



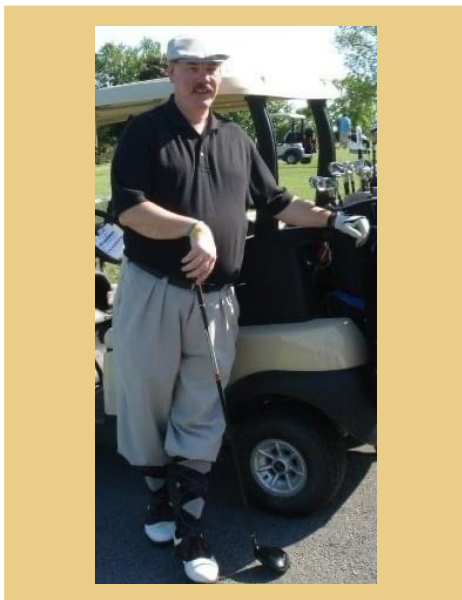
# The Baltimore Beacon

The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province

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Volume 4 // Issue 2 // 2.21.2023

## Provincial Ponderings



Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I begin this month's Provincial Ponderings with a word of congratulations to our newly elected Provincial Superior, Fr. John Collins, his Provincial Vicar, Fr. John Olenick, and his Provincial Consultor, Fr. Kevin O'Neil. They will officially be installed and begin their time of service on March 13th when the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province gather in Chapter at San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, NJ. I ask that those reading my message join me in prayer for each of these men and that the Spirit of God and the zeal of St. Alphonsus be upon them during their time of leadership. May Our Mother of Perpetual Help also continue to watch over each of you.

And so, I sit at my computer to pen my final words to those who read this little publication called *The Baltimore Beacon* (sorry Fr. John McGowan ... the title will not be changing!) I want to take this moment to begin by thanking all my Redemptorist confreres, both in the Baltimore Province and throughout the world-wide Congregation, for your confidence in me over these last eight years. I have tried my best to give my life in service to the Congregation. A

special word of thanks to Jerry Knapp and Matt Allman for serving on the Ordinary Provincial Council. The members of the Baltimore Province have supported me with their love, care, and prayers; the members throughout the world have been a joy to work with whenever we gathered at meetings for North America or for an international gathering.

I wish to thank our Partners in Mission for journeying with us and for being a reminder to us of how important it is to be missionaries of hope and to follow in the footsteps of the Redeemer. To those I have met during my various trips to our Redemptorist ministry sites, thank you for your faithfulness and your love for each of our confreres. To those who may be in parishes that the Baltimore Province unfortunately had to withdraw from over the last eight years, know that I have never stopped praying for each of you and, while necessary, how painful it was that we had to leave your parish when we did. To our benefactors reading this publication, words fail to express the deep gratitude I have for each one of you. Because of your generosity you have helped us in the training of our seminarians, in our care for our elderly Redemptorists after years of service to the Good News, in our ability to respond to the needs of our Caribbean brothers and sisters after natural disasters, in our attempt to offer relief to those affected by the war in Ukraine, and simply to help us continue our mission to preach the Good News to the most abandoned, especially the economically poor. To all I have had the privilege to be a part of your life somehow over these past eight years ... thank you and continued blessings from our loving God!

Now I take your leave to spend some time on sabbatical starting around

Easter at St. Alphonsus Villa in New Smyrna Beach, FL. My hope is to refresh, recharge, and renew after eight years in leadership before accepting a new assignment from the new Provincial Government. My golf game has suffered over the last eight years, so that will be one of my main focuses, and my brother, his wife, and my niece live a short 45 minutes away so I hope to be able to spend some time with them. To end my Provincial Ponderings, I would like to paraphrase the words of Walter Cronkite (March 6, 1981) from his final broadcast on CBS News:

This is my last ponderings as the Provincial of the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province; for me, it's a moment for which I long have planned, but which, nevertheless, comes with some sadness. For eight years, after all, we've been meeting like this each month, and I'll miss that. But those who have made anything of this departure, I'm afraid have made too much. This is but a transition, a passing of the baton. A great priest and Provincial, Fr. Kevin Moley, preceded me in this job, and another, Fr. John Collins, will follow. And anyway, the priest who writes this column is but the most conspicuous member of a superb team of Redemptorists - Priests, Brothers and Partners in Mission - and none of that will change. Furthermore, I'm not even going away! I'll be back from time to time. Old Provincials, you see, don't fade away; they just keep coming back for more. And that's the way it is. I'll be away on sabbatical, and Fr. John Collins will be sitting in here for the next few years. Goodbye and God Bless!

*In the Spirit of the Redeemer,*

Paul J. Borowski, C.Ss.R.  
Provincial Superior of the  
Redemptorists of the Baltimore  
Province

## Upcoming 2022/2023 Dates

**Monday, March 13 – Friday, March 17, 2023** *and if necessary*  
**Monday, March 20 – Friday, March 24, 2023:** XVIII Baltimore Provincial Chapter at San Alfonso Retreat House; Long Branch, NJ

**Tuesday, May 30 - Thursday, June 1, 2023:** Province Retreat at San

Alfonso Retreat House; Long Branch, NJ, Anthony Gittins, CSSp, is the retreat director and the theme will be: “Missionary Discipleship.”

**Saturday, July 15, 2023, at 11 a.m.**  
Province Jubilee Celebration: Mass and Luncheon at Sacred Heart of Jesus; Baltimore, MD

**Tuesday, October 17 - Thursday, October 19, 2023:** Province Convocation at San Alfonso Retreat House; Long Branch, NJ, Anthony Gittins, CSSp, is the presenter and the theme will be: “Intercultural Living.”

## Communications Updates

• Daily Audio Podcasts on the readings of the day may be found at [www.redemptorists.net](http://www.redemptorists.net) in either Spanish or English.

• Weekly Video reflections on the upcoming Sunday readings (Cycle A) may be

found on Facebook: [facebook.com/RedemptoristsBaltimore](https://facebook.com/RedemptoristsBaltimore) or YouTube: [youtube.com/BaltRedemptorists](https://youtube.com/BaltRedemptorists) or on our web site at [www.redemptorists.net](http://www.redemptorists.net) These videos are released each Wednesday.

• “Praying with the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help” will resume in April

## Parish Mission Schedule

- Feb. 23-Mar. 2, 2023: St. Columba in Hopewell Junction, NY
- Feb. 25-March 1, 2023: St. Edmund Catholic Church, Lafayette, LA
- Feb. 26, 2023: Saints Simon & Jude’s Church, Bethlehem, PA
- Feb. 28-March 1, 2023: Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, San Jose, CA
- March 2-9, 2023: St. Mary, Dumont, NJ
- March 3-5, 2023: St. Christopher Catholic Church, West Covina, CA
- March 4-8, 2023: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Lafayette, LA
- March 6-8, 2023: St. Columban Catholic Church. Garden Grove, CA
- March 10-12, 2023: St. Anthony Roman Catholic Church, Wichita, KS
- March 11-15, 2023: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Shrub Oak, NY

- March 18-19, 2023: Saint Martha Catholic Church, Sarasota, FL
- March 23-30, 2023: St. Bede, Williamsburg, VA
- March 25-29, 2023: St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, The Villages, FL
- March 27-29, 2023: Our Lady of Lavang Shrine, Australia
- April 1-4, 2023: Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, Rock Lake, ND
- April 10-14: U.S. Region Annual Retreat to the Missionary Society of St. Paul, Houston, Texas
- April 15-19, 2023: Holy Name Catholic Church, Nashville, TN
- April 29-May 3, 2023: Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Landsdale, PA
- May 13-16, 2023: Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Johnsonburg, PA
- June 3-7, 2023: Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Staten Island, NY

- June 11-17, 2023: Sisters of Saint Joseph Conference Retreat, Erie, PA
- June 24-27, 2023: Our Mother of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, Ephrata, PA
- July 15-19, 2023: Our Lady of the Cape Catholic Church, Sandwich, MA
- July 22-26, 2023: St. Pius X Catholic Church, Yarmouth, MA
- Sept. 23-27, 2023: St. Joseph, St. Thomas, and St. John Neumann, Staten Island, NY
- Oct. 21-25, 2023: Sacred Heart, Cornwall, PA
- Nov. 25-29, 2023: Immaculate Conception, Stayton, OR
- Dec. 2-6, 2023: Ascension, Hurricane, WV
- Dec. 9-13, 2023: Our Lady of the Angels, Lakewood Ranch, FL

## Young Adult Ministry, Immaculata University, Pennsylvania



It would not surprise me if St. Alphonsus held a hearty smile upon seeing the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, also known as the IHM Sisters, and the Redemptorists collaborating in ministry. Br. Kenneth Stigner, C.Ss.R., and myself, Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R., are the two Redemptorists on the team working with campus ministry director, Sr. Laura Downing, IHM, assistant director Ms. Amanda Bielat, and graduate student Mrs. Maggie Czapski. The coming together of these two congregations rooted in Alphonsian

spirituality saw a fusion of dynamic ministry spreading throughout the campus.

One year before the arrival of the Redemptorists at Immaculata, Sr. Laura began her campus ministry leadership with an intentional steadfast promotion of Alphonsian spirituality. Therefore, excitement among the IU community was palpable when the news broke that Redemptorists would be a new addition to the campus ministry team. I can testify that the efforts of infusing Alphonsian spirituality by Sr.

Laura were fruitful upon hearing a student during a planning session for a Kairos retreat say, “we must include something on the love of God; we must include Alphonsus.”

Working in campus ministry is life-giving. Each day presents new opportunities to journey with college students searching for deeper meaning in life. The fascinating reality of campus ministry is that some days can go exactly as planned, but many days require you to be flexible and

ready to respond to the demands of campus ministry. For instance, in the fall semester, a group of faithful campus-ministry students would frequently discuss/debate topics of the Church and the world, often seeking direction from campus ministry. As a result, a new program was added to the schedule called “God-chat” with Fr. Royce. Each Thursday at 6:45 p.m., the original group of students and additional students gather in campus ministry to discuss the Church’s teaching on several topics and how this impacts life in the world as disciples of Christ. At the end of the discussions, the group heads to the chapel to spend one hour in Eucharistic adoration.

Since the arrival of the Redemptorists to the IU community, additional Masses were added to the schedule based on the request of students, both during the weekdays and weekends, along with continuing the one-hour adoration time on Thursday nights. Many students can be seen using the Visit to the Blessed Sacrament prayer book during said adoration time.

During my initial formation, the importance of Our Mother Perpetual Help devotion left a mark on me; hence, I knew I had to include this among the IU community. Each Wednesday at the end of midday Mass, we pray OMPH prayers followed by a blessing with the Icon.

The Redemptorist presence is being felt at the Immaculata during the popular Tuesday community night programming. Community nights, started by Sr. Laura, offer a time for students to come to campus ministry to share a meal and build community while listening to various speakers. Beginning this fall, we had Frs. Denis Sweeney, Peter Linh, Phillip Dabney, and Paul Borowski, with still to come in the spring semester, Frs. Richard Bennett, Francis Gargani,

and Dennis Billy. Also on the horizon here at IU is the first ever Redemptorist Lenten mission preached by Redemptorists coming this March.

Each day campus ministry offers spiritual, communal, service, and social-oriented programs and activities to engage the students of Immaculata University. Campus ministry is very much the place to be on campus, which is evident by the number of students that come in daily and the growing number of core students, both Catholics and non-Catholics.

Aside from the powerful spiritual retreats, from meetings, praying, advising, and listening to students all day, I feel most rewarded in this campus ministry by witnessing the growing number of students

coming through the doors. The continuous rise of students at weekend Masses and the love and appreciation the students are developing for Alphonsus and the Alphonsian tradition are incredibly encouraging. The team can attest that the work can be tiring, the hours are long, and the unpredictability of what the students might bring can be daunting. However, observing and absorbing the community spirit is truly inspiring. Again, it would not surprise me if St. Alphonsus is smiling and very much pleased with campus ministry at Immaculata. The relationship of collaborating with campus ministry is only six months in existence, and the fruits of this initiative are already evident.

*Royce Thomas, C.Ss.R.*

## Redemptorists' Charism Lives On, Notre Dame Retreat House

Over the past 55 years Notre Dame Retreat House has served thousands of parishioners from the Diocese of Rochester, New York, through the retreat ministry led by fellow Redemptorist priests and brothers passionate about preaching the Word and serving those in need. As word spread about this wonderful facility, other Christian denominations and not-for-profit groups started hosting retreats, events, and trainings here also. Five thousand people annually choose this retreat house as a place to get away from the busyness of everyday life for retreat, reflection, and renewal.

As of August 1, 2023, our Redemptorist presence will cease at this beacon on a hill, but our charism will live on. A spirit-filled group of laity led by Paul Peterson and Gary Keating over the course of six months put together a plan and proposal to keep Notre Dame Retreat House as a spiritual center for years to come. This thought-out plan was proposed to the EPC back in November 2022 and approved by the council in December 2022. We hope that this plan may serve as a model for other facilities that may be proposed for restructuring.

The Lay Committee leading these efforts is comprised of longtime

retreatants and community members from all walks of life and professional backgrounds. Fr. Tom Travers, C.Ss.R., and Fr. Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R., have offered their wisdom and spiritual guidance throughout this entire process.

While details are still being negotiated, we are blessed to know that Notre Dame Retreat House, which started as a Redemptorist Ministry, will continue offering a place for retreats and a haven for those seeking spiritual guidance and renewal.

*Tom Travers, Retreat Director  
Nancy Lynch, Office Manager*

## The Healing and Restoration Ministry at the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Boston

The Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help here in Boston, MA has always been considered a shrine of healing. It is the home of the beautiful and miraculous Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. That Icon is lovingly situated in a reserved area of the Basilica, and it is visited daily by the faithful who come seeking our Mother's loving and powerful intercession. It is not an exaggeration to state that miracles of healing continue to come from Christ Jesus, through the loving hands of Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, here at her shrine.

Coupled with the great gift of this miraculous Icon of Mary, our Basilica has also been blessed with a very special ministry of healing begun here in 1974 by Father Ed McDonough. It was named "The Healing and Restoration Ministry." Once again, it is not an

exaggeration to state that hundreds of the faithful came to attend the healing services offered by Fr. McDonough each month and were granted, through God's loving grace, the healing they so fervently prayed to receive.

This ministry was continued in later years by Fr. Robert Lennon who carried on in faithful and grand tradition what Fr. McDonough had so prayerfully inaugurated. Both these great Redemptorists garnered a devout following through the years, for they were both seen to be faithful and humble disciples of Christ who were moved by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit and held under the protective mantle of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. They were both seen as gifted by God with the charism of healing. Through their "laying on of hands," which is at the heart of each healing service, the faithful

who came seeking help were granted a renewed sense of God's grace within – restoring them to wholeness and health, whether that be of body, mind, or spirit.

Once again, the torch has been passed and the Healing and Restoration Ministry has now been entrusted to another Redemptorist – that is – to me. I stand quite humbly in the shadow of my predecessors and ask only for a modicum of the grace and holiness they possessed as they embraced the healing work of this powerful ministry. May I ask for your good prayers that the great work begun by them may continue. With God's grace and under the protective mantle of Our Mother of Perpetual Help may we do the holy work that we have been entrusted to do.

*Anthony E. Michalik, C.Ss.R.*

## Updates from Visitation BVM, Philadelphia, PA



"As the body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one, so also Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12).

God's sincere desire – and Jesus' sincere prayer – that we share in the oneness and love of God Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has always been a goal hard to reach, and harder to maintain.

Healing wounds inflicted on communities that have not always conformed to the dominant culture was a problem

for early Christians not of Jewish origin, and it has persisted in various forms ever since.

We must always strive for unity in diversity, if we are to fulfill the Church's mission that all find a home in the body of Christ. It will not come naturally, as we prefer that which is most familiar, and most comfortable. Many Redemptorists have capitalized on the various expressions of Christian faith and culture in the parishes, communities, and foundations where we find ourselves, looking to foster unity in diversity.

From December to early February, Visitation BVM in Kensington, Philadelphia, has found joy, unity, and hope by appreciating and celebrating the faith, culture, music, food, and history of our diverse communities. La Virgen de Guadalupe and Christmas, Our Lady of Suyapa and the Lunar New Year, Black history month and Catholic Schools' week were all joyfully recognized and celebrated.

Of course, all these celebrations preexisted the Redemptorists coming to Visitation BVM in Kensington. Jim Brennan, C.Ss.R., beloved by the people and

mourned in his passing, served many productive, fruitful years here. As a formator, Jim would remind us, "Do not presume to think that Gospel arrived when you did."

While all the aforementioned traditions and celebrations were here, our particular Redemptorist charism has made Visitation BVM especially open and welcoming to various groups. We are blessed here as well with a beautiful Church, a multicultural and diverse school, and a Community Center that has become an essential part of not only our mission, but a part of the City of Philadelphia's mission to tackle homelessness, severe drug addiction, and poverty. Sarnelli house remains open and active, and the community at St. Peter the Apostle participates in our ministry.

Many see this area of Kensington as full of despair and hopelessness. But the people bring so much hope and vitality to the parish and mission that you can see and



experience what our Redemptorist spirituality promotes: "in seeking the salvation of souls, the members achieve their own sanctification."

Many commentators have noted that division, polarization, and animosity have increased around the world. Continuing to promote the God that is crazy in love with us in Kensington these past three months have provided ample opportunity to find the one God in many different faces.

*Frank Mulvaney, C.Ss.R.*

## Partners in Mission, Canandaigua, NY

The Canandaigua PIM has developed in a different way. In the beginning we thought that it would be a "Hybrid" circle with local members and others who would join by Zoom. Now it is a small circle of 12 to 15 members who

join us mostly by Zoom but we are still reaching out to those who live nearby. Some are Redemptorists, former Redemptorists, former Redemptorist students, and laity who are interested in maintaining a closer relationship with the

Alphonsian Charism. We have been meeting once a month for the last eight months and these meetings have been blessed with inputs from Fr. Dennis Billy on many occasions, and Fr. Francis Gargani, Anne Walsh,

## Partners in Mission, Canandaigua, NY

Lucy Burich-McNamara, and others. Skip Doyle prepared the following “mission” for Advent, and we hope to present more in the coming months. We welcome all of you to join us.



### *Redemptorist*

#### *Mission Given by the Newly Formed Canandaigua PIM Circle*

Skip Doyle  
February 2023

When you think about it, one purpose of life is to appreciate beauty with all our senses and our mind, and to create beauty, whether tangible or intangible, either for ourselves or another. Thus, for this Advent past, the Canandaigua circle of Partners in Mission, formed in May of 2022, after months of formation and community-building, undertook our first mission. Rather than the Redemptorist themes of old – “death, judgment, heaven and hell” – we created a beautiful, Christmas-oriented prayer service centered on the first of the four Redemptorist pillars – The Nativity – with an eye towards 2023 to give missions on the Cross, Mary, and the Eucharist.

Our Redemptorist mission has three parts: sacred scripture, a sermon, and social sharing.

Using sacred text from The Jerusalem Bible, we interwove the Nativity stories of the four

Gospels into one cohesive narrative. Researching classical art, we chose a painting representative of each of the ten scenes. Seven of the passages were read by active members of the Canandaigua PIM circle; we then reached out to PIM coordinators from other circles to build relationships with those communities. In true Partners-in-Mission fashion, three of the readers were professed Redemptorists; of the seven others, two were former Redemptorists. It is worthy to note the gender balance: two women, eight men. The Mission was delivered via the Internet. As each of the ten passages were read portraying the Nativity, classical art for each scene was displayed starting with the Annunciation painting by Henry Tanner (African American artist from Philadelphia of the 1800’s) and ending with The Journey of the Magi by Stefano di Giovanni (Italy, 1435). As a prayer service, the readings were bookended with music, commencing with O Come, O Come Emmanuel and concluding with O Holy Night.

The sermon was delivered by Michael Brehl, recent

Superior General of the Redemptorist congregation. Father Brehl began his reflections, “I find it impossible to think of the Redemptorists without thinking of Partners in Mission. I think this was very much in the mind of Saint Alphonsus from the very beginning.

Those that know his story know that before he gathered a group of priests and brothers to be missionaries in the formal sense, Saint Alphonsus found and called forth lay men and women as missionaries who would bring the word of God and the word of hope to their sisters and brothers.” His full sermon can be found at <https://youtu.be/sJLV2sT5SXM>.

For shared discussion – the final segment of our mission – Bob Graf, who presided over this Advent prayer service, posed the question “During this preparation season of Advent, what are you doing to get ready for Christmas?”

As we in the Canandaigua PIM circle commence 2023 and continue with our formation, we look forward to sponsoring a Holy Week mission honoring the sacrifice and redemption of the Cross. As a Redemptorist, Partners in Mission, and Christian community, please join us for that mission on Spy Wednesday, April 5 at 7 p.m. EST via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85448836608?pwd=UUNDOQkNjcWoyZnAvV2RQMnEvSityQT0>.



## 2023 Confreres celebrating a significant anniversary of Profession

### 75 Years Professed (1948)

- Hennessy, John

### 70 Years Professed (1953)

- Knappik, Richard
- Devin, John
- O'Blaney, James
- Spillane, William

### 60 Years Professed (1963)

- Lynch, E. Patrick
- Cannoles, Gordon
- Moley, Kevin

## 2023 Confreres celebrating a significant anniversary of Ordination

### 70 Years Ordained (1953)

- Hennessy, John

### 65 Years Ordained (1958)

- Knappik, Richard
- Devin, John
- O'Blaney, James
- Spillane, William

### 50 Years Ordained (1973)

- Hoog, Eric
- Hergenroeder, Charles
- Jones, J. Francis
- Murray I, John

### 40 Years Ordained (1983)

- Tran, Vang Cong
- Cascione, James

### 25 Years Ordained (1998)

- Houston, Michael

## Archbishop of Erbil, Iraq at Redemptorist Provincial Residence



On November 11th Fr. Eric Hoog, C.Ss.R., and Archbishop Bashar Warda, C.Ss.R., of Erbil, Iraq met at the Baltimore Province Provincial Residence in Washington D.C. Archbishop Warda is a Redemptorist and is the Archbishop of the Catholic Chaldean Archdiocese in Erbil, Iraq. Erbil is in the Kurdish region of Iraq, north of Mosul. Fr. Eric first met Archbishop Warda in 2005 when he was Fr. Warda and was the Pastor of St. Elias Church in Baghdad. Fr. Eric was the Command Chaplain for

the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. In 2010 Fr. Warda was made Archbishop of Erbil.

Archbishop Warda is dedicated to rebuilding his country through education. He has founded the Catholic University of Erbil. He has also started a Catholic elementary school and a Catholic high school in the Erbil area. Fr. Eric and Archbishop Warda met to discuss how the elementary school and the high school at St. Mary's parish in Annapolis might "team up" and financially help these two schools, as well as have an online exchange with their students. Ideas are still being generated.

*Eric Hoog, C.Ss.R.*

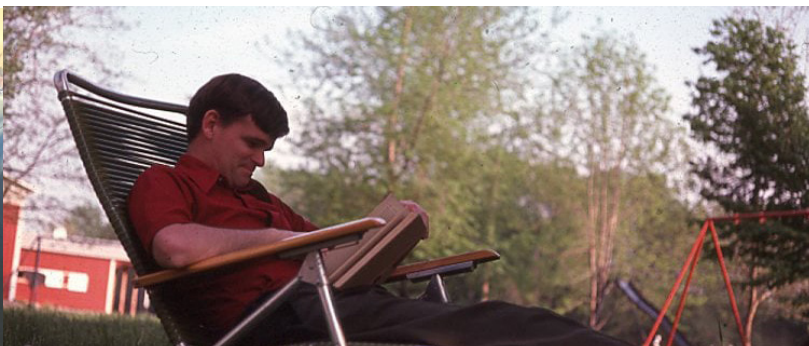
## Redemptorist Happenings around the Province



Pictured left: Frs. Denis Sweeney and Peter Linh, C.Ss.R., at a vocation fair hosted by Catholic University.

Pictured right: (Starting from the left, going around in a circle) Staff member Nicole Pinzino in the grey, Archbishop Gilbert, Staff member Nancy Zito, Staff member Vicki Schwed, Fr. Lennon, Staff member Anna Daabies, Fr. Daigle

## In Memoriam: Fr. James Brennan, C.Ss.R.



### Reflections from Patrick Hayes, Redemptorist Archives:

When he was a young man growing up in Boston, Fr. Jim encountered Bishop Thomas Reilly, who was also a Boston native and resident at the Mission Church. As a boy, Brennan got to know the bishop and learned of his encounters with the dictator, Rafael Trujillo, in the Dominican Republic. This made a deep impression. When Brennan was an altar boy at the Mission Church, the Bishop

acknowledged to him that he was getting to be an old man and that one day he would replace him. Brennan later reminded the Bishop of this when the two were stationed together in the Dominican Republic many years later. "To me, the Bishop serves as a kind of hero figure, but also a teacher on what it meant to be apostolic," Fr. Jim stated. He encountered other Redemptorists who taught him how to pray or how to live in community well. He told one story about Fr. Jerry Campbell in Puerto Rico. "When the

generator would go out, in about three seconds he was descending the stairs to fix it." Not afraid to do the same, one day in 1994 when he was pastor of St. Cecilia's in Manhattan, Brennan helped the staff facilities manager tend to the oil burner. It suddenly exploded and both men sustained scalding burns on their faces and hands. But, Fr. Jim was a trooper and pulled through. He had the grace of not being tentative, but always deliberate.

I can say he also served my hometown

of Springfield, Massachusetts, well. With Fr. Tim Keating, he was a sorely needed injection of talent (few priests in Springfield could speak Spanish) into the urban center. They served as an instrumental connection between the City of Springfield's North End, with its heavily Hispanic and very misunderstood population, and the downtown shopping and business district, which had practically no Catholic presence other than the Cathedral and chancery. He knew urban life well. He knew Hispanic ministry well. When the Redemptorists departed, they were sorely missed.

**Fr. Gary Lauenstein, C.Ss.R., in the Bronx once interviewed Fr. Jim Brennan, C.Ss.R., and recounted this story, which really shows the character of Fr. Brennan:**

"In the Dominican Republic, Jim was involved with the landless campesinos. One night he went with a group to invade land. The campesinos did this from time to time to stake their claim to land that was hoarded by the government or wealthy individuals. They would do it under cover of darkness. When the army or police arrived, they would discover the campesinos in the morning on the contested land. What struck Jim was, in the middle of the night, perhaps by the light of the moon, he saw these hundreds of huddled figures on the ground. He thought to himself, "This is where the Church ought to be, where Redemptorists ought to be." When the police or army arrived, the campesinos had a strategy they would use. The police were armed with guns, the campesinos only had sticks. They would spread themselves out all over the field so that it was more difficult to round them up. They would sing the national anthem, so that the police or soldiers would have to stand at

attention and sing with them. It was the campesinos' way of saying, "We are all Dominicans."

**Wise words from Fr. Brennan:**

*Discussing his time in the DR:* "I can't say we lived poorly, but we did live simply. Also, it was the place where I was most evangelized by the poor." (1993)

*From his time at St. Peter the Apostle in Philadelphia:* "The Hispanic community seems to me to have great promise. There's a dedicated core of 25 or 30 people who are fervent and prayerful and ripe to move out in an evangelization effort. The prospect excites me. We have started a pilot project of street evangelization in the early evening during the summer months when people sit out in the front of their houses." (1993)

On leadership: Good leaders can't do two things at once. A role in administration is demanding enough without piling on a rectorship, which carries its own burdens.

*From his talk, Missionaries to the End: Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Life of the Redemptorist*

Quoting from Father F. X. Durrwell, "It is well for us Redemptorists to realize that it is through our sufferings and death even more than through our life that we can and ought to be truly effective apostles."...Our theme is how a Redemptorist, not in spite of old age, sickness, and death, but through them can remain a missionary to the end...No matter how old you are or how young you are, some day you'll preach your last mission or your last retreat or your last homily. Is there life after that? Yes there is!...Certainly old age brings more time for prayer, for spiritual reading, the possibility of developing our contemplative side, as

more and more we put aside the role of Martha to grow into the role of Mary...What that means practically is that for the men in the infirmary at Saratoga and those at New Smyrna who are sick, their vocation is not ended – they're not on the shelf – their vocation is being lived as fully as when they were young or middle aged...My brothers, the good news about old age, sickness, and death is that we can be Redemptorists and missionaries to the end – and in fact more Redemptorist, more missionary, at the end than at any other time of our life.

**Bishop Bruce Lewandowski's funeral homily for Fr. Brennan:**

Friendship is the most beautiful thing on earth, and it's at the center of our Catholic Life as we understand Jesus and his mission and ministry. It's at the center of our Redemptorist life. It's what makes us most like the Redeemer himself. It is our greatest "tool" for ministry, and it can become one of the great means of our sanctification and salvation. The Redemptorist vocation is one of initiating, cultivating, and sustaining Gospel friendship.

Jim, Fr. Jim, Jimmy...was a really good friend. He's the best person I know for making and keeping friends...

Jesus reminds us that friendship is forever, unending, eternal. How grateful I am for that today. I'm not worried about Jim today. I know where he is. He is among friends, friends that he made here on earth, who are now enjoying his company in heaven. Many of us enjoyed Jim's friendship. We're better people, we're closer to Christ because Jim loved us and would never let us move out of his circle of friends, would never let us be far or distant from him.



# The Redemptorists

— Baltimore Province —

Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province  
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