



Redemptorist North American Historical Bulletin

Issue #32

ISSN 1480-5235

Winter 2010-2011

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West End Conference



Some of the participants in the West End Conference

The North American Redemptorist History Conference held at West End, New Jersey, from Monday evening October 4 until Friday morning, October 8, 2010 is now itself part of Redemptorist history. In this issue of the *Bulletin*, we will print some of the photographs (unfortunately, only in black and white) taken at the event. Several of the presenters have indicated that their papers would be published in other journals (for example, in *Spicilegium Historicum*) and were too long for the *Bulletin*.

A summary of the Conference was written by Ashley Large, the Denver Province archivist, and it was printed (with pictures!) in the October 22, issue of the Province's *Denver Link*.

Among the many historical announcements made at the West End Conference, this one caused a stir and several participants pulled out their pens to note it: Brother Leo Patin's "ROOTS" project – the "unofficial" who, what, when and where of the Redemptorists in the American West since 1875 – is now online, available to all at:

cssr-roots.com

Please visit the site and send any additions or corrections to Bro. Leo at: patinleo@aol.com.

The next announcement came from Father Bob Fenili:



The second installment of *The History of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer* has just been published in English.

During the Centennial Celebrations of the Death of St. Alphonsus in 1987, the General Government initiated a multi-volume work outlining the history of our Congregation from 1732 to 1967.

The first volume covers the period from the initial gathering of priests around St. Alphonsus in Scala in 1732 up to the 1793 reunion of the two branches split by the Regolamentoo of the King of Naples in 1780.

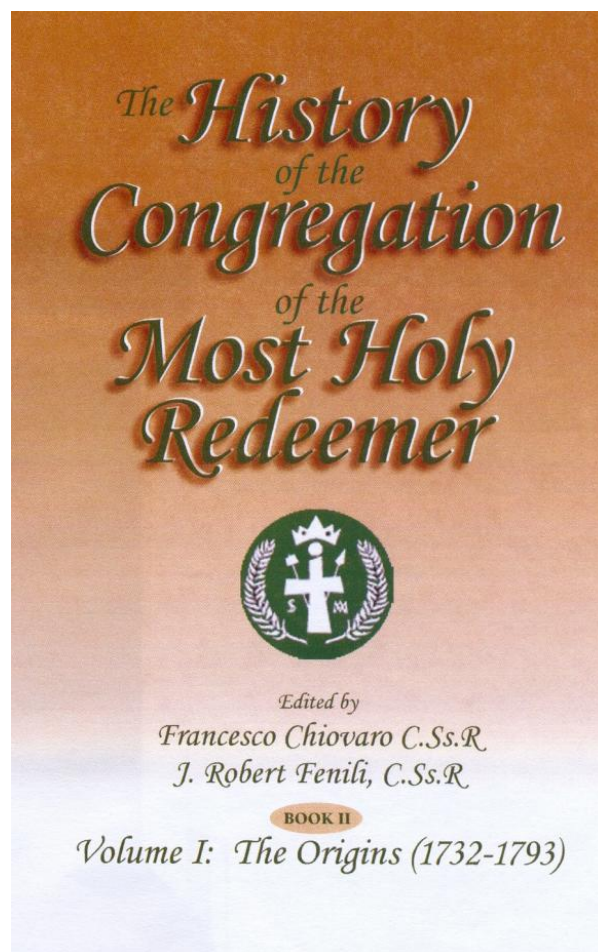
The first volume was split into two books: Volume I/i (published in 1996) and Volume I/ii which has just been released. The new volume continues the story of the origins, treating **Redemptorist spirituality and daily life among the first confreres**. Of special interest are several appendixes presenting important early documents as well as photographs. Some of the latter are the **earliest we have of the first Redemptorist houses**;

others show contemporary portraits of early members or original documents.

The provincial offices in the USA and Canada have purchased one copy for each house in their Unit; these will be arriving shortly from Liguori Publications or your Unit's provincial office.

If you or your community would like additional or personal copies, you can order them from Fr. Bob Fenili at 50% off the cover price of \$19.99, that is: **\$10.00 plus postage (\$5.00 USD for USA; \$7.00 USD for Canada)** per copy. Send him a check made out to "The Redemptorists" at:

**Redemptorist Theology Residence
1027 E. Hyde Park Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60615
U.S.A.**



During the West End Conference, the Francis-Xavier Seelos Award for Redemptorist History was presented. ... The following is the speech given by Paul Laverdure, the immediate past winner, in presenting the award.

George Rassley attended the Academy of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, then Holy Redeemer College in Oakland, California, and was professed a Redemptorist at Mount St. Clement's College, DeSoto, Missouri, in 1948. He was ordained a priest at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, in 1953.

Father George Rassley then obtained a Master of Library Science from the Catholic University of America. He may be the first Redemptorist to get such a professional degree; this was done when this kind of advanced degree, although known, was rare among librarians themselves. He served as librarian at the Redemptorist major seminaries of Oconomowoc (1956-1968) and Esopus (1968-1978) and then began pastoral work, as an associate in Holy Redeemer, Portland, Oregon (1978-1981), and St. Alphonsus, in Fresno (1981-1984), and pastor of St. Gerard's in Great Falls, Montana (1984-1990). In 1990 he moved to Coeur d'Alene and became parochial vicar.

When the Redemptorists left Coeur d'Alene, he retired; this means he worked as chaplain of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Daughters of America, Knights of Columbus, the Secular Carmelites, began the Latin Mass, helped create a new Catholic school in Coeur d'Alene, heard confessions, and helped with masses. Just before ill health finally progressed to the point where he needed greater care in St. Clement's, Missouri, the State of Idaho proclaimed a Father Rassley Day, and a men's homeless shelter was renamed for Father Rassley.

But we are here to celebrate the historian. The work of any lover of history, any lover of archives, any lover of libraries, is in three

parts: to collect, to preserve, and to publish, that is to say, to make available to others.

In all three areas, Father George Rassley excelled.

In the first area, he did more than excel; he surpassed us all. His single-minded drive to collect materials that witness to Redemptorist history in North America and elsewhere is already the stuff of legend. Everyone has a Rassley story. One of mine is typical. I met him at a bus station and he had four large suitcases, two clutched in each hand. As you may know, Father George is a big man. With the suitcases, he was a massive sight. I offered to take two of the suitcases. He answered in his characteristic accent (which I could never quite place – but a slow drawl): “No-o-o, no-o-o. They’re not heavy.” When he left, at the end of our conference, he then asked me for a hand. I nearly died carrying two of the four suitcases a few yards. They were full to bursting with papers, books, and I don’t know what else.



The award was presented by Paul Laverdure to his sister, Mary, who was in attendance in West End, New Jersey, while Father George Rassley listened on speaker-phone from St. Clement's, Missouri.

We all laughed at Father Rassley for collecting things we considered ephemera. We marvelled and, yet, I know I suspected he collected materials we might need to answer historical questions not yet formulated.

He excelled in preserving these materials. I don't know how many storage units he rented over the years – the Denver Province emptied nine just last summer. How many homes, garages, his own mother's house were packed with materials collected across North America and important to Redemptorist history? Photographs, of course, but parish bulletins, and even house chronicles went into storage. Once Father George was convinced by successive Denver Province archivists that these fragments and building stones of Redemptorist history were appreciated and would be better preserved in the newly-built, air-conditioned, climate-controlled archives of the Denver Province, he began to transfer his holdings – to every historian's delight and amazement at the riotous richness of the old dragon's horde.

Finally, Father George Rassley excelled in the third aspect of Redemptorist history, which is in publishing, providing, and promoting Redemptorist history. His master's thesis was a finding aid and bibliography to the Liguorian Magazine – something I've used and which is used by all North American Redemptorist historians. He has also written several histories: a history of Holy Redeemer, Portland, for its 75th Jubilee, a history of St. Alphonsus, Fresno, for its 75th, a history of the Redemptorists in Seattle for their 100th anniversary, two sections of the collection, Let Us Now Praise Great Men, a history of the West Coast Redemptorists, a short history of the establishment of the Vice Province of the West Coast in 1915, and helped Charles Maher write The Story of St. Thomas Parish in Coeur d'Alene in 1987.

So, for these three excellent reasons: for collecting, preserving, and publishing, when we considered candidates for the Francis-Xavier Seelos Award for Redemptorist history, Father George Rassley's name was brought forward at the meeting in 2009, the first ever

since 1987 that Father Rassley could not attend because of his health. We missed him.

I asked to be the one to present the award for personal reasons. I first met Father George in 1989 at the second Redemptorist history meeting – my first – when we were just a task force mandated by Father General Lasso. I remember Father Rassley sitting, sleeping in his chair but surprisingly alert, hearing everything and waking up at crucial points to ask a key question or make a telling comment. The first question he asked once we were in session, chaired by our coordinator and later a recipient of the Seelos Award, the late Father Wally George, just after the introductory remarks by Father Francesco Chiovaro, the General Congregation's historian who gave us our marching orders, was “Do we tell the truth?” Everyone laughed – some nervously. He had put his finger on a then very sore point in Catholic historiography. There was a debate between those who wanted truth at all costs and those who wanted charity to prevail – *nihil nisi bonum* – perhaps not at the expense of truth, but at the expense of history. Chiovaro insisted on truth, even painful truth, to George Rassley's satisfaction, although not to every else's.

Since that meeting, Father George Rassley and I corresponded and I found him a fountain of detailed historical knowledge, gently helping me to correct my work and sending me short articles for the Historical Bulletin I had begun to edit for our history group. As Chiovaro once exclaimed a few years ago, George Rassley seemed to know about every single Redemptorist in America, and where they had been each and every day of their lives. His is one of our living history books, especially of the Oakland Vice-Province, the St. Louis Province, and now the Denver Province.

His presence at our meetings has been invaluable and we know that his vow of poverty – and the cost of those many storage units – often forced him to travel cheaply, but travel he did with empty suitcases, muttering under his breath as he carried away full suitcases,

“they’ll only throw these out – they’ll never miss them – I’ll keep them safe – they’ll need them one day,” while snapping photos of us all as he sat at our meetings or traveled away on the bus.

Thank you, Father George Rassley, CSSR, for uniting the ideals of a priest and a scholar, of truth and charity, and for helping us all as a Redemptorist librarian, a Redemptorist archivist, and a Redemptorist historian along the same paths and in the same ideals. ***

The following comes to us from Ashley Large, Archivist of the Denver Province.

The award ceremony for Father George Rassley came at the end of three days of lectures devoted to the North American Redemptorist influence on other religious orders, on the contributions of Redemptorist Brothers, and the beginnings and growth of other Redemptorist ministries, such as the Lay Retreat Apostolate and Deaf Ministry.



Speakers in attendance included representatives from many religious orders that were either founded or profoundly influenced by the Redemptorists, such as the School Sisters of

Notre Dame, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, the Sisters of Service, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, and the Paulists.

Fr. Neil J. Roy, PhD, STL, of the University of Notre Dame, also spoke on the great artistic achievements of Bro. Maximilian Schmalzl, a 19th-century Redemptorist from Bavaria who illustrated Pustet’s *Roman Misal*.

Denver Province members attending included: Fr. Richard Boever; Bro. Patrick Concidine; Fr. Gil Enderle; Fr. Robert Fenili; Br. Clement Furno; Br. Dan Korn; Fr. Rich Luberti; Fr. Ray Maiser; and Fr. Dick Quinn.

Representatives of the Baltimore Province included: Fr. Matt Allman; Fr. Ronald Bonneau; Fr. Francis Gargani; Fr. John Gauci; Fr. Charles Hergenroeder; Fr. Carl Hoegerl; and Fr. John Kennington. Fr. James Mason represented the Edmonton-Toronto Province.

Redemptorist students Garvey Blanc, Douglas Estrada, Alfredo Medina, and Kevin Zobel joined the group, as well as attendees from the various groups represented in the lectures and friends from the surrounding community.

Many thanks to those who attended the conference, as well as to the phenomenal staff at the Retreat House!

Reprinted from the Denver Link

Special Notice

***2011 remembers the 200th
anniversary of the birth of
St. John Neumann
Mark your calendar to
participate in the special events***

sponsored by the CSSR North American
Spirituality Commission:

Retreats:

March 28 - April 1 at Liguori

May 9 - 13 at West End

July 25 - 29 at Oconomowoc

October 24 - 28 at Toronto

Sponsored by the Neumann Year
Committee of Baltimore:

Neumann Pilgrimage:

November 29 - - December 3
at West End, New Jersey

HISTORY OF ST-ALPHONSE D'YOUVILLE PARISH Montreal, Quebec, Canada

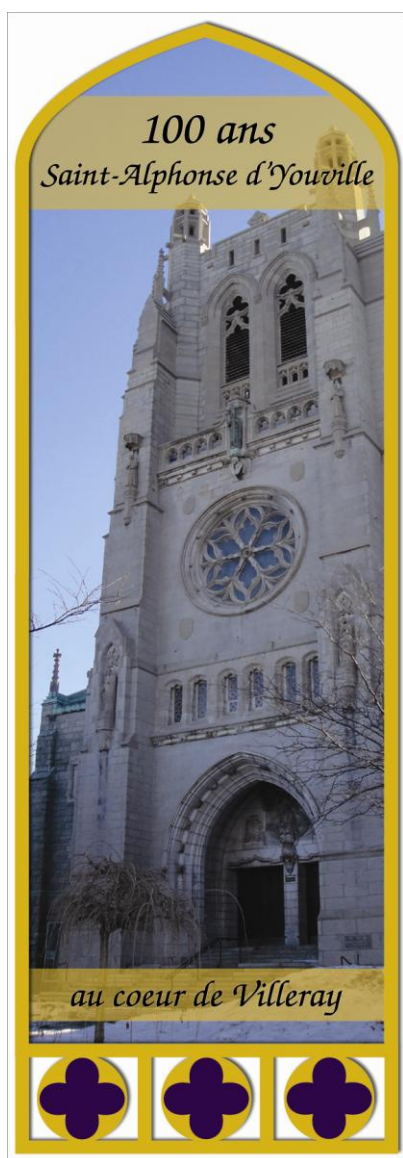
by
Luce Munn

In 1910—His Excellency Bishop Paul Bruchési agrees to erect the Youville district in the northern part of the Island of Montreal into a parish under the patronage of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori.

The parish – St-Alphonse d'Youville (Saint Alphonsus of Youville) was entrusted to the Redemptorists. The French-speaking Redemptorists were already in the Hochelaga district (the southern part) on the island of Montreal. They had taken up residence in the former Carmelite convent on October 15, 1896.

longer travels from Hochelaga but rooms in Mrs Marcel Jarry's home.

1914—The Redemptorists take possession of their new monastery. Bishop Paul Bruchési solemnly blesses the new building on November 1st, 1914.



Joseph Simard, 1910-1915

Redemptorist Father Joseph Simard became the first pastor. Named on December 5th, 1910, he served until August 1915.

December 18, 1910—the first mass was celebrated by Father Joseph Simard in a hotel belonging to Mr. Alexandre Desmarteau (called the Hôtel Vervais). That very day saw the first baptism in the parish – of Mr. Joseph Paquet's daughter, who was named Alphonsine, in honour of Saint Alphonsus.

1911—The parish numbers 72 families, 337 faithful. The hotel's dance hall becomes the chapel.

1912—Beginning August 15, 1912, the pastor no



One of the many bookmarks published on the occasion of the parish's centenary

Émile Journault, 1915-1930

1917—The original hotel-church, after six years of use, is given to the younger neighbouring daughter parish, Christ-Roi (Christthe-King) on condition that the beneficiaries take on the expense of moving the building.



The construction of a new church was due to Father Émile Journault, pastor at the time. The architects were Louis-Napoléon Audet and Eugène St-Jean. The canvassing! Finally, when the Redemptorists accepted to shoulder the costs of building the church, it started to go up, in 14th century Gothic Rayonnant style.

1927—1063 families.

Thomas Pintal, 1930-1933

1930—Father Thomas Pintal succeeds Father Journault.

1931—Blessing of the new church, on September 7th, by Auxiliary Bishop Georges Gauthier of Montreal.

Émile Journault, 1933-1939

1935—the parish's 25th anniversary celebrations are presided by Auxiliary Bishop E.A. Deschamps of Montreal.



1938—As the Holy Hour of Holy Thursday was ending, a stupendous thunderclap shakes the church and upsets the parishioners. Lightning struck the tower, the turret is destroyed, and stones were thrown as far as the monastery lawn next door.



Louis-Philippe Lévesque, 1939-1945

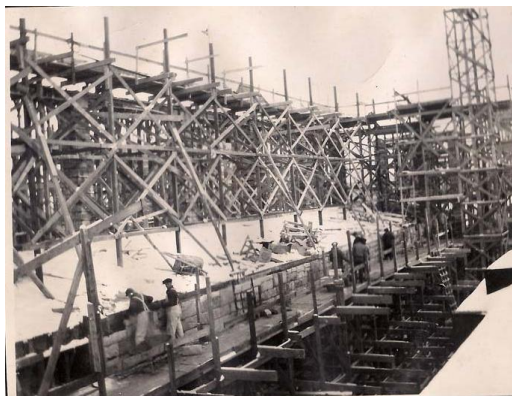
The saying was that Lévesque WAS Catholic Action.



In 1940, the first Lacordaire Circle was formed at the parish of Saint Alphonse. From its beginnings, Marian congregations and the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Society attracted several parishioners. Then there was Catholic Action and all of its many incarnations (and acronyms); the playground movement, youth recreations, summer camps at Lac Bleu. Of course, there was the League of the Sacred Heart, the Saint Anne sodality, the Children of Mary, the choirs, and the Third Orders.

Gaston Bourbeau, 1945-1948

Father Bourbeau becomes known for expanding the parks and playing fields. One field was 235,532 square feet.



Fernando Desjardins, 1948-1951

1951—Municipal authorities condemn the tower and block entrance to the church. The tower is taken down to the level of the roof-

line. The tower is then capped with a wooden construction that the parishioners dub the 'pigeon-house'.

Gabriel Gagnon, 1951-1953

1952—The playing field is sold to the city. The money is placed at the Caisse Populaire (Cooperative or People's Bank) and the interest from it is used to pay for other healthy and popular parish youth activities.

Ovila Rondeau, 1953-1958



1956-1964—Fathers Rondeau and Louis Lacroix install stained glass windows to replace the ordinary glass. Here is the list of stained glass panels: At the back: Christ the Redeemer. West transept: the Church Militant and Triumphant. East Transept: Mary Mediatrix. Lateral naves: Life of St. Alphonsus, patron saint of the parish. Above the vaults: Beatitudes and the great Christian Virtues.

1957—Inauguration of the Chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

1958—Inauguration of the great Casavant organ.

Louis Lacroix, 1958-1964

1959—Installation of acoustic tiles.
1961—Campaign to renovate the tower.
1962—Complete reconstruction of the tower in dressed granite stone.



1963—Installation of 8 granite statues on the parapet of the tower as the original plans foresaw. Renovation of the sanctuary, installation of an altar and its base in marble, installation of a baldachin – a work of art in walnut with oak highlights. The bottom half of the chancel walls is finished in wood. Four mosaics representing the twelve apostles (venetian mosaics on a gold background) are installed. Wooden stalls, statues of the Sacred Heart and of St. Alphonsus, in mahogany, a tabernacle, 6 gothic candelabra, two sanctuary lamps, and the present ambos are also installed.

Philippe Blais, 1964-1971

Father Blais solidly establishes pastoral life (in the Parish pastoral council) to reflect the renewal of the Vatican Council. Pastoral sectors are established, with the parish divided into 6 pastoral sectors to allow parishioners to know each other, share resources, and develop greater fraternal ties.

Beginning in the '60s, the parish participated in the Great Mission: God is Our Father.

There were several Folk groups: Tourbillon, Barcarolle, each growing to the point of offering recreation evenings.



A pastoral council was established. The scouting movement grew: Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, and Guides. Still in the '60s, the pastoral sectors, according to the geographical divisions of the parish, met together and promoted fraternity, sharing, and conversations about the life of faith.



Socially and culturally, the Marguerite d'Youville Circle, the recreational groups, and the parish library, with its many generous volunteers, cannot be forgotten.

In the '70s, there was the creation of the Liturgy committee which organized the Folk masses and Family masses. The parish participated in the diocesan 'Chantier' (Work-in-progress) Project which required meetings during Lent for a number of years to reflect on annual themes such as 'Christian and Love', 'Family Life', 'Leisure', 'Work', and 'Politics'.



Marcel Fortin, 1971-1975

Father Fortin begins the refinancing campaign to eliminate debt charges by soliciting gifts and interest-free loans.

Robert Moreau, 1975-1978



Marc-André Boutin, 1978-1981

All apostolic works in place were continued, a liturgy committee created, (CAMR - comité d'animation des messes rythmées, a committee to organize popular and folk liturgies), and 'la petite maîtrise' (a children's choir) was organized. Father Boutin left the parish when he was named Provincial of the Redemptorists in 1981.

Gaétan Côté, 1981-1987

1985—Celebration of the 75th anniversary of the parish. We experienced the Month of Faith, in which about fifty small groups were created and met in family homes to share the Gospel.

Paul Marier, 1987-1990



Corner of Crémazie and Lajeunesse streets in 1956

Gérard Thérien, 1990-1993



The monastery

Serge Laverdure, 1993-1999

Between 1996 and 1999, the parish participated in the Montreal diocesan synod and considered the future of our Church.

Gilbert Lévesque, 1999-2002

2000—Considering the great stakes facing the reorganization of the parishes for new pastoral challenges in the context of an entirely

ministerial, communion-minded Church, the parish was asked to participate in a new evangelization as an ecclesial community marked by the seal of pastoral co-responsibility. Committee was established to discuss the future of the Redemptorists in Montreal.



Serge Laverdure, 2002-2008

2002—Parish meeting was called to discuss the sale of the church. An ad hoc committee was formed to continue studying the possibility of selling the building, to examine other options for the building, solicit buyers, and negotiate terms of sale.

2006—The parish of Saint-Thomas is united to the parish of St-Alphonse.

2007—Establishment of the catechetical course: introduction to Christian, human, and sacramental life (with parental participation).

Régis Pellerin, 2008-

We begin uniting the following parishes : St-Grégoire-le-Grand, Sainte-Thérèse, Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire, Saint-Thomas and Saint-Alphonse, and the Latino community.

2010—A parish vote in March favours unification. One parish is created with five centers for worship.



A parish is not just a building, no matter how beautiful it may be. It is made up of the believers that gather together. The lives and dedication of the people of the parish from its creation testify to this. The Financial committees have known several volunteers: finance committee, campaigns, and let us not forget the great source of revenue: the bazaars which mobilized dozens and dozens of volunteers in year-long preparations for the two huge annual bazaars and a smaller third one at the beginning of the summer.

The parish has almost always had a choir; the most recent choir, under the direction of Sister Raymonde Bertrand, S.N.J.M., was in existence for almost 30 years! The children's choir, founded by Father Marc-André Boutin, also knew several happy years. For several years, the parish could boast its own newspaper, 'Echo', which informed us all of activities, shared testimonials and important moments in the life of the parish. There were pastoral committees: Baptismal, for the Sick, Liturgical, and each gathered dozens of people happy to share their faith and to serve. These committees are still active.

All of this life, these activities, the dedication of many people were made possible by the Redemptorists, both Fathers and Brothers, who knew how to trust the laity, who accepted teamwork, co-responsibility, and who always took pains to help form committed Christians. We have been and are still lucky

to count upon the presence of these religious priests and brothers, the Redemptorists, who have not stinted any effort to build a living community.



To recall a hundred years of history: the dates, the important events and all those who made and still make up the life of a parish: the groups, the movements, and the activities, is not easy. It is possible that some dates, some events are missing. Forgive me. What is im-

In 2009, *Spicilegium Historicum* published eleven articles, with five, the entire first issue, dedicated to Saint Clement Hofbauer. There has been an increase in the number of English-language articles and most of the articles have summaries in English—thanks in part to our man in Rome, Gilbert Enderle, CSSR.



Gilbert Enderle, one of the organizers, with Richard Luberti, of the West End Conference.

The article by Maciej Sadowski, CSSR, “Faithful to the Legacy of St. Clement – while open to the Signs of the Times. The Origin and Beginnings of the Polish Redemptorist Province (1883-1909)” (I:161-182) and the article by Joop Vernooij, CSSR, “Redemptorists in Suriname 1866-1992” (II: 209-272) are of particular interest to North American specialists, to understand the Polish Redemptorist later missions in the Americas and to glimpse the Dutch Redemptorist influence—think Peter Donders—in South America.

Happy reading!

portant is what makes a parish live and what makes it continue to live: a spirit of Faith which allows the community to grow. And at this point, we are grateful for everyone: for the Redemptorists, the priests, pastors and assistants, the brothers, and all of the people who each in their way and in their dedication have contributed to the parish over the past hundred years.

The year 2010 brings new challenges: to create one community with five others, to pool our talents, our energies, and our resources, and accept to change and to be changed in order to build one community: a supportive place of camaraderie to allow us to be the living presence of Christ in the world.

Translated from the French by Paul Laverdure

**Published by the
North American Chapter
of the
Institute for Redemptorist
Historical Studies**

The opinions expressed are the authors' responsibility and are not necessarily shared by the Institute for Redemptorist Historical Studies.

Please acknowledge all citations in the following format:

**Redemptorist North American
Historical Bulletin**

Issue 32 Winter 2010

Reproduction of any portion of the Bulletin will be granted by request. Send a note to the publishers outlining the intended use of the material.

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