



# BONDINGS

THE QUARTERLY OBLATE MAGAZINE

[V+] | OBLATES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES | TOLEDO-DETROIT PROVINCE

Fall 2013



*Oblate Ordination in Toledo, Ohio*



## JOYFUL EVENTS

In early August, Father Rudi Schwarzkopf, OSFS was ordained in Toledo, Ohio. He became the fifth North American Oblate ordained a priest this summer. Our lead article covers this joyful happening.

Another happy event was the opening of the Oblate Scholasticate, Brisson Hall, in Washington, D.C. Scholastic Jeffery Edmonds, OSFS tells us about life in that house of formation.

Oct. 10 is the feast of Blessed Louis Brisson who co-founded both the female and male congregations of Oblates. An article by Father Dave Whalen, OSFS explains one of the central teachings of Father Brisson.

The feast of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque occurs on Oct. 16. She was a Visitation Sister, the order founded by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, and was granted the revelations of the Sacred Heart.

In her Prayer of Consecration, Margaret Mary says: "Establish your home in the loving Heart of Jesus. You will find lasting peace and the strength to bring to fruition all the good desires within you and to avoid every deliberate fault."

Blessed Louis and St. Margaret Mary, pray for us. -Editorial Staff



Cover photo: Newly ordained Father Rudi Schwarzkopf with Bishop Blair and some of the concelebrating priests. Gesu Church, Toledo, Ohio, Aug. 10, 2013.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales of the Toledo-Detroit Province is to "Live Jesus" according to Salesian spirituality in our personal and communal lives, and to share this spirituality with the People of God.

### BONDINGS

*Bondings* is published regularly for the members and friends of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Toledo-Detroit Province. Its purpose is to enhance and develop the bond we have through our common faith in Jesus Christ and Salesian spirituality. *Bondings* is free of charge to anyone on request. Send your name and address (or that of a friend) to the Provincial Office or call 419.724.9851.

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Father Rudi with his parents, Kris and Rudy Schwarzkopf.

## OBLATE PRIEST ORDAINED IN TOLEDO, OHIO

By Father Roland Calvert, OSFS

**D**eacon Rudi Schwarzkopf, OSFS became Father Rudi in a ceremony held at Gesu Church in Toledo, Ohio, on Aug. 10, 2013. The Bishop of the Toledo Diocese, Leonard Blair, officiated at the ordination.

Father Rudi became the fifth North American Oblate ordained this year. Four others were ordained at St. Thomas More Church in Allentown, Pa., in late June during the joint meeting of the two North American provinces.

Father Ken McKenna, Provincial of the Toledo-Detroit Prov-

ince, served as notary during the ordination. This means that he testified to the Oblate formation Rudi had received, stating he was a worthy candidate.

Oblate Fathers Bob Bazzoli and Geoff Rose were the vesting priests – the ones who assisted Rudi as he donned the stole and



Bishop Leonard Blair with Father Rudi (left) and Provincial Ken McKenna.

chasuble for the first time. Father Bazzoli was the mentor for Rudi at Our Mother of Consolation, the church in the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia where Rudi served as a deacon.

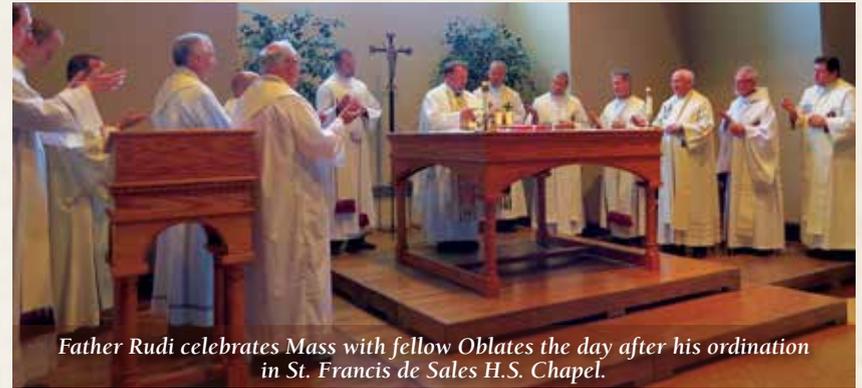
All of the concelebrating priests joined in the Laying on of Hands rite as Rudi received Holy Orders. Then they joined the new priest as he offered his first Mass with the Bishop.

In his homily, Bishop Blair quoted St. Francis de Sales several times. Francis pointed out that each priest is an *alter Christus* – “another Christ.” Priests will be faithful to their vocation to the extent that they stay close to Christ and try to imitate him in their lives. Bishop Blair pointed out that a priest is called to be another Christ when he preaches, when he

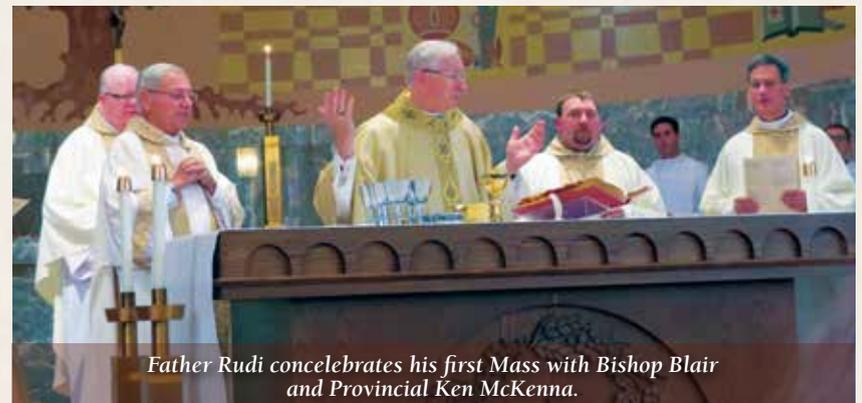
counsels and when he administers the sacraments.

In remarks published in the program, Father Rudi expressed gratitude to his family and friends for helping him to this pivotal moment in his life. He also thanked the Oblates, saying: “With your help and guidance I have found a family who has supported, challenged and encouraged me.”

Father Rudi will return this year to St. Francis de Sales H.S. in Toledo as a teacher. He noted, “I started my discernment to join the Oblates at this school, and I have loved being back at my alma mater.” He added, “I feel better able now to join people in their spiritual journeys and help them as much as they have helped me.”



Father Rudi celebrates Mass with fellow Oblates the day after his ordination in St. Francis de Sales H.S. Chapel.



Father Rudi concelebrates his first Mass with Bishop Blair and Provincial Ken McKenna.



*Group photo of the Oblates attending Convocation '13 at De Sales University – June 26, 2013. Photo by Matt Churetta.*



Chapel at Brisson Hall

## NEW OBLATE SCHOLASTICATE OPENS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

By Scholastic Jeffery Edmonds, OSFS

**F**or the past several years, the Toledo-Detroit Province and the Wilmington-Philadelphia Province have worked at creating a common formation program for men entering the Oblates. On Aug. 18, 2013, the two provinces dedicated a new house of study, Brisson Hall, in Washington, D.C. Oblate Provincials Ken McKenna, OSFS (T-D) and Jim Greenfield, OSFS (W-P) blessed the house and the new community. Scholastic Jeffery Edmonds, OSFS reflects on his time there.

An Oblate once told me that you know community life is working well when you can honestly say to yourself, “I want to go home.” And so the dedication of Brisson Hall marks the beginning not only of a new community, but of a new home.

Being from two provinces, we exemplify St. Francis’ definition of unidiverse found in the *Treatise on the Love of God*. For while we are from two provinces and each has its own individual personality, we are bonded by a common mission and spirituality: to reprint the Gospel through



Some of the Oblates who attended the Dedication



A reception followed the Mass of Dedication.



(l-r) Postulants Chris Allen and Jordan Gorzalski with Scholastic Jeffery Edmonds, OSFS.



Ken McKenna, Ed Ogden (Director of Formation), Jim Greenfield, Mike Newman (Director of Novices).

our daily lives. Father Ed Ogden, OSFS (W-P), our superior and formation director, works in campus ministry with postulant Joe Katarski (T-D) at Georgetown Visitation. Father Richard DeLillio, OSFS (W-P), teaches presiding and preaching at The Catholic University of America. Finally, Father Michael Newman, OSFS (T-D), is studying for a doctorate in ministry, while helping the postulants appropriate our Salesian identity.

The other men in formation include postulants Jordan Gorzalski (T-D) and Jonathan Dick (W-P), who are leading young adult ministries at two of our local parishes in northern Virginia. Jordan is at St. John Neumann in Reston, while Jon is at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Vienna. Taking courses at CUA are Christopher Allen (W-P), who is studying pre-theology as a postulant, while scholastics Ryan Cronshaw, OSFS (W-P), and I (T-D) are studying for our master’s degree in divinity.

Father Brisson spoke in his chapters on community life about how blessed he felt to belong to a community whose principal sign was a bond of charity. As St. Francis de Sales reminds us in the *Spiritual Directory*, “We have no bond but the bond of love, which is the bond of perfection.” This is the cornerstone to a life-giving community. If anything is an indication of this at our new home, it is the presence of laughter and joy.

As the T-D Pastoral Plan says so well regarding community life: “Living with other Oblates offers daily opportunities to build a common history, to pray and to support one another.” Through our common prayer schedule, the cooking and sharing of meals together, and even playing board games over a few glasses of beer, the sense that the guys truly desire to be together permeates our community.



## BROTHER JOHN VENTRESCA, OSFS CELEBRATES 60 YEARS AS AN OBLATE

*By Father John Graden, OSFS*

**B**rother John went by John Fallon's nickname for him for years, so many of us got to know him as "Tucci." Now, however, in his wisdom years, he prefers either Brother John or VJ – his backwards initials, which match the Salesian VJ for "Vive Jésus."

He is 80 years young now with 60 years as a DeSales Oblate. He got to know many of us in Washington D.C., Lewiston N.Y., Southgate Mich., Salt Lake City Utah, and, of course, Camp DeSales in Brooklyn, Mich. His specialty ministries included groundskeeping, high school bookstores and professional printing. He loved helping the chaplains at prisons in Utah. After a health crisis, he took a job at an independent book store which gave him the perfect experience for what was next in his life.

In 2009 the Oblates sadly left Salt Lake City behind and VJ had no idea what was next. The provincial at the time (Dave Whalen) thought he might be a perfect fit in the Niagara Region since DeSales Resources and Ministries had begun doing, in a small way, what he was already an expert at – selling used books online.

So now DRM solicits the donation of used books from Oblates and others. John sorts through them and currently has about 3,600 books available for sale online, and the profits go to spreading the Salesian charism. Since John volunteers for the work, his sale of easily more than 400 books a year makes him the biggest yearly donor to our effort to spread the charism through the ministry of DRM. Thanks, VJ. You do great work!

## SALESIAN REFLECTION: THE DIRECTION OF INTENTION

*By Father Dave Whalen, OSFS*

**O**ne cannot be around an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales or in an Oblate school very long without running into a little practice called the Direction of Intention. The Direction of Intention is simple to practice. All one has to do is take a few seconds before any new activity and offer that activity back to God, believing, in fact, that is where it came from in the first place.

The Direction of Intention is usually done by a simple prayer – for example, "My God, I give you this class, this lunch, this study time, this meeting, this washing of the dishes, etc. Help me to conduct myself during this time in a way that pleases you." If you have a bit more time, you can add a few words, particularly if the task is a little tougher than usual or may be longer than usual.

I remember once, many years ago when I was what was then called the disciplinarian of an Oblate high school, that a student was sent to my office whose conduct was less than gentlemanly. I reminded him that he had begun his class with the Direction of Intention. He came back, "Father, I think God refused my direction." I told him that God does not refuse or even re-direct the intention, but sometimes we do, and that is why

we need to make the Direction of Intention often.

Father Brisson (now Blessed Louis Brisson), the founder of the Oblates, had a strong belief in the Direction of Intention: "Through this right and pure intention, all our actions will be of service in the eyes of the Savior and the result intended by St. Francis de Sales will be achieved, which is none other than the path of holiness.

For the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, the Direction of Intention is a genuine means to holiness. I think it is the only means." (Chapter 1888)

Try it. Take one event, perhaps one that looks like it could be a little difficult. Give yourself a minute before it is to begin and then hand it back over to God by the Direction of Intention. Trust me. Trust Father Brisson – and not my student from many years ago. God will not reject your Direction of Intention!





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