

DE SALES SAYS...

"IT IS VERY TRUE THAT WE MUST HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE THUS TO ABANDON OURSELVES WITHOUT RESERVE; BUT WHEN WE DO ENTIRELY ABANDON OURSELVES, OUR LORD TAKES CARE OF EVERYTHING AND CONDUCTS EVERYTHING."

FALL 2005

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

Bob Schramm, O.S.F.S., a graduate of St. Francis de Sales High School in Toledo, Ohio, entered the Oblates in 1960. Professing vows as an Oblate in 1961, he studied at both Niagara University and Catholic University. He was ordained in 1969 and has had a diverse experience in ministry since then. Presently he is the new pastor at St. Mary Church in Adrian, Michigan. Prior to this ministry he has been involved in campus ministry on both secondary and college levels, taught high school, been a prison minister and done retreat work. He also has experience in several parishes as the pastor and on a team of ministers.

Q: Bob you have been working in parishes in Saginaw,

Bondings

A Newsletter of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales
Toledo-Detroit Province

Oblate Community

OBLATES MEET ANNUALLY

BY JOHN GRADEN, O.S.F.S.

Annually, the Oblates of the Toledo-Detroit Province meet in Assembly for the sake of community, ongoing education, prayer, updating, decision making, and celebration. This year, of the 79 members of Province (including 2 novices and 3 postulants), 72 were there for at least part of the events scheduled June 21-24, 2005. The only ones missing were those in nursing care or in Africa, Brazil, or the Philippines. The only two Dan's there were the age extremes: the oldest was Father Dan Earley (91), and the youngest was Postulant Dan Lannen(22) – both visual artists, as luck would have it. Several of the much appreciated Oblate associates were in service of the facilities and the group meeting at DeSales Center in Brooklyn, Michigan.

Provincial Dave Whalen opened the week with reflections occasioned by the recent St. Francis High School performance of *Beauty and the Beast*. To love and be loved is what ends any dehumanization process, and restores humanity to its original fully alive 'glory of God.'

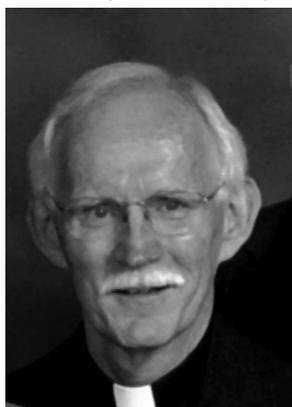
He was introducing the week and especially the first two days which would be focused on "Understanding and Managing Anger, Ours and Other's" as facilitated by Sr. Lynn Levo, CSJ, Ph.D. from Saint Luke Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Ask yourself these questions: 1. When mom or dad got angry, what happened? 2. What did I learn about anger growing up, and does that help or hinder me now? 3. When I get angry with others, what happens? What have been my assumptions? 4. When others express anger directed my way, what do I do?

Learning to understand, feel, and manage anger is difficult to say the least. Exploding, and damaging relationships, self or property is not a sane choice. Nor is stuffing it into grenade pouches, raising blood pressure, nor developing a depressive disposition nor a porcupine personality. St. Francis de Sales, who himself admitted to the difficulty, expected that he would be free of all angry feelings fifteen minutes after his death, and in his Introduction to the Devout Life advised: *It is better to try to find a way to live without anger than to pretend*

Michigan for a while. Why have you moved to another parish in Adrian?

A: There are several factors for my changing ministry and moving to St. Mary's at this time.



First, I have always been attracted to St. Mary's. I lived in the rectory here for five years while I was doing retreat ministry at the Adrian Dominican Sister's retreat center, The Weber Center, and enjoyed the parish immensely. I found the parish community vibrant and engaging. It also has a long history with the Oblates and we consider it one of our priorities in ministry, which I would like to support. Additionally, it brings me closer to my hometown, Toledo, Ohio, and my family.

Prior to coming here, I was on a team of parish ministers, consisting of three priests and two women (one of whom is a religious). We were responsible for four parishes. I found moving from one parish to another, never celebrating masses in the same place two weekends in a row rather stressful and unfulfilling. I never felt connected to the people like I was used to feeling. In short, doing parish ministry in this form wasn't to

my liking. All of these factors influenced my decision to move to St. Mary's.

Q: How has it been since you arrived at St. Mary's in July?

A: Well, the warm welcome I received was nothing unexpected. As I said, St. Mary's has a great community spirit. There are some adjustments on both sides though. Tom Helfrich, O.S.F.S. was here before me and is greatly missed. It's always a bit tough to follow someone so appreciated. The community has to adjust to his absence and my presence. There are other differences for me that are requiring a bit of a shift in myself: a different diocese with a different spirit, a parish four times larger than the ones I've been involved with before and significant Hispanic presence and ministry with all the cultural expectations and challenges that come with that.

Another significant change for me is that St. Mary's has twenty years of experience in Stewardship being the underlying philosophy of parish involvement and support by the parishioners. It is a unique and wonderful approach. Taken from the biblical notion of stewardship, all are asked to tithe their time, talent and treasure. In support of this the parish has a commitment never to have special fundraisers or collections. It has worked very well here at St. Mary's, but right now seems to need a bit of

attention. New parishioners need to be educated and long time parishioners refocused. It's a great challenge.

Q: Are there other positive aspects of moving to Adrian that you haven't mentioned?

A: Well, I am living with another Oblate, Louis Komorowski, whom I enjoy tremendously. The two of us are involved in a support group with six other Oblates from the region. We meet weekly for discussion, brotherly support and dinner. I really appreciate this opportunity and the fact that I'm so close geographically to so many other Oblates. I'm also reacquainting myself with old friends from the area, lay people and the Adrian Dominican Sisters included, which is enjoyable.

Q: Bob is there much difference beginning a new ministry at age 64 than when you were younger?

A: I wish I could say there isn't any difference, but that would be a lie. It's not only an adjustment to different styles, procedures and customs, but physically it is challenging as well. While at times frustrating it's forced me to be more reliant on others and ultimately on God. I just can't do it all by myself, which is humbling but also in a way freeing. I guess it's a grace if you look at it with the right attitude. §

OBLATES MEET

Continued from pg. 1

to make a moderate and discreet use of it. Anger can easily take over the place, like a snake who easily pulls in his whole body once he can get his head into the house. You must at the first warning, quickly muster your forces, not violently, not tumultuously, but mildly and yet seriously. Ask for God's help. And, if it be possible, do not be angry at all... for St. James tells us without reservation, "God's justice is never served by our anger." (James 1:20, Intro III, 8)

Anger has the power to turn us into beasts. The longer anger resides in us, the less human we become. But the Lord who made us as Beauties, still loves the Beast in us. And that love continues to transform us. It was an insightful couple of days!

The Assembly is also an occasion when the Province lives and celebrates the Oblate community:

Monday night's opening Taize prayer (meditative musical refrains, silences and reflections) included remembrances of deceased members who moved on to the Father's house since last summer's Assembly. Father Paul Grehl reflected on the life of Paul Gillespie. Father John Ebenhoeh was remembered by Roland Calvert. Oblate associate Nate Boltz reflected on the impact of Pope John Paul II on

his decision to request entry into the Oblate community.

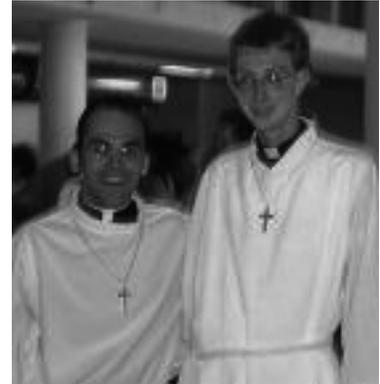
Thursday afternoon's Mass, social, and dinner highlighted the celebration of the 25th, 40th, 50th and 60th anniversaries of numerous members of the community – anniversaries of vows in community, and years as a priest.

The Assembly almost always includes some business items, and this time for the first time officially a "Provincial Chapter of the Whole." A Provincial Chapter is a "legislature" for the province. When the Assembly is gathered, and a Chapter is convened, the whole assembly, that is, each member present can be a voting delegate. Of course, we have had Chapters of Elected Representatives right from the start, but this was the first "Chapter of the Whole" for the T-D Province.

One of the things the Chapter did was to elect Jim Cryan and Ron Olszewski as our delegates to the General (international) Chapter. They will accompany ex-officio member to the Chapter Provincial Dave Whalen to the meeting in summer of 2006. The Chapter had other business as well, and there were numerous reports, announcements, updates, and questions dealing with priorities, and the realities of who the Oblates are and how they operate.

The Assembly '05 was a great time of community, at a

beautiful place, where the weather was picture perfect, and the day after it concluded, the two novices took their first vows join-



*Newly professed Oblates
Shaun Lowery and Mike Newman*

ing the community and concluding their novitiate. The Oblates clearly have a future in such new members though it will look different and be smaller for a while, at least here in this country.

"O Lord Jesus, we come to you being the smallest of all because it is the smallest You love best. Bless us, love us. Our hope is not immoderate, for little children are always the most loved."§

Father Louis Brisson, Oblate Founder, quoted in "So Much So Soon" p. 217

Salesian Spirituality

THE
JOSEPH F. POWER, OSFS
23RD ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
ON SALESIAN
SPIRITUALITY
*LIVE JESUS:
TODAY'S CHALLENGE*"

BY SUSAN GARDNER

In the fortieth anniversary year of the issuance of *Guadium et Spes*, members of the Salesian family gathered to draw from the wellsprings of the legacies of St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal. In prayer, Eucharist, presentations, and discussions conference participants were invited to accept the challenge of *Living Jesus* in our modern world.

For the first time in its history, the Annual Conference was convened in North Carolina, offering southerners an opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Salesian family. Members of many of the religious communities fed by the legacy of the Salesian tradition were present. Lay men and women comprised 73% of those in attendance. Participants traveled to Durham from all parts of the United States and from Canada. Noel Rebello, M.S.F.S. joined us from Mumbai, India. This year more than 50 people attended the conference for the first time.

The 23rd Annual Conference

on Salesian Spirituality was a precedent-setting event, changing the conference venue from college campus to hotel. This year's participants were delighted to experience a conference housed at the self-contained Hilton-Durham Hotel and Conference Center. Barrier-free hotel accommodations provided the conference participants with a prayerful and relaxing environment.

Participants gathered daily for common prayer and the celebration of Eucharist. John McGee, OSFS, prepared a reservation chapel for the Blessed Sacrament as well as a large gathering space for worship that was enhanced by color and texture. Michael Vannicola, OSFS prepared the liturgies and all of the liturgical aids. James Greenfield, OSFS and Angelo Maraldo, OSFS, along with a vocal ensemble, lead the gathering in song. A multi-sensory Salesian Reflection on Eucharist offered by John Graden, OSFS and Joanne Kinney provided an opportunity for shared prayer and reflection.

An exciting opening keynote address, "Salesian Living in the Modern World," was given by Barry Strong, OSFS. He spoke of the anxieties that tempt our culture to lose hope. Using the image of our hearts cradled in our hands, he offered five principles

of Salesian living and challenged us to mine the recently released compendium on the social teachings of the Church.

Olivia Wills Kane questioned why we are looking for fantasy



Conference organizers:
Joanne Kinney and John Graden, O.S.F.S.

rather than embracing our reality. In her keynote presentation, "Reality Religion: Loving Our Real Church, Imperfect and Incomplete," she drew from television reality shows and her life experiences to remind us that our notions of Church need to expand to embrace the diversity that is truly present in each of us and in others in our world.

In his presentation, "Poor Widows, Village Folk, and Children of the Light," Mickey O'Neill McGrath, OSFS presented his artistic renderings of his life experiences. He encouraged us to ask, "Why are we so divided?" He invited us to recognize that historic notions of "uniform holiness" have prevented us from acknowledging and celebrating our diversity. Reminding us that all God's children deserve our love and respect, he challenged

us to consider how our understanding of “truth” may be exclusionary.

Conference participants were also provided with the opportunity to attend presentations of their choice. Kevin Anderson, Ph.D., used his nested meditations to enable participants to find a new way to more deeply encounter the ordinary in daily life. William Auth, OSFS, offered a prophetic voice and challenged us to be very deliberate about connecting the plight of the poor to the Salesian tradition. Ann Doody Wiedl invited us to understand how we can enliven our work places with our spirituality. Mark Plaushin, OSFS, a United States Army chaplain, reminded us of how we are called to *Live Jesus*; to bring peace in the midst of conflict with all people and in all places.

A new feature of this year’s conference provided for Open Space Discussions allowing participants of like-minded interests to gather together for collaboration and discussion. Small groups of participants met to discuss a variety of concerns including Salesian education, Adult Faith Formation, and Salesian lay affiliates.

The preparations for the 24th Conference on Salesian Spirituality have already begun. Reserve August 3-6, 2006 back in Durham, NC on your calendar and join with other members of the Salesian family in experiencing a practical, down-to-earth way of *Living Jesus!*§

DEATHS IN PROVINCE



The senior member in age of the Toledo-Detroit Province, **Fr. Daniel J. Earley, OSFS**, has died. “Uncle Dan” as so many of us referred to him was 91 years old, (92 this coming December). He was the oldest member of our province, and the 3rd oldest of the American Oblates preceded in age only by Frs. John Conmy and Robert Balducelli. He died on September 8, 2005 within hours of transferring from St. Vincent’s Hospital to the Ursuline Center in Toledo.

Daniel Joseph Earley was born on December 9, 1913 to Daniel T. and Delia McKenna Earley of Ardmore, Pennsylvania. His parents and his brother Jim preceded him in death. His brother Joe and his wife Kathy, his sister Mary Ellen and his sister in law Helen, (Jim’s wife) survive.

By the standards of the time he was a “late” vocation entering our Oblate community at the age of 27. He professed his first vows on August 29, 1942. He was ordained on May 22 1948.

Reading through his various assignments over the years is like reading the history of the Oblates in the United States. After his Profession he went to

Washington D. C. to study theology and received an S.T.L. from the Catholic University of America. In the summers he began his ministry as a priest in the Philadelphia area while a member of the North Catholic community. From there he went as a teacher to the Salesianum High School in Wilmington Delaware and then off to the former Bishop Duffy High School in Niagara Falls New York as the Assistant Principal. From Niagara Falls he went to serve two terms as Superior of the Oblate community at the “old” Salesian High School in Detroit. When his term as Superior was over he came to Toledo St. Francis as a teacher for five years and then in mid ‘60’s back to Niagara Falls for the second time, this time as Superior of the Bishop Duffy community.

In 1968 he returned to the Toledo area but held a number of positions over the years. He served as Assistant Provincial of the newly formed Toledo-Detroit Province. He served for six years as Pastor of St. Pius X parish from 1971-1977. In 1977 he returned to St. Francis de Sales High School in the Public Relations Office and remained at St. Francis the remainder of his life serving as Moderator of the Chappuis Society, the Mother’s Club well into his late 80’s.

Almost from its beginning and for nearly 20 years thereafter the summer months would find Dan at our Camp DeSales in Brooklyn, Michigan. He served

in many positions there over the years including the unofficial representative of the Camp to the various golf courses in the area.

Dan was also an artist. He saw beauty and he respectfully captured beauty on the cloth canvas and on the canvas of his soul. His art work graces many an Oblate community house and indeed many houses in the Toledo area and beyond.

This past summer, with his new pace maker installed, Dan insisted that he come to our week long Community Assembly at Camp DeSales. He sat right up in front and gave his full attention to the speakers. At one of the breaks someone asked him how he liked the talks. He responded, "Ah wonderful, wonderful, of course I can't hear a word of it." But hear it or not, Fr. Dan Earley was the consummate gentleman. His response to inquiries about his health almost always brought a positive response. His desire to participate in community life was strong. More than once we smiled as we sang a hymn at the liturgy and heard Uncle Dan in the background. The fact that what he was singing was not what the rest of the community was singing was of no account. Dan sang because the community sang. Dan prayed because the community prayed. Dan was present because the community was present. What a marvelous lesson to young and seasoned alike. §



On August 13th in the University Hospital near Tagaytay City the Philippines, our confrere **Fr. Anthony R. Ceresko, O.S.F.S.** died one week short of his 63rd birthday and in the 43rd year of his Religious Profession and 35th year of his ordination to priesthood. His death is a shock not only to us of his province of origin but also to the entire congregation especially our confreres in India where he served for nearly ten years and now in the Philippines for nearly five years.

Anthony Raymond Ceresko was born in Detroit Michigan on August 20, 1942, the first of the seven children of the late Dr. Anthony and Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Tyrie Ceresko. He is survived by his sister Mary Beth Ceresko of Novi, Michigan, his brother Richard (Martha) Ceresko of Littleton, Colorado, his brother Lawrence of Hudson, Florida, his sister Terese (Edward Whitaker) of St. Cloud, Florida, his sister Alice Ceresko of Dearborn, Michigan and his brother Michael Ceresko of Adrian, Michigan.

After his graduation from Salesian High School in Detroit, Tony entered our Oblate congregation and completed his postulancy and novitiate at Childs, Maryland. He was professed on August 21, 1962 and ordained a

priest on September 12, 1970.

He was a 1967 graduate of Niagara University and a 1970 and 1971 graduate (S.T.B. and S.T.L) of the Catholic University of America. He completed his doctoral studies and was awarded the prestigious doctorate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome in 1979.

After a brief period of time on the faculty of the Seminary of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Orchard Lake, Michigan he began his career as Professor of Scripture in the Faculty of Theology, University of St. Michael's College in Toronto. He taught on the Faculty until 1991.

In so many ways Tony's life was a life of one "conversion" after another. As Tony said so often and particularly each year to the newly assembled student community in Toronto, he felt called to be a "scholar." That meant a conversion for him. It meant that he had to forego some very legitimate things in life in order to devote himself to the world of academia, a world of study, research, reading and publication.

At some point in his study and reflection on scripture Tony experienced another conversion. It was the call for justice in all spheres of life. He began to read the scriptures as the story of humanity struggling for justice and freedom, for liberation. Again, those of us who lived with him knew that hardly a homily would be uttered from that point on that

did not include the words, “political, social and economic justice.”

His passion for justice found its way into his teaching and eventually into his book an “Introduction to the Old Testament from a Liberation Theology perspective.” That text has had innumerable printings already and has been translated into several languages.

Another conversion experience coming from his concern for justice led him to simplify his own life in significant ways. This conversion led to his willingness to move to India.

When the General Council decided to test out the possibility of opening a Mission in the Philippines Tony was the one who came forward for the Mission and he has been there for the last five years. He has been teaching at the Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay City and together with Fr. Josef Koeltringer O.S.F.S., working to establish the Oblate presence there.

All of his teaching and research and indeed his call to respond in a most radical way was grounded in his religious profession and in his love and dedication to the whole of Salesian Spirituality. He was always looking for ways to take the traditional elements of our spirituality and show how they were compatible with solid biblical studies and genuine theology by whatever name was currently in vogue.

According to Father F. Saniel, a Divine Word priest from the Seminary where Tony was teaching, he took ill just two days before his death. He cancelled his classes that day saying that he thought he might be coming down with the flu. By the next morning he realized that he needed more help and so he agreed to go to the university hospital. As he arrived at the hospital he was placed in the intensive care unit. At midnight he suffered a severe cardiac arrest and died at 1:10 in the morning.

A mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Gesu Church in Toledo, Ohio on August 22, 2005 and his body laid to rest in the Oblate section of Resurrection Cemetery. §

Bondings is published four times a year for members and friends of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Toledo-Detroit Province (U.S.A.). Its purpose is to enhance and develop the bond we have through our common faith and spirituality.

We have no bond but the bond of love.

-St. Francis de Sales

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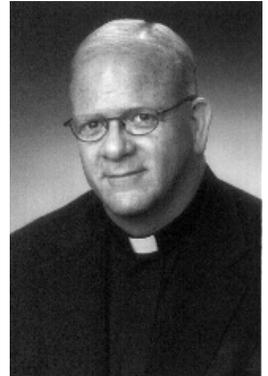
Oblates of St. Francis de Sales
2043 Parkside Blvd.
Toledo, OH 43607-1597
(419) 724-9851
E-mail: jlosfs@cass.net

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Dear reader,

As fall makes its presence felt here in the American mid-west and we look forward to the month of November, when we remember those who have preceded us in the faith, I can't help but be mindful of the Oblates who have died this past year.



Our province has lost four unique and gifted men, Paul Gillespie, John Ebenhoeh, Dan Early and Tony Ceresko. These men have enriched the legacy of the Oblate community and truly the Church. While one always misses those who have died, it is also appropriate for us to allow our faith in the Resurrection and the promise of eternal life turn our loss into celebration and joy in the victory of these wonderful people. Their victory over death and their victory in this life in finding the joy of faith and living and sharing that with others.

We all share in their victory and even as the darkness and cold of winter approach we find the light and the warmth of the Son of God calling us to live in hope. Thanks be to God for our brother Oblates and for our faith.

In Christ,

Jack Loughran, O.S.F.S.

Jack Loughran, O.S.F.S.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

The title of this column is obviously off the mark when the subject is these three young men. Rather than, "Whatever Happened To...", a more appropriate question is, "What's Going to Happen To..."

These men are presently postulants for the Toledo-Detroit Province. As postulants they are in the process of discerning whether Oblate life is a possible option for themselves. They do this while living in an Oblate community and being involved in an Oblate ministry. The next step for them would be requesting entrance into the novitiate this coming summer.



Rudi Schwarzkopf considers himself the senior member of this group, in that he's is in his second year of postulancy.

Rudi graduated from St. Francis de Sales High School in Toledo, Ohio in 1998. At that time he also became an Oblate Associate. In December of 2003 he graduated from Bowling Green State University with a degree in secondary education with a focus on Integrated Social Sciences. He is also in his second year teaching at Lumen Christi High School in Jackson, Michigan.



Nate Boltz graduated as well from St. Francis High School in 2000 and became an Oblate Associate at that time. Last year he graduated from the University of Toledo with a BA in Religious Studies. He is also proficient in American Sign Language, which he's studied for a number of years. Nate is teaching religion at Lumen Christi High School.



Dan Lannen graduated from Ottawa High School in Holland, Michigan and went on to Siena Heights University in Adrian, Michigan. He has a BA in art with his favorite medium pastel drawings. Dan was directed to the Oblates by the campus minister at Siena Heights and became an Oblate Associate in 2003. Presently he is teaching art at Lumen Christi High School.

All three of these men live in Oblate community in Brooklyn, Michigan with two Oblates. They join in Oblate activities in the area and are involved at the De Sales Center in various programs. Please keep them in your prayers as they continue the journey of discerning God's call in their lives. §

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