

De Sales Says...

*“It is, indeed,
absolutely true
that your well-being
depends on your
allowing yourself
to be guided
and governed
by the Spirit of God
without reserve.”*

SPRING 2007
VOLUME 20 ISSUE 2

Meet an Oblate

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Alan Zabler, OSFS, is a 1997 graduate of St. Francis de Sales High School in Toledo, Ohio, and a graduate of De Sales University in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He professed his first vows with the Oblates in 2003. This past January, Alan was ordained a deacon in Toronto while completing his degree in theology from the University of St. Michael's College. On June 30, 2007, Alan will be ordained a priest at Gesu Church in Toledo, Ohio.

Q: How and where did you meet the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales?

A: I first met the Oblates at St. Francis de Sales High School in Toledo. I remember my first class during freshman year was Algebra with Fr. Cutter. Second period was Old Testament with Fr. Olszewski. Throughout

Bondings

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

Salesian Spirituality

TO THE HEART OF IT ALL

BY THE NOVICES OF THE TOLEDO-DETROIT PROVINCE

The Toledo-Detroit Novices offer reflections on their Salesian Pilgrimage begun shortly after Easter. Each novice reflects on a particular area and impact during the Pilgrimage. Nate Boltz, Dan Lannen, and Rudi Schwarzkopf continue their novitiate until late June 2007. They have been under the direction of Fr. Ken McKenna, OSFS, and Fr. Mike McCue, OSFS (Wilmington-Philadelphia Province) and accompanied Patrick Kennedy and Dan Jackman, novices of that Province.

Salesian Enchantment: Annecy

By Dan Lannen

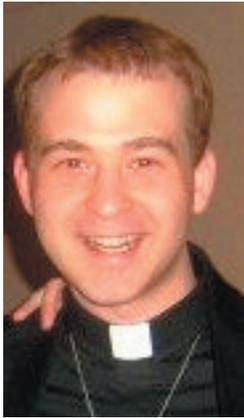
During this Novitiate year I have had many great experiences, but one of the greatest was having the chance to walk in the footsteps of St. Francis de Sales. Both the Wilmington-Philadelphia and the Toledo-Detroit Province novices flew to Geneva, Switzerland, where we were welcomed by French Oblates, taken to Annecy where we settled in at the Oblate school San Michel's, home for our pilgrimage in Annecy. We became part of this small community. We honored to share several meals with them and their hospitality was wonderful.

We were able to see Annecy as St. Francis de Sales saw it. There were so many different highlights of our time. One of the greatest highlights was seeing many of the places that I had learned about this past year. A wonderful experience was celebrating mass in the Galerie, the first Monastery of the Visitation of Holy Mary founded by St. Francis and St. Jane de Chantal. After Mass we explored more of the monastery and saw the garden where St. Francis worked and talked out the many details of his new and original way of living religious life for women.

One of the many great aspects of Annecy is that you can not turn a corner without coming upon some aspect of St. Francis's life whether it be the prison where he celebrated Mass, or the church of his first Communion, or the small cornerstone stating, "This is the house of Philothea, the woman who inspired one of Francis's most loved books The Introduction to the Devout Life.

We had an unexpected treat when we were at the Basilica of St. Francis de Sales, where we spent some time with Sr. Margaret Marie, a Visitation Sister

high school, I had several opportunities to take classes that were taught by other Oblates like Frs. O'Neill, Extejt and Ebenhoeh, and Fr. Sanford was the chaplain. After graduating in 1997, I attended De Sales University in Pennsylvania where I met a large group of



Alan Zabler, O.S.F.S.

Oblates, both at the university and in my travels to Philadelphia, Wilmington and Maryland. These Oblates seemed to be all over the place!

Q: What struck you about the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales?

A: Their ability to laugh! They actually had many good qualities as a group, but I was most impressed by the way they seemed to always enjoy what they were doing- whether it was teaching or coaching or presiding at Mass. They performed their jobs well, and they always seemed to be smiling. Also, I sensed that there was something good about their community living experience—praying together and eating together. When Fr. Roth invited me to a “Come and See” evening several years ago, I went to enjoy my first official meal with the Oblates and I had a first hand experience of the goodness of that communal gathering. Today, hundreds of meals

later, I am still impressed by the great gifts that flow out of community living.

Q: What made you decide to join the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales?

A: In my final year of studies at De Sales University, I was seriously considering pursuing an advanced graduate degree in mathematics. I had an interest and a capacity for more studies in math, but I also felt an inner desire to find out more about the Oblates. I thought about this decision for weeks, and I finally remember saying to myself “If I don’t try on life as an Oblate for at least a year, I will never be able to forgive myself.” With those words, I set up an appointment to meet with Fr. Marty (for a meal, of course) and I decided to join the Oblates later that year. Every year since that time has affirmed this original choice. Most recently, I made the final decision to join the Oblates for life on September 9, 2006 when I took perpetual vows.

Q: What will guide your ministry as a priest of the Oblates of St. Francis de sales?

A: The gifts that I have received from my studies and experiences with Salesian Spirituality will hopefully serve as the steering mechanism that guides my ministry as an Oblate priest. I am continuously struck by Francis de Sales’ gentle approach to life.

Salesian Spirituality has much to offer our Church and our world, and I hope to minister in that same spirit alongside my brother Oblates.

Q: What do you see as challenges that you might face in the future?

A: As a recently ordained Deacon, I have discovered that the opportunities for ministry have increased exponentially in my life. That said, one significant challenge for me will be to continuously discern how I can best serve the Church and the Oblates while at the same time making sure that my prayer life and physical needs receive the proper attention. In addition, one healthy challenge for me (and for all of us) will be to support, encourage and pray for the fine group of men who are presently studying in formation. I feel it is a very exciting time to be an Oblate!

Q: What do expect to be doing after ordination?

A: I am delighted to be returning to St. Francis High School as a teacher this August. I have now studied both theology and mathematics, so I am kind of hoping to put these studies to some use. Formation as an Oblate throughout the last six years has been wonderful but I’ve known for a while that I would have to start working at some point! That time has arrived, and I am glad it is here!§

from the United States now living with the sisters in Annecy. She spoke about the many different aspects of Salesian Spirituality with its greatest emphasis on the bond of love between humanity and God.

Annecy is wonderful, enchanting and the mountains are beautiful. Most of all, I appreciated walking in the footprints of people who had given themselves over to God in every way. The work begun there by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal and built upon by Fr. Louis Brisson and Mother Mary de Sales Chappuis still continues and will do so for many years to come.

The Good Mother

By Rudi Schwarzkopf

As I sit on the train to Paris after our pilgrimage through France, I feel a deep sense of connection with Salesian spirituality and a stronger love for the whole Salesian family. I found this to be true when we traveled to Freiberg, Switzerland where there is a Visitation Monastery that was established by St. Jane de Chantal herself. Later, Mother Chappuis stayed there for some time. While touring the monastery and celebrating Mass, I had the sense we were being treated like long lost family members, welcomed back with open loving arms.

From Freiberg, we then traveled to Soyhieres situated in a small valley. This is the

birthplace of Mother Mary de Sales Chappuis who, in Oblate circles, is lovingly referred to as the "Good Mother." She is a major reason why the Oblates are around today. The Oblate sisters still care for her home, and they have put a lot of work into preserving the house where she grew-up.

When we arrived we celebrated Mass with some of the Oblate Sisters and then toured the grounds of their home and their school. We received the same gracious welcome at all the Salesian sights we visited, a welcome that made me feel like "one of the family."

Walking in the footsteps of one of the Salesian founders, took me back in time to when the Good Mother lived and developed as a person and as a religious. The village and its homes seemed from a time past. The Oblates Sisters have done a tremendous job of preserving this important part of our Oblate heritage.

The house had a small museum of things the Good Mother used. One part stood out. During her childhood, there was a strict ban in Switzerland on priests and religious, so her family did what they could to keep the faith alive. Still preserved is the small hidden room where a priest could hide from arrest and execution. There were also tapestries showing times in her childhood when she took food

to some of the priests in hiding, and later on when the Lord appeared to her in the garden of the Visitation in Troyes. There were artifacts as well from Fr. Brisson founder of the Oblate Sisters and the Oblate Priests and Brothers.

As I traveled throughout France and Switzerland and met so many different Oblate and Visitation Sisters and Oblate priests, it finally hit me that as a novice I was preparing to become a part of a larger group. Even though many miles and generations may separate us, the spirit of love bridges the gaps between us. I have always been drawn by the sense of family in the Oblates. Now I have a deeper love of my extended Salesian family.

I am thankful to each of the communities we stayed with; I feel I encountered all our founders through the different people I met. This trip will stay with me. It has done much for my spiritual growth and for the development of my Oblate identity. I will forever be grateful.

From Dijon to Troyes

by Nate Boltz

Dijon, France was the second to last stop of our Salesian pilgrimage, the city where St. Jane Frances de Chantal grew up and lived until her marriage to Christophe de Rabutin. Our expectations of finding an elegant edifice at the center of Dijon near the parliament building

where Jane's father was president were dashed when we found only a sign marking the site of Jane's childhood. Her house was destroyed several years ago leaving only a wall that blocked the entrance of a new apartment complex. We looked forward to the next day when we would be traveling to Christophe's family chateau, recalling those happy years when Jane and Christophe started their family.

The Bourbilly Chateau, located near Semur-en-Auxois, some forty miles northwest of Dijon is where Christophe de Rabutin and Jane de Chantel lived until Christophe's untimely death. This castle is located on 200 acres of heavy wooded land that supports a variety of wildlife.

We were greeted by the Baron Edouard de Crepy, the present owner of the Bourbilly Chateau. We toured the chapel, the libraries, the dining room, enjoying the paintings that existed during the time of Christophe and Jane. The Baron mentioned the long and difficult effort he and his family have made in keep up the building. We expressed our appreciation to him for all the work done to the building and for allowing us to celebrate Mass in the chapel so precious to Jane. After our tour, we drove to Troyes, France to visit the tombs of our founders, Mary de Sales Chappuis and Louis Brisson.

In Troyes we had the opportunity to visit the Visitation Mon-

astery where the Good Mother, Mary de Sales Chappuis, lived and died. We also visited the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales and the crypt of their Motherhouse where the tombs of Louis Brisson and St. Leonie Aviat are maintained. In Troyes we were able to celebrate Mass at the Visitation Monastery on the tomb of the Good Mother. After Mass, the Sisters opened the monastery to us and showed us the cell where the Good Mother died. We also saw the artifacts the Sisters have carefully preserved and the site of the famous apparition where the Lord told Fr. Louis Brisson to found the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales. We found our time with the Sisters insightful, and we were moved by recalling the historical moment where the Good Mother encouraged Louis Brisson to start a congregation of men that would model the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.

The second day in Troyes found us at the home of the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales. Here we prayed at the tombs of our founder, Fr. Brisson, and St. Leonie Aviat. While at the motherhouse, we saw memorabilia the Sisters had saved from Brisson's time including such items as his first communion shirt, all the way to the priest vestments he wore. We also saw the clock that Louis Brisson spent over twenty years building. This clock, whose tick mimics the sound of a human heartbeat, is an impressive accomplishment. The Sis-

ters provided us with lunch and a break prior to our next excursion to Plancy.

Plancy is the location of Fr. Brisson's family home, the place of both his birth and death. The Oblate Sisters have restored this house. On the ride to his birthplace, the Sisters stopped to show us a chapel built by Fr. Brisson after making a vow. Apparently, he had fallen into a well at this site when he was in his seventies. With only his umbrella in hand,



l to r. Ken McKenna, Dan Lannen, Patrick Kennedy, Rudi Schwarzkopf, Nate Boltz and Mike McCue in Dijon, France

he promised God he would build a chapel if God granted him safe passage. After escaping, he carried through on his promise and built the church in thanksgiving for his escape.

After our time in Troyes and Plancy, we boarded a train to Paris, for our flight back to the USA. On our way home, we reflected on our two-week pilgrimage: Annecy, Fribourg, Soyhières, Dijon, Troyes, and Paris. We truly had a better glimpse into the lives of the Salesian personalities we had been studying. But seeing the towns, cathedrals, Salesian museums and chateaus had given us an image that no book could ever offer. For this

OBLATE DIES

Rev. John O'Neill, O.S.F.S. died on February 10, 2007 at Rosary Care Center in Sylvania, Ohio. He had been a resident of Rosary Care since 2003. In addition to his Oblates confreres, he is survived by two nieces and one nephew and many who benefited from his loving ministry.

John Patrick O'Neill was born on December 12, 1929, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He graduated from St. Madeline Sophie Barat Elementary School in Philadelphia in 1943, and Northeast Catholic High School in 1947. He completed one year of College at LaSalle in Philadelphia before entering the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.

John began his Novitiate at Childs, Maryland, in June of 1950, and was professed in September, 1951. He made his final profession at Northeast Catholic High School in Philadelphia in 1954.

O'Neill studied at both Niagara University in Lewiston, New York, and at the now closed Theological School of the

Oblates in Washington, DC. He received his Bachelor's degree in History from Niagara University in 1954. He then completed his theological studies in Washington and was ordained a priest at St. Anthony's Church in Wilmington, Delaware on June 4, 1959. He went on to complete a Master's degree in Library Science at Villanova University in 1965, and a Master's degree in Counselling from Niagara University in 1967.

Father John taught at Salesianum in Wilmington, Delaware; Northeast Catholic in Philadelphia; Father Judge in Philadelphia; De Sales High School in Lockport, New York; Aquinas High School in Southgate, Michigan; and Lumen Christi in Jackson, Michigan.

From 1969-1970, he served in the now South American Province at Paso Las Duranas in Montevideo, Uruguay. After returning from the missions, John began almost twenty years of parish ministry most of which was in the Diocese of Stockton, California where the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales have been since the 1960's both at St. Mary's High School and various parishes including now St. Anthony in Manteca, and St. Luke in Stockton. A reading of letters in his personal file from this time indicates both his love for parish ministry and his success in it. One letter notes, "Father O'Neill has particular gifts

which are needed in this parish at this time." When he was called back to Toledo the Bishop of the Diocese of Stockton wrote, "We will miss him. He is loved here by priests and people alike."

In 1998, he returned to St. Francis de Sales High School in Toledo as a Senior Religious, but John would never have accepted that as a retirement. For as long as he was able he continued to serve in various parishes in the Toledo area especially on weekends, notably Little Flower Parish in Toledo. Even in so-called retirement the pastor of one parish where he assisted wrote, "He is accepted very well here by the community and he seems happiest when he is celebrating or serving in some ministry with us."

In 2003, John took up residence at Rosary Care Center under the care of the Franciscan Sisters who administer the center. For the first couple of years he was still able to join the community, especially at St. Francis de Sales High School, for various celebrations and he thoroughly enjoyed this. For the past two years his health deteriorated to the point that he was unable to leave Rosary Care Center.

Fr. John was buried in the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales section of Resurrection Cemetery in Toledo, Ohio. May the Lord welcome home with loving arms his son and priest, John Patrick. §

Salesian Spirituality

EVER FAITHFUL, EVER NEW



**THE JOSEPH F. POWER, OSFS
25TH NATIONAL
SALESIAN CONFERENCE**

*on the Spirituality of
St. Francis de Sales
and
St. Jane de Chantal*

AUGUST 2-5, 2007

Mendota Heights
Visitation Monastery
St. Paul, Minnesota
Lodging at Mendota Heights
Courtyard Marriott

Sponsored by
DeSales Resources
and
Ministries

Salesian Spirituality begins with St. Francis de Sales and enters history creating new horizons in St. Jane de Chantal, St. Margaret Mary, St. John Bosco, St. Leoni Aviat and a host of others in a great Pentecost.

Our theme and speakers this

year all celebrate the unidiversity of a Salesian Spirituality that is both classically solid and completely contemporary in a variety of spirited expressions.

This annual conference enables both lay and religious, with an interest in spirituality from various perspectives, to meet and learn from each other, and to exchange insights, questions and experiences of spiritual life. Salesian Spirituality ...ever faithful, ever new.

CONFERENCE FEATURES

Three morning keynotes
Options for four afternoon presentations
Common Prayer
Eucharistic Liturgies
A Friday evening Parade of Salesian Saints
Salesian Marketplace
Used Book Sale
Thursday Evening pre-session for newcomers and old friends.
An opportunity to visit the "Nunz in the Hood" at the Visitation Monastery of Minneapolis
Surprise Salesian Anniversary event on Saturday evening!

For further information:

go to www.desalesresource.org,
Salesian Conference
or call
1-800-782-2270.

In Review

THE SACRAMENT OF CHARITY: MYSTERY AND ACTION

BY DAVE WHALEN, O.S.F.S.

In February, Pope Benedict XVI promulgated a post-synodal exhortation on the Eucharist. Fr. David Whalen, OSFS, offers some explanation about what this document is and some of his insights after reading the document.

Sacramentum Caritatis is the Latin title for the post-synodal exhortation written by the Pope Benedict XVI. Dated February 22, 2007, it is the Holy Father's personal summary and reflection on everything that was part of the Synod on the Eucharist held nearly two years previously.

While the document is the Pope's personal "reflection," the primary sources of his reflection are what was said, preached, discussed and celebrated at the time of the Synod together with all that was written and circulated among the Bishops leading up to the Synod.

I was deeply moved by the beginning of the document where the Holy Father speaks about the Eucharist as love, as true food, and especially by the image of Eucharist as companion. The Pope is drawn to the Eucharist as "mystery." If I were to wager I would say that it is this, namely Eucharist as mystery, which anchors most of his thoughts. Eucharist as mystery is critical to our Eucharistic theology.

At the same time I would love to explore in greater detail with the Holy Father the issue of Eucharist as action.

I understand and thoroughly hold to the critical role of the ordained in liturgy. I would love to explore the admittedly trickier role of the assembled congregation.

I would like to explore and receive clarity about the issue of inviting people who are not permitted by current church law to receive communion to nevertheless participate fully in the Liturgy without receiving Eucharist. I would love to speak more about the issue of inculturation and how this will, does or should effect our celebrations.

A somewhat primitive hermeneutic of suspicion on my part suggests that some (perhaps even a majority of those whose voices were represented in the Synod) were concerned about abuses in Eucharistic celebration that have come into practice in the past twenty-five years or more since the initiation of the revised Liturgy. That is a real concern and can easily be substantiated. The concern is not new. Equally concerned were those who addressed the abuses in Eucharistic celebration that were in common practice after the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). I guess it is for that reason that I can take comfort and encouragement from the re-

alization that Eucharist really is mystery. There is no "Golden Age" for experiencing the genuine mystery, whether that is twenty-five minutes ago, twenty-five years ago, or twenty-five hundred years ago. Any attempt to capture mystery by any set of criteria, theological or aesthetic; any attempt to hold mystery in harness or hold in harness those who encounter mystery, will always fall short and be in need of constant reform and reflection. §

To read the text of Sacramentum Caritatis visit www.oblates.us/spirituality.htm and scroll down to find the link to the document.

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

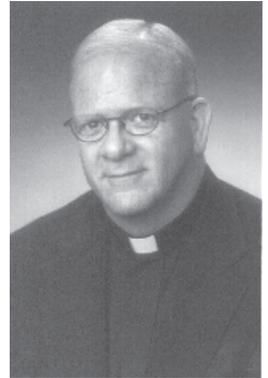
Comments and inquiries may be sent to:

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

Bondings is mailed free of charge to anyone upon request. Please feel free to share *Bondings* with your friends and any interested parties, or send us their address and we will mail them their own copy.

FROM THE EDITOR...

As you can see from the articles in this issue, there's a lot happening in the Province and in the Oblate world. At our annual Assembly in June the province will elect leadership for four more years. Immediately following the week long meeting we'll celebrate the first profession of the three novices (see article pg. 1) and the ordination of Alan Zobler (see In the Spotlight). We have much to be thankful for.



Many of you will be receiving this newsletter for the first time. You have been added to our mailing list because an Oblate acquaintance or possibly a friend or family member has given us your name.

I hope you find this publication interesting and helpful. It's a compilation of news about the Oblates of the Toledo-Detroit Province and around the world, reflections on Salesian Spirituality, ministry and church. Most are written by Oblates, but at times others are invited to share their thoughts and insights. Welcome to our publication.

In Christ,

Jack Loughran, O.S.F.S.

Jack Loughran, O.S.F.S.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Michael Moore, O.S.F.S. originally a member of the Toledo-Detroit Province has been named the first provincial of the newly formed South American Province.



The Oblates have been in South America for 100 years and until now were designated as a region. The new province includes: Brazil, Uruguay and Ecuador. Mike has been in Brazil for many years, having served as a pastor of several missions, including in the state of Saude, which is considered one of the poorest Catholic dioceses in the world. He has also been involved with the formation of seminarians in the region. The Toledo-Detroit Province is proud of Mike and wish him well.

Jim Sanford, O.S.F.S. will be making a long distance move in the near future. Due to the health issues Jim wrote about in the last issue of this publication, his doctors are recommending that he pull out of full time ministry.



A gifted preacher and administrator, Jim will be changing his focus from parish ministry to high school education as he moves from pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Toledo, Ohio to Judge Memorial High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. He'll be teaching part time and participating in campus ministry there. Jim will join Oblates Jim McHugh and John Ventresa, long time residents of Salt Lake City, in community and hopefully enjoying the Rocky Mountains.

Richard Morse, O.S.F.S. will be taking over Jim Sanford's role as pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Toledo as he moves cross country from St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Manteca, California to Toledo.

Rich is no stranger to cross country moves. He's traveled between California and the mid-west several times moving from one ministerial responsibility to another. His experience is as varied as well. Rich has taught high school, been a high school administrator, a pastor, the treasurer for the Toledo-Detroit Province and served as a Provincial Councilor for the Province. Rich has many interests, among them cooking, playing the piano and enjoying his dog - a shetland.§



OBLATES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
2043 PARKSIDE BLVD.
TOLEDO, OH 43607-1597

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TOLEDO, OHIO
PERMIT NO. 510