



An Assembly of Transitions

Leadership Elections, Jubilees and Ordination Mark 2011 Gathering



Candid shots from Assembly 2011 Courtesy of Fr. Richard Yost, OSFS

Left Photo - Paul Ruddy, Alan Zobler, John Extejt

Center Photo - Fr. Aldino Kiesel, Superior General

Right Photo - Richard McLernan, Ken McKenna, Dave Meiser, Bill Auth, Andy Dunne, John Bailey, Dan Lannen, John Kasper, Dave Kenehan, Jim McHugh

by Fr. Tom Helfrich, OSFS

While many of us in the Midwest were wondering if our challenging spring would ever yield to a genuine summer, we Oblates of the Detroit-Toledo Province gathered June 20-24 for our annual Assembly. We came from California, Toronto and western New York, from as close by as Toledo, Monroe and Detroit, from as far away as the Virgin Islands, Mexico, Brazil and Haiti, from Pennsylvania, Florida and Washington, D. C. to gather as one at St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat Center in Detroit.



St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center
Detroit, Michigan

Our Assembly is part family reunion, part retreat, part evaluation of the past year and preparation for the next. And every four years it is also a call to serious discernment for leadership. This is our time to allow the barriers of geography and age to fall away as we pray, work and play together. Not all of it is easy, not all of it is fun. But, in the words of Psalm 133, "... How good it is and how pleasant where brethren dwell as one!"

Because this was a year of discernment for leadership, it was a special joy to have our Superior General, Fr. Aldino Kiesel of Brazil and our Assistant General, Fr. Konrad Esser of Germany join us for the week. At a special celebration of the Eucharist followed by a fine dinner, we learned that Konrad is celebrating the 50th jubilee of his profession of vows along with Frs. Bill Auth, Bob Schramm and G. William Fischer, exceptional preacher at the liturgy. Our other

Continued on page 6

*De Sales says...
“Walk ever in the
way of your
vocation with
simplicity, more intent
on doing than on
desiring.”*

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Keeping us in touch since 1987.

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 and spirituality.

“We have no bond
but the bond of love.”
-St. Francis de Sales

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V+J

V+J - the French initials for Vive Jésus, Live Jesus: The prayer of St. Francis de Sales and the motto of all whose hearts are bound together by the spiritual tradition of Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal.

Oblate Ordained Priest in Adrian, Michigan

by Fr. Shaun Lowery, OSFS

On June 25, the Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing, Michigan, imposed hands and prayed for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Oblate Dan Lannen during his Ordination Mass celebrated at St. Mary's Parish in Adrian, Michigan.



Fr. Dan Lannen, OSFS, (l) poses with Fr. Michael Newman, OSFS (r)

Dan hails originally from Holland, Michigan. Many Oblates, members of his family, and members of St. Mary's Parish joined him on a beautiful summer day to celebrate his ordination to the priesthood. Dan was vested as a priest by Frs. Michael Newman and Ken McKenna, and assisted by Oblates in formation and Oblate Associates.



Bishop Boyea lays hands on Dan Lannen (Photo courtesy of Lindsay Moore, Toronto)

Immediately following the ordination Mass guests were invited to an outdoor gathering followed by a dinner on the campus of Siena Heights University where Dan earned his bachelor's degree in fine arts. Informal celebrations continued at Camp de Sales where the following day Fr. Lannen presided at his first Mass of Thanksgiving in Sacred Heart Chapel.



Oblates gather with newly ordained Fr. Dan Lannen, OSFS (left-center) after his first Mass of Thanksgiving at De Sales Center, Brooklyn, MI

Dan's first assignment will be on the faculty of St. Francis de Sales

High School in Toledo, Ohio, where he will teach art and religious education courses to freshmen. Dan will live in community at St. Francis de Sales faculty house along with ten other Oblates. Dan has previously



Fr. Dan Lannen, OSFS

taught at Lumen Christi High School in Jackson, Michigan.

Our Oblate community gives thanks for the generous offering Dan makes of himself to God, to us and to the whole Church as a priest. We pray too for the ongoing help of the Holy Spirit that all of us may continue to inspire others to join us in community and ministry grounded in the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.

More information on becoming an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales can be found at www.oblates.us



Book Offers Inclusive, Salesian Image of the Love of God

by Fr. Roland Calvert, OSFS

Fr. McDonnell, an Irish Salesian priest, author of the book *God Desires You*, and keynote speaker at this summer's Salesian Conference, subtitles his book, "St. Francis de Sales on Living the Gospel." The author presents a compelling account of Salesian spirituality and how it can help us live the Gospel daily in a real and practical way.

McDonnell begins with a chapter called "Crisis" and relates the fascinating story of the 19-year old Francis at the Sorbonne in Paris traumatized by the fear that he might be predestined to hell. The author describes this episode as "a crucible of suffering that led him to the brink of despair." But Francis came out of the crisis with a firm trust in the immensity of God's love. As the crisis ended, he still wasn't able to answer the riddle of his salvation. But he had moved from self-centered fear (what will happen to me?) to an emphasis on God's love.

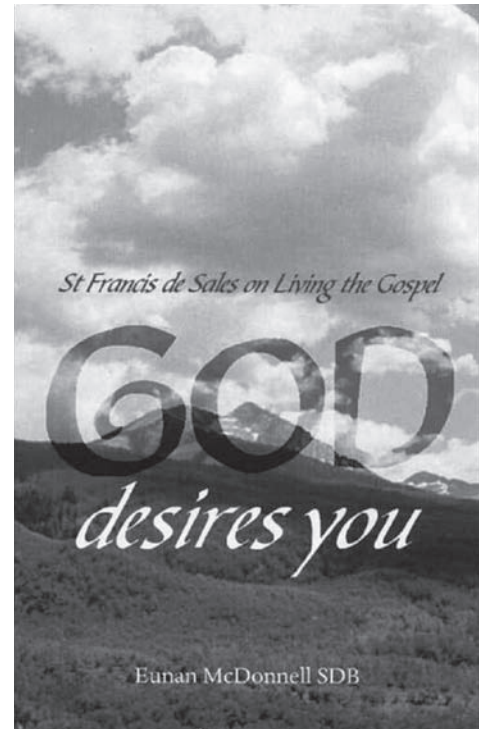
Fr. McDonnell says that the memory of this painful time and his deep conviction that God desires to save all people became the "cornerstone" of Francis' spirituality. Hence the title of the book: *God Desires You*.

In the chapter titled "The Heart of God," McDonnell uses a quote of Hans Urs von Balthasar that God's heart is restless until it rests in us (a variation on Augustine's famous dictum about the human heart). God is love and love always goes in search of the beloved.

One of the most fascinating discussions is about Francis' inclusive imagery for God. McDonnell even suggests that the most revolutionary aspect of the *Treatise on the Love of God* is the highly developed feminine and maternal images of God.

The author has done meticulous research in writing this book. His knowledge of the Salesian sources is encyclopedic, and he is able to give the reader striking new insights into many familiar quotes from the Gentleman Saint. All who are interested in Salesian spirituality will benefit from reading *God Desires You* and may well find that it does help them live the Gospel more faithfully.

(*God Desires You* is available from De Sales Resources and Ministries, www.desalesresource.org or by calling 800-782 2270.)



God Desires You
by Eunan McDonnell, SDB

Seventh Toledo-Detroit Provincial Elected

Director of Novices, Fr. Ken McKenna, OSFS

by Fr. Roland Calvert, OSFS



The Very Rev. Kenneth McKenna, OSFS
Provincial Superior

Fr. Kenneth McKenna, OSFS, was elected by the Toledo-Detroit province as its seventh Provincial on June 22, 2011. Ken spent his childhood in Temperance, Michigan. The family moved to Toledo, Ohio in 1968, where he attended Gesu School and St. Francis de Sales High School.

Ken has served the province for twenty years as Novice Director. Asked what was most memorable about this ministry, he replied: "There is something very moving when a young man at his first profession gives himself to God, the Church, and our Congregation. That never grows old." The young bring energy, enthusiasm, hope, idealism and insights into the province, he stated. "They make me confident that our future in the Church will be enriching and Spirit-filled."

Ken began his ministry to the deaf in 1975 when Fr. Rich Yost, OSFS, taught him American Sign Language. He worked full time with deaf ministry in Detroit until his work in the novitiate began. His first novice was Fr. Mike Depcik, OSFS, a Deaf Oblate. Ken spoke of his pride in the work Mike is doing for the Deaf community.

When invited to reflect on the future of our province, Fr. Ken mentioned the many wonderful ministries we are now involved in and the fact that we hear a call to respond to new ministries, especially to the poor and marginalized. This calls us to pray for vocations, for more workers in the harvest, as well as to prioritize about our ministries and lifestyle. "I see us collaborating even more closely with our brothers in the Wilmington-Philadelphia province and internationally with Oblates throughout the world," he added. We need to find new ways to articulate "the attractive and compelling charism of St. Francis de Sales."

Fr. McKenna ended with a word to the thousands of *Bondings* readers: "Thank you for assisting us Oblates in our work and journeying with us in prayer. May the good work God has begun in all of us reach completion in Christ Jesus!"



Fr. Ken McKenna with 2010-2011 Novices (L to R) Bob Killian, Jeff Edmonds, Dave Meiser, Ryan Cronshaw in Snowmass, Colorado

Looking for a Salesian Quote?

Brother Jim Petrait, OSFS (St. Joseph High School, St. Croix) has a website where you can find all sorts of Salesian quotes. Check it out at www.cybermeme.net/salesian.html.

Likewise the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales also have a Salesian quote calendar found at www.fransalians.com/quotes.html. Find your favorite, tell us why and send it in to us at bondings@oblates.us. Your quote could be selected for publication.

Favorite Salesian Sayings



St. Jane de Chantal receives the
Visitation Constitutions from
St. Francis de Sales

From Joe Dumphrey, OSFS

“Everyone knows that he said Mass and went to say the Office in choir every day, heard confessions and preached very often and well.”

-St. Jane de Chantal's testimony for the canonization process of St. Francis de Sales

This quote seems to underlie the basic teaching of St. Francis de Sales---holiness is doing the ordinary things of life well. For a priest these are normal daily activities. This is a constant reminder to do them well. It is in this regard that we are united with each person who is called to do so in their vocations of life.

Send us your favorite Salesian saying:
bondings@oblates.us



St. Francis de Sales

From Margaret Likens (Overland Park, KS)

As a Daughter of St. Francis de Sales, we are fond of the motto LIVE JESUS! Francis says at the end of the *Treatise on the Love of God*: “O Savior of our souls, we eternally sing, ‘Live Jesus!’”

I was introduced to De Sales by Fr. William Gallagher, OSFS, and devoured the *Treatise*. That was years ago but it is as alive today for me as then. How can you pick one favorite quote from the “floodtide”? But LIVE JESUS! is a wonderful summary of everything the great De Sales taught.



SALESIAN CONFERENCE ADDS ST. PETERSBURG!



De Sales Resource and Ministries announced that the **2011 Salesian Conference will now also be broadcast at a location in Florida** this year! St. Petersburg Catholic High School will host the telecast.

Along with the Florida telecast, seven other locations will host the Annual Salesian Conference on **Saturday, August 6.**

Check out De Sales Resource and Ministries on the web at www.desalesresource.org or call them at **1-800-782-2270.**

From the Editorial Staff...

We hope you are enjoying your summer and hope this issue conveys how blessed our Oblate Community is because of your prayers and support. Enjoy this edition and continue to pray that the many good things we report in this issue will both continue and grow.

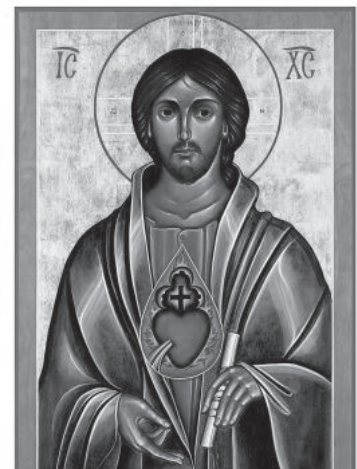
Please pray too for all Oblates in transition into new roles and ministries. Our prayer for and with one another has the power to help and strengthen our Salesian family wherever it may be.

A special time of transition and prayer is requested for our novices who will profess first vows in August. Pray for them and for more vocations to the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.

Special thanks to Oblates Rich Yost and Dave Meiser for providing us with photographs for this edition. There are many more but we are limited by page space.

May God be blessed!

-Bondings Editorial Staff: Roland Calvert, Tom Helfrich, & Shaun Lowery





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Live + Jesus

jubilarians are Fr. Dave Whalen, 40 years ordained; Fr. Bill Fisher, 50 years ordained; and Fr. John Fallon, unable to join us in person, 60 years professed. Their fidelity is a great gift to us all.



(L to R) Fred Chiappone & Francis Murray

Our community life committee has regaled us annually with an evening of creative and hilarious interactive entertainment. This year they engaged us all in their unique twist on the game "Apples to Apples." They called it "Oblates to Oblates." Anyone listening in would have called it "Nuts to Nuts." It was great fun!

I was very touched when after the Assembly my sister told me about a Mass she had participated in at the chapel of the Ursuline Sisters in Toledo. During the prayers of intercession, someone had prayed for the success of our Oblate Assembly. Friends, know that we were praying for you as well during that special week, well aware of the significance and impact of your support in all forms. You too are a part of our Oblate family!



(L to R) Jim Petrait, John Mancini, Bill Auth, Rich Yost & Grant Ferris