



BONDINGS

THE QUARTERLY OBLATE MAGAZINE

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

Winter 2013



CELEBRATING ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
FEAST DAY JAN. 24



HAPPY FEAST DAY!

The picture of St. Francis de Sales on the cover reminds us that his feast day is coming up (Jan. 24). We invite you to celebrate the day by attending Mass and perhaps reading some of Francis' writings. He is the patron of writers and journalists and knew something about great writing.

Our special thanks go out to four Oblate priests who provided photos for this issue of *Bondings* (as well as the last one): Fathers Ken McKenna, Jim Greenfield, Geoff Rose and Michael Murray. The pictorial element adds a great deal to the publication.

Where does the name "Bondings" come from? At the head of his spiritual rule (which he gave to the Visitandines and was later adopted by the Oblates), Francis de Sales wrote: "We have no bond but the bond of love, which is the bond of perfection."

This is a paraphrase of Paul's words in Colossians 3:14. As our note in the right-hand column states, the purpose of *Bondings* is to enhance and develop the bond we all have in Jesus Christ and the bond of Salesian spirituality.

May our bondings with the Lord and with one another deepen and grow always!

St. Francis de Sales, pray for us.

- Editorial Staff



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.

PROVINCIAL OFFICE

2043 Parkside Blvd.
Toledo, OH 43607-1597
419.724.9851
www.oblates.us

EDITORIAL STAFF

Father Roland Calvert, OSFS
Father Tom Helfrich, OSFS

FAITH CATHOLIC

1500 E. Saginaw St.
Lansing, MI 48906

CHAIRMAN

Rev. Dwight Ezop

PRESIDENT AND CEO

Patrick O'Brien

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Martin Solsburg

ART DIRECTOR

Patrick Dally

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Jennifer Bis

THE FIRST OBLATES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

by Father Tom Helfrich, OSFS

Still rejoicing in the Sept. 22, 2012 beatification of our founder, Father Louis Brisson, it was a delight to celebrate his feast on Oct. 12. That was the day in 1873 when the first Oblates began their long novitiate preparing for the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They came together to start St. Bernard's school for boys in Troyes, France. But Father Brisson had more in mind.

The first faculty recruit was the recently ordained Father Julien Gilbert. His focus on the care of the street children of Rome made him a kindred spirit to Father Brisson, who was doing such effective work with the youth of industrial Troyes. Father Gilbert liked what he saw in the fledgling school and the Salesian spirit that characterized the tiny faculty.

Father Jacob, known for his devotion to St. Francis de Sales, his musical inclinations and his challenging eccentricities, actually served as the novice director for the group. He, too, had great concern for the plight of young people, as the Industrial Revolution was pulling them away from the stability of their families to seek work in cities. The community experience must have been quite a challenge for him, as he would later leave the Oblates.

Newly ordained Father Célestine



Rollin, a friend of Father Jacob, became a magnet who drew others to the school. His former classmate, Jérôme Lambert, surrendered his desire to be a monk to join the new community. He would be ordained in 1876. André

Perrot, a simple farm boy who became a teacher, also was a friend of Father Rollin. Finally, Jean-Baptiste Lambey rounded out the little group of Oblate novices. He was a priest from Troyes who had studied law. His work to assist the youth of the city made him a natural for the Oblates.

Father Brisson himself also was a novice, and though founder, was very much in formation.

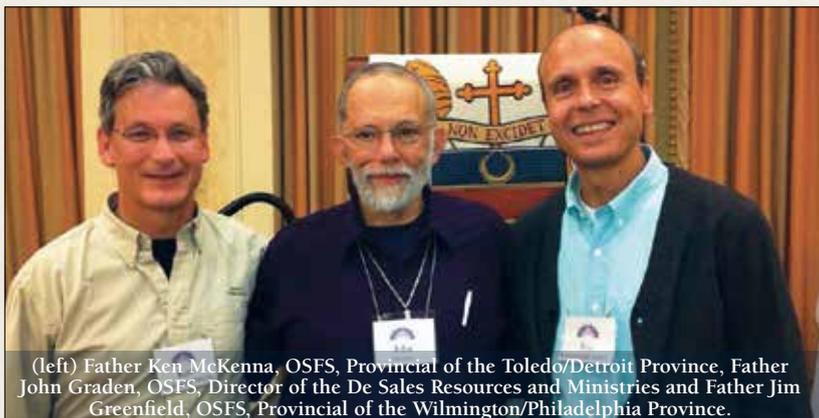
We know him well. Though the others from those early days are largely misty personalities, they also are inspirations for their courage in starting something new.

› See *Louis Brisson* by Dirk Koster, 2008: available through DeSALES RESOURCES AND MINISTRIES



NATIONAL SALESIAN CONVENTION

by Sister Marie Therese Ruthmann, VHM



(left) Father Ken McKenna, OSFS, Provincial of the Toledo/Detroit Province, Father John Graden, OSFS, Director of the De Sales Resources and Ministries and Father Jim Greenfield, OSFS, Provincial of the Wilmington/Philadelphia Province.

The National Salesian Convention, at the Sheraton Lakeside Chalet in St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 2-4, 2012, was more than a presentation of “everyday spirituality for everyday people.” It was an experience of the Holy Spirit breathing joy into approximately 80 participants.

Father Jim Greenfield opened the weekend with Mass in the conference room which became our sacred place, our Anney. Not coincidentally, our location was an “Alpine Chalet” whose rooms had such names as Bern, St. Moritz, and Matterhorn. Father Jim’s emphasis on Catholic imagination led us into Celtic “thin places” where we felt the presence of Sts. Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal and the whole communion of saints. Alan Hunt, former Methodist megachurch pastor and recent convert, next enveloped us with his en-

thusiasm for the “hidden treasures of the Catholic Church.” Speaking about ways to capture the Spirit whenever and wherever it blows, he recommended four life-giving habits: prayer, study, generosity and evangelization.

Saturday’s presenters further enriched us, as the morning featured Father Geoff Rose, OSFS and Father Joe Krupp, who inspired us to “B Who U R: A Spirituality Just 4 U.” Drawing on Gospel stories, they emphasized God turning “weeds” into “wheat” as Jesus always cares for us in the desert of life.



Joanne Kinney, Administrator of De Sales Resources and Ministries, which hosted and organized the Salesian Convention in St. Louis.



Churchgoers prepare for Communion.



Father Ken McKenna, OSFS, distributes Communion at Mass. Father McKenna (right) was the celebrant for the Saturday afternoon liturgy.



The barbershop quartet entertains those attending the Salesian Convention.

That afternoon brought Father John Graden and Jeanne Hunt whose interactive presentation on prayer, “Somebody’s Knockin’ at My Door,” explained practical Salesian ways to be intentional and surrender so that the breath of God becomes our breath. Preceding these speakers, Jeanne Hunt and liturgist Mary Sellers Malloy uplifted our hearts musically. At the Vigil Mass, Father Ken McKenna urged us to love God with all that we are. Finally,

the River City Barbershop Quartet offered a musical dessert to our celebration dinner.

Sunday, Mary Sellers Malloy again delighted with her music and reflection, “Count It All Joy,” which combined the insights and humor of another quartet: Dorothy Day, Father James Martin, S.J., and Sts. Francis and Jane.

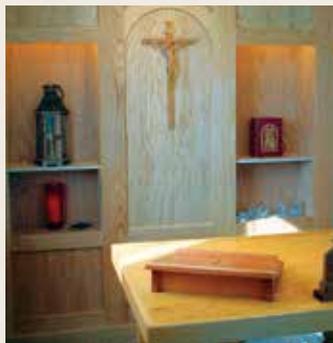
Throughout the weekend, we celebrated the Salesian evangelization Father Joe Power began 30 years ago.



SACRED SPACES IN OBLATE HOUSES

On these pages we feature pictures of various Oblate houses.

“GOD SAID: REMOVE THE SANDALS FROM YOUR FEET, FOR THE PLACE WHERE YOU STAND IS HOLY GROUND!” - EX 3:5



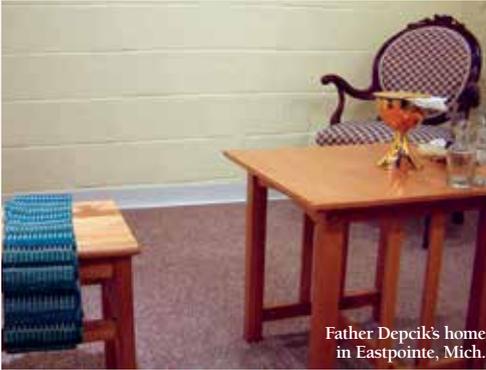
Loren Drive house,
Jackson, Mich.

The first is of the sacred space being built in the new Loren Drive house in Jackson, Mich. Father Ken McKenna and volunteer Jerome Smith are turning an existing bedroom into a chapel. Though incomplete, the priests already are celebrating daily Mass in the chapel. It's a place to pray the Office also.



Old Washington
Street house in
Jackson, Mich.

It is possible in most homes to transform a spare room or at least a smaller area of the house into a “sacred space.” Often, it can be as simple as a small table with the Bible enthroned and a candle near it. This becomes a “thin space” that Celtic spirituality speaks of where we can glimpse beyond the veil of time to what is eternal and divine.



Father Depcik's home
in Eastpointe, Mich.



Father Mike Depcik lives in a small, two-bedroom house in Eastpointe, Mich. The deaf community built a small chapel in his basement, which Mike describes as “important to his prayer life.” He says that he often recommends creating a prayer space in Catholic homes. He explains: “When we enter the kitchen, we feel like eating; enter the bedroom, we feel like sleeping; enter a chapel, and we’ll feel like praying.”



Regal Road
Toronto House.



When Oblates began living in the Regal Road house in Toronto four decades ago, Father Tom Ribits began working on a prayer space in what was little more than a closet. He exposed the stone foundation under the bay window of the floor above and added a small tabernacle, altar and lighting. It has the feeling of a grotto. It does what a good prayer space does: When you enter, you feel as though you are in a special, sacred place, a “thin place.” The chapel has been remodeled and enlarged, but it retains the original intimate feeling.



OBLATE HOUSE IN TORONTO TO CLOSE

by Father Roland Calvert, OSFS



A sacred space located in the Toronto home.

Four decades of Oblate presence in Toronto will come to an end this spring as Father Jim Roth, OSFS, who has served as scholastic master since 2004, will close the house. Scholastic Joe Newman is the last Oblate to complete his studies in Toronto in preparation for his ordination this month as a deacon, and in June as a priest. Acknowledging the substantial drop of seminarians at the University and bringing together the formation programs of both North American provinces, all our seminarians will now study at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

In looking back at his Toronto years, Jim spoke of the excellence of the theological education numerous Oblates have received in St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. The city also offers "rich (and safe!) social and cultural opportunities," he added.

In addition, Jim said, the Regal Road house was "a true home" – "We took pride in making sure we took care of the house and one another." Meals could last several hours, he noted, as the community members discussed their classes, articles they were reading or important church and societal issues.

Father Dave Whalen, OSFS,

echoed this sentiment as he reflected on his years in Toronto. The house was small, he noted, but "it was, in every sense of the word, our home."

Dave first went to the Toronto community in 1982. Oblate Father Tony Ceresko lived in the community then; he was professor of Old Testament at St. Michael's College.

Dave describes his years in Toronto as "very, very positive." He worked in the Department of Theological Field Education at St. Michael's and says this work was "exhilarating." Dave received an honorary doctorate from St. Michael's College this past November.

Dave says that the closing of this house is “a defining moment in our provincial history.” It is “the closing of a certain part of our identity,” as well as the beginning of what will “clearly be a different identity.”

Jim noted that “time does not stand still” and the province has to adapt its formation program to

changing needs and realities. But, Oblates, especially those who studied at St. Michael’s College, will never forget the excellent education they received and the experience of a great cosmopolitan city. This has provided, “unforgettable and invaluable memories,” he stated.

CAMP DE SALES HISTORY REMEMBERED *by Bill Mittendorf*

BROOKLYN, MICH. – On a beautiful and sunny fall day, Camp de Sales remembered its past with the installation of two plaques dedicated to Oblates who served in the life of camp. A plaque honoring Brother John “Beetle” Bailey, OSFS was placed on the exterior of Bailey Hall (the former Mess Hall) near the area where the original bell was located. Brother John rang that bell for many, many summers summoning campers to meals. The plaque reads:

Live + Jesus – Dedicated to the original bell ringer of Camp de Sales, Brother John “Beetle” Bailey, O.S.F.S., who presided over Bailey Hall as Chief Chef for many years. May this bell ring again in the hearts of all those who have heard it over the years in tribute to this great man. Presented by the first Reunion Class, Sept. 9, 2011.



Father Jim McHugh, OSFS,
Director of Camp de Sales

A second plaque is now situated on a concrete pillar at the site of the former scholastic residence. It honors Oblate seminarians and brothers who lived in the scholasticate camp building during their stay at camp. It was installed on a concrete pillar at the site of the former building. The plaques were the gifts of the XOSFS (former Oblates) Reunion Class held at camp Sept. 9-11, 2011. The installation was made by Tim Pilat and Bill Mittendorf, former Oblates and members of the XOSFS Reunion Class. Father Jim McHugh, O.S.F.S., Camp Director, was on hand to bless the installations, which shall remain as permanent monuments to the history of Camp de Sales.





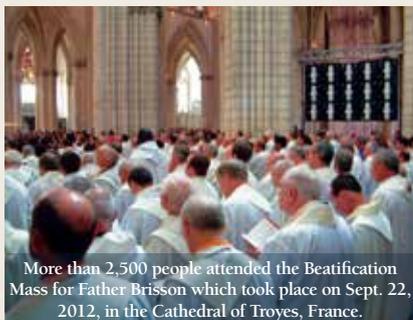
TWO EXCERPTS FROM A HOMILY GIVEN BY FR. JOHN KASPER, OSFS

September 2012 during the beatification celebration of Blessed Louis Brisson. The Mass was held in the Crypt Chapel of the Oblate Sisters' Motherhouse in Troyes, France where Fr. Brisson and St. Léonie Aviat are buried.

“The gospel calls the Church to ongoing conversion, to let the fire of the Holy Spirit inflame her again freely and unencumbered. Before his death last month, the esteemed Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Carlo Martini, offered a bold, even scathing, assessment of the Church he faithfully served. He said the Church in Europe and America is tired; it has been left behind for two hundred years and must pursue a path of radical change. The Cardinal asked: ‘Can you remove the ash from the fire so as to revive the flame of love? First we have to look for this fire. Where are the individuals full of generosity like the Good Samaritan? Who has faith like the Roman centurion? Who are enthusiastic as John the Baptist? Who dare to be new as Paul? Who are as faithful as Mary Magdalene?’ Today, as Salesian pilgrims in the city of Troyes, we can proudly answer the Cardinal’s questions. That flame of love still burns brightly for us and for the entire Church in the hearts and living memory of Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal, Léonie Aviat and Mother Chappuis and in our beloved Father, Louis Brisson. We are now called to be the ones in whom the fire is kindled into full flame and who live out of the gift of his legacy.”

“Our Salesian charism of mutual respect between men and women, as witnessed by the complementarity between Father Brisson and Mother Chappuis, is a gift we Oblate Fathers, Brothers and Sisters can offer to enlighten the Church and call her to greater transparency so critically necessary at this time in the Church’s life. This significant grace was affirmed and validated at Father Brisson’s beatification and stands as a challenge for his sons and daughters whom he guides and inspires.”

FROM THE BEATIFICATION OF FATHER BRISSON



More than 2,500 people attended the Beatification Mass for Father Brisson which took place on Sept. 22, 2012, in the Cathedral of Troyes, France.



Carlos Penaherrera (red coat) with Oblate Scholastic Jeff Edmunds (right) and Oblate Brother Bob Killion (left); and Father Mike Newman, OSFS (far left).

FAVORITE SALESIAN SAYINGS

“Nearly all flowers open out or grow more beautiful in the sunlight. Some flowers, like the sunflower, not only enjoy the sunshine, but turn to follow the sun’s rays, keeping their faces toward it from its rising to its setting ...” - St. Francis de Sales

I like this magnetic, warm, “invitational” image of our relationship with God. It’s such a simple metaphor: be like the sunflower that keeps turning its head toward the Source of its life and growth. This quote beckons me to “pay attention” to the God who leads me all day long by the attractiveness of divine love in daily living. And once my attention is on the God who loves me, that love can spill out into my thoughts, words and actions, turning all these toward the Son. This is my hope as I strive to be a sunflower garden for my God!

- Sister Karen Mohan, VHM. Minneapolis, Minn.



“Do not distress yourself about prayer. It is not always necessary to employ words, even inwardly. It is enough to raise your heart and let it rest in Our Lord, to look lovingly up toward the Divine Lover of your soul, for between lovers the eyes speak more eloquently than the tongue.” - St. Francis de Sales

I’m a cradle Catholic and a social worker by profession. I’m very drawn to Salesian spirituality and currently in formation to become a Son of St. Francis de Sales. I loved this particular quote because the eyes have been called “the mirror of the soul.” It is clear that they speak the language of the soul.

- Mark Cameron. Vancouver, Wash.



BONDINGS

THE QUARTERLY OBLATE MAGAZINE

[WJ] OBLATES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
TOLEDO-DETROIT PROVINCE

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LANSING, MI
PERMIT NO. 689