
The Clarion



Newsletter of the Brothers of Christian Instruction

Friends Gather for the Closing of St. Ignatius Parish

It was a bittersweet event. The closing of this beloved church resulted from the consolidation of three area parishes in January 2008. The final Mass, held on Saturday, October 30, was presided by Portland Bishop Richard Malone.

Present were former teachers of St. Ignatius Parish School including three of the Ursuline Sisters who helped staff the elementary school for 50 years beginning in 1919. They were featured as guests.

Also receiving special recognition were the Brothers of Christian Instruction who came on board in 1941 when then pastor Fr. Edward Nadeau recruited Brothers for his high school's boys division.

A special closing dinner was held in the nearby parish hall. On that occasion Brother Jerome Lessard, provincial, was invited to review the history of the Brothers' 26-year involvement with the school.

The first contingent of three Brothers was headed by Br. Oscar Pelland coming from St. Louis H.S. which had opened in 1929 in Biddeford, ME. Soon to join them would be fondly-remembered Brother Richard Levesque who would serve 12 years, two stints as principal.

always remained small, averaging 70 students, which made for a friendly setting where the staff-and student relations were marked by respect and appreciation.

Considering its small enrollment, St. Ignatius High School enjoyed a rather successful athletic program. Sports enthusiast Br. Richard Hebert served as Athletic Director for eight years.

Over the years some 56 Brothers were assigned to the school, usually 5 at a time. Most were young and enthusiastic first-year teachers, recent graduates of LaMennais College in nearby Alfred.

The Brothers left the high school division in 1963, in part due to an

emerging vocation crisis. The school struggled under staffing and financial constraints until its inevitable closing in 1969.

Many priestly and religious vocations came from this school, among them Alfred's Br. Mark Couture.

Present at the dinner were Br. Henri (Alban) Bernier, principal for three years, and former teachers: Br. Marcel Crete (6 years.) and Ray Fortin (3 years). Invited among the remaining Brothers were Brothers James Lacasse (3 yrs.), Albin Vigeant and Robert Michaud (1 year) and Roger Millette who enjoyed "three beautiful years at St. Ignatius in the early fifties, finding the boys easy to deal with."



Re-enacting a Historical Occasion

On November 17, 2010, President Jusseume addressed an audience gathered in the lobby of La Mennais Hall where 50 years ago to the day, the first Walsh College President, greeted the inaugural freshman class. Mr. Jusseume's "Memories of Opening Day" was one of the last events of Walsh University's 50th Anniversary Celebration.

A 1967 Walsh graduate, Jusseume praised that year's alumni for trusting that the fledgling institution directed by the seven founding Brothers would develop under God's providential care into a Catholic Institution that would prove true to its mission offering to the children of working class families a solid education.

Several alumni of the first class were present to witness this "re-enactment". Among them was Brother Guy Roddy who recalls the events of that cloudy Ohio November day when the 67 students – all in jackets and ties – mingled for the first time in the lobby of the east end of College Hall. Thirty-six recent graduates of Central High School in town mainly constituted the eager but apprehensive group. Among them were a dozen student Brothers – dressed in religious robes – who had recently migrated from Lamennais College in Alfred, ME.

As the faculty (all brothers) passed among the group introducing themselves, Br. Roddy was impressed by Academic Dean Br. Robert Francoeur's greeting each



student by name, having diligently mastered their application.

The day's events included a midday Founders' Day Mass, presided by Msgr. Robert Siffrin and closed with that evening's Thanks for Giving Reception recognizing benefactors of the 50th Anniversary Scholarship Initiative.

Editor's Note:

Copies of Walsh U's special 50th Anniversary booklet w. a DVD on the Brother's legacy are available through THE CLARION office.

News in Brief

Bro. Marcel Sylvestre was awarded the 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's Walsh University Alumni luncheon during the 2010 Homecoming Weekend. Brother was recognized for his "distinguished career in education, a commitment to Walsh and a love for global service."

Walsh University President Richard Jusseume received the Humanitarian Service Medal

during the 34th Annual International Meeting of the American Maritain Association held this year in Canton, OH. Walsh philosophy professor John Trapani, president of the association, remarked that Richard's commitment to Catholic education deserved this recognition.

Br. Roger Millette of the Fall River, MA community was interviewed on the local radio station WSAR as a "Fall River legend" having spent 48 years as an educator in the city.

Br. Albin Vigeant, age 95, died December 8 at Maine Medical Center after a brief illness. The funeral took place on December 13 with burial in the Brothers' cemetery in Alfred, ME.

Brothers from Fall River attended the funeral together with a number of former Brothers and friends of the Brothers from Alfred and adjoining areas in Maine.

The picture above is of President Richard Jusseume

Solemn Opening of the Mennaisian Anniversary Year

More than 300 persons gathered in Ploermel, France, on Nov. 26-27-28 for the official opening of the Mennaisian Year marking the 150th Anniversary of the death of Fr. John Mary de la Mennais (1780-1860), co-founder of the Brothers of Christian Instruction.

The celebration occasioned several speeches highlighting the contributions of this Servant of God to the revitalization of the Church, of Catholic education in particular, in post-Revolutionary France.

The speeches were particularly forceful since the founder's tomb

is situated in the chapel where Father John had celebrated Mass during the last six years of his life.

FIC delegates came from Canada, Uganda, Haiti, England, Italy and West Africa with Br. Marcel Sylvestre representing the USA. Sr. Louise Touchette, Superior General of the Daughters of Providence (also founded by Fr. de la Mennais) joined Br. Yannick Houssay, SG, in emphasizing the theme of Project 2010-11. Let us be energetic dispensers of the Word!

A multi-media exposition was inaugurated exhibiting the life of a

Brother of Christian Instruction as well as the story of the Mennaisian Family with its increasing numbers of lay associates.

An icon of Fr. John was solemnly blessed as was a wooden model of the Mission Cross which still stands where Father de la Mennais and accompanying Brothers bade farewell to hundreds of missionaries sent to distant lands. The replica will soon undertake its long journey to all the countries where the Brothers continue their educational ministry.

**Let us sow
Generously!**

Those Were the Days !

Father de la Mennais must have fondly looked on two sets of his disciples fraternizing recently, sharing reminiscences and good cheer over a meal at McGovern's Restaurant in Fall River, MA on November 6.

On the one hand, Provincial Br. Jerome Lessard with the three members of the Eastern Avenue community – Brothers Roger Millette, Daniel Caron and Walter Zwierchowski; on the other, seven former Brothers and their spouses mostly of the Southeastern Massachusetts Region.

Tales of shared experiences during years of training and teaching provoked laughter and satisfaction as did lingering memories of deceased confreres.

This was the 38th meeting of the group which at one time numbered

30: men who had once called Alfred their home and de la Mennais their Father and their inspiration.

At this annual gathering members and Brothers have exchanged news, updates and yarns which were later passed on to family members, former students and FIC communities.

All look forward to the next gathering – in July 2011 in Alfred for the La Mennais observances.

Roland Moses

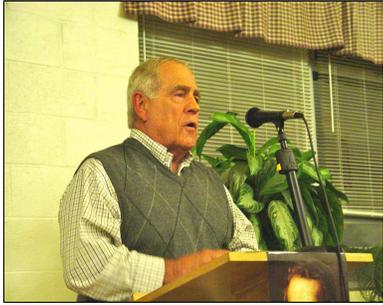
Note:

Armand Dallaire , who for years chaired this gathering, died December 2 in Fall River.



From left to right: Albert Cormier, Roger L'Heureux, Donald Rock, Roland Moses, Clarence King, Roger Lamontagne. **Not in:** Bernard Flanagan

Recognition Dinner Spotlight on Gean and FICs



Every Year York County Shelter holds its recognition dinner honoring the hundreds of volunteers.

This year Director Don Gean was especially honored on the occasion of his 25th year at the helm of this ever expanding agency in which annually thousands of clients receive either shelter, counseling, medical services, food or a combination thereof. Don was celebrated for initiating and in

turn for enabling legislation to be passed at the State level, making him a leader among those seeking to help the homeless.

That same November 3 evening the Brothers were recognized for hosting the Shelter on the Notre Dame campus. A commemorative stone was presented to Br. Jerome Lessard, provincial. He was one of three featured speakers reviewing the history of the groups who have made their home on Shaker Hill: Shakers, the Brothers and the YCS, Inc.

The stone will be placed in the Shelter's Garden of Gratitude. Shelter Ray Anger is responsible for locating the stones, power washing and bleaching them, as well as designing images and letters which he then carves on the stones.

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May Christ's love and
peace
Be ours this season and
Throughout the year 2011