



The Chronicle

News from the Baltimore Province | July 2017

Father Billy receives Templeton grant

Father Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R., learned July 3 that he had been awarded a grant from the Templeton World Charity Foundation to explore the relationship between spiritual direction and the moral life.

Funding for the three-year grant of more than \$200,000 will begin this September. The grant will support the creation of a book on spiritual direction and the acquisition of virtue; DVD, CD, and MP3 materials on the subject; a social-media-friendly website; and a video-based tutorial system for spiritual directors through a series of massive open online courses (MOOCs).

In addition to offering on-the-ground training for spiritual directors based on the Alphonsian tradition, Father Billy will help them conduct weeklong direct-



Father Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R.

ed retreats to Catholics and other Christians. He will also submit his findings for scholarly assessment and ongoing peer review.

During the course of the project he hopes to explore ways in which the approach to spiritual direction

he has developed can be adapted for members of other religious, philosophical, and ethical traditions. His project represents an attempt to integrate spirituality with the moral life and should be of interest to all Redemptorists and their lay collaborators throughout the world.

Father Billy, 63, currently serves as the Karl Rahner Professor of Catholic Theology at the Graduate Theological Foundation and is enjoying a sabbatical year at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, N.Y. He has written more than 30 books, published many articles in a variety of scholarly and popular journals, and is very active in retreat work and the ministry of spiritual direction.

He was professed in 1977 and ordained a priest on May 24, 1980. ■

Students gather in Canandaigua

Redemptorist students from throughout North America met at Notre Dame Retreat Center in Canandaigua, N.Y., May 21 through 27, along with conferees in formation and vocation

ministry. During the annual gathering, each day began with a two-hour workshop by Father Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R., on the life and times of St. Alphonsus.

At the closing Mass, Father Ste-

phen Rehrauer, provincial for Denver, and Father Gerard Knapp, provincial vicar for Baltimore, received the renewal of vows of some of the Redemptorist students.

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Redemptorists come to Our Lady of the Hills

By Father John Murray, C.Ss.R.

In January 1857, three American-born Redemptorists, Isaac Hecker, Nathaniel Hewitt, and Francis Baker, preached a mission in the cathedral of St. Augustine, Fla. After closing the mission, the fathers traveled to the cathedral in Charleston, S.C., to join their confreres, Clarence Walworth and George Deshon, who had already opened a mission there.

The next Redemptorist mission in Charleston was given in 1863, the third year of the Civil War. Father Giles Smulders, a Confederate Army chaplain, conducted the services during the siege of the city by federal troops.

In March 1930, Bishop Emmet Walsh of Charleston invited the Redemptorists to establish a foundation in Orangeburg.

—Father Francis Donlan, C.Ss.R.,
1992

FOR MORE THAN 85 YEARS Redemptorist missionaries have been involved throughout the diocese in an array of apostolic activities: Providing ministerial care to African-American communities, speaking out against racial discrimination during segregation, visiting prisoner-of-war camps, preaching missions from trailer chapels, conducting open-air missions, and establishing missions, schools, and parishes.

Then in 2015, the bishop of



Redemptorists have served at Our Lady of the Hills Church in Columbia, S.C., since 2015.

Charleston, Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone, asked the Vice Province of Richmond for assistance in staffing a parish in Columbia, S.C. Since the members had recently voted to take on a new venture, this seemed like a good idea.

On August 1, 2015, the Feast of St. Alphonsus, Father Peter Sousa, C.Ss.R., and Father John Murray, C.Ss.R., began their new ministry at Our Lady of the Hills Church in Columbia.

Before going any further, I would like to describe what our parish is like. There are approximately 1,600 families registered in the parish. Our parish is quite diversified, with people coming to worship from all over the world. Approximately 30 percent of our community is Hispanic, and of the 500 children in religious education last year, half are Hispanic. Our youth group

has about 65 young people coming on a regular basis, and 77 young people were confirmed in May. In other words, our parish is very active.

What is our life and ministry like at Our Lady of the Hills Parish? Unfortunately, our rectory was designed for a diocesan priest, so we are without a chapel in the rectory. We have morning prayer and meditation in the church, and during daily Mass one of us is the main celebrant while the other concelebrates.

I would like to describe a few of the ministries at OLH Parish that seem to define us as a Redemptorist missionary parish. The Hispanic community is the fastest-growing group in the parish. During this last Easter vigil 22 young Hispanic children were baptized and confirmed.

On the weekends we have six Masses, including one Hispan-

ic Mass that is standing room only and one bilingual Mass. Every Thursday evening Father Peter hears confessions for the Hispanic community for three hours.

However, history has a way of repeating itself, and some of our own parishioners are uncomfortable with the Hispanic community. Some have even threatened to leave the parish merely because they are different.

As members of the Hispanic community continue to be threatened by ICE, we have other groups in our parish seeking a safe place to live. We have a number of Catholics from Iraq and Syria who have come to us for assistance in seeking refuge from persecution. We have written letters to the government on their behalf and had petitions signed for them. Truly they are the poor and abandoned.

In the Columbia area there are 11 correctional institutions. On a regular basis I go to one of the maximum-security prisons with a deacon from our parish to say Mass and hear confessions. The inmates we visit are deeply appreciative that we would take the time to be with them—to share the Good News and remind them they are not forgotten and that God has an infinite love for them.

Since arriving at OLH, Father Peter and I have been very involved in ministering to the youth of the diocese. In the Diocese of Charleston there is a team of high school young peo-

ple who come together on weekends throughout the year to plan diocesan youth activities. At the camp where the young people gather to make their plans, Father Peter or I will go and celebrate Sunday Mass and hear confessions. No one else is available to say Mass and hear confessions for the young people. Columbia is in the center of South Carolina, and all the major roads seem to intersect there. I believe that is why our parish center is so large and offers so much. Our parish is in a central location, so people from all over the state can come and use the facility. Our parish center is equipped with 13 classrooms, a gym, showers, a dining room, and a full kitchen.

Every month we host the Diocesan Diaconate Formation Program in our Family Life Center, but we are not involved in the program. We also host Cursillo for the entire Diocese

of Charleston four times a year. We are very much involved in Cursillo, saying Mass, hearing confessions, and just being available. It is a blessing that we are here to help out on Cursillo weekends. Other clergy have been reluctant to help out for various reasons.

Finally, I've hardly mentioned our many active parish ministries. But in keeping with the Redemptorist charism, I would like to mention two specific ministries. Every month a group of parishioners prepares more than one thousand sandwiches that are brought to a homeless shelter in downtown Columbia to feed the poor. On a regular basis another group of parishioners washes the clothes of the homeless at a homeless shelter.

May the seeds that were sown by the first Redemptorist missionaries in 1857 blossom and bear fruit in building the Kingdom of God. ■



Father John Murray celebrates Mass for youth at the camp where they meet.

A growing Hispanic ministry at St. Gerard's

By Father Mike Houston

Hispanic ministry at St. Gerard's in Lima, Ohio, has been growing at a slow and steady pace. For the past three years we've had a weekly Sunday liturgy in Spanish. Both Father Mike Sergi and I currently celebrate Mass in Spanish with the help of the officially retired but still active Deacon Elias Peña.

Regular Sunday attendance at the Spanish Mass varies from 30 to 60 people. A major contributor to the effort has been Angelica Pierre, whose deep faith and dedication serve as a great example for the Hispanic community.

The *Misa de sanación* (healing Mass) we've been celebrating has become quite popular, with Hispanics coming from as far away as Columbus, Ohio, and Fort Wayne, Indiana. Recently after such a Mass in Toledo, I was approached about the idea of celebrating *Misas de sanación* in other parishes throughout the Diocese of Toledo as well as the possibility of celebrating them in the migrant camps.



Father Mike Houston, C.Ss.R., during a celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Gerard's in Lima, Ohio.

A notable feature during the celebration of the Eucharist is the Spanish choir, which has grown in size and talent over the past few years and has become a source of pride for St. Gerard's.

Ways have been sought to make Hispanics feel welcome in and integrated into the parish, including opportunities to celebrate Hispanic culture. For example, the Spanish choir and a local troupe of Guadalupe dancers greatly enhanced the

recent parish celebration of the feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. And during the annual parish festival, the Mexican food stand provided some tasty treats for the community.

Immigration issues are on the minds of many Hispanics these days. A recent visit of the Mexican Consulate to St. Gerard's provided assistance and was enthusiastically received by area residents. Nearly 500 people attended the event, which highlighted the surprisingly large number of Latinos who live in the Lima vicinity. By contrast, it is interesting to note that the official number of Hispanics living in Lima is only 3 percent of the local population.

We've recently become involved in migrant ministry. Currently there are only three priests (including me) available to serve the ministerial needs of migrants who work in the northwestern region of Ohio during the summer. There are roughly 20 migrant camps in northwestern Ohio and northeastern Indiana.

The great emphasis on immigration reform by the current administration has begun to affect local economies in different areas of northwestern Ohio. The number of work visas being granted to migrant workers is declining, and the fear of deportation has also affected the number of available migrants for the region. ■



Nearly 500 people turned out when the parish hosted a visit from the Mexican Consulate.

New parish hall for St. James the Greater

On April 4, St. James the Greater Parish in Concord, N.C., celebrated the dedication of its new Our Lady of Guadalupe Hall. Having seen a 40 percent increase in parishioners in the past three years, the community badly needed more space for faith formation, youth and young-adult programs, Bible studies, and other needs. Bishop Peter Jugis of Charlotte led the dedication ceremony and blessed the hall.

About 40 percent of the 22,500-square-foot building is ready for use. The rest of the space will be rented as a

source of parish income.

Before the ceremony, pastor Father Jerome Chavarria, C.Ss.R., said, “We are ‘immigrants’ from everywhere—New York to Massachusetts, Colombia to Mexico, Ohio to Tennessee, Florida to Texas, and everywhere in between,” according to an article published April 5 in the *Catholic News Herald*, diocesan newspaper for the Diocese of Charlotte, N.C.

“We are from everywhere, but we have two things in common. We are Roman Catholics living as a minority in the Bible Belt that is Charlotte, N.C., and we

practice our faith in the Americas watched over by the Patroness of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe.”

The former pastor,

Father Joseph Dionne, C.Ss.R., came from Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Newton Grove, N.C., to be present. ■



Top: An exterior view of St. James the Greater Church in Concord, N.C. Bottom: This 22,500-square foot building has now been renovated and on April 4 was dedicated as Our Lady of Guadalupe Hall. The parish will use a portion of the building and rent the rest.



Our Lady of Lourdes Parish confirmation class of 2017, seen with Bishop W. Francis Malooly of Wilmington, Del.

Our Lady of Lourdes: continuing the journey

By *Annette C. Silva*

First, a little history. Seaford, located in Sussex County, is often called “lower, slower Delaware” by northern folks. Our Lady of Lourdes, part of the Wilmington Diocese, was created in the 1940s as a small Catholic mission in a downtown storefront. By 1948 there were enough Catholic families to build a church. In 1970 our Hispanic population was growing, and the Redemptorists sent us priests known the world over for bringing the word of Christ’s love and mercy to many forgotten people in the tradition of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Since then the Redemptorists have blessed our parish with the apostolic zeal of St. John Neumann. In Seaford we now have two priests from India whom God sent to us from the Liguori Province of Kerala. Parishioners repeatedly comment about our priests’ depth of spirituality and wisdom. They definitely have

something in India that we need in America.

Fast forward. Our Lady of Lourdes is now an active parish serving nearly 900 families. We will celebrate the parish’s 70th anniversary in 2018, so it is time to look forward. Things are happening.

Our big news is a capital campaign to build a new rectory. Our priests, a dedicated parish council, and a master planning committee received the blessing of the diocese and initiated a plan and architectural drawings. The campaign is titled Taking Our Past Into the Future—Continuing the Journey.

This was a long process of volunteer work by parishioners with legal, architectural, engineering, historical, financial, fundraising, and zoning expertise. It required hosting parish hall gatherings to inform, educate, and solicit ideas from parishioners. In addition to a healthy on-campus home for our priests, the plan includes

parish offices, a meeting room, fellowship space, and, if all goes well, counseling and classroom space.

The old rectory, built in 1952, has deteriorated and is woefully inadequate, with mold and electrical problems. Father Clement Vadakkedath, observing the state of affairs upon his arrival in Seaford, invested a great deal of time and energy in this project. The diocese has offered fundraising direction for a capital campaign to begin this fall.

Father Clement and Father Paul Kuzhimannil Mathew have come to us from a part of the world where Catholic community is ingrained. They have blessedly shared that spirit with us. North Americans, in general, are by nature independent and caught up in their daily lives. A mobile and materialistic culture has robbed us of the sense of community. Our priests are truly a gift from God. (And they didn’t pay me to say this.)

I'm a convert to the Catholic faith, and my husband is a "revert." We are understanding more each day what a community of faith looks like. For cradle Catholics, Church history and devotion are inspired at a young age. We new members (many of whom have migrated here from other states, cities, or countries) are blown away by the generous and merciful concept of community—the tangible and intangible sense of belonging that our society lacks in a modern world.

Our parish includes an active St. Vincent de Paul Society that feeds and helps the needy. They work with businesses in the area that contribute food, including a southern Delaware poultry company which donates fresh chickens for the Society to package and distribute. St. Vincent's has relationships with shelters and safe havens for women, designated monies for the indigent, and a discreet call-in and communication network to assist desperate people.

Approximately 40 percent of our parish-

ioners are Hispanic. In these uncertain times, the Church is their primary place to celebrate faith and tradition. Our Hispanic community is metaphorically living in limbo. Its members contribute their essential spirit of family and love for the Church but often cannot afford to contribute financially. Our Lady of Lourdes, in some ways, resembles an overseas mission planted in a semi-rural American town.

The effort to educate our entire community, including our Hispanics members, is bearing fruit. They are receiving instruction (in Spanish) on marriage preparation, Bible study, and the sacraments. We hope to continue our

English as a second language program when the immigration "elephant in the room" problem is solved and people are able to concentrate again.

The Knights of Columbus are active here and work with boys in the parish to train them in the ways of service and responsibility.

I am only touching on the subject of our ministries, but all 25 of them fill a need, from the prayer shawl ministry to our Pastoral Care Ministry.

One of the vital missions of the Church is the education of the young. About 200 children are enrolled in CCD classes. In May 47 children received their first Communion

and 40 were confirmed.

Education for adult Catholics is also important at Our Lady of Lourdes, and there seems to be a yearning for deeper knowledge of our faith. We have a well-schooled couple, Jim and Mary Delclos, who teach Bible classes throughout the year, using materials from Ascension Press.

So you see, at Our Lady of Lourdes we have much to do for now and into our future. That's why we officially named our capital campaign Taking Our Past Into the Future—Continuing the Journey. There is so much good going on with our Redeemptorist community here. We are a Church and a mission. ■



A family participates in a bilingual parish event held June 26.

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This year marks a transition for students in formation, as those who have been studying in Chicago and Boston will now complete their theological education at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. Father Peter Hill and Father Mick Fleming will lead the community, and the students' education will be conducted in English and Spanish.

In the Bronx formation program, Brother Gene Patin will continue in his role, joined by Father Bob Wojtek and Father Joe Ngo.

The formation programs at the University of Dallas and the University of St. Thomas in Houston, where courses are conducted primarily in Vietnamese and



North American Redemptorist students gathered at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, N.Y., during the fourth week in May for formation, learning, building friendships, and—for some—the renewal of vows.

English, will continue. Father Francis Dang will remain in a

leadership role with others on the formation teams in Texas. ■



On May 11 Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw, OFM (second from left), of Lahore, Pakistan, visited St. Peter the Apostle Church in Philadelphia and is seen here greeting schoolchildren. At left is Father Dominic Ishaq of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Tribunal; in the center is Father Richard Bennett, pastor, and at right Sister Rose Federici, SSND, school principal.



Father Paul Borowski, Provincial Superior, gives Cardinal Joseph Tobin a special 65th-birthday gift during a party held May 3 at San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, N.J. View more photos at <http://provincialnews.org/festivities-at-san-alfonso/>.



From May 30 through June 1 Father Enrique Lopez (right) directed the Province Retreat on the General Chapter Documents and Theme at San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, N.J. Celebrating Mass with him are (from left) Father John McGowan and Father Paul Borowski. View more photos at <http://provincialnews.org/festivities-at-san-alfonso/>.

News briefs

Provincial archivist presents paper in Rome

Dr. Patrick Hayes of the Baltimore Province and another provincial archivist recently took part in a University of Notre Dame history conference in Rome. During a session focused on North Atlantic communities in Rome during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Dr. Hayes presented the paper “Footprint on the Esquiline: The Legacy of Father Edward Douglas, a Scot in Rome.”

A Scottish convert, Father Douglas inherited a great deal of wealth from his ancestors and “distributed it liberally on congregational projects,” according to an article published July 7 on *Scala News*. Read the article here: <http://baltreds.us/2tpaPS4>

Boston bids farewell to theology students

On Sunday, May 28, Mission Church in Boston held a farewell celebration for Father Denis Sweeney—moving to St. Martin of Tours Church in Bethpage, N.Y.—and the theology students who are moving to the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, this fall. View all the photos here: <http://baltreds.us/2ty8MK7>

Two from Baltimore Province take course in Rome

On June 26 more than two dozen Redemptorists from Afri-



Parishioners of Mission Church in Boston threw a party May 28 for Father Denis Sweeney and the Redemptorist students who are leaving this summer.

ca, Asia-Oceania, and North America met in Rome to begin a three-week course in Redemptorist spirituality. Father Dennis Billy and Father Bob Wojtek are among them.

In his article on the course for *Scala News*, Father Billy said participating confreres would study key insights in Redemptorist spirituality and visit Alphonsonian locations in Italy, including Frosinone, Scifelli, Scala, Ciorani, St. Agatha of the Goths, Naples, Mater Domini, Pagani, and Marianella.

The English-language course is being led by Father Piotr Chyla, C.Ss.R., and George Puthenpura, C.Ss.R., the director and assistant director, respectively, of the Redemptorist Spirituality

Center in Rome.

Father Billy writes that participants’ experience “will be enriched by the daily celebration of the Eucharist, a visit to the Catacombs of St. Callistus, and the opportunity to attend a papal audience.” Read the article here: <http://baltreds.us/2sUPSLB>

Feast day of Our Mother of Perpetual Help celebrated in Rome

Hundreds of the faithful celebrated Our Mother of Perpetual Help on June 25 in a Mass at St. Alphonsus Church in Rome and a procession through the nearby streets. Redemptorist Superior Father Michael Brehl was the presider. Read the article here: <http://baltreds.us/2sURkxk> ■