Views of the Sacristy Project

East side (exterior)

Pouring of concrete roof slab

Torch-on roofing (Br. Joseph and crew)

South view (interior)

North view (interior)
“And a good time was had by all.”

We had the third biennial All-Alumni Reunion on Victoria Day, May 20, 2019. About 90 former seminarians came to grace the day for us. Because of the liquid sunshine we had the meal in the gym after the 10:30 AM Mass and Midday Prayer. Father James Hughes, Alumni Association President, was the main celebrant at Mass, and Fr Eugenio Aloisio was the homilist.

The delicious lunch consisted of spaghetti and pasta sauce, and sandwiches made by ladies from Our Lady of Assumption Parish in Port Coquitlam.

There was a polyphonic motet – Ravanello’s *Haec Dies* – by a choir of monks and seminarians, then a welcome by Father Richard Au, Alumni Association Vice-President. Monsignor Bernard Rossi (pictured above), who spent 13 years in the seminary (1956 – 69), and who just celebrated his golden jubilee of ordination, gave some reminiscences of his days at SCK. Father Mark Dumont OSB, showed some photos of the seminary over the past 88 years, and Father Abbot John concluded with a short speech.
Irene Buytendorp

What would become nine years of shared life and gifts had an unlikely beginning in February 2010 when Irene Buytendorp brought a class of a dozen grade 11 French students on an excursion to the abbey. She was a seasoned French teacher with an annual budget for field trips. Her intention was to have students experience a Christian life of prayer and work, all the while employing French. The monastic community did not expect much more of this group than the fairly commonplace visit of yet one more school group. As it turned out, however, that day was providential for both sides. Irene, who had been teaching for a number of years at nearby Abbotsford Christian School, was encouraged by Father Abbot to return to the practice of her Catholic Faith. In turn, in the coming years the seminary gained a volunteer teacher of high calibre, who invested herself vigorously yet respectfully in the teaching of French in the seminary.

“Madame B” was the title by which she went. North American tongues don’t have a knack for Flemish names. If you wondered whether she had preferences in taste, one look at her appearance and teaching materials would tell you: the colour purple. And so it was with many other details. The hardest grades to teach in French are those just beginning and those soon ending. She volunteered at different times for both one and the other. For the former, one needs to adapt one’s teaching strategies for beginners; for the latter, one needs to provide an ample set of opportunities for communicating and encountering the language. Irene was adept at both levels. For those in Boot Camp, she was a coaxing mother and pitiless drill sergeant. For those in full march, she was an encouraging mentor and ever-vigilant commander. For both, she knew that a lad’s heart is made docile through treats: mini-croissants, madeleines, chocolates, anything of French origin.

With the monastic community, her relationship went far beyond the classroom. On the side, she tutored some of the monks who wished to improve their French. The fraternal witness of the community brought her support as she lived through the death of her husband George in 2014. Wanting to give of her time and talent for beautifying, she tamed and ordered several flower beds around the guesthouse under the direction of Father Abbot. At times, she shared her pedagogical expertise or offered shrewd observations on contemporary trends. One moment in French history that remained etched in her mind was the enthroning of the “goddess” Reason in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris in the aftermath of the French Revolution. That symbolised the situation of Christian Faith in France. That was what motivated her to instil a love of French in students: the faith of this eldest daughter of the Church needs to be bolstered by true Christian witnesses!

We remain deeply grateful to Irene for having walked with us and worked at our side these past few years. The Lord in His providence will surely repay her abundantly.
Ordination of Troy Nguyen

Deacon Troy Nguyen will be ordained to the priesthood at St Mary’s Cathedral, Calgary, on June 28th by Bishop William McGrattan.

Troy was born in Calgary in 1988 and attended school there before coming to the Seminary of Christ the King from 2003 to 2006. He continued on at St. Peter’s Seminary in London ON and then at St. Joseph’s in Edmonton and earned his B.A. and M.Div. degrees.

Troy took a few years off and attended the University of Calgary, receiving a B.Ed., and taught in Catholic schools.

He worked at various jobs during the summers and before entering the seminary, including as a parish receptionist, a waiter at his parents’ restaurant, and as a Productions Assistant in Toronto.

During his internship Troy enjoyed visiting schools and families, especially helping families reach out to their children. He also enjoys badminton, board games, hiking and snowboarding.

Troy will offer his first Mass at St. Peter’s Church in Calgary on June 29th.

We wish him many fruitful years in the Lord’s vineyard.

Theology of the Body with Katrina Zeno

Shortly after the seminarians returned from their Christmas break, exhausted and perhaps a little morose at the prospect of resuming their academic duties, they were hit by Hurricane Katrina. But this was a welcome hurricane which stirred them with the breath of the Spirit and drenched them with His gifts. Yes, Katrina Zeno, who had given the major seminarians their annual workshop in 2013, was back in full force with her unforgettable visual aids and her unforgettable zeal for sharing the riches contained in St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body.

Spending time with all three communities, to wit the monks, majors, and minors, she taught us all about the great gift of our bodies. Because God created us male and female, we can participate sacramentally in the life-giving love of the Blessed Trinity by giving ourselves totally, freely, faithfully, and fruitfully through our bodies. WOW! Unfortunately, this sublime gift has been terribly disfigured in our day and we can easily become disgusted with our bodies. Katrina woke us up from this disillusionment with the powerful refrain, “The body reveals God!” Until we receive our whole person (including our bodies) as a gift from God, made for union and communion, we
Major Seminary Diary

January 2019

23-26: Today marked the end of our annual silent retreat. This year it was given by His Excellency Bishop Jensen of the Diocese of Prince George. Bishop Jensen presented a number of reflections on the priesthood based on the image of Christ the High Priest illustrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He bolstered this with sections from the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (Presbyterorum Ordinis) as well as personal anecdotes from his own experience of being a priest and bishop. May the Lord continue to bless this shepherd and the flock he tends.

31: Second of the two ecumenical guests visited today. Mr. Greg Elford is the owner of The Penny; a coffee shop in downtown Mission. What’s unique about this coffee shop, however, is that it doubles a store front for New Heights Church, which he operates out of the shop’s basement level. The first of the two guests was Mr. Ron Donkersloot, principal of Valley Christian School. It was insightful to listen to Mr. Donkersloot’s experiences working in Christian education.

February 2019

8-10: This weekend we hosted a number of young men from throughout B.C. for a vocational live-in. Those visiting got to experience life here at the seminary, received talks on seminary and priestly life, were “treated” to talent show, and above all, to spend time in silent prayer, petitioning God for the light of discernment. “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send will not be able to experience the joy that comes from giving ourselves to God, others, nature, and to our very selves. Katrina’s joyful witness manifested what it means to live in the total gift of self that is love, according to the timeless treasure of St. John Paul II’s robust Trinitarian Anthropology. May God bless her as she continues in this invaluable service of making known the gift of God. VIVA THE GIFT!!!
forth labourers into His harvest.” (Matt. 9:38)

March 2019

13: Today we played a basketball game against the Senior Boys of Saint Jean de Brebeuf Regional Secondary School (SJB). The school came out in droves to fill the stands and were supportive of both sides; a truly energetic atmosphere. It was a close game throughout and although SJB pulled ahead by as much as ten points in the fourth quarter, we managed to limit the margin of our defeat to five points. More importantly, the game proved to be a wonderful opportunity, amidst the daily routine of study and prayer, to reach out to our local community and to foster vocations.

31: Today was the annual oratory contest. This year’s finalist were: An Vo (3rd), who spoke on abortion, Joseph Lefebvre (2nd), who told the story of his lengthy stay in the hospital and encouraged listeners to visit the infirm, and Lucas Tillotson (1st), who argued the importance of beauty in evangelization. Thank you, Lord, for our judges who were generous in giving their time and adjudication.

Spirituality Year Diary

January 2019

18: Today Scott Small, the director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Vancouver, brought us into the Downtown East Side to look at some of the ways the poor and homeless are served. We met and talked with staff at the Men’s Hostel and The Door Is Open, two Catholic charities that minister to the impoverished. Since there are many years of history in that part of the city, he took us around the neighborhood and pointed out some of the older or more noteworthy places.

January 22: Another tour today! This time we visited L’Arche in Burnaby, a ministry that serves the mentally handicapped and disabled by living in community with them. Throughout our time there we learned about the history and goal of the program and had the chance to meet some of the ‘core members’ (as the disabled are called) as well as some of the volunteers and full-time staff. It was a beautiful reminder of the practical ways one can live the Gospel, among which is loving service to our neighbour.

February 2019: The Spirituality Year seminarists were scattered abroad for a whole month of discipleship, immersion, and service. Three of us went to serve at the Men’s Hostel in downtown Vancouver, as well as volunteering at the myriad of ministries around that area. Two went to the aforementioned L’Arche community in Burnaby, and the last two went to Vietnam to help out on a medical aid mission and to volunteer at orphanages. For all of us the month pushed us out of our comfort zones as we tried to get used to a very simple and different way of life while serving those in need around us.

May 2019

4: By the time this goes to press we will have wrapped up the inaugural Spirituality Year Program with an eight day silent Ignatian retreat. It’s a chance for us to look back on the year and reflect on what we learned, as well as to discern our future with the aid of the Holy Spirit and a retreat master. It’s rather apt that we started this adventure in silence, and we’ll end it in the same fashion.
February 2019

1: Today, we had the great privilege to go and listen to the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra practice for their evening performance. There were two soloists who amazed us with their talent: one on the harp, and the other on the cello. The rest of the orchestra accompanied the soloist very beautifully, and we could tell they put a lot of emotion into their music. The first song they performed, quite flawlessly one might add, were two Dances from the Impressionist era that featured the sweeping arpeggios of the harp. The last music was newly composed, and the composer herself was present for the occasion. Its name, translated from Spanish, was “In the darkness, all is one.” This music is quite an acquired taste because it didn’t follow traditional musical patterns; but everyone appreciated the skill of the soloists in the piece, and the percussionists who were in charge of several different instruments all at once. During the intermission between their pieces, one of the violinists and French horn players stepped out to give us a brief and casual presentation of what it’s like to be part of an orchestra. After lunch we hopped back onto the bus, inspired to practise more for our own band.

27: All morning there was a spirit of excitement in the air. It was the day of the trip to the Museum of Anthropology at UBC. Nevertheless, we followed our morning routine and prayed our prayers like always, though still eager to get the day going.

At the museum, our guides kindly led us to a room where they gave us an intriguing introduction to First Nations art and history we would be learning about. They divided our group into two smaller and manageable groups. One group learned how to trace and replicate First Nations art, while the other toured the museum itself and learned many interesting facts about the artifacts that were in the museum. After that we had a delicious lunch that had been prepared at the seminary. Once we were all finished eating, the two groups swapped their activities. The learned guides told us of potlatches, totem poles, long-houses, masks, carvings of all sorts, and many other objects and traditions in First Nations culture. As the day was coming to a close, we said our thanks and got back on the bus. On the ride back we all talked and prayed and awaited our arrival at the seminary. That was definitely a day to remember.
As we say farewell to Fr. Alban and Br. Maximus, who are off to Rome for a three month course on translating liturgical Latin, the wonderful reality of community life is manifested by the many confreres who have taken up the various tasks which Father and Brother typically fulfill. Though it may not always be evident when our trust in Him is being tested, the Lord always supports us in our work and often does so through one another. And as we shall see, this wonderful reality of community life is by no means a lackadaisical life.

Prior to Spring, the boards on the bottom of the sports court fence were in serious disrepair. An opportunity to improve them opened up when the seminarians left for their Christmas break. Fr. Joseph seized the moment and, with the help of many others, he has been working on it ever since. The frigid days of February hindered the project so that the junior monks and the seminarians were compelled for several months to exercise their creativity along with their physique in activities other than hockey, from skating to ultimate frisbee. All in all, it is now evident that it was well worth the wait. The original boards had been in such a state of disarray as to send the ball bouncing where no one expected it or rolling right out of the rink. Now, however, there is a swanky perimeter of plywood with curved metal corners, all fastened scientifically as only Fr. Joseph knows how.

Further down the hill, Br. Emeric continues to attend to the farm. We seem to have had an unlucky stroke of gimpy bulls and this year is no different with our present bull crippled by a short leg. The herd, at fifty-two head, is doing well under Brother’s watchful care. The calf-count, which includes a pair of twins, accounts for seventeen of those husky heads. Because the twins’ mother favoured the elder daughter, Brother was compelled to devise ingenious ways to ensure that the younger brother had his share of milk.

Brother also receives plenty of eager help from monks and seminarians. Already, gates have been unwittingly left open and the delighted cattle enjoyed their escape before being herded back into their allotted domain. In order to prevent further bovine breakouts, a flurry of fence repairs has been underway.

On a slightly different note, the devotion of the cows’ greatest admirer, novice Andrew, was made legendary in a delightful skit for our Christmas talent show in which three Jews strike it rich in Nineveh, thanks to the preaching of Jonah and to the inhabitants’ doting care for their cows (See Jonah 3:7 and 4:11 for the inspiration behind the skit).

Br. Bartholomew and Br. Paschasius have taken on what we may call extra-curricular activities and have put their new knowledge to good use. Firstly, Br. Paschasius is assisting Fr. Nicholas in the maintenance of the monastic vehicles. He has also been working away in the tailor shop to produce a cope for Nazareth House and some chasubles for the monastic community. Br. Bartholomew, with access to the many tools at school, has been completing, in short order, a vast array of projects from reworking a large weatherworn cedar bench to fabricating furniture from scratch. One day, with Fr. Caesarius along to help with the computer-technical tools, the two of them made some much needed signs for our property. The sacristans are breathing a sigh of relief now that the church’s opening...
hours are available for visitors to view and the task of rounding people up before closing hours has thus become a little simpler.

Besides his studies and music practice, Frater Athanasius has finally completed a five-year plan which began in his postulancy. He had been assigned to type out the text and melody line of our Latin concelebration booklets in order to replace our former booklets which, let alone the Latin text, were nearly illegible for some of the confreres. New to such an endeavour, it was a long process of trial and error which, as Frater admits, “invaluably taught the value of consultation.”

Over the last few months, Fr. Basil has found it increasingly difficult to accompany the liturgy at the organ and so after sixty years of dedicated service, the Abbot has relieved him of this task. With gratitude for his many years of service, the task of organ accompaniment now passes into the hands of Fr. Caesarius, with Frater Athansius as his assistant. The latter pray that they too will be graced with Fr. Basil’s skilful and self-effacing touch when accompanying our chant.

Br. Joshua has been entrusted with many regular and essential tasks which he faithfully fulfills. Among these are picking up food on Wednesdays, porter duty on Thursdays, and cleaning stove-tops on Saturdays. Further, since one of our volunteer gardeners, Irene Buytendorp, has returned to her native Belgium, Brother is also taking an active hand in maintaining the flower beds. A budding pastry chef, it seems that Brother’s hands will soon be experienced with both baker’s flour and garden flowers.

Fr. Anthony has given our two novices, namely Andrew and Thomas, a thorough grounding in Benedictine formation. They have read four commentaries on the Holy Rule, two of which number over five hundred pages. Thoroughly enriched, so we hope, the novices are now writing their own commentaries.

The final tasks we shall mention here are those of Br. Joseph and his merry men, beginning with the furbishing of classroom doors with classroom-safe windows. Br. Joshua, the novices, and Postulant David all assisted in this endeavour. Apart from a few hiccups customary among apprenticing carpenters, such as the cutting of holes in either the wrong size or the wrong place, the work went well and the thankful teachers can resume closing their classroom doors. This intrepid crew has also helped clear the seminary attic for the continuing development of more fire-safe buildings - a need made all the more urgent by the unfortunate burning of Notre Dame Cathedral.

All these labours, as numerous as they may be, are merely the tip of the iceberg. We have passed over many regular duties indispensable for keeping up a monastery, two seminaries, a guesthouse, and a farm. And then, of course, there is the hidden and difficult task of daily converting to the Lord from whom we have all “departed by the sloth of disobedience” (RB Prologue). May the Lord bless our work in community and “bring us all together to life everlasting!” (RB Ch. 72).
Patrick Benedict ’57 and his wife Linda visited on May 4th from Penticton, BC. They spend the winters in the southwest US.

Alumni who are celebrating jubilees this year include: Father Basil Foote, OSB, 60th of ordination on May 23rd.

Monsignor Bernard Rossi, 50th of ordination on May 10th.

Father Dino Benedet, CSsR, 50th of ordination on Sept. 27th.

Two alumni celebrate their Silver Jubilee of Ordination:

Fathers Joseph Cuong Dinh Vu, CSJB, and Paul Thanh Huu Nguyen, CSJB, both ordained on June 13, 1994 in Taichung, Taiwan, as members of the Congregation of St John the Baptist. To all our jubilarians: Ad multos annos!

Changes in the Vancouver archdiocese, effective July 11, include: as assistant pastors: Fathers Lucio Choi ’16, to St. Matthew’s, Surrey; Lawrence Travis ’02, to St. Joseph’s, Langley (part-time); Guy Zidago ’18, to Star of the Sea, Surrey. Father Paul Goo ’16 becomes the Director of Vocations and Seminarians.

The City of Nelson and its Cultural Development Committee have presented Nelson residents Frances and Ron Welwood ’57 with a special citation in recognition of for their lifetime work in preserving, promoting and documenting Nelson’s history. As the PAX REGIS goes to press we received word that Dominic Leo, OSB ’11 was ordained a priest on May 25th at St Vincent’s Archabbey, Latrobe PA. There will be a fuller biography of him in the next issue. He is the 250th alumnus of SCK to be ordained to the priesthood.

On May 4, Brother Chrysostom (Christopher) Mijninke, ’08, made solemn vows as a Dominican at St. Albert’s Priory, Oakland, California.

Requiescant in pace:

Arthur Wright ’56, died January 1, 2019 in Victoria BC. He had been in the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa and served as a Foreign Service Officer in Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Tanzania and India, followed by serving as Ambassador/High Commissioner in Bangladesh, Barbados and Zimbabwe.

Joan Dumont, sister of Father Mark, OSB, died in Victoria BC on March 22nd.

Larry Park, brother of Father Joseph, OSB, died in Oregon on April 8th.