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“

Let us place our first step in the ascent at the bottom, presenting to ourselves the whole material world as a mirror through which we may pass over to God, the supreme [Artisan] ”

— Saint Bonaventure (1221–1274)

This edition of *Canadian Jesuits* focuses on one of the most urgent calls facing humanity and creation: caring for our Common Home.

It is no secret that our planet is facing a climate emergency. The most reputable scientific organizations agree that human activity is causing profound and systemic environmental damage that threatens our existence.

And this environmental crisis is particularly affecting the poorest and most vulnerable. Christians and all people of good will are called to act urgently. We're in need of an ecological conversion if we are to be honest custodians of this wonderful planet and avoid its destruction. We can still change the course of history.

We Jesuits and colleagues do not ignore this cry of suffering from creation. In fact, it is part of our four Universal Apostolic Preferences, which orient our efforts for the next ten years.

Our social centres, such as the Centre Justice et Foi, study the structural causes of the emergency, collaborating with schools, universities, and others who share our concerns to promote fundamental solutions.

Our educational institutions, such as the University of Sudbury and Regis College, and those who work in them, seek to

ensure that the younger generation is informed, aware, and able to incorporate this issue with their faith.

And, perhaps most fundamentally, spiritual and pastoral centres, parishes, and chaplaincies seek to work together to emphasise awareness of God's call to love all that is sacred.

But, of course, we cannot do this alone. The climate emergency is global and systemic and therefore requires us to join forces with those who influence change in these structures.

In this issue we not only highlight the efforts we lead as the Society of Jesus, but we also highlight the ways in which we collaborate with other drivers of change.

We provide concrete examples of how Jesuits in Canada are working and cooperating with others in this regard.

Our hope is that the stories shared in these pages will inspire those who feel inclined to participate, to join, with Gospel depth, in this mission of reconciliation and resurrection in our common home.

José Antonio Sánchez
Director



Photo: Stijn Dijkstra de Pexels

“

*Jesus saw God
in all that he saw.”*

— James Finley

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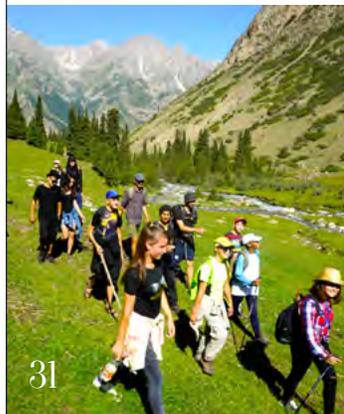
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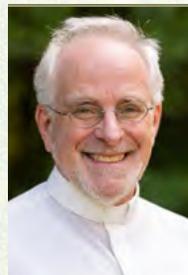
I grew up in rural New Brunswick, with its abundance of forests and rivers, as well as the ocean within easy reach. Thus, from an early age, I developed a deep appreciation for unspoiled nature. I reminisce fondly about the times when, with siblings and friends, I could take off for days at a time to the beautiful island in the middle of the river, a half hour's sail from where we lived. I'm amazed to recollect that 10- and 12-year-olds were permitted to do such things in those days. Being from the country, I was doubly appreciative that we were far enough away from the city of Saint John not to pick up the sulfur smell that emanated from the local pulp mill. I ask myself the question today: Did it really sink in during those salad days that many others were less fortunate than I, knowing as I did even then the stories about vulnerable residents in the city whose health was affected by those toxic fumes?

Youthful memories run deep, yet I am grateful to have learned that to appreciate the beauty of nature unspoiled is not enough in an age fraught with the preoccupations of ecological crisis and climate change, and the unavoidable and difficult question: What kind of world do we want to leave for those who come after us? The imperative to better care for our common home needs to be heard and acted upon, especially by those of us who live in the so-called First World. We need to acknowledge the fact that at the root of the current crisis is the truth that Western industrialization and the exploitation of natural resources have aided the prosperity and privilege of our beautiful country. Equally crucial is the fact that our comfort and flourishing has been too often at the expense of fellow human beings in other parts of the world who struggle to find food and clean water, often as the result of the abusive practices of multinational companies.

Pope Francis wrote his celebrated encyclical *Laudato Si'* five years ago and most recently *Fratelli Tutti*. Both of these inspired writings challenge Catholics, and indeed the whole world, to wake up to the reality of our suffering biosphere, to gain a greater sense of engagement and responsibility for the care of our common home, and

to develop a deeper sensitivity to the common good associated with the deeply Christian truism of the brotherly and sisterly love among all human beings. Good Pope Francis reminds us that this is God's deepest desire for the world. Shouldn't we all want what God wants?

The Jesuits of Canada and our partners are doing our utmost to live out the sacred and human values that are at the root of the founding desires of the first Jesuits almost five hundred years ago and that resonate so forcefully with the prophetic leadership of our brother Jesuit, Pope Francis. No less does the contemporary articulation of Jesuit values as espoused by the Universal Apostolic Preferences and our own recent Canadian Jesuit document *Pilgrims Together* express our hope for a world where alle *Menschen werden bruder* (Beethoven's setting of Schiller's poem in the *Ode to Joy* of his Ninth Symphony); a world where all people will recognize their common origins that connect them with each other and with the Earth. The Jesuits came to this country in the seventeenth century, naively displacing the healthy and established cultures of our Indigenous brothers and sisters who, we are only beginning to understand, have so much to teach us in terms of respect for nature and the best qualities of human collaboration. I encourage Jesuits, our coworkers, and you, our friends, to make every effort to listen, to dialogue, to learn, and to emulate God's great desire for healing and peace among peoples. We need you. God needs you. AMDG



Erik Oland, SJ
**Provincial of the
Jesuits of Canada**

Cultivating the land and the soul: the work of the Ferme Berthe-Rousseau

by Fannie Dionne | photos : Ferme Berthe-Rousseau



Photo : José Sánchez



After months of confinement in Montreal, I was happy to visit the 40 acres of the Ferme Berthe-Rousseau in Durham South. The organization's mission: to welcome and house people living in difficult circumstances.. Marie-Ève Barbeau, one of the farm's team members, received me with the joy and passion that were already apparent when we spoke on the phone.

Although the farm is nondenominational, it is in fact part of the network of Jesuit works in Canada. Firmly rooted in the Ignatian value of contemplation in action, it offers residents an opportunity to step back from their day-to-day routine and gain a new perspective on reality, a perspective that is perhaps more focused on the positive aspects of their lives. "We are women and men who value life above all," says Michel Corbeil, SJ, one of the founders. "This includes all of us and implies an awareness of what is happening within and around us." The Ignatian dimension of justice and ecology is also being lived on the farm. "We are making choices that may seem

**In 2019-2020
the farm welcomed:**

- 16 residents
- 24 groups, totalling 296 visitors (schools and other organizations)
- 456 individual visitors who made 1,072 visits



photos : Ferme Berthe-Rousseau

radical in light of today's organizations that need to be profitable and results-oriented," says Marie-Ève.

At the farm, hospitality, ecology, community life, and education are different aspects of the same mission. Organic agricultural production serves as the basis for communal living, accompaniment, listening, and building relationships.

Pascal Melançon, a former resident, poetically describes life on the farm: "At Ferme Berthe-Rousseau, we take care of the land and the water as well as what is most beautiful in ourselves. We garden and care for animals and people, heart-to-heart and hand-to-hand. At the break of dawn, we begin to sow the seeds of goodness and beauty, for the common good.

A BIT OF HISTORY

With the establishment of the international cooperation organization "Salut, le monde!" in the 1980s and after having been warmly welcomed by families in Central America who shared what little they had, a group of people in Quebec were inspired to create a project to accompany those who were marginalized. The farm was born.

"They wanted to work with people who have mental health issues, who are homeless, who are isolated," explains Marie-Ève. "The mission is to welcome people who need a place where their spirits can be restored and where community life can ground them. It is a place of transition, but there is no pressure to reach a certain level of reintegration." Julia Roy, who's also in charge, adds, "The farm is a place where we are really welcomed and accepted as we are."

In short, it's "a place where we can be Zen and not have to perform," according

to William, a resident. And ecology is an integral part of the farm's mission.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ECOLOGY

The farm is a model of sustainable living. "We do the dishes by hand so that we can spend time together. We have a composting toilet to save water. The zero-waste lifestyle is popular right now, but when you live on the farm, it comes naturally. . . . Visitors and residents are made aware of the importance of protecting our common home," Marie-Ève points out.

This attention to the environment was at the very foundation of the organization. "All the people who were there when the farm began were attracted by the values of local, eco-friendly farming," explains Marie-Ève. The farm has a dairy cow and dairy goats as well as a fruit and vegetable garden where the harvest lasts a good part of the year.

"We offer the residents hands-on, practical work as a way for them to get out of their heads. What's interesting is that the project enables these people who are usually marginalized because of mental health issues to experience a sense of belonging to a group. When they arrive at the farm, they quickly feel that they are involved in a different type of project, one that is meaningful."

"Gardens are a wonderful excuse to spend time with people, to show them what it means to be self-sufficient and active, to help them restore a sense of balance in their lives," adds Julia, a former vegetable gardener. "It's rewarding to say, 'Hey, we're going to eat the food that I grew in my garden.'"

"For me, being on the farm is like taking a break. It's a time to rest, to relax. Here, I feel like I'm working," says William, who had heard about the farm when he was in therapy.



Marie-Ève adds: “Someone who recently came to the farm said: ‘All my life, I have been considered a parasite on society, but now I have the opportunity to participate in a common project that is bigger than me. It’s different than being in a place where I don’t fit in.’”

Community work—in the barn or garden, for example—does a lot of good for people, even though not all residents have a strong interest in agriculture.

COMMUNITY LIFE

During the visit, Marie-Ève introduced me to her spouse, also one of the people responsible for the farm, and their two young children. As part of their approach to community life, the team lives on site, which offers an opportunity for informal moments of connection between the residents and the team, where “the most wonderful interactions happen.”

In addition to residents, the community regularly welcomes visitors who come for a much-needed break. Meals are sometimes served to as many as 25 people! The farm is also open to the wider community and has developed strong ties with its neighbors and the village of Durham-Sud.

During our visit to the garden, we meet Jean-Marc, a neighbor who is picking cucumbers. He speaks enthusiastically about the fact that the farm has created networks of relationships. “I’m a native of this area, and I’ve met a lot of people through my time at the farm. It creates bonds and introduces you to new people, new ways of thinking. It brings new energy to the community.”

IMPACT ON A LARGER SCALE

Ferme Berthe-Rousseau also has an educational mission. “Last year,” recalls Jean-Marc, “young people from Collège Régina Assumpta were surprised to see that this is how we grow vegetables!” Marie-Ève adds: “Groups of scouts came to visit, and we cleaned the fields with them. One girl said, ‘Now I understand all the energy and effort behind the pint of milk I buy at the grocery store.’ When she said that, I thought to myself, this is why we exist!”

Everyone should go for a visit! “It’s amazing to see what it does for you to be in such a beautiful, peaceful place, so connected with nature, with animals. It’s really wonderful,” concludes Julia

You can read more of this article at <https://bit.ly/fermeBR-ENG>



Fannie Dionne is a historian, a mother of two boys (loves coffee!), and passionate about social justice and ecology. She holds a PhD on Jesuit-Indigenous relations in New France, an MA in French literature and a certificate in communication.

New seeds of hope for an old forest

by Fannie Dionne and José Sanchez | photos : Ignatius Old-Growth Forest



The Ignatius Old-Growth Forest Project is one of the ministries of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph Ontario. It consists of nearly 100 protected acres of trails, forests, meadows, wetlands, and waterways that are home to a rich biodiversity of plant and animal life. The values of the centre, oriented by Ignatian principles such as finding God in all things and practicing a faith that does justice, are an integral part of the project's foundation. It encourages the sharing of the sacredness of creation through spiritual development, education, community building and the care and stewardship of the earth.

"Working with nature, restoring habitats, and inspiring young people to be part of nature is a spiritual journey," said Martin Tamlyn, the manager of the Old-Growth Forest. A member of the Centre's team for the past five years, he left a career as a school teacher to be part of the healing process of the ecological crisis. In the following interview, he gives an overview of the project.

WHAT IS THE OLD-GROWTH FOREST PROJECT?

Most of the original forest that was on the project site was removed during colonization, says Mr. Tamlyn. The long-term vision of the Ignatius Old-Growth Forest is to restore the site to old-growth forest.

“There are two distinct aspects to this project. One is to restore the land, the other is to engage the community—including schools and volunteers in the process of healing the land. Ecological restoration can have a great impact on a community, helping people develop a greater sense of community and a deeper connection to place, as well as fostering a sense of the common good. People come here to see what we we’re able to do; they see restoration in action and then apply that knowledge to their own ecological communities. It is a catalyst.”

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

We are in the midst of an ecological crisis and humanity is disconnected from the natural world: “We need ecological conversion,” explains Mr. Tamlyn, perhaps echoing Pope Francis’s message in the encyclical *Laudato si’*.

“Through this journey toward healing the earth we are also healing our relationships to it and each other. It addresses one of the key questions toward living sustainably: What does a reciprocal relationship to the planet that sustains look like in our modern times? Not only is it an exciting journey but one of great richness and hope for future generations.”

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE IGNATIUS OLD-GROWTH FOREST?

Ricardo Ramirez, an independent consultant, conducted an evaluation of the Ignatius Old-Growth Forest (Guelph’s “best kept secret”!) as part of the Ontario Trillium Foundation’s generous grant to the project. He explains, “By planting trees ... people feel connected to nature and humanity.”

The project allows students who visit the forest to take concrete actions to combat climate change. Who benefits from the project? Me, the tree I planted, the environment, the community. Visitors—both adult retreatants and students of different grade levels—enjoyed their experience. Here are some of their comments:



I found the visit to the forest informative and inspiring. I feel that a whole new dimension of spirituality has been awakened. The subsequent walks along the forest trails greatly enhanced my prayer time.”

“I have found my bliss.”

“It showed me how a simple action can have a big impact.”

“In the future, I want to be a person who helps save the planet.”

At a broader level, the evaluation indicates that the project has made a significant impact on the participants. The following are excerpts from the findings:

- There is better interaction between staff members in their work environment.
- Participants are more sensitive to other natural sites that they encounter in their day-to-day lives.
- The project fosters a stronger commitment to the environment.
- Participants recognize the sense of calm that can result from a connection with nature.
- The project helps to develop a sense of community.

HOW ARE ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONNECTED WITH SPIRITUALITY?

According to Mr. Tamlyn, the metaphor of a journey helps to explain how spirituality and the care of our common home are connected.

It begins with opening your heart. By taking care of something, you fall in love. Choosing to nurture love is part of this journey. To quote Dr. Peter Leigh from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: “The feeling of awe and wonder is transcendental.” The next part of the journey is mystery. This mystery involves understanding the magic of the ecological processes and connections. After that comes knowledge, to be watchful noticing the subtle changes, being able to name the plants and animals, and having a more holistic understanding of the impacts and solutions to ecosystem degradation and climate change. It provides an opportunity for individuals to work in solidarity toward caring for our common home. All these experiences lead you to engage your entire being in a reality that is much bigger than you realized. And this can be described as a spiritual experience.

The evaluators shared that during the evaluation they “witnessed something precious.”



RESTORATION MILESTONES

Since the project’s conception in 2006, Ignatius staff, in collaboration with volunteers, community groups, and government and environmental agencies, have made great strides.

Here are some key accomplishments:



The removal of the Ignatius Dam to allow Marden Creek to flow freely into the Speed River



Conducted an ecological assessment of the land and developed a long-term restoration plan



The return of cold-water species such as sculpin and brook trout to the section of the creek on project lands



The reforestation of the land by planting 2,000 native trees and shrubs per year



The securing of a conservation easement through the Ontario Farmland Trust, which protects the land forever



The ongoing removal of invasive plant species

For more information about the Old-Growth Forest, please visit:

<https://ignatiusguelph.ca/old-growth-forest/>



José Sánchez is the Director of Communications for the Jesuits of Canada. Of Venezuelan origin and with a decade of experience in communications, journalism, and new business ventures, he is now completing a master’s degree in theological studies at Regis College, University of Toronto.

The ministry of fresh mangoes, meaty coconuts and the shade of trees

by Fannie Dionne | photos : Jean Denis Saint Félix, SJ, Marcel Charélus, SJ and Frère Mathurin

“ Sometimes I find it hard to look at the deforested mountains in some departments,” says Br. Marcel Charélus, SJ, director of the Centre de Spiritualité Pierre-Favre in Port-au-Prince. Fortunately, Haitian Jesuits such as Br. Marcel and Br. Mathurin Charlot, SJ, are involved in some reforestation projects. The latter, an agricultural technician and one of the oldest Jesuits in Haiti, works in the Artibonite Department with the Project to Support Reforestation and Agricultural Development (PAREDA).

Br. Marcel describes their work and the impact of reforestation. In Haiti, planting trees has many benefits for people.

HOW DO YOU AND BR. MATHURIN CONTRIBUTE TO REFORESTATION?

Br. Mathurin’s job focuses on the environment. He works in a rural setting, accompanying farmers. He is also involved in reforestation; we don’t see many people up in his area doing this type of work. What he does is very beautiful; he reforests small mountains. He grows a lot of high-quality mangoes. It’s one of his best products, even though he doesn’t like to eat them! The area where he lives is covered with trees: mango trees, coconut palms, tamarind trees. He also grows beans, onions, tomatoes, bananas.



He prepares a lot of fruit-tree seeds, such as lemon and coconut, and gives them to people to plant elsewhere. I do the same at the retreat centre where I accompany people. The place is surrounded by trees. People often ask: "Marcel, can you give me a mango plant and some flowers? I'd like to plant them, too. They're beautiful, and there aren't any where we live."

WHY ARE THE JESUITS IN HAITI WORKING ON REFORESTATION?

In Br. Mathurin's time, the country was totally covered with trees. Even I, who am younger than he, remember when my home was totally surrounded by woods, when the mountains were not bare as they are today.

And we Jesuits preach ecology, we often talk about the environment, like our Pope Francis. We are mostly country people, so we are interested in the environment. We have a love for trees, for plants. It's in our blood.

WHAT IMPACT DOES REFORESTATION HAVE ON THE PEOPLE OF HAITI?

There are places in the country that don't have any trees, places where it's impossible to live or breathe because of the unrelenting heat of the sun. You can sometimes travel for miles without seeing any trees, it's completely desolate. And Haiti currently lacks infrastructure. In Port-au-Prince, when there is no rain, everything is covered in dust. When it rains, you're knee-deep in mud and debris. But where there are plants and trees, you find gentle rain, fresh air, and shade.

People who come to the spirituality centre are amazed to see that we live in a healthy environment, thanks to the trees. They don't need to stay inside the house or the building; they spend their days comfortably outside, in the shade amidst the fragrant trees and the birds. Even in Haiti's heat, when we sit under the mango trees, we can breathe. The people who come for retreats do not want to leave! There's a variety of trees, even fruit trees. People

The Support Group for Rural Development (GADRU) provides technical supervision of farmers, capacity building for farmers' organizations, and the transformation of agricultural products, as well as raises awareness on ecology issues (see the last issue of the magazine)



come to the centre, they relax, and they find fruit to eat. Beautiful mangoes. Or maybe fresh coconuts. Everything tastes good.

IT IS BEAUTIFUL!

Fr. Midy Godfroy, SJ, once gave a retreat on beauty. Beauty is more than just aesthetics, it is also the natural environment and our inner world. It includes all that surrounds us, what we breathe, what we eat, what we experience. He took both a biblical approach and an environmental approach. This is beauty.

Artibonite is one of the ten departments of Haiti. Its surface area is 4,887 km²



OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH—CREATIVELY PRESENT TO THE COMMUNITY DURING COVID-19

During the long period of lockdown, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Toronto set up a ministry to connect volunteers with parishioners who were isolated for reasons of health or age, offering them a friendly phone call or help to pick up groceries or medication. Volunteers connected with more than 75 isolated parishioners. The parish food bank also remained open thanks to Jesuits and volunteers.



photo : Facebook

JESUITS OF CANADA RESPOND TO THE DEATH OF JOYCE ECHAQUAN

On September 28, Joyce Echaquan, a member of the Atikamekw First Nation of Manawan, died in a hospital in Quebec, amidst a barrage of dehumanizing racist insults. The Jesuits of Canada expressed their deep sympathy to her family and community and their solidarity with the First Nations in their frustration regarding the extent of systemic prejudice and discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Canada. “To transform the places where the virus of racism lurks within us, particularly among those of us who are not Indigenous, we must actively engage in the fight against racism and decolonize our attitudes and institutions. Most importantly, we need the help of our Indigenous sisters and brothers. We must listen to their voices and learn from their wisdom.”

WINDOWS ON THEOLOGY AT REGIS COLLEGE

As Pope Francis points out, the ecological crisis is the manifestation of a deeper crisis of modernity that has “ethical, cultural, and spiritual” dimensions. We are all called to heal the relationship between ourselves and the wider Earth community. To do so, we need not only transformed technologies, policies, and economics but also practical and ethical know-how. Ecological wisdom capable of discerning a path toward just and loving relationships is paramount. Just before the pandemic (which is itself related to this ecological crisis) hit Canada, Regis College launched a series of courses through its Windows on Theology program called “Ecological Wisdom: Righting Our Relationships with Each Other and the Earth.”



Service for Discernment in Common
Service pour le Discernement en Commun

NEW SERVICE FOR DISCERNMENT IN COMMON

The Jesuit Province of Canada has recently established a new way to be of service to, among others, nonprofit organizations and the private sector by helping them to engage in a process of communal discernment. This process helps each organization to become more aware of its purpose and mission and thus to act more authentically. It enables groups to be more efficient and supportive, it gives people a greater understanding of the purpose of their work, and it improves performance and entrepreneurship. How does discernment in common differ from traditional decision-making processes? It shifts the focus away from the problem itself and redirects it to the meaning of the group’s action, its ultimate goal, its identity, and its foundation. The decision is thus anchored in the mission of the group.

IGNATIUS JESUIT CENTRE

Those who work, walk, play, and pray on the land of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre experience firsthand the deep connection between humans and the sacredness of Earth. This experience of connection can be extremely powerful, evoking a deep sense of peace and promoting physical, mental, and spiritual health. The Ignatius Jesuit Centre provides programs, such as retreats, to foster deeper ecological awareness and connection with the Earth

JESUIT COMMUNITIES

The Jesuit communities of the province have deepened their commitment to the protection of our common home in a variety of ways, including energy-efficient renovations, responsible consumption of resources, and waste sorting



Photo : Canadian Jesuits International

THE JESUIT FORUM

The Jesuit Forum engages people in reflecting deeply and sharing what's happening in our globalized world, starting with their own experience. It publishes guides to encourage dialogue on issues related to social and ecological justice at the local and global levels.

CENTRE JUSTICE ET FOI

The Centre justice et foi is a center for social analysis whose activities focus on our relationship with our common home and the climate crisis, among other critical issues. It explores the underlying causes of the crisis in collaboration with the higher education sector and others who share our concerns.

THE IGNATIUS JESUIT CENTRE'S TWO-EYED KNOWING PROJECT

Informed by the inherent values of respect, relationships, reciprocity and responsibility for indigenous ways of seeing,

Taking care of our common home:

Other works and projects

doing and knowing, the Two-eyed knowing project invites us to continually learn how to maintain a holistic approach to caring for our common home. By weaving together indigenous and western knowledge systems in this way, we gain a more complete picture and narrative of how we are integrally connected to the planet and to each other.

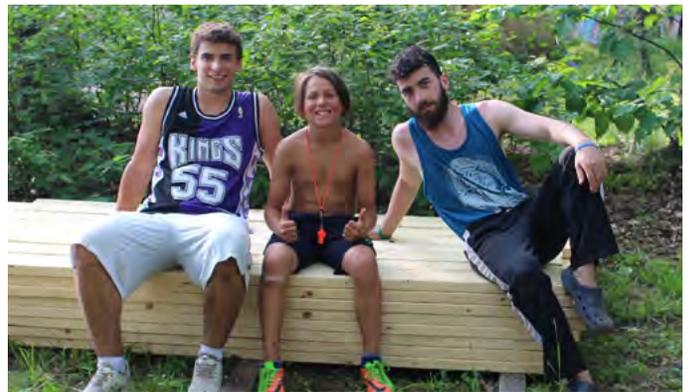


Photo : Camp Lac Simon

CAMP LAC SIMON

The beauty of creation surrounds all who come to Lac Simon summer camp, creating a stark contrast with the experience of city living that is common to most of us. Basking in the delights of nature—the forest, the moon, the sun, the stars, the wind, the silence of the night, and the lake—has become almost too familiar, and we can take it for granted. For this reason, the camp now intends to enhance, in more tangible ways, its efforts to preserve our common home.



JÉSUITES
du Canada

JESUITS
of Canada

Please take a few moments to fill out this brief survey. It will help us to make sure that the magazine responds to your needs and interests. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Thank you for your time and support.

Would you recommend this magazine to others interested in the Jesuits of Canada?

Yes No

Why: _____

Where did you find this magazine?

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- Given by a Jesuit

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- All of it
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You prefer to read *Canadian Jesuits*...

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Favourite section of the magazine:

- Our Works
- International Jesuit
- Canadian News
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- Resources
- Canadian Jesuit
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Any topics you wish the magazine would cover?

Please indicate your agreement with this statement: "*Canadian Jesuits* magazine strengthens my interest in the Jesuits."

- Strongly Agree
- Disagree
- Agree
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What actions have you taken influenced by reading the magazine?

- Attended an event (retreat, etc)
- Made a donation
- Contacted a Jesuit
- Contacted someone who works with the Jesuits
- Recommended the Jesuits
- Forwarded all or part of the magazine
- Saved all or part of the magazine
- Visited the Jesuits' website
- No action taken
- Other: _____

What is your relationship to the Jesuits?

- Jesuit
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- Other: _____

Use the attached envelope to send in your answers or fill out the survey online:

<https://bit.ly/survey-CanadianJesuits>

Survey QR Code



Everything is sacred: seeing the wonders that play below

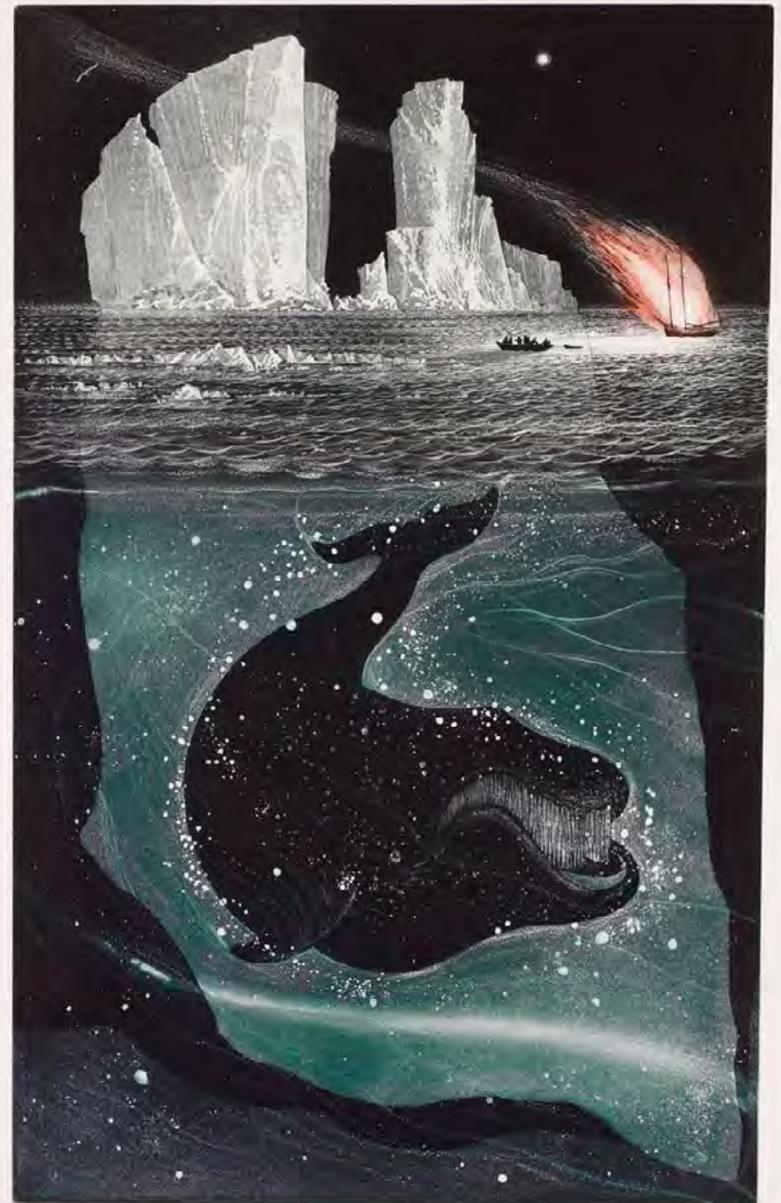
by John McCarthy, SJ

Since once again, Lord—though this time not in the forests of the Aisne but in the steppes of Asia—I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself beyond these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself; I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it will offer you all the labors and sufferings of the world.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*, New York: Harper & Row, 1965, p. 19.

*This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation. Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia**

- Saint Pope John Paul II *Encyclical Letter, Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 2003, No. 8.



"Fire down on the Labrador" by David Blackwood

David Blackwood's *Fire Down on the Labrador* (1980) is haunting. A lone lifeboat of survivors drifts from danger under the chilled Labrador night. An iceberg reaches into the depths, into the home of the denizen humpback, the drifting mass of humanity oblivious to the pelagic life and the icy thrust way down deep.

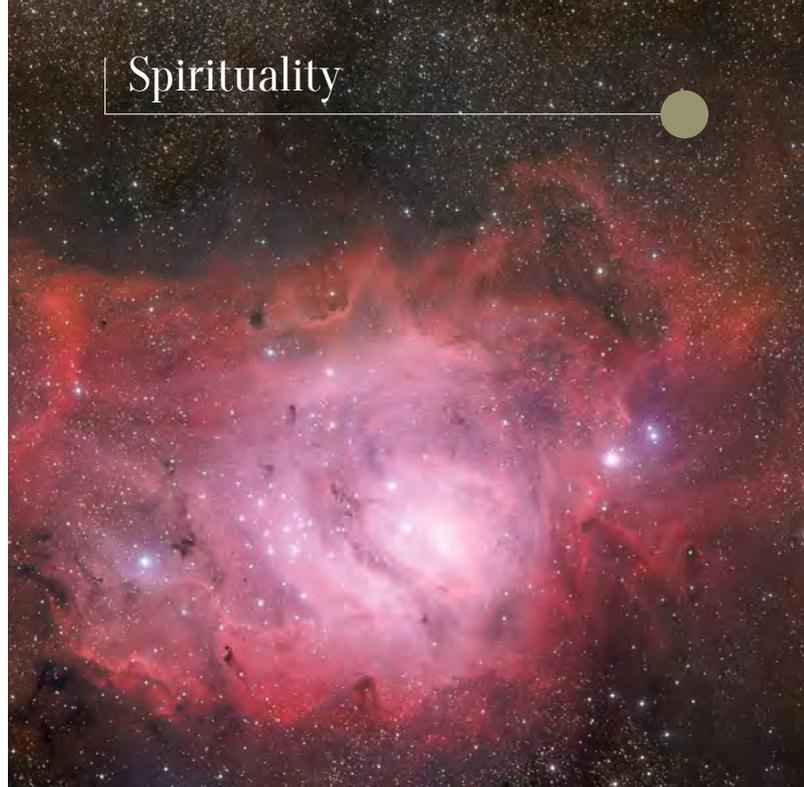
On the surface of life, we make our comings and goings, intent on beginnings and endings, bound by joy and delight, failure and despair. We often content ourselves with the veneer of life, oblivious to the wonders that play below.

In the encyclical *Laudato Si'* on the future of our planet and all its life, Pope Francis calls for a renewed imagination and dialogue on the care for our common home. Both religious faith and scientific inquiry may help in this needed dialogue. Jesus Christ would say, *Let those with eyes see, and those with ears hear ...* It is an invitation to witness the meaningful depth of the world, to go deep within our souls and deep within all of creation. Both faith and science offer insights that add depth to our understanding of the world.

The 14-billion-year-old universe has a story, a history. Galaxies came to be, life emerged, photosynthesis was "invented," and the diversity of mammals exploded after the rapid demise of the dinosaurs. Even humans have a story, with ever-new discoveries refreshing our knowledge of our hominoid genealogy. In the human emerged consciousness and active self-awareness, language, and the joy of singing. Creation became conscious of itself and expressed itself in word.

Through open-ended and dynamic ages emerged the unthinkable and the novel. We have also witnessed evolutionary dead ends and the extinction of almost every species that has ever lived. The greatest insight from this story is the deep, abiding truth of relationality. All creation, from rivers to chrysanthemums to humans, bears the mark of the Big Bang, sharing as we all do in the elements of life. Furthermore, all life shares common genetic roots and descendants.

Our faith language also attempts to fathom the mystery of existence and life. All creation is rooted in a very act of Love, flowing as a gift from the effusive, creative love of the Trinity. The world is not an accident but has meaning and purpose, animated by the wild and free Spirit of God. At the centre of creation rests the Word, the deep, incarnate gift of Jesus Christ. As Alpha and Omega, as the beginning and the end, Christ acts as the crucible



Lagoon Nebula - Wikimages of Pixabay

in and through whom all things were made. Our Trinitarian God is revealed as the Creator Trinity. Our credal formulations, clean and precise, simply state the obvious regarding the utter depth of all that is seen and unseen. Creation is the very action of salvation. Furthermore, as the ground of creation, God is revealed as a Trinitarian dynamic in a mutuality of love among Father, Son, and Spirit. All creation is relational and connected. Thus, the world is, by its very essence, dynamic, relational, and with a depth best seen by the eyes of faith.

The word of science and the word of faith help to make sense of this beautiful and groaning world. On the surface of things, we may seem adrift in the lifeboat of life. But, deep within creation breathes a spirit that engenders life, that same breath of life as when the world was a formless void. The dance of science and faith fills us with hope and direction. May we only have the eyes to see and the ears to hear.

You can read more of this article at <https://bit.ly/everything-sacred>



Scientist and Jesuit priest, **John McCarthy, SJ**, holds advanced degrees in theology as well as a PhD in boreal forest ecology, a master's in soil science, and a BSc in forest tree biology. He was the recipient of the 2002 Canadian Environment Awards Gold Medal (Lands and Forests category) for his work in boreal forest conservation in Newfoundland. He is the Ecology Facilitator for the Jesuits of Canada.

Mother Nature and Brother Hudon

by Fannie Dionne

“The best week of my life was spent on a canoe-camping trip with the Pioneer Scouts. We paddled a hundred kilometers, we only had five minutes of rain, and it was extraordinary,” said Brother Bernard Hudon, a Jesuit from Quebec, after he shared some of the moments of consolation that he has experienced during his life. Nature and connection with others, especially as an educator, were key elements of this interview that will make you want to immerse yourself in nature.

A Jesuit who calls himself “*one of God’s biologists*” .

HOW DID YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE INFLUENCE YOUR SPIRITUALITY AND GUIDE YOU TO THE JESUITS?

I was shaped by the Scout movement, as a youth and as a leader. The idea of social awareness and contact with nature impacted me a lot. I felt as comfortable sitting on a log as I did in a La-Z-Boy recliner. I lived my spiritual experiences in the forest, being close to young people.

Then I did my studies in the city. I have a diploma in science and a bachelor’s degree in biology. But every summer I would go back to the forest, and the idea of vocation would always come to mind. In the winter, I would try to fight against it by studying. After graduating, I found a job as a teacher in a program for wildlife conservation officers. Two months after I started teaching, the vocational question returned. So, at that point I figured I really had to address “this problem” before I could go any further.



Bernard Hudon, SJ

2011-2020 :

Bursar of the Bellarmine Jesuit community and accountant for the Maison du Gesù

Minister of the House of Saint-Michel and responsible for forest management

2004-2020 : Associate researcher at the Centre justice et foi

1998-2000 : Intern at the Canadian Religious Conference, Quebec Chapter, in social justice and the environment

1988-1992 : Teacher (physics, wildlife conservation, and forestry)

1988 et 1989 : Hunting and fishing lodge grader for the Quebec Ministry of Recreation, Hunting, and Fishing

1987 : Researcher at the Quebec Ministry of Energy and Resources and the Canadian Forest Service

1982-1986 : Counselor at L’Oasis Notre-Dame summer camp

I had heard about a house that belonged to the Séminaire de Québec where you could continue your work or studies while reflecting on your vocation. I ended up spending two years there.

Then, with the encouragement of the superior of the major seminary, I contacted the Jesuits again. I entered the novitiate on February 1, 1992. I tried to fight against that, in the winter, by studying. After graduating from high school, I got a job as a teacher in a wildlife conservation officer course. Two months after I started teaching, the vocational ideas returned. So, at that point I thought I really had to sort out “the problem” before I could go any further.

SO FOR YOU, THE RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE IS NOT ONLY ESSENTIAL, IT’S A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION.

Yes, my first spiritual experience took place when I was out in nature as a counselor at a summer camp. It made a big impression on me. I was sitting, leaning against a tree, on the shore of a lake. It was an experience of feeling God’s love in a personal way and also in a communal way, because I had to take care of a group of young people.

For me, it is absolutely essential to go out into the woods at least once a month.

WERE YOU ABLE TO CONTINUE YOUR CONNECTION WITH NATURE EVEN AFTER YOU JOINED THE JESUITS?

During the novitiate, we have to do a long experiment. I worked with the journal *Relations*. I put together a special report on forest management in Quebec. And then, during my 30-day retreat, it was clear to me and to the novice master that I was called to continue working in the field of ecology, so I was encouraged to stay as up-to-date as possible in the field. I participated in the annual conference of biologists almost every year. I also did a master’s degree in ethics at the Université du Québec à Rimouski, and my thesis was on the forest industry in Quebec.



Br. Hudon continues to lead forestry efforts at the Villa Saint-Michel, the Jesuits’ rural retreat in Quebec. photo: Gilles Mongeau, SJ

After that, I spent a couple of years working for the Canadian Religious Conference where I created an environment committee and sat on the social justice committee. I also put together a brief on a project to reform the Forest Act that I presented to the National Assembly of Quebec.

After my theology studies, I worked with the Centre justice et foi. I found the research and writing for *Relations* to be very stimulating.

IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR WORK IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS COMBINES SOCIAL JUSTICE WITH ECOLOGY.

For Jesuits, social involvement through the combination of faith and justice is essential. Social analysis is very important for me; working on structural inequalities, for example, when we offer input to the National Assembly (where I presented three times) on behalf of people who are poor and marginalized. What motivates me is my love of nature. Ultimately, my spiritual experience has found its expression in my love for creation and creatures which has led me to love the Creator.

YOUR MISSION IS OBVIOUSLY ALSO DEEPLY SPIRITUAL, FOR EXAMPLE, THROUGH THE RETREATS YOU OFFER AT VILLA SAINT-MICHEL.

We use the natural sciences in our contemplation of nature. We go out into nature to observe the plants and trees and to learn how to identify them. Plankton is harvested from the lake and examined under a microscope. Ultimately, the goal is to contemplate nature. You have to love nature to appreciate it and give thanks to the Creator.

When we do the evaluation at the end of the retreat, people say that they have changed or learned a lot and that this experience has made them more aware of loving nature and the Creator. This gives me great joy.

You can read more of this article at <https://bit.ly/brother-hudon>



My driving force is my love of nature. Deep down, my spiritual experiences are that the power to love creation or creatures has led me to love the Creator.



photo : Fannie Dionne

The Ignatian *Magis* :

Spirituality and Growth

by André Brouillette, SJ

M*agis* is a key word in Ignatian spirituality. It is a Latin term that means “more.” St. Ignatius of Loyola used the Spanish *más* to express the same idea, especially in his Spiritual Exercises. The risk of a mere quantitative reading of this spiritual exhortation is obvious: more, more, always more. More activity, more prayer, more work. Activism can be unhealthy, leaving us exhausted. So, what is the Ignatian *magis*?

First of all, we can look at it from the perspective of movement—from *satis* to *magis*. *Satis* can be translated as “enough,” “adequate,” or “sufficient”; for example, being satisfied with a job, or satisfying or fulfilling requirements. We have done enough. We can stop now. There is no need to go any further. Maybe we can even rest on our laurels! The movement stops. We settle down. It can sometimes mean that we have simply done the minimum. The *magis*, however, disrupts this state of complacency. It awakens

consciousness, enabling us to imagine something else. It broadens the horizon of movement and growth. It does not contradict the *satis* but invites us to transcend it, using another kind of logic, the logic of growth and even of generosity.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew (19:16–22), the encounter between Jesus and a young man opens us to a new way of seeing. This person comes to Jesus to ask him what good thing he must do to have eternal life. He wants to know what is required; not necessarily the minimum, but what should be done. Jesus reminds him of the importance of the commandments, of what is forbidden: murder, adultery, theft, false testimony. He reiterates the importance of honoring one’s parents and loving one’s neighbor as oneself. In this way, Jesus confirms what every good Jew already knew; he describes a path toward God that is shaped by attention to others in a very incarnate way. To truly love and care for the widow, the orphan, the stranger, and the poor person is already huge! But the young man wants to go even further. He is already doing all this. He wants *more*, he wants to go further, he wants to know if there is another path that goes beyond this already exceptional way of being. Jesus responds to his request by proposing such a “more”: “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, give it to the poor [...]. Then come, follow me.” This invitation is not an obligation, it responds to the young man’s desire. If you want, you can give away everything and follow me. Beyond justice and goodness, there is gratuitous generosity.



Photo: Jukan Tateisi, Unsplash



Heinrich Hofmann, "Christ and the rich young ruler", 1889

Ignatius presents a similar logic in the Kingdom meditation of the Spiritual Exercises (§ 91–100). When Christ invites us to work with him, to commit ourselves to following him, all good Christians are invited to say “yes,” to offer ourselves to the work that is to come. Such a response is expected of all of us, regardless of our state of life. Ignatius then opens a window onto another horizon: If some people wish to distinguish themselves more (*más*) in how they serve Christ, they can make an even more radical offering, committing themselves to accept even insults, if the Lord calls them to do so. Such an offering is not an obligation. It is not “necessary”; it arises from the generosity of those who desire to offer themselves to Christ. It is interesting to note that for the young man of the Gospel, like the sincere Christian who makes the Spiritual Exercises, the

invitation to a “more” is part of a personal relationship with Jesus and the consequent offering of self in response.

In fact, the Ignatian *magis* is best understood through this logic of growth in love. It’s not about doing enough or not doing enough or doing more. It’s not a question of quantifying anything. It’s about entering into the logic of an incarnate love—through deeds more than through words—that will grow increasingly deeper (Spiritual Exercises, § 230-231). The lover wants to share everything with the beloved and vice versa. This mutual self-giving is dynamic, always wanting to give more; the relationship deepens, love becomes more unitive, purer, truer, greater. Love always keeps us moving, growing. This is the heart of the experience of the Ignatian *magis*—a love that continuously opens us to the possibility of renewed incarnation.



André Brouillette, SJ A native of Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec, André Brouillette, SJ, has earned postgraduate degrees in philosophy, history and theology in Europe and North America. In addition to completing academic work and teaching theology at Boston College, he offers spiritual direction and accompanies the French-speaking Catholic community in Boston.

EVENTS



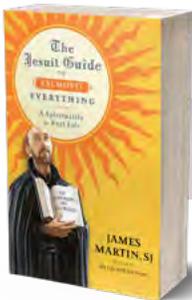
RETREATS: LET US COME TO YOU! LOYOLA HOUSE, IGNATIUS JESUIT CENTRE, GUELPH, ON

As the Ignatius Jesuit Centre retreat team awaits the safe return of onsite, residential retreats and programs at Loyola House, they have decided to take their spiritual show on the road! In addition to their online offerings, members of the team are ready to lead in-person retreats in other viable venues. Religious communities, motherhouses, parishes, and other retreat houses are all possible stops for a visiting band of Ignatian spiritual directors from Guelph.

Inquiries can be made through our registrar, Leanne McCann, at registration@ignatiusguelph.ca or 519-824-1250, ext. 266.

Learn more about online retreat offerings at ignatiusguelph.ca/events/

PUBLICATIONS



BOOK: THE JESUIT GUIDE TO (ALMOST) EVERYTHING: A SPIRITUALITY FOR REAL LIFE BY FR. JAMES MARTIN, SJ

This practical spiritual guidebook is based on the life and teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Centred on the Ignatian goal of “finding God in all things,” it includes chapters on how to manage relationships, money, work, prayer, and decision making, all while keeping a sense of humour. The guide is for both believers and seekers and is filled with user-friendly examples, humorous stories, and anecdotes from the inspiring lives of Jesuit saints, priests, and brothers.



BOOK: CANADIAN CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY: SAINTS AND SINNERS OVER FOUR CENTURIES BY TERENCE J. FAY, SJ

This book explores the spirituality of Canadian Catholics from the seventeenth century to the present using traditional historical sources to focus on the spiritual meaning of the Canadian story. Religious workers in these four hundred years, such as Jean de Brebeuf, Marguerite Bourgeoys, Marguerite d’Youville, and D’Arcy McGee, promoted Christian faith and service. It tells the stories of both sinners and saints who revealed their spirituality through lives of prayer, understanding, and good works.

RESOURCES

APP: LISTEN TO BOOKS BY JESUITS ON AUDIBLE

Let Jesuits read to you! Here are a couple of the books available on the Audible app that are written and narrated by Jesuits. Happy listening!

- *My Life with the Saints*, written and narrated by James Martin, SJ
- *Turning to God: How You Can Pray Like a Jesuit*, written and narrated by Howard Gray, SJ





From rockets to canoes

Erik Sorensen, SJ

by Becky Sindelar

Erik Sorensen, SJ, had once planned to be an engineer. Today, however, he studies theology at Regis College in Toronto, on his way to becoming a Jesuit priest. His formation has been one of accompanying and building relationships with those he encounters..

BEFORE YOU JOINED THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, WHAT DID YOU SEE AS YOUR PATH IN LIFE?

When I was twelve years old, I told my parents that I wanted to be an aerospace engineer. And, in fact, that's what I decided to do. I studied aerospace engineering at Carleton University in Ottawa, and I loved it. It was also there that I met the Jesuits. I finished the degree and joined them right after that.

HOW DID YOU GO FROM CONSIDERING A CAREER IN ENGINEERING TO JOINING THE JESUITS?

While I was at university, I got to know the Jesuit chaplain, Fr. David Shulist, SJ. He was the first Jesuit I'd ever met, and I started working with him and the Catholic student group at the chaplaincy. Then I met a Jesuit who was studying engineering at the time, Fr. Boniface Mbouzaou, SJ, now the superior of the Bellarmine community in Montreal. I was studying engineering and really enjoying it but didn't realize that you could be both an engineer and a Jesuit. Meeting someone who was doing that made me consider it more seriously.



Erik Sorensen at the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. photo: Erik Sorensen, SJ



Erik in a L'Arche community. photo: Erik Sorensen, SJ



Erik Sorensen, SJ

Aug. 2012 – Aug. 2014:

Novitiate in Montreal

Jan. 2013: Spiritual Exercises

Feb. – Mar. 2013:

L'Arche Quebec

Apr. - May 2013: Camino de Santiago pilgrimage

Jan. - May 2014: Long Experiment at Mother Teresa Middle School in Regina, SK

Sept. 2014 - May 2018: First Studies at Regis College in Toronto

Sept. 2016 – Dec. 2017: Coordinator for the Canadian Canoe Pilgrimage

Sept. 2018 - June 2020: Regency, teaching at Loyola High School in Montreal

Sept. 2020 – present: Theology studies at Regis College in Toronto

HOW DID YOU END UP ORGANIZING THE CANOE PILGRIMAGE IN 2017, AN 850-KILOMETRE CANOE TREK THAT PROMOTED RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE FIRST NATIONS AND THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH PEOPLES OF CANADA?

The canoe pilgrimage came from an idea that predated me. A group of Jesuits had done the same trip back in 1967 for the 100th anniversary of Canada and Expo 67. A fellow novice, Fr. Kevin Kelly, SJ, and I had heard the lore of this trip and thought that it would be really cool to do again. The 50th anniversary of the trip was coming up, and that was the impetus to start looking at it more seriously. As we explored further, the issues around Indigenous relationships became very apparent. So this quickly became the focus of the trip. We reached out and started to collaborate with a wider group of people to make the trip happen.

IN WHAT WAYS DID THE PILGRIMAGE HELP IN THE PATH TOWARD RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES?

The important thing for us was to build relationships. The core group ended up being about 28 paddlers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and so before we could really get into reconciliation, we had to get to know each other. Paddling together for a month forced us to build relationships. We mostly just tried to get to the end of each day in one piece and then make it together to the end of the trip.

An experience like this builds relationships, and in the process, we get to know each other, learn about each other's histories, and see—through our own firsthand experience and the personal ties that are created—the issues that impact the Indigenous communities. I can now say that I have friends who are impacted by these issues. Residential-school survivors made the trip with us, and they shared their stories. To have that kind of firsthand encounter really provides a foundation for further work in reconciliation.

HAS YOUR WORK WITH FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR VISION OF CREATION AFFECTED YOU IN ANY WAY?

It's been quite formative in my life as a Jesuit. When I was a novice, even before the pilgrimage, I spent six months in Regina working at our Mother Teresa Middle School, which serves several different populations, but primarily urban Indigenous youth in low-income situations. This was my first encounter with Indigenous peoples. Understanding more about the Indigenous worldview and the sense of connection with creation has had a significant influence on my studies. While studying philosophy, I focused on that sense of gift exchange as a basis for understanding relationships with Indigenous peoples, and it continues even now to influence my theology studies.



Erik and staff from Loyola High School at the Jesuit School Network Symposium of 2019. Photo: Tom Malone

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE APOSTOLATES YOU'VE WORKED AT DURING YOUR FORMATION?

In the novitiate, my long experiment was at Mother Teresa Middle School, and that was a big introduction to Indigenous ministry—and Indigenous ministry in an urban context. To see the kind of disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples living in the same city, sometimes a block apart, was quite eye opening and helped me to understand the challenges that they face.

I also spent about six weeks at a L'Arche community in Quebec City during the novitiate. There I learned a lot about community and about caring for each other. The core members have an openness, an innocence that draws out the best in people.

HOW HAS YOUR FORMATION ALLOWED YOU TO SERVE OTHERS?

The novitiate for me meant learning how to be with others. Whether with homeless people in Montreal, Indigenous people in Regina, or people with mental and physical disabilities in a L'Arche community—just being in those different circumstances, learning to be with others, and growing out of that was the initial formation.

Formation has taught me not only how to be with others but also how to walk with them. So, it's not just about encountering people, it's also about journeying with them. Philosophy studies and the canoe trip have shown me that. How do I walk with our Indigenous brothers and sisters in Canada in a way that is constructive and builds relationships? In high school ministry: How do I walk with young teenagers given the issues that they face in their faith lives and the complexities of being a teenager in today's society? And how do we form those relationships that allow both parties to encounter God in a more meaningful way?

WHY DO YOU STAY IN THE CHURCH WHEN THE INSTITUTION IS QUESTIONED BY SO MANY?

I stay in the Church—even though it's being questioned for good reasons—because I firmly believe that if change is going to happen in this institution, this body of Christ, it has to happen from within. I stay because I see hope in what's changing, even as slow and frustrating as that process is at times. I see hope, I see healing, and I want to be part of it. And I think the best way to be part of it is from within.

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST SURPRISING THING YOU'VE DISCOVERED ABOUT JESUIT LIFE DURING YOUR FORMATION?

The most surprising thing is the depth of relationships that can be formed in community with other Jesuits. They're not my blood relatives, but they're in all true senses my brothers.

You can read more of this article at <https://bit.ly/rockets-canoes>



Erik with Father Erik Oland, SJ and Father Peter Bisson, SJ, for his first vows. Photo: Trevor Scott



Becky Sindelar is a mother of two and does freelance communications work for several Jesuit organizations from her home in the Chicago suburbs. She is an alumna of Loyola University Chicago and has worked in some capacity for the Jesuits since graduating in 1999.

Brother Paul Desmarais: Sowing the Seeds of Knowledge

by Fannie Dionne



One of the good things about technology is that it enabled me to see Br. Paul Desmarais, SJ, and hear his laughter all the way from Zambia. Books on agriculture (academic or otherwise) were stacked from his desk to his bookcase and everywhere in between. It was against this backdrop that he described how a young Jesuit from Ontario revolutionized agriculture in this African country by offering training in organic farming for nearly thirty years.

Brother Desmarais was director of the Agricultural Training Center in Kasisi for fifty years. Now “retired,” he is preparing to offer an agroecology training course, both online and on-site, next year, with the first forty students coming from the Zambian Ministry of Agriculture.

“I like agriculture very much, and as most Jesuits, I am also a teacher. So if we put these two together, I can say that I enjoy this work that allows me to help people become better farmers.”

HOW DID YOU BECOME A JESUIT?

I was born in Pointe-aux-Roches, near Windsor, Ontario. My family had been farmers for three generations. I enjoy working on the land. When I was in Grade 4, we went to Windsor to visit several religious communities to see their work. I picked up a couple of information brochures while I was there and was very happy to learn about the brothers. I wanted to be a religious brother from then on, even though I was quite young at the time! I had hoped to enter the novitiate after Grade 13, which I did in September 1964 in Guelph. Why with the Jesuits? Because they were the closest to home [*laughs*]! I was also very happy with them.

photo : Archives des jésuites du Canada

AND WHY BE A BROTHER?

It is the Lord who calls us, and we answer the call. I have always thought that God was calling me to be a brother and not a priest. From time to time during my studies, my superiors would ask me if I wanted to be a priest, and I would say no, “no, I want to be a brother.”

WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES BROUGHT YOU TO ZAMBIA? DID YOU HAVE A DESIRE TO GO ON MISSION?

During my novitiate, I was interested in going to India, to Darjeeling. After my novitiate, I studied agriculture at the University of Guelph. During that time, Father General in Rome asked our province to send men to Zambia. The provincial asked me if I was interested and I said yes. My first visit was in the summer of 1969 for only a few weeks, as I was still studying at the University of Guelph. In 1971, I returned to Zambia, where I have been ever since, always very happy to have come here.

This Jesuit province consists of Zambia and Malawi. When I arrived, there were only a few Zambian Jesuits and six Jesuits from Canada. Now there are 120 to 130 Jesuits in the province. Most of them are native Zambians (including the last provincials), and I am the only Canadian.

HOW DID YOU INTEGRATE INTO A NEW CULTURE?

I was 25 years old when I came to Zambia. I was young, so it wasn't that difficult to adapt to another culture, and the Jesuit community was almost all white. The people in the villages accepted me easily; it was not a problem.

In the early years, I spent a lot of time in the villages and I knew almost everyone. During the last fifteen years, I was really busy with administrative work and wasn't able to go to the villages. Now that I have left my position as director, I hope to have time to go back and visit people again. I would really enjoy that.

WHAT WAS YOUR JOB AT THE KASISI AGRICULTURAL TRAINING CENTRE?

Sixty percent of Zambia's population is rural, so we couldn't work only in the cities. When I arrived here, the provincial asked me to work with the farmers around the Kasisi mission. I started to visit them in their villages, but I soon realized that it was not always possible to meet with them, given their busy day-to-day lives. So we started the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre in 1974, with two-year courses for families. In 1995, we began to offer five-day courses; families came on Sunday afternoon and left after dinner on Friday. More than 12,000 people from Zambia and the surrounding countries have participated in these courses.

This work is a source of consolation. For example, there is a gentleman who calls me almost every day. He did a course here on how to make agricultural fertilizer. He was very motivated, and now he teaches the people in his village, both young and not so young.

The center has five departments: the in-house five-day training program, the village training sessions given by people on our team, the cultivation of our 800-acre property, the research work on organic agriculture, and the development of high-value products, such as cheese or yogurt from the milk of our cows.



photo : Canadian Jesuits International (CJI)

Portrait of an International Jesuit

Every three years I return to Canada and stay with my brother and sister, who are also farmers. This gives me time to rest and also to see the type of farming that's done in Canada. I bring back many of these ideas and adapt them to our conditions.

SO YOU WERE THE ONE TO INTRODUCE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN ZAMBIA?

When I first arrived in 1971, I taught agriculture that relied on chemical fertilizers and pesticides since that's what I learned in my studies in Guelph. But in the mid-1980s, Fr. David Shulist, SJ, asked, "Why not think about organic farming?" We started to explore the idea, and I found it very interesting. When I returned to Canada in 1988, I visited organic farms in Ontario.

In the 1990s, very few people were interested in organic farming. We thought it was a step backwards. Now it's changed a lot. In October, we gave a training course to people from the Ministry of Agriculture. Then we offered another course to people who were sent by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. And now, because of COVID-19, the world realizes that we need to find different production methods. We have seen that organic agriculture can produce two to four times more than what is produced with chemical fertilizer.

YOU WERE AHEAD OF YOUR TIME!

Yes, there are many other training centers in the country, but we are the only ones that are 100 percent organic. It's one of the things that makes us unique.

Many Canadians have provided financial support for the work of Brother Desmarais and the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre through Canadian Jesuits International.

Also, in 2002, we were very concerned about GMOs. We were pretty much ahead of the game at that time as well, but now a lot of people see the problem with GMOs.

Our work is in line with *Laudato Si'* and the Society of Jesus's fourth universal apostolic preference, taking care of our common home. It's a source of consolation to work within the vision of the Catholic Church.

"God has been very good to me."



photos : Canadian Jesuits International (CJI)



AUSTRIA: A SPACE TO LISTEN AND LOOK AHEAD

One of the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences named is to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future. Many possibilities are offered within various cultural contexts. A few months ago, the Jesuit College in Innsbruck created the “Laboratory of the Future,” a residential program where young adults can take stock of their lives, reflect on their future, and explore ways to participate in creating a better world. They do this by rereading their own lives—with the help of the Spiritual Exercises offered by the Jesuits—and living in a community setting that incorporates various activities such as mountain hikes. It’s an open space that allows young people to discover their own spiritual path and explore their image of God.

KYRGYZSTAN: SUPPORTING CHILDREN, MUSLIMS, AND CHRISTIANS ALIKE

The country of Kyrgyzstan is hardly ever mentioned in the news, yet there is a Jesuit presence there: the Children’s Leisure and Rehabilitation Centre. Its astronomy camps are very popular with the young people of the region, but the center’s main work is to welcome children with various disabilities, physical and psychological, offering their parents a time of respite. Located not far from one of the country’s main Islamic centers, the children’s center also welcomes groups of young Muslim boys and girls, while remaining careful to avoid any suspicion of proselytizing—a “diplomatic” challenge that is in line with the Jesuit tradition of serving everywhere and taking into account the varied circumstances of peoples and cultures.

GLOBAL WORLD: BREATHING TOGETHER FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION—A PRAYER VIGIL

In the spirit of Pope Francis who, since his encyclical *Laudato Si’*, has been urging us to take care of our common home, a number of Jesuit organizations from various continents came together

on September 25 for a prayer vigil: “Breathing Together for the Season of Creation.” Moderated by Xavier Jeyaraj, SJ, secretary of the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology, the program was broadcast in English and Spanish on YouTube and Facebook at three different times over a 24-hour period. Reflections from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Philippines, the United States, the Amazon, and Australia, among other places, invited participants to prayer and personal conversion. (See: <https://bit.ly/vigil-world>)



INDIA: PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF THE MARGINALIZED IS DANGEROUS!

In the early morning of October 9, Fr. Stan Swamy, SJ, an 83-year-old Jesuit, was arrested in Ranchi, India, by anti-terrorist police forces and later imprisoned in Mumbai. Why this arrest and imprisonment? Because for the past fifteen years Fr. Stan has been defending the rights of tribal populations that have often been ignored, expelled from their lands, and deprived of their rights. Other defenders of Indigenous rights have also been arrested and falsely accused of having links with Maoist extremist groups. Peaceful marches have been organized in support of Fr. Stan. To read the statement of the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology of the General Curia in Rome, go to (<https://bit.ly/p-stan>)





Justice and Indigenous Wisdom:

The Work of the Pan-Amazonian Network

by Pierre Bélanger, SJ



Photo: Curia of the Jesuits, Rome

Who is this tattooed character embracing an Indigenous family from the Amazon? He is a Jesuit! Fernando Lopez, SJ, is a member of an itinerant team and, as the name suggests, travels the rivers and forest roads of the Amazon to live with its people and to share with them not only his knowledge and skills, but also the person of Jesus, the one who gives him life. He also continues to learn from the peoples of the Amazon how to journey along the path toward integral ecology

“To serve, accompany, and defend”—these three verbs are, in the Jesuit context, inextricably linked to the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). But they are not reserved solely to this internationally known and recognized apostolate. These verbs also describe many other organizations and works of the Society of Jesus that are close to the poor, the abandoned, and the marginalized of the world. And among them are the Indigenous people of the Amazon region, an immense part of South America that touches nine countries, first and foremost Brazil. The Jesuits are there, serving, accompanying, and defending the threatened population.



Visit of the nuns of the itinerant team.
Photo: Red Eclesial Panamazónica (REPAM)

“

The big companies consider all the resources of the Amazon to be commodities. The Church needs to be on our side against the companies and governments that steal from us.”

- Sister Arizete Miranda Dinelly Satere-Mawe, member of REPAM

For a long time, the people who live in the Amazon, relatively few in number and often living in hard-to-reach villages, have not been able to make their voices heard and tell the world about the obstacles they face. More recently, however, international awareness of global warming has clearly identified the importance of the Amazon rainforest as the “lungs of the earth.” The deforestation of large areas has finally been recognized as a real threat, especially in Brazil’s current political context, with a president who is insensitive to environmental issues.

But these spurts of ecological awareness rarely take into consideration the people. It took the initiative of Pope Francis to make the cry of the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon resound around the world. To the surprise of many, the pope convened a special synod of the bishops of the Amazon region to which he invited experts as well as the “people on the ground,” including Indigenous people.

Fernando Lopez was there. He and his group did not go unnoticed, either in St. Peter’s Basilica or during the Way of the Cross, which was similar to the Way of

the Cross of the Indigenous peoples. This small group represented many others who are connected through the work of REPAM, the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network of the Catholic Church, founded in 2014. A network was necessary because the Jesuits, who created the “itinerant team” in 1998 with religious sisters and lay people, wanted to reach every corner of the Amazon region.

To this end, they promoted the establishment of a network that includes people from various parts of the Church—religious congregations, dioceses, groups of catechists—who are motivated by the same spirit, namely, that of accompanying, serving, and defending the Indigenous peoples. And this implies “living with,” acculturation, and sensitivity to the values of these peoples, including religious values. The itinerant nature of this ministry is its “life-mission,” to use a favorite expression of Fr. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Jesuits. At the frontiers and peripheries of the world, this geographic itinerancy is also an interior one, a journey with the peoples of the Amazon toward God, a journey nourished by mutual respect and love.



Support for women and culture.
Photo: REPAM

The activities are both pastoral and social. On one hand, the Gospel is proclaimed by better trained catechists, and a greater number of priests are able to visit remote communities; and on the other, REPAM is also active in bringing about change by promoting the ecological vision of Indigenous peoples, defending the life of the forest and its people, and working to create a more promising future for young people without them being displaced. This spirit emerges from the Apostolic Letter that Pope Francis published after the Synod. It is entitled “Querida Amazonia,” “Beloved Amazon,” a title that expresses simply but clearly the warm affection that Francis has for the region and its people.

“For us, the first thing is always joy, to be able to announce the Good News and, at the same time, to denounce death, because we must be clear about what is killing our Amazon, our home.” *Ednamar de Oliveira, Satere-Mawe delegate to the Synod on the Amazon*

Even though REPAM was created through the initiative of the Episcopal Conferences and the governing bodies of the religious congregations of the region, the leadership of the Society of Jesus in the region and in REPAM has been well received. Their missionary experience and understanding of discernment have enabled the Jesuits to boldly explore new paths and to be creative, building on their experience of sharing life with the peoples of the region. Conventional ways have had their day; their “confrere,” Pope Francis, makes this clear by his words and especially by his actions. It is time for an itinerant accompaniment! Recently, Cardinal Pedro Barreto, a Jesuit, was chosen to be president of REPAM. This courageous Peruvian Jesuit was named a cardinal by the Holy Father, who thus expressed his support for the pastoral and social commitments that Father Pedro has taken on, despite the threats that this has earned him.

You can read more of this article at

<https://bit.ly/REPAM-ENG>



Pierre Bélanger, SJ has dedicated himself to the communications apostolate. He has worked as a researcher, writer and director for various organizations. He has been in Rome since 2018 as a member of the communications team of the Jesuit General Curia.



Welcome small children. Photo: REPAM



On the Amazon. Photo: REPAM

Cigarettes, coffee and justice:

the unusual holiness of Martin Royackers, SJ

by Fannie Dionne

Photographer unknown



Photographer unknown / *The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada*

Chain-smoking, dishevelled, even hearing confessions in a bar: Fr. Martin Royackers, SJ, never ceased to amaze. According to several sources, he rarely made a good first impression. Yet this Canadian Jesuit with a razor-sharp mind was a strong advocate for human rights, deeply committed to social justice, and firmly rooted in his relationship with God. He died in 2001 in Jamaica, murdered in front of his church for reasons still unknown, but probably related to his defense of the marginalised.

A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Born in 1959 on a farm in Ontario, Martin Royackers discerned his vocation as a Jesuit early in life, entering the novitiate at eighteen. During his formation, he worked on the Jesuit farm in Guelph, alongside marginalized people. “He welcomed people into the community that I would never have welcomed,” said Fr. Bill Clarke, SJ, former director of the Guelph farm. “His great strength was his passion for life and for God.” And for Martin, faith had to be rooted in justice.

Passionate and intense, cynical and very sensitive, funny and profound, Martin Royackers was a complex character who kept neither his tongue nor his pen in check. He never said anything to please people or institutions but always said what he thought. In *Compass: A Jesuit Journal (1996)*, for example, he wrote:

"I am grateful for the Second Vatican Council. I don't have to sing Latin masses or wear a dress. But I have some hesitations too. Vatican II, I am told, brought the Church into the modern world, but what's so great about the modern world that we want to rush into it? If the Church isn't democratic, neither is the modern world. Both have too many bureaucrats and ego-laden politicians."

JAMAICA: A SECOND BIRTH

In 1994, Fr. Royackers was sent—against his will at first—to St. Theresa's Parish in Annotto Bay, Jamaica. It was there that he spent the rest of his life, becoming so deeply rooted that he wanted nothing more than to return there after each trip abroad.

The roles he took on included, among others, superior of his Jesuit community, priest in several parishes, and teacher. After morning Mass, he spent his days working outdoors, with coffee and cigarettes as his sole sustenance, before returning home for supper. Nothing, according to him, was beneath the work of a priest: He took people to the hospital in his truck, delivered fertilizer, set up a water system for several families, and worked with his hands alongside the farmers.

He also served as director of the St. Mary's Rural Development Project. In addition to helping individual small-scale farmers, this project aimed to create agricultural cooperatives. Indeed, land distribution in Jamaica, marked by the legacy of slavery, was concentrated in the hands of only a few. The farmers with whom Fr. Royackers worked had only small plots of land, not very suitable for agriculture. The development project supported the work of the farmers, allowed for better sales, and increased their financial independence.

But this involvement also aroused hostility. As he supported the farmers in their demands for a fairer distribution of land, property developers resented the Jesuit, but that did not stop him.

Education was also very important to Fr. Royackers. He sat on school boards and worked to make school accessible to all children. More than that, he made sure that the children were well-fed and that they could play sports. He even built a basketball court

A SPIRITUALITY CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE

Spirituality was also at the heart of Fr. Royackers' apostolate. On certain Sundays he could spend seven hours presiding at Masses. But above all, he adapted to his parishioners. One of them explained: "He came to understand how Jamaicans respond in



Photographer unknown / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada

terms of spiritual experience. He worked a lot on the liturgy. It is more charismatic, more fun, more alive."

For Bishop Charles Dufour, Royackers "had to have a strong relationship with God to do what he did, to live in absolute poverty." The Jesuit loved the poor and was always there for them. His work in Jamaica, among and with Jamaicans, earned him much love in return. Sr. Shirley Thomas noted that he did not *work with* Jamaicans, but rather that he *had become* a native Jamaican. His parishioners gave him the title of "roots man," an honor normally reserved for native-born Jamaicans.

"Some said he didn't quite fit into the Jesuit community. But in intelligence, the pursuit of social justice, the option for the poor, a life of poverty, he genuinely lived his vows."

- Memories of Martin

Sources :

Memories of Martin— Fr. Martin Royackers (National Catholic Broadcasting Council)

Erica Zlomislic, Another Jesuit martyr, Holy Post.

Please Help Renew Our Home

Jesuit Infirmary René Goupil House

Dear Friends of the Jesuits:

Greetings and abundant blessings, especially during this challenging time of pandemic. I am certain that many of you know of the outbreak of COVID-19 last Spring at René Goupil House, the Jesuit infirmary in Pickering, Ontario. During a period of two weeks in late April, seven good and devout Jesuits were called home to God. To say the least, this has been a heartbreaking time for the Jesuits of Canada and for the friends and family of our deceased members. RIP good and faithful brothers.

René Goupil House was originally built as a retirement home, eventually becoming an infirmary. Due to this fact as well as more stringent regulations from the health authorities, the current facilities at René Goupil are in need of a significant upgrade in order to make the building compliant, safe and secure for the over 20 Jesuits who live there.





“Why have a special infirmary for Jesuits, given the cost and headaches, when there are many other longterm care facilities available?” Our elderly Jesuits arrive at René Goupil after many years of serving the people of God in various ministries. Many of you doubtless have been inspired by one or more of the Jesuits who are or who have spent their last days in Pickering. And so, the answer to above question is that the Jesuits of Canada have already experimented with public long-term care homes without success. A few decades ago, for example, some men were sent to a facility in St. Catharines, Ontario where despite receiving good care, they felt isolated from their brother Jesuits and from the people they had come to know during their ministries. The reality is that when a man becomes a Jesuit, he leaves behind his family and, in essence, the Society of Jesus becomes the closest thing to family that he knows. In principle, Jesuits live in an active community as long as they are able personally to take care of themselves. The beauty of this is that you often have Jesuits in their 30s living with men in their 70s and 80s. Thus, when the man becomes infirm or loses his autonomy, the transition to a house of brother Jesuits is much more wholesome than moving to a home where he may be the only Jesuit. In a very rich way, René Goupil enables Jesuits to continue to fully participate in Mass daily, and remain part of the vowed, religious life to which they have pledged their own lives. In fact, they are missioned to pray specifically for the work of the Society worldwide. The Jesuits of Canada have made



the commitment that their aged and infirm brothers will be able to continue to live in a Jesuit community.

The required renovations at René Goupil House will be costly due to the regulatory requirements that are far more onerous today than they were pre-COVID. At present the renovation budget is close to 1 million dollars.

With this letter, I am asking you to consider supporting the Jesuits at René Goupil, who have supported the faithful of God their whole lives, by contributing to this special appeal to renovate and renew our infirmary. Having a safe and secure home to live out their final days, where their ministry is to pray for us all, would be the best present any elderly Jesuit could pray for.

May God bless you for your generosity,

Erik Oland, SJ
Provincial



Dear Fr. Erik,

Yes! I would like to help renew the home of the Senior Jesuits of Canada.

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____
Name: (please print) _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____
Tel. No. _____ Email: _____

Cheque
*(please make payable to Jesuit Office of Advancement and remit to
43 Queen's Park Cres. E. Toronto, ON M5S 2C3)*
 Visa Mastercard Amex
Card #: _____
Expiry Date: ____/____/____ CSV: _____
Signature: _____

YOU CAN ALSO DONATE ONLINE: WWW.JESUITS.CA

Please enclose this form with your tax-creditable contribution
Reg. Charitable BN 130515109 RR0001

Lord Jesus,

What weaknesses did you see in us that made you decide to call us, in spite of everything, to collaborate in your mission?

We give you thanks for having called us, and we beg you not to forget your promise to be with us to the end of time.

Frequently we are invaded by the feeling of having worked all night in vain, forgetting, perhaps, that you are with us.

We ask that you make yourself present in our lives and in our work, today, tomorrow, and in the future yet to come.

Fill with your love these lives of ours, which we put at your service.

Take from our hearts the egoism of thinking about what is 'ours', what is 'mine', always excluding, lacking compassion and joy.

Enlighten our minds and our hearts, and do not forget to make us smile when things do not go as we wished.

At the end of the day, of each one of our days, make us feel more united with you and better able to perceive and discover around us greater joy and greater hope.

We ask all this from our reality.

We are weak and sinful men, but we are your friends."

Adolfo Nicolás, SJ

Superior General of the
Society of Jesus 2008~16



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TO
LOVE
AND
SERVE