

CONSTANT WILLIAM VAN CROMBRUGGHE

1789 – 1865.

**Founder
of**

THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY AND JOSEPH

THE JOSEPHITES

THE SISTERS OF MARY AND JOSEPH

THE SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH

SYMPOSIUM

HELD AT

EMMAUS RETREAT CENTRE

WEST WICKHAM

ENGLAND.

**February 28th to March 3rd
2005**

Programme.

Symposium on the Founder: Constant William van Crombrughe. **28 February – 3 March, 2005.**

Venue. Emmaus Retreat Centre. Layhams Road. West Wickham, Kent.England.

Cost. £32-35 per day.

Sunday. 27th February.

Arrive in the afternoon.

Monday 28th February. HISTORY.

Morning 1: Welcome and brief introduction. Agnès Charles / Robert Hamilton
Brief introductions by participants.
Opening Liturgy. Aidan Rossiter and Margaret Eason.

Morning break.

Morning 2: A brief outline of the situation in Western Europe at the time of the
Founder .The social and political influences on the Founder. Agnès Charles

A brief outline of the history of the Church in Belgium 1789-1865 and
its influence on the work of the Founder. Aloïs Dupré and Robert Hamilton.

Lunch.

Afternoon. How the 4 Congregations developed. 10-15 minutes for each
Congregation.

- Zusters van Maria. Robert Hamilton
- DMJ's Margaret Eason.
- Josephites. Robert Hamilton
- Zusters van St Jozef. Luc De May
- The Associates. Mona Sheehan. California.Charles Hofschulte. Renee Bauerly
- Amalgamation of congregations. Marie Rose Joye

Eucharist.

Supper.

Informal evening.

Tuesday 1st March. SPIRITUALITY.

Morning prayer.

Morning 1: Sources of the Founder's spirituality.
The early formative influences on the spirituality of the Founder. Robert Hamilton.
The influence of the spirituality of St Ignatius of Loyola on Constant Van
Crombrughe. Teresa Clements.

Break.

Morning 2: Brief outline of how the spirituality inherited from the Founder is lived today.

- Zusters van Maria (Erpe-Mere) Robert Hamilton.
- DMJ's Agnès Charles

Eucharist.

Lunch.

- Josephites. Martin Ashcroft.
- Zusters van St Jozef Marie Rose Joye.
- Associates. England and Ireland. Mona Sheehan.
- Associates. California. Charles Hofschulte. Renee Bauerly

Break.

Afternoon 2. How is this spirituality passed on today in 1st formation?

Jacob Beya.
Teresa Bateta
Open forum.

Evening prayer.

Supper.

Film. P.Daens.

Wednesday 2nd March. MISSION.

(The ways in which our spirituality is translated into our mission today).

Morning prayer.

Morning 1: The importance of our archives. Alice Nugent

Origins of the Founder's ideas on education?
How did he put them into practice? Michael. Powell

Break

Morning 2:

Schools : Maureen Martin Tony Hudson. Cathleen Calvey
How do we preserve the spirit of the Founder in our schools?
Aloïs Dupré Jacob Beya C.J.
Open forum. Comments and reactions.

Lunch

Afternoon 1:

WORKSHOPS

1. Parishes and Retreat Centres.
2. Medical and Social Work.

Open forum. Sharing and reactions.

Break

Afternoon 2: Reports from the Workshops.

Eucharist.

Supper.

Party :

Thursday 3rd March. How are we going to preserve our common charism ?.

Eucharist.

Morning 1 and 2 : Brief introduction: Robert et Agnès

Work in small groups.

Lunch

Afternoon : Reports from small groups.
Resolutions
Evaluation.

Sending out liturgy.

Supper

4th March: Morning. : Departures.

Participants

Daughters of Mary and Joseph

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|-----------------------|--|--|
| General Team : | Deirdre Slade Margaret Eason Agnès Charles | moderator liturgy – presentation presentations – translation |
| Africa : | Teresa Bateta | presentation on Formation |
| Belgium : | Dolores Arrieta Maggy Kraentzel | présentation – Ministry Social work. |
| California : | Renee Bauerly Alice Nugent Catherine Mc Shane Margaret O’ Rourke | presentation – Ministry – Associates presentation – Archives presentation – Ministry Nursing home presentation – Ministry Parish work |
| England: | Sheila Barrett Celia Beale Marie Goretti Betchetti Teresa Clements Jennie Eldridge Mary Hickey Agnes O’ Shea Felicé Wright Mary Lees | Secretary presentation – Ignatian spirituality presentation – Ministry Health Secretary |
| Ireland: | Cathleen Calvey Liz Mc Carthy Nora T. Mc Carthy Peg Rahilly Joan Roddy | Presentation – Ministry Education (primary) presentation – Ministry Health presentation – Ministry Retreat Centre presentation – Ministry Asylum seekers... |
| Associates: | Mona Sheehan Maureen Martin | presentation – Associates presentation - Ministry Education (secondary) |

Sisters of St Joseph (Bruges)

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| General Team : | Marie Rose Joye Luc De May | moderator – presentation - Amalgamations presentation - History |
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JOSEPHITES

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|-----------------------------|--|--|
| General Team : | Robert Hamilton Richard Lear Jacob Beya Kadumbu Aloïs Dupré William Muir | presentations – translation translation/ traduction presentation. Formation. presentation - History |
| Africa: | Evariste Kabemba | |
| England: | Aidan Rossiter Martin Ashcroft Patrick Matthews Andrew Alexander (Tuesday only) Francis Owen (Tuesday only) Kitty Ellard (Tuesday only) | Liturgy presentation – Spirituality CJ's photography |
| California: | Charles Hofschulte | presentation - Associates |
| <u>Moderators :</u> | Deirdre Slade Marie Rose Joye | |
| <u>Secreataies :</u> | Felicé Wright Celia Beale | |
| <u>Liturgy :</u> | Aidan Rossiter Margaret Eason | |
| <u>Translation:</u> | Robert Hamilton Richard Lear Agnès Charles | |
| <u>Hospitality :</u> | Anne Jordan and team. | |

SYMPOSIUM ON THE FOUNDER

MONDAY, 28 February

HISTORY

Welcome and introduction

Agnès and Robert

Sr. Agnes

In the name of my sisters, and in my own, I am very happy to welcome you here for this venture. I wish you all a good and fruitful stay, a time of prayer, of reflection, of sharing and of orientation for our future.

We have gathered in the name of a man who has marked our lives in a privileged manner: Canon Constant William van Crombrugghe. May he watch over us. May we all benefit from the light that shone so clearly for him, and may it illuminate our way too. May Jesus Christ, Mary and Joseph, protect and bless our days and direct our searchings.

Fr. Robert

This is a dream come true.

How did it come about? The first time I met Agnès in Rome we discussed the Founder. I told her that I thought he had been neglected by the Josephites. It was Agnès who suggested a SYMPOSIUM, so many months later here we are.

- The aims:**
1. To celebrate the marvels God has performed through our 4 congregations since 1817.
 2. To deepen the sense of belonging to the same family by praying and studying together and to search for ways of strengthening that sense of family.
 3. To explore together the life and teaching of our Founder to see how we can continue to live as his daughters and sons today.

- How?**
- a) Through conferences on the Founder, looking at his story, reflecting on his spiritual teaching and heritage, and how we live it today, and by looking at the ways we carry on his mission.
 - b) Gradually we will share our own stories and look to the future.
 - c) We will finish by making some resolutions about the future.

Finally It is important that we strive to overcome language barriers. Please avoid always sitting in congregational groups. Thank you all for coming.

Opening Liturgy Fr. Aidan and Sr. Margaret Eason

1.

**A brief outline of situation in Western Europe at the time of the Founder.
The social and political influences on the Founder
Simone Vandensteene and Agnès Charles**

Introduction:

Our Founder was born into a Europe which was torn apart by wars, revolutions and new ideas. Without doubt, all this had a profound influence on his personality and we are going to try and take a quick look at some of the elements which affected his life. The aim of our symposium is to try and answer three questions:

where have we come from?

where are we now?

where are we going?

What follows is an attempt to answer our first question: where have we come from? We are all rooted in the world, in an age which leaves its mark on us. Simone and I have tried, with the help of the studies of Fathers Bill Garcia and Jacques Jorissen and Sister Teresa Clements, with the help of the books written by Mgr Pieraerts, Fr Desmet and Fr de Kort, to give you a brief introduction to the various factors which have had an influence on the life of our founder.

After a historical reminder of what happened in the Netherlands, we will look at the life of Constant William Van Crombrughe and see the impact he had on public life, the life of the Church and the life of the Institutes he founded.

1.- A little history:

The provinces of the Netherlands, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

When Constant Guillaume Van Crombrughe was born, Flanders, where he first saw the light of day, was part of the Austrian Empire. For about the last 70 years it had been part of this vast imperial conglomeration.

Emperor Joseph II, filled with the spirit of the “Enlightenment”, ruled as a despot. He is the absolute ruler of the empire and directly responsible for the wellbeing of all its peoples. According to this viewpoint every aspect of the administration of his empire, including the Church, must submit to him. His aim was suppress all irrational practices then in use, in the state as well as the Church. This policy was very unpopular in the Netherlands; this centralised control from Vienna was seen as a destruction of liberties which had been accepted in the Netherlands for several centuries. Furthermore, the measures taken by the emperor in an attempt to organise the life of the parishes, the seminaries and other ecclesial institutions in a Church which tended to be ultramontane in outlook (the Pope is the supreme authority above any interference by the civil state), led to a revolt. The Belgian people were called to rise up.

The independent United Belgian States: 1790:

The uprising was led by two Belgians, Van der Noot and Vonck. The first is head of the *statistes* made up of the aristocracy and the upper clergy; the second is head of the *démocrates* made of the lower and middle classes who want to get rid of the other two. The *démocrates* want to impose the ideas of the French Revolution, whilst the *statists* want to keep the monarchy and the status quo which had existed in Europe for several hundred years. The Confederation was weak. Congress held

the central power but this power was very weak. The entire clergy, fearing a repeat of what was taking place in France supported the *statists*, while the *démocrats* were in favour of Gallicanism (the state has the power to intervene in the affairs of the Church). All this led to a very confused situation and the Austrians quickly reasserted their control in the Netherlands

The first Austrian restoration: December 1790 – 1792:

The return to Austrian rule was very unpopular in the provinces which were to become Belgium. The resulting tension soon led to riots and the entire population refused to pay the taxes imposed by the Austrians. France, watching closely the events unfolding on their northern borders, declared war.

The first French occupation November 1792 – March 1793:

The French, following the plans of the National Convention, wanted to turn the Netherlands into an independent republic. France, weak and exhausted because of the instability which reigned in the country, set about raising money through taxation and as a result was soon hated in the southern provinces. The Austrians soon returned to the attack and removed the young French republicans from the Netherlands.

The second Austrian restoration March 1793-June 1794:

The Austrians were on the whole well received by the peoples who hoped that their ancient liberties and privileges would be restored. This situation did not last long. The Emperor Francis II who had succeeded Joseph II, intended governing the Netherlands directly. Tension mounted between Vienna and the Netherlands and even between Vienna and the local officials in the Netherlands.

The situation was disastrous both on a national level as well as a local level. When the allies were defeated by the French in the battle at Fleurus the Netherlands became part of France and would remain so for the next 20 years.

The second French occupation: June 1794 to April 1814:

The government of the youthful French Republic was desperately in need of money and as a result emptied the occupied countries of their treasures and wealth. Many heavy taxes were raised, people were taken hostage, freedom of the press, so dear to the inhabitants of our country, was suppressed.

The economic situation was no better. Administrative reforms were very costly and a bad winter added to the suffering of the population.

The different currents of political thought ranged from anger against the French government to a desire to be completely assimilated into the Republic. This desire was perhaps a reason why there was little pillaging and few demands for ransom. It was finally decided to opt for union with France. The provinces of the Netherlands were divided into departments, with the industrial and commercial centres as the local administrative capitals. Once the Constitution of Year III had been adopted there was some stability. The Code of French law replaced the old case law. The civil authority set up hospitals and reorganised education. It was the re-organisation of education which led to the growth of the opposition especially when these reforms were followed by anti-Church

laws. The clergy were forced to take an oath of submission to the civil authorities. This oath led to the division of the clergy. Things went even further when an oath of hatred had to be taken. This was the straw that broke the camel's back and a revolt broke out amongst the people. However, it was badly organised and soon put down.

With the establishment of the Consulate by Napoleon a period of peace and calm prevailed. The economy which had been badly administered previously started to pick up. The administration was centralised and effective. The Oath of hatred was replaced by a Declaration of Fidelity to the Constitution. And this led to the improvement of Church-State relations. The teaching of religion was re-introduced into the schools and education was shared by private institutions and state colleges, the first were run privately (many by the Church), the second were funded by the state. The dioceses were reorganised. Then Napoleon started to take decisions in areas which were reserved to the Church. He appointed bishops and often chose his Episcopal candidates from elsewhere.

Next Napoleon crowned himself Emperor and established the French Empire. He now became a real dictator. He wanted to control education and the Church. He entered into conflict with Pope Pius VII whom he imprisoned. He set up a Council of bishops in the hope that they would replace the Pope when it came to making Church appointments. The Council declared itself to have no authority to make such appointments. Three of the leaders of the opposition group were imprisoned. The bishop of Ghent, Mgr de Broglie, the bishop of Tournai, Mgr Him and the Bishop of Boulogne. Their replacements, named by Napoleon, were rejected by the clergy (The Pope did not accept them). Almost at once sanctions were levied on the recalcitrant dioceses.

Little by little the imperial power was waning and in 1814 the allied powers divided up the territories which had been annexed by France. The two southern provinces of the Netherlands were annexed to the kingdom of William 1st of Orange Nassau.

Belgium from 1814 to 1830. Dutch supremacy:

The great powers wanted to make Holland and Belgium into “a perfect amalgamation of two countries” by giving them both an equal absolute authority. This was a difficult even impossible task undertaken by the great powers using their right of conquest. (Promulgation 21 June 1814.)

The “fundamental law”, promulgated by William 1st for Holland on the 30th of March 1814, placed public education exclusively in the hands of the sovereign. It accorded protection and tolerance to all denominations but the sovereign's own denomination, the Protestant Church, was given special favours. This Constitution would later be modified by common agreement in order to govern the new State of the Netherlands. (Law of 23rd March 1815)

Almost immediately there was opposition. The Catholic bishops of the southern provinces (Modern Belgium) appealed to the king and demanded the freedom to govern their dioceses without state interference. When King took possession of the southern provinces he stated in his proclamation that “To respect and protect your religion will be one of my dearest duties, a duty I shall ceaselessly carry out.” Not long afterwards the Allied Powers addressed the Bishop of Namur in these terms “The government of the Allied Powers will maintain inviolate the spiritual power.... as it is laid down in the canon laws of the Church. Therefore, Church affairs will remain under the control of the spiritual authorities who will care for and watch over the interests of the Church.” These clauses were ignored and unrest broke out everywhere. The Belgian notables rejected the Fundamental Law which the King in turn insisted was obligatory. The Belgian population were faced with numerous difficulties: nobody could get a job unless they spoke Dutch, nobody could get a job as a teacher nor be a member of a teaching organisation unless they had a diploma which were given out by the government authorities. A number of private schools were ordered to stop

teaching. Amongst others, the College of Alost where the founder, Fr Van Crombrughe, was principal was ordered to close.

If the chief aim of the king's policy was the fusion of Belgium and Holland he went about it in the wrong way by doing everything which was likely to provoke the Belgians to seek independence.

The social situation amongst the people of Western Europe at this time:

Although the French revolution erupted in 1789 the causes which led to it had existed for several years. The Bourgeoisie, (the Third Estate) had been calling for social and political change for some time. They suffered under an absolute monarch whose wishes and needs were met at the expense of any attempt to improve the lot of the poorer classes or to recognise rights of the middle classes, even the rich middle classes. Only the nobility and the higher clergy had any privileges and these were denied to the middle class. In the country, peasants eked out a bleak life. They were worn out, exploited and impoverished without any means of making themselves heard. Flanders which was part of France at this time was no exception to this rule.

However, new ideas were circulating in Europe. In some countries, like the Kingdom of Holland, there was some freedom of speech and freedom of the press and it was possible to read that liberty, equality and brotherhood were not just vain words but could become a reality. People were talking about human rights and the rights of citizens. It was in the name of these principles that the mob rose up in France to demand a new system of government and an end to a worn out monarchy that was ignorant of the needs of the people.

A few timid experiments proposed the idea of free trade, paid work for each individual and some writers called for an industrial revolution which sooner or later would take place and which will lead to the exploitation of workers and the circulation of new ideas like trade unions who would demand that workers received their due.

The Catholic Church is also influenced by new ideas. Jansenism with its idea of salvation and predestination is still very much alive in France and in Flanders. Rulers tried to break up the Roman primacy by encouraging Gallicanism. Within the Church there were two tendencies among the clergy. On the one hand there was a new understanding of the role of Head of State in the affairs of the Church and on the one hand Ultramontanism. The first group were willing to submit to the local sovereign rather than the successor of Peter, while the second group refused to obey anyone other than the Pope.

We know that if the French Revolution marks an important step in the acquisition of new rights for all it was also accompanied by bloody and painful events which led to a great deal of suffering in many families and caused violent division between the different factions among the people.

The deplorable sanitary condition amongst the poor was disastrous. In 1817, following torrential rainfall, famine was widespread in Flanders. Outbreaks of disease like typhus ravaged the poor and in this situation, once again, our founder was ready to help those who fell sick. It was this situation which led him to ask his "daughters" to stay close to the poor people who were stricken and destitute. Destitution was a stark reality in the southern provinces throughout this troubled period.

If Flanders was administratively dependant on Austria or France, it had for many years been economically linked with England through the cloth trade which was an important source of livelihood for the inhabitants of the Lowlands.

Belgian Independence: 1830:

The fall of Charles X in July 1830 in Paris was to have an influence on the independence of Belgium. In August 1830, the beginning of the movement to put an end to Dutch hegemony started in Brussels in the theatre called “de la Monnaie” where a play called “La Muette de Portici” was being enacted. The uprising soon spread from the theatre to elsewhere in the city. The middle classes armed themselves and set about tearing down emblems of the Dutch regime. This was the origin of the middle class militia which adopted the colours of Brabant as its symbol of the call to arms. An attempt was made at a settlement. A delegation was sent to the king to present him with the complaints of the citizens. The reply was a bad one. The king’s son, prince Frederick, marched on Brussels with an army of 10,000 men. The prince failed to win the battle and had to withdraw. In October Antwerp was shelled. This was the last straw for the population of the southern provinces. A provisional government was set up which restored the liberties so dear to the Belgians and which they have been demanding for some 15 years. The freedom of religion, the freedom of the press and the freedom of association are promulgated. In the same month a decree is published which allowed the Belgians to hold a National Congress of some 200 members.

The Congress met for the first time on the 10th of November. By the 18th the independence of Belgium was declared unanimously. Shortly afterwards the Congress decided on a form of government; it would be “a constitutional monarchy with a hereditary king”. Then the Congress set to work to draw up a constitution for the Belgian people. Each article was the subject of serious debate.

A sovereign was found in the person of Leopold of Saxe Coburg Gotha who became the first king of the Belgians. The choice was made in order to please the Great Powers. Soon after the arrival of the king in Belgium the Dutch attacked the young kingdom but were driven back with the help of the French. As a result of these events Belgium lost what became the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and a part of Limburg which was attached to Holland.

The early governments under the monarchy were mainly made up of Catholics and Liberals. It would be some time before the socialists participated in government but social demands were soon to appear throughout the new Belgium.

2.- The life of our Founder in the context of this western Europe.

From birth to ordination:

Constant William Van Crombrughe was born in Grammont on the 14th of November 1789. His father, Ghislain-François was born in Ghent on the 6th of May 1761 and died at Grammont on the 7th of September 1842. His mother, Cécile-Joséphine Spitaels was born in Grammont on the 17th of December 1757 and died on the 10th of August 1826. His parents were married in Grammont on the 19th of June 1787. There were other children in the family, 2 boys, Jean Ghislain and François and three daughters, Charlotte, Cécile and Rosalie.

Constant’s father was a business man and deputy mayor of the small Flemish town. He often visited France to do business and went there several times during the French Revolution to sell black lace. He also had dealings with English business men, which may be a reason for later

foundations by the DMJs and the Josephites in that country. The family belonged to the upper middle class with a comfortable life style. It was a deeply Christian family with numerous church connections. Canon Ghislain Huleu, vicar general of the diocese of Malines was his father's god father. We will learn more about the relationship between our founder and his great uncle. This will be the subject of a later presentation.

As a small child, the young Constant was greatly influenced by his mother, a generous woman who was attentive to the needs of others. At 10 years old he would give catechism classes to the poor children of the neighbourhood. He encouraged them with small gifts which he bought with his own pocket money. We know from a document of a much later date that he made his 1st Holy Communion on the 15th of August 1802.

His parents wanted their children to have an education that was solid as well as Christian and they looked for a good school for Constant. It was the custom at this time to send a child away to boarding school. Constant did not escape this general practice. First of all he spent a year at Wilhaus, near Ath, then two years at the boarding school of Mr De Wulf in Ghent. We learn a lot about the young adolescent from the letters he wrote to his parents in a French which was "somewhat strange and forced which he used as a second language" (cfr Jorissen, Constant Van Crombrugge d'après sa correspondance, p.13) In his letters he appears to have been very attached to his family, an attachment which remained throughout his life.

In 1805 the young Constant was sent to France, to a neighbourhood of Amiens, to a college which had been recommended to his parents. The College is run by the Fathers of the Faith. It wasn't long before the young man realised that the college would not prepare him for a life in business but would give him a classical education. The father of the founder had studied Latin as well and could see no reason why his son should not do the same. The young man however, preferred to study only French, business studies and mathematics. He hoped to be able to change school. However, one of the teachers at the college, Fr Sellier, had seen that the young boy had hidden qualities and talents and succeeded in convincing both father and son that the college could provide the best possible education for his future.

In March 1806, after a novena to St Joseph to discover his vocation, the young man, who, up to now had only considered a career in business, changed his mind. "I have thought very carefully, I want to enter the Church". Constant spent two happy years at the College of St Acheul. He studied diligently and was a valued pupil. It is enough to read how his teachers spoke about him and how he tried to continue his contact with the youth of the area, how he organised and was responsible for a group of altar servers.

Next came the years spent in the seminary at Ghent which he entered in September 1809. He received an excellent training there from well qualified seminary professors. Our seminarist was grateful for this education which gave him a solid grounding in philosophy which he would make use of in his pedagogical principles. He also received a good theological formation but above all he matured as a person and is marked by human and gospel values which enabled him to grow into a man with a deep life of prayer, a man of courage who was always open and courteous with everyone.

The seminarist received the diaconate at Namur on the 21st of December 1811, this was due to the imprisonment of the Bishop of Ghent, Mgr de Broglie and the refusal to recognise his "replacement" as bishop of Ghent.

He was ordained priest on the 19th of September 1812 at Brussels in the chapel of Mgr Vande Velde de Melroy, the former bishop of Ruremonde, who also had been a victim of

Napoleon's anger. He celebrated his first mass at Malines in the presence of his Great Uncle, Canon Huleu.

His apostolate:

The first appointment of the young priest was as curate at Mouscron. His poor health did not stop him from visiting the poor of this large township, part of Flanders but very close to the border with France. He zealously taught the catechism to children and naturally, as a priest, administered the sacraments. Almost at once his courtesy and his concern for all were noticed by the people of the parish. He was at home amongst the middle class, but he was also approachable by the less well educated. He knew how to be strict and this was necessary at a time when the clergy were divided, some supporting the bishop in prison and others his replacement. In the small town a group of women ran a small boarding school and the young curate helped them. Later these women would join the congregation he founded and one of their pupils, Mlle Delehaye, will become the third Superior General of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. In 1813 an epidemic broke out amongst the French soldiers, the priests who were able to speak French were called upon to go to the help of the soldiers, and so Fr Van Crombrugghe set off for the hospice of Akkergem. As a result his health deteriorated further and he left Akkergem for Heusden. It was not long before he started to spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart. He introduced this devotion to the different parishes to which he was appointed. Surely it is in this devotion that we come across the notion of mercy and compassion, so dear to our founder and which he will make the charism of the Congregations he founded.

In 1814, after the defeat of Napoleon, the town council at Alost were eager to return the direction of their college to the clergy. Mgr de Broglie sent for Fr Van Crombrugghe and appointed him Principal of the college. The young priest explained his reticence but the bishop persuaded him to accept the post of principal. On the 2nd of October of that year classes began. The college quickly acquired an excellent reputation and several students were later to become high ranking officials in the country. He established in the school a group of pupils called "proviseurs de pauvres" (providers for the poor). Their job was to collect food, clothes and money to distribute. He took care to ensure the servants were well paid. He tried to get the town of Alost to set up a state workshop to help the children who didn't go to school.

In 1817 he opened a lace making school for the young girls. The poor children were also taught to read and write as well as trade skills and a basic Christian formation. He asked a lady called Colette De Brandt to help him with this project.

In 1818, he set up the same sort of workshop in his home town of Grammont. His mother became one of the first teachers of the young girls.

The tuition fees for the College of Alost were high and so the founder set up a second boarding house. The pupils followed classes in the college but lived in their own boarding house. This proved a great success and many young people from the lower middle classes were able to get a good education.

The college was closed in 1817 as a result of a decree which was directed against private institutions.

Already in 1817 the young priest had founded two congregations. In March at Alost a group of sisters who would later evolve into three congregations; the Sisters of Mary and Joseph (Grammont), the Sisters of St Joseph (Bruges) and the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. In May of the same year at Grammont the brothers of St Joseph.

His great concern was to establish a solid educational system for boys. An education which was adapted to meet future needs with the emphasis on a good grounding in commercial sciences over and above a classical education. He was also anxious to establish a good educational programme for the wives of these future men. He insisted on a high standard of education for the young girls. In this way he drew up his pedagogical principles which were to be of great importance at that time.

The founder retained his concern for the sick, the poor and the marginalised. He made sure that his religious sisters visited the poor families who were suffering, the sick and all those abandoned by society. No doubt all this was characterised by a “paternalist” attitude but that was the spirit of the age especially among the richer classes in society. The founder is a child of his time and his social background. He was formed by it and reacted to poverty and destitution as a member of the middle class.

As the congregations he had founded started to evolve, Fr Van Crombrughe’s principle apostolate became the care of these growing communities. He kept up a close correspondence with several members of these Institutes and also visited the communities.

After the closure of the College of Alost in 1825, Fr Van Crombrughe went to live in Ghent where his main task was looking after the congregations he has founded. He keeps in touch with the priests of the diocese as well as with certain men who will become influential in the future kingdom of Belgium.

In 1829, Mgr Vande Velde is appointed bishop of Ghent. Soon after his consecration he names Fr Van Crombrughe an honorary canon, a member of the bishops’ council and makes him one of his closest advisors. The choice is a good one as the new canon is fluent in both Flemish and French, has a good understanding of political and ecclesiastical matters as well as local government administration as a result of his years at Alost.

It is not long before the ideas of Lammenais were to divide the Belgian clergy. Lammenais favoured freedom of instruction, freedom of worship, the separation of the Church from the State and his ideas spread throughout Belgium. Setting aside tradition and authority, Lammenais based his ideas on the basic principles of common sense and the universal assent of the human race. These ideas found fertile soil in the southern provinces which had been oppressed by the Dutch government. Nonetheless there were those who opposed these ideas and amongst them we find Canon Van Crombrughe. He was fearful of their audacity which rejected respect for authority and the Catholic tradition. His strong views on the subject left him somewhat isolated apart from a few friends.

The Founder could be very forceful when he took up the pen to defend his way of thinking, or oppose any sort of concessions to the Dutch authorities. We can find several examples of this in

his correspondence and in the brochures he published at the time when the debate over liberty in education and respect for legitimate church authority (ideas which were close to his heart) became heated.

Throughout the many years he lived in Ghent he visited prisoners in the jail as well as the sick. He always lived out the compassionate side of his nature which was so dear to him. Flanders suffered from what Dr Mareska has called “the sickness of Flanders; fever and famine”. The poor are frequently ravaged by epidemics of typhus. Despite the constant poverty, the workers continue to suffer without complaining or organising themselves, there is a certain apathy or resignation to their fate which prevents them organising themselves. That will come later.

What was the part played by our founder in the politics of the new Belgium? He was elected a member of the National Congress. In fact, from the end of 1830, the provisional government did not delay in getting rid of all the restrictions on liberty which was so dear to the Belgians. Freedom of worship, freedom of the press, freedom in education and freedom of association were all proclaimed by the decrees of the 12th and 16th of October. Several days later the decision was taken to hold a National Congress with 200 members voted directly by the people. Our founder was elected for the district of Alost. He was not the only churchman to be elected, others priests took a very active part in the Congress. These are the priests elected in Flanders. The priests from Wallonie did not take their seats. The founder played an important part in the drawing up of the articles of the Constitution on freedom of worship and freedom of education. His wisdom and experience were appreciated by some, “inspired by his enlightened patriotism and a sincere love for the Church, a priest, whose name alone demands veneration, Monsieur Van Crombrughe...” (Terwecoren, Précis historiques 1865, p.294) and despised by others who saw him as “backward looking, a man of the rich and comfortable classes, a avowed opponent of liberal institutions” (Bartels, Documents historiques 1836, p.20). It was decided to introduce civil weddings as the 1st recognition of the union of a couple. This caused all sorts of problems because a large number of couples living in the countryside did not bother with a civil wedding and as a result all sorts of amendments had to be made in order to regulate different situations.

Once the work of the Congress was over, Fr Van Crombrughe withdrew from political life. His reasons are to be found in a short note.

Other studies will give us more information on the political role played by the young Belgian priest. We want to mention the Institutes which he founded.

In March 1817, he founded at Alost, with the help of Colette de Brandt, the *Dogters van de H.Jozef* (Daughters of St Joseph). He set up a lace making school which soon developed into a proper became an educational establishment. Nonetheless, the founder did not abandon his concern for the poor, the sick and the marginalised of the society of that time.

In May of the same year he founded the Brothers of St Joseph (later called Josephites) in Grammont. The brothers opened a weaving school for the street boys of Grammont. Later the Josephites would offer an education adapted to the needs of the business class.

The next year, 1819, he founded in Grammont the Sisters of Mary and Joseph (Zusters van Maria en Jozef). In the beginning the sisters ran a lace making school but this soon developed into an institution which undertook the education of young girls from different social backgrounds. Girls

from middle class homes were educated to become the wives of businessmen and those from the poorer classes to become good wives and mothers in working class homes.

In 1837-38 he divided the Institute of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph into two distinct bodies. One retained the name “Daughters of Mary and Joseph, called Ladies of Mary” and undertook above all the education of girls from the middle class, while the “Sisters of St Joseph (Zusters van St Jozef) undertook the care of the sick and elderly as well as the education of girls from different social backgrounds.

Later, two of these foundations would become Institutes of Pontifical Right, the Josephites and the Daughters of Mary and Joseph and two foundations would remain diocesan Institutes, the Sisters of Mary and Joseph (Zusters van Maria en Jozef) and the Sisters of St Joseph (Zusters van St Jozef).

The founder died on the 1st of December 1865 after several years of suffering. During the last years of his life he endured physical suffering. He had been delicate since his childhood and in old age his health broke down. He was only able to eat with great difficulty, he was unable to celebrate mass as often as he wished and he was dependant on others to write his letters. His death was a great loss to the congregations he founded. A large crowd attended his funeral, made up of representatives from his different religious congregations, members of the clergy, politicians as well as a host of ordinary people who wanted to pay their last respects to a man who had been their benefactor.

His influence:

In the Belgian state:

Fr Van Crombrughe had already made a name for himself during the Dutch occupation on the southern provinces. His aim was to defend the rights and liberties so dear to its inhabitants. He fought this cause by means of his published articles, his letters and his meetings with influential men in Flanders as well as with the Church authorities.

His cultured personality was remarked upon and at the time of the birth of the Belgian state when he was elected a member of the National Congress. His role in making sure that articles protecting the freedom of worship and education were included in the constitution is well known. Twice he stood up to speak and his interventions were important in helping to obtain a vote in favour of these two important liberties.

The foundation of religious congregations which specialised in the education of boys and girls from different social backgrounds is another contribution the founder made to the Belgian state. He was also careful to ensure the setting up of medical centres in certain parts of Flanders. He was always moved by destitution, poverty and ignorance. He worked to combat these scourges. Everything he did, he did as a man of his time and background, but he did not remain indifferent. His positive attitude encouraged others to follow his example.

He was appreciated by certain important people in the world of Belgian politics who recognised in him an honest, courteous and cultured priest, one who was zealous and pious. The

same was true in ecclesiastical circles. Letters written at the time of his death are ample testimony to this.

On the society of his time:

The Van Crombrughe – Spitaels family were part of the well off middle class who were not affected by the economic ups and downs of their time. They were able to prosper and have a certain influence in Flanders.

Like many middle class families of that time, they were always ready to profit from new economic opportunities and were ready to trade with neighbouring countries. We know that the founder's father was willing to travel abroad. This was a social milieu where knowledge of both French and Flemish was acquired. The members of these families were Catholic or Liberal, Ultramontane or Gallican.

These families were not indifferent to the insecurity and destitution of the lower classes. We know that Madame Van Crombrughe was well aware of the terrible conditions many of the poor lived in. She wanted to help them and her son Constant, still a child, is at her side to help her by giving catechism classes to the children of the poor. Later his mother will play a role in the beginnings of the religious congregation founded to teach girls in Grammont. She would take charge of a lace making school in the town. The girls learnt a craft and a few rudiments of education so that in the future they will be able to help their husbands and educate their children.

The Flemish middle classes were ever ready to adapt to new situations in order to prosper. No doubt this spirit of adaptability and intervention in the lives of others had an influence on the life of our founder. We know that he was ready to integrate groups of pious women into his newly founded congregations. He would also ask individual sisters to move to another convent or even to move to another congregation according to the needs which he judged to be of the first importance. He wanted to respond immediately to needs and at the same time recognised which individual was best suited for a particular task. The French sisters who were part of the small group at Mouscron were required to live in Flemish towns in order to ensure a good knowledge of French in the schools there. Sister Julie Herbeau was told to change congregation in order to meet the concern of the founder to be closer to the poor. We are all aware of the founder's insistence on the necessity to adapt.

He wanted some of his institutes to become pontifical congregations and others to be diocesan congregations. In that he was very much a man of his time. The bishops of the young kingdom of Belgium wanted to reorganise the life of their dioceses. It is clear that for them a diocesan congregation was far more useful for this purpose than a pontifical one. That is why in the newly established diocese of Bruges, the sisters founded by Fr Van Crombrughe are a diocesan congregation. He had confidence in the bishops of Bruges, Ghent and Malines and had a good relationship with them.

As a child of the commercial class he was struck by the gaps left by a classical education which did not appear to prepare young men for their future life. He wanted schools which would be better equipped to form the future administrators, managers and captains of industry and business in

Belgium. He insisted on this point and had some success. This would be the domain of the Josephites. He also wanted to educate the wives of these captains of industry and business and aimed to provide a suitable education for young ladies from the middle classes. He entrusted the responsibility for this to the sisters of the different congregations he founded.

The founder did not forget the disadvantaged and made sure the schools were open to the poor of that time. He wanted to provide an education for the future working class and their wives but this would be a different type of education, which according to him, must be available in these establishments.

His presence at the National Congress gave him the opportunity to take steps to ensure a presence for his congregations in Brussels. These steps were successful in the case of the “Ladies of Mary” but unsuccessful in the case of the Josephites. His good relationship with Cardinal Sterckx enabled him to establish the Ladies of Mary in Malines where they settled in the “quartiers généraux” for some time. Cardinal Sterckx entrusted a school in Louvain to the Josephites.

Our founder insisted on a simple life style, which is to be expected, nonetheless all these foundations meant that the young institutes had very few resources and were faced with real financial challenges. He was a man who spent little on himself and lived a frugal life. He wanted the same for the members of the congregations he founded.

In the same way the insistence in the first constitutions on courtesy and politeness are an imprint of the founder’s own personality. He is deeply courteous and polite and understood just how important this way of behaving is in every day life and also for establishing good relationships with others and with everyone you come into contact with.

Conclusion.

The aim of this paper is simply to enable us to understand a little better where we have come from and why we were founded. It is, of course, incomplete but it gives us an idea of the circumstances which gave birth to the sons and daughters of Canon Van Crombrughe. It is certain that we have all been influenced by an age, by a culture, by a family that has a lasting effect on our attitudes, on the way we think and act. Each one of us has inherited not only certain intrinsic values from all these elements but also the limitations that go with them. Our Founder was no exception to this rule.

The historical situation in Europe at the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th is confused, uncertain and often violent. New European states were created and great powers broken up. Belgium is born in the midst of this process; she is small and fragile at the beginning of the 19th century and still is today.

Our congregations, born into a turbulent Europe, have spread elsewhere and continue to live through a time of uncertainty in some countries and hope for a future in others. The important thing is to be able respond with the same conviction to the situation we find ourselves in today as did our founder nearly 200 years ago. We have inherited a series of values which are common to us all and which have been entrusted to us. Our task is to pass them on to those within our religious family and to those outside, each congregation in its own way.

We want to thank all those who have made it possible for us to present this paper. We thank all of you who are attending this symposium and who will pass on the values of our religious family to those who will join us in the future.

The founder wrote to the two congregations he founded in 1817 in these words.

“I have asked for you that Jesus might send you the Spirit which enlightens, which purifies, which sanctifies and that he might make you instruments of his mercy.”

Through the gift of this charism our founder asks us to work in our world today with our eyes fixed on the future. He speaks as a prophet and invites us to

live our charism of compassion by denouncing violence in all its forms and to be non violent ourselves.

respect creation and use all it offers us with moderation and wisdom.

Respect ourselves and live in harmony with ourselves and others.

go beyond our own frontiers and limitations and discover new values.

Many years ago Eckhart wrote “You can call God love, goodness, but the best name for God is compassion.” This is what the founder offers us, this is what God proposed to those who came before us in our religious family and still proposes to us today.

2.
Constant Van Crombrugghe and the Church in the southern provinces of the Lowlands
1789 – 1865. (1)

Aloïs Dupré and Robert Hamilton

Introduction.

The aims of this short paper are:

1. To give a brief account of some of the historical events which influenced the development of the Church in the southern provinces of the Lowlands during the life of the Founder.
2. To study the way in which the Founder's views on Church-State relations and education were formed by the experiences of his early life.
3. To try and understand better how the foundation and growth of our 4 congregations was influenced by developments in the Church after 1830.

This paper should be understood in the context of the paper given by Sr Agnès and read as a development of it.

This paper is based mainly on the doctoral thesis of Fr Guillermo Garcia. (2).

I have divided this short study into 4 sections each corresponding to a clearly defined period in the history of the southern provinces.

- a) The Catholic Church in the southern provinces of the Lowlands 1789-1805.
- b) The Napoleonic era. 1805 – 1814.
- c) The United Kingdom of the Netherlands 1815-1830.
- d) The Kingdom of Belgium 1830-1865.

The Catholic Church in the Southern provinces of the Lowlands
1789-1805.

i) The Van Crombrugghe-Spitaels family.

Sr Agnès has already explained the importance of the Founder's family in his religious development. It is important to note that the family were used to playing their part in local government. It is hardly surprising that the Founder would play an important role in the political life of the diocese of Ghent and even in the political life of Belgium at the time of the National Congress in 1830.

ii) Persecution.

Constant Van Crombrugghe was born in 1789, the year of the French Revolution. At the time of his birth Geraardsbergen was part of the Austrian Empire. It is worth noting that Van Crombrugghe was already 41 years old when the Kingdom of Belgium was established

His childhood was spent in Flanders and as he grew up as a small boy he must have become increasingly aware not only of the poverty and destitution around him but also of the persecution of

the Church especially after the French occupation of 1794. At that time the Founder was 5 years old.

This persecution took the form of:

- the replacement of religious education in schools by the study of Republican principles.
- the suppression of religious orders and the confiscation and sale of their property.
- the prohibition of the wearing of ecclesiastical clothes.
- the introduction of divorce by mutual consent.
- the obligation for Priests to make a declaration of submission to the French Republic. Those who refused had their possessions confiscated

This persecution touched the life of the young Constant in several ways. His great uncle, Canon Huleu was to become embroiled in a bitter struggle over whether or not the clergy should take the oath of submission. **(3)** Constant's father was to save the Chapel of Our Lady on the Old Mountain after it had been sold and was about to be demolished by its new owner. **(4)**

The Napoleonic era 1799-1814.

Napoleon came to power in 1799 and ruled France first as Consul (1799 – 1804) then as Emperor (1804- 1814). The Founder was to live the formative years of his life under the Napoleonic regime. He would be 26 years old and a priest by the time Napoleon lost power and was exiled.

In 1801 Napoleon concluded a concordat with Pope Pius VII. This made possible the reorganisation of the dioceses of the Northern Departments. However, Napoleon personally nominated bishops to the new sees created in the north.

With the establishment of the Empire it soon became clear the Napoleon wished to control both education and the Church.

Educational reforms.

Napoleon established a new national system of education. No individual, no religious congregation or order could open or teach in a school unless they were accredited by the Imperial University.

The young Constant was soon to experience at first hand the implications of Napoleon's educational policy. In 1805 the teenage Van Crombrugge arrived in Amiens (France) and enrolled in the Collège St Acheul run by the Fathers of the Faith.

In June 1804 a decree was issued suppressing the Fathers of the Faith in France. In December 1807 all former members of the Fathers of the Faith were ordered to leave their schools immediately. In a letter to his parents, Constant described his pain at seeing his teachers and friends leave the school. (M. Sellier) *gathered us together in a room and told us that the government had given them the order to depart, but that he had spoken with the bishop in order to provide us with other teachers. At this news everyone broke down in tears, all you could hear was groans and sighs; in vain did M. Sellier try to tell us more in order to console us.*

The humiliation of Pius VII and the struggle for the control of the Church.

In 1809, aged 20, Constant Van Crombrugge entered the Seminary of the diocese of Ghent to begin his theological training for the priesthood.

During these years the young seminarian was to witness the humiliation of the Pope by the Emperor.

Napoleon annexed the Papal States, bought the Pope to France and imprisoned him at Fontainebleau where he would remain until the fall of the Emperor in 1815.

With the Pope imprisoned Napoleon thought he would have a free hand in the appointment of bishops. The Pope refused to invest any of the bishops named by the Emperor. Napoleon decided to convoke a national council of bishops in 1811. The aim was to bypass papal approval by replacing it with the approval of the Council.

The plan failed. The bishops declared that the council was not competent to supply for the pope in his case.

Amongst the leaders of the opposition to the Emperor's plan was Van Crombrughe's own bishop, Maurice de Broglie, bishop of Ghent. (5) The bishop was imprisoned. He would remain in prison until the fall of Napoleon.

The diocese of Ghent now experienced the ire of the Emperor.

- all exemptions from military service were abolished.
- no nominations of clergy were approved unless they supported Gallican views (that the Church in France was independent of the pope and primarily subject to its own bishops and the ruler of the nation).

Bishop de Broglie was one of three bishops forced to resign from his diocese. In 1813 the Emperor appointed a new bishop to the diocese of Ghent. The diocese refused to recognise him.

In the mean time Constant Van Crombrughe had been ordained priest in 1812. He was fortunate to have been ordained before the wrath of the Emperor fell on the seminary. The majority of seminarians were deported and 40 out of 148 died of dysentery. One of those who died was a relative of Van Crombrughe's.

The end of the Empire was at hand. In 1814 the Prussians occupied Brussels and the French evacuated Ghent. Napoleon abdicated on April 6 1814 and French domination of the Netherlands was at an end.

The young Van Crombrughe: Ultramontane and Traditionalist.

Born at the outbreak of the French Revolution, the Founder had been a citizen of France for most of his life up to 1815.

By the time Europe was finally rid of Napoleon Van Crombrughe was 26 years. He had suffered at first hand from the interference of the state both in education and the affairs of the Church.

During his seminary years he had become a convinced Ultramontane. (6)

He abhorred the chaos and poverty that had been the immediate result of the French Revolution. He opposed all state interference in education and the affairs of the Church. He strongly opposed the educational ideas of the Enlightenment. (7) In general he looked back to the social order of the *Ancien Régime*.

These were the views he came to hold in the light of the experience of the first twenty five years of his life. He would defend them with increasing intransigence until the end of his days. (8)

The United Kingdom of the Netherlands. 1815-1830.

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815 Constant Van Crombrughe was to become a subject of King William I of Orange Nassau for the next 15 years of his life.

William of Orange sought to control both education and the Church throughout his kingdom and especially in the Catholic provinces of the south.

State interference in education. (9)

During the entire reign of William I over the Southern Provinces, the government's progressive monopoly of education provoked the opposition of the Catholic hierarchy and clergy. In 1814 Bishop de Broglie appointed Abbé Van Crombrugghe Principal of the diocesan college of Alost. As principal of the College, the Founder was to suffer directly from government interference in education. He refused to adopt the methods of education approved by the government so in 1825 the government closed the college along with all diocesan schools.

In 1817 Van Crombrugghe founded two pious associations. A group of sisters in Aalst and group of brothers in Geraardsbergen (Grammont) Both groups were involved in educating the poor. Once again government interference in education made life difficult for the Founder and almost led to the demise of the brothers.

It is important to note that in founding his congregations Van Crombrugghe was part of a general renewal movement within the Church which led to the foundation of numerous congregations. Within the diocese of Ghent alone at least 21 new congregations and older orders were either founded or re-established. A further 19 congregations were established between 1837 and 1857.

Interference in the affairs of the Church.

William I also desired to exercise control over the Church and in particular to control the nomination of bishops, vicar generals and even the parish clergy.

The bishop of Ghent, Maurice de Broglie, had already stood up to Napoleon on this issue and he was not about to give into William I. He proceeded to appoint parish clergy without the government's consent. In this and many other ways he opposed government control of the Church. Having been warned of his impending arrest and trial, Bishop de Broglie, once again, left the country and went into exile.

The diocese of Ghent again became the target for government persecution.

All parish priests named by bishop de Broglie were removed from office.

The government not only refused to recognise the authority of the 2 vicar generals appointed by the bishop to run the diocese in his absence, but later imprisoned them.

Van Crombrugghe's position in the Ghent diocese 1815-1830.

During the entire period 1826 -1830, the clergy and especially the clergy in the diocese of Ghent played a leading role in Catholic opposition to the Dutch government's religious and educational policies

The clergy in the diocese of Ghent were divided into 3 factions

The first group was favourable to government control of the Church. The members of this group adhered to the principles of the Enlightenment.

A second group and in direct opposition to the first group were the Ultramontanes. They were opposed to all government interference in the Church and looked to Rome for direction. Amongst this group were François Boussem, the secretary of the diocese and later bishop of Bruges. Another leading member of this group was Abbé Van Crombrugghe.

A third group were the Liberal-Catholics who were strongly influenced by Lammenais' theories on Church state relations. This group was to become very influential in the diocese after 1831 and would soon come to oppose the Van Crombrughe and the group of Ultramontanes.

In 1825 the Founder was 36 years old.. He had the confidence of those who were administering the diocese of Ghent. Bishop de Broglie had died in 1821 and the diocese would be without a bishop until 1829. Van Crombrughe was a man of influence. He could call on a vast network of former students and staff members of the *Collège d'Alost*. He had many links with the wealthier classes and the Flemish aristocracy. Over the years he had gained vast experience in the "diplomatic" nuances needed to deal with ministers, provincial governors and local authorities, to whom he was well known. Among his friends and collaborators were R. Boussem (the future bishop of Bruges) and E. Sterckx (the future cardinal archbishop of Mechlen.)

The time had come for the Founder to exercise his innate political skills to defend the liberty of education and the freedom of the Church from state control.

The Founder became the spokesman for the Ghent Vicariate as the bishops developed their campaign of opposition to the government of William I. The unpublished correspondence between Van Crombrughe and other leading churchmen of the time shows that he played a pivotal role in representing the diocese of Ghent in its relations with the Archdiocese of Mechlen and the papal envoy.

Mgr Vande Velde, bishop of Ghent. 1829.

Mgr Van de Velde was appointed bishop of Ghent in 1829. He was a man with a limited theological and philosophical formation. He was not really an administrator much less a diplomat. Recognising his limitations and the complex political situation in the Church at the time of his appointment, Van de Velde immediately accepted the proposal made by E. Sterckx, the Vicar General of Mechlen, that Abbé Van Crombrughe be appointed as his secretary and personal advisor.

For the next few years the Founder was to have a considerable influence on the affairs of the Church at a local level and an international level.

Understandably he had little time to devote to the small congregation he had founded. They would have to limp along as best they could until a later date when the Founder was no longer in favour with Bishop Van de Velde

Francesco Cappaccini , papal envoy.

Pope Pius VII was alarmed by the strength of the opposition of the Belgian bishops to the government of King William. Part of papal policy was to maintain the European order established at Vienna in 1815. Pius VII feared any exercise of popular sovereignty. Even after the revolution in Brussels in 1830 he was to urge to Catholic bishops to remain faithful to William I.

The papal envoy, Cappaccini, arrived in Brussels toward the end of 1828. He quickly developed a low esteem for the clergy. He referred to Van Crombrughe as somewhat "fanatic" or "hot headed" and he thought that he had too much sway over his bishop.

With the revolution of 1830 and the establishment of the Kingdom of Belgium, Rome regarded the liberal constitution of the young kingdom as verging on atheism and for years to come considered the Belgian bishops as dangerously liberal. (10).

The Kingdom of Belgium 1830 – 1865.

The National Congress.

Constant Van Crombrughe was elected a delegate to the National Congress. There was some opposition to his taking in place at the Congress but Bishop Van de Velde urged him to take his seat.

During the Congress Van Crombrughe played his by now familiar axial role. He was well known to the hierarchy and at ease in the company of a number of influential members in Congress. Although he made only two interventions, his “hidden” activity proved him to be the most influential member of the Flemish clergy in the National Congress.

The objectives of the Church in the Congress were to secure the Church’s absolute freedom, especially in education and church government.

Archbishop de Méan decided that some sort of direct intervention on the part of the hierarchy would be necessary. In order to prepare for such an intervention the archbishop asked for help from E. Sterckx, Van Crombrughe and certain lay congressional leaders.

We know that the Belgian hierarchy succeeded in obtaining its objectives. The Founder made two important speeches and always felt that he had served his country and his Church well during the Congress.

The diocese of Ghent and the ideas of Lammenais.

Not long after the Congress Van Crombrughe was to lose his influential position in the diocese of Ghent. As we have already seen there existed amongst the Ghent clergy a faction who had been greatly influenced by the writing of the liberal-catholic Lammenais. The Liberal-Catholics gained influence in the diocese and were able to oust Van Crombrughe and the conservative ultramontanes from the influential positions they held in the diocese.

The catholic liberal ideas of Lammenais were widely accepted in Belgium amongst the clergy. But for the pope Liberalism raised the spectre of the French Revolution and the chaos it had brought to Europe. **(10)**

In 1830 Lammenais and his friends founded a newspaper, *L’Avenir* which propagated catholic liberal principles.

Van Crombrughe was totally opposed to many of its ideas which like the Pope he associated with the French Revolution. **(11)**

He was strongly opposed to the *L’Avenir* and collaborated in another newspaper *Le Mémorial du clergé*. In 1833-1834 Van Crombrughe was associated with a violent polemic against a Liberal-Catholic publication. The incident divided the diocese and deeply embarrassed the bishop. It was the end of Van Crombrughe’s influence in the diocese for a number of years.

The views of Lammenais were later condemned by Gregory XVI in the Encyclical *Mirari Vos*. **(12)**

The Church in Belgium: Diocesan and Pontifical Congregations.

We will devote the final section of this paper to a brief outline of developments within Belgian Church which have a bearing on the development of our religious congregations.

Three factors have to be kept in mind.

1. The desire of Belgian bishops to reorganise and strengthen their dioceses.
2. The rapid growth in the number of foundations of new congregations.
3. The centralisation of papal authority.

1. The dioceses of the Southern Provinces had suffered badly for nearly half a century. They had undergone repeated and prolonged vacancies. The bishops appointed in 1829 were keen to reorganise their dioceses. They gave a general impression of episcopal originality, independence and initiative. This was often looked upon with suspicion by the Roman Curia. **(13)**

2. This was especially true with regard to the religious congregations which were springing up everywhere in their dioceses. It was particularly true where education was concerned. The Diocesan bishops started to create their own network of schools for boys and often found them to be in competition with schools founded by religious congregations.

In 1845, Bishop Delebecque, bishop of Ghent, decreed that no new boarding schools run by religious could be opened in the diocese without his express permission.

In 1830 Van Crombrughe's two congregations received Episcopal approval and became diocesan congregations. As we have seen this means that diocesan bishops will have their say in the development and organisation of these congregations. Bishop Van de Velde gave founders plenty of liberty in founding and developing their congregations. Bishop Delebecque (Bishop of Ghent 1838 – 1864) like most diocesan bishops kept a firm control over his diocesan congregations.

Many of the newly founded congregations worked with the poor but many suffered real financial difficulties. Diocesan bishops insisted that congregations had to be financially viable. This resulted in a movement away from working for the poor towards an apostolate which provided an income. In 1857 Bishop Delebecque decreed that no new communities could be founded unless they had proper financial support.

It is in the light of these developments that we need to understand the early history of the growth of our Congregations.

For a number of years (1834 – 1838) the Founder no longer played an important role in the diocese of Ghent. With the appointment of Mgr Delebecque (Pro-Roman and Ultramontane) he would once again enjoy the confidence of his bishop.

It was during these years (1834-1838) that the Founder was able to give more time and attention to the organisation and development of his two Congregations.

The Founder had a double concern.

- The evangelisation of the poor. **(14)**
- The christianisation of the bourgeoisie by means of education.

He set to work reorganizing and adapting the congregation of sisters to meet this double concern. **(15)**

In 1834 Sr Antonia, one of the original founding group of sisters in Aalst, went to Geraardsbergen. She was to become the Superior General of the sisters in Grammont known as De Zusters van Maria en Jozef (Zwarte Zusters.) This congregation developed separately from the other sisters. Van Crombrughe remained their spiritual director and continued to help them organisationally. After his death in 1865, Bishop Bracq (Bishop of Ghent 1864-1888) would sever their connections with the Josephites and make them a truly diocesan congregation.

In 1838 the Founder undertook a further modification of the main Congregation of sisters. This reorganisation probably took place in the light of the imminent creation of the diocese of Bruges. The Founder would have been well aware of the proposal to divide the diocese of Ghent and create the diocese of Bruges. A significant number of communities of the sisters were situated in the future diocese of Bruges. Once the diocese was established it was only natural that they would be under the bishop of the new diocese. In this way the diocesan congregation, De Zusters van den Heilige Jozef, came into being.

The brothers were always short of personnel and this prevented the Founder from breaking them up into different congregations. They had become a diocesan congregation in 1830. In the 1840's the Founder was to make a significant change to the very nature of the Josephites.

In 1845 Bishop Delebecque supported the Founder's intention of admitting Josephites to the priesthood by writing a chapter to be added to their constitutions which regulated admission to Holy Orders.

While Bishop Delebecque may have approved of the proposal to make the Josephites a sacerdotal congregation Henri Bracq, his successor, remained opposed to it throughout his episcopate and continued to exercise a strict supervision over the Josephites. **(16)**

3. While the Belgian bishops were busy centralising their power and reinforcing their authority in their dioceses, Rome was carrying out a similar programme.

Papal Nuncios began to interfere more and more in the life of national churches. Ad limina visits were re-instated. Rome concentrated as much as possible the direction or administration of the entire Church in its own hands.

It is in this context that we have to understand the requests made in 1861 by the Daughters of Mary and Joseph and the Josephites for Pontifical status. That is to say a request to be removed from the authority of their local bishop and placed under the authority of Rome.

The Diocesan bishops especially Henri Bracq, were opposed to such requests. Indeed as early as 1832 they asked Rome to place the ancient exempt orders under the direction of their local bishops. Rome refused. **(17)**

Rome was prepared to look favourably on requests for Pontifical status. The Daughters of Mary and Joseph and the Josephites received a decree of praise, the first step to Pontifical status. However, in the case the Josephites there was a fundamental misunderstanding as to whether the Congregation was lay or clerical.

The Founder died in 1865 and left the Josephites at the mercy of Henri Bracq. The question of their clerical status would not be resolved until 1897.

The histories of our Congregations since the death of our Founder will be told during this symposium.

Kimwenza
24.12.04

Notes.

(1) The Southern Provinces of the Lowlands have a complicated history during this period. After the French conquest they became part of the Northern Departments of the French Empire, then part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815 and finally the Kingdom of Belgium in 1830. It is always difficult to know how to refer to them.

(2) Constant Guillaume Van Crombrughe. The response of a Christian educator to and within the historical context of the 19th century .
Leuven 1980.

(3) Canon Huleu and the Oath of submission. Cfr Garcia. Op. cit. page 28.

(4) The chapel rescued by Constant's father.

(5) Prince Maurice de Broglie bishop of Ghent.

(6) *Ultramontanism* is the word used to describe the views of those who support the use and interpretation of the powers and prerogatives of the papacy. *Febronianism* or *Gallicanism* favoured control of the Church by national rulers and by the national hierarchy. The word *Ultramontane* means "beyond the mountains" and it distinguished those members of the Church who looked beyond the Alps, that is to the Pope, for guidance.

(7) The Founder's view on education will be explained in a later paper.

(8) There is a strange paradox in the Founder's opposition to Liberalism and especially to the revolutions of 1848. In 1830 he had voted for the Belgian Constitution which was seen by Liberals as a model for Constitutional monarchies. In 1848 many countries struggled in vain to establish a similar regime in their own country. They did not have the support of Van Crombrughe in their struggles.

(9) Guillermo Garcia describes in detail the attempts of William I to control education and the opposition of the bishops, especially the bishop of Ghent. Op. cit. pages 47- 50.

(10) Cfr H. Verbist (P. Gabriel c.j.) *Les Grandes Controverses de l'Eglise contemporaine*. Edition Rencontre Lausanne. 1969 Chapitre VII.

« Après la libération, la Belgique se donna une Constitution qui faillit être condamné par Rome; que Mgr Lambruschini qualifia d'athée ». p. 208.

(11) Cfr H. Verbist op.cit. *Le mystère de Lammenais*. p.196. See also E.E.Y.Hales *The Catholic Church in the Modern World*. London 1958 pp95-101.

(12) *Mirari vos* declared the following principles taught by Lammenais to be erroneous.

- The Church is in need of renewal.
- Freedom of conscience.
- Freedom of the press.
- Revolt against authority is acceptable in certain cases.
- The Church should be separated from the State.

It is interesting to note that the publication of *Mirari vos* was delayed in Belgium.
Cfr H. Verbist op. cit. p. 205. and p.208.

(13) One area of conflict between the Belgian Hierarchy and the Roman curia was the establishment of the Catholic University in Leuven. The Belgian bishops had not created it as a pontifical university but one solely dependent on their authority. In using freedom of education accorded by the Belgian Constitution they seemed to have given Church sanction to the constitutional freedoms frowned upon by Rome and this within an area of education which the Holy See had traditionally reserved to itself. In addition to this a number of professors were known to have contact with Lammenais and his theories. The entire university was therefore looked upon with suspicion by Rome.

(14) On the Founder's attitude towards the poor cfr Garcia op. cit., p.124.

It would be interesting to know to what extent Van Crombrughe's attitude towards the poor differed from that of the bishops of Ghent.

Mgr Fallot de Beaumont, bishop of Ghent (1802-1807) stated « *Certains vivent dans la pauvreté, d'autres dans le luxe, ainsi l'a voulu la Providence, c'est une des preuves les plus tangibles de la bonté et de la sagesse divines, c'est le plus puissant bien de la société.*

Mgr Delebecque, bishop of Ghent (1838-1865) urged the poor " *de ne pas murmurer contre les riches ni contre Dieu*".

Mgr Bracq, bishop of Ghent (1865-1888) announced that « *L'égalité des hommes était un dogme monstrueux, puisque Dieu avait voulu l'inégalité dans les institutions sociales* ».

Cfr. H. Verbist op. cit., p.368.

(15) The Founder's re-organization of the Congregation of sisters in 1834 and 1838 is analysed and described in detail by Fr Guillermo Garcia. Op.cit. pages 165-169.

(16) It has to be said the Josephites were not easily controlled. Writing to the Papal Nuncio on the 5th of August, 1869, Bishop Bracq denounced Mr Remi (3rd Superior General) for having founded a Josephite house in England without informing him.

Bishop Bracq made it clear that Mr Remi could not be elected to a second term of office as Superior General.

(17) In 1832, through the intermediary of Archbishop Sterckx, the Belgian bishops asked Rome, that religious who had an exempt status prior to their dispersion during and after the French occupation now be placed under Episcopal jurisdiction.

Discussion

- Fr. Jacob** asked whether it was our Founder's wish or was it circumstances that resulted in some congregations having pontifical and others diocesan status?
What was his role in that request?
What did he really think?
- Sr. Agnes** responded that it was difficult to enter into the thought of someone else. He certainly wished to assist the new diocese of Bruges, but at the same time he played a national role and in Brussels he met politicians who worked at an international level. He wanted a foundation in Brussels for the DMJ's, so because of that we became 'extra'-diocesan.
- Secondly, the Founder's family was very open to other cultures in France, e.g. his father traded with French businessmen. The Founder considered making foundations outside Belgium, so he wanted both pontifical and diocesan congregations.
- Fr. Alois** stated that he had always understood that the Josephites were founded to aid the poor and the weak, yet at first glance the foundations at Louvain and Melle might appear to contradict that. We need to understand that our Founder was very concerned that future leaders from the commercial middle-classes should have a sound Christian formation.
- Sr. Luc** offered the clarification that the diocese of Bruges was 're-born', rather than newly established. It had existed before Napoleon but the bishop lived in Ypres. When the diocese was re-founded after Napoleon the bishop wanted all the institutes in his diocese to be diocesan.
- Sr. Teresa** considered that another element in the diocesan versus pontifical question was the fact that when the sisters were divided, the sisters in Bruges remained diocesan but those in the arch-diocese of Malines were outside of that. Mme. Flore, the 2nd Superior General, always had ambitions to achieve pontifical recognition and make a foundation in England. Discreetly the Founder delayed this until the Josephites were also recognised.
- Fr. Evariste** queried why Agnès emphasised the charism of compassion. If this were really the Founder's intention, why did he not found orphanages and similar institutions?
- Sr. Agnès** stated that the Founder insisted on compassion so that teachers would be careful to pay attention to each pupil, whether rich or poor, clever or not, easy or difficult. He insisted each child would be considered as a unique person, loved by God. Compassion means suffering with someone, sharing with them our wisdom and limits. When the DMJs went to Burundi they very soon realised the need for medical work, orphanages and homes to look after the elderly and the handicapped.
- Sr. Marie Rose** commented that in the Congo her congregation founded orphanages, retirement homes, dispensaries and Sunday schools. They also provided for the handicapped and difficult children.

- Sr. Liz** thought it was a mixed blessing that we have not had institutionalised orphanages in view of what has transpired recently. In Uganda the DMJs' outreach to AIDS' patients has been by going out to villages rather than setting up institutions.
- Fr. Aidan** asked whether we were avoiding part of the answer from social history in that two congregations remained diocesan institutes and two became pontifical institutes. The diocesan institutes looked after the poor, the pontifical ensured a good Christian formation for the members of the middle class. In the past this was a subject of tension between our 4 congregations. Our Founder seems to have had a somewhat schizophrenic approach!
- Sr. Agnès** basically agreed, but thought the issue was more complicated than this and that the Symposium will return to this topic later. The way in which the Founder asked Julie to change congregation and habit would not be acceptable today!
- Sr. Luc** suggested that Flore was a strong woman, whereas Julie was very humble and was really meeting the needs of local parish priests who were asking for Sisters. This is why they have remained a diocesan congregation.
- Sr. Maggie** observed on the question of compassion that towards the end of the 1st World War there was an effort to organise studies for girls that would enable admission to university. This was a real change of attitude and could be construed as compassion for the plight of women.
- Sr. Teresa Clements** said that initially Julie was not recognised as the first Superior General of the DMJs, and this caused pain outside the congregation. Yet Flore wrote of Julie that 'we have lost a tremendous person and one who keeps us in touch with the poor'.
- Sr. Agnès** remarked that this was redressed in the latter years and she herself had always considered Julie as the first Superior General of the DMJs. Perhaps Sr. Alice Nugent might have more to say about this.
- Sr. Luc** informed us that she had read somewhere that the Founder did not personally inform Julie that she was no longer Superior General, but sent a sister with a letter to tell her!

How the 4 Congregations developed.

3.

De Congregatie van de zusters van “Maria en Jozef” Geraardsbergen

The Sisters of Mary and Joseph were unable to attend the Symposium. Robert visited them in Erpe Mere and agreed to speak on their behalf.

Robert Hamilton

2nd November 1818.

Father Van Crombrugghe, principal of the College of Alost sent two sisters from the small group in Alost to Grammont. These sisters were looked after by the mother of the Founder, Cécile-Joséphine Van Crombrugghe, née Spitaels. The sisters started a lace making school for the poor girls of the town. In 1820 they started a Sunday school where poor children learned their catechism and how to read and write.

1831.

Bishop Van de Velde asked to Founder to train his sisters so that they could leave their convent to go and nurse the sick in their own homes. A sister from Alost came to Grammont to train the sisters in the care of the sick.

From very early on the Sisters in Grammont had this double apostolate; teaching and care of the sick. The sisters wore same black habit as the sisters in Alost which is why they were called the Black Sisters (Zwarte Zusters).

1834.

Sister Antonia is appointed Superior General.

Sr Antonia Vanhendt is an important person in the history of the sisters. Born in Ghent in 1795. She was one of the first group of sisters founded by the Fr Van Crombrugghe at Alost in 1818. She made her profession on the 21st of May 1820. She became the Superior General of the Sisters of Mary and Joseph in 1834. She remained Superior General until her death in Grammont on the 21st of May 1867. Her male counterpart is Ignace Van den Bossche, the 1st Superior General of the Josephites.

1845.

A junior school (lagere school) was started. The sisters continued with their lace-making school.

1855.

The sisters opened a community in **Meerbeke** where they established a kindergarten and a primary school. The sisters continued in Meerbeke until 21st of March 1994 when the community left to join with the sisters at Erpe.

1856.

In this year Pauline Spitaels died. Pauline was a relative of the Founder's mother. She was a wealthy spinster. In her last years she was nursed by a sister of Mary and Joseph. In her will she left her magnificent house in Grammont in Abdij straat to the sisters.

On the 27th of January the sisters moved into their new home where they also established their magnificent school for girls, le Pensionnat des Soeurs de Marie et de Joseph. The sisters were to remain there until the 19th of March 1996. On that date the entire community left Grammont to join the community at Erpe.

1865.

Death of the Founder. Fr Benoit Busschaert (1st Josephite to be ordained priest in 1848) takes over the direction of the sisters until 1867 when Bishop Bracq replaces him with a diocesan priest. This move reinforced bishop Bracq's control over this diocesan congregation of sisters.

1874.

On the 14th of October 1874 the sister founded a community at **Adegem (Maldegem)** here they opened a kindergarten and a primary school. In 1931 some land was bought and new school buildings were constructed for a kindergarten and the 1st year of primary school.

On the 5th of August 1980 the sisters left Adegem.

1877.

This year saw the foundation of a community at **Erpe**. The history of this foundation will be found in the little booklet published by the sisters in 2002 and entitled *125 jaar Zusters van Maria en Jozef te Erpe*.

At the request of the Parish Priest of Erpe the sisters founded a community in Erpe and on the 2nd of November opened a kindergarten.

The next year they opened a primary school and then a year later in 1878 a primary school. A hospice was founded which looked after orphan girls and the elderly.

In 1930 the decision was taken to build a new retirement/nursing home for the elderly. It was opened in 1932.

This nursing home was to develop into a large complex which today is home to the 21 remaining sisters as well as being an up to date nursing home and retirement home

1880.

A foundation was made outside the diocese of Ghent in 1880 when 4 sisters started a community in **Oetingen** in the archdiocese of Malines/Brussels. Mr and Mrs Kervyn had asked the sisters to make a foundation in Oetingen and start a school for girls. They built a convent for the sisters and a school. The kindergarten and the primary school were opened in 1880.

As well as a school a hospice was built for orphans and the elderly. On the 16th of November 1978 the home for the elderly was closed and the sisters moved into the community at Erpe.

1890.

Yet another foundation was made in 1880 at **Zarlardinge**. Once again it was through the initiative of the Parish Priest. He had a convent built for the 4 sisters who arrived on the 18th of September 1890.

On the 1st of October the sisters started a primary school for girls and a bewaarschool for little ones and girls. From 1894 to 1979 little ones were taken into the boarding school. After nearly a century in Zalardinge the sisters left in 1984.

1904.

A final foundation was made in 1904 at **Erondegem**. At the invitation of the Parish Priest 4 sisters went to Erondegem in 1904. They ran a kindergarten and a primary school. Later they set up a Sunday school.

The sisters left in 1984 and went to Erpe.

4.

The Congregation of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph Margaret Eason

Apostolates 1817 – 2005

Education

The names of schools etc. are different in different countries. Our sisters were active in all types of teaching at all levels.

Boarding and Day Schools, Nursery Schools, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Preparatory Schools, Grammar Schools, Technical Schools, Special Education Schools, Colleges of Education, Industrial Schools and Schools of Home Economics.

Schools for dressmaking and sewing.

Schools for the children of chiefs in Burundi.

Teaching and Lecturing in Universities, Major and Minor Seminaries and other centres of advanced studies.

Secretarial College.

Formation of Aspirants for other congregations.

Medical

Dispensaries, Pre-natal consultations and consultations for infants.

Hospitals and Medical School

Nursing in General Hospitals, Children's hospitals, Mental hospitals and of the chronically sick.

Nursing Tutors, Paramedics and Physiotherapists.

Doctors in Hospitals, General Practice and a Centre for the Homeless.

Work with Leprosy patients including a Child Care Facility, School, Home for the Elderly, Village and a Rehabilitation Centre.

Work with Aids projects, orphans of Aids patients and village outreach.
Responsible for the promotion of Health

Pastoral and Social Work

Retreat Centres, Retreats, Spiritual Direction, Prayer Groups, Counselling and work in Ecumenical Centres

Religious Instruction to Adults and Children.

Catechumenates and Courses in Catechetics.

Work with Youth and Hostels for Students.

Farming.

Homes for the Elderly, Children's Homes, Orphanages. And respite care.

Social Workers, resident wardens in hostels helping young women

Prison Work and Probation Work.

Work with the Homeless, ex prisoners, recovering alcoholics, Home for unmarried mothers.

Parish Sisters.

Secretary to a Bishop.

Working for the Nunciature.

Visiting the sick and elderly.

Work with the Batwa

Ecumenical Work, Jewish-Christian relations, collaboration with humanitarian organisations.

DATES

- 1830 Episcopal Approval of the Institute and our Rule by \bishop Van de Velde (Ghent)
- 1833 Julie Herbau appointed 1st Superior General.
- 1837 Separation of Sisters of St Joseph and daughters of Mary and Joseph.
- 1838 Definite division
- 1839 Olympiade elected as Superior General
- 1844 Rule and Constitutions approved by Cardinal Sterckx, Archbishop. Malines/Brussels
- 1864 Constitutions approved by Rome 20th July.
- 1869 First foundation in England – Croydon, approved by Thomas Grant, Bishop. Southwark
- 1891 Definite approbation by Rome of the Congregation and the Constitutions
- 1923 Novitiate opened in England in Scarborough.
- 1926 First foundation in California – Culver City
- 1930 First foundation in Urundi – Kaninya
- 1939 Independence of California, England and Burundi
- 1943 Novitiate opened in California in Brentwood after one year moved to Westwood
- 1947 Castlecor novitiate opened in Ireland for the missions
- 1959 England became a region
- 1959 First foundation in Uganda in Mbarara. Response to call from Bishop Ogez
- 1963 Generalate moved to Rome – La Storta
- 1963 First foundation in Brazil – Macau
- 1964 First foundation in Iran – Teheran
- 1965 Belgium, England and California became Provinces
- 1971 Ireland, Uganda and Burundi became Provinces
- 1971 First foundation in Ghana – Cape Coast formation of Infant Jesus Sisters
- 1974 First foundation in New Mexico – Albuquerque
- 1980 First foundation in the Cameroon – Mayo-Ouldeme
- 1986 Associate membership England and California
- 1991 Province of Africa – Uganda, Burundi, Ghana, Cameroon

- 2003 Belgium and Ireland became Regions
2004 England became a Region

5.

The Congregation of the Josephites Robert Hamilton

Early Years. Lifetime of the Founder.

During the Founder's life time foundations were limited to Belgium.

1817 Grammont. St Joseph's Institute was founded and is still flourishing today.

1830 Rooborst. Mlle Huysmanns d'Annecroix who lived in the chateau in the village persuaded the Founder to send some brothers to run a catholic school for poor boys. The Foundation never flourished.

The Josephites left Rooborst in 1861.

1833 Hal. This was the first foundation outside of the diocese of Ghent. Josephites founded Notre Dame de Hal which was **closed in 1842**. The College always struggled financially. There were misunderstandings with the Dean over finance.

1834 Maldeghem. Collège St Michel. This foundation struggled for 15 years before being closed in **1849**.

1835. Collège St Jean Baptiste. A foundation in the capital, Brussels. Great efforts were made to make a success of this College. However when the Cardinal Sterckx opened a diocesan school for boys not far away the Josephites closed down and left Brussels in **1858**

1837. Melle. Difficult beginnings but eventually Melle became firmly established and still flourishes today.

1839. Tirlemont. Collège St Stanislas. Yet another College which struggled and eventually was closed after nearly 50 years of existence.

1842. Leuven. Leuven was the last Josephite school to be founded in Van Crombrughe's lifetime.

The Archbishop of Malines asked the founder to take over a school which had been set up by a priest of the diocese. The priest was to move to another appointment and Cardinal Sterckx did not have another priest to take the school on.

On September 20th 1842 classes began under the direction of the Josephites.

The school building quickly became too small and in 1843 Van Crombrughe arranged the purchase of the buildings of a former university college, the impressive Collegium Sanctissime Trinitatis. In 1843 the school opened on its new site.

The college is flourishing today.

1865. Death of the Founder. At his death the Josephites had houses and schools in **Grammont.**

Melle. Tirlemont. Leuven.

The Foundation in England

Long before his death the Founder had envisaged a foundation in England. We have already heard about the misunderstandings between the Superior General M. Remi and Mgr Bracq bishop of Ghent over this foundation.

1869. St George's Croydon is founded. The school moved to Weybridge some time later.

1951. A second foundation was made in England. Barrow Hills was founded first of all at Longcross. Later moved to Witley near Guildford. The school still flourishes but was sold to the parents in the late 1980's.

Foundation in Brazil

1925. In this year the Josephites made a foundation in Brazil. Fr Bernard, Fr Vincent and Br Jerome went to Brazil. This foundation was never developed. No further confreres were sent there. Fr Vincent returned later to Belgium. Fr Bernard and Br Jerome lived the rest of their lives in Brazil (Igassu) Some research needs to be done to discover why this foundation was made and why it was never developed.

Africa.

1929 1st Belgian missionaries left for Luluabourg (Kananga) in the Kasayi. (Belgian Congo)

Establishment of a school at Katoka.

1936 Mission at Bena Makima followed by a foundation at Mushenge.

1939. Mission at Port Francqui.

Fr Willibrord will build a school at Ilebo. Today 2 schools there. I.T.C and Ste Marie.

1950 Josephites leave Luluabourg to take over territory of the Bakuba as their mission territory.

St Joseph's Bulongo founded from Katoka.

School at Domiongo founded.

Other missions established. Kakenge. Misumba.

1956. Prefecture of Mweka. A Josephite, P. Evariste becomes the Apostolic Prefect. (Mgr Marcel Van Rengen)

1960. Independence. R.D.Congo

1962. Mweka becomes a diocese/ Mgr Van Rengen ordained bishop by Pope Paul VI..

Eventually with the development of a Congolese diocesan clergy Josephites keep Bulongo and a large parish in Ilebo. They run the diocesan school in Domiongo.

European missionaries replaced by Congolese Josephites.

2002. St Etienne's founded in Kinshasa. Capital of R.D. Congo.

The Congolese Josephites have made foundations in the **Gabon** and the **Cameroon**

Belgium. Later developments.

Velm. For a number of year the Josephites ran a juniorate at Velm which also served as the Mother House. That is to say the Superior General and his council lived there.

1946. Houtaing. College of La Berlière was established in a chateau not far from Ath.. This is a French speaking school.

U.S.A. California.

1963. A foundation was made in California. 2. Belgian and 3. English Josephites made the first foundation.

They started in Los Angeles before moving to Santa Maria and opening St Joseph's High School with the DMJs. Later the parish of St Louis de Montfort in Orcutt was taken on.

A second foundation was made in Santa Barbara.

Recent developments in England.

More recently the Josephites in England have taken on parishes.

Addlestone. The Holy family Parish is next to St George's. Fr Benet Woodman was parish Priest there for many years and built the Parish Church there.

Fr Richard was Parish Priest until his election as Superior General. Fr Adrian was parish priest until this year (2005) when the Parish was return to the pastoral care of the diocesan clergy.

Bournemouth. The Josephites are responsible for two parishes in Bournemouth within the diocese of Plymouth. Frs Benet, Richard, Jude and William have exercised a parish ministry in Bournemouth.

Limehouse. London. Fr Aidan is at present parish priest in Limehouse in the east end of London.

6.

De Congregatie van de Zusters van St Jozef Brugge

Luc De May

Power point Presentation.

English text of power point presentation.

1. Welcome

2. Origine

***Alost 1817**

Rules for the Daughters of Joseph – Flemish handwriting

***Bellegem 1827** affiliation of a Charitable Institute to the Institute of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph

***Ghent 1830**

Approbation of the Holy .Rule – Printed in Flemish

***Bruges 1832**

The Founder takes over an Institution for poor children

3. Notes by the Founder

4. Text:

First outline of the Rule of the Sisters of St. Joseph Alost, 1817.

This text is a handwritten text by Miss Colette De Brandt, who has started with myself this Institute of the Sisters of St. Joseph. *C.G. Van Crombrughe*

5. Division in 1838

*Ladies of Mary

*Sisters of St. Joseph

* No obligations towards the other branch

*They have an own Superior

6. The Sisters of St. Joseph

*Choice is free or indicated

*Renounce the blue scapular and the “M” of their costume.

7. Bishopric of Bruges

*1841 approbation of the original Rule – French handwritten text.

*1865 Founder asks the Bishop for a successor.

*1897 The Noviciate in Bruges

*1886 The Motherhouse in Bruges

*1907 Certificated sisters (87)

*1932 Mission in Congo

*1955 Mission in Chili

8 – 9 Maps

10. Expansion

11. Map of Belgium

12. Juridical Statute

*The Congregation is a VZW or an association without profitable purpose

*All institutions are separate VZW's

*Some schools are donated

*Institutions are given in long lease contract

*Schools go into a larger set of school communities

13. Sisters and Collaborators

- *Devoted women
- *Choir sisters, lay sisters and second order
- *Clergy; pastors, bishop, missionary congregations
- *Charitable and humanitarian organizations

14. Julie Herbau 1801-1864

- *She was the head of a charitable institute in Bellegem
- *Daughters of Mary and Joseph in 1827
- *Superior General 1832-1838
- *Superior General of the sisters of St. Joseph

15. Farm of the family Herbau

16. Special Events

- *1865 The sick Founder personally appoints the General. Superior.
- *1922. Reforming the lay-sisters
- *1948 The Superior General dies in Libenge in an aeroplane crash
- *1955 Fusion with the sisters of Charity of St. Joseph – Ypres
- *1957 Fusion with the sisters of Ste Theresa – Rollegem
- *1957 Noviciate Vogelzang starts with novices from five Federations
- *1967 Special General Chapter, adaptation to the documents of the Council

17. At the service of teaching, education and care-taking

Poor children, orphans, colonies, boarding schools
 Sunday, Primary, Secondary and High schools
 Handicapped children: De Kindervriend, de Berkjes
 Care: Witgele Kruis, Elderly people, maternity, dispensary, hospital
 Free of charge: parish work, sick people, refugees, administration

Associates

7.

Development of the DMJ Associates in the UK & Ireland.

Mona Sheehan

I would like to start by thanking Sister Agnès and the general team for inviting me to the symposium to share just a little with you on the origins and history of the DMJ Associates in the English Province.

So on to my first W – WHY Associates

It's fair to say that close religious bonds between major religious orders and lay people have existed for centuries. But it was just after Vatican II when many congregations looked more closely at the possibility of collaboration with the laity. And of course, the laity, in their turn, having become more aware of their role in the mission of the church looked to the religious to help them develop and deepen their spirituality. This eventually gave rise to the development of lay associate membership of a religious congregation as we know it today.

So back to our **WHY** for the Daughters of Mary and Joseph

Historically, it was not seen as a totally new venture for the Sisters as Colette de Brandt and Cécile Van Crombrughe (the Founder's mother) remained lay and in today's understanding would have been considered, in some sense, associates. There were also, in the early years, women who were, to some degree, attached to each community. In addition, the women from Mouscron who joined the DMJ's in 1830 had a 200 year experience as a lay community recognised by the diocese.

But in the 1980's what did it mean? Very basically it was about developing a prayerful relationship and a mutual support between associate and community members. It was in essence an invitation to come and share their charisms, spirituality and mission.

Move on now to **WHO** or **WHAT** are Associates –

Associates are women and men, single, married, and widowed who come from various walks of life. They are not religious and therefore do not live in community with vows. They have been in some contact with the Sisters for some time and were drawn initially by the spirituality and charism of the congregation.

Associate members have their own constitutions based on those of the DMJ Congregation. These offer the same spiritual understanding and challenge. The first chapter, to know Christ Jesus, on the spirit of the Congregation is identical with the 1985 Constitutions of the Sisters. The associate constitutions follow the same outline as those of the Sisters but are adapted to allow for the various life styles lived by the associates.

I will now very briefly look in more detail at the present structures of membership.

Aims

- 1 To develop in the Associates a spirituality which is based on the charism of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph.
- 2 To create a structure which will enable the Sisters and Associates to interact supportively while remaining financially independent of each other.

Objectives

To provide opportunities for Associates to become familiar with and share in the spirituality of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph through lectures, group sharing discussions, prayer and scripture sharing.

To encourage and enable the associates to translate this spirituality into active service in the church.

To provide an interaction where each is gaining from the other in their spiritual development.

To provide support to the sisters and on occasions and where appropriate to be an extension of their apostolate.

Formation

Prospective associates are invited to attend at least two or three associate gatherings on a “come and see” basis.

When they become familiar with the spirit of the Associates they may ask or be invited to undertake the three year programme.

During the first three years the new associate is introduced to the history and spirituality of the sisters and of the founder. They are helped to develop their understanding of the charism of mercy, gentleness and joy and how these gifts can be lived out in today’s world. They are given opportunities for praying with scripture and guidance in personal and group prayer. They spend time becoming familiar with the Associate Constitutions. Ongoing formation takes place in the link groups and at the annual National Associate Weekend.

After three years, the Co-ordinator in consultation with the Core Group asks those who are ready whether they wish to make a personal “Response” to being an Associate Member of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph by living out the key elements of DMJ Associate membership in their lives. The response is made publicly before the Provincial, the Co-ordinator, other associates and sisters and usually during the national weekend. At this ceremony the Associate receives the official symbol of the Associates. This is a lapel badge bearing the DMJ insignia.

Once a year, at the National Weekend, the Associates and the Sisters together publicly renew their commitment to live as “instruments of mercy”. Our national weekends are seen as a time of coming together, of deepening our relationship with God and each other. Some of the many topics at the N.W. include the DMJ Charism and the history of Constant Van Crombrughe, Charism and the Church, Prayer and the Prayer of the Church, Charism and the Constitutions, Scripture, Mission and Ministry, Prayers of the Founder, Charism and Social Justice to name but a few.

My third and final W is **WHEN** did it all begin in England –

The seed of Associate Membership was planted in 1981 at the General Chapter in Rome. Subsequently Sr Teresa Clements began to look at the question of Associate Membership for the English Province initially with Maureen Dolan and Sr Celia Beale. In 1986 permission was sought from both the Provincial and General Superior to begin some form of Associate programme that year. Sr Mary Cuthbert, then Provincial and Sr. Bernadette Lecluyse, then Superior General, greeted this proposal warmly and permission was given to start a programme. Sr Teresa who was leader of the Formation team wrote to all the communities in England asking for prayer, recommendations and suggestions in exploring the possibility of forming a group of associates.

In 1987 five sisters and six interested lay women (including Maureen Dolan and Srs Teresa and Celia) came together to discern and establish whether it was considered right to continue. As a result the first associate group was established in the English Province. At this same meeting, the group formulated some guide lines for Associates. Using the sections of the 1985 Constitutions of the DMJ Congregation dealing with spirituality, prayer and mission a draft set of constitutions was formed for Associates.

Through Intercom the Province was informed of the developing life of the Associates and was encouraged to invite others to the meeting planned for the following summer (1988). The next meeting saw a group of 25 people coming together, mainly family relatives of the Sisters or those

who had already some contact with a DMJ community. It was decided at that meeting to produce their own newsletter called Wellspring. (Wholehearted Easter People Laughing Loving Sharing Praying in the New Life of God). Later that same year a group of lay people formed a group in Middlesbrough and the following year a group of Associates was started in Cornwall. So that small seed planted in 1981 was now beginning to establish itself at a national level.

1997 proved to be quite a momentous year for Associates as the provincial team felt that the time was right to appoint an Associate as Co-ordinator. Up until that time a Sister had been Co-ordinator. Maureen Dolan was appointed and in fact Maureen was one of the six lay people who were instrumental in establishing the Associate group in 1987. Maureen stayed in post until 2003 when she was obliged to resign due to family commitments. Another graced and privileged time for Associates was in 2001 when Associates and Sisters came together for the first time at the Plenary in Ushaw. More good news was to follow from the General Chapter in Kilkenny that same year where the General chapter “ affirmed ” the value of the Associate Movement in the Church and in the Congregation”.

And so on to today, how that same seed has grown and blossomed. We currently have up to 56 actively involved Associates, 18 praying members, 6 people in formation and 8 waiting to go into formation. Will our membership continue to increase? I do not know. All we can do is to trust and be open to the Spirit and allow the Spirit to guide and lead us.

What I do know however, is that Associate membership is not about being part of “an exclusive club” but it is more a way of life. It’s a mutual sharing in the charism, the spirituality and the mission of the DMJ Congregation.

8.

Josephite Associates. California California.

Fr. Charles Hofschulte C.J.

What is it? A program designed to invite the laity who wish to have an association with the Josephites by sharing in the Josephite Spirituality and by assisting in the Josephite apostolate in the parish or in the school(s).

Opportunities:

- To come together and share in our prayer life (through morning/evening prayer at St .Louis de Montfort and Holy Cross parishes, and at St. Joseph Seminary, or to pray the daily Josephite prayers we pray at home on a daily basis;
- To engage in one-two days of recollection a year;
- To engage in discussion groups on issues of common interest;
- To engage in volunteering your time in assisting in some of our apostolic works at the school or parish, or at St. Joseph Seminary in accordance with your interest, expertise, and the developed interests of the group.

What it is not: The Lay Association program will attempt to develop a programme of activities that do not duplicate any of the existing parish committees or activities. This is not to say that Association members should not be involved, but rather through their involvement they will attempt

to bring the Josephite charism and spirit into the group. That spirit can best be defined as: hospitality, compassion and mercy, an interest in youth/young adults.

Meetings:

- Will be held at St. Joseph Seminary, 180 Patterson Rd.
- Regular meetings will be 4 times a year and will be arranged at the first meeting of the year in September or October.
- Special events, i.e. days of recollection, etc. will be arranged at the meetings.
- And joining in the parish novena(s) on Thursday before 1st Friday; and on the Monday Exposition following 8:00a.m. Mass to 12:00 noon are encouraged as giving an example to others.

9.

DMJ Associates in California

Renee Bauerly

“You will love God with every heart you help to love him.”

This is a quote from the Founder that has had a special meaning for me since I was a novice. When I was asked, four years ago, to be the Director for the Associates it took on an even greater significance for me.

“You will love God with every heart you help to love him,” became a call to evangelise in a new way, through teaching and sharing.

What I discovered was that those who responded to the call to be Associates had already developed a spiritual life. There was something in their life that resonated with the spirit of the congregation and being instruments of mercy. They had for a long time been in a relationship with God but needed direction as to how God was leading them along the journey. We need one another to help identify the working of the Spirit.

We DMJ’s are fortunate that through our community experience we have been able to develop and grow spiritually in our own lives. The Associates in California are starving for more opportunities to be able to share their journey with others. It is difficult to hold Christian values in our societies today. Some have been active in the parish or even engaged in pastoral ministry, but this does not satisfy the desire to grow and share personally with others who understand their faith experience.

Sr Enda Creeghan, who is present Associate Director, asked me to share with you about our Associates. At our November Meeting Sr Enda asked them to reflect on the following question in preparation for this event.

Where are we today with the Founder’s message; “Be there for the whole Church”?

THESE ARE A FEW OF THE RESPONSES:

With the limitation on time I can only give you brief phrases.

To be courageous is important

Being a good listener is a gift

Accepting myself as God sees me

They are searching for this intimacy with God.

St Ignatius Loyola wrote ... “it is not knowing a great deal that satiates and satisfies the soul, but feeling and savouring things intimately.”

At this time I would like to thank Maureen Dolan and Sr Teresa Clements for the scholarship they have brought to the Associates, the programme and to the development of the laity’s position in the Church today.

The article; Where to look for Lay Spirituality? Written by Maureen appeared in the Irish Dominican publication of Spirituality 2001/ The Maryknolls in the U.S.A. also published the article.

Maureen gives the background on the documents written by the ecclesial church concerning Associates. She also asks the questions that are challenging the laity, who are trying to find their place in today’s Church.

The position of the Laity before Vatican II was seen very differently from what we have come to understand after Vatican II.

Colette de Brandt, may have been our first pre-Vatican Associate. As a lay woman she guided and helped the Sisters in the practical aspects of running a school. At that time the “spirituality for the lay person consisted mainly in sacramental life, prayer and good works.”

Colette lived at the time “... when spirituality and the secular were two poles of a person’s life: they said their prayers and then got on with their lives. Any good works which the laity did were seen as done as a mandate from the clergy and were seen as sharing in the mission of the hierarchy.” This may have been the relationship between Father Constant Van Crombrughe and Colette de Brandt.

I wonder if Colette were alive today, whether she would have considered being one of the DMJ Associates. I hope someone at the Symposium, who has studied our history, will be able to answer this question for me.

The ecclesial church has given recognition to two exceptional women who responded to their vocation as laywomen. Dorothy Day and Mother Seaton are two such women. There was a radical change in their thinking about their role in the mission of the Church. Since Vatican II there is an appreciation of the laity as People of God through baptism. There is a universal call to holiness and the fundamental right to share and play a part in the mission of the Church and the world. The Laity have a distinctive call and it is a challenge to see their position realised as a mission in the Church today.

Parker Palmer defines vocation “not as a goal to be achieved but as a gift to be received.”

Religious communities have taken on two roles in relation to Associates; one to educate the laity about their gift and their role in the Church, and the second to recognise these gifts with hospitality and encouragement. There is a unique call to holiness, which needs to be accompanied and encouraged. Very often the parish or pastoral programme does not provide the intimacy they seek.

Inclusion:

We are experiencing new ways of being more inclusive of our Associates on congregational, provincial, regional and local levels. Some of you here today will recall their presentations at the 2001 Plenary at Ushaw. This type of bonding is essential to their understanding of how they are part of an International Community.

In California, our Associates participated in our “Province Ministry Fair.” We asked each Sister and Associate to make a display about their ministry. We discovered a great deal about ourselves and also how through the Associates the charism and mission were being extended. They are influencing society in ways we could never touch, through marriage and the family, in business, health and technology. We even have a private investigator.

All the members of the General Team as well as other visitors have presented reflections to the Associates. For some time it will be the only occasion to experience our international dimension.

We are looking forward to future activities with the Josephite Associates. There has been a collaboration and generosity from the English Region. We have been enriched by the publication of *Wellsprings* and gifted by the talents you share through the members.

It was here at Emmaus Centre in 1998 that we had the first International Associates Meeting. Many of you who participated are here at this Symposium. It was at the 1981 General Chapter that Teresa McShane proposed the possibility of Associates to the DMJ’s. We are well on our way and as the Founder would say; “en Avant” – keep moving forward.

(Quotes are taken from *Where to look for Lay Spirituality?* By Maureen Dolan, Spirituality, 2001)

Amalgamations / Federations.

10.

Amalgamations and Federations of congregations in the diocese of Bruges.

Zr Marie Rose Joye.

About the year 1953. Mgr E. De Smedt, bishop of Bruges, following the example of his predecessor, decided to regroup certain congregations into federations or unions.

Union or fusion of congregations.

At this time there were almost 100 apostolic congregations in the diocese.

How did he go about it?

Mgr De Smedt’s main concerns were the formation of the sisters and the demands of the modern apostolate.

First of all the bishop himself took a close look at the large congregations to see if their spirit and apostolic work could be harmonised with smaller and weaker congregations.

The bishop had a number of meetings with the superiors concerned so as to explain to them the necessity of uniting with a larger congregation. In their turn the superiors had to persuade their counsellors and sisters to see the wisdom of the decision.

It has to be pointed out that already the congregations had been obliged to accept “the holy rule for diocesan congregations of sisters”. The congregations were already living by this common rule. The customs and particular characteristics of the different congregations existed then and still exist today.

Before the actual fusion there was a lengthy period of preparation involving first contacts, preparation for the fusion and the final decision. Then came the realisation of the union. It has to be said that the union was not always accepted with good grace.

As far as our Congregation is concerned in 1955 the congregation of “The sisters of charity of St Joseph” at Ypres were united with us.

This congregation had a retirement home for ladies and primary schools.

In 1957 the congregation of “The sisters of St Thérèse” at Rollegem (between Courtrai and Mouscron) were also united with us. This congregation also had primary schools in different places (amongst others Mouscron) and an institute for mentally handicapped children.

Today our congregation is made up of 3 congregations. There are 5 sisters who were at Ypres and 13 sisters from Rollegem.

After 50 years we can say that we form one congregation. The union is a real one.

Federations

The federating of congregations began at the same time as the fusions.

This was the case for congregations who although small, still had

- A sufficient number of sisters to carry out the apostolate entrusted to the congregation.
- A sufficient number of novices and postulants.
- A fervent religious life.

There was no question of the congregation ceasing to exist.

The statutes of the federation provided for a postulancy within the congregation followed by a common novitiate.

The superiors met on a regular basis.

As far as our congregation is concerned, we form a federation with 5 other congregations.

The novitiate “Marie Médiatrice” was in our house, Vogelzang in Bruges.

By the end of the 1960’s there were almost no novices in these congregations. The common novitiate closed and all the novices within the entire diocese received a diocesan formation.

In the diocese of Bruges there is still a federation for the mission in the R.D. Congo.

Discussion.

Sr Agnes O’Shea wondered how three congregations fused their respective charisms with just one set of constitutions?

Sr. Marie Rose

Responded that that was precisely the problem. Elections were a particularly delicate matter. The Sisters of St Joseph respected the spirituality of the others and slowly they began to reciprocate. It helped that they realised that they were getting older and weaker and that they were happy to be with us. Another small congregation had only three houses and a school. At elections an effort was made to have a counsellor from each of the congregations on the general Council. However, when the pooling of financial resources was proposed, they withdrew because they were a very rich congregation. Much of their wealth consisted of their patrimonies and they were unwilling to share that. They preferred to remain independent. In the diocese there are still 48 congregations with fewer than 20 sisters in each. They are trying to find a way to come together without mentioning the word ‘fusion’.

Fr. Robert asked if the Common Rule of 1953 for diocesan congregations was still used.

Sr. Marie Rose

Replied that officially it was, but since Vatican II it had gathered dust in the cupboards of the different congregations.

Sr. Marie Rose

sought clarification about the 200 years existence of a lay community in Mouscron that had been mentioned by Mona Sheehan in her paper on the English Associates.

Fr. Robert observed that the lay community existed even at the time of the Founder as a group of pious women in Mouscron and they were known to the Founder.

Sr. Teresa added that what was remarkable about this particular group was that they lived community life as lay women. In response to a question from the floor, Teresa agreed that they could have been a Beguinage, but not enough research has been done to settle that question. Two former members of that lay community were of particular interest to the DMJs: Catherine Dal and Anne-Marie Ponthieux. The latter was novice mistress for 25 years with the DMJs and formed Olympiade, Flore, and Raphael, three Superior Generals.

Sr. Luc

Stated that in Blankenberge Mlle Knopf taught a group of lace-makers but it was not working very well so she handed the school over to the Srs. of St. Joseph and herself became a member of their congregation.

Fr. Robert said that in a few months time 1,000 letters of the Founder will be available on computer, courtesy of Brother Patrick.

Fr. Aidan

asked why has it taken over 150 years for us to come together in this way. He felt it was a seminal moment for us all as sons and daughters of van Crombrugghe.

TUESDAY, 1st March

SPIRITUALITY

12.

The early formative influence on the spirituality of the Founder.

Robert Hamilton

Introduction.

This short paper attempts to list the different influences which made Constant Van Crombrugghe not only the man of prayer and action that he was throughout his adult life but also the skilled spiritual director of so many men and women.

The Founder was not the author of books on spirituality. Like his great uncle Canon Huleu he was a director of souls and a founder of religious congregations. Throughout most of the 53 years of his priestly life (1812 – 1865) he exercised a ministry of spiritual direction by means of the letters he wrote to the religious brothers and sisters in the Congregations he founded. (1)

The spiritual climate in France and the Low Countries in the late 18th and 19 centuries.

Like all of us the Founder absorbed the religious and spiritual teaching of the age in which he was born and grew up.

What was the religious climate in which Constant van Crombrugghe grew up during his early formative years as a small boy in Grammont?

The religious climate in France and the Low Countries was very much one of rigorism which owed its origins to the spirit of Jansenism.

This is not the place to delve into the theology of grace and free will as taught by Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638). Based on the writings of Jansen and a desire to return to the orthodoxy and spirit of the early Church, Jansenists believed

1. The sacraments of the Church were only efficacious when God had already transformed the inner disposition of the recipient by his grace.
2. Because the grace of God was strictly limited to the elect, the Church need not preoccupy herself with the conversion of men and women outside the visible institution.
3. The members of the Church must purify themselves by severe discipline and rigorous asceticism.
4. Christians must make no concessions to self (e.g. the theatre and luxury are condemned)
5. The sacraments were restricted in their use to those who by their moral discipline had qualified themselves to receive them.

6. Everything in the Church which did not have divine sanction should be mercilessly routed out.

The teachings of Jansen were condemned in the papal bull *Ugenitus* (1713) from then on Jansenism ceased to be a real heretical force in the Church but rather a temper of mind, a way of thinking and acting.

This temper of mind is best summed up in the word *rigorism*. A spirituality which emphasised

- God's justice rather than his mercy. (2)
- A fear of God's punishment in this world.
- An overwhelming fear of hell in the next.
- A hostility to a man-centred theology (often associated with the Jesuits).
- A fear of approaching the sacrament of the Eucharist unworthily. This meant that the faithful, religious included, limited the occasions when they approached the altar for communion.
- A disdain for the human body and feelings and emotions.
- The ascetical life and corporal mortification.

This rigorist spirituality was widespread in France and especially in the Church in Lowlands. (3) This rigorist spirit was to remain in the Church for many years. Indeed many aspects of it remained in the Church until the reforms of Vatican II 1962-65.

2. The Founder and the spirit of rigorism.

A careful reading the letters of the Founder to his Josephite religious reveals that he was a child of his time and was not entirely free of the rigorist spirituality which was common in the Lowlands where he grew up as a young boy.

It may well be that his mother influenced him. Mgr Pieraerts who knew the founder well suggests that his mother had an important influence in the spiritual life of her son during his early years.

The Founder in his personal spirituality was never entirely liberated from fear of God's anger and punishment and a fear of damnation. He led a life of rigid self-discipline and personal asceticism. At times his observance of his personal rule of life and his regular attendance at the offices recited in the cathedral of St Bavon in Ghent verged on scrupulosity.

Listen to this prayer of the Founder which reveals a certain disdain for the human body.

“Acceptez la destruction de mon être comme un hommage que je veux rendre à votre souveraineté et à votre immortalité; et, miséricordieux Jésus, ayez pitié de moi.”

“Accept the destruction of my being as homage I wish to offer to your sovereignty and your immortality, and, merciful Jesus, have pity on me”

Another striking example of this dark negative shadow which lurked over the Founder's spirituality is to be found in a letter he wrote to a young Mr Stanislas (Later to become the 2nd Superior General) He is writing to a young religious to inspire in him a love for the young boys in his charge. The passage is both inspiring in its proposals and yet alarming in its negative attitude towards the young.

Travaillez avec ardeur à vous pénétrer de plus en plus des sentimens de notre divin Maître; à mesure que vous connaîtrez mieux J. C., vous deviendrez de plus en plus sensible aux maux de ces jeunes gens que vous êtes appelés à secourir; votre amour devenant chaque jour plus vif, vous parlera sans cesse en leur faveur; vous regarderez comme un bien fait à vous même, celui qu'on procurera à vos enfans; vous supporterez leurs défauts avec cette patience qui fait qu'on les corrige avec douceur; vous prendrez part à leur joie; vous vous affligerez de leurs peines; connaissant leur faiblesse, vous pourvoirez à leurs besoins, avec cette bonté qui prévient et qui finit toujours par triompher des caractères même les moins heureux.

Quand vous verrez de ces enfans engendrés en J.C. par l'Evangile, mais tombés dans le malheureux esclavage du démon, qu'elle ne sera pas alors votre compassion ? Leur sort tout déplorable qu'il est, n'est pourtant point désespéré, s'ils rencontrent en vous un Père prudent et charitable. Lettre de 27 octobre 1832.

Work with ardour to fill yourself with the same sentiments as our divine Master. To the extent that you get to know Jesus Christ you will become more and more aware of the misfortunes of our young people whom you are called to help. Your love for them will grow day by day and you will speak up ceaselessly in their support. Whatever you obtain for your children you will consider a benefaction for yourself. You will patiently put up with their failings so that you will correct them with gentleness. You will share their joy and share in the pain of their suffering. Knowing their weakness you will foresee their needs with that goodness which always finishes by triumphing even with the less fortunate of character.

When you come across these children who have been born of the gospel of Jesus Christ but have fallen into the miserable slavery of the demon, how great will be your compassion? Their state, no matter how deplorable, will not be hopeless if they find in you a prudent and charitable Father.

Letter dated 27th October 1832.

In another letter he mentions the avenging arm of God..

Allez à cette Mère de miséricorde, et le bras vengeur de Dieu sera arrêté avant qu'il ne vous frappe. Lettre 18 mai 1839 à M. Athanase.

Go to this Mother of mercy and the avenging hand of God will be held back before it strikes you. Letter dated May 18th 1839 to Mr Athanase.

He even refers to God's vengeance and the arm of Jesus as if it were raised and about to strike us down.

Qui nous dira où s'arrêtera la vengeance du Ciel Tâchons de désarmer le bras du Seigneur en profitant des moyens que je viens de vous rappeler. Lettre 27 février 1847.

Who can tell us where Divine vengeance will stop? Let us try and disarm the hand of the Lord by using the means which I have just pointed out to you. Letter dated 27th of February 1847 to the superior at Grammont.

In other letters the Founder writes about the wrath (Courroux) of God.

Je supporte tout dans l'espoir d'apaiser le courroux de Dieu. Lettre de 3 juin 1836.

I will put up with anything in order to appease the wrath of God.
Letter dated 3rd of June 1836 to the superior at Grammont.

J'adore les desseins de Dieu. Puissent-ils ne pas être, en cette occasion, un effet de son courroux. Lettre de 15. nov. 1844.

I love the plans of God. May they not be, in this occasion, an effect of his wrath.
Letter dated 15th of November 1844 to the superior at Melle.

Humilions nous donc et tâchons d'apaiser le courroux céleste, en acceptant les punitions, sans murmure. Lettre de 20 avril 1850.

Let us humiliate ourselves, and try to appease the divine wrath by accepting punishment without murmur. Letter dated 20th April 1850.

The Founder feared that the revolutions which swept through Europe in 1848 would provoke the wrath of God.

Prier, apaiser le juste courroux du ciel, implorer avec confiance notre Patron qui est aussi le Patron de notre Patrie... Lettre de 10 mars 1848.

Pray; to appease the just wrath of heaven; trustingly implore our Patron who is the Patron of our country Letter dated 10th March 1848 to the superior in Brussels.

In spite of his own fears and anxieties, as a Director of souls the Founder constantly advised his religious brothers and sisters to avoid the negative fears which at times assailed him.

He urged them not to give way to fear or anxiety. He urged them to have confidence in God and in his goodness. He was opposed to rigorous fasting and often forbade it altogether even during Lent.

To understand this more positive side of the Founder's spirituality we have to examine the other more positive influences which were also present in the spiritual climate of that time. Chief among these is the spirituality of St Francis de Sales.

Early positive influences in the spiritual formation of the Founder.

That the Founder did not succumb to a spirituality which was dominated by a spirit of Jansenism and religious scrupulosity is due to a number of influences on his spiritual life as he grew to manhood. It is important to notice how in later life the Founder was able to forge all these different formative influences into a coherent spirituality which he passed on to the members of the Congregations he founded.

These positive influences were:

- The spirituality of St Francis de Sales.
- The spiritual formation received from the Fathers of the Faith.
- Devotion to the sacred Heart of Jesus.
- The spiritual formation received from Canon Huleu.

The spirit of St Francis de Sales.

Francis de Sales (1567-1622) was Bishop of Geneva but lived in Annecy. He was canonized in 1665. The spiritual teaching of Francis was in contrast to the austerity which was so widespread in French spirituality.

He taught.

- A positive attitude to human nature. (Devout humanism)
- God is a God of love, mercy and goodness who desires to save everyone.
- All are called to union with God. Not just a select few.
- The heart is central to the spiritual life.
- The importance of gentleness (*douceur*) and humility.

The Founder was to model his own spirituality and his spiritual direction chiefly on the teachings of Francis.

The Fathers of the Faith.

In 1806, the Founder went to school in France and enrolled in the Collège St Acheul in Amiens. This school was run by the Fathers of the Faith. The years spent at this college in the company of the Fathers of the Faith had a profound effect on every aspect of the Founder's life, not least on his spirituality.

Teresa Clements has made a study of the Fathers of the Faith and written several important articles on their history, their spirituality and their influence on several apostolic congregations including those founded by Constant Van Crombrughe.

Teresa Clements characterizes the spirituality of this remarkable group of men as

- An emphasis on community life and the sense of family.
- A special emphasis on devotion to the Heart of Christ.
- An emphasis on the interior attitudes of obedience, gentleness and humility.
- A style of living that was poor.
- A readiness to move on to new places when apostolic needs required.

Teresa Clements. *Les Pères de la Foi en France :1800-1814. Spirituality, Foundations, biographical notes.* Rome 1988. page 234

All these characteristics would become important elements in the Founder's direction of the Congregations he founded.

3. Canon Huleu (10) and St Francis the Sales.

As a teenager at the College of St Acheul at Amiens in France, the Founder entered into a correspondence with his Great Uncle, Canon Huleu. Canon Huleu was President of the major seminary of Malines. He founded a religious congregation of sisters and from 1806-1813 through his letters was the spiritual director of the Founder.

Huleu had been greatly influenced by the writings of St Francis de Sales. He had proposed Francis as the patron of seminarians.

The teenage Van Crombrughe was experiencing moments of spiritual dryness. Convinced of his utter unworthiness he had ceased going to Holy Communion. Huleu introduced the young man to the *Introduction to the Devout Life* of St Francis. It is clear from the letters of Huleu that he introduced his nephew to the spiritual school of the holy Bishop of Geneva

Huleu had been greatly influenced by the *Memoriale Vitae Sacerdotalis* written by Avisenet. This work was imbued with the gentleness of St Francis. It seems very likely that Huleu would have passed this book on to his great nephew.

There are in the Josephite archives 41 letters written by Huleu to the Founder. Unfortunately we do not have the letters the Founder wrote to his uncle.

A careful study of these letters is essential for an understanding of the spiritual development of the Founder in his early years.

Huleu encouraged the Founder

- To have an active submissiveness to God's will.
- To work for his personal sanctification.
- To have a devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Virgin Mary and St Joseph.
- To curb his tendency to scrupulosity
- To develop a deep awareness of God's love.

Conclusions.

The Founder was not an original thinker, as a man of action he was at times an innovator. He was happiest when sifting through the wisdom of past ages to discover what was best and most suitable for use in the troubled times in which he lived.

This was true of his spirituality. He took all that was best from his formative years and forged them into a spirituality which was adapted to the needs of the men and women in the apostolic congregations he founded.

This spirituality was greatly influenced by St Francis de Sales. It was a spirituality characterized by gentleness, zeal, humility, politeness and the family spirit. Above all a spirituality which sought to make the mercy of God a reality in the lives not only among his religious but also among the people with whom they worked.

This symposium will help us discover how this rich spirituality has touched the lives of so many people down through the years and in different ways in our different religious families.

NOTES.

(1) Van Crombrugghe wrote well over 1000 letters to his religious brothers and sisters. Over 900 letters to his religious sisters and over 500 to the Josephites.

(2) The extraordinary success of the autobiographical writings of Thérèse of Liseux (1873-1897) was due to the fact that the spirituality of the *Little Way* emphasised the loving kindness (the mercy) of God rather than his justice.

(3) A schismatic Jansenist Church was established in Utrecht 1793. We know that the life of the Curé of Ars (1786-1859) almost an exact contemporary of the Founder, was coloured by this rigorist spirit.

(4) “Cette excellente mère laissa dans l’âme de Constant des traces indélébiles.” Page 5. Mgr. C.Pieraerts. *Vie et Oeuvres du Chanoine Constant Van Crombrugghe.* Louvain 1878. Pages 5-6.

Mgr C. Pieraerts knew the founder well. He has often served the Founder’s mass when a boy at Tirlemont. He wrote the first biography of the Founder. Although his book is somewhat hagiographical in style, nonetheless, he is able to pass on his own personal memories of the Founder.

In 1936. Père Adolphe Desmet c.j. enlarged Mgr Pieraerts biography. Pieraerts et Desmet. *Vie et Oeuvres du Chanoine Constant Van Crombrugghe.* Bruxelles 1936. Page 22.

(5) Mgr Pieraerts devoted an entire chapter in his biography of the Founder to his exemplary life, especially his life of prayers and fidelity to the offices recited in the cathedral of St Bavon in Ghent. Pieraerts. *Op.cit.* pages 133-144. Pieraerts Desmet. *Op.cit.* pages 300-308.

(6) Quoted in J.Jorissen. *Le visage idéal de la Congrégation des Pères Joséphites telle que son Fondateur l’a conçu dans sa claire sagesse et sa brûlante charité.* Articles in the *Messenger de St Joseph.* 1965.

(7) E-M. La jeune. *St François de Sales et l’esprit Salésien.* In the collection *Maîtres spirituel.* Aux éditions du Seuil.

(8) Sr Teresa Clements D.M.J. has written two excellent articles on the Fathers of the Faith.

I love the plans of God. May they not be, in this occasion, an effect of his wrath. Letter dated 15th of November 1844 to the superior at Melle.

Teresa Clements D.M.J. *“LES PERES DE LA FOI” in France: 18800-1814 Spirituality, Foundations, biographical notes.* Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu. 1988. Rome. Pages 233-262.

Teresa Clements D.M.J. *Reflections on apostolic spirituality. A study of the “Fathers of the Faith, Franc (1801-1814).* Milltown Studies No 15, Spring 1985. Pages 51-64.

(9) Teresa Clements D.M.J. *LES PERES DE LA FOI in France.* Page 234.

(10) The life of Canon Huleu and his influence on Founder has been studied by

A. Desmet c.j. *op. Cit.* Pages 43-53.

G.C. Garcia. *Constant Guillaume Van Crombrugghe (1789 – 1965. The response of a Christian and an educator to and within the historical context of the 19th century.* Doctoral thesis. Louvain 1980. Pages 27-32.

Teresa Clements D.M.J. *Instrument in the hand of God.* Rome 1983. Pages 47-61.

The Letters written by Canon Huleu to his nephew are in the Josephite archives in Grammont. They have recently been transcribed and printed out for ease of access.

APPENDIX

Primary sources for a study of the spirituality of Constant Van Crombrugghe.

The letters of the Founder to his religious sisters and brothers.

Manuel de politesse.

Manuel de la jeunesse chrétienne.

Spiritual instructions to the Daughters of Mary and Joseph.

Various manuals for teachers and surveillants.

The early Constitutions drawn up by the Founder for his religious congregations.

Amongst the letters of the Founder those written to Br Athanase C.J. and Sr Marine Colon D.M.J. are of particular interest since they are concerned with spiritual direction.

Secondary sources for a study of the spirituality of Constant Van Crombrugghe.

Jacques Jorissen C.J. *Le visage idéal de la Congrégation de Pères Joséphites telle que le fondateur l'a conçu dans sa brûlante charité et sa claire sagesse.* Messager de St Joseph. 1962.

Jacques Jorissen C.J. *Constant Van Crombrugghe : Essai de décryptage psychologique.* Leuven 1982.

G.C. Garcia. *Constant Guillaume Van Crombrugghe (1789 – 1965. The response of a Christian and an educator to and within the historical context of the 19th century.* Doctoral thesis. Louvain 1980.

French translation.

G.C. Garcia. *Constant Guillaume Van Crombrugghe (1789 – 1965. La réponse d'un chrétien et d'un éducateur au et dans le contexte historique du 19^{ème} siècle.*

Teresa Clements D.M.J. *Instruments of Mercy. A study of the spirituality of Constant Van Crombrugghe.* Rome 1982

Teresa Clements D.M.J. *Instrument in the hand of God.* Rome 1983.

12.
The influence of the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola on
Constant van Crombrughe

Teresa Clements.

It is always difficult to grasp and understand the spirituality of any person, even of oneself! It is doubly difficult when that person is a historical figure, as in the case of Constant van Crombrughe. With this proviso I will attempt to offer some thoughts concerning the influence on our Founder of Ignatian spirituality and its subsequent influence on the Congregations he founded. Robert Hamilton CJ in his paper has examined the perceived spiritual heritage of Constant van Crombrughe. Both these papers need to be read together and within the context of all the presentations during the Symposium as a type of conversation.

There has been a long tradition among the Daughters of Mary and Joseph that our spirituality is basically Ignatian. There are good reasons for this perception that will be returned to later. We begin by exploring the question of Ignatian influence relating to Constant van Crombrughe. In his early life and as mentioned by Robert, van Crombrughe came under the influence of the *Pères de la Foi* (Fathers of the Faith) through the education he received in Amiens. Because of the importance of this group of priests in Constant's life, it is worth taking time, in so far as we can, to look at their spirituality.

The *Fathers of the Faith* have an interesting history as a group, which, incidentally, I consider offer a valuable lesson for all of us today.ⁱ Contrary to popular belief, none of the *Fathers* had been Jesuits before the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. Most, though not all, joined the Society after its restoration in 1814. Among these were Père Joseph Varin (who had helped both Madeleine Sophie Barat and Julie Billiart to make their foundations) and Père Louis Sellier who had such a strong influence on the young Constant.ⁱⁱ

The origins of the *Fathers of the Faith* in France are found among a group of young priests and students for the priesthood from the St. Sulpice Seminary in Paris.ⁱⁱⁱ In 1795, during their early days together as a community, they made the 30 days *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, under the direction of the Capuchin Franciscan friars in Antwerp. An interesting combination of spiritualities indeed!

This founding group held a strong devotion to the Heart of Christ that had developed under their first superior, Eléonor de Tournelay. This was possibly influenced both by the devotion made popular in 18/19th century France following after St. Margaret Mary Alcoque (d.1690), and at the same time a more Scriptural approach. Devotion to the Heart of Christ finds a natural home in Ignatian spirituality. Van Crombrughe was to inherit this devotion from the *Fathers of the Faith* in Amiens. Eventually he was among the first to bring it to Belgium, particularly around the Mouscron area. In our four Congregations we have all received this devotion as part of our own spirituality. In the last *Constitutions* (1864) that the founder approved for the *Daughters of Mary and Joseph*, we find:

Filled as I am myself, dear Sisters, with gratitude for the infinite goodness of God to us, and with a just desire to testify to the adorable Heart of my Divine Master my gratitude and love with which he inspires me, I have *vowed and consecrated to Him your Institute and myself with all that I may possess.*^{iv}

For the Founder, devotion to the Heart of Christ was the source of God's mercy and love. He wrote to Olympiade Derville in 1835:

“Remain in the Heart of Jesus Christ, take from there your impulses, your direction; completely immerse yourself in the furnace of sacred fire, you will emerge purified, recreated.”^v

Constant van Crombrughe also had a great love of nature and creation that inspired his spiritual life. Many of the books in his personal library that he left to the Josephites are ones that reflect this interest. We may remember for example the beautiful prayer:^{vi}

“Make it possible that I take this walk with the same serenity, the same attention to your Presence, that you had yourself when you walked alone on the mountain or with the apostles by the edge of the sea, or in the country. I offer you this simple pleasure and I unite it with everything that you have done on the earth for love of me.”^{vii}

One is perhaps reminded of the *Contemplation to Attain Love of the Exercises*.^{viii} Or was this a remote influence, through the *Fathers of the Faith*, of the Franciscan experience of the Ignatian *Exercises*?

At the school in Amiens and in other places where the *Fathers of the Faith* ministered, there was a great sense of family spirit. The well-known romantic French poet and philosopher, Alphonse Lamartine, was educated in Amiens just after the Founder. He wrote of how much he appreciated such a spirit^{ix}. From the very earliest letters of van Crombrughe, held in the Josephite Archives, we learn of his appreciation of the atmosphere in the school.^x This is truly remarkable when we consider the conditions of educational establishments throughout Europe in the early 19th century. It may also be said that to experience such a family spirit in a school was not a particularly strong mark of Jesuit establishments either before the dissolution of the Society or perhaps even afterwards. It seems safe to say that it was a particular mark of the spirituality of the *Fathers of the Faith* that our Founder introduced into the spirituality of our Congregations. It is evident in Josephite establishments and also very present in each of the Congregations of women. So while this is not a particular trait of Jesuit establishments, it reflects a clear influence from the *Fathers of the Faith*, who tried to interpret and live Ignatian spirituality in France during and after the French revolution, with all this implied for the Church. We also note that van Crombrughe drew on this spirit for the Congregations he founded because, not only in his educational principles, but also in his early instructions to our communities, he insisted on relationships being like that of a family.

Within the context of this family spirit, when teaching and forming the first religious of our Congregations, van Crombrughe led them to reflect on the mercy of God. In his early letters to the Daughters of Mary and Joseph (remembering that until 1832 all the Sisters were part of the one Congregation) and especially in his first formal ‘official’ letter of 1818, and then in the *1830 Rule*, he makes the invitation to be instruments of mercy in the hand of God central to their spirituality. “However, beloved Daughters, you will never arrive at these important ends, you will never be able to fulfil your holy vocation, if before all else you do not try to make yourselves worthy, by a godly and perfect life, to become true instruments of divine mercy.”^{xi}

It seems to me that it is in this accent at the very heart of our call as apostolic religious that we see a very strong influence of Ignatian spirituality.

Ignatius had offered the concept of being an *instrument in the hand of God* within the context of obedience. It is an apostolic call that leaves the individual free to go where needed. To be an instrument in the hand of God is to be another Christ, whose humanity is an instrument so perfectly joined to the Father as to be the very hand of God.^{xii}

Van Crombrughe uses the same concept but tempers it, one could almost say softens it, with his understanding of God’s mercy. Was this a basic influence of his uncle, Chanoine Huleu and the spirituality of St. François de Sales? Possibly, even probably, but it is not possible at this stage of our study of the Founder to go further than this.

In Ignatius it has been argued that it is a term inclusive of the breadth and depth of Ignatian spirituality and may serve as a resumé.

The call to be an instrument in the hand of God is used mostly in the personal letters of Ignatius and also in the *Constitutions*. Ignatian spirituality is complex and has many strands. At root it is Trinitarian in nature while being firmly centred on Christ. Ignatius' vision at *La Storta* offers an insight into the complexity of his spirituality. In the vision, the words of the Father addressed to Jesus carrying his cross were: 'I want you to take this man to be your servant'. Jesus then says to Ignatius: 'It is my will that you should serve us'. The implications of this vision for Ignatius and the young *Society* as he went to Rome are deeply apostolic in their spiritual impact.

This is not the place to explore to any great extent the breadth of Ignatius' heritage to apostolic religious such as we are. Enough to say that as we trace the themes and also the use of Scripture in the early *Constitutions* of van Crombrugghe we recognise the strong influence this spirituality had on him personally and that he shared with us. An example of this influence is that from the earliest days the Founder called both the Sisters and Brothers 'co-workers' with Christ.^{xiii} In the same formal letter of 1818 there is the first expression of the wonderful Trinitarian statement that, in various forms, would be part of future *Constitutions* and is an essential part of our spirituality. You are the instruments of the mercy of the Lord to form servants of the heavenly Father, disciples of Jesus Christ, and living temples of the Holy Spirit. Let no difficulty stop you in this sublime ministry.^{xiv}

At the same time it might be said that van Crombrugghe never seemed to have the intention of our being 'Ignatian' Congregations as such.^{xv} When in the 1860's Madame Flore was re-writing the *Constitutions* for the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, the Founder wrote to her:

I still persist in the fear that you have not removed from the text of your *Constitutions and Rules* expressions which might give the term *Rules* a meaning different from that which we have attributed to it.

In our spirit, our *Rules* signify: our exercises, our usages, our practices, and the way of carrying them out, fulfilling them, observing them. We make no allusion at all to the term Rule of St. Benedict, for example, of St. Francis, of St. Augustine.^{xvi}

From this we may understand that he wanted us to live simply the charism, the founding gift he had shared with us: to be who we are. The only *Rule* he did give was that, for the sake of the Kingdom we should always be adaptable to the needs of our time.^{xvii}

While considering the spirituality given us by our Founder, it is vitally important for us to keep in mind that the Founder left us free in the way we might grow in the spiritual life. This is his great gift to us, a treasure indeed for our Congregations.

It is also important to remember that there is a distinction to be made between the spirituality of a person and that lived in the Congregations they founded. In the history of spirituality, the foundational charism developed and at times declined. One could suggest that Jesuit spirituality of the late 18th early 19th century may not always have expressed the full richness of Ignatian spirituality. The same may be said for ourselves; only Constant van Crombrugghe lived truly and fully his spirituality. He was influenced deeply by the *Fathers of the Faith* and their interpretation of Ignatian spirituality. As he developed in the spiritual life and was influenced by other spiritualities, such as that of, François de Sales, he made his own synthesis which he passed on to us. In this context it is helpful to remember that before he made the foundations in 1817, van Crombrugghe had not been influenced by Jesuits as such. But as already noted, further study of the early *Rules* and *Constitutions* reveal their Trinitarian and Christ centred nature. We have surely inherited these strands of spirituality that are Ignatian in their insight.

The often quoted encouragement among the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, to make a retreat whenever possible with a Jesuit, belongs to a later time. In the *1830 Regel-Boek* we do find the statement that the Sisters, in making their annual retreat ‘of some days’, use the ‘book of exercises of St. Ignatius’.^{xviii}

In the *1844 Constitutions* of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph there is no such recommendation,^{xix} even though at that time van Crombrugge had the help of a Jesuit, (perhaps P. Terwecoren) in writing the Constitutions. They were written in French for the first time, rather than in the Flemish of the *1830 Rule*. Interestingly neither do these *Constitutions* contain what are known as the *Allocutions* of our Founder, which were included again later in the 1864 text under Madame Flore’s editorship.

Returning to the question of the Ignatian Exercises in the Constitutions, Flore wanted to go further in the 1864 version of the *Constitutions* than the Founder had ever wished for the Congregation. Even though he was elderly and in poor health, he did not agree with her and responded vigorously. We might remember at this juncture that he had already corrected her regarding the way in which she understood *Rule*. Because of the importance of this material, the text of their correspondence is included. She wrote:

I forgot to suggest to you, Reverend Father, to put in our holy *Rules* that our extraordinary confessor, whenever possible be a Jesuit priest. Would you have the goodness to reflect on my proposal and to tell me, when you have the opportunity, what you think. It seems to me, my dear Father, that if we are in some way supported and guided by the Company of Jesus, we will be strong and durable.^{xx}

But the Founder was not so keen on this idea and replied

It (seems) to me impossible I think, to allow that your extraordinary confessor be of a particular Order. It is the Bishop who chooses and gives confessors to Religious.^{xxi}

However, Flore did get her own way in one aspect and included the following:

During the holy time, they follow, whenever possible under the direction of a Father of the Company of Jesus, the exercises of St. Ignatius.^{xxii}

Interestingly, when in 1878 the Holy See responded to the *Constitutions*, as presented in 1864 for their approval, they insisted this should be changed.^{xxiii}

This correspondence offers a good example of how someone other than the Founder wishes to either expand or limit the founding inspiration. In some ways, the *Allocutions* are the best source of getting in touch with the *ipsissima vox* of van Crombrugge. But this is not an easy task. One method is to study the texts in the various Constitutions, including and especially the *1830 Regel-Boek* and find what was carried forward with the knowledge and agreement of the Founder. As we have seen, he was quite capable of saying when he did not approve of a particular interpretation. Another source, apart from the rich mine that is the letters, are the *Instructions Spirituelles*. There are many found both in the Josephite and DMJ Archives.

Conclusions

To draw these thoughts together, we might wish to reflect and summarise for ourselves two main areas: [1] the elements of Ignatian spirituality and [2] what may be found in the writings of Constant van Crombrugge to the Congregations he founded. Our reflections will hopefully take us way beyond the indications and limitations of this paper.

It might then be possible to conclude this paper with the question: How Ignatian in spirituality was van Crombrugge and to what extent did he intend his Congregations to be Ignatian? Further, can

we say that our Congregations are Ignatian in their spiritual vision and if so to what extent? Only the members, both men and women, religious and lay Associates can answer these questions. A starting point might be to ask ourselves: What areas of Ignatian spirituality resonate within our lived experience? It may be the invitation to be an instrument in the hand of God; or it may be in reflecting on the Trinitarian and Christo-centric spirituality summed up in the *Constitutions* and which reflect the *La Storta* vision of St. Ignatius. It may occur during the experience of making the 30 days *Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, especially through the *Contemplation to Attain Love*.

Whatever the starting point to our further reflection, it offers a conclusion to this paper. No matter what we have been offered by our Founder and those who have gone before us handing on to us such a rich tradition, it is only in our daily living that we find ourselves as we are, daughters and sons of van Crombrughe in our following of Christ. These days will surely help all of us in our reflection and will help us discern for our times the spiritual inspiration we are called to hand on to the men and women of future generations.

Teresa Clements, DMJ

February 2005

¹ See T. Clements, DMJ, 'Reflections on Apostolic Spirituality. A Study of the "Fathers of the Faith"', France (1801-1814), in *Miltown Studies* [Dublin]15(1985)51-64 and T. Clements, DMJ, '«Les Pères de la Foi» in France: 1800-1814. Spirituality, Foundations, Biographical Notes' in *Archivum Historium Societatis Jesu* [Rome]571988) 233-262.

Photocopies of both these articles can be made available on request.

² Another of the *Fathers of the Faith*, Père Pierre Roger, was very influential in his work in Lyons with Pauline Jaricot in the founding of the work of *Propaganda Fide*.

3. One of the main aims of this new foundation was the restoration of the Society of Jesus. Originally known as the *Société du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus*, they had been inspired by the spirituality of St. Ignatius, and wished to live accordingly. They were marked by their life of contemplation, and attitudes of gentleness and humility as well as their lives of poverty and missionary zeal.

4. Cited in T. Clements, *Instrument in the Hand of God* [henceforth *IHG*] (Rome: Gregorian University, 1983)179. *C1891* Art 194

For the reference to the Articles in the various Constitutions, note the following:

Regel-Boek 1830: RB1830; Constitutions et Règles 1844: CR1844; Constitutions 1864: C1864; Constitutions 1891: C1891

5. T. Clements, DMJ, *Instruments of Mercy* [henceforth *IOM*] (Rome: Gregorian University 1982) 61 To Olympiade Derville, Archives Daughters of Mary and Joseph [henceforth ADMJ] A 2A 6-8 - 26.03.1835

6. C. Van Crombrughe, *Manuel de la Jeunesse Chrétienne* (Alost: J. Sacré, 1821) 48; ADMJ A 2A 9

7. *IHG*185

8. See especially, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* Trans Louis J. Puhl, (Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1952) Annot. 236: This is to consider how God works and labours for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth, that is, He conducts Himself as one who labours. Thus, in the heavens, the elements, the plants, the fruits, the cattle, etc. He gives being conserves them, confers life and sensation, etc.

9. L. Deries, *Les congrégations religieuses au temps de Napoléon* (Paris: Felix Alcar, 1929) Ch. VI-IX Citing Lamartines, *Confidences*, Livre VI, notes 2,3, and 4. (Les professeurs) mes amis plutôt que mes professeurs, resteront dans ma mémoire comme des modèles de sainteté, de vigilance, de paternité, de tendresse et de grâce pour les élèves. (*The teachers, my friends rather than my professors, will remain in my memory as models of holiness, of vigilance, of fatherliness, of gentleness and of graciousness towards their students.*) Quoted in *IHG* 29

10. Letter of van Crombrughe to his parents, 28.10.1805. Josephite Archives:

L'arrangement de ce Pensionnat me plaît beaucoup à cause de la douceur et affabilité avec lesquelles on nous conduit. (*I like the arrangement of this boarding school very much because of the gentleness and affability with which we are led.*) (In IHG 30)

11. ADMJ *Regel-Boek der Dogters van Maria en Joseph*, (Aanspraek, 1830) Citing letter written in Aalst, 06.03.1818. Nogtans, beminde Dogters, gy zult tot deéze groote eynden nooyt geracken, nooyt zult gy uwen heyligen roep volbrengen, is het zaeke gy niet eerst voor al en tragt u weérdig te macken, door uw godvrugtig en volmaekt leéven, de waere instrumenten te worden bermhertigheyd Gods. (In *IHG* Append VII: 209)

“However, dear daughters, you will never reach this great goal, you will never achieve your holy vocation unless you try to make yourself worthy by a perfect life the real instrument of God’s mercy.”

12. D. Maruca, *SJ Instruments in the Hand of God* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1963)72
See also *IHG* 37-38

13. *RB* Letter 06.03.18: Gy zyt medewerksters van den Zaligmaeker.” “You are collaborators of the Blessed Saviour.”

14. *CI89I* Art. 161, ‘Zèle pour le salut de la jeunesse’:...vous êtes les instruments de la miséricorde du Seigneur pour former des servants au Père céleste, des disciples à Jésus-Christ, des temples vivants du Saint-Esprit. Que dans ce sublime ministère aucune difficulté ne vous arrête.

This text was used in relation to the 4th vow of education of the poor originally taken in the Congregation. By 1844 it was simply a 4th vow of education. It ceased in 1878 on the recommendation of the Holy See. See *IHG* 106-7 especially fn. (72)

15. During an Ignatian symposium in the Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Dublin, I described our relationship as being similar to that of cousins, rather than that of sons and daughters. T. Clements, DMJ ‘The Influence of Ignatian Spirituality on Apostolic Religious Life for Women’ *Milltown Studies* (Dublin) 29(1992)51-64

16. Letter to Flore Delhay A 2A 7-83: 29.01.1863 Je persister toujours dans la crainte que vous n’avez pas fait disparaître du texte de vos *Constitutions et Règles*, les expressions capables de donner au terme *Règles* une signification différente de celle que nous lui attribuée.

Dans notre esprit, nos *Règles* signifient: nos exercices, nos usages, nos pratiques et mode de les exécuter, de les remplir, de les observer. Nous ne faisons aucune allusion au terme Règle de St. Benoît, par exemple, de St. François, de St. Augustin. (*IHG* 123)

17. Handwritten addition to *De l’instruction et de l’éducation chez les Filles de Marie et de Joseph*, 1833. *IHG* 91. Enfin pour être toujours utile, notre Institut se faisant tout à tous modifiera ses moyens d’action d’après les nouveaux besoins de la société. Tel sera en tout temps notre grande règle
In order to be always useful, our Institute will do everything to modify its means of action according to the new needs of our society. Such will in all ages be our great rule ...

18. *RB* Vierde Capittel. Jaerlyksche Oeffeningen in ‘T Gemeyn [1] p.54
Jaerlyks dan, zullen alle de Zusters van onze gemeyntens eene geestelyke exercitie doen, van eenige dagen, volgens den boek der exercitien van den H. Ignatius. “4th Chapter. Yearly exercises in community. Every year all the sisters in our communities will follow the spiritual exercises according to the book of exercises of St Ignatius, during a few days.”

19. *C1844 Chapter IV: Des exercices annuels – de la retraite* p. 54-5.

20. A 2A 22: 10.11.1862 Letter of Flore Delhay to van Crombrugge. [*IHG*177]
J’ai oublié, mon très révérend Père, de vous proposer de mettre dans nos saintes *Règles*, que notre confesseur extraordinaire, autant que possible est un Père Jésuite. Auriez-vous la bonté de réfléchir à ma proposition et de me dire quand vous le trouverez bon, ce que vous en pensez. Il me semble, mon très cher Père, que si nous sommes un peu soutenues et guidées par la Compagnie de Jésus, nous serons fort et durable.

21. Letter of van Crombrugge to Flore Delhay. ADMJ A 2A 7-78. 12.11.1862
Il m’est impossible (sic) je pense, d’admettre que votre confesseur extraordinaire soit du tel ordre. C’est l’évêque qui choisit et donne ces confesseurs aux Religieuses.

22. *C1864* Art.13. [*IHG*177]. Pendant ce saint temps elles suivent, autant que possible, sous la direction d’un Père de la Compagnie de Jésus, les exercices de S. Ignace.

23. ADMJ, Rome. Response of the Vatican , 1878, Item 20. The reasons given were similar to the remarks given by the Founder regarding the extraordinary confessor. The next redaction, that of C1891, Art. 113{219}, did not include this requirement.

Questions and Responses

- Sr. Kitty Ellard** Dame de St. Maur, said how much she had appreciated the presentations and enjoyed discovering the common ground.
- Sr. Maggie** also expressed her appreciation of Teresa's presentation. She remarked how she had been struck by the title given to Teresa's input because through Chapters and her own formation she had always been told we were not 100% Ignatian. For her, the emphasis had always been to live as an instrument of mercy.
- Sr. Teresa** replied that the original synthesis offered by our Founder is as an instrument of the mercy of God, not of ourselves. That sense is peculiar to our Founder, whereas Madeleine Sophie Barat and the Founder of the Marists used the expression 'misericorde' in the sense of gentleness.
- Fr. Robert** drew everyone's attention to the fine encyclical written by the present pope on the mercy of God. It would be good, he said, to read this and to study the relevant scripture texts.
- Fr. Aidan** recognised within himself a certain antipathy towards the idea of Jesuit influence. People so often confused CJ with SJ, and Josephite with Jesuit, and for him that became an identity issue! As a priest in the confessional, he experienced being an instrument of the mercy of Jesus, not his mercy but the mercy of the heart of Christ, especially with those inclined to scrupulosity.
- Sr. Dolores** spoke of her recognition that the two important aspects for the DMJs are mercy of God and adaptability. Unfortunately 'mercy' is out of fashion with young people. They do not use that kind of language. We need to find alternatives that express the reality of mercy in a way that is meaningful for young people today.
- Sr. Liz** wanted to thank Robert for underlining the Founder's love of nature which he brought out in his report. She finds it very relevant for ecological issues today.
- Fr. Robert** told us how the Founder had liked to walk in the gardens at Melle with the Josephites.
- Fr. Richard** recounted how he had come across in the library at Melle a book in French with the Founder's signature on the flyleaf about the management of glass-houses.
- Fr. Bill** said how struck he was by the emphasis on the Founder's rigorism and he sees a possible resurgence of that attitude in the Catholic fundamentalism so prevalent today.

- Fr. Robert** said how the Josephites have always had a reputation for flexibility and gentleness in Confession.
- Sr. Renee** commented that the resurgence of interest in spirituality, especially the confluence of Eastern and Western spiritualities is raising questions about what their Retreat Centre is really trying to do. It needs a firm statement of our spirituality to avoid confusion and prevent 'the liquid of spirituality becoming too diluted'.

Brief outline of how the spirituality inherited from the Founder is lived today

13. Zusters van Maria en Jozef Robert Hamilton

Spirituality

For us the spirit of our Founder can be summed up in these words.

Nobleness of heart with regard to men and women who are created in the image of God.

We want to remain faithful to this spirit.

In it we see a harmonious synthesis of virtues and qualities which, with the help of God, constitute the basis of love of neighbour.

Our Founder, being the great pedagogue that he was, wanted to see this spirit integrated into our commitment to the religious life, lived in chastity, sharing and obedience.

In this way our Founder wanted to respect the divine plan of the Creator, who by his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, redeemed and freed us. It is not enough to be merely human men and women we have to be Christian men and women.

For our Congregation, the Founder wanted us to live this spirit of Christian love as it was lived at Nazareth. Our entire spirituality is based on the life of the Holy Family.

In the writings of the Founder and by means of the witness of his own life, we discover the life of the family as it was lived in Nazareth and this is our ideal.

The Holy family lived in a marvelous and perfect way a life of evangelical poverty, of chastity and obedience which founded on divine grace, makes this harmony possible.

In this family each one carried the suffering of every human life. Mary and Joseph in the presence of Jesus, lived a family life in which love reigned together with mutual service, simplicity in humility, cordiality and goodness.

At Nazareth Jesus is the centre. He is the animator of the purest love. He fills the heart and spirit of Mary and Joseph. He transforms poverty into richness of heart, obedience into freedom of spirit and purity into spiritual fertility.

This is how our Founder wanted our communities to be. This is the ideal our Founder set before our communities. Jesus is in the centre, Mary is the ideal example and Joseph is the protector. Love must flourish in our communities and amongst all those entrusted to us; pupils, parents, the elderly in our homes, all must become part of this family together with all those we meet along the road of life. As our Founder said, through our love for creatures we teach them love for the Father. In this way we unite the love which we owe God with our love for all mankind. This is an ideal we always strive to live in our religious commitment.

Vatican II defined religious life as the continuation of the life at Nazareth. In this way the Founder wanted us to ;live the Gospel.

In the writings of the Founder we find texts which say : “Never forget how Jesus behaved towards men.” Or again, “ May Christ work through your hands and your words.” A longer quotation: “Since Christ humbled himself for us, let us be humble and avoid being overcome by human pride. Since Jesus was obedient let us be obedient, since Jesus became poor for us let us detach ourselves from obstacle along the way, in a word, since Jesus took all suffering upon Himself, let us accept everything out of love for Him.”

According to our Founder, the Holy Family is central to God’s plan of salvation for us. It is the link between heaven and earth.

Let us make a reality in our apostolate, by our words and deeds, the link between heaven and earth.

14. Daughters of Mary and Joseph Agnès Charles

What is a “spirituality?” What do we understand by this word ? Furthermore, how can our everyday lives be influenced by this “spirituality”?

Reading through the writings and letters of our Founder it is soon obvious that certain words occur again and again, words which introduce us to concepts with which we are very familiar today: a profound attachment to Jesus Christ and his Church, a profound attachment to our brothers and sisters, a special devotion to Mary and Joseph, adaptability, joy, confidence, compassion, loving kindness (*miséricorde*), simplicity of life, zeal, courtesy, brotherly love in community ... the list could go on and on.

At the beginning of our constitutions it is written that “his family background (the founder’s), the influence of the college at Amiens, the impact of the political upheavals of the time, made of him a resolute man who was committed to helping the poor and weak, a defender of freedom of worship and teaching ... His deep spirituality enabled him to unite in the same prayer the loving kindness of God and the concrete problems of the world in which he lived..... This openness to God is translated into action which he adapted according to circumstances and in that way opened up for the congregations he founded ever new horizons and invited them to look to the future, to change the form of their apostolate according to the needs of the contemporary world.... The apostolic work of the sisters was not slow in adapting to the different needs to the time: the pitiful condition of the children of the poor, the religious ignorance of the middle class, the need to raise the standard of education of that class and the care of the sick”.

From the first days of our existence as a congregation, we have a vocation to be attentive to the needs of others, to witness to the love of God to everyone whether they are rich or poor, young or old, sick or in good health. That is what the founder meant when he called us to be “instruments of mercy in the hands of Jesus Christ” Here we are close to the contemplation in action so dear to Ignatius Loyola. An authentic concern for others means that we have to be close to them, as St Francis de Sales emphasised in his writings.

Thanks to his years spent with the Fathers of the Faith, C.G. Van Crombrughe is struck by the richness of the spirituality of St Francis de Sales and that of St Ignatius of Loyola. We have been influenced by both of those founders of a special spirituality. We have already looked at our sources for these two spiritualities. Both are based on a deep attachment to God while at the same time being firmly anchored in our world. Our world today is no longer that of the 19th and 20th centuries. How have we adapted to meet the changing times? What has happened to us during all these years as Daughters of Mary and Joseph?

Those of you, who like me, were pupils in one of our schools, will remember those sisters who were conscious of the fact that they were educators, aware of the best teaching methods, handing on to their pupils not just an intellectual package but a openness to academic, social and cultural areas. They were women with an open spirit, very human and in our day women of prayer. It would be an interesting exercise to share amongst ourselves the reasons why we entered the congregation to which we belong and not another congregation. This exchange would help us clarify some of the quasi subconscious reasons why we made this choice. It would also allow us to understand how the “specific spirituality” of our respective institutes continues to give sense and meaning to our religious lives today.

The Founder’s insistence on the importance of adaptability has remained important down through the years. The first foundations were followed by others and by apostolates which met the needs of the time with a concern for the marginalised.

I would like to draw your attention to the documents of our recent chapters which are for me the incarnation of our spirituality today. In 1985 the decrees on social justice and on the quality of community life, called us to a concrete commitment, not only as individuals but also as members of a congregation to make the living out of these two realities in our everyday lives a matter of conscience. In 1997 and again in 2001 the members of the General Chapter reiterated this profound desire “to be there for the whole Church”. This has helped us to be consecrated women in our world and hear again the cries of suffering, exclusion and marginalisation.

I am offering you these texts which have helped me in my commitment as a Daughter of Mary and Joseph. They gave, and still give, an up to date understanding of the spirituality of “mercy” which has been ours since the beginning of our congregation, even if it has been expressed differently. The foundation of every commitment is anchored in prayer, reflection, conformity to the call of the gospel and at the same times is adapted to the concrete situations in different ages. This spirituality makes possible a spirit of openness and initiative in the context of a fidelity which is not measured in terms of permanence but by the need for transformation both interior and exterior.

A boundless love of Jesus Christ, his Church and all our sisters (brothers) is what is needed today and will be tomorrow because it is based on the message of the gospel. We have received a spiritual heritage, we are trying to hand it on to the generation of today as well as to those in the future in a variety of forms which reflect the diversity of our Church and our Churches and the diversity of our world and our society.

15.
Josephites.
Martin Ashcroft.

How Josephites live out their founding spirit today.

I would like to start by sharing a short extract from the letter written by van Crombrughe on 1 May 1818 that prefaces the 1818 Constitutions of the brothers of Mary and Joseph.

‘You are fellow workers of the Saviour. He has commissioned you to help in leading His sheep into the pastures of eternal bliss. You are the favoured instruments of the most Holy Trinity and the children are its living abode. Your duty is to make every effort to adorn and enrich the souls of these children so that they be pleasing to the infinite majesty of God’.

At the outset we need to remember that the ecclesial, cultural and socio-political circumstances in 1817, when Constant van Crombrughe founded the Josephites, were significantly different from those we are experiencing at the start of the 21st Century.

Furthermore as we know, van Crombrughe himself was an ultramontane conservative priest. He belonged to the Roman Catholic Church that saw itself as a perfect, hierarchical and monarchic society within a European culture that was still overwhelmingly Christian in outlook and practice – notwithstanding nationalist tendencies.

Our task this afternoon is, therefore, to identify the essential characteristics of the founding Josephite spirit that transcend the vagaries of time; its historical linkage with education, and the evolving ecclesial, cultural and socio-political circumstances of our contemporary post-Christian society.

This task is particularly important for the following reasons. For much of their existence Josephites have lived and worked within the context of middle class education and the day-to-day running of boys' boarding schools. This is no longer the case. While Josephites are still very much involved in education, there is now a differing relationship between them and their (former) schools. Moreover there are Josephites who are actively involved in apostolic works that are not school or education based.

Time does not allow this presentation to offer an exhaustive account of the Josephite spirit but the following aspects comprise the core elements of this spirit.

The most common expression used to describe the uniqueness of the Josephite Spirit is 'Family Spirit'. It is worth noting there always used to be a difficulty in articulating to others what was actually meant by this 'Family Spirit' especially to those who live and work outside a (boarding) school context. However, in paragraph four of the 2002 Constitutions, Josephites are now offered a five-point description of what underpins their 'Family Spirit'. It is:

1. Proclaiming God is our Father.
2. Being obedient to the Father's will in imitation of Jesus' own obedience.
3. Imitating the obedience shown by Jesus to Mary and Joseph.
4. Imitating the service and love shown by Jesus to the community of disciples.
5. Cultivating an attitude of selfless charity and sharing among themselves.

Perhaps the three most common metaphors used by Josephites when talking about their spirit are

1. Hospitality: In the sense of our being generous and welcoming hosts.

Perhaps it is worth noting that one of the features of Josephite community life that has always been remarked on by visitors is the 'warm hospitality' offered to them. They often claim they feel relaxed and very much 'at home' when among Josephites. Remember also that Jesus often enjoyed the hospitality of others in their homes.

2. *Douceur*: Often described as a 'firm gentleness' that is based on the Matthean version of the Beatitudes and reflects the true gentleness of Jesus towards others.
3. *Politesse*: In the sense of 'right living' that is based on I Corinthians 13. In other words it is more than simply politeness.

As it happens 'Family Spirit' is also very much in keeping with the post-Vatican II ecclesial image of the Church as *communio* or *koinonia*. This image is perhaps better translated into English as 'fellowship' rather than simply 'communion' or community.

Linked to this is a continuous tension between the demands of the 'individual' and the needs of the evangelical witness of shared community life. For example, in England, while our table fellowship can be regarded as exemplary, our Eucharistic fellowship is decidedly impoverished.

Another essential feature of the Josephite Spirit should be the ability to be 'adaptable'. As we heard yesterday our Founder was very proactive in adapting his religious congregations to the needs of the times and even to new radically different apostolic tasks.

On the other hand, In England we are very much aware of paragraph 84 in 'Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools' (Congregation for Catholic Education – October 2002) that explicitly states:

'No difficulty should remove consecrated men and women from schools and from education in general, when the conviction of being called to bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the poor and small is so deep and vital'.

Having listened carefully to yesterday's presentations, perhaps one aspect of our 'Family Spirit' that still needs to be addressed is our outreach to those who share our apostolate through the development of a genuine collaborative ministry rooted in fellowship or *communio*. Theologically speaking, collaborative ministry involves the entire 'People of God' – laity, religious, priests and bishops – sharing their common priesthood working together in the Church's mission and ministry as a consequence of their Baptism.

To do this means moving beyond inviting laypersons to join Josephites in sharing their apostolic work. A different perspective is required from both Josephites and their lay partners if this joint mission is going to become a truly collaborative ministry – a ministry that is fundamentally a partnership of equality. I would wish to go even further so that the question changes from: 'How can lay women and men assist Josephites in their ministries?' to the more challenging question: 'How can the Josephites serve lay women and men in their ministries as well as serving the needs of the local church?'

Another aspect of the 'Josephite Spirit' that is undergoing a reappraisal at this time is our understanding of 'Fatherhood' especially as it is subject to so much negativity in our contemporary society. More happily, the Josephite understanding of 'Fatherhood' has been reflected on recently by a number of Josephites in the series *Studia Josephitica* and Fr Robert's commentary on the 2002 Constitutions.

The Josephite understanding of Fatherhood is not rooted in any particular socio-political model but in the very relationship between Jesus and his Father. This understanding, once again, is in keeping with the Trinitarian roots of *communio* or fellowship that underpins post-Vatican II ecclesiology. We read, for example, in paragraph four of *Lumen Gentium* that the universal church is 'a people made one from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.

Arriving out of this Trinitarian understanding of fellowship is a renewed sense of personal responsibility particularly concerning the vow of obedience. This is typified by the attitude: '*You do not need to ask permission to go out but we need to know that you are going to be out*' as well as a

greater sense of collegiality in decision making – remembering at all times, however, that religious life, like the Church, is not a democracy!!

A further metaphor of fatherhood is offered by the example of Jesus washing the feet of the apostles. The Superior exercises his ‘fatherhood’ not in a spirit of power and domination but one of service; for animation and pastoral support. As Fr Jean Lefebvre – who has animated several Josephite Chapters – reminded Josephite superiors:

‘God has revealed himself as Father for his people but a father whose feelings are maternal. The revelation of fatherhood is characterised by mercy, maternal tenderness and unfailing benevolence. We will never be able to fulfil our mission to become a father for our confreres and for the people we meet, unless we ourselves really behave as sons of our heavenly father’.

This perception is closely linked to another hallmark of the Josephite spirit’ that is the requirement for every Josephite to be ‘an instrument of God’s mercy’. While van Crombrugghe probably took this concept from Ignatius of Loyola, it encapsulates the Josephite spirit to be ‘as compassionate as our heavenly Father in dealing with others’. For van Crombrugghe to be ‘an instrument of God’s mercy’ meant taking on the following six attributes:

1. Abandoning oneself to the will of God.
2. Being poor in spirit and in fact.
3. Being open to experiencing the mercy found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
4. Listening to the Holy Spirit.
5. Proclaiming God as ‘all-merciful’ and ‘all-compassionate’.
6. Being at the service of the whole church.

Van Crombrugghe wanted his religious to be formed so they could become ‘instruments of God’s mercy’. This meant his religious always had to seek and be totally at the disposal of the will of God. This act of ‘radical obedience’ corresponds with van Crombrugghe’s own ‘active submission’ (Ignatian election) to the ‘will of God’.

The Josephite spirit also requires Josephites to have certain personal dispositions. There are clearly articulated by van Crombrugghe in his 1818 ‘Rule of the Brothers of Joseph and Mary’ and include: Politeness – Patience – Affability (Joy) – Kindness – Cheerfulness (Good Humour) and Prudence.

To conclude, I have tried to highlight the core aspects that encapsulate the Josephite spirit as rooted in the founding vision of Constant van Crombrugghe. I have done this in a way that transcends the educational context of the original Josephites communities. At the same time I have sought to illustrate a number of aspects of the Josephite ‘Spirit’ that are in need of further reflection.

Thank you.

16.
Sisters of St Joseph. Bruges
Sr. Marie Rose

“The spirit which must animate you lies essentially in unlimited devotion to our Divine Master Jesus Christ, to his Church and to all your brothers.”

“You are called to become instruments of divine mercy in the hands of Jesus Christ.”

“Understand more and more the wonderful privilege of being an associate and co-worker with Jesus Christ in the great work he was called to do on earth.”

These three quotations sum up for us the charism which has been our guide down through the years.

During the novitiate we had the opportunity of translating the Founder’s letters which were in our archives into Flemish. This was a good way of making contact with the Founder.

These texts which sum up our charism are like an unceasing refrain which has been constantly taken up in our chapters over the last 40 years. We hold a chapter every 5 years. In fact during our chapters when it comes to elections and moments for making important decisions we always allow ourselves to be inspired by this spirit.

This has been a fruitful source for

- The spirit in our communities and the care of our sisters
- A concern for our pupils in our different schools and helping us to be open to undertake the renovations which have presented themselves and which are at the service of our pupils
- Being available to take on new tasks such as the care of the sick
- Helping others in all sorts of different areas.

Whenever jubilees are celebrated, either in the Congregation or in our schools, reference is always made to the spirit of the Congregation and to the Founder. The few texts we have brought with us are witness to this.

For about the last 15 years there has been in existence a group made up of sisters, laity and priests called “The friends of St Joseph.” The members have a strong devotion to St Joseph and are very involved with publications, prayer cards etc. which are widely circulated. There has even been an exposition concerning St Joseph.

In 1991 about 20 sisters took part in a workshop on the theme of belonging to the Congregation. Apart from a few writings of the Founder we concentrated on what the brothers and sisters had to be and do. From this starting point we were able to establish to what extent each sister understood the charism and how she lived it personally. This session was very important in that it gave new life to the spirituality of the Congregation.

Around about the 19th of March we invite those who run our schools and other institutions to join us. Then using a power point presentation we offer them the opportunity of getting to know the Congregation, the Founder and the spirit in which we work and in which we wish to see our work continued. Each school and institution has the opportunity of making its own presentation. In this way a link is developed between the different institutions by means of our common spirituality.

The celebration of feasts and jubilees or meetings with other congregations offers us the opportunity for a more direct approach to our spirituality. These celebrations are also concrete expressions of our fidelity to the mission that has been passed down to us by the Founder.

Discussion.

- Fr. Robert** apologised for the fact that in the paper on the spirituality of the Zusters van Maria en Jozef the English translation was prepared from a French translation of the original Dutch, and therefore there might be discrepancies. He said that nobleness of heart came from an original Flemish word which is now obsolete. It means courtesy and gentleness.
- Sr. Felice** questioned the use of the word 'sharing' to describe the vow of poverty and wondered if there was anything deeper behind this.
- Sr. Marie Rose** responded that the original Dutch word meant 'poverty' and should have been translated as such.
- Sr. Liz** declared herself surprised that the emphasis on ecology had not appeared in DMJ Chapter documents.
- Sr. Agnes Charles** agreed but said that any Chapter delegates present should take note and remedy this at the next Chapter in August 2005.
- Sr. Agnes O'Shea** replied that the integrity of creation has come up as linked with social justice. It is one of the needs of today.
- Sr. Teresa** Perhaps we have been complacent because it already exists in our constitutions.
- Sr. Dolores** wished to congratulate the presenters on the profound and serious nature of their papers. She found Agnes Charles' tracing of the evolution of the DMJ's sense of mission through the Chapter documents very useful and very inspiring.
- Sr. Agnes O'Shea** said that because of increased awareness of ecology and integrity of creation that the Associates have created a sub-committee to look at this issue.
- Sr. Renee** felt herself greatly inspired by the richness she had received through the presentations. She admitted to feeling stifled in California in that they have become detached from the young. The challenge for her is how to take this inspiration forward to the next generation and translate it into a language they can understand.
- Fr. Robert** enquired as to the nature of the Friends of the St. Joseph, mentioned by Marie Rose.
- Sr. Marie Rose** Definitely they are not Associates and, in any case, the group no longer exists because of the age of members.

- Sr. Maggie** requested further information about the sessions on the 19th March.
- Sr. Marie Rose** replied that every year for the past 3 years they have held a session on the 19th March, or as near to that date as possible, for the Directors of their schools, with their partners on the spirituality of their congregation.
- Sr. Teresa** asked how the Sisters of St. Joseph worked together in their schools to transmit and deepen their spirituality.
- Sr. Marie Rose** replied that the Directors were astonished at the effect the Power-Point presentation had on them. This year they have asked the Directors of both the secondary and primary schools to tell other Directors how they try to keep their spirituality and values alive.
- Sr. Agnes Charles** asked where did you get the phrase '*the spirit by which I wish to see you animated resides ...*'
- Sr. Marie Rose** said she found it on a picture and it has been traditional in her congregation, at least for the last 40 years.
- Sr. Alice Nugent** said she found it in the Josephite's book 'The Founder speaks', which would suggest that we started using it in the 1970's and she had the impression that it was used in the context of the vows.
- Fr. Robert** responded that since it comes from 'The Founder speaks' it is a direct quotation from one of the Founder's letters to the Josephites, and he is sure he can track it down.
- Sr. Margaret Eason** noticed how close the two charism statements of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the DMJs are to each other. This suggests that the quotation goes back to the time before we were separated.
- Sr. Teresa** said that in a formal letter to all of us in 1818 our Founder referred to our being 'instruments of mercy'. This was in the context of our 4th vow of education of the poor, which later became just education of the whole person and zeal for the welfare of youth. Simone thought that Jacques Jorisson had used it in Belgium when speaking to the novices. This would support the idea that it comes from 'The Founder speaks' because it was published around the same time, i.e. 1970's.
- Fr. Aidan** asked what does 'mercy' mean for our congregations. It is important for us to explore this and develop the depth of our concept, now that a special Sunday has been designated Divine Mercy Sunday. This is basically a Polish devotion, quite different from our emphasis and understanding. We need to explore scripture and deepen our understanding of what it means to be 'instruments of mercy'.

How is this spirituality passed on today in 1st Formation?

17.

How are we to pass on today the spiritual heritage of Constant G. Van Crombrughe in initial formation?

Jacob Beya

This conference is an attempt to answer the question we have been asked. A question which is important today but is difficult to answer.

The question is an important one since it is one which today many congregations with a Founder or Foundress ask with some urgency.

It is also a difficult question because experience has taught us that neither the efforts of formators to live and share with their young religious both in everyday life and in human relationships, the rich spiritual inheritance received from their founder, nor the enthusiasm of young religious who believe in their vocation, are enough to give them a specific sense of identity.

This view point is supported by a specialist in formation for the consecrated life who writes:

“Each charism contains a wealth of spiritual wisdom, mysticism and asceticism. But how are we to translate this precious deposit into a programme of lessons so that young religious are formed in it and can relive the experience of their founder or foundress? Can we be certain that our formation programme contains and follows a precise method linked to the charism? Or do we content ourselves with using various techniques, pre-conceived formulas (on the level of prayer, community life, intellectual maturity.)? Do we continue to use obsolete teaching methods and carry out our formation programme without any precise methodology? How does our “ratio formationis” set about encapsulating in a teaching programme the essence of the spiritual wisdom contained in our charisms?” (AMEDEO CENCINI, *Les sentiments du Fils. Le chemin de formation à la vie consacrée*, Ed. Du Carmel, Toulouse 2003, pp26-27).

As you can see, the fundamental problem is to find a method which can help us and help our young religious to relive the spiritual experience of the founder or foundress. We can study all the documents of the founder, we can say that we know and understand his spirituality, but is that enough to ensure that we can pass it on in a way that is both fascinating and captivating? Or again it seems to me that we do not have a unified teaching method which enables us to experience the journey made by another in order to make it our own. It seems to me that the solution can be found in a carefully thought out use of several methods. I will propose four such methods. Exposition and proposition, mystical experience, and the witness of a mystical life lived out in the local situation.

1. Exposition and proposition.

“ They will not ask his help unless they believe in him, and they will not believe in him unless they have heard of him, and they will not hear of him unless they get a preacher” This quotation from the Letter to the Romans (10,14) shows clearly the importance of exposition and proposition. This formal method of teaching emphasizes the role of the teacher who proposes and explains what he knows about the Founder with a view to awaken, nourish, edify, educate and make the faith of those he is teaching grow. In that way he creates in the young religious a passion, not for a model of the past which has become obsolete in our own day, but for a credible model, still meaningful in the search for perfection. The teacher strives to arouse in young religious the realisation and the

conviction that they are members of a religious family which has its own proper patrimony in the Church. It is for this reason that in our communities the reading of the Founder's letters or one or other of his writings is encouraged with a view to helping the young religious to drink from the very source and to become the type of religious that the Founder would have rejoiced in, that is to say, religious who are at the service of others, joyous, punctual, regular, open, polite, saints as well as wise men, or rather more saintly than they are wise. For the same reason some community meetings look more closely at aspects of the Founder's life.

2. Mystical experience.

Our Founders and Foundresses were men and women of prayer who "contemplated the divine mystery or a particular aspect of the divine reality or the human life of Jesus, and who have progressively or suddenly discovered themselves in this mystery. They have discovered God's plan for them and for others. They discover an identity, a desire to assume a divine image to be lived out in everyday life, a divine aspect to reveal in their everyday lives." (cfr Amedeo Cencini, p.158-159). It is then through prayer and through *lectio divina* that young religious in formation discover the spiritual heritage of the Founder as a rich and diversified reality rooted in Scripture and lived in faith. A young religious who prays will understand better this spiritual heritage and be able to contemplate it in God by opening his heart and his spirit to fruitful intuitions.

3. The witness of life.

A formation which is based on example will be successful. In fact, today, we appear to be sated by speeches and long for an authentic word. Young religious in formation expect from their formators, not to be mere lecturers but witnesses "*Because contemporary man, writes Paul VI, is more willing to listen to witnesses than to lecturers – or if he listens to lecturers it is because they are also witnesses. Therefore the Church will evangelise the world by its way of life, that is to say by the lived out witness to the Lord in poverty, detachment, liberty and holiness*" (Evangeli Nuntiandi, 41).

The Josephite formator must be the first to live what he teaches. He must be the one through whom the family spirit spreads by contagion. He must be someone who lives out the gospel values of communion, loving kindness, compassion, availability, joy, truth and fidelity. Above all formators should "be able to help young religious participate in the discovery of the treasure of their spiritual heritage, to be able to speak of the beauty of the vocation that has won over their hearts, because it is impossible to hide what is beautiful... even to go as far to be able to give a young religious the same enthusiasm which he in turn is willing to share with others. To enable them to allow themselves to be enlightened by the spiritual journey of another brother who lives alongside him and by others who he will meet in the future." (Amedeo Cencini, p. 262). It is our belief that this is the only way we can lead our young religious to open their ears in a responsible way and listen to the spiritual heritage of the Founder and to accept the demands it makes in the everyday life of a consecrated Josephite.

4. The witness of a mystical life lived out in the local situation.

Young religious in formation are initiated in the apostolate through lived experiences which have been developed over the years and proved their worth. It is in these apostolic experiences that they are invited to use every relationship both inside and outside the community, as an opportunity to

express their love as service and loving kindness. In these apostolic experiences they are asked to be aware of the different realities which shape the cultural life of their different regions. For, these realities are at the same time opportunities as well as obstacles to the living out of the spiritual treasure which has been inherited from the Founder.

What can we say by way of a conclusion?

We owe our existence as a religious family to an experience of God which was lived by Constant William van Crombrughe. We continue to exist because others as well as ourselves have accepted to relive this experience in a modern way, that is to say in the context of the socio-cultural experiences which shape our lives. Convinced of the importance of all the values which characterise a son or a daughter of van Crombrughe, it is the duty of all of us to be aware that we are all formators. Everyone who is not directly concerned with formation must play their role in the task of formation so that there is no watering down of our identity.

18.
DMJ 1st formation in the African Province.
Teresa Bateta.

STRUCTURE

1. AFFILIANCY
2. POSTULANCY
3. NOVICIATE
4. FORMATION OF SISTERS IN TEMPORARY VOWS
5. ON GOING FORMATION

“From the above structure we have Initial formation and on going formation.
All is a gift: received and lived in faith by the grace of God”.

Formation in our African province is directed by a named Formation coordinator for the initial stage. The coordinator works with the provincial, regional and formator of novices and formation coordinators in different areas in Africa. She is at the same time in charge of forming and journeying with the young professed sisters. Our formation coordinator is Sr Donatilla Nyirarwanga.

The first stage of initial formation is preceded by a period of vocation promotion. During this time sisters appointed in each community go to secondary schools and institutions, parishes and places of work to contact young women.

On Diocesan level our sisters join an organised team to give talks on different vocations and about our Congregation in different Parishes and this has helped us to get some young women interested in joining us.

All members in the province in Africa are in one way or another vocation promoters, some pray for vocations, others receive young women who come to visit the communities and give information needed. Different communities receive and answer letters while others participate in giving days of recollections to aspirants.

Affiliancy stages are for those who have expressed their desire to join us. They are invited and given a short course in of our houses in each Country. These courses are arranged during holidays as most are in school. This time is special for young women and us who get to know one another before they finally meet as postulants.

Before entering postulancy, the young women are asked to have experience of working for two years. This is left open for each region to adapt to the situation of each candidate but information is passed on and discussed by the formation team. There is no uniform formula for accepting young women in postulancy due to different systems of education in each region. A retreat of discernment is given to those who are ready to come and live in community as postulants. The young women who wish to live in the family of DMJ's are received in a simple ceremony and that marks the beginning of their religious formation.

Postulancy may last two years. During this stage the postulants are given lessons introducing them into religious life and community living. They continue to work out side the DMJ community.

Postulancy is done in the country of origin for a year after which postulants from Uganda and Burundi change countries to study French or English. Living in different country is important for postulants and sisters in those regions. The postulants get to know sisters in different countries. Learning of the second language is very important in postulancy because as novices they have their classes in French. For the future they are able to communicate with the sisters who speak either French or English, and it is a good preparation for future mission in different countries.

The above experience has benefited postulants socially and spiritually as they live in countries with different cultures and ethnic background. When they meet in the noviciate they have a fair knowledge and respect of one others culture and way of life.

NOVICIATE PERIOD

During noviciate the novices have a variety of lessons from different teachers from an inter-congregation organised course in Yaoundé (Cameroon).

During this period the novices get chance of sharing cultural values; spiritual and academic knowledge from teachers and one another.

I would like to thank Marie-José Baranyanka and her team who made arrangement for the noviciate to be in Cameroon because these last two years I have witnessed how young women have grown in appreciation of mission and internationality through classes and sessions they have shared with other novices of other congregations.

The novices have classes daily at the inter-congregation centre in Yaoundé as well as classes in the community given by the sisters, priests and lay personnel around. There are five sessions during the spiritual year, which are attended by male and female congregations in each zone. There is a lot of faith sharing and sharing of life experience men and women. The sessions last from three to four days each time.

TOPICS FOR THE SESSIONS ARE:

- 1st session prayer
- 2nd session affectivity and sexuality
- 3rd session vows
- 4th session discernment
- 5th session mission

These sessions are of benefit to both novices and formators because these sessions confirm and give more light on what the novices go through during formation on a personal and community level; and prepare them to be missioned after novitiate.

During 1st year of Novitiate; the Novices work in neighbouring Parishes doing catechism with different groups. Some work with the youth who are organised in groups. i.e these under 15 yrs and those over 20yrs still in colleges, University or with few years of work experience. Others take Sunday school with children while their parents are at mass near by. This gives the children a chance to participate in reading and sharing the Sunday reading at their own level.

During the 2nd year the Novices are welcomed in different communities where they have a community life experience and a full time apostolate. At present we have Eleonore working with the sisters of St. Paul and living in the provincial house. Alice is living and working at Meme parish in the North Cameroon. She does apostolate with the youth of the parish and visits families the community. The Novices in the same year with Eleonore and Alice who speak English do their apostolate in English speaking communities near the novitiate house on Sunday. They give Catechism to children and adults. Those continue their studies. At Inter-Congregation course we have nine Novices. Six in 1st year and three in second year. The total number of Novices in Cameroon is eleven.

1st year novices are:

Pricilla, Evelyne , Scovia, Sarah , Claudia, and Clarisse.

2nd year Novices are:

Alice, Eleonore , Fauster, Lucy and Rossete.

Four of the eleven novices are from Burundi and seven are from Uganda.

The Postulants in second year are four. One from Uganda and three from Burundi. The 1st year Postulants are three from Burundi.

Temporary/ Young Professed. Some of our young sisters in temporary profession live in community and do full time ministry while others are finishing their studies by upgrading. During this stage the sisters have spiritual formation courses on national and zone level in each country. These courses are moments of support and sharing of life experience from different congregations. There is a year as spiritual course for personal renewal in preparation for final vows. The courses provided depend on the present needs of the individual and community vision of apostolate.

There are organised days of recollection and retreats as well as weekend workshops for the sisters in temporary vows.

ON GOING FORMATION

The provincial counsel takes care of the sisters spiritual development as well as directing their apostolates. In this stage some continue to have different courses both spiritual and academic to facilitate their apostolate needs.

I would like to share in this meeting that in our African province the sending on mission of our young sisters and those in final vows to different regions is and has been a means of formation of the whole person as well as communities of acceptance. There is a rich exchange in culture and community growth, which brings about strong mutual support and faith sharing as each one shares and receives different values of religious life and commitment.

The young sisters have a lot to offer in terms of modern way of creative liturgy and sharing of new ideas on religious life gained in different spiritual course experiences. The values of the congregation are passed on to the young by the elder sisters in each community. From this mutual exchange of values our formation gains strength because all members of the province are actively involved in initial and on going formation directly and indirectly due to the nature of

the communities which community of acceptance. The old are energised and filled with hope because of living with the young sisters.

I finish by thanking of each one of our sisters for the spiritual moral and material support you gave us in our African province in the work of formation.

I would like to thank you present and our sisters not here for praying for the work of initial formation and for praying with organised groups for vocations. We appreciate your continual support in every way.

Thanks to those who have inspired to have this Symposium so that we can share our life and faith as congregations from the same Founder.

Done by Teresa Bateta

Yaounde Cameroon- Africa province.

Discussion

- Sr. Liz** thought both the papers on formation gave us cause for great hope in Africa and for the future of the church, especially the witness of mystical life, of which Jacob spoke.
- Fr. Aidan** confessed that *'Be ye perfect as your heavenly father is perfect'* had always been a problem for him. This was resolved by Robert, who had taught him in Class 2, been his novice master and Superior General, explaining that the word 'perfection' comes from the Greek word meaning 'to be the perfect creation', that is, the person God wants you to be. Hence, the quotation from Matthew above means 'the perfection of the Lord is his mercy'. Since then Aidan has tried to help people to become the persons God wants them to be, just as the Josephites allowed him to be. Today has been a powerful day for Aidan, and as he has experienced 'mercy' he wants to share that with the next generation.
- Sr. Renee** felt humbled by what has taken place here this week - humbled by the amount of scholarship and by the intensity of preparation that has been evident. In spite of getting older and our having fewer resources, she is experiencing a feeling of being thrust forward and a sense of greater vitality to face what still has to be done.
- Sr. Deirdre** felt we are now no longer 4 congregations but one and getting to know each other better is a cause of great joy.
- Sr. Dolores** was very happy at all she has heard. Referring to Jacob's paper, she found it inspiring and that it is a text that can lead us forward in a very positive way. It is a text that obviously was not a 'copy, but written out of a lived experience. She feels we must in the future work much more closely together to build not models but ways of doing things together that will lead us beyond and above ourselves and grow out of this shared experience.

The temptation today is to make an amalgam of things that do not necessarily go together. Differences can make us grow forward together, not just us but our Associates too. The identity problem is everywhere: for the young, the addict and the aged. This particularly applies to women.

- Fr. Robert** Dolores has raised a very important point and perhaps part of the work on the final day could be to focus on our 4 different identities, so that we can enrich each other.
- Sr. Teresa** One of the greatest gifts Teresa has received over the years from the Associates has been the richness of the variety of vocations among them - married, single, committed or not. They come together to share something of their understanding of the world today. It is a question of celebrating our differences within the rootedness in Christ that draws us together.
- Sr. Renee** Having listened to Martin, she has become aware of how Josephite spirituality focuses more on the family spirit. She has missed the presence of the Bene Maria sisters here, whom we had helped to found. We have assisted in the formation of other communities in Africa but they had a different orientation of spirituality, whereas the Bene Maria are very close to our own spirituality.
- Sr. Agnès** agreed with Dolores and felt that perhaps we had needed time to become comfortable 'in our own skins', as a necessary prerequisite to be able to welcome differences. She felt this was a moment of grace in which we are able to receive, listen and share.
- Fr. Robert** asked for an explanation about who the Bene Maria were and what was their link with us.
- Srs. Renee and Agnes** between them explained that the Bene Maria had been founded by a White Father in Burundi. The Dames de Marie had been asked to help with their formation and Marie Godlieve, Bernadette Lecluyse and others assisted in this role. They lived in our communities and we lived in theirs. They were founded for the well-being of the family, so their emphasis was different from ours. At the time bishops preferred to encourage vocations to indigenous congregations, rather than international ones.
- Fr. Charles** Charles wanted to acknowledge that over the last few years a lot of effort has been made to make translations of our Founder's letters available. Without that, the research and preparation for this meeting would not have been possible.

WEDNESDAY, 2nd March

MISSION

19.

The importance and richness of our archives.

Alice Nugent

The two themes I received for this presentation are the importance of the archives and the richness of the archives. I am combining both because I believe one cannot focus on one without focusing on the other. I should mention, at this point, that in preparing this presentation I would have to highlight those topics that I considered important and that require additional research.

INTRODUCTION

Take a moment to do a mental check of your room. If you are like me you probably have accumulated a lot of things over the years. You may have old letters, photos, documents and papers relating to your ministry and community. You may also have a collection of mementos of events, travels, etc. that are long past. The list of the things many of us collect is endless. We only discover the extent of our collection when we have to move from one community or ministry to another and we find ourselves filling boxes and boxes of stuff.

The things we collect have meaning to us. They help us remember events of the past and in remembering they help us tell our personal story. Our collections could probably be called our personal archives.

Recording events and keeping records of past events are part of human nature. We know from our study of world history and from discoveries of archaeologists that in many civilizations there were those who recorded, in a variety of ways, events in the lives of their people.

THE ARCHIVES

Our archives tell the story of how the men and women who have gone before us interpreted, understood, and lived out in their daily lives the teachings of our founder. They received the founder's teachings through a variety of methods: through letters, personal visits, conferences, talks to the Sisters, and through the Constitutions and the Exhortations attached to the articles of the Constitutions.

The word archives is defined as that place where records are kept. In our archives we find documents relating to the ministries of our communities and how these ministries were carried out according to the letters, exhortations and guidance of our founder. In the letters of the founder we read about sisters being moved from one house to another in order to meet the ministry and community needs of their respective communities.

Examples of the diversity of documents that form our archives:

- Letters of our founder; Spiritual Instructions given by our Founder
- Constitutions (all revisions – to present day)
- Letters of Superiors General, Regional and Provincial Superiors
- Circulars of Superiors General
- General, Regional and Provincial Chapter documents. Acts of Chapter including reflections, discussions, decisions
- Triennial chapters held during the early years of Congregations.
- Membership (community) lists ¹
- Lists of deceased members

¹ Recently in California we have had to refer to past community lists on a number of occasions.

- Biographies of deceased members
- Correspondence with Church hierarchy
- Civil documents
- Wills and Bequests
- Property records. (Letters to/from Superior General requesting authorization to buy and/sell property. Letters to/from Ecclesiastical authorities when authorization is needed. Title deeds relating to property, mortgage agreements, insurance, etc.
- Photographs
- Artifacts

Ideally all documents should be catalogued according to subject for easy retrieval. There are “how to” reference books available in public libraries or one can devise one’s own using an alphanumerical system that meets the needs of the Congregation.²

WHY OUR ARCHIVES ARE IMPORTANT

They tell our story. They tell us about our past, about our present time as they shed light for our future.

First, I want to share with you what the founder says about what we call our archives. In a letter addressed to Reverend Mother Olympiade³ he wrote,

To ensure the preservation of more or less useful papers, I have made a portfolio representing each of your houses, and in particular for your Institute... I am sending them to you with the papers they contain. Please look through these papers again. There are some that can be usefully kept in their portfolios because of certain pieces of information relating to each house, others contain proofs of the good spirit animating some members of the Institute, and still others are suitable for recalling edifying sentiments, etc. You will put these portfolios in a safe place and classify the items it would be of some use to preserve.⁴

Our founder was obviously concerned that records be kept of the foundations and development of our congregations. He was equally concerned that they be classified and kept in a safe place.

In another letter to Rev. Mother Olympiade in October 1840, we see that he was not just concerned with preserving records. It seems he had a different purpose in mind. I think the quotation will speak for itself and needs no commentary. He wrote,

I am sending you some notes I put down on paper so that in time you could make a short account from them for each convent. I think I remember we have already made use of them at Alost and that an account of the Institute exists.⁵ ... One must not hurry when it is a question of things to hand on to posterity. Piety, common sense, style must all be assembled to help each other. It is not enough for us to go on living among our successors, to have our short say in their pious recreations, to slip some remark into their evening chats or even into their conferences; we must show ourselves worthy of the choice our good God deigned to make use of us to found a holy family; they must find us wise in all things. Our words must exhale sweet piety and that happiness Jesus Christ communicates to his faithful servants and our ways of life and judgment must not detract too much from our respective positions. That is how it is

² Although we in California have, for the most part, kept these documents they are not classified or catalogued.

³ Rev. Mother Olympiade was born in 1812 and professed in 1834. She was superior general from 1840-1858.

⁴ *Letters and Spiritual Instructions* addressed by CVC to religious. p. 254

⁵ *The History of the Institute* records important events in DMJ Congregation from 1817 to December 8, 1950.

*appropriate for us to live as long as there are children of Mary and Joseph who will be concerned with us on earth.*⁶

It appears from the founder's phrase "...the choice our good God deigned to make use of us to found a holy family..." that he and Olympiade are the founders of our congregation.⁷ Later we will see a different and probably correct observation.

THE RICHNESS OF OUR ARCHIVES

The documents in our archives are indeed rich in content and variety – probably much richer than we realize. In recent years the renewed interest in the writings of our founder has resulted in a variety of studies of his charism and spirituality; his principles and directives for the ministry of education, etc.

However, there is a lot of other material that, I believe, has not been fully explored. Our founder did not write to unknown men and women. How would studying the lives of our deceased members, for example, lead us to understand how the religious of our congregations lived out, in their respective communities, the teachings, directives and exhortations of our founder? How would such an understanding be valuable to us today? How, for example, did our early superiors guide and direct their respective communities according to the directions and exhortations of our founder? What other sources do we have that show the influence of our founder?

Fortunately for you I do not intend to respond here to these questions. I am simply mentioning them as possible areas that could be researched for a more comprehensive study of the life and spirituality of our founder and the origins and developments of our respective congregations.

However, I want to focus for a moment on a few of the documents in our archives that are mentioned above. The first place would be the Constitutions of our respective Congregations. But our focus should be directed not so much on our Constitutions themselves since they may have been revised in recent years, but on the exhortations of our founder on the articles of our old Constitutions. Triennial Chapters were held in the early years of our Institutes. It seems from notebooks in our archives that our founder frequently participated in these Chapters, giving talks, interpreting the Constitutions, etc.

Another place that deserves our attention is the Circular letters of our early superiors and/or superiors general. There may be instances where the superior met with the founder prior to writing a Circular so that what is written reflects his thinking. There are also Circulars written after the death of our founder. Do these differ, or how do these differ from those written during his life?

There is still another place for us to investigate, that I have already mentioned, that is the lives of our deceased sisters and brothers. These deceased women and men of our congregations tell our early story in a way that no one else can. And we are part of and a continuation of their story.

I have been interested in the lives of our deceased members since I first heard a remark at a talk given in Rome many years ago. The remark was this: If you wish to research and understand the origins of your community and the influence of your founder on your early communities study carefully the lives of your deceased members. In the section that follows I am briefly addressing this topic.

In July 2004, we received from our General Government, in preparation for our next General Chapter, reflection papers featuring Biblical women and other women of various ages and cultures. When I first started working on this presentation I decided to include a section on a few of our deceased sisters. I trust that by including at least one here we may be motivated to add their names to those of other great women.

To show the importance and the richness of our archives and in the context of what I have previously said I did a little research on our deceased Sisters for this presentation.

⁶ *Letters and Instructions* addressed by CVC to religious. p. 241-242.

⁷ Olympiade was born in 1812 and professed in 1834.

In a preface in Volume I of the *Biographies of our Deceased Sisters* Reverend Mother General Flore⁸ wrote,

Our deceased Sisters had a simple way of living – one that calms our hearts and our fears. This is the road that leads to perfection. These models given to us, these beautiful portraits according to our religious spirit, these types of zealous teachers – in a word, the perfect Dames de Marie that we find in those sisters who have preceded us to heaven.

Before continuing, I first want to mention that in our founder's letters⁹ there are some qualities and virtues that appear so frequently that they merit attention. Among these are simplicity (often used in the context of speaking, acting in a simple manner) is mentioned about 70 times. Being joyful and cheerful is mentioned 120 times. The one that tops the list is confidence. It is mentioned 243 times and courage is mentioned 100 times. Frequently, two virtues or qualities will be mentioned together, for example, courage and confidence. Of course devotion or devotedness and zeal are frequently mentioned as well.

Second, I went through the list of our deceased sisters. As well as giving the date of death the list includes the dates of birth and profession. Of the approximately 140 sisters professed in our Institute during the life of our founder I was looking for a sister who had been a member of the congregation for many years and to whom there are no existing letters in the archives addressed to her. And I was curious to see if the biography in some way reflected the virtues and qualities that that we find so often in our founder's writings. I found several that met my criteria. I chose Sister Henriette for an additional reason – the date on which she entered the community and the date of her profession.

Sister Henriette was born in Grammont in 1792. She entered the community on February 4, 1820, was professed in 1821 and died in Alost in 1861. According to her biography the community was barely three years in existence when she entered. It goes on to say those who entered before her did not persevere for very long. Then came something that, as far as I know, is not recorded in any history on the origins of our congregation and unknown to most of our sisters. The biography states that Sister Henriette as well as Sister Antonia, the future founding Superior of the Sisters of Mary and Joseph in Grammont, could be regarded the foundresses of our congregation.¹⁰ It goes on to say that Sister Henriette filled the function of Superior when Sister Antonia went to Grammont and for some years she was the Mistress of Novices in Alost.

According to her biography Sister Henriette was always full of courage – a quality much recommended and admired by our founder. For a few years she was responsible for the sick sisters, a function she carried out with zeal, charity and devotion – again qualities much recommended and admired by our founder.

In 1844 she became mistress of the lace making classes – a function she continued until shortly before her death in 1861. It is noted in her biography that she was always full of solicitude and kindness for her students. .

In a letter addressed to Rev. Mother Olympiade when she was superior at St. Joseph's Convent in Alost our founder wrote,

If that dear Sister, who flees from me at Malines, had been in that area on Sunday, I would have told her that, thanks to her care, my health has been constantly maintained all this winter; I am excepting a few days of last week. If Sister Henriette heard that

⁸ Superior General from 1858 to 1885.

⁹ I have not included the *Spiritual Instructions* and *Exhortation* at this time.

¹⁰ While translating the biography of Sister Henriette Sister Regine Donner, a DMJ for almost 50 years, said, "I did not know that."

*statement, she might indeed be a little jealous. If in that stage of perfection she has reached, one is still susceptible to jealousy.*¹¹

The biography of Sister Henriette ends with, “The memories she left among us were beneficial because she reminded us of the religious virtues and the good manner (politeness or courtesy) of being in community.”¹² This last quotation from the life of Sister Henriette reflects also the spirit, the qualities or virtues that our founder wished to see in the religious of his congregations

It is evident that our archives are important to our congregations. As I said at the beginning they tell the stories of our communities and ministries. They also tell how, through our ministries, we responded to the changing circumstances around us. The fact that this topic is part of the Symposium on our founder lends additional significance to their value.

Our archives are indeed rich in content and variety. Their true richness is for us to explore, research and determine. Our study of the documents in our archives can help us understand the stories of our respective congregations. They help us, too, to understand and appreciate our shared origins, and our common bond in our common founder.

Additions to the original texts of her paper:

During the time of Ruth Schwalenburg as Superior General, Simone Vandensteene and Bernadette Lecluyse, and Barbara Batten, embarked on a project to make the letters of our Founder available to all the sisters in their own languages. Simone transcribed the letters in the archives in Rome; Mary Baptist translated from French into English and Josephine Bellm translated from Flemish into English. Around this time Marie Edmee found in the cellars at Uccle another 175 letters of the Founder and some notebooks which were also transcribed and translated.

p.4 (last paragraph) Alice added that when in Rome she had found a list of all the sisters. The first sister was professed in 1821 so she asked herself how could we have had a congregation founded in 1817 without sisters? She found the answer from this biography of Sr. Henriette that the reason was that those who entered with Sr. Henriette did not persevere.

p. (end) Alice read from a statement from the Congress of Religious Life about the importance of historical material for the transmission of the charism.

¹¹ The end of the letter with the date is missing. *Letters and Spiritual Instructions* of CVC. P. 215

¹² *On Reciprocal Affection*. *Letters and Spiritual Instructions* of CVC, p. 622. *Cheerfulness, Meekness, Politeness. Constitutions of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph (Revised)*, p. 33.

20.

Where did the educational ideas of the Founder come from?**Michael Powell**

(Brother Michael gave a Power Point presentation in English, but spoke in French.)

This is a strange question as it does, in a certain way, suggest that he was able to make, after mature reflection, a choice from a whole range of pedagogical possibilities which he had studied and measured against previously established criteria, or at least had known something about in advance.

On the contrary, if one considers the events of his life it becomes most evident that he was not led by his circumstances to make a choice, but rather that these same circumstances led him inexorably towards one sole possibility.

I would go further: all my research and reflection over the past eight years lead me to declare that the educational philosophy which I call, out of convenience, “Constantian”, was present and fixed in his mind from an early age.

It should be clearly understood that Van Crombrugge sought in no way to introduce anything new as an educational model.

Further, it is to be clearly understood that for Van Crombrugge it was the “how” of education which was much more important than the “what”.

To explain:

What I have written elsewhere concerning the history of the region shows that as a Belgian, Constant Van Crombrugge lived his life in a period of enormous social and political change. During his lifetime he knew four régimes: occupation by Austria and France, an uneasy and contrived alliance with Holland, and finally an independent Belgium. Did this cause in him any form of struggle for national identity? Probably not. Until 1830 Van Crombrugge would probably have thought of himself as a citizen of East Flanders, and, more specifically, Geraardsbergen rather than anything else. Foreign occupiers would come and go as a fairly major irritation but would not cause any fundamental instability of identity on a personal level. Even after the establishment of Belgium it could be imagined that Van Crombrugge would not really think of himself as Belgian.

As a Roman Catholic, and more specifically as a Roman Catholic priest, he lived through a period where the directing role of the Church in everyday life, and particularly in education, was being questioned and had been dramatically weakened. As has been noted, however, as far as Belgium was concerned this was a questioning and weakening which went hand in hand with foreign occupation and, for many Belgians, the Church remained at the centre of their lives. For many, a rejection of foreign occupation would hopefully mean a return to the ecclesiastical status quo. We have seen that at the Collège d’Alost Van Crombrugge did not throw himself into the creation of anything radically new: rather he attempted to turn the clock back by re-inventing the Jesuit college of 1773. One could also ask whether this was entirely because he thought it the best way, or was there more than a hint of human nostalgia for his “second family” at Amiens.

As an educator and as a Roman Catholic educator (for, as we have seen, the two in Van Crombrugge cannot be separated) he inherited a situation in which education in Belgium was something of a wasteland, having been subjected to well-intentioned (but deeply mistrusted) interference by Austria and Holland, and revolutionary manipulation by France. It could be said that Van Crombrugge's insistence on freedom of education at the National Congress came as a reaction to the utilitarian function of education demanded by the unitary states of Joseph II and Willem of Orange. He characterises the Belgian people as those "who would go without it (education) rather than to see it imposed on them by the administration and at the whim of the civil power." Above all, the fabric of secondary education had been deeply damaged by the suppression of the Jesuits and the suppression or transfer to other authorities of their Colleges.

It could be argued that all of Van Crombrugge's "public" life, a period of only seventeen years lasting from 1814 when he became principal of the Collège d'Alost to 1831 when he more or less retired from public life, was lived as a reaction to the situation which he inherited. Thus he was to a large degree, a "righter of wrongs", seeking to re-establish a past order which was seen to have been of value rather than a revolutionary thinker striving after a new order. He was, after all, a member of that Belgian Roman Catholic provincial bourgeoisie whose sensibilities had been offended on all fronts since 1713; as a Belgian by foreign occupation; as a Roman Catholic by the subjection of ecclesiastical to civil authority under an enlightened despot; as a provincial by the notion of centralised government; and finally as a bourgeois by the withdrawal of the traditional rights of the burgher in Belgian society. Much of the offence caused by these measures was, as has been noted, due to Joseph II's total misunderstanding of the nature of his subject populace. Joseph sought an efficient state; Belgians remained attached to a rather bumbling status quo. Joseph, and later Willem of Orange, sought a state of religious tolerance: Belgians remained attached to the supremacy of the Roman Catholic faith.

How lucky the young Van Crombrugge was. I would suggest, based on my reading of the letters to his parents during the period of his adolescence, that his youth was marked by a real anguish of solitude, uncertainty, and of a real absence of deep affection from his parents. Certainly one can read in these letters, written by a respectful son and one already alive to a deep sense of duty, many formulaic protestation of love and respect for his parents. But if one looks more closely to discover the truth behind these formulas prescribed by contemporary epistolatory art, I always hear a little voice which cries out "love me as I love you".

Van Crombrugge's letters to his parents serve as an essential scene setter - to know the boy is to know the man. Certainly in the letters of his childhood we meet a person who is a) lonely and b) over burdened with responsibilities which should have been borne by his parents. Over and over again we read that his parents have been slow in communicating with him, and that he is forced to take responsibility for his brothers and sisters. From a 21st century perspective one could argue that it was cruel of his parents to send him so far away to school at so young an age and with weak health: there are frequent references in his letters to his eye problems. The physical distance which seems so small to our eyes must have seemed enormous at the end of the 18th century, but the physical distance involved is less of a factor than the psychological distance.

On the other hand it would be unfair to make such a judgment as Van Crombrugge's experience of being sent to France was perfectly normal at the time for a child of his milieu and against the background of the disarray in education in Belgium: his parents were doing the "right thing" by him. Nevertheless it could be argued that the young Van Crombrugge was an emotionally starved child whose salvation would lie in the care that he would receive at the hands of the Fathers of the Faith, to whom he would look for love and understanding and a milieu in which he felt at home. To take the argument a stage further, and as has been previously suggested, the "family spirit" upon which Van Crombrugge would later become so insistent in his teaching congregations was not the

spirit of his own birth family but rather the spirit he experienced at the hands of the Fathers of the Faith.

That he was further burdened by responsibilities beyond his years is evidenced by the frequent references to his care for his brother and sister, both of whom were physically distanced from his parents at a young age. His brother clearly had educational difficulties and we see the young Van Crombrugghe acting as his educational mentor. His sister suffered from ill health, on occasion quite serious, and it is clear that Van Crombrugghe was deeply impressed by the care that was lavished upon her by the Sisters to whom she was entrusted. One wonders, however, if he ever questioned why his sister, in a poor state of health, remained physically distanced from his parents. Certainly he never expressed such a question in writing but one cannot help but suggest that the question was there. These experiences could be said to have pre-disposed him to organisation of others, as is evidenced by the fact that he was put in charge of the (boarder) choristers of Amiens Cathedral, more or less as their “Housemaster”, at the end of his schooldays. To have been put into this position he must have shown capability for organisation and for pastoral care, and perhaps it was a deliberate ploy on the part of his masters to test his sacerdotal vocation and to give him a taste of the life he might expect to live were he to become a teaching priest – perhaps even a Father of the Faith.

The principal importance of these letters from the young Van Crombrugghe to his parents is to highlight the deep formative impression made on him by the Fathers of the Faith, his teachers. It could be said that without the evidence of this impression it would be impossible to understand the Josephites and Van Crombrugghe’s foundations.

If Van Crombrugghe suffered from isolation and a lack of immediate parental affection in his childhood, this juxtaposition of his personal, emotional position and the way in which the Fathers of the Faith answered to his needs was the crucible in which the educational ideal of the Josephites was forged. Almost everything is there: the fatherhood of the teachers towards their pupils; their leading of the pupils not by harshness and restraint but rather by affability and gentleness; the adaptability of the system to a pupil’s individual needs. Above all there is the transparent happiness of the young Van Crombrugghe at being a pupil of such a system, a happiness which he would later wish to see reflected in pupils at Josephite schools.

Another step in Van Crombrugghe’s career which cannot be illuminated by hard evidence is the reason why the Bishop selected him to become principal of the College of Alost. It has already been suggested^{xiv} that the main reason could be that Van Crombrugghe was a former pupil of the Fathers of the Faith. Certainly he was able to put into practice all that he had learnt from the Fathers of the Faith, and a new generation of pupils, this time Belgian pupils in their own country, could benefit from his experiences.

If there were to have been an “ideal” Josephite school for Van Crombrugghe, what would it have been like? The evidence suggests that it would have been a triple establishment. At its core would have been a boarding school, the second tier being a day school and thirdly a poor school with its attendant Sunday schools. The boarding school would have been at the centre for two reasons. Firstly it would have provided the financial powerhouse of the institution, attracting pupils from the better families and therefore those most able to pay the higher fees involved. Secondly the boarding milieu would have provided the stage on which the drama of education par excellence in Van Crombrugghe’s eyes could have been played out – an enclosed forum, protected from the distractions and noxious influences of the “the world”, in which a symbiosis of learned and cultured Josephites with eager and submissive pupils could take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Outside of this inner circle would be the day school, attracting pupils from the better and “not so better” families of the local area. These pupils would follow the same lessons as the boarders and would be equally the subjects of Josephite care, but would be regarded as slightly dangerous and would be separated from the boarders at other times as they represented an intrusion of “the world” into the more perfect arena of the boarding school. Finally, the third tier of poor pupils, no less deserving of care and loving attention but to be taught on a more casual basis a less demanding and more work orientated curriculum mostly by the less able Josephites. In this ranking we see, of course, an inversion of the original Josephite foundation. What we do not know is whether this is an inversion of Van Crombrughe’s original founding intention for the Josephites.

As the Josephites moved away from education for the poor during the 1830’s another “ideal” presents itself for questioning, i.e. what should be taught in Van Crombrughe’s ideal school?

The germ of the answer to this question lies, as does so much else, in Van Crombrughe’s own educational experience. We know from his letters to his parents that it was his youthful intention to follow his father into the world of business. We read of his anguish at discovering that the curriculum of the Fathers of the Faith in Amiens was that of the classical humanities – Latin, Greek and literature. This, of course, begs the question as to whether this was a complete surprise: surely Van Crombrughe père had looked into the matter and discussed it with his son? Nevertheless it was only the intervention of Father Sellier in offering to teach the young Van Crombrughe business studies privately that persuaded him to stay at Amiens. At Alost Van Crombrughe was, as Principal, engaged in the re-establishment of the classical humanities in the Jesuit tradition. Any move to introduce a different curriculum at that stage would have been regarded as highly suspect, unlikely to find public support, and probably contrary to the Bishop’s wishes. A glance at the speeches of Van Crombrughe to the parents of Alost in 1815^{xxv} will confirm Van Crombrughe’s broad adherence to the curriculum of classical humanities.

It is, however, clear that when Van Crombrughe had the opportunity to form his own major educational establishments after 1830 he had a different goal in mind. From his own background, and his vision of a new Belgium at a time of expansion in business and technology, Van Crombrughe foresaw a new type of educated Belgian, ready to take his place in this new world. One has only to look at the references he makes in his letters to the subjects that various Josephites are to study: the young Athanase (only 17 at the time) is bidden to study: - mathematics, book-keeping, geography, history, Flemish; then physics, astronomy, chemistry and botany. These are to be followed by other, unspecified, subjects. This was a heavy burden of study for a young man who was also engaged in full-time teaching and supervision. At the same time the Brothers are encouraged in their study of more basic subjects: grammar, arithmetic, letter writing style, history and handwriting. At a later stage (1855) notes the departure of a confrere who is a teacher of commercial law and constitutional law, at the same time as suggesting to the Superior (Bonaventure) that he take on these classes himself. Mr Polydore is to study physics and chemistry. An undated letter, probably to Brussels, notes that the subjects to be taught would include religion and history, “modern languages which are needed by commerce”, Greek and Latin, commercial, industrial and administrative science. Writing in 1839 to Athanase, Van Crombrughe notes that he wishes him to “work a little on the information you have been given about commercial schools so that we are able to do what the interest of the house of Melle demands; but let us proceed prudently.”

It is clear that Van Crombrughe attempted to establish modern sections in all his schools. Melle would be the flagship of this enterprise, and in particular due to the establishment there of the huge museums of science, technology and natural history. Even Grammont on its official notepaper advertised itself as offering “instruction littéraire, scientifique, commerciale et industrielle”. For Grammont this direction was essential for its survival as it would make a clear statement that it was

not in competition with the diocesan college with its classical curriculum. However, 1857 was to sound something of a death-knell for these modern and forward-looking curricula. In that year the Government passed legislation making access to Belgian Universities impossible for any candidate not in possession of a certificate showing that a full course of humanities (i.e. classical humanities) had been followed. This forced the Josephite schools to narrow their focus and cease any further development of the commercial side, bringing a bold and innovative experiment to an abrupt end. Melle would be an exception since it had attracted something of an international clientele unconstrained by the demands of the Belgian educational system. Here the commercial and technical sections would last longer than elsewhere.

As was stated in the introduction to my thesis an attempt has been made, in considering the various sources, to concentrate on those threads which are particularly concerned with the Josephites as educators and to leave in the background such material as is concerned with the Josephites purely as a religious congregation. Such a distinction, however, it is inevitably a false one as for Van Crombrugge the two threads are indivisible. This means that making purely secular judgments on the actions of Van Crombrugge and his co-workers, whilst being a useful academic exercise, cannot reveal the whole picture. One has to remember that Van Crombrugge did not set out with two foundations in mind: the foundation of a religious congregation and the foundation of a teaching institute. Rather the two were one: the former was a way of effecting the latter, the latter a means of effecting the religious duty of the former.

What are the main features of Van Crombrugge's concept of education?

Reading through all the texts of Van Crombrugge, and with an understanding of the vivid Jesuit background to his educational vision, one can isolate a number of threads which go to make up the central core of his educational concept.

1. Competition, *honesta aemulatio*, is a principal means of encouraging effort and minimising the need for punishment. Of all the traits identified in Van Crombrugge's woven cloth of education, the one which might be seen to be problematic is that of competition. It has already been noted that the whole idea of competition is possibly something of a mixed blessing. Even Quintilian suggest that it contains the possibility of evil: "though ambition may in itself be a vice none the less it is frequently the source of virtues." We have also seen that for Compayré competition was a source of ammunition for an attack on the Jesuits: "fostering of ambition" was "the characteristic of the corrupt Jesuitical morality".

In our own times, competition is regarded as a mixed blessing: in 1997 the "Catholic Education Service" wrote:

"Competition is, of itself, neither good nor evil, but when it is used to brand children or schools in a way which limits their freedom or potential, it is damaging to human flourishing. It also carries the danger of communicating to children and young people - and, indeed, to the wider community - that a person's value is measured solely in terms of academic, sporting or financial success. When, as St Paul describes it, we try to win the race, we are racing against ourselves. So, in education when a school encourages its pupils and staff to perform to the best of their ability for their own sake, its aim is to enable them to fulfil their God-given potential. If competition sets one school against another, if success in one institution is achieved deliberately at the expense of another, it is morally unacceptable."

2. A teacher's authority is based on esteem: the esteem of the pupil for the teacher and vice-versa. A teacher will gain esteem by the virtue of his example, and by his care for and interest in the

individual pupil. There is also an element of fear in the sense of *timor reverentialis* which is better expressed as respect.

3. A teacher must show a genuine - i.e. real and human, not based on a supernatural notion - affection for his pupils, and will seek their affection in return. The bond between teacher and pupil is characterised by a relationship which goes beyond mutual respect to genuine affection. This affection is based on Jouvancy's "earnestness of a father and the devotion of a mother". In this context education is, for Van Crombrugghe, an intensely personal activity undertaken in the context of an ordered institution.

4. Education is aimed at transformation - *Umbildung* - in Jorissen's description a move "beyond" oneself, rather than formation - *Ausbildung*. Central to this is the simultaneous cultivation of the hearts and minds (in that order) of the pupils. This does not in any way minimise the importance of academic excellence, but rather seeks to place it within a broader economy of personal development.

5. No education without religion. Van Crombrugghe was quite unequivocal on this point.

6. Gentleness; a key word which keeps re-appearing in Van Crombrugghe's writings is "doux" and "douceur". The teacher must have "un air doux et modeste" - a gentle and modest manner. Van Crombrugghe was struck by "la douceur et affabilité avec lesquelles on nous conduit" - the gentleness and affability with which we are led - at Amiens. Teachers are to win the heart of their pupils by gentleness, and also to correct them in a spirit of gentleness and humility.

7. Appropriateness: the way in which an individual pupil is taught, in which he is disciplined, can only successfully be based on a thorough understanding of the individual. Van Crombrugghe was most insistent that his teachers should study their pupils.

8. A good education cannot be achieved without order and method. Nothing can be left to chance and, although education takes place within a framework built on personal relationships, the whole is undertaken within a structure in which everything is subject to meticulous analysis and regulation. There is no place for mavericks in Van Crombrugghe's organisation. All is to be justified, not by the yardstick of what is novel and radical, but by what is already proven.

As for "family spirit" I profoundly mistrust this overcomfortable definition. Speaking of family spirit is to treat in a simplistic manner something which is much deeper and richer, rather like valuing a diamond by considering only one of its facets chosen at random.

This is not to say that this "family spirit" is not a useful, if simplistic, image. Certainly the image of family as an enduring hierarchical structure permeates Van Crombrugghe. The son is in a position of filial duty to parents; parents have a duty of care to the son. The place of the parents is taken over by the Fathers of the Faith in Amiens; the son seeks a continuation of hierarchical structure in the Church; the son becomes parent as Headmaster of the Collège d'Alost and as Founder. Within the communities an almost Trinitarian atmosphere is to be engendered whereby the individual religious lives in harmony with his confreres and with his pupils in a symbiotic relationship. It is perhaps this notion of symbiosis which most specifically illuminates Van Crombrugghe's concept of family spirit. On a personal level this is why I react so strongly to the contemporary orthodoxy which insists that we call our pupils "students". As pupils they can enter into this Trinitarian relationship. If they are only students the relationship can only be at a far less personal level.

If one was to set oneself the question "did Van Crombrugghe, in his lifetime, achieve his founding intention for the Josephites as an educational Institute", one would have, in a secular context, to

reply "no". This is not, however, a criticism nor a condemnation. At the very outset Van Crombrugge would have framed his founding intention in terms of alleviating the situation the poor of Grammont through basic education, provided by a group of committed Christians who would be moulded into a religious congregation. If the Institute had closed, or Van Crombrugge died, in 1830, then at one might conclude that he had, indeed, achieved his aim. But this would have been a very limited aim and one which would open Van Crombrugge to the accusation of inflexibility and lack of imagination. Furthermore it would have left the Josephites as a tiny, local congregation with little possibility of expansion or growth, nor of making any significant impact on Belgian society. It was the key to Van Crombrugge's success that he was not limited by his own aspirations, but rather changed those aspirations to meet the needs of changing circumstances. What was problematical for Van Crombrugge was that as circumstances changed the human material at his disposal did not, and he found himself obliged in a very short period of time to force those Josephites he had, and who would have, no doubt, proved adequate to the original, limited task into suitable subjects for the "second intention". This second intention can be characterised by the need, realised by Van Crombrugge after the National Congress of 1830, for an elite middle class educated in a modern tradition who would infuse Belgian society with the values that Van Crombrugge and the Church held dear. His reaction to the realisation of this need was one of "Christian ruthlessness", relentlessly driving the Josephites to make themselves capable of achieving the end which Van Crombrugge appreciated so vividly.

Van Crombrugge was an all too human idealist, fired with a passion for achieving the will of God, a passion which would lead him into making errors of judgment, into a relentless driving of his religious subjects, and into demanding a superhuman level of submission from minds that he was at the same time attempting to open to all sorts of new learning and wisdom. His Josephites were ordinary men, stretched way beyond their natural abilities to answer to the needs which Van Crombrugge saw all around him. If their actions seem on occasion to tend towards folly, then it is a powerful folly practised by "fools for God" and a folly from which the education of thousands benefited.

To return finally to the original question: where did the educational philosophy of the Founder come from? On an academic level one can quite easily trace its origins in the Gospels, and then further trace their development and transmission through the Jesuits, the Fathers of the Faith, and the Constantian Congregations. But at the end of the day one can simply say that it was the same philosophy that he experienced in his own education. Why did he choose it for his own project? Because it answered his own needs as a pupil: moreover it answered them at two levels. At the institutional level it gave him the security and love which were missing in his own young life: on the personal level he found Fathers who, by the manner in which they lived out this philosophy, gave him a shining example of Gospel values.

Let us therefore respond to all our pupils as the young Van Crombrugge would have wished: love me as I love you.

21.

How are we to pass on and inculcate the spiritual heritage of our Founder and the Josephite spirit in our schools.?

Is it possible? How are we to get about it?

Aloïs Dupré

In order to begin answering these questions it might be interesting to listen to what our predecessors have to say, to hear how they explained what they understood by a Josephite education. I am going to use a text which I found in an "Album-Prospectus" for our college in Leuven. Although the text was written in the second half of the 19th century it has lost nothing of its value for us today.

Here it is.

EDUCATION

*"To attempt to force a child to submit to the yoke of discipline;
To unleash in him a force of energy which will enable him to resist his passions;
To get him to accept voluntarily the law of duty and work ;
To get him to develop order and discipline without the help of religion is to attempt the
impossible".*

Michel. University of France.

To inspire in pupils a practical and intelligent faith, the love and cult of the family, patriotism, esteem for duty, a taste for virtue and work: this is the aim that teachers set before themselves. To achieve this they endeavour to foresee faults by means of a paternal vigilance and by encouraging praiseworthy emulation. They regularly appeal to reason and to the heart of the children. Above all they strive to get the children to understand and to love filial piety.

Our system of education relies a great deal on the constant influence which the family must have on a child. Even when they are at College there is regular contact between parent and the Headteacher. There is ample opportunity for visits by parents and holidays at home. Pupils are required to write home at least every fortnight.

The mutual feeling confidence which exists between teachers and pupils creates a family spirit in the life of the College. Teachers keep order in a firm but gentle manner which protects the morals of the children and encourages the development of their intelligence as well as ensuring success in their studies. Through their regular contact with pupils, teachers have the opportunity to work at the formation of their pupils' character, to teach them to acquire the habits of order and economy, to behave towards them in a way that is relaxed and polite, to surround them with thousands of little acts of delicate kindness and care which they are accustomed to in their own home.

*Here is what the **Revue Catholique** had to say in praise of our system of education.*

"The Josephites have based their system of education on that of their Founder. Their boarding schools are like families in which the superior is the father and pupils are united in a cordial friendship. Piety flourishes there but without affectation, the studies

are serious but varied, the discipline is firm but does not degenerate into excessive rigorism.

I would also like to quote a former pupil of Melle which goes back to 1912. It is by Paul Quintin, who originated from Leuze, he became a Barrister in the Court of Appeal in Brussels.

I have often tried to explain the educational methods of Melle. If you look closely at the way the college was run you might be tempted to see an English influence as well as a modernist one. Modernist in the best sense of the word. At Melle pupils' initiatives, far from being repressed, were encouraged and channelled. There was discipline but not authoritarianism, inspiration was drawn from the past but we marched towards the future." Extract from the Souvenir Album of the 75 anniversary of Melle (1837-1912)

Another way of attempting to answer these questions is to look at our own formation.

When I talk about my own formation in a Josephite school there immediately springs to mind a story which I told during a homily at a mass one Wednesday evening for the pupils of the junior school at Melle. Here it is.

A spiritual father was asked what do you have to do to pass on the faith to some one. The spiritual father answered in a way that is both simple and surprising. "Well", he said "I invite the young man to come and live with me and I ask him to do nothing but to observe me for a whole year. That is all he needs to do to become a true Christian".

This story can help us find a solution to our questions. In the same way our novice masters and others in the Institute who were responsible for our formation invited us without using many words (a very few explanations) to become true Josephites, especially in the years that followed the novitiate.

In all our houses I regularly heard others talking about a way of life that was typically Josephite, such as "family spirit", "politesse du coeur", compassion etc. Even today I have difficulty in defining for myself and even more so for others, exactly what we mean by a Josephite spirit.

Perhaps I can put it like this. Our finest confreres have a way of behaving in the presence of others which is authentically Josephite. It is easy to identify in all our colleges and in all our houses a way of living. In spite of the wide range of pupils who attend our colleges (at least in Belgium) you can say that the same family spirit is to be found in all of them. It is not just the confreres and the pupils who notice this but also lay teachers who sometimes move from one Josephite college to another. More than once I have been pleased to hear a new teacher express his satisfaction with the spirit that he has found in the college. It is not surprising that over the years the spirit of simplicity and openness of heart and spirit has formed our lay colleagues into "true" Josephites.

However because the responsibility for running our schools has been in the hands of the Josephites for so long our lay colleagues still do not feel responsible for the silent transition that has taken place over the last few years, that is to say the transfer of our colleges to lay control. Don't forget that at the beginning of these changes we were living a very traditional Catholicism. So it was that little by little almost stealthily and change was brought about for which not everyone was totally prepared.

It is easy to understand why our lay colleagues do not feel directly responsible for the religious dimension of the role as teachers. You could say that they have not been properly prepared to become true teachers and Christian educators.

In a conference given by Fr Garcia in 1979 we read this:

“Emphasis has often been placed on the pragmatic, political and even diplomatic side of the Founder. What is becoming more and more evident is that he was a man of prayer, always striving to do the will of a merciful God “in a way which pleases our sovereign Master”.

Here we have the source of all his activities. It is this that he tried to pass on to the Josephites, his religious collaborators. We in our turn want to pass on this same attitude to our lay colleagues and our pupils.

We all know that we live in a society which has become more and more one-dimensional. Teachers and pupils cannot get away from this reality. Here is a great challenge which we have to take up. The situation is not the same in all our regions. It is very different in Africa where we find in our young confreres a renewed interest in schools and education.

Discussion

Sr. Agnès said that from the point of view of religion, we now have a multi-dimensional faith aspect in our schools, so the question is how do we pass on the charism in this situation?

Fr. Alois replied that the fact we have head masters in all our colleges who feel themselves responsible for the pastoral and religious dimension is a great advantage in this respect. Also in each college there are pastoral teams and history shows that it is only by being faithful to our tradition, allowing it to evolve, that we will make progress.

Aidan remarked that a new situation has arisen for schools in Europe. Although led by a strong Catholic lay head teacher, the big question was the calibre of the lay teachers. His experience of teaching in non-Josephite Catholic schools was that the best contribution comes from teachers who are either practising RCs or non-Catholics. The big problem was with non-practising RC teachers who bring their own prejudices about the church.

Fr. Alois agreed that this new situation was everywhere, but having said that there was no sense of rupture with what has gone on before. Religion was taught very differently now and our Colleges have always been guided by a group of teachers who have been exemplary in trying to be faithful to the spirit of the Josephites. We have to leave them free to interpret the spirituality of the Founder for a new generation.

Sr. Dolores wished to make the observation that the family spirit has received a lot of emphasis, but she feels that it is the concept of parenthood, i.e. father and mother roles combined that is central. She had never heard it spoken of in the DMJs, rather the accent was on the formation of young women capable of occupying positions in society. Of course, there was always this insistence ‘la politesse’, which culturally she found extremely difficult, because what is polite in one culture is impolite in another.

Fr. Richard agreed with Dolores. He struggled with the notion of the ‘father’ role being equated with paternity, and he wished to stress that the concept of exercising the roles of father and mother is not equivalent to parenthood.

Br. Michael said that No. 129 of the Guide Pédagogique stressed that the Josephites must be fathers and mothers to their pupils, and for the Josephites the accent is on the feminine role. The rather 'rough' young Josephites needed to be taught how to exercise their feminine side. The family spirit was not insisted on so specifically for the DMJs because the Founder presumed their femininity would take care of that, whereas the directive role of the father was stressed in the duty of the sisters to prepare their pupils to take up an active position in society.

22.

How can we live and pass on the charism of our Founder in our schools?

Jacob Beya

The aim of the Josephites is to be a body of men whose members are formed in the spirit of their Founder, "*they try their best to conform themselves to the spirit of the gospel which remains the chief guiding principle of their life... they apply themselves in a particular way to rediscovering the sense of family as Jesus lived it on earth: by his loving obedience to his Father; by his loving obedience to Mary and Joseph, by his love for the family formed by his disciples*" and by his love for humanity. (Constitutions 4.).

In perpetuating in this way the spirit of their Founder, Josephites work for their own redemption and sanctification. They radiate the charm of charity by drawing the world towards the one who came to reveal the love of an ever loving Father.

The school remains for Josephites the first object of their pastoral concern. It is by means of the Christian education and instruction of the young that they pass on religious, moral, social and intellectual virtues as well as the spirit of their Founder to their lay collaborators (teachers and parents) and also, above all, to their pupils.

Naturally the ways of achieving this are many and varied, but in the context of our African province and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where all our schools are run by confreres, the means and methods used are part of the normal organisation of any educational establishment with the usual school and outside school activities: that is to say, the rules of the school, religion classes, meetings of teachers and parents, days of recollection and retreats etc. I will come back to this later in the paper.

The Staff

The charism of the Founder concerns the teachers first of all. We (the Josephites) run our schools; we give class but we cannot teach every class as well as supervising the pupils and maintaining order and discipline. That is why in our work of education and instruction of the young we need the help of our lay colleagues. They are, together with us, the means by which the spirit of the Founder is lived and passed on to the pupils. That is why at the beginning of every school year we pass on to them "*Les documents pédagogiques à l'usage des éducateurs*". They are reminded of this document or of some of the texts in it at every staff meeting or during the recollections which have been organised for them.

We make an effort to encourage a spirit of dialogue between us so that they are always kept informed of major decisions concerning the working of our schools. We also organise during the year for teachers and confreres times for relaxation in the form of an excursion which are not only joyful occasions but also help create a climate of confidence between us.

There is another important factor which is also a sign of our compassion. Today in Congo-Kinshasa, our teachers are supposed to be paid (though more often than not they are not) what we call a salary

of destitution (salaire de misère). This salary amounts to \$10. It is the parents (who are also badly paid or out of work) who help the teachers by paying an extra supplement. We for our part offer support them as well by adding our own supplement. This is possible thanks to the generosity of our teachers in England.

The Pupils.

Turning to the pupils. Our schools are not selective. They are open to the rich as well as the poor, to Catholics as well as non Catholics, to boys as well as girls, in nutshell to all children of school age. But there is always the problem of the payment of school fees. However whenever we are forced to send away those who have not paid we do not do it in the same way as many schools for whom money is more important than education. We only send away those whose parents we know have the means to pay the school fees and we take responsibility for the children of parents who are unable to pay.

We are always close to our pupils, attentive to each and everyone; making an effort to know their names, their parents and their home background. It is not only the confreres who teach who make this effort but also those who do not. In this way a parent or a pupil will find in each Josephite someone who can answer their questions. Our pupils are always made to feel welcome in the school and love to stay on after school. Those who have been sent away for a time because of bad behaviour or for failing an exam, always come back without a sense of bitterness and share with the other pupils moments of happiness such as the feast of St Joseph. This is our way of living the family spirit. Our pupils feel at home when they are with us. We do not hesitate to share our meals with them. In general they feel loved by the Josephites. Didn't our Founder say : "Love your pupils, be a father for them and that is not enough be mothers as well".

For pupils and teachers alike we have a set of School Rules which is based on a common model used in all our different schools. The same key notions are to be found in the introduction, in the aims as well as the punishments to be given to the pupils. The chief directives for both teachers and pupils are inspired by the pedagogical principles of the Founder.

During the year, as part of the general religious formation, we organise class masses and recollections which are an opportunity for both the Josephites and the lay teachers to pass on the spirit of the Founder.

Those pupils who distinguish themselves by good behaviour and/or a better exam result receive a prize as an encouragement. This is in keeping with the spirit of Van Crombrughe.

The awareness that one is an educator, the care taken in the preparation of classes, the way classes are taught and punishments administered are for every teacher in a Josephite school the proof that he is living the spirit of the Founder and that he is passing it on to the pupils. That is why we are forever inviting each Josephite and lay teacher adopt as their own all the principles relating to the good education and instruction of youth and to strive to put them into practice so as to promote a Josephite spirit in our schools.

DISCUSSION

Sr. Liz congratulated Jacob on a beautiful paper and wondered why collaborators were only kept informed about major decisions rather than being part of the decision-making process.

Fr. Jacob responded that they were part of the decision-making process.

- Fr. Aidan** remarked that with the idea of ‘family spirit’, a valuable practical application had been stated by Jacob and encapsulated in the statement by Jacob “our pupils feel at home when they are with us”.
- Sr. Renee** thought that ‘feeling at home’ was equivalent to the notion of welcome or hospitality so well developed by the DMJs.
- Sr. Theresa Bateta** wanted to congratulate the administration of the Congo, which had laid an excellent foundation for the future. ‘Making a difference’ is what is important and the education their pupils have received will be carried into their own families and the work they do in government positions, and this will make a difference.
- Sr. Joan Roddy** enquired as to how the Josephites, and education generally, was challenged by the political and social situation in the Congo?
- Fr. Jacob** replied that teachers were in a very vulnerable situation because they depend on the Government for their salary, which is so small it is called ‘salaire de misere’. Lay teachers cannot do very much about it but the bishops are taking a lead and working with the unions in schools, who are asking the Government to give teachers a decent salary. The result of this is that teachers have been on strike since February, a strike provoked by the Church. As well as state schools we also have private schools and they have a little more freedom.
- Sr. Maggie** added that they experienced something similar in Belgium where they have had to accept the teachers supplied by the state. The Government controls and regulates their schools and they have little liberty left. She questioned how it was possible to pass on the traditions of the Founder.
- Fr. Jacob** responded that in the Congo it was totally different: they have the freedom there to choose their own teachers.
- Fr. Charles** added that Stella Enright had given them a little book of words of our Founder related to education. A lay teacher after reading it said ‘Now I understand why the DMJs do what they do and why they do it’.
- Sr. Teresa** remembered that when Maureen Martin became head of Coloma she was presented with that same booklet by the bishop. There are only about 2 left in the archives.

Education today.

23.

Primary Education

Cathleen Calvey.

I live and teach in the area of Tallaght in Dublin. Tallaght is situated to the south west of Dublin city. This extension to Dublin city came into being over the last 30 years. The local area in which I work and teach is called Tallaght West. This is the catchment area for the school. It is approximately 3 km from where I and the other D.M.J.’s live.

The school is called St Anne’s. It provides for children between the ages of 4 and 12 years. There are around 400 pupils on roll. The school is Catholic, parish based, co- funded by the Dioceses and the dept. of Education.

I have been teaching in this particular school for approximately the last 10 years. The following somewhat jumbled reflections are based largely on my experience of the last 10 years in this school.

One of the first quotations / advice from the Founder which became familiar was;-

“Be there for the whole Church.”

A tall order I thought.

One of the lovely things about teaching in primary school .. as many of you know ... is that the child is not seen or taught in isolation but is held and regarded within his/her wider spread of experience.

The child in the school is part of school life, family life, extended family, local community and the worshipping community. This is the entire life experience of the child, it is the local Church, “the whole Church” of the child. This has brought this saying alive for me. I can “be there for the whole Church” of that area. I hope I am.

Another of our Founder’s sayings to his teaching sisters is this. “No child becomes lazy or unmanageable without reason. Do you know the reason?” Knowing the families and the child’s background has helped me wonderfully to understand the child’s behaviour.

Let me say something about the children’s local environment. The area is termed “Socially and economically disadvantaged.” This is a label that all people in the area have to wear. It puts them on the receiving end of the scale of society.

It seems to me that it covertly conveys a message to these people that the rest of us do not expect that they have anything to contribute to society. So they are of no worth.

The scenario that arises from having no self worth ensues. Excessive drinking, poor management of financial resources, aggression, broken and re-broken relationships, poor parenting etc.

Bad experiences mark us all. How much more so children. The children are hurt, they are confused and betrayed. They simply carry too much too young. They are vulnerable.

When one knows their background, one knows the reasons why they act out their upset.

I too am part of that environment. I too am part of that Church. I am ministered to as well.

I never cease to be amazed and humbled and brought down of my high horse when I see so many wonderful parents, happy families in circumstances such as theirs. I know that I neither could nor would do as well. I admire and respect them.

I am humbled by their hospitality. The doors of their houses, whenever weather conditions permit, are left open. You are not expected to knock. You are expected to walk into the kitchen – the heart of the house! And you are welcome!

I have been humbled when I realise my own arrogance as a Teacher. I thought that in this setting only the Teachers wanted the best for the children. I have learned and I have had to learn that **EVERY PARENT OF EVERY CHILD IN THE SCHOOL DESIRES ONLY THE BEST IN EVERYTHING FOR THEIR CHILD.**

I believe it. I know it. They may not seem to be doing anything about it. They may even be hindering their child’s growth and progress, but deep within is a desire for the best. I am touched by their transparency, their directness in communication. What you see is what you get and what they want to tell you is what you hear.

I consider myself blessed to be part of a staff that is so caring, so interested and so understanding of these children. We try to make their time in school that is safe, homely, secure, and pleasant. I have a feeling that the children are aware of that. They feel valued, important and appreciated.

A little about myself.

I always wanted to be a teacher. When I entered teacher training initially I was not at all sure that teaching was my talent. I had to leave teaching (for some time in Ghana and Parish work) to discover that I belonged in teaching. I missed the children. I had to go back.

Sometimes I have a sneaking regret of not having taught in or not having experienced a D.M.J. school. Would I be a better teacher if I had? Have I missed out on the great teaching tradition of the congregation? I don't know. I will never know.

There seems to be some invisible thread that weaves through the whole of our lives. In my first week as a teacher I received some very good advice from my mother. "Be kind to the children," she told me. "That is what they will remember." There were certainly echoes there of our Founder's advice.

When my class's year was leaving Coloma College, Sr Mary Moore presented each one of us with a copy of this booklet. "The Educational Principles of Canon Van Crombrughe." It is full of gems of wisdom. I draw solace from this book in my present situation.

Education is a very practical and simple thing, which requires little theory, but much care, few precepts and a lot of love."

I hope that the children I have taught and teach at the moment, know that they have a special place in my heart and sense my understanding for them I hope they experience my kindness and drown in a sense of their own self-worth. I hope that they have sensed through me a sense of the OTHER, a sense of God, a kind loving and understanding God. I pray that I have helped them in some small way to be the person God intended them to be.

I would not consider myself to be steeped in our Founder's spirituality. However, on going back to this booklet I have been surprised to discover how much I see myself reflected in these pages and the extent the book reflects what I do. There is surely something about the mystery of charism and the thread that weaves through our life.

I have found the preparation of the presentation to be a great benefit to me. During many years of teaching I have not reflected in this way. I am grateful that I have done so now and thank you for the opportunity.

Secondary education: Lay head teachers in schools once run by religious

24.

Secondary Education Maureen Martin

Maureen explained that she was taught by the DMJs from the age of 5 up to 18, had lived with them at different times, and had many friends among the DMJs. She felt she had absorbed the charism by osmosis.

Coloma Convent Girl's School

Introduction.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how Coloma puts into every day practice the charism of the Founder and his principles on education.

Coloma is a secondary day school in the state sector with over 1000 girls from ages 11 to 18. It is a comprehensive school which means there is no academic selection. Situated in Croydon, Greater London, the local education authority and the learning and Skills Council provide funding which is intended to meet the basic running costs of the school including staff salaries. However, for nearly all major maintenance and capital development costs an additional 10% has to be found by the trustees or others on their behalf. This reflects the national agreement between the government and the church, which allows the school the freedom to select staff and pupils in accordance with its own religious criteria, in return for a financial contribution. In my view, this freedom is essential if we are to continue to transmit the values and create the ethos which reflect the DMJ charism at work in the school today.

The DMJ's were involved directly with the management of the school from 1869 until 1996 and since then have continued to play a leading role on the governing body of the school.

The charism in the daily life of the school

The school continues to practise its founding ethos. We recognise that we are instruments of mercy in the hands of Jesus Christ. We try to implement this in the every day life of the school in the following ways:

Prayers or moments of reflection begin nearly all lessons, form periods and staff meetings. The school prayer "Direct, O Lord, our actions by Your holy inspiration.." is often said, led by the teaching staff or pupils.

Each week mass is held during a lunch break. Staff and pupils take turns to prepare the liturgy. Every year special masses are held to celebrate, give thanks and pray for the needs of the whole school community including those for

- The Year 13 students and the school staff
- The year 11 students, who are preparing for major public examinations, and their parents.
- The Year 13 students who will shortly take their final school examinations, and their parents.
- The parents of the new Year 7 students.
- The parents, staff and friends of the school who participate most actively in the supportive parent's association.
- The end of the year with all staff and parents.

The whole school gathers for an assembly on a Friday morning. There is always a spiritual reflection highlighting gospel values as well as opportunities to pray together for the needs of the school and the wider community. There are times of celebration, nurturing the family spirit of the school, the charisms within the community and encouragement of ministries, as well as promoting order and self-discipline in order for teaching and learning to be successful.

Efforts are continually made to ensure that the education the pupils receive is aimed at the development of the whole person. Although the school closely monitors their progress and behaviour, the pupils really enjoy their education, not only through well taught lessons but also through a vibrant extra-curricular programme of school trips, sports and music. (Coloma has just been designated as a specialist music school with the intention of involving every student in a

musical activity of some type and sharing to an even greater extent with the local community.) The school has a small bursary scheme to ensure that no pupil is left out by their inability to pay.

The school lays considerable emphasis on reaching out to those in need by involving the pupils in charity work. For example:

- Every form group raises funds for a charity of its choice.
- Year 13 students on the charities committee lead the school's charities week each October when everyone in the school participates in a number of fun activities to raise significant sums of money.
- Various school choirs participate in external fund raising for a number of national and international charities each year.

The school pays particular attention to the pastoral care of its pupils, staff and whenever possible former pupils, staff and their respective families. We endeavour to know all our pupils well, understanding their joys and sorrows, celebrating and empathising. We work closely with parents and whenever possible parishes, to ensure that the spiritual formation of our pupils as well as their academic, social, physical and moral education is well focused.

In recent years we have introduced 'Founder's Day' sessions for new pupils and some staff to focus on the history and life of the DMJ's and several classes have been named after countries where the DMJ's are active. Attention has also been drawn to the chapel and the garden dedicated to the DMJ's and their work locally. Several DMJ. sisters have come to the school to talk to the pupils and one has recently accompanied a school trip to the U.S.A. (Sadly pressure on time and resources has made it increasingly difficult to take this forward in a more substantial way.)

The Challenges

Although the school continues to make enormous efforts to maintain the founder's charism, there are a number of challenges it has to face at the current time.

We face difficulty in maintaining the unity of purpose and the educational principles of the founder. Apart from severe financial constraints, this is particularly due to the problem of retaining sufficiently dedicated staff with the knowledge and desire to form a large enough core to drive forward the founding ethos. We try to address this by organising management away days which include more time for prayer and reflection on our mission, and each year some in-service training and induction for new staff also focuses on this issue. We have to pay great attention to personnel matters before appointing permanent staff.

However, this is not the case with parents. The school has for several years come under huge pressure from hundreds of parents, supported by their parish priests to place their daughters in Year 7. There is an increasing realisation amongst parents that the ethos is fundamental in the successful education and spiritual formation of their daughters. Unfortunately many face rejection because of the limited numbers i.e. 150 students that can be accepted into the school each year. We feel it conflicts with the mission to be at the service of the whole church and would wish under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we could find a solution.

Conclusion

We are totally convinced that there could not be a better charism on which to build a successful catholic school, and thank God for His strength and guidance which has enables countless girls and young women to learn more about the kingdom of God during the 136 years of Coloma's existence.

25.
Education
Taking over a Josephite School.
Tony Hudson, Head of St. George's Junior School

No text available.

26.
The influence of the Founder's charism on educators
in the 21st century
Joséphites and DMJ's California.

Charles Hofschulte

The following reflections are the result of approximately thirty educators; Daughters of Mary and Joseph, Josephite priests and our lay collaborators meeting, reflecting and praying in three separate two-hour sessions. Elementary and high school educators were represented in the discussions. Our reflections and discussions are based on "Educational Principles" as proposed by the founder, Constant Van Crombrughe (1789-1865)

A copy of Van Eyck's "adoration of the Lamb," one of Belgium's greatest artistic treasures, is found in the forward of Van Crombrughe's booklet entitled The Christian Teacher. The magnificent treasure was painted for the High Altar of the Cathedral in Ghent. The central theme of the polyptych is the ADORATION OF THE LAMB.

The contemplation of the painting by young Constant, led him to make the Lamb of God the centre piece of his life's work. His motto, like John the Baptist's was "Behold the Lamb of God." Constant asked himself, "How can I bring the Lamb of God to the world?"

Constant gathered together a group of men and women, with eyes intent on the Saviour and on the children of every tongue, nation and race, as well as the people they would lead to the altar of God. Today, his work lives on in the religious congregations of men and women and with lay men and women dedicated to the work of Christian education. The Founder's words are much like the Bible; written many years ago but having the timelessness that makes them relevant today.

THE FOUNDER ON PRAYER

"If you are filled with the spirit of prayer, your teaching will never distract or harden hearts."

Teachers

- Prayer is central to the lives of teachers
- We instill in the lives of students the need for a prayer life that is apart from "obligatory" prayers.
- We educate parents in sacramental preparation to be educators of their children
- We encourage participation in weekly liturgy.
- We recognize that School Administrators are responsible for implementing a Faith Development Programme in the school, for both teachers and students.

FOUNDER ON TRUST, RESPECT AND CONCERN FOR THE POOR

Founder on Trust: “We must listen carefully to students. We are, in a very real sense, the only adult they may be able to talk to.”

Teachers

- The school may be the only stable influence in the life of the student.
- We might be the only person in the child’s life who may look and smell nice. We need to be aware of how we are seen by our students.
- It is important to pray for each student individually
- The Founder wrote to all religious by name; hospitality and courtesy were very important to him.

Founder on Respect: “Always show confidence and children will have confidence in you.”

Teachers

- Respect all aspects of the students’ lives.
- Teachers should be keenly aware of the need for punctuality. The Founder was keen on that. Being on time shows respect for the students; that you value their time.

Founder on Care and Concern for the Poor: His attitude towards the poor was developed by his mother.

Teachers

- At the time of our Founder, the family was being destroyed by elements in society; hence our schools, in effect, supplanted the family that they did not have at home.
- Our Founder wanted the students to feel that they were all part of a family and, since we had a boarding school, the Josephites and the Ladies of Mary were required to live “on site” with the students.
- Our Founder mandated that a school for the poor students co-exist with schools for students of means.
- Today, many schools of means are mandated to have a “sister school” in a poorer area and are asked to build community with the students in addition to supporting them in a variety of ways.
- Family life continues to disintegrate and the teachers’ role, more than any other time in history, is very relevant to the lives of students.

The Founder: mandated that students be educated in a variety of ways, to be aware of the needs of the poor.

Teachers

- In all of the areas in which we minister, schools of means or schools in poor areas, we educate our students to be aware of the needs of the less fortunate; locally, nationally and globally. Our outreach programmes are so numerous that we will name just a few of them here: Holy Childhood, Read-to-Feed, Thanksgiving food drive for St Joseph’s Centre, collection for children/schools in Africa, tutoring a “sister” school, Christmas gift giving for students at a nearby school in need, book collection to benefit three public schools through the “Book Ends” Programme and “Adopt-a-family” programme for the holidays.

The Founder: counsels his teachers to model the following characteristics at all times for their students.

Understanding: “Study the various characters of your students so that you may treat each one according to his/her needs.”

Teachers

- For the 21st century young person, understanding on the part of the teacher is paramount to the life of the student.
- Praise effort more than success.

Guidance: “Few people really know how to give guidance to children because they love them wrongly or too little.”

Teachers

- Guidance follows understanding. In today’s world where there are so many more choices and opportunities, guidance for youth is an essential role for educators.
- Spiritual guidance, moral guidance, psychological guidance.

The Founder on guidance for teachers when counselling students:

“To direct a child’s will successfully, two things are essential to the teacher: respect and affection for the child. Add to these a firmness of character, free from harshness.”

Teachers

- In modern times when substance abuse is very present in the lives of our students, the Founder’s advice on health to teachers is inspiring.
- Health is a great boon in itself and a powerful help in accomplishing all the numerous duties of your vocation. Do not fail to look after yourself in this respect.
- Growth in knowledge and understanding are but facets of the truth itself and should go hand in hand with deepening union with Christ. Whatever changes may come in modes of teaching, subjects taught, the challenges of the future present no fears for those who have accepted the Founder’s “Educational Principles for the Christian Teacher.”

SUMMARY

The following essential elements summarize the discussion.

PRAYER: Emphasis on its importance in our personal lives and instilling the importance of prayer in the lives of students and teachers.

FOUNDER’S WRITINGS: Emphasis on the relevance of these writings for today’s 21st Century teachers. (They are like the Bible for their unending value.)

REPUTATION: Emphasis on the fact that our schools now enjoy the reputation that sees our former students enrolling their children in our schools.

EXAMPLE: Students see us living our faith. They see us interested in the events of their lives.

EDUCATORS: Emphasis on the idea that teachers do not have to be C.J. or DMJ. to follow the Founder’s guidelines.

And taking a child ... He said to them:
 “Whoever receives this child in my name, receives me.
 And whoever receives me, receives Him who sent me.”

Discussion and exchange of views.

Tony Hudson asked if the high proportion of those coming into the school as practising Catholics persisted into the 6th form.

Maureen responded that because of the great care taken initially, for the most part the majority of the families continue to practise their faith, though some of the pupils will have dropped out of church by the time they reach the top of the school. She continued to be amazed at the high degree of commitment of the families. The school worked closely with parishes in their Confirmation programmes. It wasn't just Coloma but there were other strong Catholic schools in the area and consequently a strong local church presence, a phenomenon peculiar to that part of the South East.

Because of their concern not to appear exclusive, the 6th form the school always admitted some who are not Catholic but Muslim or Hindu. This is an important outreach to the local community.

Fr. Aidan felt it was an issue for the Catholic system in England whether to accept only practising Catholics or give those who are not practising, an opportunity of coming into contact with the church.

WORKSHOPS ON MISSION

The afternoon of Wednesday was devoted to workshops which explored the way in which the charism of the Founder was being translated into mission in the Church today.

There were two simultaneous workshops.

1st Workshop Parishes and Retreat Centres.

2nd Workshop. Medical and Social Work.

Each member of the Symposium was invited to attend the workshop of their choice.

WORKSHOP 1. Parishes and Retreat Centres.

27.

Animation points for the workshop on Parishes and Retreat Apostolates.

The focus of this 3rd day of the Symposium is on Mission and how we translate our congregation's charisms and/or spirituality from its origins in our schools to our current apostolate in parishes and retreat houses.

1. How did we end up in parishes/retreat centres?

- Was it a deliberate act of our congregation?
- Were opportunities offered?
- Personal initiative?
- Were confreres/sisters in need of an alternative outlet for their pastoral life?

2. How were such expansion received by the rest of the community?

Positively?

Negatively?

Indifferent?

3. When undertaking these new avenues of apostolate was there a clear discernment of how to do things in the light of the charism/spirituality of our congregation?

4. Is there a discernable way of doing these apostolates which is characteristic of our congregation?

5. Has the development of these apostolic initiatives been mainly the result of the “founding apostle’s” vision or way?

6. Today, how do we think we serve in these apostolates in terms of the spirituality of the Founder / our congregation?

7. Have there been aspects of our congregation’s charism or spirituality which have discovered or re-discovered.?

8. How do our characteristic elements of instruments of mercy, hospitality, douceur, politesse etc. really work in our apostolates? What evidence do we have for this?

9. How are we perceived as people or communities stamped with these characteristics of our congregations?

10. What feed back do we get that affirms our charisms etc.?

11. What feed back do we get that challenges us to follow our charism etc.

12. How do we hand these congregational characteristics in the setting of a parish or a retreat centre?

Aidan Rossiter C.J.
Group Convenor. Emmaus 2005.

28.

Some reflections of a Josephite in a parish.

Aidan Rossiter

I have had three experiences of being a Josephite working with other Josephites and living in a parish.

1 In Santa Barbara living with Fr Ludo de Clippel

2. In Kinson, Bournemouth England. I lived with Fr Paul Connor, Fr William Muir and Fr Benet Woodman

3. Limehouse, London, England where I live on my own and where I am the Parish priest.

Reflecting on these experiences I have the following observations to make.

The way each of these communities lived the religious life of a Josephite was defined by the calls/needs of the apostolates we were involved in.

Living in small presbyteries as opposed to large schools was also a different factor. In the parishes we bump into each other more frequently, in large houses you have more chance of anonymity or escape.

The gentle banter and chit chat of life in a presbytery is part of the community glue.

The need to cook and keep house etc, for ourselves was an important bonding.

The time table was somewhat loose depending on commitments.

Meals together were always important but again apostolates could pull that apart. We maintained the CJ. tradition of praying for deceased confreres at supper.

But is there such a thing as a Josephite way of running a parish or exercising a parish apostolate?

Can the charism of the Founder find a place outside the class room and in a parish context?

I can discern in my own parish experiences which bear the characteristics of the Founder's charism. Characteristics such as politesse, hospitality and douceur and I hope also being an instrument of mercy. One thing that religious priests do not have to get caught up in is diocesan secular clergy politics. There is no jostling for position or for appointments etc. In a way this frees us up to do the job well rather than at times (as I have noticed) being seen to be doing x or y for the sake of the hierarchy of the diocese. This is perhaps a little harsh but there is an element of truth in it.

In my own parish I try to be just as available to the poor man at the door` as I would to a regular committed member of the parish or a local grandee.

I think this idea of availability is a very important way of living out the Founder's charism as he proposed it for schools especially since in schools there is a far more regimentation in terms of daily contacts. Schools have a time table of availability whereas parishes do not. So, the welcome, respect, gentleness and openness we show are alive in my parish life.

I am also introducing slowly various Josephite prayers (To the Sacred Heart, to St Joseph and soon I will introduce the Founder's prayer.)

What is more when other Josephites come to supply for me when I am away they have always been made to feel most welcome. As one parishioner said to me after a confrere had looked after the parish for a short while; "I can see similarities between you."

29.

A reflection on parish ministry. Margaret O'Rourke (California)

Be there for the whole Church.

Be there as a pardoned sinner who has found peace (Van Crombrugghe)

Parishes have existed for centuries but it was during and after the Second Vatican Council that the Parish really became the hub of mission and vision of the Church. It is in the parish that the mission of the Church is carried out.... "Go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them all I have commanded you. I am with you always until the end of the world" (Matthew 28: 18-20.) This is basically the Church's Mission Statement. To form a community is what parish is all about just as the Apostles did after the Ascension of Jesus.

Our Founder did not write much about parish ministry per se. However there are many themes that permeate his letters and discourses... joy, confidence, simplicity and his constant stress on “being instruments of mercy.” All of these are qualities and virtues which are constantly part of our daily lives wherever we find ourselves in ministry. In his allocution to us on THE DIVERSITY OF TALENTS he cautions us *“to devote ourselves to the cultivation of those talents which God has given to us and use them for the good of the Church according to our particular position.”* In parish ministry I am called every day to be compassionate, joyful and generous.

A huge area of Parish life since Vatican II is the area of SOCIAL JUSTICE. It is about changing our society, our world and ourselves so that the dignity of each human being as a child of God is honoured. We must work for that dignity in all areas of our lives. I am the Social Justice Coordinator in my parish with special emphasis on taking care of the poor in the area. I have been in parish ministry most of my life but in the very small area of the parish school. Now, I am closer to the people. I see them in their lives of struggle, joy and sorrow.

At the March 1977 provincial chapter in California we declared:

“We welcome the benefits of a simple way of being – especially given the consumerism, violence and waste in our country. We will not fear sharing our vision, mission, values and our authentic and ever-deepening spirituality with others. We will allow the joy that emanates from our relationship with Christ and each other to permeate the milieu in which we live and minister.”

And in our General Chapter of the same year we stated.

“We live in a world that is characterized by a spiritual void. .. We ourselves are not divorced from this reality .. We need to allow the presence of God to break open anew our own lives, in the life of our communities and in the world.”

Further on in that document we said:

“The world is characterized by masses of people to whom society says “There is no room for you here,” persons who are not allowed to claim their rightful place in society, those who are displaced and not welcome. We are called to make room in our hearts for each person and to address our individual and corporate biases and prejudices. In this way we live more fully of charism of compassion, becoming women of welcome, embrace and hospitality.”

It was to this climate of hope and solidarity that I returned from my long African safari in 1997. I was no longer able to return to my ministry of class room teaching. So I began looking around for a ministry that would suit me in these years of declining energy. My provincial put a flyer in my mail box about a parish which was looking for a parish sister. I took the flyer to her and said, “I know nothing about parish ministry.” He reply was, “You’ll learn.” I did!

The flyer also said that the Pastor would not be able to pay a full salary but he would give a stipend and supply a car. Since as a province we had made a commitment to be with those “to whom society says there is no room,” the provincial team accepted this. I went for an interview and was accepted **“to take care of the poor of the parish.”** So I was missioned to St Athanasius Parish in North Long Beach. The Pastor told me that what was most needed in the parish was a Food Pantry I had no idea what this was. We always took care of the poor when they came to our doors from our own pantry shelves. I thought it would be something of the same. At about this time another flyer

came across my desk ... there would be a FOOD SECURITY workshop at Loyola University in a few days. I signed up for this and my learning and involvement in the whole area of Food Security began. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that people would be hungry in the richest state in the richest country in the world. **There is a lot of hunger in America.** Not only is this an aberration, it is sinful.

However, there are wonderful people in America who work tirelessly so that children do not go to bed hungry or that seniors do not have to make a choice between eating and buying their medicines. There is a national organization called SECOND HARVEST. This is a biblically based idea of “gleaning”, with the understanding that there is always enough for everybody if we share. All across America this organization collects food from supermarkets and farmers and makes it available to FOOD BANKS. Even the government helps out with food from “the milk lakes, the butter mountains, the cheese hills etc.” All it takes to make this work is committed people, hundreds of thousands of volunteers and the willingness to go the extra mile. I have over 700 households registered – most are families but I do have over 100 senior households ... retired people on fixed income who cannot live healthily without a couple of trips to the Food Pantry every month. I go to the Food Bank every Wednesday and bring home between a ton and a ton and a half of food. This is all I have room for in my pantry space, which is one half of the church’s sacristy. It was a very big sacristy and the pantry space used to be used as a bride’s room in the days when St Athanasius was a booming parish.

St Athanasius parish caters mainly to Hispanic immigrants. These people come from Mexico mostly, either by slipping across the border at the dead of night, or swimming the Rio Grande River, or walking for days in the desert, or paying huge sums of money to some of their own compatriots to get them safely across. These latter are called “coyotes”. These immigrants come with just what they have on their backs and are not loved by the Anglo Americans they move next to. They live in over crowded apartments where the rentals are very high. Sometimes as many as five adults and ten children live in a two-room apartment. They are willing to do the meanest of work for the minimum wage on which they cannot live a decent life. They do the work the Anglo community is not willing to do. (There is a documentary about this work which points out that California could not keep going if all the Hispanic community left.) They live in fear of being found and deported back to Mexico. Their only crime is trying to find a better home for themselves and their children and their extended family back home. The government is forever trying to pass laws to limit the amount of help they can receive either from health services or the educational establishment. So those of us in this kind of ministry have to get involved in lobbying and advocacy to try to maintain some kind of humanity in their lives. I work closely with our Catholic lobbies in Sacramento, the State capital, and Washington, D.C.

Since I work with poor undocumented immigrants who have very few rights or privileges I have a network of parishes which help me at Christmas with gifts for the families and the seniors. St John Fisher Parish Seniors take care of some of my seniors, so does St Paul the Apostle and St Mark’s in San Diego. St John Fisher Parish and St James the Less help with families. I add a parish or two to my network each year ... and I find that the gifters are as happy as the giftees.

This is basically my work ... but of course there is a whole series of other ministries going on simultaneously around me. There is a Catholic school run by another group of sisters, a huge religious education programme for over 1,100 public school children, a RCIA programme, a liturgy committee, a financial committee, a Filipino association and a Hispanic association. These latter help keep the parish in good financial running order as well as giving these cultural groups a chance to socialize and celebrate.

I am very happy to be able to help in this way at this time of life and I hope the Lord continues to look kindly on me so that I can continue for a few more years. And I am sure that if our Founder was around today and in his senior years he would be very involved in this kind of ministry. To borrow a phrase from Joan Chittester's book *Where I stand*, the whole Food Pantry ministry seems to be run by senior volunteers and it is a very rewarding ministry.

I did not do a big discernment when I was looking for work when I returned from Africa. The most important thing was to have a ministry that I would be able to do given my hearing problems. I remember when we were researching and studying our Charism Bernadette Lecluyse once said to us "*You did not come to the Daughters of Mary and Joseph because of their Charism ... you came because you already had the Charism ... and you found a congregation that matched it.*" This was the one idea of Charism that I really caught on to! Our Founder calls us "to be flexible instruments of the mercy of God." Unconsciously, I think, we choose what is in line with our Charism and what our Founder has called us to be!

30.
Retreat ministry.
Peg Rahilly

*"Be there for the whole Church,
Be there as a pardoned sinner who has found peace."* C.Van Crombrughe

INTRODUCTION

When reflecting on Retreat Ministry, I wondered when and where Retreat Ministry had its origins?

I wondered if perhaps the Garden of Eden was the first, original and ideal one?

Or perhaps the potter's house as we read in Jer. 18.1-12.

Or in New Testament times, Nazareth, Bethany, on a mountain top, by a lakeside, by a well, to mention but a few possibilities.

The Scripture passage that comes to my mind and speaks about retreat ministry is the short, simple yet very meaningful invitation from Jesus himself found in Mark 6.31

"Come apart and rest a while."

PEACE IN CHRIST RETREAT HOUSE

BEGINNINGS OF RETREAT MINISTRY IN IRELAND

The sixties was a time when people were enthusiastic and looking at new ways to answer Pope John XXIII's invitation to "*Open the Church's windows to let in a breath of fresh air.*"

And so, in 1967, due to the inspiration and vision of the later Bishop Peter Birch, Peace in Christ Retreat House in the diocese of Ossory, came into being. It was unique at that time in that it was the very first Diocesan Retreat House to be opened in Ireland. Since then only one other Diocesan Retreat House has been opened in the Country and that is in my own native Diocese of Kerry. It has taken its inspiration from Peace in Christ.

Peace in Christ was unique too as some of the Founding Members from the Daughters of Mary and Joseph came from England to join some sisters in Ireland to give Peace in Christ a solid foundation. It is also worth noting that our sisters in England shared their financial resources to help build Peace in Christ Retreat House. For this the people who experience the peace of “Peace in Christ” are deeply grateful.

Describing Peace in Christ in 1967 Bishop Birch said:

“Here people can come for a few days of recollection, prayer and counselling, for unhurried Mass and for conversations about problems. It RENEWS them in a real sense. We insist on comfortable and pleasant surroundings and good food, cheerful and quiet, and sharing of prayer and religious experience.”

Situated on the banks of the River Nore, Peace in Christ has been a Diocesan House of Prayer for over 37 years. While only a mile from the centre of bustling City of Kilkenny, it offers a haven of tranquillity, hospitality and is a “Diocesan Oasis”

Our Founder urged us to “Be there for the whole Church” and in article 34 of our Constitutions we read:

As Daughters of Mary and Joseph we share with Christ in his mission of incarnating the merciful love of God in the world. It is in the Local Church in whose life we are immersed that we incarnate this mission most visibly.”

From the foundation of Peace in Christ Retreat House, the daughters of Mary and Joseph have been there “for the whole Church” through the retreat ministry in the Local Church in the Diocese of Ossory. In our day it is here that we try to incarnate the mission of Christ most visibly. We are mindful too of the call from the General Chapter in Kilkenny in 2001 that: “We keep in mind that everything we undertake is in order to participate more fully in the MISSION OF CHRIST TODAY.”

PRESENT REALITY: RETREAT MINISTRY TEAM

The Retreat Ministry Team is composed of :

- A core group of 3 Daughters of Mary and Joseph with a 4th on the Confirmation Retreat Team
- A lay person who is actively involved in the core group sharing some in put and adding immensely to the building of “Sacred Spaces”
- Some priests of the Diocese who are actively involved in the Retreat House Programmes and give generously of their time and expertise.
- A group of faithful and committed Promoters mostly lay men and women who take responsibility for promoting the work of Peace in Christ in their Parishes.
- An Extended Team composed of Priests, Lay People and three DMJ’s who help with visioning, future planning and see the emerging needs of people.

- Three members of a catering and cleaning staff who prepare meals and clean the house to make it a place of friendship and welcome.
- A faithful group of local lay people who, on a voluntary basis, look after the rooms and laundry

Today, the Retreat Ministry continues to offer opportunities to the people of the Diocese and beyond to “come apart and rest a while,” to experience hospitality, peace and personal space in a creative and relaxed atmosphere. Experiences which foster enrichment in faith and Christian living are provided through a wide range of retreats:

Day, Weekend and Evening
 Specific Groups and Liturgical seasons
 Confirmation
 Parish Evenings
 Longer retreats
 Reflective Evenings during Lent and Advent.

DAY RETREATS

The Day Retreats usually take place around the Liturgical seasons of Lent and Advent. People are invited to take time to reflect on a chosen theme, through Ritual and Story. In recent years the Creative element of any retreat has become very popular.

For those who come, normally around 60 people, the day moves on in different spaces.

- A space for welcome
- A space for input
- A space for ritual
- A space to pray in the chapel or one of the many sacred spaces around the house
- A space to breathe in God’s fresh air while walking in the grounds
- A space to drink a cup of tea and share a meal
- A space for the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- And usually during the day, for all of us, an integrated Eucharist, a space of nourishment and encouragement for our journey in faith.

WEEKEND RETREATS

Our retreat ministry involves many weekend retreats, ranging from charismatic, AI-Anon. Weekends for Women and Men. Sometimes they just long for some quiet space where they can get away from the hustle and bustle of our noisy world. Sometimes they are waiting to be listened to or to share a problem with the Director or a Team Member. For those on retreat concerns and responsibilities are not forgotten, but for awhile, a space is created where people can be reminded once again that God is there for each one. St Ignatius believed passionately in a God who is there in the midst of our day to day, real and courageous lives, and this too for those we love, for our world with all its challenges. As our own Poet Patrick Kavanagh puts it “God is found in the bits and pieces of every day.”

On other weekends, the Retreat Ministry caters for groups such as:

- Grow: An organisation working with people with psychiatric disorders, the Poor of Yahweh in need of some tender loving care, sharing in a compassionate and loving way as people journey through serious illness.
- Cura: An organisation taking care of people in crisis pregnancies.

Rainbows: An organisation dealing with young people who are experiencing Loss of any kind, be it family break down, a family death, suicide, trauma of any kind.

Some weekends are booked by different groups of Religious who like to have their Province or region Meetings here.

The Retreat Ministry sometimes involves welcoming for a weekend the Daughters of Mary and Joseph who come to pray, to share and to reflect on some aspect of Mission, to prepare for Chapter, or to reflect on and to plan for Regional affairs. Sometimes too to celebrate in true DMJ style and give thanks for the journeys of Jubilarians!

EVENING EVENTS

The Retreat Ministry caters for evening events when people from 33 out of 42 parishes in the Diocese come in on a Monday and Tuesday evenings, September to June. It is an opportunity for busy people to come into a reflective space in their lives.

We welcome groups ranging from 25 to 40. The age profile is almost always on the plus side of 50. We feel that the Retreat Ministry, not only ministers to those who physically come to Peace in Christ, but it also reaches through them, to others in their lives, e.g. parents to their children and grandchildren, to the Parish Community and the World.

A theme from Scripture is chosen for these evenings of Prayer and Reflection. The people are invited and welcomed into a Sacred Space depicting the theme for the evening.

The format for the evening is perhaps described as one “unhurried” celebration of the Mass, with an opportunity for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Two DMJ.s and a Diocesan Priest animate these evenings, which take place within the framework of two hours. These Evenings of prayer and reflection have changed radically over the years. The present format is certainly attracting younger people and all appreciate finishing by 11.00pm. After sharing Eucharist, a cup of tea and sandwiches are served to add to the social side of life and give people some time to catch up on happenings in the Parish and talk over such important events as hurling in Kilkenny.

CONFIRMATION RETREATS

Our Retreat Ministry also brings us into the world of 10 to 12 years olds. This ministry is demanding, challenging, enriching and rewarding. Pupils come from 5th and 6th classes in the different primary schools in the Diocese and beyond who are preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation for a day of retreat. They are young, enthusiastic, full of life and loveable.

At that age they share honestly and easily. We notice in them:

- A great desire God as experienced through meditation.
- A great desire to be listened to
- A great desire to be taken seriously
- A great desire to be accepted.

The Confirmation Retreat aims to give candidates a personal experience of the wonder and power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. This is done through Group work:

- Meditation
- Exploring the gifts of the Holy Spirit in everyday life
- Creative preparation for the Liturgy.

The day's retreat seems to be a memorable and essential preparation for the Confirmation candidate. There is contact and exchange with younger people and the Retreat Ministry. These retreats take place, as far as possible, on Wednesdays and Thursdays, January to May. It is also the time for the candidates to meet the Bishop and chat with him before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

SIX DAY RETREATS: NATIONAL LEVEL.

The Retreat Ministry for these days includes:

- Input
- Reflection
- Creative Ritual
- One to one direction
- Creative Sacred Spaces as part of Retreat Ministry, which are conducive to prayer and reflection.

It is a powerful experience for all concerned.

This retreat is conducted in prayerful silence during the day and at meals when some quiet music helps to foster a reflective atmosphere/

The Advent weekend (three days) takes on the same pattern with of course emphasis on one or other aspect of the Liturgical Season. People are invited to enter the Mystery of the Christmas story through ritual and prayer. This is a very popular weekend for both Laity and Religious.

CREATIVE EVENINGS

Another part of the Retreat Ministry is organising and setting up Evenings of Prayer and reflection during the seasons of Lent and Advent, where again, people are invited to enter the Mystery of the Christmas and Easter stories through Ritual and Prayer. Many relevant Sacred Spaces are set up throughout the house where people can just sit and reflect, ponder and be refreshed and renewed. We offer not only a space to rest, but also a space in which God is really the One who welcomes, the one who is the real Guide of the days and evenings spent here.

Each Wednesday afternoon we welcome a John Maine Prayer Group.

Our retreat ministry involves a little bit of Ecumenism. Once a month we welcome a group of men and women Clergy from the Church of Ireland who come for prayer meetings to reflect and plan for the direction the Church of Ireland needs to take in the future.

Once a year we welcome teachers from Primary Schools for In-Service days. The teachers are helped to deepen their own faith so that they will be better equipped to communicate the riches of the Christian tradition with increased conviction and confidence.

Retreat Ministry serves the needs of all classes of people in the Diocese and beyond. Priests, Religious, Laity, young and old, healthy and sick, rich and poor, all nationalities and different cultures are welcome to Peace in Christ.

Retreat Ministry is both a giving and receiving. We are always conscious that we are "pardoned sinners" invited to participate in the unfolding reign of God among us. We are conscious too that we who minister are enriched as people share something of their stories, something of the courageous lives they have lived and live in both happy and sad times.

While in our Retreat Ministry we experience limited resources, the space is somewhat sparse. It is a much simpler building than Emmaus and Palos Verdes, yet over the years it has been maintained beautifully and if the walls could speak, there would be no need to give a report on Retreat Ministry.

Our Financial Resources are stretched, but again, a little is made successfully to go a long way. Retreat Ministry can be hectic in the areas of shopping, catering, cleaning, administration, planning, buildings and light bulbs, meetings and answering the phone, enquiries and applications – all the behind the scenes, invisible but necessary work that goes into ensuring that for those who come here on retreat, it is a place of hospitality and welcome.

Retreat Ministry takes into account the stressful times we are living in. There is so much noise, anxiety, brokenness, pressures of one kind or another, personal and family expectations weighing people down, people are hungry.

Our General Chapter of 1997 reminds us that:

“We live in a world that is characterized by a spiritual void. In our world attention to what is good and true and beautiful, attention to the transcendent is often missing. Some describe this as a famine, experienced by people in every society, a deep desire for meaning in life, a hunger to make sense out of our human experience.”

Yes, the “Multitudes” come in and through our Retreat Ministry we try to “feed” them.

THE FUTURE:

While the reality of the continued presence of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph poses a question for the future, I personally feel that some DMJ. Presence will be seen here for the foreseeable future.

CONCLUSION:

As the 40th anniversary of Peace in Christ Retreat House Ministry approaches (2007), we look forward to “being there for the whole Church,” to being of service to all who are “thirsty” in one way or another. We live in an age of global uncertainty at a time of war and famine.

In Ireland we are living through difficult times as the Church is experiencing the fall out from the sex abuse and clerical scandals of the past decade or so. We need the Light of the Spirit to remain hopeful, to take risks and face the challenges of the 21st century squarely, mindful that

“Our Founder experienced God as all-merciful, all compassionate, he calls us to reflect in our own lives the merciful love of God, centred on the heart of Christ.”

Constitutions No 2

Challenged and inspired by this call and sensitive to the needs of the world today, at this time:

We pray and reflect

We keep alert, we keep listening

We keep discerning the signs of the times

We look at the needs of people

And the Retreat Ministry will be there to facilitate in some way for our people, a direct encounter with Jesus Christ in the Gospels – Jesus Christ who calls each one of us to share uniquely in His Mission of love, mercy and justice in the world. As long as we can respond in some way to the hunger in the hearts of people, the Retreat Ministry will continue and the doors of Peace in Christ will remain open, mindful that “The Mission of Christ is where we are”. The E.C.G 03.

*“May the Peace of Jesus Christ,
that gentle and powerful peace
which surpasses all good,
always enlightens our minds
and direct our love. C.V.C.*

31.

Retreat Ministry. Massage.

Renee Bauerly

(Renee presented her paper during a plenary session. However her subject matter has its rightful place with the reflections offered on Retreat Ministry)

I am Sr Renee Bauerly and I am a massage therapist at the Mary and Joseph Retreat Centre in Palos Verdes, California. Today I look forward to sharing with you, what some may consider an unusual ministry.

Those of us in the Retreat Centre share in a holistic attitude towards the service we provide. We are attending to the mind, body and spirit of the retreatants. This is in tune with the attitude of our Founder who, as an educator, was concerned with the development of the whole person.

The retreat experience becomes a sacred space in time where the individual can be connected with himself/herself, God, creation and others. I create a sacred space in my massage studio at the Retreat Centre for those who want to move ahead in their spiritual journey.

How is what I am doing in massage ministry related to the charisma that Constant van Crombrugghe has given us? He encouraged adaptability to the times. Today in America and more specifically Los Angeles, we live in an over stimulated society. For all the good that modern technology is bringing us we are learning that if the stress is not addressed we become ill. Four popular non invasive antidotes to stress are: *meditation, massage, exercise* and *play*.

Let me describe a little of what massage is about, from the perspective of healing touch and how we can alter our sense of well being.

Touch is a basic need of all human beings. By manipulating the fascia muscles of the body in a therapeutic way, the tissue is able to release toxins and be revived by an increase of oxygen into the tissue. Likewise, when pain is relieved and tight muscles released, the energy of the body is able to come back into balance.

Our bodies have everything they need to take care of themselves. Stress is one of the main causes for illness and if allowed to get out of balance we can experience pain. When pain becomes chronic, we have “dis-ease.” This can lead to a pathology or a more severe illness.

Massage is a preventative means to keep us healthy. This therapy can give temporary relief for those who are ill or it can accelerate healing. There are *physical, psychological, emotional* and *spiritual* facets to massage. I felt the shortest way to share these aspects with you, was to create a few scenarios that I encounter with clients.

First scenario:

Sarah – 12 step Recovery

At the Retreat Centre we have a large clientele, who through the 12 step programmes, like alcoholics anonymous and alanon are on the journey of recovery. There are retreats for men, women and couples who are in these programmes.

When individuals come for massage they fill out a preliminary form.

Sarah is 52 years old and her reason for coming for massage is relaxation and because it feels good.

With recovering alcoholics or substance abuse, what has happened is they have become detached from their bodies because of the disease of addiction. Through massage they are able to come to body awareness and as a result have the experience of wellness. Release is an important concept in the programme, “letting go and letting God,” and when this happens physically it supports the spiritual as well.

Body tissue has memory and the massage can help bring the client to an awareness of a previous experience that needs to be addressed.

One truth to remember is that “your body never lies.”

Second Scenario:

Stressed Weekend Retreatant

Peter arrives for a weekend of spiritual renewal. He sees massage is offered. He knows the benefits of massage and asks immediately if it is possible to have a massage before the opening session begins.

Peter is the head of a large corporation and has had to negotiate a lot of business to get free for the weekend. He arrives tired and weary from the traffic and his shoulder and neck are sore from hours at the computer. His complaint is fatigue, tightness in his neck, shoulders and lower back. During the massage he is able to get release from the tension.

Because of the relaxation, his mind is able to enter an altered state. An hour massage can be equivalent to four hours of sleep.

Peter will be more receptive to new information and more willing to enter into his own centre for prayer. There is openness, because the energy of his body is free to flow. The body knows when it has been cared for and he feels ready to pursue something new.

Very often and especially with men, they arrive at an altered state of being during a massage, so much so, that they begin snoring.

I told a female client that it was O.K. if she fell asleep during the massage. Her response was “No way! This is too good to be missed.” To be touched in a caring and healing way is so relieving that she did not want to miss the experience.

It is important that we reflect and learn from moments of relaxation, as well as pain.

Christ did not inflict suffering on us. Suffering and pain are part of the human condition. What Christ was saying is that we love and be of service, which can bring its own pain.

Third Scenario:

Hilda – The Widow with Arthritis

I see clients on a regular basis at my massage studio. Hilda is one of my widows that come regularly for massage. Her husband died a year ago and her children live some distance away. She has suffered from arthritis in her hands and hips and more recently developed heart problems.

We are able to reduce blood pressure, so she does not have to take medication. Massage does not cure arthritis, but there is a healing going on. By decreasing the inflammation there is less pain and Hilda is better able to cope with the discomfort.

As she grows in the experience of being cared for, she begins to take better care of herself. Her posture begins to change; she begins to feel better about herself. She makes social arrangements with friends and begins to create a life for herself.

Touch is so important during the grieving process of a husband or wife. The individual feels they are being cared for and realize that they are precious. In the post Vatican II era we have moved from a Jansenistic attitude, to an appreciation of the body as sacred.

In closing remember:

Our bodies are the vehicle that allows us to carry out our mission and dreams and it needs to be cared for.

Through the incarnation Christ came to share himself and his mission.
We are called to incarnate with Christ the mission of restoring all creation and people back to God.

It is with gratitude that I find myself working in the Healing Arts.

Thank you for the occasion to share.

REPORTING BACK

1st Workshop.

3 talks were given, 2 about parish ministry and 1 about retreat ministry. Initially, after Vatican II, when individuals began to move out from the teaching ministry into nursing or social work etc., there was a negative reaction on the part of some communities, and a general feeling of being 'second-class citizens'. Later, when the 'preferential option for the poor' was proclaimed by the church, this situation was reversed and the teachers became second-class citizens.

It was clear that our charism easily transferred to parish work. The experience of living in community pre-disposed us to collaborative ministry. Our way of working in retreat and parish ministry was influenced by the two aspects which can be summed up in the 'whole person approach' and 'to be at the service of the whole church'.

WORKSHOP 2. Medical and Social work

IN THIS WORKSHOP THERE WERE 5 REPORTS ON:

HOMELESSNESS

Mary Hicky D.M.J.

LIVING THE CHARISM IOF HEALTHCARE

Nora T McCarthy D.M.J.

WELCOMING CENTRES

Dolores Arrieta D.M.J.

IMMIGRANTS

Joan Roddy D.M.J.

LIVING THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FOUNDER IN MINISTRY

Catherine McShane D.M.J.

32.

Homelessness

Mary Hickey

Text of a power point presentation.

**** In the mid 1980's**, and old redundant convent in central London was bought by the late Cardinal Basil Hume to realise his dream of helping young men and women at risk. At this time, after 15 very happy years working in England and also in Africa as a gynaecologist, and having joined the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, I was drawn to work more closely with the poor and marginalized in England. General practice offered the ideal gateway to fulfil this mission and to live more deeply my religious calling, serving Christ in a ministry of healing. With the backing of the Health Authority and the blessing of the Province, I opened the surgery in 1987 in the Cardinal Hume Centre to provide full-time medical care for the homeless people

**** Homelessness** is one of the greatest challenges facing our society today. It is difficult to convey the extent and severity of this evil to those who do not have personal experience of working with homeless people. One representative statistic is that the average age of death is 42, and for intravenous drug users it is 34 years. If they were a country, rather than an underclass, they would be the poorest country in the world. Some of the neediest people in our world live halfway between the palaces of Buckingham and Westminster.

**** Accommodation.** Many sleep in cardboard boxes or bin-liners, in doorways or parks. Others stay in crowded hostels or substandard hotels. Some find shelter only at night, or have friends who let them stay occasionally.

A few have their own flat but cannot get on a Doctor's list, usually because they are violent or addicts.

**** Initially** there were many families with children, Travellers, refugees and Asian immigrants, as well as the indigenous homeless population. Over the past 18 years numbers have risen steadily and the practice profile has changed radically. It is now a wholly adult clientele. Most are British with mental health and addictions as the main presenting problems, but with continuing influx of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as immigrants mostly from EU countries. Children are no longer accepted because the environment is too dangerous.

**** Each one comes** with their unique personal story, failure, loss, injustice, guilt, sorrow and usually hopelessness. They carry heavy burdens, physical, mental and social. Treatment and management are tailored, as far as possible, to meet the needs and pace of each person. There are no blueprints, no neat solutions.

**** Staff.** The staff of 14 includes doctor, practice nurse, receptionists, drug and alcohol counsellors, psychiatric nurse and general counsellors.

I am about to enter in to partnership with another doctor so I can expand the services for addition and do more outreach work.

****MAIN FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HOMELESSNESS**

1. Chronic severe mental illness
2. Alcohol abuse
3. Drug abuse
4. Family breakdown
5. Unemployment
6. Refugees and informal migrants especially from Africa
7. Migrants from other countries
8. Current government policy and public opinion

Government policy is hostile to benefit claimants in general and asylum seekers in particular. The people most affected and quickly marginalized from these shrinking services are those with the most needs, the least personal resources and the greatest obstacles to accessing care – that is the homelessness.

The effects of changes in the benefit system will make larger numbers of people destitute, homeless and driven to crime, and sharply exacerbate the current crisis.

Adequate access to health care is one if their most pressing needs and registration with a GP is the cornerstone of health services in this country and the gateway to all secondary care.

**** FACTORS PREVENTING REGISTRATION**

1. National shortage of GP's especially in poor inner city areas
2. Financial disincentive for doctors
3. High level of violence and disruptive behaviour
4. Longer consultation times (complex needs and language problems)
5. Hygiene – aromatically challenged / infections + lice, scabies etc
6. Difficulty tracing because of several aliases

7. Failure to keep appointments
8. Perception as difficult, dangerous, devious, demanding, disruptive.

**** England provides** a very high standard of health care. We obtain our pills, patches and creams or hospital care with relative ease. Society even feels that face lifts, Botox injections and reconfiguration of our breasts and buttocks are equally necessary for health and happiness. But the homeless struggle to get basic medical care and attention.

**** MENTAL ILLNESS**

1. Almost 50% have a serious mental health problem and is the most frequent problem
2. Many have no insight into their illness, resist or stop treatment and are likely to be long term homeless on the streets.
3. There is a high incidence of self-harm, suicide and accidental death.

**** SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

- Drug and alcohol addiction is high and rising
- The slide shows the most commonly used drugs
- London is awash with drugs, especially heroin and crack cocaine
- Most addicts inject and frequently mix drugs for enhanced effect
- Drugs and alcohol may precipitate or aggravate mental illness
- Shortage of inpatient detoxification and rehabilitation centres which may not accept the mentally ill or violent.

**** CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS**

GREATLY INCREASED RISK OF:

- Infections especially Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, viral Hepatitis and sexually transmitted diseases.
- heart , lung and liver disease
- cancer – lung throat and stomach
- use of institutional services (psychiatric unity, hospitals)
- contact with criminal justice system due to crime, violence, anti-social behaviour
- early death

| ** DEATHS in ENGLAND | YEAR | AVERAGE AGE |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| General population | 1800 | 50 |
| | 1900 | 47 (? WARS) |
| | 2002 | 78 |
| Homeless | 2004 | 42 |
| Intravenous drug users | 2004 | 34 |

In my practice :

Average age of death of IV drug users is 32 years
 One patient dies every 4 weeks at least
 Many die suddenly and alone.

The sociologist R.H.Tawney wrote that nothing reveals the true character of society and its underlying philosophy more clearly than the way in which it treats those who have fallen by the way.

I have mentioned several sinister viruses. But there are also the viruses of greed, wealth, power, indifference and national egoism which are equally debilitating, diminishing, destructive and deadly for the homeless.

But we are not the powerful and perfect helping the weak and fallen. Awareness of our own limitations, prejudices and frailty, enables us to suffer with them and help them and us to health and wholeness.

Progress can be painfully slow. We hope for great things but have learned to appreciate small steps forward and not to be discouraged by set backs.

Sometimes we may see a patient once only, but in that time we try to sow the seed of love and hope, remembering that the sees never sees the flower.

33.

Living the charism in healthcare and ministry.

Nora McCarthy

“The Founder has passed on to the religious of his congregation his experience of God as all-Merciful and all-Compassionate. Thus they are called to reflect the mercy of God to others through their lives. They allow themselves to be used in His hands in whatever way He chooses.”

T.Clements D.M.J. Instruments of Mercy. P. 145.

In my work as placement co-ordinator and facilitator for students in pastoral care in hospital ministry, the above quote from “Instruments of Mercy” speaks to the very heart of what I attempt to do in this role at this time. In my previous ministry as a Nurse, as an educator and as an administrator I was forever conscious of the need to address the spiritual in patients, as well as educating and facilitating others to this essential need and to try and create a climate where it is possible to address it.

Now in my present role, which is an extension of what I did previously, highlights for me also the varied ways that this compassion, which is written into the constitutions, can be brought into today’s world in many adaptable forms and particularly into the healthcare where patients are at their most vulnerable. In this role then working with student Chaplains in the Pastoral Department of Milltown Institute, as part of my brief, I place the students in hospital ministry and with time, guidance, reflections, direction, assessment and supervision they arrive at a stage where they can help to identify what is spiritual and theological in their encounter with the patient, as well as grow in personal awareness of their own human development using their skills of listening, compassion, presence and communication in whatever way the spirit moves them to be used.

Mentoring this group of approximately 8 students, who vary in age from 19 to 45, who may be religious or lay, male or female, and from different cultural backgrounds, entails primarily creating a safe and sacred place where differences are probed and respected, where a sense of the sacredness of human life is developed and experienced. It also involves exposing them to a holistic approach to compassion as one of the pastoral skills they try to develop. Learning to be compassionate as we all know is a life long work; all human beings have the potential to be compassionate. Compassion is our kinship with God, with the people and with the cosmos He created; it is the action we take

because of that kinship. It is the awareness of togetherness that urges us to rejoice at one another's joy (celebration) and to grieve at one another's sorrow. Compassion is a flow in our walking in justice and even an overflow. Luke says "Be compassionate as your Heavenly Father is compassionate." Expressed in another way we would say "Be like Him as He is gracious and merciful." When we are living graciously and mercifully, compassion then becomes the fullest experience of our spiritual lives.

How then may you ask do I get any insight into the growth of compassion in this group of students?

There are two tools that I use as a type of facilitative process. In the first semester each student has to present a verbatim of their encounter with a particular patient and I facilitate the reflection. As a general rule I always receive a copy of the verbatim in advance so that I can have an opportunity to familiarise myself on what needs to be challenged/questioned or clarified.

The session which lasts for ninety minutes begins with a ten minute reflection prepared by the students in which may be a piece of Scripture, prose, poetry and they may also use music or symbols to enhance the reflective experience. This relaxing introduction eases us all into the process and helps to increase the self-awareness and sensitivity of the individuals within the group.

The pastoral reflection proper follows on and the student presenting, will role play the encounter with the help of other students, so that they can fully enter this process and avail of the learning and the value of the reflection. Each student presenting is expected to analyse their own encounter and to share what they felt were the strengths and weaknesses of their performance and to have the capacity to reflect theologically as well as pastorally, so that they can draw from this experience the truths which emerge in the light of the Gospel and that they will grow in awareness of who they are as hospital chaplains. This sharing, inter-action and supervision always takes place in a confidential and safe space.

In the second semester the student relates another experience, it is named as a critical incident. I tell the students that whatever distracts them on the way home from their healthcare ministry is grist for the mill of critical incidents. If they find themselves going over and over some incident or reviewing a conversation frequently, there is usually something significant at issue. A critical incident may be one that stands out in their mind that elicited strong feelings and emotions, one that concerned an issue important enough for the student. This incident is then brought to the pastoral reflection group in much the same manner as a verbatim with very strong emphasis on their own personal learning.

Each student meets with me on four occasions during the academic year. This enables them to raise issues concerning the clarity of their role as student chaplains, concern about faith issues, concern about issues of death and dying, pain and loss as well as issues around sexuality. Twice in the academic year I visit students in their placement and with the supervision as well of the field supervisor they draw up their achievable goals for the year in the first semester and in the second semester on my return visit we evaluate how they achieved them and how realistic they were.

During the whole process of this hospital ministry a key activity that I emphasize is reflection on the experience. I am convinced that learning from reflection on the experience in this manner is the way in which learning takes place rather than the experience itself, it can also be hugely transformative for the student chaplain in this context. Reflection leads to self-awareness and self-awareness is strength of one's soul.

Ronal Rollheiser (with whom many of you are familiar) shares a little story about students and compassion. He tells us about when he was acting Dean at a theological college. He received a phone call from one of the local parish priests. The conversation went something like this:

“Are you Dean of theology at the College?”

“Well, I am filling in for the Dean who is on sabbatical.”

“God your students are a pain in the ... They take a couple of courses and come back and terrorize the parish. Nothing is ever right for them. They roll their eyes at everything; how we do liturgy, my preaching, the parish’s priorities, our ecclesiology in general. Don’t you teach them anything about compassion?”

This short incident resonated with me, as I feel it is a huge challenge to try to guide the students on way of compassion. As student chaplains they bring a quality of presence which is caring and above all compassion, unlike most other health care workers who bring one form of therapy or skill.

I like to think and believe that orientating students through the route of compassion helps their own self growth. Rollheiser also reminds us that genuine growth in our lives also leads to a concomitant growth in compassion, respect, gentleness and to be more understanding of what’s in opposition to us.

In time and with time the students feel privileged and humbled to be allowed into that sacred space between the patient and themselves. They rejoice in their ability to pray with the patient, to be present, to empathise, and to share compassion and concern and their gradual growing into a more reflective stance towards life.

In his book “Compassion Caring” Trevor Hudson tells us that “Compassion comes as a grace soaked gift to those who intentionally, consciously and regularly place themselves before God.”

In our Congregation we are privileged to be called to live compassionately and to use it in the service of others. Compassion moves us at the depths of our being and so into works of mercy.

34.

Les foyers d'accueil Welcoming centres

Dolores Arrieta

Origin of the Welcoming Centre.

After the ratification of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the abolition of the exploitation of prostitutes, Belgium adopted an abolitionist policy. Prostitution itself was no longer to be considered a criminal activity but rather the exploitation of prostitutes and soliciting on the streets. This put an end to brothels and to obligatory medical cards. Furthermore the State proposed subsidies in order to encourage organisations who worked for the moral rehabilitation of women who wanted to give up prostitution and those who were in moral danger.

Nelly Verbeke, a social worker who was finishing her studies by looking at the life of women in brothels, came to know in this way something of the lives led by prostitutes in Brussels. For a whole year, together with Aline Henrion, she knocked on every door in an effort to obtain a pleasant house in a good state of repair, with a garden and set apart from the centre of the town but with easy access to public transport.

The Centre opened its doors on the 16th of January 1953. The announcement of its charitable status appeared in the newspaper on the 8th of November 1953.

The aim of the Centre.

The Centre welcomes young girls and young women between the ages of 18 and 33 who are in moral, social and financial difficulty. They come of their own accord for an indefinite period with the intention of being reintegrated into society.

The women who come to the Centre.

The young women who come the Centre have been recommended by local social services, hospitals, the police, other emergency centres and by former members of the centre.

Here are some of the situations they have come from before entering the centre.

- Young women who have had a fairly lengthy stay in a psychiatric institution or visits to one from time to time after being raped or as a result of alcoholism, or to escape from violent parents or because of anorexia.
- Young women who are regular or occasional prostitutes
- Young women having nowhere to live and are staying with a boyfriend or girl.
- Young women who have been thrown out by their parents or husband/partner.
- Young women who cannot cope with the conflict between generations or cultural conflict.
- Young women who have been maltreated by their parent or a husband/partner.
- Young women running away from a forced marriage.
- Young women who have been victims of international trafficking

We have noticed that the young women who come to the Centre are from every social, economic and cultural background. Their parents could be journalists, labourers, diamond merchants, doctors or unemployed. They have a level of education which ranges from unfinished primary schooling to a university education. Some of their families are from deprived areas, others from well to do areas. The group is international. This is an advantage when it comes to learning to know and appreciate those who are different. It helps us to go beyond stereotypes and prejudices so as to be able to live together in a pluralist society.

What they all have in common is a lack of affection and a disturbed family background. Most of them have been victims of sexual abuse during their childhood by a close member of the family.

Conditions of admission.

- They must be young women between 18 and 33 years.
- They must come of their own free will without any pressure being exerted on them by someone else.
- They must want to be reintegrated into society and be willing to play their part in this process.

- They must not have serious personality disorders. If they have personality disorders it is hard to integrate them into a group and the group usually rejects them.
- They must not have psychiatric disorders or be addicted to drugs.

The interview which is carried out before admission enables us to listen to the young woman's personal story, to learn what she expects from us and even sometimes an outline of her plans for the future. We can then explain to her what the Centre is like as well as the rules which organise the life of the house.

The young woman and the team allow themselves as short a time as possible to make a decision. The fact that the young woman has made an appointment and then kept the appointment followed by a decision to stay is often a significant sign of their motivation. We on the other hand are able to come to a decision after reflecting together as a team.

If the process of selection takes place right at the beginning, it is because the aim of our house is not to offer emergency help but to bring about a deep change. Taking into account all the suffering they have been through, it seems to us important to accept these young women on a long term basis and for an indefinite period. This is an important and specific characteristic of our house. We have always believed it to be enormously important to allow each one to take time to rebuild their lives and to work at their social reintegration at their own speed.

Time spent in the Centre will vary from a few weeks to several years. At the moment the average stay is about 18 months.

At the beginning they experience a sense of relief at having found somewhere to live and eat, they are pleased that they have got away from an intolerable situation, they are happy to have been welcomed with gentleness and kindness. Then they start to study us and test us. The young woman starts to take her place in the house and her relationship with us and others starts to develop. Sometimes it takes several months before underlying problems appear on the surface and they are able to put them into words. Their fear of rejection goes very deep. These and other deep seated problems can only be overcome within a relationship which is built on confidence and a willingness to listen, in a place where they have new experiences which are positive and different to their experiences in the past.

Life in the Centre.

A welcoming Centre needs a favourable atmosphere which is made up of a variety of things. Attitudes, the relationships between us which makes us at ease with one another in the house. Even if this atmosphere, this ambiance, is the work of every member of the house, nonetheless, it has to be very much the work of the team who by their own attitudes establish favourable relationships with the young women and with each other. We are always available to listen to them; we take notice of their opinions, their wishes and their complaints about other members of the house and even about us.

Once they have arrived in the house the young women have a chance to get their health back. They are given a structure in their life; getting up in the morning, sharing with us the task of looking after the house, eating together, relaxing, sleeping at night, carrying out administrative tasks like organising their family benefits and their health insurance etc. We try to create an agreeable atmosphere in the house and this gives them a sense of security. We make a special effort to be always ready to listen.

It is not long before we are deciding together what to do about their desire to start some studies. Taking into account the time of year when they arrived and the many opportunities for study and

formation, a programme is gradually worked out. This has certain practical consequences because they need help with their studies and daily support and encouragement.

All these things, adopting a new way of behaving, establishing positive relationships,, regularising their position with the local authorities, getting stable employment, obtaining a suitable professional formation etc all help to break the chain of suffering, marginalisation and social exclusion. These are experiences which help them to rebuild their lives.

The composition and work of the team.

From the beginning of the Centre, we realised just how important it was to employ qualified personnel and we have kept to that. A team is made up of a Directrice and 3 assistants, all 4 are social workers and between them they provide a 24 hour presence in the house.

Each member of the team has a monthly supervision. The team meets for one day every month with an external Moderator and similar meetings are held as soon as it seems necessary. Two members of the team have followed a 3 year course.

In our work we must

- Understand the problems of the young women without becoming personally involved that is to say without projecting on them our problems because that falsifies the relationship.
- Help the women in their powerlessness to take the smallest step but at the same time stimulate them so as to avoid becoming too dependent
- Help the women to create a new world of relationships for themselves.

Our work is based on relationships which is of fundamental importance for us but involves education and teaching in the context of everyday life.

We represent for the young women who live in the centre valuable models of good behaviour. We are people who they can refer to and who they can approach. At the beginning they pass through a period of dependence, an indispensable part of their journey towards autonomy, they also pass through a period of opposition in order to find their own identity.

Listening to them, letting them speak, listening to their moans, valuing the efforts of each one, supporting them in their relationships with a friend or with colleagues at work or with class mates, or with their teacher, with their employer, supporting them in their paper work for local services etc., there you have a whole programme which requires on the part of the team coherence and cohesion.

We are also available for former members of the Centre who visit us to say “hello” or to talk with us, or to join in a celebration or to introduce us to their husband and their children. These visitors are a source of hope for those living in the house.

Relationship with organisations.

A.M.A.- Associations des Maisons d’Accueil. Since its foundation in 1969, the centre has been a member of this organisation. Meetings of the A.M.A. are an opportunity for us to meet with social workers from other houses and to share our day to day experiences. Meetings are organised to study different themes as these help us to understand ourselves better. Discussions on practical matters help with the ongoing formation of members of the team.

F.A.I. Fédération Abolitionniste Internationale. This is a non governmental organisation which fights against the exploitation of prostitutes by others which it considers a violation of human dignity.

The F.A.I. is consulted by UNICEF, UNESCO and the European Commission on the position of women. It is also an observer at OMS and UNHCR.

The F.A.I. organise world wide meeting every 4 years. As we are part of the International Committee we are able to attend congress meetings and other meetings which enable us to widen our understanding of the reality of prostitution and the international trafficking of human beings in other countries. In this way we can establish collaboration at an international level.

After my first profession in 1967 I studied to be a social worker. Once my studies were finished I was employed by a Welcoming Centre as a social assistant and I have lived there with the young women for the last 34 years.

A commitment to follow Jesus Christ.

A commitment which is lived out day by day through my confidence and faith in each of the young women and the conviction that each of them is loved by God in a unique way no matter what they may have done. A commitment which is lived out in the certainty that each of them in the depth of their being has the potential to grow, to stand up and walk through life with dignity.

Taking the risk of devoting my life to following Jesus has always placed me in a situation of uncertainty in my human life and that is why I have to constantly renew and deepen my confidence in Jesus.

All that can be summed up in the Mercy of which our Founder speaks.

A member of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph.

Over the years every provincial and general superior have given me permission to live this special vocation. It has to be said that they have confidence in me. My membership of the Institute has been deepened by this confidence. My work has given me a great deal of personal liberty in terms of life and not just in terms of rules. This is because living with these young women means eating with them and sleeping with them in the same house as they do.

The Belgian Region

My professional career has been possible thanks to the support and understanding shown to me by the sisters of the Belgian region even when it has involved an unusual life style. I have been supported by the prayers of the sisters especially the elderly sisters at Clos. I have not experienced adverse criticism when because of tiredness I have been unable to attend regional meetings. The sisters have shown compassion and goodness towards me. I have always felt their support.

On several occasions The Centre has been helped financially either by the sisters themselves or by the regional government of the time. In that way they have helped The Centre continue to the present time.

35.
Welcoming the stranger. Immigrants.
Joan Roddy

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience... The truth of these words of a well known Palestinian, who died far away from his homeland, makes me hesitate to speak about something of which I have so little experience (Said Edward (200). *Reflections on Exile and other Essays*. Harvard Univ.Press)

But I want you to meet some people who have experienced exile, and to see life through their eyes.

Let me introduce....

Carmen... She is a nurse who has come to Ireland from the Philippines. As well as her own children she has responsibility for her parents and her three younger, school-going sisters back home. All this requires money and because her salary was so low, Carmen decided to emigrate. Having heard that Irish hospital personnel were coming to her region to recruit staff, she went for interview, was offered a nursing post and has been in Dublin for more than a year now. Meanwhile in the Philippines, her husband and mother care for her children and Carmen sends money regularly to the family. Carmen's hope is to save some money and return home as soon as possible. However, like many people she finds the cost of living high and has realised that it is not easy to save... nor is it easy to be far away from family and home.

Three years ago Mahomed fled his East African home. For a long time he had struggled with the growing injustice within society there. He could see that while some sections benefited greatly from the country's natural resources, others were without basic health, education and social services. Eventually Mahomed formed a human rights group. As the group grew in numbers and became increasingly active there were signs that he was falling into disfavour with the authorities. Warned secretly that his life was in danger he fled to Ireland – a country about which he had heard much from his Irish teachers. After a lengthy and agonising process he was recognised officially as a refugee. However, his struggle did not end there. In ways, it seems as if it has just begun. Since Government policy (as in all the European Union) prevented him from working during his three years as an asylum seeker, he is now finding it difficult to get a job, to find affordable accommodation and to become part of a new community. And there is the ongoing pain of forced exile – and unceasing worry about his family for whom he is still in the lengthy process of getting necessary documentation which would allow them to join him.

And then there is Katharina, her son Vladamir (7 years) and her daughter Natalia (4 years) who arrived in Ireland from Eastern Europe more than a year ago. They immediately applied for asylum on the grounds that Katarina's husband had "disappeared," believed killed, and there were grave fears for her safety and that of her two children. The journey here was hazardous, as she says. It was a case of choosing between certain danger at home and an unknown future away from home. At first, hearing that their refugee application had been turned down, an appeal was lodged. Katarina is convinced that they have a strong case. Meanwhile living with her daughter and son and some 700 other people in a full board hostel, with a small weekly allowance is not easy for this lone mother. The children's teacher comments on their excellent progress. Will Vladamir and Natalia have the chance to build on what they have achieved to date? Or, after a couple more years, will their refugee application be definitively rejected, and mother and children forced to leave Ireland?

Those whom we have met are not individual persons, but while representing *nobody* in particular they, in fact, represent *everybody*. They are among some 170 million human beings 'on the move' in the world today. Let us look at some of the people who form part of these millions. Among them are *People seeking asylum* – those who cannot depend on the protection of their own country and

who seek refuge in another country, as is their right under an international agreement (UN Convention on Refugee and Asylum Seekers 1951 (Geneva Convention))

Refugees – people who sought asylum and who after their case had been examined, have been recognised as refugees.

At the beginning of 2004, some 17 million people were ‘people of concern’ to the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) – these include refugees, people seeking asylum and persons displaced within and outside their country of origin.

Migrants/Migrant Workers – people from outside certain European countries (Switzerland and the European Economic Area 9EEA), EEA= EU, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein) who come to live and work in the European Union (EU). For the most part, these people have to satisfy strict work permit and visa criteria in order to gain entry to the EU.

Ours is an age where global movement on a large scale is taken for granted. From North to South, from East to West.

Information moves instantly at the touch of a button

Capital moves equally easily and quickly

Goods cross frontiers with fewer and fewer formalities and delays

And *People* – what about people?

... it is only where people are concerned that borders are becoming increasingly difficult to cross. Borders are no longer necessarily located at the dividing line between one country and its neighbour as shown on the map – distant bus and rail stations or air and seaport, in another jurisdiction, are now more and more the point at which access to a country is granted or, as is often the case, withheld. Frequently travel documents are demanded of people seeking asylum, despite the fact that, according to international law, they are not necessary. Those wishing to travel to seek work are confronted by processes which, while becoming increasingly complex and lengthy, grant less and less entitlement and protections. These are but a few of the obstacles which make it increasingly difficult for ‘people on the move’ in the world today to access their rights.

The unprecedented scale of movement of people today is not without rationale, it is not a chance happening. Wars, persecution, civil conflicts, famines, disease and natural disasters abound. At the same time economic development and the benefits which accrue, is very unevenly spread across the globe. Inbuilt structural inequalities abound, and in an era of mass communication this fact is no longer hidden from people on any part of the globe. E-mail, the mobile phone and internet combine to bring awareness of global social, economic and political realities to the farthest corners of the earth. For the most part, people realise that they ought *not* to be condemned to a life of poverty where their basic rights are denied them. In addition, travel today is relatively easy, routes are more numerous, fares are comparatively cheaper than before, consequently, people, more and more, know others from their home country who have gone abroad ahead of them and whom they can join.

But having set out on the journey it is then that myth and reality, fact and illusion, interface. It is then that for so many people, hopes and dreams are shattered! For the one seeking asylum, to be recognised officially as a refugee is the overarching goal, and all the resources, not just material, but also, energies of mind, spirit and body are expended on this ... For the small percentage who eventually – usually after several or more years – get refugee recognition, the realisation quickly dawns that, once reached, what was for so long a goal is, in fact, only a starting point. The road to integration, to inclusion and to participation in a new society is littered with obstacles. The migrant worker, too, faces many of the same obstacles – for the most part, theirs is the *3-d work* – dirty,

difficult and dangerous. Many live far from family and with little security since work permits are mainly short-term, without guarantee of renewal. Such precariousness inevitably makes for vulnerability. And yet, these are, in some sense, the more material outer layers of the exile experience

Other layers, too deep, too sensitive, too painful and too personal, can be glimpsed, simply glimpsed, by a listening heart and a compassionate spirit. These touch unspeakable losses ... family, clan, home and homeland, language, custom, tradition .. an endless litany of the familiar, of what makes for 'at homeness'. Euripides, writing in the 5th century (431 BCE), touched on this experience – *There is no greater sorrow, he wrote than the loss of one's native land.*

The presence of the person seeking asylum, of the refugee and the migrant calls us to look not only at the world they are leaving but also at the world they are entering – each of us, to varying extents, lives in both worlds. While we respond, often automatically, to both these worlds, it is frequently the arrival of people, rather than their departure, that engages us. Have we accepted what the history of humankind shows us, that

Migration is a historically-rooted, worldwide phenomenon, one that is natural, inevitable and continuous.

(Prof J.W.Berry, Dept of Psychology, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Where refugees are concerned, we must ask ourselves whether we are part of the “culture of disbelief”?

Much of the problem comes from one simple fact: we don't believe refugees ... the culture of disbelief can make us deaf to genuine cries for protection ... we must allow their cries of pain to be heard.”

(Lena Barrett, quoted in Raper and Valcarel, *Refugees and Forcibly Displaced People* (2000), Trocaire, Veritas, CAFOD, SVIAF)

Working with the Refugee Project of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference brings me face to face with the people and the issues we have shared. While the focus is largely on lobbying and advocacy with Government for more just policies and procedures, the Project also facilitates a network of groups and individuals from six Christian Churches throughout Ireland involved in supporting people seeking asylum, refugees and to a lesser extent, migrants. Through the Project we have also close contacts with Church groups at European level, and with a variety of non-governmental organisations (NGO's), nationally and internationally.

To be present in the world of people who are forced to migrate is to become aware of the fragility of human life, it is to realise that on this earth, each of us, to some extent, is in exile. The Burmese expression for refugee is .. *the one who has to bear suffering* ('Towards a true refuge', Aung San Suu Kyi, in *War has changed our life, not our Spirit*(1993) Jesuit Refugee Service. Rome)

In that sense, none of us can avoid knowing what it is to be a refugee. And so we are challenged to widen the space of our tent, to accept and appreciate difference, to welcome the stranger into our midst. To live in God's kingdom is to move beyond the narrow confines of local Church. It is to realise that God's vision for humankind is of a community of sisters and brothers without boundaries. Do we have light within us to enable us to see as God sees –

There is an old Jewish tale told of the Rabbi and his students. The Rabbi asked 'How can you determine the hour of dawn – when the night ends and the day begins?'

One of the students suggested 'when, from a distance, you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep'. 'No', was the answer of the Rabbi.

'Is it when you can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine?' asked the second student. *'No', the Rabbi said.*

'Please tell us the answer', pleaded the third.

'It is', replied the wise teacher, 'when you look into the face of a stranger and have enough light within you to recognise that person as a sister or brother. Up until then, it is night, and darkness is still within you.' (Source unknown)

36.

Living the spirituality of the Founder in ministry to the elderly. Catherine McShane

Introduction:

Our Founder, Constant Van Crombrughe, when he founded the daughters of Mary and Joseph, offered us a challenge for all times and all ages:

Our Founder calls us to the service of Christ and his Church; to live our mission to the full with 'unlimited devotion to Jesus Christ, and all our brothers' Constitutions 1.

In July 1952 I was professed as a Daughter of Mary and Joseph in our motherhouse in Uccle. In August of the same year I was missioned to Los Angeles to teach in an Archdiocesan school. If our destination was to be the United States our only option at that time was to teach. So, for the next 38 years I was in the field of education and very happy there.

From 1990 – 2000 I was involved in the administration of the California Province.

Our Founder encourages us to adapt our apostolate continuously in order to live more effectively our ministry as instruments of God's mercy. Constitutions 6.

Beginning in 2001 I have been working with the Sisters of Nazareth at Nazareth House, a retirement home for the elderly.

The motherhouse of the Sisters of Nazareth is located in Hammersmith, England. The congregation was founded by Mother Basil who had some connection with Jeanne Jugan, the Foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor. Both congregations have much in common. Both care for the elderly.

Our own "Provincial Philosophy Statement on Ageing" is very clear and the care we should provide for us ageing sisters.

The Daughters of Mary and Joseph understand ageing to be a process of change affecting all aspects of a person's experience – psychological, physiological, social, ministerial, and spiritual. We reverence each person and the world in which she lives, recognizing and valuing differences among individuals as contributing to the richness of the human experience (See C.73). We treat the person with dignity, accepting and caring for each sister. The Daughters of Mary and Joseph value life and the quality of life throughout the ageing process. We affirm that the later years of one's life hold the potential to be the fullest and richest time of life. We also believe that each sister in her final act of abandonment should be granted the peace of meeting her God with dignity. (See C 74)

I can identify with the DMJ philosophy on ageing since I work directly with the elderly at Nazareth House.

My main ministry is to assist the Administrator in providing suitable accommodation for new residents, to make them feel welcome, to be available to them, to speak for them and to see that their needs are met.

Jeanne Jugan had a special devotion to the Holy family and has a profound bearing on the philosophy evident at Nazareth House.

“Think, little ones, how dearly all three of them loved one another! How happy they looked! How kindly, how gently they spoke to one another! In our own family, we must do the same. Little ones, always be cheerful. Our little old people do not like long faces.”

Our Founder also encourages us in this area:

May it please the Lord to allow us to know the effect of his tender love and to animate us more and more by his Spirit so that we become worthy objects of his special affection and as such, good instruments of His mercy “ (150)

I pray that one day you may be an excellent instrument of His mercy ... respond to the ways of your Divine Spouse, gently abandon yourself into His hands and remain in gentle joyfulness which helps others and which acts like a spiritual balm.” (151)

In conclusion I would like to refer to the “Wisdom of the Group” statement from the California Province Chapter of 1997. In this statement we recognize the limitations of age, finances, personnel and resources which we experience as a Province. In faith, however, we affirm that these limitations are in no way an impediment to living the Gospel.

We draw strength and confidence from the lived tradition of our congregation and from the vision and prayer of our Founder:

I have asked particularly for you that Jesus would send his Holy Spirit who enlightens, purifies and sanctifies, the he would make you instruments of mercy.” (C.7)

PLENARY: REPORTING BACK

Group 2: Medical and Social work

5 reports centred on

the homeless
health ministry
a home for women aged 18 – 32 with problems
welcoming refugees
apostolate for the elderly

The charism was incarnated in various ways in our world of today. We discovered *compassion* through these 5 presentations

Compassion:

- on the streets of London
- in the homes of Brussels
- with the refugees
- with the elderly
- and with those who are chaplains for the sick

All demanded listening, welcoming others with kindness and treating others with respect. It is only possible when one begins to recognise one's own limits to be able to enter into the other's weaknesses and be of help. Adaptability of ministries to the needs of our time, led us to ask, when these apostolates are mainly individual, what is the role and the place of the community? Members of a congregation who worked as the sole representative of their community were usually part of a team in their workplace. In any case any individual religious working 'alone' was still expressing the congregational charism. Today we tended to seek lay help rather than the assistance of other religious.

Fr. Robert Firstly these great works of compassion, demonstrated in the 5 ministries, powerfully incarnated our charism, but also lead us to discover our own vulnerability and the realisation that it is the poor who have educated us. This is how we are before God: poor and vulnerable. Secondly, when it is a question of an individual versus a community apostolate, we should always feel proud of the work our sisters and brothers are doing.

Fr. Bill was very struck by the parallel movement between the sisters and the Josephites moving from education to other apostolates. As religious we brought certain gifts to parish life, notably because of our experience of parish life we have the ability to act collegially, and this was much appreciated by parishioners.

Fr. Aidan had been struck by two phrases: 'being at the service of the whole world and whole church' and the 'education of the whole person'. He was also impressed by the idea that each individual has his or her own charism and succeeds in finding a congregation that matches it.

Fr. Alois wished to record his admiration and congratulate all the sisters on the magnificent expression of the charism in the diverse works they have undertaken.

Sr. Joan commented that in Africa there was life and youth but in Europe and the States there were no new vocations. She felt we needed to come to terms with the different ways of living the charism vis-à-vis these different realities.

Sr. Maggie acknowledged her concern at the responsibility of conveying 'the future' to the elderly. The death of a group is very traumatic.

Sr. Teresa Suddenly it had become 'all four congregations together' and there was a sense of our being at a new turning point, of something emerging, and it was important to grasp this moment and deepen our charism together.

Sr. Agnès observed that sisters and brothers before Vatican II entered a well organised structure of large communities. Those who entered post Vatican II had a different experience: the possibility of various ministries and living in smaller in smaller communities of 4 or 5 persons.

Sr. Renee said that today the important questions were 'who am I' and 'who is God'? Together we have a wealth of experience in exploring the answers to these two questions. When we take the global view the borders between young and old disappear.

Fr. Aidan remained convinced that it is not 'what' or 'why' but 'how' I do something which was important. How we live together, as well as how we do our apostolate, that marked us.

Fr Robert felt we needed to be very humble and ready to apologise because it is so easy to put one's foot in it. The crux of our ministry is how we are towards 'the other'. St. Vincent de Paul says of the poor "only their love would enable the poor to forgive you for the alms you are giving them"

THURSDAY

Evaluation of the symposium experience and ideas for the way ahead.

The following questions were discussed in working groups.

CHARISM

1. What can we do to deepen and clarify the concept of mercy?
2. How can we share our charism with the young?

COLLABORATION WITH THE LAITY

3. To what extent do we have to change our mentality in collaboration with the laity ?

THE SYMPOSIUM

4. How have we understood the differences between our Congregations ?
5. What have we received from each other through these differences?
6. What do we have in common for the formation of young religious in our Congregations?
7. How can we share our riches? (archives, information, studies on the Founder, apostolates etc.)

OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FOLLOW UP TO THE SYMPOSIUM

8. How are we going to share with our communities our experience of the symposium?
9. We have a responsibility to keep alive the charism of the founder
 - what can we do with the older members of our community?
 - what can we do with the youngest members of our community.

POINTS GIVEN IN THE FEEDBACK

1. Celebration of the Founder's Day on the same date.
2. Common retreat open to members of the 4 congregations
3. Link websites of the 4 congregations
4. Assemble material from the Symposium into file for each Region/Province
5. Send representatives to each others Chapters
6. Further work on documents of the Founder for use with co-workers etc.
7. Direct collaboration between formators
8. Bring young together for workshops on the Founder
9. Initiate further work on understanding the concept of mercy
10. Apostolic experience by young with one of the other three congregations
11. Use our constitutions regularly in community e.g. before a meal or at evening prayer

12. CD on Founder and conservation of the archives
13. More Associates involved in the Symposium and work of the community
14. Sharing insights into aging and disappearance of a congregation
15. Plan an African Symposium
16. Pass on lived spirituality of the Founder
17. Reflect together on challenges of the world today
18. Create a Constantinian family (e.g. like there is a Franciscan family)
19. News of important events to be shared among the 4 congregations.

RESUME OF POINTS MADE BY THE WORKING GROUPS

After some debate it was agreed to divide the 19 points into two categories.

1. Everything that concerns the living of our charism in today's world and the challenge that brings.
For example. Dare to deepen our understanding of the reality of our congregations.
Look more closely at our identity (Who are we?)
Take to heart the two fundamental precepts of our charism.
Instruments of mercy
Adaptability.
2. Seek ways of collaborating. Reflect together on how we can communicate amongst ourselves.
Look at ways in which we might help one another.

FINAL DISCUSSION

Deidre, speaking on behalf of everyone thanked Agnès and Robert for their courage, their vision, their enthusiasm and their hard work over the last 18 months. Without that the Symposium would not have taken place.

Marie Rose, spoke of her initial doubts which were shared by **Luc** and how they had hesitated about participating in the symposium. She was glad that she had allowed herself to be persuaded by Agnès and Robert. They had both visited Bruges to meet with them and convince them that their presence would be an enrichment for everyone. Marie Rose explained that in the 1950's the Bishop of Bruges went to visit the Sisters of Mary and Joseph at Erpe Mere and tried to persuade them to amalgamate with the Sisters of St Joseph in Bruges. Their reply was in the negative. Marie Rose wondered if the same question were put to them today would they get the same answer or another one. She was delighted to see that the charism was flourishing among the Josephites and the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. And it was this message that she would take away with her to share with her sisters in Bruges and with the sisters at Erpe Mere.

Marie Rose also invited all the members of the Constantinian family to join with her and her sisters, as well as the sisters from Erpe Mere on the 10th of September at a rendez-vous close to Bruges. There we would celebrate our charism together.

Robert also remembered how Marie Rose and Luc had hesitated and how he and Agnès had explained that the Symposium would not be the same without them. He assured them that from now on we would journey together.

He thanked each congregation for their participation, for the sharing of riches which had made the Symposium what it was.

He thanked in particular all those who had participated by preparing a paper, all those who had worked in the secretariat, those who had acted as Moderators as well as the staff of Emmaus and those responsible for the Liturgy

The Symposium finished with a final “sending out” ceremony.

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ⁱ See T. Clements, DMJ, 'Reflections on Apostolic Spirituality. A Study of the "Fathers of the Faith", France (1801-1814), in *Milltown Studies* [Dublin]15(1985)51-64 and T. Clements, DMJ, '«Les Pères de la Foi» in France: 1800-1814. Spirituality, Foundations, Biographical Notes' in *Archivum Historium Societatis Jesu* [Rome]571988] 233-262.

Photocopies of both these articles can be made available on request.

ⁱⁱ Another of the *Fathers of the Faith*, Père Pierre Roger, was very influential in his work in Lyons with Pauline Jaricot in the founding of the work of *Propaganda Fide*.

ⁱⁱⁱ One of the main aims of this new foundation was the restoration of the Society of Jesus. Originally known as the *Société du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus*, they had been inspired by the spirituality of St. Ignatius, and wished to live accordingly. They were marked by their life of contemplation, and attitudes of gentleness and humility as well as their lives of poverty and missionary zeal.

^{iv} Cited in T. Clements, *Instrument in the Hand of God* [henceforth *IHG*] (Rome: Gregorian University, 1983)179. *C1891* Art 194

For the reference to the Articles in the various Constitutions, note the following:

Regel-Boek 1830: RB1830; Constitutions et Règles 1844: CR1844; Constitutions 1864: C1864; Constitutions 1891: C1891

^v T. Clements, DMJ, *Instruments of Mercy* [henceforth *IOM*] (Rome: Gregorian University 1982) 61 To Olympiade Derville, Archives Daughters of Mary and Joseph [henceforth ADMJ] A 2A 6-8 - 26.03.1835

^{vi} C. Van Crombrughe, *Manuel de la Jeunesse Chrétienne* (Alost: J. Sacré, 1821) 48; ADMJ A 2A 9

^{vii} *IHG*185

^{viii} See especially, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* Trans Louis J. Puhl, (Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1952) Annot. 236: This is to consider how God works and labours for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth, that is, He conducts Himself as one who labours. Thus, in the heavens, the elements, the plants, the fruits, the cattle, etc. He gives being conserves them, confers life and sensation, etc.

^{ix} L. Deries, *Les congrégations religieuses au temps de Napoléon* (Paris: Felix Alcar, 1929) Ch. VI-IX Citing Lamartines, *Confidences*, Livre VI, notes 2,3, and 4. (Les professeurs) mes amis plutôt que mes professeures, resteront dans ma mémoire comme des modèles de sainteté, de vigilance, de paternité, de tendresse et de grace pour les élèves. (*The teachers, my friends rather than my professors, will remain in my memory as models of holiness, of vigilance, of fatherliness, of gentleness and of graciousness towards their students.*) Quoted in *IHG* 29

^x Letter of van Crombrughe to his parents, 28.10.1805. Josephite Archives:

L'arrangement de ce Pensionnat me plaît beaucoup à cause de la douceur et affabilité avec lesquelles on nous conduit. (*I like the arrangement of this boarding school very much because of the gentleness and affability with which we are led.*) (In *IHG* 30)

^{xi} ADMJ *Regel-Boek der Dogters van Maria en Joseph*, (Aanspraek, 1830) Citing letter written in Aalst, 06.03.1818. Nogtans, beminde Dogters, gy zult tot deéze groote eynden nooyt geracken, nooyt zult gy uwen heyligen roep volbrengen, is het zaeke gy niet eerst voor al en tragt u weérdig te macken, door uw godvrugtig en volmaekt leéven, de waere instrumenten te worden bermhertigheyd Gods. (In *IHG* Append VII: 209)

^{xii} D. Maruca, *SJ Instruments in the Hand of God* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1963)72

See also *IHG* 37-38

^{xiii} *RB* Letter 06.03.18: Gy zyt medewerksters van den Zaligmaeker.

^{xiv} *C1891*Art. 161, 'Zèle pour le salut de la jeunesse':...vous êtes les instruments de la miséricorde du Seigneur pour former des servants au Père céleste, des disciples à Jésus-Christ, des temples vivants du Saint-Esprit. Que dans ce sublime ministère aucune difficulté ne vous arrête.

This text was used in relation to the 4th vow of education of the poor originally taken in the Congregation. By 1844 it was simply a 4th vow of education. It ceased in 1878 on the recommendation of the Holy See. See *IHG* 106-7 especially fn. (72)

^{xv} During an Ignatian symposium in the Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Dublin, I described our relationship as being similar to that of cousins, rather than that of sons and daughters. T. Clements, DMJ 'The Influence of Ignatian Spirituality on Apostolic Religious Life for Women' *Milltown Studies* (Dublin) 29(1992)51-64

^{xvi} Letter to Flore Delhaye A 2A 7-83: 29.01.1863 Je persister toujours dans la crainte que vous n'avez pas fait disparaître du texte de vos *Constitutions et Règles*, les expressions capables de donner au terme *Règles* une signification différente de celle que nous lui attribue.

Dans notre esprit, nos *Règles* signifient: nos exercices, nos usages, nos pratiques et mode de les exécuter, de les remplir, de les observer. Nous ne faisons aucune allusion au terme Règle de St. Benoît, par exemple, de St. François, de St. Augustin. (*IHG* 123)

^{xvii} Handwritten addition to *De l'instruction et de l'éducation chez les Filles de Marie et de Joseph*, 1833. *IHG* 91. Enfin pour être toujours utile, notre Institut se faisant tout à tous modifiera ses moyens d'action d'après les nouveaux besoins de la société. Telle sera en tout temps notre grande règle
In order to be always useful, our Institute will do everything to modify its means of action according to the new needs of our society. Such will in all ages be our great rule ...

^{xviii} *RB* Vierde Capittel. Jaerlyksche Oeffeningen in 'T Gemeyn [1] p.54
Jaerlyks dan, zullen alle de Zusters van onze gemeyntens eene geestelyke exercitie doen, van eenige dagen, volgens den boek der exercitien van den H. Ignatius.

^{xix} C1844 *Chaper IV: Des exercices annuels – de la retraite* p. 54-5.

^{xx} A 2A 22: 10.11.1862 Letter of Flore Delhaye to van Crombrughe. [*IHG*177]
J'ai oublié, mon très révérend Père, de vous proposer de metre dans nos saintes *Règles*, que notre confesseur extraordinaire, autant que possible est un Père Jesuite. Auriez-vous la bonte de réfléchir à ma proposition et de me dire quand vous le trouveres bon, ce que vous en pensez. Il me semble, mon très cher Père, que si nous sommes un peu soutenues et guidées par la Compagnie de Jésus, nous serons fort et durable.

^{xxi} Letter of van Crombrughe to Flore Delhaye. ADMJ A 2A 7-78. 12.11.1862
Il m'est impossible (sic) je pense, d'admettre que votre confesseur extraordinaire soit du tel ordre. C'est l'évêque qui choisit et donne ces confesseurs aux Religieuses.

^{xxii} C1864 Art.13. [*IHG*177]. Pendant ce saint temps elles suivent, autant que possible, sous la direction d'un Père de la Compagnie de Jésus, les exercices de S. Ignace.

^{xxiii} ADMJ, Rome. Response of the Vatican, 1878, Item 20. The reasons given were similar to the remarks given by the Founder regarding the extraordinary confessor. The next redaction, that of C1891, Art. 113{219}, did not include this requirement.