



Letter to our Friends and Benefactors

Oblata

Novitiate of the Oblates of the Society of St. Pius X

October 2006 – No. 3

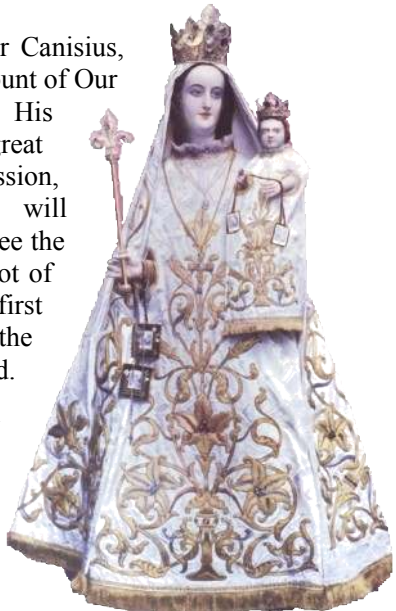
Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Of the many titles of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, one should be particularly dear to us: *Our Lady Guardian of the Faith*. Is it not the honorary title that Our Lady took at the sanctuary of Bourguillon near the city of Fribourg in Switzerland?

The Great Doctor of the Church, St. Peter Canisius, assiduous pilgrim of this chapel, gave this account of Our Lady of Bourguillon, in 1581: “God wants His Mother to be honoured in this place with great devotion, and the efficacy of her intercession, already well proven up to now, others will experience it again.” Four centuries later we see the founder of the Society of St. Pius X at the foot of Our Lady of Bourguillon, conferring the first tonsures and first minor orders under the watchful gaze of the Madonna and of Her Child.

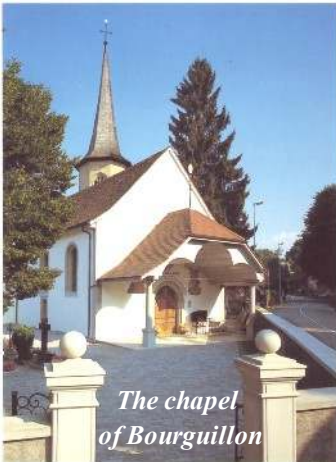
Let us stop in this city of Fribourg and in its illustrious sanctuary which is associated with a long history of combat for the true faith.

Your Oblate Sisters of Salvan



Our Lady of Bourguillon, Guardian of the Faith

What is the most important asset to a person, to a family and a country? It is certainly the true Catholic faith. Here is an intervention of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in favour to maintain the true faith.

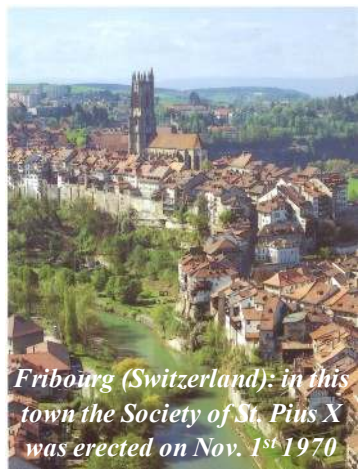


On the height that dominates the city of Fribourg on the East side, we find a beautiful chapel called Our Lady of Bourguillon. At any time of the day you will find there faithful in prayer. In the Middle Ages, this place was a lepers' colony. The chapel was that of the lepers. One of them sculpted a statue of the Mother of God carrying the Infant Jesus in her arms in a block of oak wood. The Holy Virgin was invoked by the lepers, and she heard them; she consoled them; and she healed some of them. She, who in the following ages was to operate in Bourguillon so many cures, shouldn't she, having the title of *Health of the Sick*, bless first the most unfortunate?

But the honorary title “Guardian of the Faith” of Our Lady of Bourguillon calls to mind a more recent event. It was in the 16th century. Protestantism had just come from Germany to Switzerland and wrought havoc. The primitive cantons remained faithful to the ancient faith, but almost all the others turned to the Reform. The canton of Fribourg remained Catholic. The danger, however, was great that it followed the example of the others that encircled it. A circle that drew ever closer. Moreover, the religious practise of the Fribourgeois reflected strongly the lukewarmness of the era. In the town of Fribourg, there were barely twenty Catholics who fulfilled their Easter duty.

The magistrates, who clung to the faith of their ancestors, were afraid. What were they going to do? ... They kept their trust in Mary. They made a vow that the inhabitants of Fribourg would go in procession to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Bourguillon every fortnight, during the fine season. The good Virgin heard their supplications: the Protestants stopped at the border of the Canton. In 1528, the danger became more pressing, the Small Council decided that men should go in procession to Bourguillon, and there, at the foot of Our Lady, pronounce a solemn oath of fidelity to the Catholic faith. And the result? The Holy Virgin answered the fervent prayers of her children. She inspired the governors not to turn to the Reform.

If the great battle between Catholicism and Protestantism in Fribourg had ended, one can say that the religious and moral state there were far from perfect. The true sign of piety is the



reception of the sacraments. In this regard, we have already noted that there was very little fervour, even the Easter Communions were rare. In 1580, the Holy Virgin sent to Fribourg her most illustrious servant of the time, St. Peter Canisius, whose great work on the Mother of God, *De Virgine incomparabili*, had just appeared. He spent the rest of his life in Fribourg. The saintly Jesuit soon noticed the laxness among the Fribourgeois in the practice of their religious duties. What was Father Canisius to do? To fortify, to consolidate, to complete the healing, and to immunise against all relapse. He set to work immediately; he founded the



Saint Michael's School, reorganised the preaching, multiplied the catechisms, and instituted associations, which took the form of Catholic Action. Then, four years later, instead of twenty persons accomplishing their Easter obligation, there were six hundred. Furthermore, the Forty Hours devotion that he established was followed assiduously. This success, this marvellous return, the ardent apostle attributed to the maternal assistance of Our Lady of Bourguillon. He knew that it was She who preserved Fribourg from the protestant invasion; it was Her whom he beseeched, and from Her obtained the awakening of the faith, and the return of religious practice.

From the outset, the Saint felt attracted by the pious chapel of Bourguillon. He took the habit to visit it almost every day, rosary in hand, and often preached there with a lively conviction on the goodness and the power of the Virgin to the pilgrims who came to pray, assuring them that "in that sanctuary Mary made miracles". In an allocution, on 30th July 1581, he declared: "God wants His Mother to be honoured in this place with great devotion, and the efficacy of her intercession, already well proven up to now, others will experience it again."

The Saint not only went to Bourguillon, but he also sent pilgrims there. During the plague of 1587, Father Canisius went on pilgrimage every day at Our Lady of Bourguillon, and often, he was accompanied by the pupils of the College. In the year 1588, he led a procession of 3,000 people there. Their prayers were granted and the plague ceased.

St. Peter Canisius died on December 21st 1597. On May 22nd 1925, he was solemnly proclaimed "Saint, and at the same time Doctor of the Church". His name is linked to Bourguillon as its most faithful pilgrim and its greatest apostle. He is fondly considered as one of the most ardent pioneers in the combat to safeguard the faith in the world, and in particular at Fribourg; and his memory remains forever blessed.

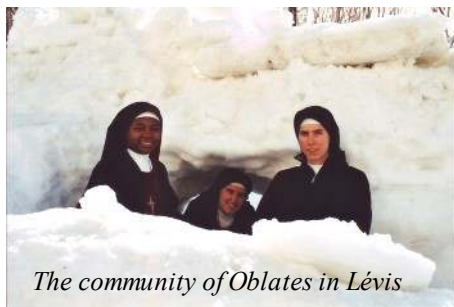
🔔 *Novitiate diary: January to July 2006* 🔔

Thursday, 5th January: All through the Liturgical Year, Our Mother the Church, has foreseen numerous blessings, granting us powerful assistance and protection through these sacramentals. On the Vigil of the Epiphany, our chaplain blessed water and salt of the Epiphany, followed with the traditional blessing of houses.

Friday, 27th January: The country of 7,100 islands sent us a new vocation. We welcomed our Filipina postulant.

Sunday, 5th February: Blessing of the bread of St. Agatha after Sunday Holy Mass. All the faithful received blessed bread to be kept in their house as a protection against fire, and also for eating – to the great joy of the children.

Sunday, 26th - Tuesday, 28th February: By relays, our sisters took their turns of adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament for the 40 Hours Adoration. The work of reparation proves to be more and more necessary in this world of degradation.



The community of Oblates in Lévis

Tuesday, 7th March: Sr. Marie Emmanuella obtained her visa for Canada, and flies today for her first assignment in the School of the Holy Family in Lévis. Her two fellow sisters seemed to have prepared her arrival already: igloo, very thick coat, and snow boots!

Saturday, 25th March: In this Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady, the Holy Virgin blessed us with the planning permission of our municipality, in order to renovate our roof and to make new rooms.

Saturday, 1st April: Mgr. Bernard Fellay ordained on this first Saturday of the month 10 sub-deacons and 8 lectors/exorcists at the Seminary of Ecône; a very beautiful ceremony that we wanted our new postulants to discover.

Thursday, 13th April: The Chrismal Mass with the presence of many clergy, the Vespereal Mass with the commemoration of the institution of the Holy Mass and of the Priesthood, the adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the High-priest, on the altar of repose: all of the liturgy on Holy Thursday reminds us of our vocation to pray and sanctify ourselves for the priests.

Monday, 24th – Saturday, 29th April: The start of the work of dismantling for the changing of our roof was carried out with the help of a family and a crew of sisters.

Monday, 1st May: Before the recitation of the Holy Rosary in front of the Blessed Sacrament, the whole community was gathered together in front of the statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Our Lady has received today a place of honour in our garden, and after the statue had been blessed by our chaplain, we greeted the Queen of Heaven and Earth with a polyphonic chant “Salve Regina caelitum”.



25th May – Ascension of Our Lord:

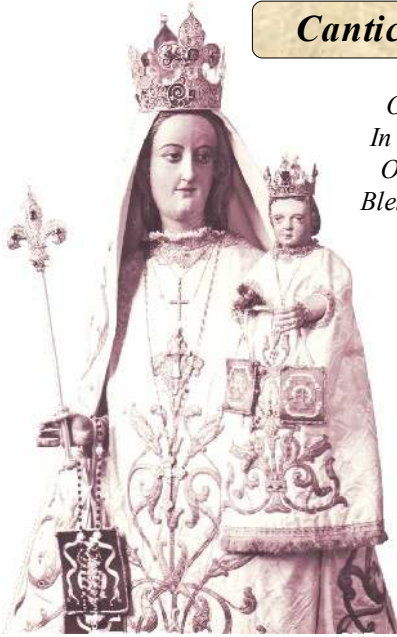
Father Verlinden, prior of Kaunas in Lithuania, presided the ceremony of the taking of habit of the two postulants who came from Lithuania and India, and received the first engagement of our Mexican novice, Sister Alejandra de Jesús. This variety of nationality, is it not the image of the Society of St. Pius X?

Thursday, 29th June – Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul:

A great day of blessing at Ecône! We assisted at the ordinations of the priests and deacons, and were happy to receive with the faithful the first blessing of the four new priests.

Friday, 30th June: Our new Oblate, Sr. Alejandra de Jesús, left the Novitiate for her first post in Montalenghe (Italy), where two Oblates are already exercising their apostolate.

Sunday 2nd – Saturday 15th July: While the members of the General Chapter were assembled in Ecône for the election of the Superior General and of his two Assistants, the coincidence of our annual retreat at Flavigny for the French speaking sisters and at Mels for the English speaking, permitted us to pray more for the members of the General Chapter. During our short visit to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Bourguillon on the way to Mels, we heartily confided to Most Holy Virgin Mary the intentions of the General Chapter.



Canticle to Our Lady of Bourguillon

*Our Lady of Bourguillon,
In thee our hearts find hope,
Once refuge of our fathers,
Bless now their sons, we pray!*

*In troubled days, in frightening times,
Most humbly, pilgrims came
To present to Her their ardent prayers
And to implore in pious verse.*

*Grant us the strength and constancy
To serve Our God and observe His law.
Art thou not, when all things fail
Proclaimed: "Guardian of the Faith"?*

*The gifts once offered at Her altar
Prove to us their generous hearts.
May we still tread in our fathers' footsteps,
Let us, like them, know how to pray.*

Annual Pilgrimage

The District of Switzerland of the Society of St. Pius X organizes each year a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Bourguillon every 1st August. On the same trail as their ancestors, the pilgrims walk the distance of around 13 km, asking the Most Holy Virgin Mary the grace of fidelity to the Catholic faith.

Our Lady of Bourguillon, Health of the Sick

The Hospice of Our Lady of Bourguillon was founded on 19th March 1921, in memory of the ancient lepers' colony, which was the origin of the pilgrimage. The presence of the Most Holy Virgin Mary was first for the poor lepers, and her predilection for the sick and afflicted did not cease through the centuries. The goal of the Hospice is to comfort the sick, those who suffer in their bodies and in their soul, and to help them to sanctify their life and their pains in an apostolic spirit. To know how to suffer, is to cooperate with Jesus in saving the world.

Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre, who knew already the Hospice of Our Lady of Bourguillon when he was an Apostolic Delegate in Dakar, wrote in 1952 this beautiful text, most encouraging for the sick:

**Inscription in the Visitors' Book at the Bourguillon Hospice
of H. E. Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre,
Apostolic Delegate of Dakar**

The Missionary often feels weak and powerless faced with the enormity of the task he has to accomplish. The One who has sent him to preach the Gospel to the poor has not promised him an easy victory. So the Missionary seeks everywhere for help to enlighten souls and enflame them with charity, while they in their millions dwell insensibly in the darkness of error and the slavery of sin. On the contrary those who are sick hold in their hands an unfathomable and mysterious treasure, but sometimes they are greatly pained to think that they suffer in vain; firstly as regards their own perfection (because they are not always resigned to their pain), and secondly as regards others (for the Good Lord does not yet allow them to grasp all the marvels that are worked by their sufferings when they are joined to those of Jesus Crucified).



Thus has Our Lord in His infinite wisdom willed that each one of us carry his cross in union with Him. Like the union between the Missionary and the Contemplative, does there not exist between the Missionary and those who are sick – between these chosen ones of the Lord – a mystical union in Jesus the Apostle and Jesus Crucified? Yes! Blessed be this Hospice of Our Lady of Bourguillon which brings about in Our Lord and through the Virgin Apostle and the Mother of Sorrows this real and effective union of the Missionary and those who are sick.

To the many other requests herein, I add those of the Vicar Apostolic of Senegal for all his vicariate, and especially for his mission among the Sérères who are coming in large numbers to ask for Baptism. I will ask all the priests who are laboring in this region and all those in my vicariate to pray in turn for the sick who offer up their sufferings with the particular intention of praying for the Vicariate of Dakar.

Since I am convinced of the enormous benefits that the offerings of the beloved sick can bring about for all the Missionaries, I recommend the fifty vicariates and apostolic prefectures of the Apostolic Delegation of Dakar to your pious intentions, and I thank you most sincerely as well as those who work devotedly for the Hospice of Our Lady of Bourguillon.

May Our Lord and the Virgin Mary deign to heap many blessings on our beloved spiritual benefactors.

+Marcel Lefebvre
Delegate and Vicar Apostolic of Dakar
Fribourg, August 7, 1952

(Mgr. Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Marcel Lefebvre – The Biography, appendices, p. 615)

☞ Little flowers from an International Novitiate ☞

One Oblate sister pays a bill at the post office of Salvan, using all the small change in the petty cash. The postman starts counting and upon seeing many five centimes species (the smallest coin in Switzerland), he draws his conclusion: "Sister, I would like to tell you a story: a ten franc note arrives in front of the door of heaven to enter there, and it is told to wait at a certain distance. Then a twenty franc note presents itself, and is told to wait still further away. And then arrives a thousand franc note; this one, to its great surprise, sees itself relegated to the furthest place. Finally, a five centimes coin arrives in front of the door of heaven, and, in an instant – to the great surprise of the others – enters directly in Heaven. Then the notes start to complain. Heaven answers: the piece of five centimes was more often at Holy Mass."

Our Oblate sister also draws her conclusion from the story: First of all, the pieces of five centimes did not come from the church collection, and even if that had been the case, didn't Our Lord Jesus Christ praise the offering of the widow in the Gospel who put two mites in the treasury: "Believe me, this poor widow has put in more than all the others." (Luke 21.3)

Our Projet:

The renovation of our roof

On August 16th 2006, we started the renovation of our roof. It is the most important work since the settlement of the Novitiate in Salvan... but also the most costly. Your help would be very precious to us in this indispensable work, and we thank you wholeheartedly in advance for your donation for this cause. May Our Lord and the Virgin Mary deign to bestow abundant blessings upon our dear benefactors.



If you wish to help the Novitiate of the Oblates



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