

THE ORATORY OF SAINT PHILIP NERI – TORONTO

Mark your calendars:

- **Wednesday, September 10, at 7:30 p.m.:** Evening at the Oratory: The Church – Midwife of Science
- **Monday, October 6 at 5:30:** Sung Mass in honour of Saint Aloysius Scrosoppi
- **Wednesday, October 8, at 7:30 p.m.:** Evening at the Oratory: JP II – Theology of the Body
- **Wednesday, October 15 – Friday, October 17:** Annual Forty Hours' Devotion begins with Mass on Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. and concludes with Rosary Holy Hour on Friday, from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- **Saturday, November 1, at 10:00 a.m.:** Sung Mass in honour of All Saints (28th Anniversary of Foundation of the Toronto Oratory)
- **Wednesday, November 12 at 7:30 p.m.:** Evening at the Oratory: What Becomes of the Dead?
- **Saturday, December 6, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.:** Family Day of Recollection
- **Monday, December 8, at 6:00 p.m.:** Sung Latin Mass in honour of the Immaculate Conception
- **Wednesday, December 10, at 7:30 p.m.:** Evening at the Oratory – Our Lady of Guadalupe
- **Monday, December 15, at 5:30 p.m.:** Sung Mass in honour of Blessed Anthony Grassi

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Dear Friends of the Toronto Oratory:

I apologize for the long delay in getting this Newsletter out to you, but at least there will be plenty of news to report.

Father Robinson – *Spiritual Combat Revisited*

Let me begin by assuring you that Fr Jonathan Robinson is in good health and spirits. In March, Ignatius Press published his *Spiritual Combat Revisited*. In the book, he argues for the continuing relevance of Lorenzo Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat*, which was first published in the 16th century and spiritually nourished countless Saints, especially Saint Francis de Sales. Fr Robinson draws on a wide variety of traditional writers, from Cassian to Newman, to make Scupoli's classic work accessible to us. You can buy the book from various on-line bookstores – including ours! – or, if you want to learn more about it first, you can listen to an interview with Fr Robinson which will first appear on Mother Angelica's EWTN on November 9 at 3 a.m. and then be rebroadcast on November 10 at 10 p.m., November 11 at 2 p.m., and November 13 at 10 a.m. If you do not have access to EWTN on your television, you can watch the show on the internet. Our Web site will soon have a link to enable you to watch at these times. Fr Robinson is presently working on another book. We will keep you posted.

Oratory Web Site – www.oration-toronto.org

Although this surface-mail newsletter is slow in coming, we have been making efforts to keep people informed about events at the Oratory using the internet. Our Web

site is constantly being updated and expanded. You can read about our history, find out about notable Oratorians, get driving instructions to our churches, listen to our choir, and buy various items from our on-line bookstore – to name just a few of the things that are posted for instant access. You can also request that we add your e-mail address to our e-mailing list, so that you will not have to wait so long for news from us.

Evenings at the Oratory

The Oratory grew out of Philip's efforts to spread the Gospel, through talks and music, to the people of Rome in the sixteenth century. Every day, in the afternoon, four talks were given, mainly on prayer and the life of virtue, but also on Church history. In between the talks, music lifted the souls of the listeners to God. These afternoon sessions, called the Secular Oratory, were well-attended by people of all backgrounds: cardinals and prelates, the idle nobility, tradesmen, shopkeepers, servants, soldiers, and many others. In 1575, when the Oratory first received papal recognition, there were about forty priests who dedicated themselves to this apostolate.

Last fall, we tried a new adaptation of this work, which we have been calling 'Evenings at the Oratory'. On the second Wednesday of every month, at 7:30 p.m., we present an hour-long talk on a topic of interest to Catholics, aimed at educated adults (both men and women). Refreshments follow with an opportunity for people to meet one another and to talk to the Fathers and Brothers on an informal basis. Then at 9:00 p.m. we sing Compline (night prayer) in the church, accompanied by organ music. The topics last year

included 'The Shroud of Turin', 'The Galileo Case', 'Lord of the Rings: A Catholic Fantasy', 'The Crusades', and 'Cardinal Newman: The Father of Vatican II?' Crowds varied from a low of about 60 to a high of nearly 200. The topics for September through December are in the 'Mark Your Calendar' section of this newsletter and on our Web site.

Oratory Summer School of Theology

We resumed our summer teaching this year after taking a break from it last year on account of World Youth Day. The first session of our summer school was, as usual, an introduction to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and was attended by twenty-seven people. The second session was on the Doctors of the Church and attracted sixty-three people.

Family Days of Recollection

For several years, we have provided a Day of Recollection for Families on the first Saturday of Advent and the First Saturday of Lent. This year, we added a third day in June, which we dedicated to the Sacred Heart. We plan to have these three days again in the future, so that you can mark your calendars now for the first Saturdays in Advent, Lent, and June.

Saint Philip's Seminary

In May, we had the largest graduating class to date – thirteen men. Although the graduating class next year

will be much smaller, we are encouraged by an influx of first-year students. Nine students for the priesthood will be living with us. They come from the Archdioceses of Toronto and Kingston, from the Dioceses of Hamilton and Charlottetown (P.E.I.), and from the Carmelites. Among these, five are students right out of high school!

Ryerson Polytechnic University Chaplaincy

Fr Thomas Trottier has continued to make a Catholic presence felt in this challenging downtown environment. In May, he and Claudia Brown (the executive director of Saint Philip Neri House) took a contingent of eighteen students to Jamaica to help various religious orders such as the Missionaries of the Poor and the Missionaries of Charity to take care of some of the poorest people on the island. It was clear that many of the students gained a more realistic vision of the world as a result of this experience.

Library Construction

Last year, most of you received a letter, asking for funds to help build our new library. Construction is now under way after a slow start on account of some contaminated soil which had to be excavated and trucked to a special land-fill site. You can watch the building go up on-line on our Web site. Many thanks to all those who contributed to this project.

Fr David Roche's 25th Anniversary

Fr David Roche helped Fr Robinson to found the Oratory. He was part of the group that was living

together in community for two years before the Oratory was canonically erected in November 1975. He was ordained on July 30, 1978, so this year was the silver anniversary of his ordination. The official celebrations took place on Sunday, August 3, so that more people could be on hand. Fr Roche sang the 11:00 a.m. Latin Mass; and Fr Ignatius Harrison, the Provost of the London Oratory, preached an inspiring sermon about the priesthood, especially as it is lived out by a son of Saint Philip. Several hundred people attended the Mass and the reception afterwards in the parish hall. We wish Fr Roche many more years of fruitful ministry.

Pilgrimage to Rome for Mother Teresa's Beatification

Fr Roche will be the chaplain to a pilgrimage to Rome on the occasion of Mother Teresa's beatification. The tour leaves on October 16 and returns on October 27. In addition to Rome, the pilgrimage will visit Siena, Assisi, Cascia, Loreto, Monte Casino, Orvieto and Lanciano (the sites of two Eucharistic miracles), and Pietralcina (where Padre Pio is buried). See our Web site under 'Events and News: Calendar of Events' for more information.

I hope not to keep you waiting as long for the next Newsletter as for this one. In the meantime, you can visit our Web site. And you can be sure of the prayers of all the Fathers and Brothers for our friends and benefactors.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr Martin Hilbert