



The Oratory of Saint Philip Neri



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Building on a Blessed Foundation



EVERYONE HERE IS STILL FILLED with excitement and encouragement from the Papal Nuncio's Solemn Blessing of the Saint Philip's Seminary new building (which you can see at www.youtube.com/c/TheTorontoOratory). It was a joy to be able to share that day in person with our friends and parishioners. The success of the *Renovatio* project is a testimony to the generosity of very many people and their deep commitment to working for vocations for the Church. The Nuncio clearly identified this firm dedication in his remarks at the Blessing: "...it is our hope that, especially through houses and schools such as this, we may once again win the heart of the modern world for God." Almost everyone present for the festivities commented that hope for the future of the Church's mission was palpable: vocations are still happening, the Church is alive and growing, something greater than ourselves is driving events here: it is God's work, and we are blessed to be his instruments in bringing it about. The people who were able to gather for the celebrations were

a visible witness to that wholehearted willingness to work for the future of the Church in union with God and his saints.

The fruitfulness of this commitment has been shown by the number and quality of our graduates who have been ordained to the priesthood around the world, by the growth of the Oratorian community here in Toronto, and by the impressive number of applications to study in Saint Philip's Seminary. Because of the completed renovations, we can now house twenty-four seminarians. But for the upcoming semester, twenty-eight want to attend. What an extraordinary problem to have! At a time when seminaries are closing their doors, we are scrambling to find room. The expansion of the Oratorian community includes our two new priests beginning their first assignments, in a high school and in a hospital. Our parishes are back functioning as they were before the pandemic. Ministries in nursing homes are starting to become more normal.

This time of expansion and growing involvement is very exciting—but it is also rather intimidating on a human level. There is so much to be done. In terms of both personnel and financial resources, the work is demanding. With an impressive group of volunteers handling tasks that would often require employees, we do everything we can to keep our overheads to an absolute minimum. But we need to accommodate ever-growing numbers of seminarians and prepare for new Oratorians. Rooms we thought we had available are suddenly taken up for residence. This means that suddenly we have no rooms ready for new Oratorian vocations! We also need to make some rooms available as chapels in order to foster the spiritual lives of seminarians from many different traditions.

This demands of all of us great confidence in God and his providence. And, as always, we depend upon your help. We thank you for what you have helped to begin, and we ask you to assist us as we continue to expand. Together with you and with God's grace, there is much to be done. 🍷





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