

CENTENNIAL SNAPSHOTS

7. Brother Idesbald Monstrey, CSSR



Louis Monstrey was born 10 May 1854 in Ichteghem, Diocese of Bruges, in western Flanders, Belgium. When he requested entry to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, the Redemptorists judged him to be an especially intelligent, talented, and religious man, but too old to begin studies for the priesthood. He professed his vows of religion 12 October 1896 in Saint-Trond (now known as St-Truiden), took the religious name of Idesbald, and began his life as a Redemptorist Brother. With the growing mission field in Canada, the Redemptorists immediately sent Brother Idesbald to where they knew his talents would be appreciated and useful. He arrived on 30 October 1896. After a short time in eastern Canada to acclimatize him to the weather and other challenges of Canadian life, the Belgian Redemptorists sent him to open their first monastery in western Canada, in Brandon, Manitoba. Brother Idesbald served in

Brandon from 1899 to 1904 building St. Augustine of Canterbury. When the Belgians decided to turn their attention to the Yorkton area, he was one of the pioneer Redemptorists who left to establish St. Gerard's parish, church, and hall. He willingly turned his hand to everything asked or required and his handiwork was evident in the woodwork of the altars, pews, kneelers, window frames, doors, picture frames, and shelving throughout the many rectories and chapels scattered across the Redemptorist mission field in western Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan. His paint brushes were in constant use, beautifying churches and walls. He personally built and painted many of the tabernacles in use in the area. He was also an accomplished musician, writing hundreds of scores for piano, organ, and orchestra, organizing and leading church choirs and bands, and teaching the minor seminarians and the orphanage children in Yorkton singing and instrumental music. At least five of his students became priests. The famous song, *Redemptorist Rosary*, was first written in French by Brother Idesbald and his song was translated into Ukrainian and English and from these languages to others around the world. When the Belgians discussed leaving western Canada and the Ukrainian missions, he was one of the few Belgians who opted to remain in 1928. In his later years, he liked to fix watches and clocks. He died in St. Boniface Hospital, Manitoba, on 25 April 1934, leaving few personal belongings behind: his tools, a couple of prayer cards, and photographs of his family members, his manuscript music, and the memory of a dedicated, self-sacrificing brother. He was 79 and is buried in Yorkton. *Vichna Pamiat'!*



Ukrainian Redemptorists 100 years

The year 2006 marks 100 years since the Redemptorists began formally working with eastern European immigrants in North America and eventually around the world in their own rite. This series of 'Bulletin Inserts' is dedicated to the pioneer Redemptorist Fathers and Brothers of the Yorkton Province. For more information about the Redemptorists, contact: the Redemptorist Vocation Office: 250 Jefferson Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2V 0M6, Canada or visit our website: www.yorktonredemptorists.com