

Retarded Child” (1963), “The Role and Value of the Retarded Child” (1964), and “May the Retarded Receive Communion” (1964), the Breitenbecks were among the

foremost clerical advocates for this portion of the people of God during and after the conciliar period.

## ***A New Accession to the Baltimore Province Archives: The Sermon Book of Father Edward Walsh, C.Ss.R.***

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Part of the joy of the archivist’s job is the resurrection of documents from the dust bin of history or the rescue of items that might otherwise be consigned to oblivion. An instance of this occurred on February 21, 2014, when I drove up to the former Legionaries of Christ scholasticate at Thornwood, New York. I had gotten a tip the previous evening from a professor at Manhattan College that the Legionaries were disbursing their library and that many Redemptorist books from France were among them. Not knowing precisely what to expect, I jumped in the car the next day.

It turned out that the Legionaries had obtained a large portion of their library from the Redemptorist novitiate library of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, once housed at Sherbrooke in the Province of Quebec. Sherbrooke had been in use as the novitiate for the Province of Ste. Anne since 1914, a year after it was canonically erected, and had secured all of the important volumes useful for theological study as was typical of Redemptorist seminary libraries in the early twentieth century. There was a large selection of volumes printed by the Abbé Migne, especially his *Encyclopédie théologique*, printed at Paris between 1844-6. Additionally, works by members of the French Catholic intelligentsia of the nineteenth century, such as Lacordaire and Chateaubriand, were also available for the taking. While I left the Migne volumes

(they are all online now) I was able to secure a number of volumes in church history for the archives’ library. But my most important acquisition that day was a book with a black cover and red spine, with no identifying marks except a call number from the library at Sherbrooke. When I opened it I learned that this was a book of mission sermons given by Father Edward Walsh, C.Ss.R., when he was stationed at St. Ann’s in Montréal, P.Q., Canada.

Inexplicably, this book of sermons had been incorporated into the overall donation by the Redemptorists to the Legionaries. Instead of de-accessioning the book from the Sherbrooke library and placing it within the provincial archives, it had gone out with all the other tomes. It is now in the possession of the Baltimore Province archives, where it will join our sermon collection.

The author of these sermons is an interesting and important figure in the development of the Edmonton-Toronto province and the sermon book itself is a small but interesting piece of provincial history. Edward Walsh was born in Montréal on March 29, 1880 to Richard and Mary (née Morrow) Walsh.<sup>1</sup> He grew up in St. Ann’s parish in Griffintown, an enclave of Irish immigrants and their descendents, even though the parish itself was then under the control of Belgian Redemptorists. He followed a Redemptorist vocation and was professed on October 8, 1899 at St. Trond.

He was one of the last men to go to Belgium for studies, enrolling in 1895. His theological training was at Beauplateau, Belgium, where he was ordained, by Bishop T. L. Heylan of Namur, on September 29, 1905. His final year of theology was spent at Ste. Anne-de-Beaupre, Quebec, and remained there as a tutor and teacher in the minor seminary from 1906-1909. His next assignment was to his home parish of St. Ann's, Montréal, and his principal duty was the preaching of missions and giving retreats. The *General Catalog* for 1910 lists him as a consultor. It was during his tenure at St. Ann's that the parish was transferred by the Belgian Province in 1912 to the newly constructed Vice-Province of Toronto, under the Baltimore Province. Walsh was among those who left for the nascent unit. St. Ann's joined two other English-speaking foundations—St. Augustine's in Brandon, Manitoba, and St. Gerard's in Yorkton, Saskatchewan—in the transfer away from the Belgian-controlled Province of Ste Anne-de-Beaupré.

According to the title page of Father Walsh's mission sermon book, it was composed beginning in the years he was at St. Ann's; thus, the book's beginnings reach back nearly a century. The last dated sermon is given at Woodstock, Ontario, September 1, 1938, enabling researchers to track developments in preaching style, subject matter, and rhetorical facility. The volume stretches over 264 pages and the sermons are given in a distinctive, clear hand, in penmanship that remains largely unaltered for approximately 25 years.

At this time, Walsh, now a member of the Baltimore Province, was sent for a second novitiate at St. Mary's, Annapolis, between 1912 and 1913. After five months work on the mission band at St. Patrick's, Toronto, he was next assigned to St. John's, New Brunswick, 1913 to 1915. Following the Baltimore Province's acquisition of the Brandon, Manitoba, St. Augustine

of Canterbury parish from the Belgian Redemptorists, Walsh was named as rector and pastor (1915-1921) and director of the re-opened minor seminary in 1916. There he was joined by his confreres George Mylett and Denis Coll. A strong English-Canadian nationalist, Walsh advocated for the creation of Toronto Province and wished to curtail pastoral care to Polish settlers in the area. The Redemptorists in Canada and the United States believed in assimilation of settlers. Employing English and instilling its use among the people was the principal mechanism for doing so. Only gradually did the province accede to a request for a Polish priest. The Brandon foundation closed in 1924.



Photos courtesy of the Archives of the Edmonton-Toronto Redemptorists.

Returning to St. Patrick's, Toronto, (1921-1924) as rector/pastor, he placed greater emphasis on missions than the parish. As the seat of the provincial government, a change was felt necessary. This was during the tenure of Father Provincial Arthur Coughlan, C.Ss.R., and the initial expansion of the Toronto Province into Western Canada. Walsh was transferred to St. Mary's College, Brockville, as the juvenate's minister, admonitor and prefect (1924-1927). Assigned to the preparations for the foundation of St. Joseph's parish in Moose Jaw, he arrived on August 27, 1927 in that Saskatchewan town and was welcomed by Father Thomas Forrest, "the erstwhile curate of St. Joseph's."<sup>2</sup> When the superior (Fr. Francis Hill) arrived on October 20, 1927, Walsh remained there, preaching missions in Western Canada until he took up his appointment as the first superior and pastor of the Ruthenian community of St. Mary's in Yorkton in mid-August 1928.<sup>3</sup>

Territorial claims and transfers between national or language groups often found Walsh in the mix. The Ukrainian Eastern-rite missions were transferred to the Toronto Province in 1928 by the Belgian Redemptorists. According to an entry on August 31, 1928, in the annals for St. Alphonsus, East Kildonan, Winnipeg, the chronicler notes: "Definite news of the taking over of the Ruthenian work by the Toronto province. Father Walsh is at present in charge. Father Provincial will commence the visitation at Yorkton."<sup>4</sup> In fact, Walsh was preparing to leave for Yorkton as early as August 8, 1928. Two days later he departed the community at Moose Jaw.

In his time at Yorkton, Walsh attempted to introduce English services gradually in the parish while prayers in the monastery switched to English. I will say more about this policy below.

Further details of Walsh's successive assignments in Western Canada are found in an article written by Father A. McBriarty in 1946.<sup>5</sup> According to McBriarty, when Walsh arrived at Moose Jaw on August 27, 1927, he was not alone. He was accompanied by Father George Daly, then director of the Sisters of Service. They were to take charge of the parish of St. Joseph until the arrival of the Redemptorists from Regina. This community was withdrawing from Regina's Holy Rosary Cathedral, but these fathers did not arrive until October 19, 1927. The last superior of the Regina community, Father Francis Hill, was the first Redemptorist superior of Moose Jaw, though Walsh remained in Moose Jaw until Hill's arrival.<sup>6</sup> From November 3 to December 9, Walsh went out on the missions in Alberta—travelling in some of the most inhospitable weather conditions. Between March and June of the following year, Walsh preached missions as far west as British Columbia.

At the time, these two foundations at Yorkton and Moose Jaw formed the Ruthenian Vice-Province of the Belgian Province. As mentioned, these communities were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Toronto Province in August 1928. McBriarty wrote that "just before the transfer it was decided that some Redemptorists of the Belgian Province would remain in these two places until the English-speaking Redemptorists of the Toronto Province would learn the Ruthenian language and Rite so as to be able to take over the work themselves. This explains why the personnel of the first Redemptorist Communities of the Toronto Province comprised mostly Fathers of the Belgian Province, viz.: Fathers Delaere, Kinsinger, Bala, Coulie, Szyszkowycz, Bachtalowsky and Kopiakiwsky. Of the Toronto Province, the Superior, Very Rev. Edward Walsh, was in Yorkton from the beginning, and then

these others arrived in 1929: Rev. James Grannan at the beginning of this year; Rev. Michael MacIsaacs on September 19th; and Rev. Lucian Howard about a week later.”<sup>7</sup>

Father S. J. Boland, in his *Dictionary of the Redemptorists*, notes that Father Walsh was made the first superior of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help community at Calgary on May 3, 1929.<sup>8</sup> However, the house annals for OLPH indicate that Walsh arrived only on February 6, 1930 and became the second superior.<sup>9</sup> The first superior was, in fact, Fr. Isadore Shalla and it was Shalla who supervised the building of the first church, which opened on December 22, 1929.

Meanwhile, Father Bachtalowsky succeeded Walsh as superior at Yorkton.<sup>10</sup> Walsh served at OLPH from February 1930 to 1933, during which time (1931) the Superior General returned the Ukrainian missions to Belgian Redemptorists. Thus, in the late 1920s, Walsh’s service was given to different provinces and vice-provinces, each of which had different language groups or liturgical rites (or both).

He could not have imagined being the inaugural pastor of this church (formerly St. Angela’s), newly dedicated to OLPH, and having new waves of immigrants radically alter its character. Today it is ethnically Chinese.

For his final pastoral appointment, he returned to St. Patrick’s, Toronto, as rector/pastor (1933-1936) and again placed the priority on preaching missions. Out of the parishes, Walsh was appointed to St. Alphonsus seminary, Woodstock, (1936-1938) as minister of the community and Novice Master to the Brothers in 1937.



Almost immediately after his arrival, the town levied a poll tax on all residents. The 73 seminary staff and students refused to pay it. With his superiors’ support, Walsh pleaded guilty to non-payment of the tax. Although jailed, he was freed after mounting public opinion on his behalf.<sup>11</sup>

While visiting St. Patrick’s in Toronto in December 1938, he suffered a stroke. He died at St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto, May 8, 1939. Several confreres were present in the hospital room at his death, including Fr. George Daly, a fellow Montrealer, St. Trond alumnus and homilist at his funeral Mass. The students at St.

Alphonsus seminary travelled to Toronto for the funeral, celebrated by Toronto Archbishop James McGuigan in St. Patrick’s church. Walsh is buried in the Redemptorist plot at Mount Hope Cemetery, Toronto, Ontario.

In his obsequies, Father Walsh is described as a man of robust constitution. “The many positions that Father Walsh held in the Order shows not only the great

confidence his higher superiors had in his prudence and judgement but also his unusual executive ability and his capacity to handle men. Although he was a Celt, he was nevertheless very even-tempered, jovial and kindly toward all. He was a faithful Redemptorist, observant of the Rule, very correct in his speech and conduct and a shining example to confreres and people alike.”<sup>12</sup>

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What is so significant about Walsh’s sermon book is that it shows this priest’s principal concerns. Much of it is boiler

plate, but some subjects were well-defined and focused on particular problems or groups. For instance, on June 25, 1913, Walsh gave an impassioned mission in Throoptown, Augusta Township, in the province of Ontario, a tiny border community along the St. Lawrence River about ninety miles from Montréal. It was an admonishment against drunkenness and the urging of confession—both of which were peculiarly fitting and culturally-specific examples of how an English-speaking mission would flow. It had become a commonplace since the nineteenth century for Protestant and Catholic preachers to consign drunkards to perdition. Walsh was interested in preserving his listeners from the flames of hell, but he also had other motives in mind, not least of which was the mainstreaming of a Catholic perspective on temperance in an Anglicized population. Thus, his words were one part spiritual encouragement, and one part dedicated to fomenting political will. Ontario went for Prohibition in 1916.

Walsh jolted his audience with vivid anecdotes and almost poetic eloquence. Drawing their attention to the fate of an American, Paul Morrison, who murdered his own mother, Father Walsh calmly explained that while Morrison was being led to the gallows—“his hands red with his mother’s blood”—he declared that “he never would have done the deed, were he not under the influence of drink.” So, he concluded,

Go on, drunkard, take the maddening cup: the drops floating on the rim of the glass will remind you of the tears of your broken-hearted wife; drink on: the foam on the glass will remind you of the grey hairs of your father and mother, whom, perhaps, you have sent already to the grave with broken hearts; drink on: the glass may look red to you now, it will remind you of the blood of your starving children, you have drained

their heart’s blood! Take the glass now, you cannot resist, ’tis the cup of necessity, ’tis the cup of malediction, ’tis the poison of serpents, and the gall of dragons, and the wine of the wrath of God! Drink it, ’tis the curse of the widow and the orphan; soak your body with drink, and be sure it will burn all the more fiercely in hell! ... And you, who sell liquor to the drunkard, and fatten on the accursed crime, stand up, if you dare, in the presence of God, and say, ‘His blood be upon us and our children!’ ... Listen to the cries of the drunkard in hell tonight, and remember, you will repeat those cries yourself if you die as a drunkard!

At the time Walsh preached the sermon at Throoptown, the temperance movement in Canada was at its peak. Many of the provinces had already outlawed alcohol consumption, beginning in 1900 with Prince Edward Island. The temperance movement in Quebec was gaining ground, too, though it was the last of the provinces to embrace Prohibition. Still, it had a tepid reception. By the onset of World War I, Quebecers had banned distilleries from selling alcohol, though this lasted only a brief time.<sup>13</sup>

Walsh’s gift of language and awareness of the politics of his age can be found in other aspects of his career as a Redemptorist, though with complications. In his book *Redemption and Renewal*, Paul Laverdure, notes that in the aftermath of his ministry at Brockville, Walsh was not up to learning Ukrainian so late in life. Moreover, he was more enthusiastic about bringing the Ukrainians into the Latin-rite and anglicizing the population. He began preaching missions in English in the villages and towns around Yorkton and tried to stir these communities into assimilating in English-speaking Canada. Already their children were learning English; Walsh saw that the future lay in the people having their rite quietly but assuredly supplanted. And yet,

when other members of the Toronto province were assigned to Yorkton, they were instructed by the provincial to learn the Eastern rite and language of the people, in complete contradiction to Walsh's orders. According to Laverdure, Walsh's superiors "were aghast" at his impolitic pastoral care, and his Belgian confreres were equally vexed. However, when he met with the Roman visitor, Baltimore Provincial James Barron, Walsh explained his own position

on the "Ukranian question." Apparently this made an impression on Barron, who sent Walsh's recommendations to Rome in an official report. But the damage had been done. English-speaking Redemptorists from the Toronto province were removed by 1930, leaving only Ukrainian-speaking Redemptorists to care for the people.<sup>14</sup> Walsh went back to St. Patrick's in Toronto as rector, never having to worry over preaching in Ukrainian again.

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<sup>1</sup> For the following biographical details, see Archives of Edmonton-Toronto Redemptorists, Toronto Series 6-05, File 2, Box 26. Many of the elements of Walsh's biography were supplied by the archivist for Edmonton-Toronto, M.C. Havey. Much of what follows is drawn from her investigations.

<sup>2</sup> Edmonton-Toronto Archives, Annals, St. Joseph's, Moose Jaw, Toronto Series 7-19, Oversized Box 40.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Edmonton-Toronto Archives, Annals, St. Alphonsus, Toronto Series 7-19, Oversized Box 20, file 1.

<sup>5</sup> See A. McBriarty, C.Ss.R., "The History of the Redemptorists in Western Canada," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report* 14 (1946): 73-94.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 85. This is a parish swap within the Archdiocese of Regina. When the pastor in Moose Jaw died, Archbishop Mathieu offered the Toronto Province the parish in Moose Jaw. The Toronto Province considered their 12-year pastoral presence at Holy Rosary Cathedral in Regina as temporary. But the archbishop wanted the Redemptorists to remain in the archdiocese. Thus, Fr. Hill left the cathedral parish in Regina and became the first superior in Moose Jaw. Edmonton-Toronto Archives, Annals, St. Joseph's, Moose Jaw, Toronto Series 7-19, Oversized Box 40.

<sup>7</sup> See McBriarty, "The History of the Redemptorists in Western Canada," 86.

<sup>8</sup> See S. J. Boland, C.Ss.R., *A Dictionary of the Redemptorists* (Rome: Collegium S. Alfonsi de Urbe, 1987), 62.

<sup>9</sup> Founded in 1925 under the name of St. Angela's, the parish was transferred to the Redemptorists in April 1929 and was renamed as Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Annals, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Calgary, Toronto Series 7-05, Oversized Box 4.

<sup>10</sup> See S. J. Boland, C.Ss.R., *A Dictionary of the Redemptorists* (Rome: Collegium S. Alfonsi de Urbe, 1987), 62.

<sup>11</sup> AETR, Toronto Series 6-05, File 2, Box 26.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See "Temperance Movement," in the online Canadian Encyclopedia, available at <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/temperance-movement/> and Miriam Catherine Smith, *A Civil Society? Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> See Paul Laverdure, *Redemption and Renewal: The Redemptorists of Western Canada, 1834-1994* (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1994), 150-152.

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### ***In the Fall issue:***

- ***Redemptorist Chaplains in World War II***
- ***The Post-Vatican II experience of the Vice-Province of San Juan***
- ***The Paraguayan Missionary Journals of Father Charles "Jakey" Herget, C.Ss.R.***
- ***Spotlight on the Brothers and more!***