

VISIT TO THE F.I.C. ROCKY MOUNTAIN MISSIONS – SEPT. 4-11, 2012 –

By Br. Charles Thomas FIC

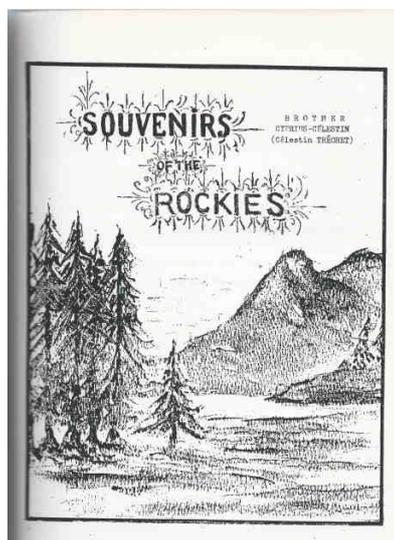
When Bro. Roger Monfette was Archivist, I went into the Archives and read Bro. Cyprius Celestin's memoirs of his stay with the Indian people of the Rockies. At the time I read it more out of curiosity than for any other reason. As my fiftieth anniversary was approaching, I thought about the book and began to plan for a trip in the footsteps of the founders of the FIC in the US. Among the things I had to consider was to find someone who would come with me because I no longer drove.

Then one afternoon, while Brother Albert and I were talking in the archives, I popped the question about the trip. After some time for thought, he finally agreed to join me. We spent the next year planning the trip. We checked the List of Personnel for the 1903-1910 period and listed the missions where the brothers worked with the Jesuits. We sat by the computer and "map quested" a trip that would bring us to the missions that were still standing today. We eliminated the two or three of Eastern Montana only because of distance. Once we had a fairly accurate itinerary of a possible trip, we started to seek the necessary permissions.

Two minor problems rose. What was it going to cost? What was the rationale for the trip? Both were easily addressed. The finances for the trip was based on personal travels to and from Detroit. When finally figured out, it came to around \$25.00 for each year of service given to the Order. I said to myself, "What a deal!"

The rationale for the trip took more thought. In the end it came to the point that we look to those brothers who come before us for inspiration and example. In order to more appreciate what they have done for their Church and their Order, it made sense to follow their footsteps. In so doing, I could only wonder at the end of the trip how these men managed. We were talking distances of miles at a time when the car was in its infancy. Brothers were two in a community for most of the time. How did they manage?

Following is a summary of our trip. While there is little mention of the Brothers in the history of "Holy Angels Province," the name given to the missions at the time of their foundation, there is some mention of the Brothers' presence in the superior's log for the Jesuits.



Tuesday, September 4, 2012

We drove from Alfred, ME very early to Manchester, NH to catch a Southwest flight at 6:30AM for Denver, CO and then another for Spokane, WA. We rented a 2012 Chevy Malibu equipped with satellite radio, and drove to our motel in eastern Spokane.

Wednesday, September 5, 2012

After spending some time with Mr. David Kingma, archivist for the Jesuit Fathers at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Albert and I drove to Omak, WA to visit St. Mary's Mission nearby. St. Mary's is about four miles from Omak. The church we saw was built in 1910 on the campus of the Paschal Sherman Indian School. Some of the original buildings besides the church are still standing – some in use others standing empty. A granite stone marks the dedication of the church to its founder, Fr. Etienne de Rougé, SJ. The present pastor, Fr. Jake Morton, SJ gave us a tour after which we enjoyed a pot-luck supper with volunteers at St. Joseph's Church in Omak.



On our way to and on the return trip from Omak, we stopped at the Grand Coulee Dam, the largest concrete structure in the US. Our afternoon trip offered us time to take pictures of the dam and its surroundings. We made it in time at night to see the laser light show which traced the history and the purpose of the dam through laser technology on the falls from the dam. After a short visit to the tourist center, we returned to Spokane.

Thursday, September 6, 2012

After our daily Mass and breakfast, we stopped at Wal-Mart for some drinks for the trip to Pendleton, OR. We returned to the motel, picked our belongings and headed for Pendleton. We stopped at the Tri-cities (Richland, Pasco and Kennewick, WA) one of the three places associated with the Manhattan Project, the development of the first atomic bomb. A tour of the museum for the use of plutonium took about an hour and then we continued on to Pendleton, OR.



We arrived in Pendleton around 7:00 PM. Fr. Michael Fitzpatrick, SJ, along with his two dogs greeted us and gave us a tour of the St. Andrew's Mission campus. St. Andrew's is located about five miles from Pendleton. The campus consists of the rectory, church, a guest house and a couple other buildings. None of the buildings seemed like they were of original structure. The mission church is an A-frame structure. The western wall's stained glass windows traced the history of the mission. Most of the décor of the church was of Indian culture.

After our tour of the campus and church, supper was

welcomed. Original venue was the Wildhorse Resort and Casino. Because of the wait time, we opted to go to Sharri's Restaurant nearby. After supper we returned to St. Andrew's and spent the next two to three hours looking at records for some mention of the Brothers who worked with the Jesuit Fathers. We were able to find some notes throughout the documents. Copies will be furnished to the archives.

Friday, September 7, 2012



After an early rising, pre-Vatican liturgy and breakfast, we searched for a jeweler to repair Albert's watch and then headed for DeSmet, ID. We arrived at Sacred Heart Mission in DeSmet at around 3 in the afternoon. Here there were three buildings that caught our attention – the church, the rectory and the long house, meeting hall for the people in the vicinity. The hallway of the rectory was adorned with pictures and artifacts of the Jesuit presence among the Salish and Coeur d'Alene tribes. We sat at the dinner table Fr.

Robert Erickson, the pastor, and his assistant, Sr. Dolores Ellwart SP.

The church, not the original, had pieces from the original church which were used to make the altar and like St. Mary's and St. Andrew's, most of the art motif was Native American. The hallway of the rectory and one room trace the history of the mission. As in the other two missions, very little evidence was registered concerning the presence of the Brothers at the mission.

We rested after our tour of the church and the rectory. When we met around suppertime, we walked to the Long House to join those who arrived early for a "Mini Tekakwitha Conference," a short Native American Retreat with Bishop Michael Driscoll, the bishop of Boise. During the pot luck meal, there was a showing of the history of Sacred Heart Mission. After supper, we left for Spokane and our motel room.

Saturday, September 8, 2012

After an early breakfast, we left for Cataldo, ID and eventually, St. Ignatius, MT. Although the brothers did not minister in Cataldo, the mission serving the Salish and Coeur d'Alene Indians was within a mile of I-90 and a welcome break in the trip. The church and the rectory are the oldest standing structures in Idaho. It began with a fifteen minute presentation of Sacred Heart Mission. The tour included, for us, a tour of the church and the Visitor's Center.



The Church showed the ability of the Indians to build structures. A guide explained how the church was built without nails and then painted with juice from berries. One could trace a light blue in a couple of the ceiling panels and on the front wall behind the main altar. The Visitor's Center overlooked what was part of the cemetery.



Later on Saturday, it was on to Stevensville, MT and St. Mary's Mission. St. Mary's was founded by Fr. Pierre DeSmet in 1842. The present church (seen on the left) is the third church. Although Fr. DeSmet founded St. Mary's, it was Fr. Anthony Ravalli, priest, physician, pharmacist, carpenter and artist who was responsible for much of the artistry and building of the mission.

Still seen in the museum next to the church are artifacts built and molded by Fr. Ravalli.

Today the mission is a museum and the people of the area worship at the present St. Mary's Mission Church on the adjoining property. We joined them for the 5 PM Saturday evening Liturgy and then continued on to St. Ignatius Mission which was a three-hour drive from Stevensville including supper at Applebee's in Missoula, MT.

We arrived at the church and rectory around 8:30. Fr. Drew Maddock and his assistant greeted us. Due to the darkness, we didn't tour much on arrival, but rather visited with Fr. Maddock and got acquainted with our lodging.

We attended Liturgy Sunday morning which was followed by a coffee gathering in the basement of the church. When we returned to the rectory, we ate breakfast with Fr. Maddock. While Fr. Maddock was celebrating the Eucharist with his second community in another location, we visited the St. Ignatius Cemetery to give our respects to Bro. Alarius Nédélec, who died at the mission, September 10, 1904.



Of the six missions that we visited, St. Ignatius was the largest.

Fr. Maddock boasted that the mission purchased one million bricks in 1891 for \$500 to build the church. In its prime, the mission became the theologate for the Jesuits and

over 100 men resided there. In one of the buildings was a layout of the original mission which was made up of several buildings. Today only four stand — the Church, the rectory, the first convent for the Sisters of Providence and the first house for the pastor and his assistant.

At about the time that the brothers were in St. Ignatius, a Jesuit brother, Brother Joseph Carignano, was also there. Brother Joseph was the cook and handyman for the Jesuit community



and in his free time, he painted murals of the walls and the ceiling of the Church. His paintings include those of saints and scenes from the Bible. In all he painted 58 murals including three behind the main altar that show visions which St. Ignatius Loyola had.

While Father said the evening Mass at Jocko, where the Indians use one of the original St. Ignatius buildings for its Church, we went to a local restaurant for supper. The following morning, Monday, 10 September, 2012

we returned to Spokane in time for Albert to visit the grave of his brother-in-law's first wife.

We finished our trip on Monday evening by having a jubilee supper in Spokane. We flew back to Manchester, NH by way of Denver, CO, and Baltimore, MD on Tuesday, 11 September, 2012.

