



# Redemptorist North American Historical Bulletin

Issue #31

ISSN 1480-5235

Summer 2010

Visit us at: [www.redemptorists.com](http://www.redemptorists.com)

## West End in 2010!

Historians, Archivists, Friends will gather in West End, New Jersey, from Monday evening October 4 until Friday morning, October 8, 2010 to celebrate Redemptorist History in North America. The formal papers run the morning of Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Once every three years, the Institute for Redemptorist Historical Studies presents a conference open to the public. The speakers are already chosen; the topics in 2010 concentrate on biographies, especially of Redemptorist Brothers, special ministries (notably the ministry to the Deaf), and the relationships between Redemptorists and women religious congregations.

The historical scholars among us have been working hard over the past three years and are ready to present their findings in a rich and satisfying medley of anecdotes, biographies, histories, and meaning. This, the fifth conference organized and sponsored by the Institute for Redemptorist Historical Studies, is open to all interested people. But space is limited! Register early!

To register, contact the *San Alfonso Retreat House* in West End:

[mary@sanalfonsoretreats.org](mailto:mary@sanalfonsoretreats.org)

tel: 1-732-222-2731 ext. 140

fax: 1-732-870-8892

See you there!

*On March 28, 2011, we will be celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. John Neumann. There are many events being prepared to mark this event including a new book on Neumann, retreats for the Redemptorists of North America, and many events in concert with the Shrine of St. John Neumann in Philadelphia and the Redemptorists Foundation and Public Relations Office of the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province.*

*This is an article which shows a bit of the dynamics of St. John in the concern he so dramatically experienced and responded to during his ministry in North America, namely the Immigrant. Neumann sought to do everything he could to serve the needs of these faithful in the deep need they experienced in a new world.*

## A Pressing Need for the German Immigrants' Proposed German Seminary to train men for ministry in America

by

Rich Boever, CSSR

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, German-speaking immigrants were arriving in the United States in vast numbers, 1,500,000 of them in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Providing clergy for these immigrants was a major concern in North America. The new surroundings of America, far removed from the regular routine of the fatherland, was a great threat to the faith of the immigrant. There was, without doubt, a firm conviction that “language preserved faith”. How was the faith to be preserved in a land that seemed so foreign to all that had been known in the homeland?

Fr Alexander, CSSR, wrote that “*we were soon convinced that for every hundred Indians who were baptized, a thousand Catholics fell away from the Faith, their children grew up without baptism, the adults lived without instruction in their religion, without receiving the sacraments; and all of this is due to the scarcity of*

*priests. At present the Indians are better cared for than the German Catholics; for the Indians have the benefit of a college conducted by the Jesuits and financed by the Government, while the Germans have absolutely nothing in this regard”* (quoted by F.G. Holweck in *Pastoral-Blatt*, July, 1920, p. 121).

When Father Frederick Rese who was then Vicar General for the Diocese of Cincinnati and later Bishop of Detroit reported on the condition of the German immigrants, the Austrian Emperor established the Leopoldine Foundation for the needs of the American mission; he also successfully persuaded Father Passerat to consider sending Redemptorists to the mission which became a reality in 1832 with three Brothers and three priests sent as missionaries. By 1845, there would be 30 Redemptorists engaged in the American mission. These were supported by the Leopoldine Foundation in Vienna and later by the Ludwig Mission Society of Mu-

nich. The financial support was essential, but it did not suffice in increasing a number of priests sufficient to serve the immigrant German speaking people.

John Neumann was well aware of this need. As a newly ordained priest in the frontier of New York, he wrote back home on a number of occasions making his point:

*“...I was at once determined to go among the Indians. God in the meantime arranged otherwise and I became a missionary in the Diocese of New York...I can assure you that my mission district might support 2 or 3 priests as well as me alone”* (June 4, 1837, to the Rev Dean of Budjovice).

*“In the Diocese of New York, there would be enough work for 5 German priests; the Rev. Vicar General of the diocese of Cincinnati assures me of the same fact for the state of Ohio”* (Letter of Oct. 7, 1838, to Neumann’s family).

*“...(T)hey (the bishop and staff) are convinced of the increasing number of German Catholics. The favorable moment has, therefore, arrived when I should like to remind my dear confreres of the words of Christ: “Go into the whole world and teach all nations.” The Germans have little to expect from the seminaries in America now in existence. They are incomplete and studying is expensive. Most Rev. Bishop Hughes, the co-adjutor of Bishop Dubois (of New York) wrote through Father Raffener that several others can come next year. The most Reverend Bishop of Boston in Massachusetts also wants a German priest for his diocese. Another large field for German missionaries is opening in the new Republic of Texas...”* (May 31, 1839 to Dean).

Well aware of the pressing need for clergy who could minister to the German immigrant, Neumann encourages the idea of establishing seminary in Europe which could provide missionaries to North America.

*“In regard to the Mission-House, I have by no means given up the idea because its utility and indispensable necessity is the same and becomes more apparent. To carry out the idea, I advise but without presuming to dictate, to begin on a small scale. Even should the moment not yet have arrived, when an institution can be erected in our Fatherland, that is not necessary for the present. The temporary promise of voluntary poverty and of entire obedience to the respective Bishops with which some are willing to devote themselves to the American Mission, assures us of the realization of a congregation of Missionary priests. If only two or three can come, they would have to take over a station like Rochester, Albany, Syracuse of Lancaster....Therefore I beg my dear confreres, who have made the resolution to come to America to come in God’s name, and to support the arms of our militant and praying Church”* (May 31, 1839).

This desire to recruit more clergy for the German speaking immigrant in America remained one of Neumann’s special hopes:

*“The need of Catholic priests and the spiritual desolation of the faithful is increasing day by day. Judging from a human standpoint, the disproportion would have lamentable results – only God alone is the support of His Church. When I arrived here in America three years ago, it seemed as if the Germans in America would soon have sufficient priests. But the results taught otherwise. The Most Reverend Bishop Hughes, the co-adjutor*

*of this diocese, declared not long ago, that he would receive 7-8 if they were to be had” (May 31, 1839).*

In 1841, John Neumann became a Redemptorist novice, but he never ceased to dream of a seminary established for the preparation of missionaries to North America. He took it upon himself to write to the Archbishop of Vienna stating that in the existent structures, it would not be possible to recruit a sufficient number of priests to serve the new immigrants; neither was the training provided in the existent seminaries adequate of preparing priests for service among the German immigrants. A seminary in Austria or Bavaria to prepare men for the ministry in America would contribute greatly to the safety of the faith among the German speaking immigrant.

Mr. Francis Sausen in *Katolische Sonntagsblätter für Belehrung und Erbauung*, February 5, 1842, urged the creation of such a seminary as a fitting tribute to the 300th anniversary of the Council of Trent.

*“The most fitting celebration of the tercentenary would be this: to establish as a memorial of the event an institution which would continue the work inaugurated by the Council of Trent. We all have an obligation to do our utmost to spread our Faith and thereby perpetuate the efforts of the Council of Trent. And the best way to achieve this end would be to erect a German seminary for foreign missions. An institution of this character would be the most appropriate celebration of the tercentenary of the Council” (John M. Lenhart, O.F.M.Cap., *Social Justice Review*, May 1941, p.58).*

Though the idea of a Mission Seminary for America was well received, the proposal never took root. The superior of the

Redemptorists in America, Rev. Alexander Cziwtkowietz, proposed that Bavaria might be a better place to execute the plan. The Redemptorists in Altotting under the Rector, Rev. Franz von Bruchmann, were prepared to try to open such a seminary. A meeting was arranged with King Ludwig I who was greatly impressed by the work of the Redemptorists in the New World. Fr. Alexander had reason to have hope.

*“His Royal Majesty has most graciously deigned to decree, pending any contrary decision by Himself, that a German Mission Seminary be established in Bavaria and be assigned to the college of the Redemptorists in Altotting, that negotiations shall be immediately entered into with this College regarding the manner of its establishment, and that proposals shall be submitted to the King to enable him to make His decision” (Willibald Matthaeser, O.S.B., *Social Justice Review*, 1935, p. 213).*

The purpose of the new seminary was: *“to provide for those who feel themselves called to the exalted and divine work of devoting their energies to the salvation of souls in distant parts of the world, the an opportunity to prepare themselves in every way for this important field of labor...” (Willibald Matthaeser, O.S.B., *Social Justice Review*, November 1935, p. 250.).*

This idea was developed in detailed but never saw the light of day. It was probably never even shown to King Ludwig.

On July 2, 1841, The Redemptorists were divided into Provinces and in 1844 the American houses were placed under the Provincial of Belgium. After visiting America, the Belgium Provincial, Friedrich von Held, submitted that the Redemptorists should cease to serve many small communities and become organized

into larger communities. To do this, he would need the full support of the Ludwig Mission Society and this would interfere with the proposed Mission Seminary.

*“It was evident that the Ludwig Mission Society, notwithstanding the generosity of the Bavarian Catholics of that period, could not at one and the same time carry out the undertaking involving the expense of the great Mission Seminary and support*

*the Redemptorist establishments in America with sizable contributions” (Willibald Matthaeser, O.S.B., Social Justice Review, December 1935, p. 287).*

As a result of these circumstances, it seemed that the possibility of establishing a Mission Seminary of the American mission was halted. It was an idea whose time had not yet come. \*\*\*

The North American Chapter of the Institute for Redemptorist Historical Studies met in St. Michael’s, Chicago from October 26 to 30, 2009.

Present were:

Matt Allman C.Ss.R.  
Holy Redeemer College  
3112 7<sup>th</sup> St NE / Washington, D.C. 20017  
(617) 650-3873 (cell)  
(202) 529-4410 (house)  
[mattcssr@gmail.com](mailto:mattcssr@gmail.com)



Rich Boever, C.Ss.R.  
Pagani House Community  
1810 Timber Trail Ln / Oconomowoc, WI  
53066 / (262) 370-4241 (cell)  
[rboever@redemptoristretreat.org](mailto:rboever@redemptoristretreat.org)



Gil Enderle, C.Ss.R.  
C.P. 2458  
Via Merulana 31  
1-00100 Rome, Italy  
[gilenderle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gilenderle@sbcglobal.net)



Bob Fenili C.Ss.R.  
Seelos Community  
1027 E. Hyde Park Blvd  
Chicago, IL 60615-2807  
(773) 363-2094  
[jrfcssr@aol.com](mailto:jrfcssr@aol.com)



Carl Hoegerl, C.Ss.R  
7509 Shore Rd.  
Brooklyn, NY 11209-2807  
(718) 833-1900  
[carlhoeg@aol.com](mailto:carlhoeg@aol.com)



Ashley Large  
Redemptorists–Denver Province  
2130 E. 14th Ave. / Denver, CO 80206  
(303) 370-0035  
(386) 405-1814 (cell)  
[archives@redemptorists-denver.org](mailto:archives@redemptorists-denver.org)  
[alarge@redemptorists-denver.org](mailto:alarge@redemptorists-denver.org)



Jack Kennington, C.Ss.R  
7509 Shore Rd.  
Brooklyn, NY 11209-2807  
(718) 833-1900 (cell)  
(718) 833-1900 (house)



Rich Luberti C.Ss.R.  
9147 Joseph St  
P.O. Box 158 / Maybee, MI 48159  
(734) 693-2033 (cell)  
(734) 587-3490 (fax)  
[rich\\_luberti@compuserve.com](mailto:rich_luberti@compuserve.com)



Paul Laverdure  
(Director of Library and Archive  
Services, University of Sudbury  
935 Ramsey Lake Road  
Sudbury, ON. CANADA P3E 2C6  
(705) 673-5661 ext 208  
[plaverdure@usudbury.ca](mailto:plaverdure@usudbury.ca)



Otto Weis  
Wolfersbergasse 10C/1  
A-1140 Wien, Austria  
(Tel) 0043-1-9671920  
[o.weiss@gmx.net](mailto:o.weiss@gmx.net)



**T**he 2009 meeting of the North American Chapter of the Institute for Redemptorist Historical Studies opened with prayer. The announcements by Gil Enderle were greeted with applause. A donor graciously paid for lunch for the group and Bob Fenili was congratulated on the publication of another tome within the General History project. An English edition is in the works.

The bulk of the 2009 meeting revolved around the preparation of the 2010 Conference to be held in West End. The meeting also elected Gil Enderle to chair the group, and discussed works in progress. These included the transcription and annotation of the Sheeran diary and Otto Weiss's work on Stangassinger. Other topics included Sarnelli, Spirituality, the Retreat Movement in the Baltimore Province, the early years in Puerto Rico, the situation of the library and archives of Esopus, the Shroud Collection, amalgamating archives, digitizing records, the costs of publishing (including the *Bulletin*), new works about Clement Hofbauer, up-coming works on Cardinal Van Rossum, Gillet, Saenderl, F.X. Murphy, Max Schmalz, the Knights of Columbus in Coeur d'Alene, Hecker and the Paulists, and so many other topics too numerous to mention. The discussions were dense, informative, and fruitful. \*\*\*

## Special Notice

*2011 remembers  
the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the  
birth of St. John Neumann  
Mark your calendar  
to participate  
in the special events*

sponsored by the CSSR North American  
Spirituality Commission:

### Retreats:

January 3 - 7 at Tucson  
March 28 - April 1 at Liguori  
May 9 - 13 at West End  
July 25 - 29 at Oconomowoc  
October 24 - 28 at Toronto

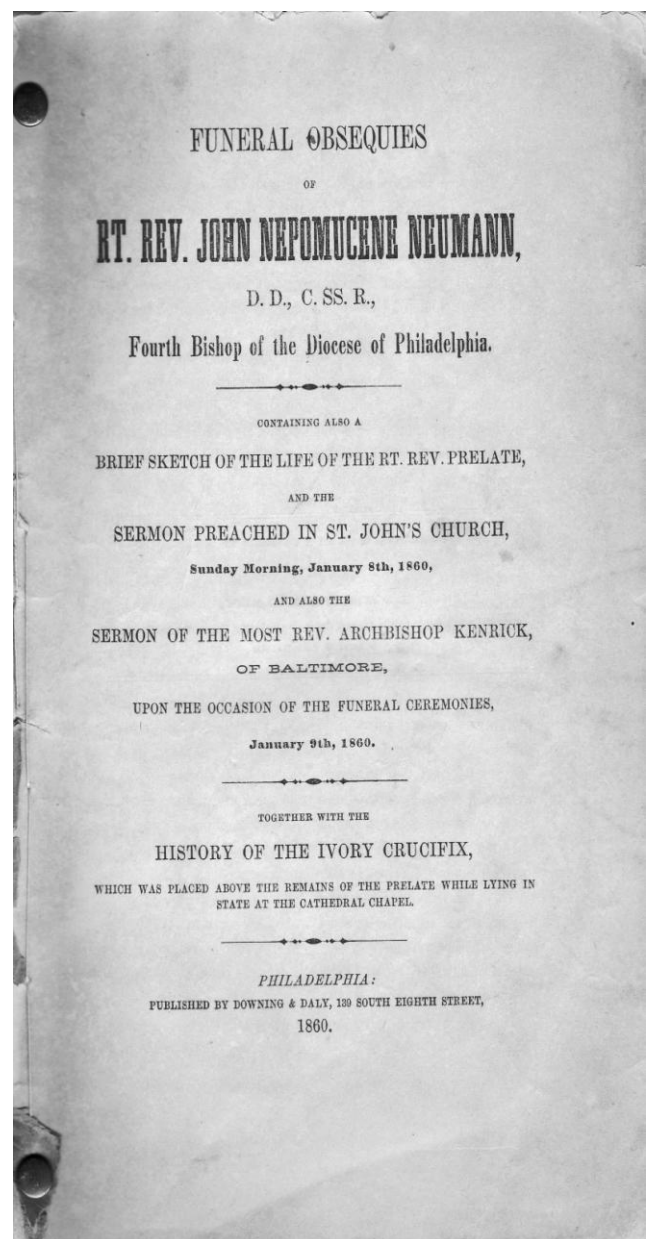
Sponsored by the Neumann Year  
Committee of Baltimore:

### Neumann Pilgrimage:

November 29 - - December 3  
at West End, New Jersey

From Liguori Publications:

The Life and Writings of Neumann  
A Retreat with John Neumann  
Charism 4



**North American Chapter  
of the  
Institute for Redemptorist  
Historical Studies**

*The opinions expressed are the authors' responsibility and are not necessarily shared by the  
Institute for Redemptorist Historical Studies.*

*Please acknowledge all citations in the following format:*

**Redemptorist North American  
Historical Bulletin  
Issue 31 Summer 2010**

*Reproduction of any portion of the Bulletin will be granted by request. Send a note to the publishers  
outlining the intended use of the material.*

Editor: Dr. Paul Laverdure  
c/o The Library: University of Sudbury  
935 Ramsey Lake Road, Sudbury, Ontario,  
P3E 2C6, Canada  
Email: [plaverdure@usudbury.ca](mailto:plaverdure@usudbury.ca)



Exhumation of Saint John Neumann (courtesy of Richard Boever, CSSR)