

News of the arts

St. Joseph's celebrates anniversary

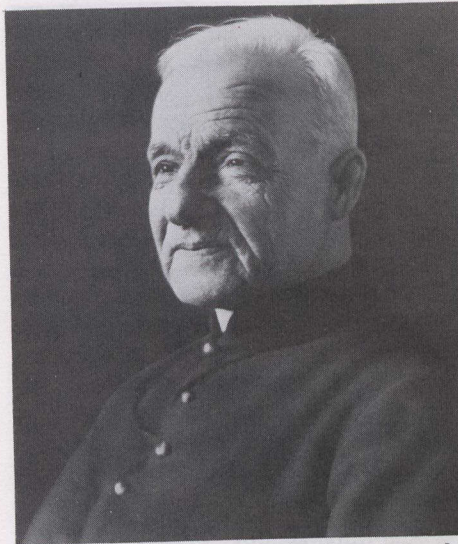
Visitors to St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal are sharing in the celebration this year of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the shrine's inauguration.

Founded by Brother André as a simple chapel on the slopes of Mount Royal in 1904, the shrine became so popular that, by 1937, an imposing basilica had replaced the original structure.

Born in 1845, Alfred Bessette assumed the religious name "Brother André" when he joined the Fathers of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1863. The frail, shy, semi-literate man was the doorkeeper of Montreal's Notre-Dame College for 65 years. As his piety gained renown, people flocked to see him; many of the sick and disabled claimed to have been cured through his intercession.

When the college parlour could no longer accommodate Brother André's numerous visitors, the chapel was built. He died in 1937, a few months before the basilica was completed.

To mark the anniversary, flags and banners decorate the grounds surrounding the Oratory. Special events are taking place, including sacred music concerts, religious theatre and exhibitions of religious art. A collection of engravings by



Brother André (above) founded the Oratory in 1904.

the French artist Georges Rouault is on display until September. The Oratory's prayers are being concentrated on current themes such as the International Year of the Child, and on the problems of the unemployed, the lonely and the handicapped.

Brother André was pronounced "venerable" by Pope Paul VI in 1978, meaning that the Roman Catholic church considers him to be an exemplar to the faithful.



The Oratory attracts some two million visitors and pilgrims a year.



St. Joseph's Oratory as it was the day of its inauguration, October 19, 1904.

Hai Hong refugees learn French

Fifty-three young Vietnamese, refugees from the freighter *Hai Hong*, who arrived in Canada last November, have been attending Montreal Catholic School Commission orientation classes since December.

The students, ranging in age from 12 to 17, are studying mainly French at Saint-Luc High School in the west end of the city.

Teachers Thich La, Gilles Lapointe and Christiane and Irène Tellier are in charge of the classes and, although they experience difficulties, they also have their share of rewards.

"As in every class, there are strong and weak students. We try to make the learning process as easy as possible for them," explains Miss Tellier.

The method used is that of international French, which involves "dynamic" teaching techniques. "There is a great deal of repetition accompanied by many gestures," adds Miss Tellier.

"Written work presents less of a problem since at the outset the Vietnamese use the same alphabet as we do."

In addition to French, the students have to acquire basic modern mathematical skills.

Thirty-one of the Vietnamese students are at the high school level and the rest will enter elementary school. For Mr. La, "the important thing is to build a bridge between what they have already learned in their country and what they have to learn in a few months to be able to integrate into regular classes by September 1979".

"Au revoir"

It required prompt action in December on the part of the school commission's reception service to prepare the way for young refugees to attend school. "Addresses had to be obtained for registrations, transportation had to be organized for children attending kindergarten and elementary school, parents had to be encouraged to provide the children with a lunch and, of course, teachers had to be hired...all this within two weeks," said Jean-Pierre Blain.

The results are already encouraging. The students know the verb "partir", and can distinguish pronouns, say complete sentences and call out a friendly "au revoir" as they leave for home.

(From Panorama, March 1979.)