

EYMARDIAN FAMILY

**SSS INTERNATIONAL**

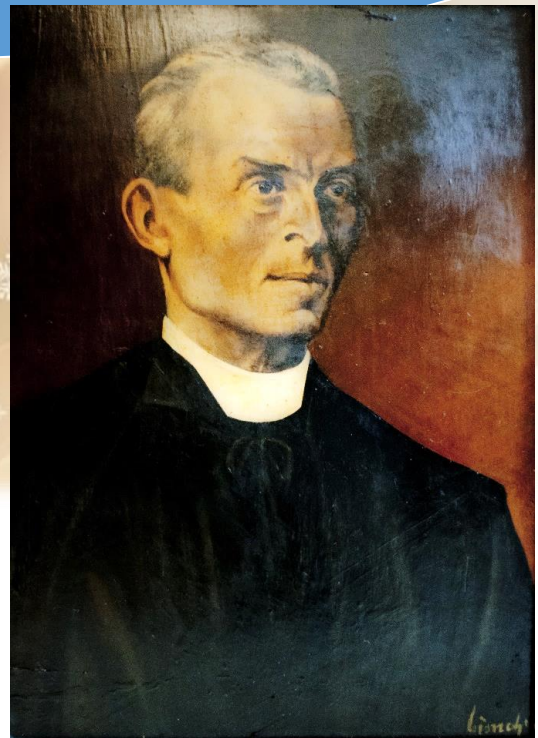


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**Curia Generalizia SSS, Via G.B. de Rossi, 46 - 00161 Roma - Italia - [www.ssscongregatio.org](http://www.ssscongregatio.org)**

## A painting of Fr Eymard found in Rome

On 30 September 2021, our Superior General, Father Eugênio Barbosa Martins, received a letter from Professor Gianni (Giovanni) Biondi, a resident in Formello in the province of Rome. Prof. Biondi informed him that he had in his possession of a painting by Saint Peter-Julian Eymard. We got in touch with him to get to know each other better and to arrange for how to obtain the painting. Here is the story about it.



### Contents:

- A painting of Eymard found in Rome
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- 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of priesthood, Italy
- Review of the book 'In God's time'
- Deceased / Anniversaries

Prof. Gianni (Giovanni) Biondi is a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, former Director of the Complex comprising the Unit of Paediatric Psychology at the Bambino Gesù Hospital, in Rome.

He wrote to us about a work of art painted by his father, Michele Biondi di Giubbino.

It all began in 1953. Like many of his peers, he had contracted polio. His condition was quite serious. At that time his father was in contact with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in Rome and perhaps at San Benedetto del Tronto regarding some works of art, about which, however, Prof. Biondi remembers very little.

It was a very difficult time for him: infantile paralysis, with various levels of severity, had affected his four limbs. During that period, a religious was very close to him; his name was Father Damiani. One night the child Gianni dreamt of a priest next to him, and he says that he was struck by the sense of serenity transmitted by the feeling his affectionate closeness gave him.

Later, he spoke of his dream to Father Damiani who showed him a photo of the then Blessed Father Eymard whom the child, with surprise, recognized.

Prof. Biondi recalls that at home there had always been the impression that from that moment on he began to improve and apart from some remaining problems, he was able to experience a good autonomy of movement, eventually allowing him to carry out his life both as a father, husband, professional.

At that time his father painted a portrait of Blessed Father Eymard which he possesses.

Since Prof. Biondi and his wife live in a house that is too large for them, they decided to move and to donate this portrait to the Congregation in memory of Saint Eymard, of whom he is very fond.

The religious to whom Prof. Biondi refers is Father Leone Damiani, a Blessed Sacrament religious. In September 1952 Fr Damiani was transferred to the community of San Claudio in Rome. Thus, he became acquainted with the Biondi family.

Fr Damiani was born in Botta di Sedrina, province of Bergamo, on 28 July 1923. Ordained a priest on 29 March 1952 at San Benedetto del Tronto, after a brief stint in Rome, he left on a mission to Brazil in August 1953 and then returned in Italy in 1973. He died at San Benedetto del Tronto on 18 May 2011.

On 10 November 2021, Father Eugênio and Father Philip Benzy, the General Treasurer, went to Formello to meet Prof. Biondi and his wife in person, from whom they received the painting. The meeting was very cordial and interesting. The picture presents a beautiful portrait of Fr Eymard realised by oil painting technique, measuring 85 x 67 cm, carried out between 1954 and 1957 in Rome by the artist Michele Biondi di Giubbino.

A few days later, the Biondi family were invited to lunch at the Curia during which Fr Eugênio gave them a copy of the biography of Fr Eymard.

To learn about the works of the artist Michele Biondi di Giubbino, you can visit his website:

[www.michele-biondi-di-giubbino.it](http://www.michele-biondi-di-giubbino.it)

Rome, 7 December 2021

**Father Joseph Vu Quoc Binh, sss**  
Secretary General



Fr Eugenio and the Biondi family  
with the picture above

## Colombia: the Eucharist from solidarity with the poor

**T**he mission of the Blessed Sacrament Religious, deriving its meaning widely from the Eucharist, urges us to be in constant harmony with the living reality of the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Following the Eucharistic Week carried out in the community of the Vocational House from 29 August to 2, September 2021 on the theme “*Eucharist, bond of charity and fraternity*”, it was suggested to undertake a concrete activity related to this pastorally.

Attentive to the universal Church’s proposal for the month of October, the community carried out a missionary activity and charitable deed for the poor of

the Barrio el Codito, in the Usaquén-Bogotá locality. Some sixty (60) baskets and twenty (20) bags of clothing were shared with the inhabitants of the said community.

This activity enabled us to get closer to the living reality of this community’s vulnerability of extreme poverty, consisting of a lack of drinking water or toilets, food shortages, and the constant struggle to get daily bread. The approach to this sociocultural context within the Colombian capital recalls a thought expressed by the Founder: *The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament is the first religious order, the first of all, and must have the most beautiful mission, namely, everything that is miserable, most vile, everything. They think that when we call them marginalized, we cannot go any lower. We must only imitate Jesus in his mission of welcoming the poor and marginalized. I tell you, though we are not numerous enough yet, there our mission is already traced out.* (cf. PS 381,2)

One would not imagine such a chaotic and inhuman reality in a big city like Bogotá but in more distant environments such as the regions of Chocó, La Guajira, among others, as reported by the media.



*Eucharistic week: "Eucharist, bond of charity and fraternity"*

Although we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with fine political statements related to democracy and social improvement, the living situation of the poorest shows realities of extreme poverty and injustice in today's world. This is constantly denounced by Pope Francis: *"The high levels of poverty are the clearest*

*indication of the widespread injustice that prevails in the world and our failures in implementing the most elementary rights."* (Speech of Pope Francis addressed to the Pan-American Committee of Judges regarding social rights and the Franciscan doctrine).

Hopefully we will not remain mere observers expressing some 'homiletical' reflections about the Eucharist but that do not touch life in concrete acts. It is urgent to go beyond the liturgical dimension of the Eucharist and embrace its entire breadth from the social and experiential perspective of human beings.

9 November 2021

Father Elibien Joseph, sss

## **Do this in memory of Me** **(Lk 22:19c)**

The General Council had its annual retreat from 29 November to 04 December 2021 in the sss community of Malmantile, near Florence. By now, Malmantile has become the usual place for our retreats. After being guided in 2019 by Father Mario Vecchiato of the province of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament - Italy/Spain, in 2020 via zoom by Father Justin Sequeira of the province of Kristu Jyoti - India, this time, in 2021 Father Mario Pistolesi of the province of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, preached the retreat to the Council.

For those who do not know or do not remember, Father Mario Pistolesi was a member of the General Council in the years from 1988 to 1993. Hence, as an expert on the mission of the Council, he was free to suggest the theme. He chose to guide us along the theme:

*"Do this in memory of Me".*

Following the Evangelist Luke our preacher led us along the road that Jesus passed from the Mount of the Temptations to Jerusalem in the spirit of a pious Israelite (cf. Ps 94:95). From the beginning we had to wear the spiritual habit of a pilgrim who experiences the joy of being invited to go up to Jerusalem. Jesus would have made the retreat to understand what the will of his Father was. Aware of his mission, Jesus took the firm decision to go to Jerusalem. Along the way, we were invited to look at the Master's way of approaching the most diverse people encountered along his missionary path. We had to pause to consider his delicacy in welcoming and empathizing with his interlocutors.

Nonetheless, the guide led us to contemplate how empathy and compassion were two features of the Son of Man's mission. He pointed to the emblematic example shown in the journey together with the disciples of Emmaus, and he underlined the pedagogy present in it: Jesus' patience in the face of their slowness to comprehend the reality, among many other good deeds Jesus carried out



So, what is the meaning of the discipleship of disciples if not that of carrying out his mission according to the last commandment "in memory of Me"? That is, the words "Do this in memory of Me" had become such a strong refrain because it was always combined with an action with geographical and temporal localization that Jesus directed to concrete people. In some way, this retreat suggested various dynamics and dimensions to be kept always together in our personal living, but also in carrying out our mission as a General Council. As vicars of the Master, it is necessary always to have before us that the mission is His. Two important rudders in this undertaking are faith and prayer because He is with us.



Frs Benzy, Agostinho and Mario



Father Agostinho Maholele, sss  
General Consultor

Father Mario Pistolesi has turned 85 and has just celebrated his sixtieth anniversary of priesthood on 8 December 2021. It was pleasantly surprising to see his vitality considering his age. We renew our expressions of gratitude and our eucharistic best wishes for this man of God convinced of his sss vocation. A THOUSAND THANKS! Likewise, gratitude goes to all the members of that community who made us feel welcome by their warm hospitality, brotherhood and generosity. We can say that we have found some of that fire with which Eymard wanted to enkindle the four corners of the world.

14 December 2021

## Meeting of the European Conference

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the two previous European Conference meetings in May were held via Zoom. But now we could meet in Paris on 9 and 10 November 2021 and each province had two delegates. The Provincial of the Province of Peter and Paul was connected via Zoom.



The two General Consultors, Jose-Antonio Rivera Ruiz and Joseph Vu Quoc Binh, had brought a letter from Father General in which he reflected on some of the items on our agenda.

An important point on the agenda was **the mutual communication of the three provinces in Europe**. How can we keep each other informed? We often talk about the concept of "internationality" in the Congregation and how we can live it in Europe first of all. Of course, language remains a problem: in the province of Peter and Paul the language is English, in the province of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Italian and Spanish, and in the province of Eymard in Europe French, German and Dutch. But there are always possibilities for translation and there are even good translation programmes.

We still want to exchange the decisions of the provincial councils, as well as all the preparatory documents for the upcoming chapters.

Each province talked about the method they use to involve the religious and the Eymardian family in the chapter.

**Primary and ongoing formation** were also discussed. Fathers Hans van Schijndel and Manuel Barbiero both have experience in the formation of older candidates for the novitiate. They each wrote a reflection on our formation document "Follow Me" and the adaptations and additions for older candidates.

Each province has a commission for ongoing formation and material for this will also be distributed.

Another point were **the statutes**. How to simplify and adapt them to facilitate the responsibility for the good functioning of the European Conference. The main adjustments are the following:

- the meeting takes place once every two years in person and in the meantime the meetings are held via Zoom.
- Until now, the president was always elected, but it was decided that the presidency would rotate between the three provinces. And that the presidency will not be held by one person, but by the provincial and its council. This is an expression of joint responsibility.
- If necessary, provincials from other continents who have a community in Europe can be invited by Zoom.

**Other items** on the agenda were:

- ✓ foundations in Europe by provinces outside Europe,
- ✓ finances,
- ✓ news
- ✓ and a European Commission for Mission.

And as the last item on the agenda, we celebrated Joseph Binh's birthday.

**Father Eugene van Heyst, sss**

*President of the European Conference*





# Ordination to Diaconate and Priesthood in the Province of Vietnamese Martyrs

In discussions about the meanings of the Eucharist and its relationship with the Church, Vatican II in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* emphasises that the Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life” (LG 11). The Catechism of the Catholic Church also tells us that, “The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of the communion in the divine life and the unity of the People of God.” (Catechism 1325). The Eucharist cannot be separated from the Church and the Church cannot exist without the Eucharist.

Because of the importance of the Eucharist in the life of the Church, the Church unceasingly encourages young people to respond to God’s call in the vocation of priesthood and every year many are ordained to priesthood so that the Eucharist is frequently celebrated among God’s people.

**Sharing our joy with the Church and the Blessed Sacrament Congregation globally, on 22 November 2021 - the feast of Saint Cecilia - the SSS Province of Vietnamese Martyrs was given eight newest deacons and six newest priests who were ordained by Archbishop Joseph Nguyen Nang of Archdiocese Sai Gon in the chapel of the Provincial House.**



With the concerns of the Archbishop and the Province, due to the pandemic of Covid-19 with uncertainties and endangerment, and for the health and safety of many people, the ordination was celebrated with a very limited number of attendants. We trusted in God’s providence. At 8:30 am, Archbishop Joseph arrived at the Provincial House. Father Peter Cung - the Provincial - and the Provincial Consultants welcomed him, shared and discussed with him about the celebration of the ordination. At 9:00 am, the mass commenced with the procession, in the joy of the entrance hymn sung by the choir of the SSS scholastics.

In the chapel which was small but cosy, simply decorated but beautiful, only a few SSS priests and brothers were able to participate in the celebration. Unfortunately, parents, families and friends of our newly ordained priests and deacons could not make it. However, in such a disadvantageous situation compared with the celebrations of previous years, our newly ordained had a precious opportunity to deeply understand the importance of the grace of the holy orders that they received, as expressed in the Rites of Ordination, “Received the Gospel of Christ whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.” (Rites of Diaconate Ordination) and “...renew deep within them the Spirit of Holiness; may they henceforth possess this office, which comes from you, O God, and is next in rank to the



office of Bishop, and by the example of their manner of life, may they instil right conduct.” (Prayer of Priesthood ordination). Every word and every act of the ordination rites are reminders of our religious life and the life of service, especially for us as the SSS religious. Jesus commanded his disciples and us as well, “You give them something to eat” (Matthew 14:16).

Archbishop Joseph also reminded us of that mission in his homily, “Your call is to bring the Word of God and the Eucharist to God’s people for their nourishment”.

After the mass, the Provincial, on behalf of the Province, expressed our gratitude to Archbishop Joseph. In the midst of the pandemic, his presence and willingness to ordain our brothers was a great support, encouragement, and joy for the whole Province. In addition, the Provincial also gave thanks to our benefactors who have helped us in our mission and who contributed their parts to the beautiful celebration. It ended with a hymn devoted to the Vietnamese Martyrs - the patron saints of our Province, and with brotherly greetings to our newly ordained. Then we all took photos them and Archbishop Joseph. After the celebration, we shared in a fraternal meal with one another.

We wish the fire of the love of the Eucharist always burning in their hearts; and may the Eucharist be manifested to the world by their lives. May Mary - our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, our Founder - Saint Peter Julian Eymard, and the Vietnamese Martyrs journey with them always and help them to be faithful to the mission that they were entrusted on this special day.

Khiet Tam, 28 November 2021

Father Joseph Hoang Yen Linh, sss

## HISTORY

### Foundation of the Congregation in Habana-Cuba

*"Havana lacks a History (...) the oldest ones invent another story, a lie, as it should be (...) between Havana-that-does-not-exist and Havana-a-paradise-lost."*

Abilio Estévez

**T**he revolution underway, we gladly went at night, after dinner, to the terrace of the chapel to refresh ourselves a bit and speak about the events of the revolution. What was happening began to acquire special interest and concern because of the marked communist turn that the revolution was taking, especially after the failed attempt to invade the Bay of Pigs. Father Martín Gorostidi was in charge of informing the meetings with the news, not without the spark that he used to convey from Jesús de Miramar and that he shared with the Capuchin Fathers. Soon Father Manuel Oyarbide left Havana and went to Sainz de Baranda, Madrid (1961).

**Military personnel in the house:** this happened one day, when at midnight, that a band of militiamen banged hard on the door of the house. I woke up and, not without fear, went out to meet them. I was not exempt from being discreetly searched and was asked about the persons who were at home that night. With a

great deal of serenity. I told them that at the time there were two other religious resting. They ordered them to leave their rooms and locked the three of us in one, threatening to shoot us if we tried to escape. The three of us were: Father Gorostidi, Brother Vicente Urquía and the undersigned, Father Gregorio. That day, Father Segundo Urquía and Father Ignacio María Eguibar were detained in their respective chaplaincies. Because of this they were not at home that night.

While the three of us religious were being held in a room, the soldiers searched the house as they pleased and even entered the Chapel alone. They even opened the door of the tabernacle, with the idea they could find something that could compromise us – such as weapons. When they did not find anything that would compromise us, they free us to be inside the house and the Church, although under their supervision. Of course, they treated us with trust and respect. They allowed us to open the Church for the faithful to be able to participate in the Eucharist and they permitted us to use the kitchen and the table quite freely. In other words, the military personnel did not hinder us from carrying on our normal community life. A few days later, the two fathers who were absent returned to the community: Father Segundo Urquía and Father Ignacio María Eguibar. They chose to leave Cuba.

*To be continued...*

**FATHER GREGORIO URQUIOLA, SSS**

*Bogotá, Colombia, NOTIBIP 74 - October 2021*



## Jubilee festivity of Fr Walter Marzari SSS

**O**n Sunday, 25/07/21, the parochial community of Proveis, in Alto-Adige, celebrated, albeit a year late, with great festivity Father Walter's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the priesthood. This jubilee could not be celebrated the previous year because of the pandemic and the rather delicate state of Father Walter who suffered an ictus at the end of September 2019.

For this beautiful occasion, the whole parochial community of Proveis, Father Walter's birthplace, wanted to show great gratitude and deep appreciation for its fellow citizen, a Blessed Sacrament religious.

At the beginning of the Eucharistic Celebration, the president of the Parochial Pastoral Council cordially greeted the jubilarian, accompanied by the parish priest, Siegfried Pfitscher and by me, his confrere and superior of Bolzano; he thanked him for his innumerable contributions to the town of Proveis, for his great passion and his valuable priestly work, and as a doctor at the service of our Blessed Sacrament missions in Congo.

In my homily I first underlined that it is solely due to Fr. Walter that I am today a member of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament; through his example and his profound Eucharistic spirituality, Father Walter attracted my attention in the year 1990 when I was a young student at the minor seminary of Bressanone. With his great tenacity, willpower and wisdom he always committed himself to being a faithful disciple of Jesus, situating the Eucharistic mystery, celebration and adoration, at the centre of his daily life.

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, Father Walter expressed heartfelt thanks with very moving words to all those present for coming to this beautiful festive occasion and thus showing him so much kindness, friendship and esteem.

In the square facing the church, the entire population of Proveis, including the mayor, remained a long time, personally congratulating and exchanging a few words with the jubilarian; likewise the beautiful melodies of the musical band and the parish choir, which had already played and sung in the church earlier, raise the tone of this day's celebration.

After a delicious lunch in the large hall of events, together with Father Walter's family and relatives, this beautiful day ended, certainly unforgettable for the one being honored.

On 29/09/21 Father Walter celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his religious profession with such simplicity but full joy. Father Gianni Furlanetto SSS, the vicar and bursar in Bolzano, visited him in the Health Residence of Cornaiano, near Bolzano, where he has now been for 2 years, and conveyed to him the best wishes from the confreres of Bolzano and from the confrere of Merano.

May God continue to accompany Father Walter, blessing him to be able to go on enjoying good physical and spiritual health for a long time.

17/11/2021

**Father Klaus Costabiei, sss**  
*Superior of Bolzano*

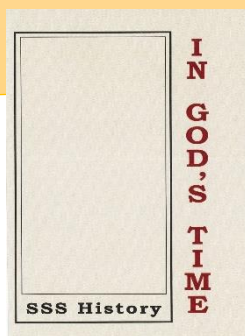




# IN GOD'S TIME

## SSS History

by Father Norman B. Pelletier, sss  
Cleveland, Ohio, 2018



### A Review

An impressive book (with numerous references to vast resources), from an inspiring and experienced member of the Congregation. It should be a fascinating book for many of us who would like to know more about our Congregation, especially the developments during the teething and nascent period. I am still a novice in so far as the knowledge of our history is concerned. I spent quite a few days to read the book through. Though this book was given a year back to me, I cast my sight on it only this June as I was gathering a few materials on the Spirituality of our Founder.

Fr. Norman, sss is trying to converse with his readers, particularly with younger generation of the Congregation. As the author puts it, "... it behooves us to know and understand our history so that we can appreciate the contributions of those who have gone before us and recognise the events that have shaped us". This book contains 10 Chapters, 1 Epilogue and 3 Appendixes with so much of clarity and myriad of information.

The first part of the book is fairly chronological beginning with the death of Father Eymard, followed by General Chapter and the line of Superiors General, with a shaky start, their Administration with the given historical and testing period of surviving and consolidating through troublesome days in France, and redeeming experiences over *The Marechal Affairs = The Benedictine Project*. One notes that Fr. Norman, sss, has done enough justice to unpack the unfathomable emptions, the drama of those decisive years, unfinished initiatives, struggles, ambiguities resulted by the political upheavals and expulsion of religious, unavoidable conflicts and quarrels, days of depression, financial constraints, pros and cons of the conflicting situation and many more experiences of the nascent group of religious dedicated to live the Eucharistic Life envisaged Fr. Eymard.

These enormous ups and downs, the author observes, were the moments of living the Paschal Mystery, thus providing to the members a purpose and direction that paved fruitful for generations. At the same time, the author has given more space than otherwise, to highlight and recount the moments of God's Grace and Blessings, guiding the Order during which the fathers exhibited the spirit of charity and love throughout such period to *The Eucharistic Charism*. The author is overwhelmed so, as he does not cease to omit to expound the steady growth in numbers and new foundations in Europe and elsewhere.

The second part of the 10 Chapters has abundant quoted materials of the Generals and leading personalities which are important for our collective identity. One will be happy to recount while reading through the transitions and progress made from the Constitution to Rule of Life of our Congregation. It is made clear to the committed readers that there is no secret formula for process of discernment to save the Congregation and its Eucharistic Charism than to listen to the voice of God in The Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Obviously, though this book is not of the total history of the Congregation, it is a right book to acquire a birds-eye-view on which the members and scholastics alike may build up their own history and add volumes to this present contribution. Observations offered in the Epilogue is worth reading again and again thus reminding our identity with sure note of hope. Pope Francis reminds us thus, "*Recounting our history is essential for preserving our identity, for strengthening our unity and common sense of belonging*".

**Father Bangar Arputha Raj, sss**

Nalgonda, India

We inform you that the General Secretariat will shortly insert the book of Fr. Norman on the Congregation website [www.ssscongregatio.org](http://www.ssscongregatio.org) / Reserved area / **English** / Father Eymard / History; and **Français** / Père Eymard / Histoire.



#### **N. 1613 - Father Pierre Duvillaret**

Province: Saint Peter Julian Eymard  
 Community: Paris, France  
 Death: 16 November 2021  
 Age: 97  
 Profession: 78  
 Priesthood: 72



*The death of a brother will be celebrated as a Paschal event filled with hope. We shall faithfully carry out the prescribed prayers for our deceased (RL 13).*

#### **N. 1614 - Father Jacques Gaudreau**

Province: Saint John the Baptist  
 Community: Québec, Canada  
 Death: 10 December 2021  
 Age: 85  
 Profession: 64  
 Priesthood: 57



## **Anniversaries of Profession and Ordination in January 2022**

05.01.1997	Fr. François MAYESI NATUGOLA	Kinshasa, D.R.Congo	Ordination 25
05.01.1997	Fr. Jean-Pierre LAKIKA KIBANDA	Kinshasa, D.R.Congo	Ordination 25
12.01.1997	Fr. Floriberto de Jesús GUEZGUAN	Bogotá, Colombia	Profession 25
12.01.1997	Fr. Carlos José SIERRA RODRIGUEZ	Bogotá, Colombia	Profession 25
13.01.1952	Fr. Émilien LE BLANC	Québec, Canada	Profession 70

