

Communities of the Word

STORIES OF THE CHICAGO PROVINCE



THE CANADA DISTRICT STORY, 1949 – 2012

Rev. Marcel Barsalou



On February 10, 1948, Father General Aloisius Große-Kappenberg wrote to Father Joseph Eckert, who was finishing his term as provincial of the Southern Province, and asked him to go to Canada and explore the possibility of founding a mission house. Superior General Große-Kappenberg also wrote to Msgr. Ildebrando Antoniutti, the Apostolic Delegate for Canada, stating that the Society of the Divine Word was looking for a diocese in Canada where a school could be established. The Superior General went on to explain that the Society had lost

about 700 members in Europe and in the missions during World War II and that the General Council had decided to seek missionary vocations in new countries.

Father Eckert then wrote to the Apostolic Delegate and asked him to indicate a diocese where the Society would be welcome. Msgr. Antoniutti suggested that he visit Arthur Douville, Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe, in the Province of Québec. The Apostolic Delegate explained that there were few possibilities in English-speaking Canada, but that vocations were plentiful in French Canada and in the Province of Québec in particular.

Father Eckert went to Rougemont, Québec, on August 6, 1948, where Bishop Douville had a summer house. He was very well received by the bishop, who told him that he was acquainted with the work of the Society of the Divine Word among African Americans in Lafayette, Louisiana. He was particularly interested in the formation of priests for them.

Bishop Douville told him that he was in favor of the project to open a minor seminary and suggested the town of Granby as a good location. Granby had grown rapidly during the war because of textile factories built there. Three new parishes had just been started, and there was a need for additional priests to help the local clergy. On August 11, the bishop sent an official letter giving permission to the Society of the Divine Word to start the mission house. Father Eckert quickly sent a report to Rome, and the General Council approved the new foundation on August 27, 1948.

A farm was bought just outside the Granby city limits. The cost of the farm was \$15,000 (Canadian dollars). It was paid for by the three U.S. provinces – Northern, Eastern and Southern. The farmhouse was in rather poor condition with no plumbing and no running water, but it nonetheless was renovated and enlarged to accommodate the first community.

In correspondence with the Generalate, Father Eckert repeatedly mentioned his difficulties with the French language, and that he was hesitant to assume responsibility for the new project. Even though he mentioned the difficulties he had with French he still was quite surprised when the Generalate appointed Father Bruno Hagspiel as rector of the community. Father Eckert graciously greeted Father Hagspiel when he arrived at Granby on August 18, 1949. On the same date, Brother Benedict Schneider, a carpenter, arrived from Hong Kong.



Ground-breaking ceremony, September 8, 1949.

A short ground-breaking ceremony took place on September 8, the anniversary of the founding of the Society of the Divine Word. This was the first French-speaking institution of the Society. The previous day, Father Arthur Knobloch had arrived from St. Wendel, in Germany; Father Albert St. Pierre from Bordentown, New Jersey; and Father Joseph LeBeau from Chicago.

The first community included Father Hagspiel, the rector; Fathers Knobloch, St. Pierre, and LeBeau; and Brother Benedict Schneider. One more Brother arrived to complete the team. Brother Vincent Webb arrived from Bay St. Louis on September 18.

The rector supervised the building, Fathers St. Pierre and Knobloch began to help in the surrounding parishes and gave talks to recruit the first students. Brother Benedict repaired the house and Brother Vincent took care of the house and cooked for the community.

The name chosen for the new mission house was “Mont Saint-Jean-Baptiste.” St. John the Baptist is the patron saint of French Canadians, so the Society wished to identify with the people from the start.

Plans for the building were discussed back and forth, and construction finally started on October 18, 1949. The winter was mild at first—the workers could continue until the end of January—but

they had to stop construction during February and March because of the severe winter weather. The community, which had been living in the enlarged farmhouse, finally moved into the seminary building on September 4, 1950. The original house then became the convent for the six Sisters of St. Martha who arrived on the next day.

The Sisters immediately took over the kitchen, the laundry and the chapel. They would stay in the farmhouse until 1954, when a new convent was built for them. The Sisters had two days to prepare for the arrival of the first thirty-three students who came on the afternoon of September 7, 1950.

A solemn High Mass was celebrated in the new chapel on September 8, and classes started the next day. The curriculum was the same as in the diocesan seminaries. It was called the classical course, at the end of which a Bachelor of Arts degree was given. The plan was that the students would enter novitiate after six years and study philosophy after they had joined the Society.

The community members pictured are, from left-to-right in the front row, Fathers Francis Xavier Fuchs, Maximilian Skara, Egbert St. Pierre, Bruno Hagspiel, Arthur Knobloch, and Joseph Le Beau, and Brothers Vincent Webb and Benedict Schneider. Yvon Allard is the third student from the left in the third row, and Marcel Barsalou is the last student on the right in the fourth row.



The first class at Saint-Jean-Baptiste, with the community members, September 1950.

The Society's purpose for this new foundation was clear: it was for the training of future missionaries. The general population, however, had a different idea. A seminary, in their point of view, was primarily an institution for secondary and college education not specifically directed toward a religious life. The reason for this difference came from the fact that seminaries in the environment of larger cities were the only schools offering this type of education at the time. Thus, diocesan seminaries promoted priestly vocations but accepted as well students for other professions. Religious seminaries stressed the religious vocation but had to accept the reality that a certain number of the graduates would choose not to enter novitiate.

Out of the five students in the first graduating class of the seminary at Granby, only two entered novitiate. They were Yvon Michel Allard and Marcel Barsalou. Both were ordained after completing two years of novitiate, two years of philosophy, and four years of theology. The ordination ceremony took place in the Granby seminary on May 7, 1964. Father Gilles Bernier was the only member of the second graduating class to be ordained.

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

The question Father Eckert asked in his letters again and again was, "Who was to pay for the new foundation?" It was decided that since the house was near the Eastern Province of the United States, the provincial, Father Robert Hunter, would look after this new community. The provincial, however, repeatedly stated that he did not have the funds to support this new venture.

The three U.S. provinces had provided \$15,000 for the farm and added another \$8,000 for the renovation of the old house. The Generalate then asked the Northern Province, the original United States province with headquarters in Techny, Illinois, to advance \$300,000 as a ten-year loan for the seminary building. After that the new foundation was expected to make it on its own.

Father Hagspiel saw the impossible financial situation, so he resigned from office in October and asked permission to return to his preaching in the United States in order to gather funds and send them to the Granby community to support the new seminary. Permission was granted, and he supported Granby for many years.

A second source of income, the farm, had partly been taken over by the new school. What was left would not be sufficient for sizeable revenue. Thus, in 1951 a second farm across the road from the original one was bought for \$40,000. It had dairy cows, farm implements and an orchard. Two Divine Word Missionaries came to run this new venture: Father Francis-Xavier Fuchs, who could not return to New Guinea, and Brother Wilhelm Greber, who had to leave the China mission.

Father St. Pierre, who had replaced Father Hagspiel as rector in October 1950, borrowed the money from the diocesan seminary and a few of his friends. The funds sent by Father Hagspiel, the revenue from the farm, the tuition paid by the parents, and the income from the pastoral work of the priests barely sufficed to support this project. Because of the many religious orders present in the Granby area as well as in the diocese, it was not possible to develop a large group of benefactors.

OUTSIDE MINISTRIES AND A PROMISING FUTURE

Besides teaching, the Fathers helped the local clergy by saying Mass in the Granby parishes on weekdays as well as on weekends as had been agreed upon with Bishop Douville. Another request from the bishop was that the Society begin to minister to the English-speaking Catholics and the immigrants who had settled in Granby and the surrounding towns. Father St. Pierre was appointed to establish the St. Patrick Catholic Community. It was never an official parish because the number of parishioners was deemed too small, but it practically functioned as such. St. Patrick community still exists, but the Society is no longer in charge of it.

There were a number of Polish immigrants in the area, and Father Maximilian Skwara—who had to leave his China mission—came to care for them. A few years later, a number of Dutch immigrants came, and since several priests from Holland were teaching in the school, they cared for them. Then Hungarian refugees came in 1955, and Father Antal Németh, who had fled Hungary during the war, took care of them. Finally, German immigrants were taken care of as well. The pastoral care of immigrants was to become the main task of the Society. This care of immigrants continues to the present day in the Canada District.



Brother Vincent Maurer, 1932-2004.

The Brothers played an important role in the new foundation. The care of the buildings and the running of the farm provided financial support. Over the years, several Brothers from Europe and the United States were assigned to Granby. Two of them spent many years at Granby. Brother Michael Carrier, who was from Richmond, Québec, had joined the Society at Techny after the First World War. He was assigned to Granby and became the maintenance man of the house. Brother Vincent Maurer came from Germany and ran the farm for forty-eight years.

In 1954 a new chapel and, underneath it, a gymnasium were built under the leadership of Father Lawrence Walsh, the rector at that time. Finally in 1964 the north wing was added to make room for more boarders. The outlook for continued growth looked good.

CHANGING TIMES FOR SEMINARIES AND RELIGIOUS

In the early 1960s, the Québec provincial government made a number of changes that affected the role played by the Church and, as a consequence, affected the possibility of vocations for all dioceses and religious orders. Up to that time the Church supplied most of the personnel and ran almost all the health and education institutions in the province of Québec. Because of greater prosperity in Québec, however, the government decided to take over health care and education. These

two elements of public life became practically free as was the case to a certain extent in other Canadian provinces. Religious orders had to make major adjustments.

In 1965 the Society joined a new association of religious orders. This association had built a central campus in Cap-Rouge near Québec City. The course offered was a fifth year of high school and a two-year junior college. After three years, it was decided to move the group to Sherbrooke, which was only fifty miles east of Granby. Our students attended the diocesan seminary and lived in a small community. This residence was closed in 1982 for lack of students.

Vocations to the religious life were becoming fewer and fewer. A new approach to recruitment and education of candidates became necessary. A Divine Word novitiate was organized at Granby, and a recruiting program was started to appeal to young adults, since the minor seminary had not produced any prospects in quite a few years.

Father Marcel Barsalou was asked to run the recruiting program, and eventually he was also appointed to run the novitiate. The first novitiate class accepted four young men in 1983, and a second accepted three young men in 1985. Two newly professed went to St. Paul University Seminary in Ottawa together with Father David Streit, who came from St. Mark's in Erie, Pennsylvania, to accompany them. After three years the students were transferred to Montréal and attended courses at Montréal University.

During the same period, the Granby seminary went through a series of changes. Once secondary education became free, the school was partly funded by the provincial government and financial difficulties were solved, for the most part. However, the vocational aspect of the seminary became a more difficult matter. For all practical purposes the seminary was now a private secondary school. The option chosen by the Divine Word community was to increase the enrollment and hope that some of the graduates would eventually join the Society. The increase in the student body took place, but the hope for vocations did not materialize. Some community members left the school to minister elsewhere, but two members stayed and devoted their energy to train Christian leaders. These were Father Antal Németh, who retired in 2007, and Brother Harald Larisch, who died of a stroke in 1998.

In 1975 the seminary became a day school, and in 1981 it became coeducational. In 1983 the Society of the Divine Word removed

itself from the administration of the school, and a layman became the director. In 1989 the Society moved its living quarters out of the school building. The same year, a separate corporation was set up to run the school. The board of directors was to include two Divine Word Missionaries, four parents of students, one teacher, one accountant and one lawyer. The building was then rented to this new corporation for twenty-five years.

MONTREAL – A SEMINARY AND THREE PARISHES

By 1987 there was only one student left in the Montréal House, and the prospect of vocations was uncertain. It was decided to invite major seminarians from other Divine Word provinces to study theology in Montréal in order to better prepare themselves to work in our French-speaking missions. The response was very positive, and seven students arrived in September 1988. Three came from Poland, three from Indonesia, and one from Mexico. Father Gerhard Vogel, who had run the Montréal House, now had a new responsibility. These students studied French for one year and then theology for four years. A total of fourteen seminarians and two Brothers spent one-to-six years at the Maison Joseph André. Several priests were assigned to help with formation, but neither the Generalate nor the Chicago Province was able to provide formators. Still, from this program there had been some success. Twelve of the seminarians were ordained: one joined his home diocese, one died while he was still a deacon, and two have left the priesthood.

When the Maison Joseph André was established, the



The Christmas Crib at Santa Cruz Mission, Montréal, 2009.

Society accepted as well the care of the Santa Cruz Mission. This was the national parish for the Portuguese-speaking people on the whole island of Montréal. The Society also accepted St. Boniface Parish, which served German Catholics. In 1992 the Society also accepted the care of the French-speaking parish of St. Édouard, to provide a place for the seminarians to engage in pastoral ministry.

MAISON JOSEPH ANDRÉ, 1986–2002

The formation house in Montréal was named after St. Joseph Freinademetz and St. Frère (Brother) André, founder of Saint Joseph Oratory of Montréal.

Father Vogel started the project in September 1986. The first members of the formation community were Brother Sylvain Bélec in temporary vows, Frater Michael Kline preparing for his Cross Cultural Training Program in Congo, and Brothers Jean-Claude Fortier and Richard Sullivan, both newly professed. Two apartments were rented on Édouard Montpetit, right at the foot of Montréal University.

In 1987 a house was bought at 8280 Foucher Street close to the Jarry metro station. Father Vogel and Brother Richard Sullivan were the first occupants.

In September 1988 Father José Pimenta and seven seminarians arrived to attend French courses at Montréal University and eventually study theology. They were Fraters Miguel Guerrero, Paul Czoch, André Grabski, Mireck Wolodko, Marcel Anjelis, David Amfotis and Zacharias Lusi Ujan. The first one was from Mexico, the next three from Poland, the last three from Indonesia.

In 1988 a second house was bought at 7494 Saint-Denis Street. On December 8, Father Pimenta became pastor of the Santa Cruz Mission and stayed there until 2000. He was replaced by Father José Maria Cardoso who was still pastor in 2012.

In September 1989 two new seminarians arrived from Poland: Fraters Christopher Kolis and Gregoire Sarniak. Father João Oscar Martins arrived from Brazil to help Father Vogel with formation. Brother Gerry Chidiac came to study French before his Cross Cultural Training Program assignment in Congo.

In September 1990 two more seminarians arrived: Fraters Zbigniew Orlikowski and Robert Ratajczak from Poland.

In 1991 two seminarians arrived from Congo after foreign students were expelled due to political difficulties in the country. They were Fraters Erasmus Morty and José Alfredo Escobar. Father Raymond Lennon arrived to help with formation, and Father João Oscar Martins returned to Brazil.

In 1992 two seminarians arrived: Fraters Fabian Conrad from Germany and Miguel Antonio Ruiz from Argentina. Father Alphonse Muller also came to help with formation.

Father Anumu Andrew Quaye-Foli arrived from Ghana to pursue studies in theology. Father Walter Bracken arrived from the United States to study French. Father John Serrao came for courses in formation to prepare for his responsibilities in the new Theologate in Nairobi, Kenya. He left Montréal in 1995.

In September 1992 Father Marcel Barsalou became pastor of St. Édouard Parish. The seminarians were living on Foucher Street, and Father Raymond Lennon joined him in the new parish. The seminarians were Fraters David Amfotis, Marcel Anjelis, Paul Czoch, André Grabski, Zacharias Lusi Ujan, and Miguel Guerrero, who was ordained a deacon on October 10, 1992, and died suddenly on January 25, 1993.

In September 1994 Fraters Rolando Danzine and Dominic Nguyen came from the Theologate in Chicago to do their Cross Cultural Training Program at St. Édouard. They returned to Chicago in 1996.

In 1995 Father Andreas Mua arrived from Indonesia to be in charge of formation.

In September 1996 Father Barsalou left St. Édouard because of health problems. Father Mua and the remaining seminarians moved to 7494 Saint-Denis. In 1997 the last seminarians left Montréal. This was practically the end of the formation program in Montréal, although one seminarian, Frater Phong Nguyen, came to study French for his Cross Cultural Training Program in Madagascar, and Father Fabian Conrad came back to do a doctorate in scripture.

In September 1997 Marcel Barsalou became pastor of St. Odile and stayed until 2002. Father Fabian Conrad came to stay at St. Odile, and the house on Saint-Denis was rented to the Congregation of the Holy Cross for their postulants. Father Conrad left Montréal for St. Wendel, and Father Marcel Barsalou left the parish to become

the District Superior for Canada, and reside in Granby. The Maison Joseph André became part of the new Canada District with Granby as the main house.

How can we describe the years of the Maison Joseph André? The House had two purposes when it was started: (1) to provide a house of formation for newly professed Canadians; (2) to offer formation and theological studies in French for seminarians interested in working in French-speaking missions of the Society.

The main difficulty during the whole time was the lack of personnel for formation. The task proved to be too much for Father Vogel, and it was not possible to find trained personnel to help him adequately. It is surprising that the seminarians persevered in spite of this deficiency.

Over and above the high rate of perseverance, the success of the Maison Joseph André was that it offered the opportunity to learn French to about twenty confreres. The Society has no roots in France, so few members had mastered the language. The lack of French-speaking members has been a great handicap for the work in French-speaking Africa. Maison Joseph André changed that.



Granby Bible Center.

GRANBY – A CENTER FOR BIBLE AND SPIRITUALITY

In September 2002 Father Yvon Michel Allard, who had returned to Canada after being rector of Nemi, the Divine Word house for renewal programs located in central Italy, started a Biblical Center at Granby. He offered Bible courses to the laypeople of the area. Father

Marcel Barsalou came back to Granby from Montréal and offered spirituality sessions.

A new group of immigrants arrived in the Granby area at the same time. They were mostly refugees from Colombia. Bishop François Lapierre PME, of the St. Hyacinthe Diocese, asked the Society to care for them. Besides this new group, Mexican migrant farm workers became more and more numerous. Father José Escobar, who had studied in Montréal, came from Paraguay to work with these immigrants. Then, after three years he was succeeded by Father Nicolas Sengson. This activity and the Biblical Center are now the two main activities of the Granby community.

The objectives of these two programs are caring for minorities and pastoral work for the French-speaking population. The population as a whole has become largely secularized. Members of the Society believe that it still is the charism of the Society to proclaim the Good News to them. The situation is opposite of when the Society first came to Granby to recruit vocations among a population that was almost entirely Catholic.

A NEW MISSION IN TORONTO

After the 2003 General Visitation conducted by General Councillor Father Konrad Keller, a recommendation was made that the Society begin to work in English-speaking Canada. The objective was to seek vocations while doing pastoral work. The Society contacted the Archdiocese of Toronto, and was gladly accepted. The Canada District expanded in 2005 to include St. John Bosco parish in Toronto. This was originally an Italian national parish, but many of the parishioners had moved out and had been replaced by the Portuguese. As a result, the services had to be conducted in three languages: Italian, Portuguese and English.

A year later, the Society accepted St. Matthew parish, also in Toronto, which was in the same situation. In 2010 the two parishes were combined under one pastor, and the Society accepted the combined parish of Cristo Rei and Salvador do Mundo in Mississauga, a suburb of Toronto, that had two churches and a population partly Portuguese and partly multi-ethnic. At the same time, it was decided to open a mission house in the rectory of St. John Bosco. The purpose was to have our own place for mission promotion and vocational work. The future will tell whether we will be able to recruit vocations in English-speaking Canada.



Superior General Antonio Pernia met with the Provincial Council and the Canada District in August 2010. Pictured from left-to-right in the front row are Fathers Quang Duc Dinh, Nicolas Sengson, Laurensius Ruba, Mark Weber, Antonio Pernia, José Maria Cardoso, Carlos Macatangga. (Left-to-right back row) Fathers Thomas Ascheman, Marcel Barsalou, Brother Patrick Hogan, Father Anthony Clark, Mr. Thomas Artz and Father Yvon Michel Allard.

CONFRES FROM CANADA

The 2012 *Catalogus* lists two Brothers and six priests whose country of origin is Canada. Brother Cyril Schroeder was born in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, when his mother was visiting her sister. He grew up in Wisconsin, served at Techny for most of his eighty years as a Divine Word Brother and died there in 2014.

Father Walter Bracken grew up in Belle River, Ontario, near Detroit, and attended seminaries in Perrysburg, Epworth and Techny. He has ministered in the United States, except for two years (1994-1996) in Montréal.

Father Lucien Gaudreault was born in French-speaking Québec, Canada, and received his education and formation there in a diocesan seminary and with the Trappists before joining the Society of the Divine Word. He served in Granby from 1991-2000, and then was assigned to East Troy, Wisconsin, where he continues to minister as a chaplain.

Father Raymond Hannah was born in Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada. His family moved to New Hampshire when he was six. He

attended Divine Word seminaries in Miramar, Epworth and Techny. After his ordination in 1960, he served in Canada for nearly a decade before going to Papua New Guinea in 1969, where he was a missionary for twenty-one years before returning to the United States.

Father Jon Kirby was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, but grew up in Southern California. He entered Divine Word Seminary in Riverside, California, and went from there to Epworth. Following his ordination at Techny he spent 36 years in Ghana before returning to the United States in 2008.



Fr. Yvon Michel Allard



Fr. Marcel Barsalou



Brother Richard Sullivan

Three confreres stand out as the heart and soul of the Canadian contingent in the Society of the Divine Word.

Father Yvon Michel Allard was a member of the first entrance class of the seminary at Granby arriving in the fall of 1950. He studied there for six years, made his novitiate at Conesus, New York, did his philosophical studies at Techny and theology at Sankt Augustin in Germany before being ordained at Granby in 1964.

Father Allard spent 18 years in formation / education in Canada and was rector of the Granby community and director of the school from 1976-1982. He spent the next six years in the Mexico Province including three years as provincial. He then was chosen to serve on the General Council in Rome from 1988-94, after which he served six years as the rector of Nemi. In 2001 he returned to his roots in Canada where he worked at the Biblical Center in Granby, assisted in numerous area parishes and was active in diocesan ecumenical affairs before moving to a retirement home in 2009.

Father Marcel Barsalou was also a member of the first entrance class of the seminary at Granby. After six years in Granby, he made his novitiate in Conesus, New York, and then spent six years at Techny before being ordained at Granby in 1964 alongside his classmate and lifelong friend, Yvon Michel Allard.

Father Barsalou has spent his entire priestly life in Canada. For 32 years he was a teacher, formator, novice master and seminary rector working with Divine Word seminarians at Granby and Sherbrooke. He then devoted ten years to parish ministry in Montréal before returning to Granby in 2002 where he has resided ever since. He served as praeses of the Granby residence and Canada District Superior from 2002-2008.

Brother Richard Sullivan was born near Montréal in 1960. He entered the seminary at Granby in 1983, made his novitiate there under the direction of Father Marcel Barsalou, and professed religious vows on August 15, 1986.

Brother Richard's Cross Cultural Training Program assignment was to the provincial office in the Mexico Province. He spent time working in the business offices of Divine Word International at Techny, Divine Word College at Epworth, the headquarters of the Southern Province at Bay St. Louis, and the Divine Word house in Nemi, Italy. Since 2002 he has been the business manager for the residence at Granby and treasurer of the Canada District.

CHRONOLOGY

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| February 10, 1948 | Father General Aloisius Große-Kappenberg writes to Father Joseph Eckert about a foundation in Canada. |
| April 13, 1948 | Father General Kappenberg writes to Msgr. Ildebrando Antoniutti, Apostolic Delegate for Canada. |
| May 12, 1948 | Father Eckert writes to Msgr. Antoniutti about the foundation in Canada. |
| July 2, 1948 | Msgr. Antoniutti suggests that Father Eckert contact Bishop Arthur Douville. |
| August 6, 1948 | Bishop Douville accepts the foundation at Granby. |
| August 27, 1948 | The Divine Word General Council approves the new foundation in Canada. |

- December 21, 1948 Father Eckert buys the Lauzon farm just outside the Granby town limits.
- August 18, 1949 Father Bruno Hagspiel arrives as the new rector.
- September 8, 1949 Ground-breaking ceremony.
- October 18, 1949 Beginning of construction of the seminary.
- September 4, 1950 The SVD community moves into the new building.
- September 5, 1950 Sisters of St. Martha arrive to care for the chapel, among other duties.
- September 7, 1950 Arrival of the first thirty-three students.
- September 8, 1950 First solemn High Mass in the temporary chapel.
- March 9, 1951 Purchase of a fully equipped farm south of the original one.
- June 8, 1953 Construction of a new chapel and gymnasium.
- March 25, 1954 First solemn High Mass in the new chapel.
- May 7, 1964 Ordination of first graduates: Fathers Yvon Michel Allard and Marcel Barsalou.
- January 7, 1965 Ordination of Father Gilles Bernier, a member of the second graduating class.
- September 1965 Junior college students move to the Cap-Rouge campus formed by several religious orders west of Québec City.
- January 7 1967 Ordination of Father Yvan Lavigne and Guy Lemaire.
- January 7, 1968 Ordination of Father Ronald Cloutier.
- September 1968 Junior college students move to Sherbrooke and attend courses at the diocesan seminary.
- September 1970 Acceptance of day students at the seminary.
- September 1975 End of the boarding school.
- September 1981 The school becomes coeducational.
- August 15, 1982 First novitiate in Canada opens with four novices.
- September 1983 Two newly professed move to the university seminary and attend courses at St. Paul University in Ottawa.
- August 15, 1985 Three students accepted into the novitiate at Granby.

August 15, 1986	Foundation of the Maison Joseph André by Father Gerhard Vogel in Montréal.
September 1988	Seven major seminarians arrive at the Maison Joseph André to study French and theology.
December 8, 1988	The Society accepts the Santa Cruz Mission in Montréal caring for the Portuguese immigrants.
September 6, 1992	The Society accepts a French-speaking parish, St. Édouard, to provide a pastoral experience for SVD seminarians in Montréal.
September 1994	The Society accepts a German-speaking parish, St. Boniface in Montréal.
March 2005	The Society accepts St. John Bosco parish in Toronto to care for Italians, Portuguese and English-speaking immigrants.
September 2007	The Society accepts St. Matthew parish in Toronto for the same reason.
September 2011	The Society accepts the care of Cristo Rei and Salvator de Mundo in Mississauga to care for Portuguese and multi-ethnic immigrants.

Leadership Personnel in Canada

Father Joseph Eckert	1948–1949	Founder
Father Bruno Hagspiel	1949–1950	Rector and builder of the seminary
Father Albert St. Pierre	1950–1952	Rector
Father Lawrence Walsh	1952–1955	Rector and builder of the chapel wing
Father Johannes Küppers	1955–1961	Rector
Father Jacques de Hollander	1955–1967	Rector and builder of the North wing
Father Johannes Pfemeter	1967–1970	Rector
Father Marcel Barsalou	1970–1976	Rector
Father Yvon Michel Allard	1976–1982	Rector
Father Joseph LeBeau	1982–1985	Rector
Father David Streit	1984–1987	Formator at Séminaire Saint-Paul, Ottawa

Father Antal Németh	1985–1987	Rector
Father Marcel Barsalou	1987–1990	Rector and builder of new residence
Father Gerhard Vogel	1987–1995	Prefect of scholastics in Montréal
Father Marcel Barsalou	1990–1993	Rector
Brother Vincent Maurer	1993–2002	Praeses at Granby
Father José Pimenta	1993–1999	Rector, Maison Joseph André, Montréal
Father Fabian Conrad	1999–2002	Rector, Maison Joseph André, Montréal
Father Marcel Barsalou	2002–2008	District Superior and Praeses at Granby
Father José Maria Cardoso	2008–2014	District Superior
Father Nicolas Sengson	2008–2014	Praeses at Granby
Father Carlos Macatangga	2014–present	District Superior
Father Marcel Barsalou	2014–present	Praeses at Granby