

Mission "Optometry in Cuenca," Ecuador

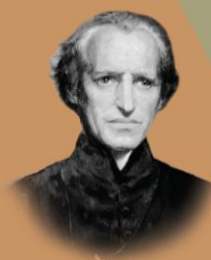
A testimony of solidarity and international service

From July 21 to 26, a team of 48 people travelled to Cuenca, a city located 2,800 meters above sea level in the magnificent Andean region of Ecuador. This humanitarian mission aimed to provide essential vision care to populations with little or no access to specialized services.

The team, remarkable for its diversity and commitment, was made up of 9 optometrists, an ophthalmologist affiliated with Harvard University, 6 opticians, 12 optometry students from Montreal and from the Faculty of Manabi in Ecuador, along with 20 dedicated volunteers. Together, they formed a true community in the service of sight.

Warmly welcomed by the local Rotary Club, whose members were actively involved in the organization and smooth running of the mission, the team was able to offer a mobile clinic





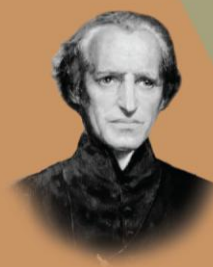
for five days. Thanks to this collaboration, 2,339 patients received consultations, eye exams, and proper prescriptions.



In addition to this clinic, the team donated many eyeglasses to a charitable organization supported by the Cardinal of Guayaquil, thus extending the impact of the mission beyond Cuenca. Before their departure, the team also brought back 82 specific prescriptions to be filled in Canada, mainly for Ecuadorian children and teenagers who will receive their glasses in the coming weeks.

This mission stands as a witness to the strength of interdisciplinary work and humanitarian dedication, as well as to the generosity of all those who make such projects possible.

Pierre Labine, c.s.c.



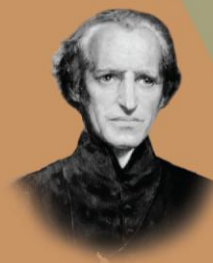
SAINT BROTHER ANDRÉ VISITS THE MARITIMES

What began as a hopeful plan before the pandemic in 2020 finally came to life from July 24 to 31, 2025, with a heartfelt mission across the Dioceses of Halifax-Yarmouth in Nova Scotia and into New Brunswick. It was more than a trip – it was a pilgrimage filled with grace, touching hearts and building bridges of faith.

We set off from Montreal, with our mission truck packed and spirits high. Our first stop was in Woodstock, New Brunswick, warmly welcomed by Chris and Jindyah and their children. Their hospitality was a beautiful start – delicious food, evening prayers, and a restful night.

In Halifax, we celebrated Mass with the Holy Family Syro-Malabar Catholic Parish and then spent Friday at the majestic St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica. There we met Fr. Anthony and our dedicated liaison Deacon Dan Bowden, who carefully coordinated the mission schedule. The cathedral gathering was vibrant and deeply moving. Fr. Jomon spoke passionately about the life and spirituality of Saint Brother André, accompanied by powerful testimonies from Pauline and Marc Cantin. It was here we met Betty, whose steadfast devotion inspired us all – she attended every single mission event that week!





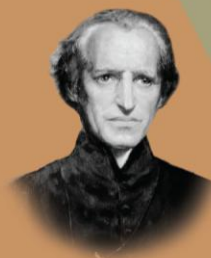
In the countryside of Middle Musquodoboit, we celebrated Mass at Holy Cross Mission Church with Fr. Gerald, pastor of the *St. André Bessette Family of Parishes*. The community's pride in their church, built by the parishioners themselves, was deeply moving. Deacon Dan led the Scriptural Rosary, which became a daily part of our mission. Among the faithful was a courageous mother of 15, battling cancer – her strength and faith left a lasting impression.

Sunday was full: first, a gathering at St. Rose of Lima, then again with the Holy Family Parish, led by Fr. Daris and Father Jomon. The church was full and fantastic fellowship followed with the parishioners as on this day we celebrate the feast day of Saint Alphonsa. She is the first canonized Saint from the Kerala. Both events were marked by prayer, veneration of the relic of Saint Brother André, and blessings with St. Joseph's oil. The community spirit and faith were truly uplifting.

On Monday, we visited St. Ignatius of Loyola, where Fr. Paul – a talented cook – treated us to a wonderful meal. Though the church is under renovation, the parish hall was filled to capacity, and the joy of the evening was unmistakable.

At St. Bernard Parish, we met Donna, who could barely walk and rarely left her house – but made it to the Mass. She later felt stronger, and incredibly, her MRI – originally scheduled months away – was rescheduled for the same week. We hold her in prayer.





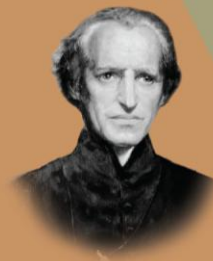
At Stella Maris Parish, we encountered Joe and his family, seeking Saint André's intercession for Joe's cancer. He was deeply touched by the blessings received. These encounters reminded us of the power of faith, community, and healing.

Our final destination was St. Ambrose Co-Cathedral in Yarmouth, the southern tip of Nova Scotia. Fr. Henry welcomed us for a vibrant final celebration. We prayed for Big Al (stage 4 cancer), Eddy, and Dorthy, who couldn't attend but sent loved ones on her behalf. Among the faithful was a beautiful family with their daughter Elsa Marie, joyfully present in her wheelchair. Her smile radiated hope.

We were welcomed into the home of Seema and Tony for the week and developed what would be a lifelong friendship with the two of them along with their two beautiful daughters. Their kindness and that of their daughters formed friendships we'll cherish forever.

This mission was a true success – not just for the number of visits, but for the grace poured into each encounter. Everywhere we went, people shared touching stories of healing, faith, and hope through the intercession of Saint Brother André. May his spirit continue to guide and bless the Maritimes.

Pauline et Marc Cantin



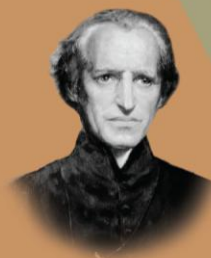
Annual Pilgrimage of Saint Joseph's Oratory to Mont-Saint-Grégoire

On Sunday, August 31, the faithful and friends of Saint Joseph's Oratory gathered for the annual pilgrimage to Mont-Saint-Grégoire, a cherished tradition that each year marks the month dedicated to Saint Brother André.

Blessed with clear skies, the pilgrims walked together in a spirit of prayer and fraternity, entrusting their intentions to the intercession of the one still affectionately called *"the friend of God and of people."* The day was enriched with a moment of prayer at the foot of the cross and culminated in the celebration of the Eucharist, a highlight filled with gratitude and faith. This annual gathering is not only a time to renew devotion to the spiritual heritage of Saint Brother André, but also a chance to reaffirm trust in God – the source of consolation and peace. It fosters a true sense of community, uniting participants in the joy of walking together in the footsteps of the saint from among us.

As Saint Brother André once reminded us: *"Place yourself under the protection of Saint Joseph and you will see what he can do."*





Opening of the Holy Family Plaza at Saint Joseph's Oratory

On Friday, September 12, at 11 a.m., Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal marked a memorable moment with the official inauguration of *Rhizomes*, a public artwork by artist Marie-France Brière, and the presentation to the public of the newly restored carillon, now composed of 62 bells.

Installed on the terrace of the Holy Family Plaza, *Rhizomes* unfolds as a poetic evocation of the living roots that nourish both faith and history. Entitled *Cords of Saint Joseph*, the piece is inspired by the invisible bonds that unite generations of pilgrims who have entrusted their lives to the patron saint of the Oratory. Through a play of shapes and materials, the artist creates a dialogue between spiritual memory and contemporary presence, offering visitors a place of contemplation at the heart of the sanctuary.

The event also brought renewed life to a unique sonic heritage: the Oratory's carillon, one of the largest in North America. Since its installation in 1955, the carillon has set the rhythm of the hill and accompanied major liturgical celebrations. Thanks to recent restoration, its 62 bells have regained their full resonance, offering a richness of sound that can once again vibrate in the service of prayer, celebration, and remembrance.

It is worth recalling that the carillon project was launched in the mid-20th century, at a time when the Oratory – founded by Saint Brother André in 1904 – was already becoming a major international pilgrimage site. Today, its renewed sound joins the spiritual and artistic heritage that the sanctuary places at the service of present and future generations.

The enhancement of the outdoor space through *Rhizomes* and the musical rebirth of the carillon together express the Oratory's desire to unite art, heritage, and spirituality. These two initiatives offer visitors not only a cultural experience, but above all a path of beauty toward God, in the spirit of Saint Brother André's charism: to welcome, to connect, and to let the joy of the Gospel resound.

