Thoughts on Assumption Prep, Its Mission, the Class of APS65, and Me

Leo Laverdure, APS’65
22 Août 2015
50th Reunion
Je maintiendrai.
“I will uphold.”

• But what precisely will I uphold?
• And how has it worked out?
Flag of Quebec Province

Coat of Arms of Quebec Province

Flag of French Royal Family

French Canadian fleur-de-lis

French fleur-de-lis

APS fleur-de-lis

Franco-American flag
State coat of arms of the Netherlands
The Essential Tension in “Je maintiendrai”: Thomas Jefferson Quotes

“As new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times.”

“In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.”
Milestones

- 1900 – All religious orders (including Assumptionists) exiled from France
- 1904 – Assumption “alumnate”/ ”apostolic school” founded
  - "Our Lady of Consolation, Apostolic School of the Assumptionist Fathers"
  - Courses taught in French, boarders only, 7 days a week, 6-week summer break
- 1905 – Religious orders readmitted to France
- 1911 – "Assumption College“; “a seminary”
- 1929 – Paul Claudel, French Ambassador and playwright, visits Assumption
- 1930 – More students needed
  - “Day-hops” admitted (French speaking)
  - Local-area boarders allowed to return home Saturday noon, return Sunday 8pm
- 1931 – “Je maintiendrai” adopted
- 1941 – School admits non-French speakers (who must learn French)
- 1943 – First thoughts of separate College
- 1946 – First non-French Assumptionist Superior in US (Fr. Dufault, Franco-American)
- 1947 – Birth year for most of APS65
- 1953, Jun – Tornado destroys buildings, killing 3
- 1954 – College separates
Milestones (continued)

• 1955 – High school first referred to as Assumption Preparatory School in its brochure
• 1961, Sep – APS 65 class enters
• 1961, Dec – APS incorporated
• 1963, Jun – Building program announced
• 1964/5 – APS performs 2 Paul Claudel plays
  – L’Annonce faite à Marie
  – Le Soulier de satin
• 1965 – APS 65 graduates
• 1968 – APS considers admitting co-eds
• 1970, Jun – APS closes
• 1970, Oct – APS buildings and grounds sold to QCC
• 1971 – Assumption Preparatory School, Inc. dissolved
1929 – High Point of French Culture in Worcester

• Assumption Silver Jubilee: 3-day visit of the French Ambassador to the US, Paul Claudel
  – “Greatest reception of my career”

• “La Sentinelle Affair” resolved with capitulation of Franco-American activists
  – Franco-American parishes in Diocese of Providence accept to have their collections used to fund English-speaking Catholic schools
  – Excommunicated leaders readmitted to the Catholic Church
1931 – “Je maintiendrai” adopted

High School & College

Je maintiendrai (I will uphold)

APS only

Donec formetur Christus in vobis (Until Christ be formed in you)

1953 Tornado
"My room is the one at the extreme right on the corner front (red circle). I left the room as mud and hail pelted the windows which face south. The axis of the building is north-south."
Fr. Alexis Babineau, A.A. - Tornado Survivor
The Top 10 Things I Learned at Assumption

10. How to pronounce my name
9. Speaking French can change your life
8. The extra food goes to the waiters
7. *Mens sana in corpore sano*
6. Hard work pays off
5. Passion is more important than money
4. *Ama et fac quod vis*
3. Keys: connectedness, compassion, contribution
2. Collaboration & co-opetition beat competition
1. APS friends are friends for life

Leo Laverdure
En Somme, ...

- J’ai retrouvé (en bonne partie)
- L’esprit de “Je maintiendrai” continue en nous tous
Bio for Leo Laverdure,
APS ’65; Harvard College, AB ’69

A “Born-again Frenchman”