



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

Leo Laverdure, APS'65
22 Août 2015
50th Reunion

Thank you Moe for your kind introduction. [See appended Bio for Leo Laverdure]

It's hard to believe **it's been 50 years!**

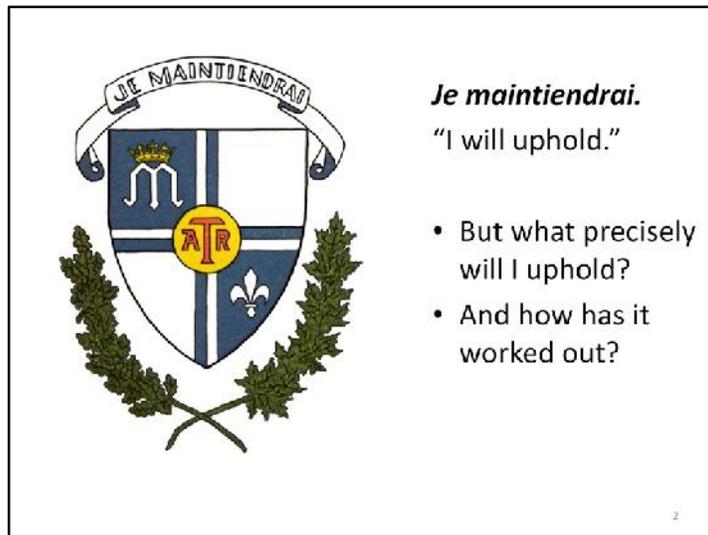
When we were in school at the Prep I don't think I could even form the thought of finding all of 50 years older looking back!

Where did all that time go? Why do the years seem to go by even faster lately?

As we've prepared for this reunion, I've found myself **reminiscing about my experience at APS**, to be sure, but also **thinking about what APS was all about: its mission, its history, its graduates, its impact.**

So I did a little **research** (a task greatly facilitated in the age of the Internet!) and found a wealth of information.

I've tried to pull these into a coherent story, which I'll share, and then conclude with how my APS experience has impacted my life.



Je maintiendrai.

"I will uphold."

- But what precisely will I uphold?
- And how has it worked out?

Most of you surely recognize this as the **emblem (or "coat-of-arms") for APS**, iconifying the key elements of the school's **mission and foundational elements**.

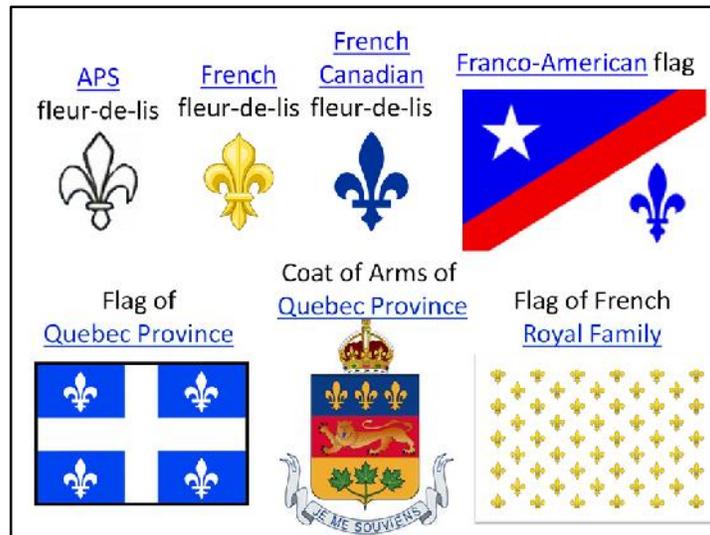
- This image is on our 1965 graduation program. It was laid into the floor tiles at school's entrance. And it appears on the APS letterhead, the school's brochure, and countless other school documents.
- Joe Simoneau has a beautiful wood carving of the coat of arms

Have you taken a close look at the several elements of the coat of arms? What do they mean?

- Motto (*devise* Fr.): Je maintiendrai. I will uphold.
 - But what, precisely?
 - And how has it worked out?
- Escutcheon/shield (*écusson* Fr.)
 - Cross: Christianity
 - At the center of the cross, aTr: "adveniat regnum Tuum" from the Pater Noster; Thy kingdom come; que Ton règne vienne.
 - **The ATR and triple love as the basis of Assumptionist work**
"Our spiritual life, our religious substance, our reason for being Augustinians of the assumption is in our currency: Adveniat Regnum Tuum." [<http://www.soyasuncionista.cl/en/quienes-somos/carisma/>]
 - M with crown: Mary queen of heaven (natural for the Assumptionists)
 - Fleur-de-lis: multiple meanings
 - The **fleur-de-lis** (lis pronounced either LEE or LEESE) is a stylized [lily](#) (in French) that is used as a decorative design or [symbol](#). It may be "at one and the same time, *religious, political, dynastic, artistic, emblematic, and symbolic,*" especially in [French heraldry](#).
 - The most common symbol in French heraldry.
 - A symbol for French royalty; figures prominently in the flags and seals of many French regions and départements, and of French nobility and families
 - According to French historian [Georges Duby](#), the *three petals represent*

the medieval social classes: those who worked, those who fought, and those who prayed. [The three estates used to categorize people before the 1789 revolution: the [clergy](#) (first estate), the [nobility](#) (second estate), and [commoners](#) (third estate)]

- “In a very strange turn of events after the end of the [Second French Empire](#) (1852-1870), where a flag apparently influenced the course of history, [Henri, comte de Chambord](#), was offered the throne as King of France, but he **agreed only if the French gave up the tricolor [le bleu-blanc-rouge] and brought back the white flag with fleurs-de-lis.**^[28] His condition was rejected and France became a [republic](#).
- [Michel Pastoureau](#), the historian, says that until about 1300 fleurs-de-lis were found in depictions of Jesus, but gradually they took on Marian symbolism and were associated with the [Song of Solomon](#)'s "lily among thorns" (*lilium inter spinas*), understood as a reference to Mary. Other [scripture](#) and religious literature in which the lily symbolizes purity and chastity also helped establish the flower as an **iconographic attribute of the Virgin**. It was also believed that the fleur-de-lis represented the [Holy Trinity](#).^{[35][36]}
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleur-de-lis>
- Leaf branches:
 - **The Maple-Leaf has been generally adopted as a Canadian emblem**, and consequently figures upon the arms of that Dominion, and in the arms of many families which have or have had Canadian associations.
[<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/41617/41617-h/41617-h.htm>]
 - **Oak branch** – Age and strength; heroism and victory?
[<http://www.fleurdelis.com/symbolism.htm>] Also: courage; **fidelity** (which would fit nicely with the motto); wisdom
 - Oak and maple together? – New England/Northeastern US?? (These are the two predominant hardwood species in my yard.)
- Colors: blue and white for Mary



- Looking closely at the Prep’s fleur-de-lis, we see that it differs from both the French and French-Canadian variants of the symbol:
 - The center leaf is taller than the French and more the shape of the FC variant, but more angular than either
 - The side leaves are closer to the center leaf (no gap) and wider than the FC variant, and they are slightly asymmetric, unlike both the FR and FC variants
 - The band is the shortest
 - The bottom is different from both
- **It seems that the Prep’s fleur-de-lis steers a middle ground between the French and the Canadian**
 - Could be unintentional, but I think that is unlikely, given the care with which emblems are created, and for another reason which I’ll come back to later.
- There are many [French-speaking people](#) in other Canadian provinces for whom the fleur-de-lis remains a symbol of their [cultural identity](#).
 - Note the motto for Quebec Province: *Je me souviens. I remember*. This is a necessary precondition for *Je maintiendrai*.
- The fleur-de-lis is even used in the USA, e.g.:
 - Some cities that have it in their flag or seal are the cities of [St. Louis](#),^[m] [Louisville](#), [Detroit](#), [Mobile](#), [New Orleans](#), [Baton Rouge](#) and [Lafayette](#).
 - On 9 July 2008, Louisiana governor [Bobby Jindal](#) signed a bill into law making the fleur-de-lis an official symbol of the state.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleur-de-lis>



State coat of arms of the Netherlands

Google “je maintiendrai” and the first thing you discover is that this is the motto of the Dutch royal family (in French, not in Dutch).

What they were **maintaining** – since **1530** – was **their name!**

The motto has been used by every "ruling" member of the Nassau family, who was also the prince of Orange since it came into the family with the [Princedom of Orange](#) in 1530. Count [Henry III of Nassau-Breda](#), who was living in the Low Countries, was married to [Claudia Orange-Châlon](#). Her brother, [Philibert of Châlon](#), was the last Prince of Orange from the House of Châlon. When he died in 1530, Henry's and Claudia's son René of Nassau-Breda inherited the Princedom on condition that he used the name and coat of arms of the Châlon family. History knows him therefore as [René of Châlon](#). With this inheritance came the "**Je Maintiendrai Châlons**" motto into the Nassau family. René died in 1544 without leaving a child. His cousin William of Nassau-Dillenburg inherited all of René's lands. William became William of Orange (in English better known under his nickname [William the Silent](#)) and the founder of the [House of Orange-Nassau](#). William first changed the motto to "**Je Maintiendrai Nassau.**" **Later he (or his sons) dropped the family name from the motto.**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_the_Netherlands

The shorter motto is easier to remember and to fit into artwork. And, **sometimes a little ambiguity is a desirable thing: others can read into it reasons to go along with you, and you don't have to keep changing it when the name changes!**

William III of England, Sovereign (William the Silent)

William III was sovereign Prince of Orange from birth, Stadtholder of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, and Overijssel in the Dutch Republic from 1672, and King of England, Ireland, and Scotland from 1689 until his death [in 1702]. [Wikipedia](#)

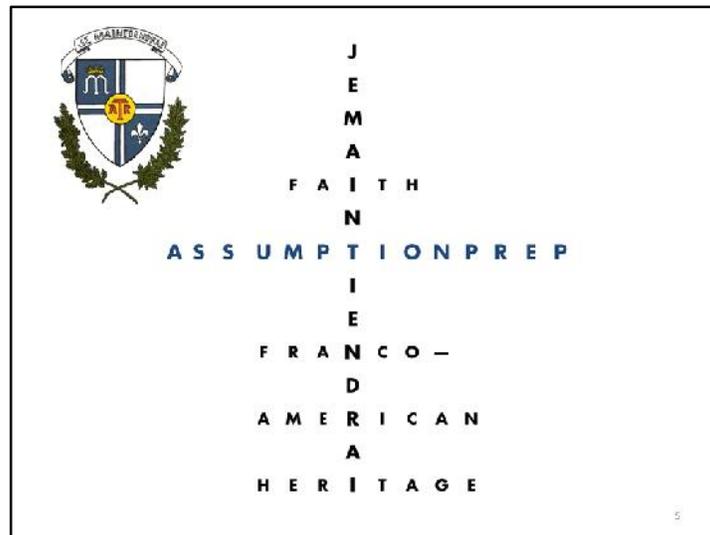
When William III. came to England (1689) he **retained the motto, but added to it, “I will maintain the liberties of England and the Protestant religion.”**

<http://www.britannia.com/history/monarchs/mon51.html>

William III:

- Agreed to let Parliament be in charge, establishing the modern role of the English royal family
- **Mainly occupied himself with wars on the continent to advance Protestantism (vs. Catholicism), making the motto a curious choice for the A.A.!**

Artwork by Sodacan. Based on: Painting by Johannes Evert van Leeuwen (1855-1931) (from 1907). Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:State_coat_of_arms_of_the_Netherlands.svg#/media/File:State_coat_of_arms_of_the_Netherlands.svg



What was being upheld?

- The history of the school’s founding makes it clear that a major part of what was being upheld was the Franco-American culture, which included the French (/French Canadian) language and its Catholic faith. Very hard to tease these apart, and yet ...
 - This set up **tensions** among each of these elements:
 - For many, preserving the **Franco-American language and culture** was **primary**. There were already many **immigrants** from French-speaking Canada, and more were coming. For them, it was a question of “**survivance.**”
 - For others, the **Catholic faith** was **primary**.
 - The **Assumptionists**, who had been exiled from France in 1900, wanted to set up an “alumnate” – a school for monks in training, covering the high-school and college years. A major goal was to develop **vocations**, that is, new Assumptionists.
 - **Some** of the **Franco-American clergy** **opposed the coming of the Assumptionists**; they feared the loss of their parishes to them. Some said in effect, “These damned Frenchmen, they’ll turn to English and **anglicize** our people, as the La Salette Fathers did in Hartford, in obedience to Bishop (Michael) Tierney. [The Catholic church hierarchy in America was very Irish.]
 - **Bishop Beaven** (in Springfield, where the Assumptionists were awaiting a new assignment after their Granby project ended), **did not like the idea of a strong Franco-American element**. After all, Americans spoke English.
- <http://assumption.us/about-us/47-virtual-library/468-the-assumptionists-from-past-to-present>

One of the activities we sometimes engaged in at the Prep was exploring specific differences between French French and Canadian French.

- As seniors, trying to decide on the best translation for “**You’re a gentleman and a scholar.**” (18th century England/Scotland; Holden Caulfield (Cacher in the Rye 1951).)
 - French: “Vous etes un gentillehomme et un érudit.”
 - French Canadian/Canuck: “**T’es ben gentille et t’es ben smaat.**” (Fr. George Charland, A.A.)

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.”*



This leads to the following questions:

- **What are the true “matters of principle”?**
- **How do you distinguish them from “matters of style”?**
- **When there is a conflict between “matters of principle,” how do you resolve it?**
 1. **Catholic Faith**
 2. **French Canadian heritage**
 3. **Franco-American heritage**
 4. **French heritage**
 5. **French language**

Milestones

- 1900 – All religious orders (including Assumptionists) exiled from France
- 1904 – Assumption “aluminate”/ “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

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In this slide and the next, I’ve laid out some of the major milestones of the Prep’s history, along with where my class (APS65) fits in.

Exile from France:

- It seems relevant that the school was started during the 5-year period when the Assumptionists, along with all other religious orders, were exiled from France. This came about as a result of church-state struggles in France, which came to a head during the Dreyfus Affair.
 - The Affair, from 1894 to 1906, divided France deeply and lastingly into two opposing camps: the pro-Army, mostly Catholic, “anti-Dreyfusards” and the anticlerical, pro-republican Dreyfusards. It embittered French politics and encouraged radicalization.[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreyfus_affair]
- One way the A.A. played a role in the affair was through the public newspaper, *La Croix*, they had founded. Along with other, mostly Catholic, newspapers, they attacked Dreyfus. And tempers ran high, as evidenced by this more-recent news article:
 - NY Times World News Briefs, Headline: ***French Paper Apologizes For Slurs on Dreyfus***, January 13, 1998:

France's Roman Catholic daily La Croix has apologized for its anti-Semitic editorials in the case of Capt. Alfred Dreyfus a century ago. La Croix said ... that it had betrayed its Christian beliefs by writing "Down with the Jews!" and describing Dreyfus, a French military officer jailed on false charges of spying for Germany, as "the enemy Jew."
[<http://www.nytimes.com/1998/01/13/world/world-news-briefs-french-paper-apologizes-for-slurs-on-dreyfus.html>]

- La Croix, Headline: **La Croix dans l'affaire Dreyfus**, January 12, 1998

Oui, nous avons écrit cela. De Dreyfus : « C'était l'ennemi juif trahissant la France. » De Zola défendant l'innocent : « Etripez-le ! » Des juifs : « Contre le Christ qui les a maudits, et dont ils demeurent les ennemis farouches, ils voudraient pouvoir soulever toutes choses : leur haine va jusqu'au délire. » Ainsi écrivait-on, il y a cent ans, dans La Croix. Il faut s'en souvenir. Il nous faut nous en repentir.

Les hommes qui signèrent ces lignes mortifères sont nos grands frères. Assomptionnistes ou laïcs, les rédacteurs de La Croix eurent en ce temps-là une attitude que rien _ ni l'antisémitisme général, parfois plus excessif encore, des milieux catholiques, ni l'anticléricalisme odieux d'en face _ ne saurait excuser. Ils voulaient sauver Rome et la France ? Ils n'ont fait que salir le Christ qu'ils pensaient servir. En criant « A bas les juifs ! », en se proclamant « le journal le plus antijuif de France », notre quotidien ne voyait pas qu'il trahissait le crucifix arboré alors si fièrement en première page. [...]

http://www.la-croix.com/Archives/1998-01-12/La-Croix-dans-l-affaire-Dreyfus-_NP_-1998-01-12-450120

- In 1905, along with the other exiled religious orders, the Assumptionists were readmitted to France, having set up their aluminate/Apostolic school, Our Lady of Consolation, the year before. Clearly, good things can arise from times of great difficulty: “When one door closes, another opens.”
- The first reference to the school as Assumption College was in 1911. The high school was called the “école supérieure.”

1904: A Franco American School

“From the first, **Assumption benefitted from the Franco-American and French Canadian communities**, the school's pools of potential students as classes were taught in French; at the time, **French speakers numbered 20,000 in Worcester alone**, and Assumption cultivated their support through ethno-cultural organizations. In the early days the most important such group was the [Franco-American Catholic Organization](#), which sought to forge **“an elite of educated men”** among its stock. Assumption College shared that goal. The 1917-1918 college catalog observed *“while it is very necessary for the Church to have zealous and educated priests, it is no less important for it to find, among the faithful, those elite souls who, as a result of their thoroughly Christian training and instruction, exercise a salutary influence in the different professions they choose.”*

[http://en.metapedia.org/wiki/Assumption_College]

- “The strident **identitarian** charism [that is, the deeply engrained understanding of the Franco-American nature of the school] at Assumption was a **cause of grief and occasional conflict** with the overwhelmingly Irish-American, assimilationist [Church] hierarchy. [Springfield Bishop Thomas M. Beaven](#) [Worcester was part of the Springfield diocese at the time] complained that he "did not authorize a purely French-Canadian college." But he did not force the **Assumptionists**, who **promised to "remain very quiet" in ethnic affairs**, to admit non-French students to the school.^[10] Assumption would **remain aloof from the [Sentinelle Affair](#)** concerning [La Sentinelle](#), the militant Franco-American [Woonsocket](#) newspaper operative from 1924 to 1928,^[11] but by the school's **25th anniversary** festivities in 1929, vicar provincial Fr. Clodoald Sérieix could **proclaim the college gave "the Franco-American race [!] in the United States" a means of "survival"**.^[12] **Two years later**, the Assumption College acquired its **first motto, *Je maintiendrai***, French for "I will uphold," in the **sense that "I will uphold the faith, the language and the traditions of my fathers."** [http://en.metapedia.org/wiki/Assumption_College]
- The opening of the school to day-hops in 1930 is a good example of adaptation to economic circumstances, in this case, the beginning of the Great Depression. In Jefferson's terms, this was clearly a change in a "matter of style," not a "matter of principle." A second example, however, the admission of non-French speakers in 1941, even though they were required to learn French, was arguably a (small) change in a matter of principle. Clearly, the strength of the school's mission to "uphold the language of my fathers" was beginning to wane a mere 11 years after the adoption of "Je maintiendrai." The forces of assimilation of Franco-American families into the predominant English-language culture were working slowly but inexorably.
- In 1943, the Assumptionists came within a day of purchasing land in Lexington, MA for a College campus. They reportedly pulled back when told that Archbishop Cushing "would have required that the school change its Franco-American character." [<http://assumption.us/about-us/47-virtual-library/551-assumptionists-in-the-us>] "Je maintiendrai" was still strong enough to prevent this change.
 - It took a so-called "act-of-god" – the tornado of 1953 – to provide the sufficient cause for the separation of the high school and college.

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

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- Already in 1954 the high school was being referred to as Assumption Preparatory School. The next year the name was being used formally by the school in its external literature.
- My class started in 1961. There were a number of important trends and events that influenced our school experience, including:
 - Booming US economy
 - Acceleration of the space/moon race, with its emphasis on science and math in academics. One manifestation of this trend at APS was the hosting of a National Science Foundation summer program in Mathematics (1963).
 - The Cuban missile crisis (Oct 1962) – raised the level of existential angst
 - Kennedy presidency; Peace Corps; assassination (Nov, 1963) – national uncertainty; loss of our “Catholic” president
 - Civil Rights movement (from 1963; thinking beyond the white “elite”; student-body diversity; reading list addition: *Black Like Me*)
 - Vatican II (Oct 62 – Dec 65) – opening of relations between the [Catholic Church](#) and the modern world; ecumenism; adoption of “Protestant” hymns in APS services (*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*); call to holiness for everyone, including the laity; set stage for adoption of vernacular for liturgical services (and reduced importance of Latin)
 - Rising Québécois nationalism; rising Franco-American assimilation
- In 1963, the planning phase of the building program was begun during auspicious economic times. APS’65 student Al Surprenant’s father was a major donor. No ground was broken before APS’65 graduated; new buildings used by students starting in 1967.
- Fr. Gérard selects, produces, and directs 2 Claudel plays for “Les enfants sur la place” (lasting influence from Ambassador Claudel’s 1929 visit?)
 - Small audiences in Worcester (The Little Theater, behind the Worcester

Auditorium main hall) and New Bedford

- In 1968, APS briefly considered admitting co-eds as a way to increase the population base from which the Prep drew students. This was a clear recognition of the critical need to increase enrollments. The idea did not gain enough support to go forward.
 - 1970: Key factors in APS decision to close -- finances
 - losing about \$0.5M/year, with projection of the annual loss growing
 - repayment of building program loans
 - high operational costs, including \$ to pay increasingly lay faculty (not enough new Assumptionists to pick up the load)
 - need to fund retirement for aging religious
 - insufficient revenues and **declining enrollments**
 - weak financial conditions for US Assumptionists
- [<http://assumption.us/about-us/47-virtual-library/551-assumptionists-in-the-us>]

As I think about this list, I consider the declining enrollments to be the **primary factor**. If there had been strong demand from student families for continuing the “Je maintiendrai” mission, all of the other problems could likely have been overcome.

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

I want to say **a little more about 4 of these events**, 2 of which occurred in 1929. The first was a major accomplishment, indicating how well the school had succeeded. The second was a pretty clear indication that Franco-American culture would never again be as important in the city’s and region’s future.

Event 1: Assumption Silver Jubilee and Visit of Ambassador Paul Claudel

“By 1929, twenty five years after its foundation, the school could rejoice over the fact that 64 of its former students had been ordained to the priesthood. The Silver Jubilee of Assumption College was dramatized (I use the word advisedly) by the visit of the Ambassador of France, Paul Claudel, on May14-16. **Mayor Michael J. O’Mara issued a proclamation urging Worcester citizens to fly the American and French flags** on the occasion of this first visit to Worcester by a French ambassador. **Among the reception committee were FF. Clodoald Serieix, Rodolphe Martel, and Lambert Saive.** The great poet/dramatist and his wife were greeted at the Worcester railroad station by the band of the 101st Infantry, and escorted by 500 National Guardsmen to the City Hall, where they were greeted by Mayor O’Mara. Mr. Claudel stated that Worcester had given him the **greatest reception of his entire career**. After a banquet at the Worcester Club, the ambassador arrived at Mechanics Hall, and he was greeted by a trumpet fanfare. **The College orchestra and chorale** had just finished the first half of their annual concert. In his remarks, Mr. Claudel gave the three reasons why he had come to Worcester

- first, he wanted to imitate Lafayette, who had visited the city in 1824. ‘No Frenchman,’ he said, ‘can do better than follow Lafayette.’
- he wanted to visit his countrymen, whom he addressed in French, recounting his recent trip to visit the Acadians of Louisiana.
- Finally, he wanted to keep his diplomat’s promise to **accept the Assumptionists’ repeated invitation.**

He expressed his gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Gage for their generosity toward the *Cite Universitaire* then being built in Paris. The College orchestra and chorale then finished their concert

“On Monday, May 15, Ambassador Claudel visited a number of Worcester schools: Holy Name of Jesus parochial school, North High, Holy Cross College, where he autographed some of his books in the library, Worcester Tech, and Clark University, which conferred upon him an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. This was followed by a reception and **banquet at Assumption College**, and by the presentation of two short plays, before the Ambassador had to leave for another banquet at the Bancroft Hotel.

“On Tuesday, May 16, the Ambassador visited St. Joseph and Notre Dame parochial schools, St. Anne’s Orphanage, and the St. Francis Home. He and Mrs. Claudel made a **brief final visit to Assumption** before leaving for Woonsocket, Rhode Island.

“May 19 through 21 saw many other celebrations planned by Fr. Clodoald Serieix: drill-team performances, a banquet for civil leaders and representatives of Franco-American societies, a Solemn High Mass for students and their parents, multi-colored illuminations gleaming from the College windows, an Alumni reunion, an Exhibition tracing the history of the Assumptionists and of the College, a reception and banquet for priests, at which it was announced that Fr. Clodoald Serieix had been named Provincial of the Paris Province of the Assumptionists.”

<http://assumption.us/about-us/47-virtual-library/551-assumptionists-in-the-us>

Event 2: La Sentinelle – the Subordination of Franco-Americanism to Religious Authority

“The details of the ‘Sentinelle Affair’ are **complex** and are intertwined with the **political** and **social** climate of the 1920’s. [...] The “Sentinelle Affair” was so named for a newspaper called *La Sentinelle* which was founded by Elphège Daignault and others in **opposition to Mgr. William Hickey’s fund raising project**. In 1924, Bishop Hickey of the Diocese of Providence Rhode Island launched a project to raise funds at the parochial level, in order to **build several English-language Catholic high schools**. If a parish did not reach a quota for fund raising, a special tax was imposed on the church. Daignault and other **Franco-American leaders opposed this project** for many reasons, **especially because they felt it was unfair for French speaking parishes to be forced to subsidize the building of English speaking schools**. Thus ensued a war of words played out in many Franco-American newspapers of the time. In early 1928 Daignault and dozens of supporters of the Sentinellist movement were **excommunicated** by the Holy See and it **became a sin for Catholics to read, sell, or distribute *La Sentinelle***. A year later Daignault and his followers **capitulated** and were readmitted to the Catholic Church.”

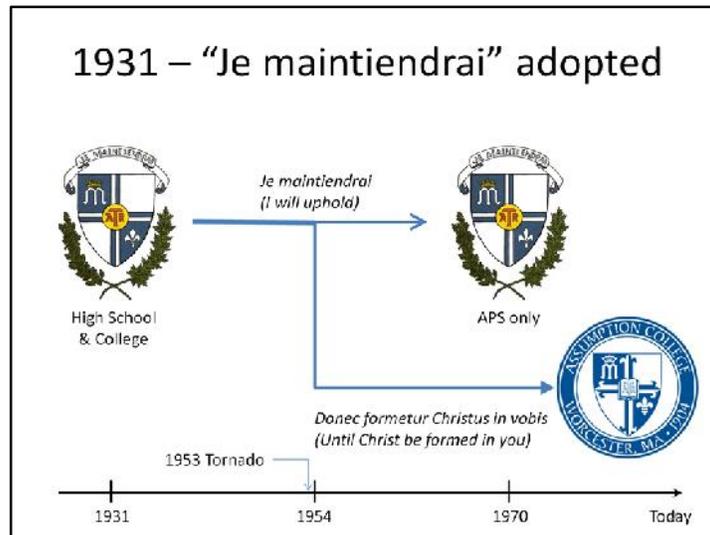
<http://assumption.libguides.com/content.php?pid=312340&sid=2567098>

For a longer treatment of the details and importance of the Sentinelle Affair, see: **The Mortality and Morality of Nations: Jews, Afrikaners, and French-Canadians**, By Uriel Abulof, pp. 99-101. Here is are two excerpts:

“The importance of the Sentinelle affair in the chronicles of French-Canadian existential insecurities can hardly be exaggerated. Sentinellists and opponents alike shared the ethos of *survivance* but differed over its moral, political meaning. Adherents of both groups were devout Catholics seeking to preserve the French language. The difference between them lay in the degree to which they were prepared to subordinate the needs of the ethnic community (and their distinct linguistic characteristics) to church authority.”

“The Sentinelle affair sowed the seeds of dissent in the French Catholic community in North America. In practical terms, the Sentinellist failure had a huge impact on the education of coming generations, accelerating the assimilation of the French into the US melting pot.”

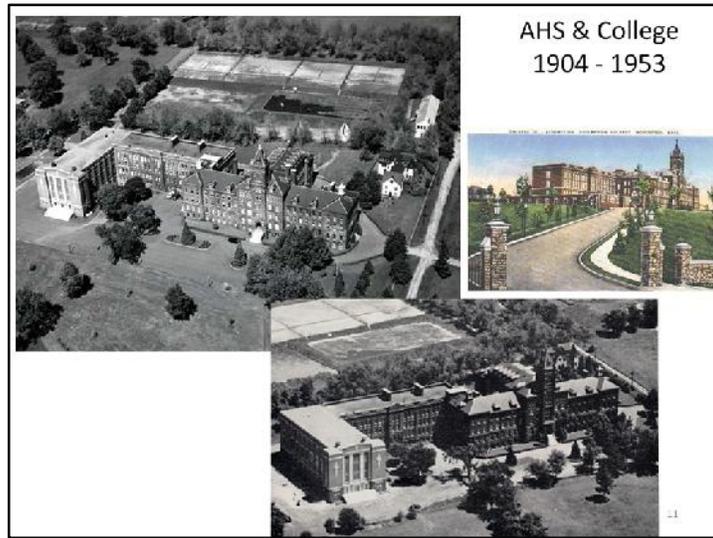
[<https://books.google.com/books?id=ejIZCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA100&dq=Sentinelle+Affair+hickey+daignault+capitulated&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAGoVChMIOP6q1NnCxwIViyYeCh0kHALi#v=onepage&q=Sentinelle%20Affair%20hickey%20daignault%20capitulated&f=false>]



Event 3: The adoption of the motto “Je maintiendrai” and the emblem/coat-of-arms.

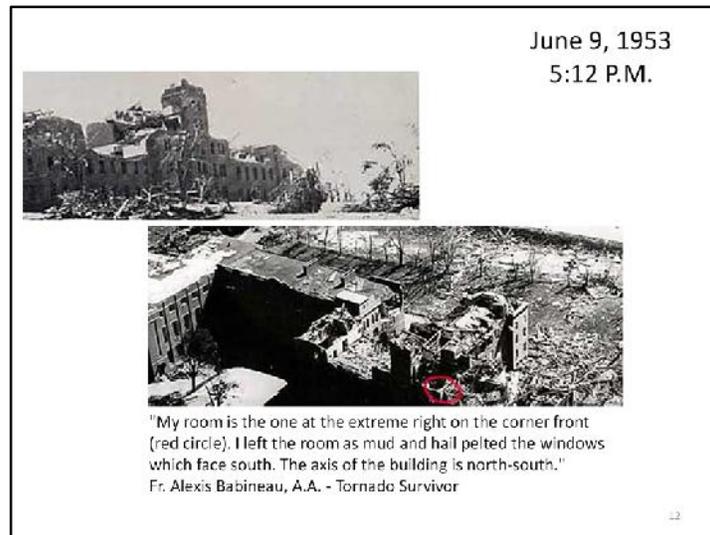
It hardly seems an accident that this came only 2 years after the 1929 events. (Which is also why I think it unlikely that it was an accident that in the APS/AC emblem, the fleur-de-lis was neither French nor French Canadian.)

Note the lack of French in the College’s 1954 motto. The fleur-de-lis remains, perhaps conveniently ambiguous as to whether it refers to France/French Canada/Franco-Americans and/or Mary. There are no maple leaves.



And, the 4th event: the infamous tornado of 1953

This finally set the high school (*école supérieure*, which became APS shortly after) and the college on “nearly independent” paths.



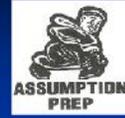
<http://www.assumption.us/tornado/album/index.htm>

What ensued, of course, was the rebuilding of the Boylston St. campus as the Prep school, and the purchase of land and building of the College campus on Salisbury St.

I'd like to switch now from the overall story of what was going on with APS and the Franco-American and Assumptionist communities, to a more personal view of APS as I experienced it.

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 13

I come from a large Franco-American family (12 kids), with my grandparents and great-grandparents having immigrated from Quebec. But my parents knew only a few words in French, and I knew none. They lacked the means to send me to APS, but they learned about a scholarship competition, and I was lucky enough to win a full scholarship. So I came to APS with a mission: to recover my family's French-Canadian heritage, especially its ability to **speak French**: Not "Je maintiendrai" but rather "Je retrouverai" ("I will rediscover.").

I learned a lot, with many of the most important lessons not in the syllabus! Here is a list of the "top 10" things I learned, with the benefit of hindsight. (This is slightly updated from the first version of 2005.)

10. How to pronounce my name. Along with other just-arrived Freshmen, I was milling about on a cool September afternoon near the grotto, meeting my classmates and faculty. A priest in a béret approached me, extended his hand in greeting, and said, "Hello, I'm Fr. Gérard Messier. What's your name?" "Leo Lah-vur-ger." A look of puzzlement. "Could you spell that for me please?" L-A-V-E-R-D-U-R-E. "Oh, La-ver-dure! Such a beautiful name! Why would you spoil it? Repeat after me: La-ver-dure." And so it began.

9. Speaking French can change your life. You can learn to speak a foreign language well as a young adult, but you have to behave like a kid: whistling diphthongs on an APS park bench with coaching from my roommate, Vinny Pelletier; learning dialog well enough to play the King of Spain in a French play; laughing with kids at my pronunciation mistakes as a camp counselor in France. It can lead to untold developments like a beautiful French wife, 3 French kids, and 6 years of living in la douce France. (And other benefits: "You can never understand one language until you understand at least two." ~Geoffrey Willans)

8. The extra food goes to the waiters, ... and the extra wine to altar boys. Waiting on tables also gets you out of those forced, post-breakfast, outdoor recesses in mid-winter, while serving Mass gets you out of early morning study hall. Good things can happen behind the scenes. Be there!

7. **Mens sana in corpore sano:** “A sound mind in a sound body.” It’s not an either/or proposition. Sports were a major, memorable part of my APS experience. Much more fun than walking around the gym doing calisthenics under the command of M. Trudeau.

6. **Hard work pays off.** It starts with one’s natural talents and builds on them. Clarity of purpose and focus help enormously. Meritocracy: not just about who has money; my family’s very modest financial means did not hold me back. People and institutions are more than willing to give you a hand-up (but not a hand-out). APS, and the people and organizations supporting it – especially the Union de St. Jean-Baptiste, who provided my scholarship – helped me tremendously, and I am forever in their debt.

5. **Passion is more important than money.** Finding and following one’s muse is critical. Do something well; enjoy it. Because of my passion for math, I was able to attend the NSF summer math program (1963) and made a quantum leap in my understanding and proficiency in that subject. And, throughout my entire career I guided my choice of work by the adage “If it’s not about more than the pay, it will never pay more.” I was lucky enough to have an interesting, challenging, and rewarding career in a rapidly growing profession that I loved, helping to usher in the information age. And I got to do some of it in France and other European countries that I wanted to experience first hand.

4. **Ama et fac quod vis.** “Love and do what you want.” St. Augustine via Fr. George. He was our hall proctor and spiritual mentor, and this was his overarching rule for how we should behave. (But he would often add we were **doing too much “fac-ing” and not enough “ama-ing.”** Interesting that *amo* was the first verb we learned in Latin.) Love god and people. For me, finding meaning in life seems necessary but elusive. No easy answers; dogma (received wisdom without questioning) ultimately a turn-off for me. Nature as “god” appeals.

3. **Keys: connectedness, compassion, contribution.**

Connectedness. We *are* part of larger wholes; wisdom lies in recognizing this and acting accordingly.

- Vatican II broadened our concept of “us” across religions and all people of good faith (even if agnostic or atheist).
- Sustainability, my passion for the last 10 years since taking an early partial retirement, is all about understanding this connectedness -- not only across space but also time: “Think long term, act now.”
- Pope Francis’s encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, on “human ecology,” or the interrelated relationship between humans and the environment recognizes this truth and urges us to do the necessary, starting with changing the way we think about the world and reprioritizing our values and actions (the principles – the rocks in the stream).

Compassion: The great commandment/prescription of all religions – even those that don’t

recognize a supreme being – is to love our fellow human beings. Aha. (Hillel?: Negative statement of the Golden Rule: “That which is hateful to you, do not do unto another: This is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary. And now go study.”

<http://forward.com/culture/14250/the-rest-of-the-rest-is-commentary-02564/#ixzz3iXKwGJJs>)

Contribution:

- Rather than “noblesse oblige,” **ability obliges** (“elites” perhaps, but without “elitism”).
- “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” ~ J. Kennedy. Not sure how many people think this way in today’s America.
- “To each according to their need; from each according to their ability to contribute.” I struggled for many years trying to find a good answer to Fr. George’s question: **“How will you use your talents to contribute?”** (But I got there eventually.)

2. Collaboration & co-opetition beat competition. Learning is a social activity: it’s a lot more fun to study together. I studied for exams with Walt, and Vinny, and Ricardo. Uncompromisingly WIN-WIN. The lesson goes well beyond learning, of course. Life is **not** a game with the winner being “the one who has accumulated the most toys.”

Darwin got it right: Life is about the survival of the fittest. But many people understand this – wrongly -- to mean that competing, and winning, is everything. Rather, **the primary fitness test is how well we collaborate to meet common challenges.** From the gene’s perspective, altruism helps shared genes survive and thrive (and we share the great, great majority of our genes).

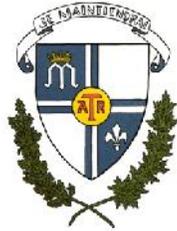
1. APS friends are friends for life.

- I have attended no college reunions, but all the 5-year APS’65 reunions.
- ***Dis moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai qui tu es.*** (“Tell me who you hang out with, and I will tell you who you are.”)
- And my “friends” are not just classmates, but also my mentors at the Prep and my (often-unnoticed) supporters, to whom I will always owe a deep **“Merci”!**

Thank you all for being such great friends!

En Somme, ...

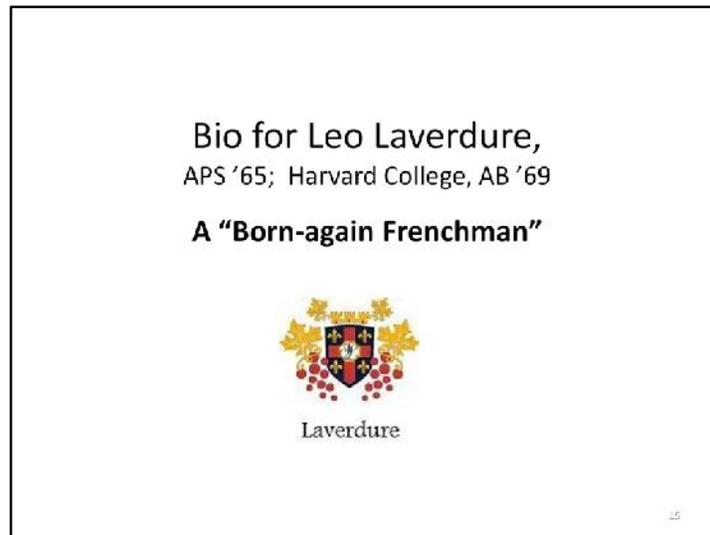
- ✦ J'ai retrouvé (en bonne partie)
- ✦ L'esprit de "Je maintiendrai"
continue en nous tous



- With great help from the APS community and through a lifetime of experiences that ensued, I have become a **"born-again Frenchman"**
 - Pretty good mastery of the French language; some French culture.
 - But **not** a born-again French Canadian or Franco-American!
 - Elaborating on my bio a little:
 - Nearly everyone in my family, including my parents, has visited France
 - My brother Larry attended APS after me
 - My brother Don also married a Frenchie
 - My wife's family have all visited us in the US many times
 - one of her brothers restores Cadillacs and drives around flying both the French and American flags (in France)
- **APS did not survive as an institution** – primarily because of the **assimilative English-language culture**.
 - Still, **it has made a huge difference in my life**, and I suspect in the lives of everyone here.
 - We are the living continuation of "Je maintiendrai"
- **Esprit = spirit = essentials = "matters of principle"** (of Thomas Jefferson)
 - But the particulars (Jefferson's "matters of style") keep changing with the stream of events that surround and shape our lives
 - From St. Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*, one of the first books I read in French at APS, I learned my lifetime principle (recorded in my yearbook entry):

***"L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux [the essential is invisible to the eyes],
On ne voit bien qu'avec le coeur [we see well only with the heart]."***

Thank you.



Came to APS in '61 not understanding a word of French
Charged with recovering French language for his large Franco-American family
Berlin, MA
Learned enough French to join Pop's French-speakers class as a junior
Finally got a speaking part in Fr. Gérard's production of Claudel's *Le Soulier de Satin*
Learned more French in college
... and as a camp counselor in central France (summer of '66)
Performed Jacques Brel songs at the International Student Association in Cambridge with a
visiting Frenchie
... who introduced him to another Frenchie, Martine, the love of his life, on Bastille
Day '68
They married, with two of his best friends (from APS) attending, in Royan, FR ('69)
Fr. Paul Goudreau from AC performed the ceremony
Worked as a programmer and systems architect for Digital/Compaq/HP for 30+ years
5 years in France
Headed worldwide systems architect community
Still working part-time as an instructor of HP's system architects
Wrote a book and is working on another
Proud, engaged father of 3 children, naturally dual nationals (French, American)
All of whom speak French (2 pretty well) and have lived in France
Plus 5 grandkids
Keen interest in sustainability and how organizations and their systems adapt to change
How to balance short- and long-term needs
Member of the Sustainability Commission for Town of Groton MA
Founded a non-profit organization to meet sustainability challenges locally