

Foundation Mass Introduction – Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Today, we are here to celebrate the founding of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, and to celebrate 194 years of educating young men in the charism of Fr. Andre Coindre, our founder. This past summer, I was blessed with the experience of a lifetime when I, along with Mr. Lynn and Mr. Bogran, was able to spend 17 days in Lyon, France, where the Brothers of the Sacred Heart began its ministry. I remember looking down one day at the stone floors in Fr. Coindre's home and realizing that I was literally and figuratively walking in his footsteps and the footsteps of the many other brothers before me. The magnitude of that moment was overpowering. As I spent those days studying the Brothers' history with many other lay partners, I came to understand more fully our mission, a mission rooted in the charism of one man, Fr. Andre Coindre, all stemming from one simple act of kindness.

At Brother Martin we use the word charism often, but what is the charism of Fr. Coindre? And why are his charism and this day important to us? A charism is a gift from the Holy Spirit. Our charism is a gift that is transmitted to us from our founder. We are heirs to a legacy, a gift, a charism based on trust, compassion, social justice and personal attention, words we use every day at Brother Martin, the same words used 147 years ago when the Brothers came to New Orleans. This charism manifests itself in the care and concern we show to one another, in the feeling we get in this building that makes us want to be here. It manifests itself in the trials and successes of our days here. Brother Martin is not just a school; it is a sacred place, a sanctuary for all of us. It is sacred ground; a place where the charism is alive. Each one of you has a sacred story.

It is incredible to realize that one man's ideas, dreams and spirit are alive today. And it is our job to develop this charism, to safeguard this spirit. The success of the brother's mission depends on each of us. That is why celebrating this day is so important. It reminds us to stay rooted in our history. It reminds us to be thankful for the brothers and partners in the mission that are here with us today. It reminds how truly powerful and wonderful this work is in the world today and especially here on Elysian Fields.

So as we pray and celebrate today, we should be thankful and recommit ourselves to continue to carry the charism throughout our lives.