

### The Hole in the Clouds, 24 July 2010

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After we decided that the dedication would have to be held at the Solanus Casey Center instead of at the cemetery because of the hard rain the days before and the threat of more, we asked Cardinal Szoka to bless the monument when he arrived, if the weather permitted.

The FCHSM president, Loraine DiCerbo, and I waited to greet the cardinal at the gate at 1:45. With Russell Burns, director of Mt. Elliott Cemetery, and Maura DeGrande, who had taken care of ordering the monument and the inscriptions, we went to Section A of the cemetery. A few people, about six, not all of them members of FCHSM, just happened to be there viewing our monument. Cardinal Szoka asked me why the dedication had been rescheduled inside the Solanus Casey Center, and I explained our concerns about possibly dangerous weather. He commented, with a smile: "Oh, ye of little faith."

Letting me hold the aspergillum, the holy water sprinkler, for the blessing, the cardinal began to read from his book; and, at that very moment, some of the grey clouds cleared. The sun shone down through a hole in them right onto our heads as we stood in front of the monument. It was an eerie and exultant moment. I have to believe that the ancestors were smiling at us, grateful for our efforts to honor and remember them. After that, there was no hint of rain for the rest of the day.

When I drove home that night with Sherry Somerset, the moon was rising over *Le Détroit du Lac Érié et Lac Sainte Claire* on our right, and the western sky burned with streaks of red and yellow and rose. In the ancient traditions of many nations and religions, the West is the Land of the Dead. I want to believe that the ancestors sent that explosion of vibrant colors to celebrate with us, just as the inhabitants of New France celebrated important events with *feu de joie*, fireworks or bonfires of joy,<sup>1</sup> even writing the expense for them into the budgets they sent to France. What a spectacular end to a spectacular day!

Addition in 2014: President Loraine DiCerbo had the presence of mind to photograph the spectacular skies above Ste. Anne de Detroit on 24 July 2010. Here, on the next page, with her permission, are two of her photographs. Thank you, Loraine, for preserving a spectacular memory.

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<sup>1</sup> See Library and Archives Canada ArchiviaNet, Private Archives and Colonial Records, for Governor Callière's letter in October of 1701 noting the "ratification de la paix par une assemblée d'environ 1,300 Indiens de toutes les nations (Te Deum, **feu de joie**);" ratification of the peace (Great Peace of Montreal of 1701 that made the founding of Detroit possible) by an assembly of about 1,300 Indians of all the Nations (*Te Deum* [hymn to praise God], **feu de joie**). Series C11A. Correspondance générale; Canada; Microfilm of original, reel no. F-19; Original: Volume 19, fol. 114-122v. The reference to budgeting for *feu de joie* is filed somewhere in my documents in a hard copy from a microfilm.

