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A feast for Saint Eugene

Ten years after the canonization of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate, and the Youth Movement "Costruire" organized a congress in Catanzaro.

A missionary community, when it organizes a congress, has to do so in a missionary way. Therefore, the congress "On the Paths of the Mission," which took place in Catanzaro in early December, could not but have a missionary and itinerant touch. It was not the classic sequence of speakers, but a number of missionary conversations in an effort to dialogue with everyone and to announce Jesus Christ as Saviour.

The congress was part of the tenth anniversary celebrations of the canonization of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. On December 3, 1995, the Church solemnly proclaimed this new saint. Ten years later, the Oblate community of the Calabrian capital, together with the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate and the Youth Movement "Costruire" decided to organize this gathering.

Therefore, it was not merely a get-together to celebrate. From the beginning of November, the Oblates and some young people from the Calabrian "Costruire" visited the students in two big city high schools, along with their religion teachers during their regular weekly classes. The students at the Siciliani (science school) and the Galluppi (classical school) were able to listen to stories about the missions, look at photos, and ask questions of the missionaries. The welcome

and the attention of the students was generally very positive. The interest of the students and of the teachers grew with each passing day. Brochures were passed out during the classes with the program of the Mission Congress. Printed above a picture of St. Eugene on one page were the words, "Who is hiding behind the question mark? If you wish to find out, we'll be waiting for you at the Church of the Star in Catanzaro." Nearly 2,000 youth heard the school presentations.

In the afternoon, the headquarters for the mission was the Church of the Star, located in the middle of the city's historical centre. The little church, remodelled for Jubilee 2000, hosted an important conference, the evening meetings of the teenagers, a round-table with testimonies about St. Eugene, a prayer vigil, and a missionary exhibit.

The first conference was given by Fr. Frank SANTUCCI, OMI, General Postulator, on the theme: "St. Eugene, a saint for our times." With the help of numerous pictures and with the dynamism so characteristic of him, Santucci related to those present many episodes from the life of the holy bishop. He generated much interest and many questions. During the round-table, some people gave personal testimonies about St. Eugene's role in their own lives. The final talk was by Archbishop Antonio Cantisani, retired archbishop of Catanzaro, who, as a seminarian, knew the Oblates at Maratea (Pz) in 1943. His talk focused of the missionary charism at work in Southern Italy from after the war until the present day. Also making presentations were Mr. and Mrs. Gallace, MAMI members, Adriana

from “Costruire, and Fr. Giovanni FUSTAINO from the Oblate community in Catanzaro.

The evening gatherings of youth were well attended as was the missionary exhibit, complete with photos and souvenirs coming from the missions where Italian Oblates are working.

At the end of the week, on December 4, there was celebration in the auditorium of the Mazzini Middle School of Cattanzaro. People attended from parishes in Calabria where the Oblates had conducted parish and youth missions in the past few years. There were also many friends of the community, members of MAMI and of “Costruire,” coming not only from Calabria but also from Messina and Catania in Sicily.

At the end of the concluding Mass, presided by Archbishop Cantisani in the Church of the Magadalen, there was the blessing of a portrait of St. Eugene, the work of the artist, Andrea Nesticò, a member of MAMI. The Vicar Provincial of the Italian Oblates, Fr. Pino SORRENTINO, attended the final days of the congress. (*Pasquale CASTRILLI OMI*)

AUSTRIA-CZECH REPUBLIC

How the Oblates captured the front page in the Media

It took only two days in the Czech Republic to make the Oblates of Mary Immaculate known in the whole country. The “credit” goes to the kidnapping of Fr. Roman MUSIL in Haiti. Fr. Roman, a native of the Czech Republic, was kidnapped in Port-au-Prince on December 6, 2005. Two days later, the Oblates in his home country received the sad news; they immediately asked their friends for prayers – by e-mail, instant messaging, and through Catholic Radio Proglas. The news travelled so quickly that in a few hours, the Oblates’ telephones began to ring. First the television crews arrived for their reports; and then came the newspapers. Some Oblates were interviewed even until late at night.

The next day, around noon, the news of Fr. Roman’s release came in. The phones began to ring again; the television crews returned and new interviews were granted, this time, fortunately,

in joyfulness and calm. Roman was fine and was safe in the provincial house at Port-au-Prince.

The interest of the journalists surprised all the Oblates in the country. What had happened to Fr. Roman was the opening news on television for two days and was on the front page of the newspapers and on the Internet. In the Czech Republic, where the majority of the population claims to be atheist, there was a deluge of questions: what is a missionary? What does he do? Who are the Oblates? And so on.

For two days, everyone was talking about the mission of Fr. Roman, but also about the missions of the Oblates in general. Ironically, the misfortune of Fr. Roman brought incredible publicity. Nevertheless, we continue to hope that other Oblates will not have such an experience.

POLAND

Meeting of parish mission preachers

From the very beginning of the Polish Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the preaching of parish missions and retreats has been an important part of their ministry. At this time, 55 Oblates are involved in this ministry. In the course of a year, Polish Oblates preach more than 700 parish missions and retreats to children and adolescents, to religious, and to various other Church groups.

In Poland, the requests for this sort of ministry are always numerous. Therefore, for several years the group of itinerant preachers is regularly reinforced and re-energized. In order to maintain the quality of preaching the Word of God, the missionaries continually try to improve what they call their “preaching workshops.”

Since preaching the Word is an essential characteristic of the Congregation, the scholastics have six years of preparation for the ministry of God’s Word, through a special homiletics program. In Poznan, twice a year there is a formation program for young Oblate preachers; in 2005, seven Oblates worked on improving their skills for preaching parish missions and

retreats. Besides the traditional forms of preaching the Word, such as homilies, sermons and conferences, the young priests learned new forms of evangelisation: multi-media presentations, pantomime, drams, and ways to conduct retreats with children and adolescents.

Every year, the Oblate mission preaching team takes part in “preaching workshops.” These meetings are designed to make the preaching of missions to the people more competent and contemporary. In 2005, this formation gathering took place at the scholasticate in Obra, from November 16-18, with 44 participants. There were four major conferences: *Preaching in the context of communications theory* (K. CZEPIRSKI); *Preaching in the liturgical context* (B. NADOLSKI and K. LIJKA); *Preaching to religious* (K. SWITALA); and *Biblical aspects of preaching* (W. POPIELEWSKI). There were several other conferences with E. KING, Vicar General; T. JOCHEM, Provincial; and T. SAJDAK, Provincial Treasurer.

Pleased with the encounter, the participants decided that they will meet again in November, 2006, in Cracow, where they will hear from professors at the Pontifical Academy of Theology at the University of Cracow.

ROMANIA

Bethany, School of the Word

As frequently happens at the end of a parish mission, a meeting was planned to follow-up and deepen the joyous experience of that encounter with Christ. On October 23, we got together once

again at Târgu Jiu. The Oblates were welcomed by a well-prepared group from the parish community of St. John Capistrano in order to establish the School of the Word. The background for this meeting, which will be followed by five others up till the celebration of the second week of mission, is Bethany, the place where Jesus often went to visit Martha, Mary and Lazarus (Lk. 10, 39-42). At their home, Jesus was welcomed; he was at home with them and could speak freely. This scene is relived during the parish mission, especially in the “listening centres” where people put their worries aside in order to listen to the Master. Bethany, as a School of the Word, is tied to the “Centres for Listening to the Word” and seeks to answer the questions raised there: How do we live all that we hear? Is it even possible for someone from our times to live according to the Gospel of Jesus?

During the first meeting of Bethany, the focus was especially on the theme of “listening” which is the basis for understanding what Jesus wants to communicate with us. All of this was done in the context of listening exercises and a hands-on experience of the Gospel, the book where the living Christ speaks with us.

Bethany, the School of the Word, is part of the third phase of a missionary project of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and by the pastor of Târgu Jiu, Fr. Petru Husariu. The second phase had been begun on March 13, 2005, by Archbishop Ioan Robu, Archbishop of Bucharest, who, during a Eucharistic celebration, handed over this mandate to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Africa-Madagascar

SOUTH AFRICA

Oblate Restructuring in South Africa

A task team has been meeting with Oblates on both an individual and group level during the past few months to surface views and opinions regarding the proposed restructuring of the three South African provinces into fewer units.

The team was led by Father Nhlanhla NKOSI from Natal and included Father Emmanuel MOSOEU from Central Province (now the new Provincial there) and Father Tony DANIELS from Northern Province.

The report of this task team has now been presented and it has been distributed it to Oblates

in South Africa for discussion in local communities.

Of the 207 Oblates in South Africa, the team managed to survey 144 of them individually. There were 110 Oblates in the field who responded and 34 Scholastics. Furthermore, group discussions on Unification were held in all Oblate Provinces.

Of the 110 Oblates-in-the-field respondents across age spectrum: 62% accept Unification; 6% are against it; 24% accept it conditionally; 6% are against it conditionally and 2% are neutral. Of the 34 Scholastic respondents 56% accept Unification and 32% accept it conditionally. None of this group is against Unification. The fact that there are no whites in this group makes for interesting reading for the future. This generation in which Blacks (Autochthonous, Coloured and Indian peoples) will be a majority is the one that will be affected by Unification.

In processing the data, the team made a number of recommendations. One was that the Scholastics discuss the project of Unification during their spiritual conferences. Another suggestion was that the Superior General give first obediences to provinces other than the one of origin to the newly ordained. The team also suggested that Oblate workshops dealing with racism be held at district and provincial levels. Some Oblates perceive the Unification project as a ploy by some White Oblates to regroup themselves in order to maintain hegemonic

dominant status in the congregation.

The team also requested the Provincials to send a letter in which they state clearly the reasons for Unification and why the time frames are constructed with such a sense of urgency.

The committee of Provincials and councillors will meet to discuss the next step in the procedure. This may be a discussion about important matters raised in the report and how to deal with them. It could also include the beginning of an animation process to see where to go with this. However our feeling is that whilst there is strong support for the restructuring process, there are also some important issues that need to be discussed and debated. The provinces prefer to move slowly at this stage to give people time to reflect and to see what specific issues might need to be dealt with before we begin any animation programme.

In the community meetings the members are asked to reflect on questions like these:

1. What do you think about the report?
2. What important issues have been raised for you?
3. What views do we wish to communicate to the Provincial and councillors about these matters?

Each local community whether it is a house, a residence or district is required to submit a written report on their discussions and the outcomes.

Canada-United States

CANADA

The OMMI: a new President Directress General

The Secular Institute of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate have a new President Directress General. She is Claire Nantel, elected last July 15 for a five-year term.

A member of the Administrative Council since

2001 and General Secretary since 2002, the newly elected leader succeeds Simone Huneault who has finished her term.

Originally from Waterloo, Quebec, Claire Nantel lived for several years in Italy where she held several positions at the World Conference of Secular Institutes, among them that of General Secretary.

The Secular Institute of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate was founded in New Brunswick (Canada) in 1952 by Father Louis-Marie PARENT, OMI. Today there are some 600 members and more than 400 associates in twenty-two countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas.

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP Summoned by the concerns of our world

Twenty-two Oblates, along with men and women associates and collaborators, held a meeting at the Centre Saint-Pierre in Montreal, on October 15-16, 2005, concerning issues of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation (JPIC).

First of all, it was a time to consider where we are right now: our permanent or periodic involvement with groups who are fighting for the dignity of the human person. We were able to identify about 30 places where some of us dedicate a part of our energies, as well as 40 organizations with which we are in contact. Therefore, we are already involved with many groups in the field.

The afternoon was spent listening to the stories of concrete involvement. We heard first of all from Gerard Laverdure, from the South Central section of Montreal (the parishes of St. Peter and St. Bridget). He described his personal and common ties to the destitute of the area. Then we heard from the Notre Dame Congregation which ten years ago did a radical turnabout: from teaching in private schools to solidarity with the disadvantaged, especially exploited women and children. Then the focus was on what is happening among the Oblates on the level of the JPIC service of the General Administration and of some provinces constantly involved with victims of AIDS, with political prisoners, with street children (DR of Congo), with migrants (France), with big corporations (USA), and with the United Nations. (General Administration). We were already aware of the daring involvement of our confreres in various places in Latin America.

As a third step, we explored some reference points for the future. First of all, what sort of consciousness raising and action are possible and desirable for our province? About 10 topics were suggested, with the idea that in the course of the next year, we would choose for ourselves one or two areas of particular interest.

There then followed a consideration of some concrete ways to give life to our wishes: how to awaken our members to the needs? How to support personal and collective projects? Here are some of the suggestions:

- Start with our “gut feelings” ... that which is dear to our hearts.
- As much as possible, develop a direct contact (a meeting, a phone call, a letter, an e-mail) with someone in a difficult situation or with an organization that can help.
- Invite to our local and regional community meetings persons who can give witness, especially laity who are closer to the life of the people.
- Offer some ideas for sharing in community meetings.
- Join existing organizations. Disengage from administrative duties to dedicate time to the ministry of listening and compassion.
- For each region, prepare a select list of resources and possible involvement.
- Become familiar again with certain Oblate texts of the past 20 years.
- Publish a monthly JPIC bulletin, giving on one page short suggestions about documents or web sites.

So that this impetus does not fall flat, the group thought it a good idea to set up a few follow-up steps:

- An annual workshop on a particular theme, bringing together people from all over who feel called by the missionary charism of Eugene de Mazenod.
- A small JPIC Committee to see to the preparation of the workshops and further animation.
- Someone who can give two days per

week to stay in touch with a contact person in each local community as well as with Oblate JPIC communities throughout the world, and who can seek out other sources of information and visit involved organizations.

The history of this Oblate province, from its very beginning, is noted for significant and successful involvement in this area of our mission. Although we are no longer in charge of workers' movements like we were in the past, nevertheless the gospel dimension of justice permeates more and more all of our ministries of general and university education, our spiritual resources and our parish life. Has the time of isolationism passed, when too easily we saw opposition between the "spiritual" and the "activist?" Certainly we are more aware that justice and compassion are an integral and necessary part of our understanding of how to preach the Gospel in today's world: "...to proclaim Christ and his kingdom to the most abandoned." (Const. OMI 5) (*Infomission*, December 2005)

UNITED STATES

A challenging prison ministry

Oblates have long had a history of ministering to the incarcerated. At one time, the Oblates had more men involved in prison ministry in the United States than any other male religious order. It continues to be an important part of the Oblate apostolic outreach.

Fr. Michael O'HARA, OMI, is presently chaplain at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre in New York City. This prison is unique in several ways. It houses over 900 inmates from 51 various countries. It also houses many of the international terrorists who have been involved in crimes against the U.S. Those involved in the World Trade Centre bombing in 1993, the tragedy of 9/11, and those involved in the bombings of the embassies in Africa have been incarcerated there. So, too, are many of the world's international drug traffickers. The prison also has a Witness Security Unit.

Fr. O'Hara not only takes care of the religious

needs of the Catholic inmates, but also, as supervising chaplain, oversees the religious needs of the Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and several other religious faith groups. For Catholics, he celebrates Mass, organizes rosary groups and several Bible study groups throughout the week. Actually, the main ministry is not evangelisation, but rather pre-evangelisation. Although approximately half of the inmates identify themselves as Catholic, few have much of an idea of what that means.

One challenge unique to this prison is that over 500 men are separated from one another lest they engage in informing one against the other in order to get a better deal for themselves with the government. Thus multiple Masses and other services have to be held on individual units, as opposed to having several central Masses.

Another facet of Fr. O'Hara's ministry is as leader of the institutional Crisis Support Team which, in the aftermath of 9/11, has taken on greater significance. (from *OMIUSA*)

LACOMBE

An Oblate rediscovers St. Eugene in Aix

In the fall of 2004, I asked and received permission to participate in the "de Mazenod Experience", a three-month revitalization in the life and spirit of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, the Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This takes place at the birth place of our congregation, Aix-en-Provence, in the south of France. So it was in the first week of September 2004, in the company of fifteen Oblate missionaries, priests and brothers, from French speaking sectors of Africa, Indonesia, South America and Europe, that I began a spiritual quest into the life, times and charism of our Founder. This motley crew represented a colourful snapshot of the "inter-nationality" of our congregation.

The "crux" of my quest - who is Saint Eugene to me, and secondly, how does his spirit and charism inspire and motivate one ministering to the marginalized and disaffiliated homeless population of downtown Toronto and dwindling

urban First Nations parish?

The privilege of spending the first six weeks at the Oblate Centre in Aix where the Mission Church is, the very place where Saint Eugene, Father Tempier and three of the initial candidates formed the first Oblate community, to have celebrated Eucharist in what was then their common room, to have walked the halls where Saint Eugene united those who were drawn by his charism, to preach the Gospel to the poor in the villages of Provence, to celebrate Eucharist with brother Oblates from the Third World in the chapel of the old Carmelite convent, where Saint Eugene undoubtedly offered daily Mass, were all very impressionable experiences.

Many excursions took us to the significant landmarks of the congregation's beginnings and of Saint Eugene's lightning bolt spiritual experience — most notably, the Church of the Madeleine, where he received the living gift of the Holy Spirit, while attending a Good Friday service in 1807. Seven years later, while on retreat he was to write: "Can I ever forget those bitter tears which the sight of the Cross caused to stream from my eyes one Good Friday service?" and a little further, "Never was my soul more relieved, and never did it feel happier." This was a moment when the hitherto normal situations of his life were totally uprooted. Becoming aware of God's immense love for him, new roots were planted, and from that moment on, his entire life would be dedicated to Christ and to the preaching of God's love.

The last month of the "de Mazenod Experience" took place at a former Oblate Scholasticate, now a retreat centre in Lumières, France, where we prayed the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Each evening the director, an Oblate, would distribute Scripture passages and excerpts from Saint Eugene's letters to his brother Oblates for our meditations and times of prayer the following day. These were days of silence to be attentive to God's word and allow the charism of Saint Eugene to take root deep within our hearts. Today as Oblates, associates and friends of Saint Eugene, we share in his charism; and, just as he was called to a particular mission,

preaching to the poor and marginalized, we too are called to act for the good of those whom we are called to evangelise.

Who is Saint Eugene to me? An extraordinary man - whose life and work inspires me to be an Oblate, gives witness to the absolute need for a commitment to Christ and motivates me to bring Christ's love and compassion to the homeless and marginalized of Toronto.

The "de Mazenod Experience" was for me, most certainly a time of renewal and revitalization in Saint Eugene's charism, the Evangelisation of the poor. His ability to adapt to the "signs of the times" renders him as relevant today as he was in mid 19th century France. From the moment of his profound religious experience at the Crucifix in the Church of the Madeleine on Good Friday 1807, his entire life was centred on Christ. At this significant time in the life of "OMI Lacombe Canada" and the launching in the new year of "AMMI Lacombe Canada MAMI", history teaches us that communities that were revitalized did as Saint Eugene — by answering to the needs of the times and by a personal and community conversion to Christ. I am truly grateful for the graces received at the "de Mazenod Experience" and pray that my brother Oblates, associates, benefactors and friends of Saint Eugene will be blessed with a greater share in his charism.

--Vaughan QUINN, Co-director – AMMI
Lacombe Canada MAMI

UNITED STATES Spirituality Centre at Oblate School of Theology

Following his installation as president of Oblate School of Theology, Fr. Ron ROLHEISER, OMI, is putting his words into practice as he leads the Board of Trustees, faculty and staff through a visioning process. The final product will serve as a compilation of dreams and help make "our dream" that much more achievable. One dream is already gaining momentum. The Spirituality Centre at the Oblate School will offer classes in Christian spirituality with a heavy emphasis in our desert, medieval, mystical and contemporary traditions.

The classes are a response to a growing hunger for solid formation in spirituality, at all levels, academic and pastoral. Classes should help individuals in their spiritual lives, help develop competent spiritual directors, be a resource for renewal centres, retreat movements and parishes, foster research and writing in the area of spirituality, and be a flagship program for Oblate School of Theology.

LACOMBE **Oblate Youth Ministries Team**

Three Oblates of Mary Immaculate - Mike DECHANT and Dan DIONNE and Mark BLOM – have developed a team called ‘Oblate Youth Ministries’. Recognizing that the Catholic Church sometimes struggles to find a meaningful place for the youth of today, the Team reaches out to youth to help them take their place in the life of the Church and the community. The Oblates believe that the youth are not only the future (of the Church), but “the Church right now”!

For the past two years, in the schools of the Edmonton Catholic School Division, the Oblate Youth Ministries Team has offered a program called ‘PROJECT JUNIOR HIGH’. The focus of the ministry is the training of youth leadership and evangelization. The team spends one month at a junior high school, during which time they provide a “ministry of presence” to the staff and students—visiting classrooms, working with staff and students in areas of learning, and building a school community.

At the beginning and the end of each month they offer a retreat experience to the staff of the junior high school. They also offer a retreat experience for the parents and the parish connected with the school. While the team ministers to the youth, they also recognize the need for on-going adult catechesis and evangelization. The response to the retreats for the school staff and the parents has been positive and supportive.

However, the major focus of the team is the training of youth leaders to assist with the retreats. In collaboration with the chaplain of the

respective high school, teams of senior high school students are taught to help facilitate the Grade 7-8-9 retreats at the junior high school. A team of junior high school students are also taught to assist with the Grade 6 retreats of the feeder elementary schools. This style of ministry encourages and facilitates “youth ministering to youth.”

The Oblate Youth Ministries Team is a strong advocate and catalyst for the relationship between the home, the school and the parish. All the school retreats are held at the local parish. This is part of the team’s effort to connect young people with the local parish community, and the parish to the youth. Students learn to take a leadership role in the faith life of their school and their parish. This is an exciting and challenging ministry, which has trained almost 1,000 students to be retreat team leaders. Each of these students has helped in at least two retreats.

They highlight each month with an evening of prayer and praise called “Into the Deep”. Through song and symbol, they celebrate some of the special images of the presence of God. The music tries to touch not only the heart and the soul, but also the spirit of joy and excitement for the Lord. “Into the Deep” is hosted by Oblate Youth Ministries, the Parish, the High School(s) and the Junior High School of that month.

At the end of all the retreats, the students are offered a parting dictum by the Oblate Retreat Team. The team encourages and challenge them with these words: WHEREVER YOU GO, GO WITH GOD! WHENEVER YOU GO, GO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

—Mike Dechant, OMI

LACOMBE **Winnipeg Oblates Welcome Refugee Family**

At the end of September, Majaliwa Nabulizi Jean-Bosco, his wife Hicuburundi Gertrude and 8 of their children moved into the Oblate house on 571 Furby Street. The family recently arrived in Winnipeg from Africa where they had spent 4

years in a refugee camp in Zimbabwe having fled from Burundi. (Since 1959, Burundi and its northern neighbor Rwanda have experienced horrific inter-ethnic violence and it is because of this violence that they were forced to seek safety outside their country.) As they fled, the family became separated. Gertrude and Jean-Bosco still have no idea of the whereabouts of their two oldest children; they continue to hope that they are still alive, perhaps in Burundi or Tanzania. The children with them in Canada range in age from 3 to 20: 4 boys and four girls.

The new tenants seem to be adapting well in their new home. The whole family is currently in school where they are learning English. Jean-Bosco speaks French, as well as his native language Kivira. Gertrude speaks Kirundi, the language of Burundi. The family speaks to each other in Swahili, the lingua franca of East Africa.

Brother Adélard GERVAIS, OMI, has accepted the mission of being a liaison with the family, and working on the necessary renovations to make the house more suitable for a family with small children.

The Oblates of Manitoba have a long history of supporting refugees. For example, over the last 20 years, the community on McMillan Ave. has welcomed refugees from Viet Nam, Eritrea, Nicaragua and Sierra Leone. 571 Furby was previously the home of Pregnancy and Family Support Services. The Taché Leadership Team is studying the possibility of opening a new mission in the inner city of Winnipeg, a mission that would involve Oblate priests, brothers, associates and other lay people. It has been recognized that the house on Furby Street would make an excellent centre for an inner-city mission.

Asia-Oceania

SRI LANKA

The struggle continues

Assistant General, Fr. Oswald Firth, OMI, during a December visit to his native Sri Lanka, sent this report to Fr. General.

In Sri Lanka, despite the provocation from the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in the north with mine blasts that have killed numerous army personnel and wounded innocent civilians, war has not broken out. There are some silver linings among the dark clouds: for the first time, the new president elect and the defeated candidate have come together to make a common pledge for peace and search for an acceptable political solution to the long drawn crisis. The civilian population has eschewed war and all forms of violence and are living with great expectations that the politicians and the militants would reach a settlement acceptable to all, and one which would permit all communities to live in harmony.

I have already visited certain parts of the east where rehabilitation work to resettle the Tsunami victims is in progress. Our Oblates in the affected

areas are quite busy contributing their share to the task of resettlement. It is clear that the government has defaulted on its obligations to provide land and shelter to the majority of the affected. Among the NGOs too, there have been abuses and a blatant wastage of precious funds. Before the year is over, I will be assisting in the handing over of a number of permanent houses to Tsunami victims. The Oblates and related JPIC organizations have been involved in some solid work.

AUSTRALIA

Mazenod College: Evangelising the students

“Leave nothing undared is your call Mazenod” begins the College Anthem at Mazenod College in Mulgrave, Australia. Mazenod College is an Oblate secondary college of 1200 students. This motto provides the courage and challenge of taking risks to bring about the Kingdom of God. As part of the Australian Province’s response to Immense Hope, an Evangelisation of Students Project was planned and implemented at Mazenod College.

The brief given by the Provincial Council asked that students be given an opportunity to have a personal faith experience and that they hear the Gospel in a way that speaks powerfully to them and leads them to live it. It also asked the College to develop pathways from the College faith experience to active participation in parish life.

Year 8 Students (13/14 years old) were selected to implement this project because they will be in Year 11 (16/17 years old) when the next World Youth Day is celebrated in Australia in 2008. They have an important role in the Australian Province's welcome to the world.

The chosen Evangelisation Project was a Curriculum Expo where the presence of God was found and shared in each and every one of the subjects offered in a college curriculum.

There were 208 Year 8 students who formed Evangelisation Teams of 4 and who were responsible for the planning, designing and implementing of their display at the Expo. Over 750 local primary school students were invited and chose to attend this Expo.

The Year 8 students prepared for approximately 9 weeks through 1) evangelisation training sessions during Religious Education lessons; 2) Year 10 Faith Friends who attended classes voluntarily with the students; 3) Family Faith Formation sessions; 4) group and teamwork.

Our understanding of evangelisation is essential and was the basis for our entire project. Pope Paul VI identified evangelisation as "bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity and through its influence, transforming humanity

from within and making it new." (Evangelii Nuntiandi 1975) Building on this definition, we used the following definition to guide us: *Evangelisation is the process of invitation for individuals, societies and cultures, to embrace for the first time, again, or more deeply the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ.*

To achieve this we designed a programme that 1) provided opportunities to have fun and to make friends; 2) broke down barriers to Christ and the Church (including the parish); 3) demonstrated how Christ can relate to their lives; 4) invited the students into a closer relationship with Jesus.

The Curriculum Expo asked each of the groups to "Find God...Celebrate God...and Share God" through their subjects studied at school. This means that the project could be exported to anywhere in the world since there are always things to be studied at school.

Students were given the freedom to be creative and their instructions included making their display as interactive and as enjoyable as possible. There were 48 different displays, prepared by the students. We believe that the students of Mazenod were both being evangelised via their preparation, enthusiasm and celebration and that they were also the Evangelisers through the sharing they had with the primary school students.

There are now moves to celebrate this project at Mazenod College in Perth, Western Australia which will continue the focus of Evangelisation of Students as we prepare to welcome the World to Australia for World Youth Day 2008.

Latin America

VENEZUELA **15th anniversary of the arrival of the Oblates in Venezuela**

December 14, 1990, was the date of the arrival of the three first Missionary Oblates in Venezuela, coming there from the Province of Spain. They came first to Casigua el Cubo, a village located

in the western part of the country, in the Apostolic Vicariate of Machiques, very near the Columbian border, where there were also two indigenous communities. The pioneers were the superior, Fr. Ramiro DÍAZ, now the bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Machiques, accompanied by two young priests, Octaviano VEGA and Francisco Javier PUERTA. These beginnings

were difficult and humble; later others joined them. Since then, the life of the community has been tied to that of the people of that country, at the same time, so rich and yet so poor, so full of life and so full of conflict.

In 1992, another parish was opened in the city of San Cristóbal, in the Andes region of Venezuela and also near the Columbian border. The prenovitiate house is located there.

In 1997, Fr. Ramiro was named bishop of Machiques, and more Oblates arrived from Spain, Uruguay, and Italy. In 1999, the Oblates took on the pastoral responsibility of the cathedral of Machiques, a parish of 60,000 persons. Since 2003, Fr. Marcelo QUATRA has been working in the Mission of San José de Kayamá, with two different indigenous ethnic groups, in a place where one can arrive only by small plane since it is situated in the jungle.

Presently, there are eight Oblate priests in Venezuela, one in Rome, a bishop, and five young men in formation: three prenovices and two candidates.

To arrive at the age of 15 is to reach adolescence and leave behind childhood. It is an opportunity to look back at the past, but especially, to look to the future. That's what fifteen-year-olds do. But with all that has been lived, with all the work that has been done, with all the successes and all the failures, it is also an opportunity to thank God for the brotherhood we have lived together during this time.

There still remain many paths to take and many ways to grow, many challenges for the future and many dreams to realize...

BOLIVIA

Fr. Luis Jolicoeur —1938-2006

Sometime during the night of January 2, 2006, Fr. Luis JOLICOEUR, an Oblate well-known internationally, suffered either a heart attack or a cerebral aneurysm. Since he was very likely smoking in his bed at the time, an ensuing fire made any definitive determination of the cause

of death very difficult. Because of student vacations, he was alone at the formation house, Bolper, in Cochabamba, Bolivia at the time of his death.

At the time of his death, he was a member of the formation team of the Oblate scholasticate "Bolper" which serves both Bolivia and Peru. He was also the provincial treasurer for Bolivia.

Born in 1938 at Ste-Anne-des-Chênes in Manitoba, Canada, he made his first profession of vows as an Oblate in 1958. After completing the Licentiate in Philosophy at the International Scholasticate in Rome, he began his theological studies in Santiago, Chile in 1961. He was ordained a priest in 1966.

After ordination, he received an obedience for Bolivia where he became involved as chaplain of Boy Scouts for several years and as a prison chaplain. Since 1980, he served several terms as provincial counsellor and provincial treasurer. From 1991 until 1997, his was the provincial of Bolivia.

He was a member of the three-man commission that planned the 1998 General Chapter. He became even better known during the 2004 Chapter as coordinator of the team of translators. In December 2005, he was in Rome, representing the Latin American region on the committee that is studying the future of the General House.

Mission and evangelization carried out today in the Church and the world by the Missionary Oblates, point to the timeless need for the explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ and the Reign of God as Good News to the poor and the most abandoned. It is a message steeped in hope, as we engage a constantly changing world.

"Witnessing to Hope"

General Administration

“General House Committee” begins its work

The resolutions of the 2004 General Chapter included a mandate: “That the Central Government and the General Finance Committee undertake a comprehensive study regarding the possible sale of the General House and the relocation of the personnel and services located there.” (Resolution C 2)

The General Finance Committee subsequently asked the Superior General and General Council to appoint an “ad hoc” committee to begin this study in view of making some concrete recommendations in early 2007. The members of this committee began their work in Rome on December 14-17, 2005. The Vicar General, Eugene KING, chairs the committee. Other members, each representing a region of the Congregation, are the following Oblates: Daniel CORIJN (Africa-Madagascar); Ramon BERNABE (Asia-Oceania); David KALERT (Canada-United States); Louis JOLICOEUR (Latin America); Giorgio DEL COL (Europe). Serving as staff to the committee are the General Bursar, Rufus WHITLEY, the Procurator General, Roberto SARTOR, and James ALLEN as secretary.

The committee immediately became aware of the complexity of their task. While present and future finances of the Oblate mission have a significant impact on the discussion, there are many other interrelated aspects that need to be taken into consideration. Also to be considered is the presence at the General House, not only of the Central Government and its auxiliary services, but also the Oblates who are studying for higher degrees at the pontifical universities and the International Scholasticate community. There are many historical, logistical and emotional issues that need to be considered in the study of the future of the property at via Aurelia, 290.

The demographic statistics of the

Congregation’s present and future have also led the General Chapter to mandate the creation of a Governance Committee to recommend ways to improve the manner in which we govern ourselves, in view of the predicted realities of the Congregation.

The General House Committee has taken the first steps in giving these issues serious and studied consideration. Much more consultation must take place, not only about legal and financial issues, but also of other Oblates, including those living at the General House.

News from the International Scholasticate

At the top of the home page of our international web site (www.omiworld.org), there is a link entitled “*International Scholasticate*.” For over a year, clicking on that link led to further links that led nowhere. That is no longer the case.

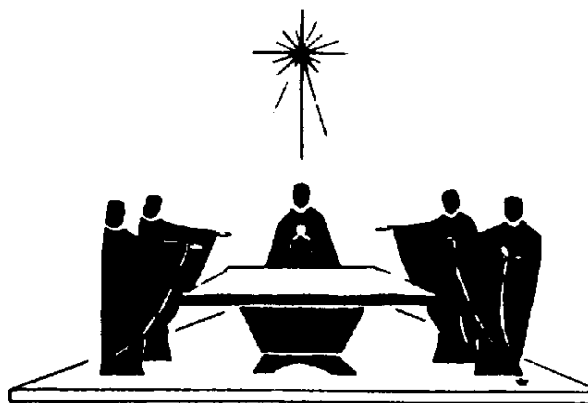
Clicking on the “*Scholasticate History*” link will take the internet surfer to an interesting account of the International Scholasticate’s story, one that began with the repressive laws of the Third Republic of France. This difficult moment in Oblate history led the Superior General of that time, Father Joseph FABRE, to send the scholastics away from France to continue their studies. Eventually, they came to Rome. In 2006, the International Scholasticate will celebrate its 125th anniversary.

The history is accompanied by pictures from Via Vittorino da Feltre, the former scholasticate near the Roman Coliseum, and from its present location attached to the General House in Rome. It is a story that may even bring a tear or two to the eyes of some “old Romans.”

There is also a “*Scholasticate News*” link that the scholastics hope to keep current. The first story to appear is about the priestly ordination of Sri Lankan Oblate, Fr. Peter RAJANAYAGAM, on December 17, 2005 in the General House chapel.

Up until the early 1970's, priestly ordination in Rome was the rule rather than the exception. With the changes in the theology cycles at the Pontifical Universities, it has become more common for young Oblates to return to their home countries for priestly ordination. However, Fr. Peter's family has moved to France. Traveling to an ordination next summer in Sri Lanka could

be difficult for some of them who have small children. Therefore, his family was able to come to the Eternal City to help their son and brother celebrate his ordination. Almost 60 of his fellow Oblate priests were able to lay hands on Fr. Peter during the moving ceremony in the General House chapel.



ANNIVERSARIES – MARCH 2006

65TH Anniversary of Ordination

1941.03.30	06269	Fr. Michael O'Reilly	Anglo-Irish
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60TH Anniversary of Vows

1946.03.19	08613	Bro. Luc Fortin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.03.19	08612	Bro. Claude Langlois	Lesotho
1946.03.25	08615	Bro. William Kelly	Anglo-Irish
1946.03.25	08124	Fr. Jean-Paul Vantroys	Lacombe

60TH Anniversary of Ordination

1946.03.10	06869	Fr. Olegario Domínguez	Paraguay
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50TH Anniversary of Vows

1956.03.07	10085	Fr. Kevin Casey	Indonesia
1956.03.07	10084	Fr. Vincent McGillicuddy	Australia
1956.03.07	10089	Fr. Bernard O'Brien	Australia
1956.03.19	10612	Bro. Wilson Audet	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.03.19	10611	Bro. Gonzague Laferrière	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.03.19	10614	Bro. Albert Poirier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.03.19	10616	Bro. Jacques-G. Saumure	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.03.25	10619	Bro. Henryk Kowalczyk	Pologne

50TH Anniversary of Ordination

1956.03.11	08924	Fr. Leonard Glowacki	Pologne
1956.03.17	08832	Fr. Gaspar Alonso	Espagne
1956.03.17	08961	Fr. Rafael Alvarez	Espagne
1956.03.17	09253	Fr. Benoît Garceau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.03.17	08948	Fr. Aladino Garmón	Espagne
1956.03.17	08667	Fr. André Jodoin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.03.17	09396	Msgr. Alessandro Staccioli	Italie
1956.03.25	08992	Fr. Othmar Grüber	Paraguay

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Suffrages for our Deceased

2005 - No. 86-92
2006 - No. 1-3

NAME	PROVINCE	BIRTH	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Gabriel Houyoux	Congo	20/07/1929	Ifwanzondo	09/12/2005
Fr. Roméo Arbour	N.D.-du-Cap	26/06/1919	Ottawa	18/12/2005
Fr. Ernest Royer	France	01/02/1920	N.D. de Lumières	25/12/2005
Fr. Alfons Schmitz	Deutschland	02/03/1912	Hünfeld	27/12/2005
Fr. Willem Bauhaus	Belgique-Pay Bas	08/12/1918	Valkenburg	29/12/2005
Fr. François-Xavier Vogel	France	04/02/1917	Sulzbach	30/12/2005
Bro. Gérard Juneau	N.D.-du-Cap	11/11/1918	Richelieu	30/12/2005
Fr. Johannes Mühr	Deutschland	15/01/1912	Hünfeld	02/01/2006
Fr. Luis Jolicoeur	Bolivia	06/04/1938	Cochabamba	02/01/2006
Fr. Ignacio Escanciano	España	31/07/1920	Madrid	03/01/2006

“We will keep alive the memory of our deceased and not fail to pray for them, faithfully offering the suffrages prescribed on their behalf.” (const. 43)