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Indonesia: Earthquake relief continues

Fr. John O'DOHERTY, an Oblate in Indonesia, tells of the ongoing problems as a result of the recent earthquake.

While the earthquake in Indonesia is no longer an item of the headlines on the CNN and BBC news, for those living in the midst of the destruction, the suffering is still a major item affecting their very existence. It would seem that the initial 'First Aid', namely the medical assistance to the injured, has now passed the critical stage. However there is still the concern for the on-going care and control. The problem now is infection. The poor conditions under which the people are still forced to live are not conducive to a good healing process. There were more than 40,000 people injured. As if it was not enough that the people were suffering from wounds and trauma caused by the earthquake, a few days later, it was reported that there were 300 cases of food poisoning, apparently because of some tainted rice meals.

It is in situations like this that we can see the great generosity of people. One report said that it was the NGO's that acted the most quickly, and this would also include the many church groups. One such group was a team of doctors, chemists and nurses from a parish in Jakarta where the Oblates are working. After hearing the news, they were immediately on the move. The coordinator was contacting and being contacted by people in Jakarta who wished to become contributors. With the money given or promised the team put together a 300kgs package of medicines to bring with them on the first flight out on Sunday morning. Because the Yogyakarta airport was not functioning, they came through Semarang. On arrival they did more shopping, buying essential food supplies. It is sad to hear that the price of some

of the essential commodities increased by more than four times the normal price in some areas. Arriving in Yogya, they were began to work immediately, searching out the needy and attending to the victims. On one particular day they attended to 200 patients. The number attended to each day depended on the seriousness of the injuries.

Apart from these "shock troops", the people in the parish also rallied to collect food, clothing and tents to send to the command post, or base camp, set up in the Oblate seminary. Two huge trucks loaded with these items began arriving on the third day. Then a third truck of equal size arrived from another group in Jakarta. Fortunately the drivers were very skillful, as they had to enter the grounds through a gate not made for large vehicles.

The contributions kept pouring in. Fr Charlie BURROWS sent six tons of rice from Cilacap, bought with money given by Misereor for the victims of the quake. The two trucks that brought the rice were left here at the command post to be used in transporting all these goods to their destinations. We were helped in all the unloading and loading by many of the local youth who quickly rallied to our call. The team of helpers was growing steadily as were the contributions of food and tents. The value of the goods received from various contributors is quite enormous. Everything is being recorded and when it all calms down we will be aware of just how great was this generosity of people. It needs to be said that while a lot is happening in this command post, there are many other posts throughout the city doing similar works.

The Oblates, priests, seminarians and novices, have been helped by a big team of young people, mainly

from the universities and colleges nearby. The fact that the disaster occurred during the preparation for exams meant that many young people were free to help, and help they did. The Major Seminary also cancelled classes during the week; this made it possible for the students to lend a hand.

While the earthquake was not on the same scale as the tsunami in Aceh, it was big. The latest figures for those who died is estimated at 6,200. It seems that most of the bodies have been recovered, and any additional deaths will come from the victims who are still on the very serious list. The rain made it all the more difficult for the people to cope. Because of the rain the bodies that were buried beneath the rubble in the first few days were decaying more rapidly, making it uncomfortable for the medical teams moving in and out of the afflicted areas. One difference between the quake in Yogyakarta and the tsunami in Aceh, northern Sumatra, was that the teams of helpers and the supplies were able to get here more quickly by road, rail or plane.

A few Catholic churches and chapels were damaged in the earthquake, some so badly that they will need to be rebuilt. The earthquake occurred while morning mass was being celebrated. That meant there were people in the church. In one church, the sacristan and two of the parishioners were killed by falling debris. The parish priest is still in shock, and has not yet been able to celebrate Mass. He will possibly need some trauma counseling. Indeed there will be many people in that position and there will be a great need to bring in qualified people for this work. One religious sister who did a lot of this trauma counseling work in Aceh will be moving in to help the people.

As an immediate help for people who were seriously traumatised, a group of students from Nias, one of the areas affected by the tsunami in 2004,

came to help the people. These young people are students from the Marine Academy in Cilacap, who had been given scholarships to help them in their rehabilitation after the experience of the tsunami. While not fully professional counselors, they are able to share with the people and tell their own story about how they worked through their agony and suffering in the days following the tsunami in Nias. These young people have been helped by Fr Burrows, and now are ready to help others.

Helpers have tried to address the immediate needs of the victims. It will take a long time to recover. A major work will be the rebuilding of the homes. One segment on television showed a village where all the houses except one had been demolished. The house still standing had been built with reinforced concrete. But that takes money. In the same scene, the people were already beginning to clean the bricks to rebuild. Most families will not have the means to build something stronger, so they may only be able to build what they can and hope it doesn't happen again. That is what it means to be poor. The government has offered some help.

While the conditions in the earthquake area are improving, the other monster, Mount Merapi, is looming over us. The activity of the volcano has increased since the quake, with some predicting that it will erupt soon. But no one really knows just when. We just sit and wait. Certainly the people living in the area are now better prepared. If and when something does happen, we will also be better able to help quickly because of this present experience, and once again call for assistance from the teams that have been working so well this past week.

It has been a terrible week for many people, but it has also been a week when we have seen the goodness of people quickly responding to a need. The LOVE OF PEOPLE FOR OTHERS, without counting the cost, is the GOOD NEWS.

Asia-Oceania

COLOMBO

125th Anniversary of Saint Vincent's Home

St. Vincent's Home in Maggona (Sri Lanka) was established 125 years ago as a shelter for orphaned

children and other needy children and youth. During the recovery efforts after the 2004 tsunami, St. Vincent's played a vital role in helping people who had lost their homes in the disastrous floods.

Today, many of the children there have the same story and the same questions. Why did they lose their parents? Why did their parents leave them? They struggle with the fear and anxiety of being left alone again.

An Italian priest, Fr. Luigi Peccinnellei, who was responsible for the spiritual welfare of Catholics in the area, founded a sodality on the premises of what is now St. Vincent's Home. The sodality took over the responsibility of caring for 12 orphans brought in from an orphanage in the central part of Sri Lanka.

In 1883, an Oblate, Christopher BONJEAN, became Vicar Apostolic of Colombo and, three years later, Archbishop of Colombo. The founder of St. Vincent's sold the Home to the Oblates who assumed the care of the children living there. The archbishop appointed the first Oblate director of St. Vincent's, Fr. Adrian DUFFO, in 1884. The Oblates continue to manage the home, now under the leadership of Fr. Rohan SILVA, along with nine other priests and brothers.

In 1892, a contingent of Oblate Brothers came to work with the children. So pleased was the British Government with the Home that in 1895, they asked St. Vincent's to expand their mission to include the care and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.

St. Vincent's Home sees its principal role today as that of carrying for and rehabilitating deserted and destitute orphans, as well as youth who need corrective formation, through a good academic and technical training based on religious values, so that they might one day lead a happy and productive life.

Grouped in five different houses according to their school grade, the total number of children and youth varies from 150 to 200.

The students are offered the opportunity to learn a trade of their choice. They have the responsibility of choosing a trade from courses conducted at the technical school at St. Vincent's: printing, carpentry, welding, lathe and metal work, motor mechanics, electricity, candle making and computers.

There is also a farm at St. Vincent's which, among

other things, has installed large pits designed to produce methane gas from the waste of pigs. They have also acquired their first cows to provide milk for the students. The farm helps support the Home through the sale of pigs and the harvesting and sale of coconuts and peppers. They plan to cultivate also pineapples, bananas, and ginger.

Moved by the charism of St. Eugene de MAZENOD, the Oblate priests and brothers continue their commitment to welcome and care for the abandoned, disadvantaged and downtrodden children and youth who come to St. Vincent's seeking solace, refuge, and security. The Oblates see these children as "thilina," the Sinhalese word for "gifts." Although society might consider these abandoned and sometimes misguided children and youth as "bothersome," the Oblates try to recognize God in their faces. Each child has a story of its own, sometimes filled with tragedy. The effort at St. Vincent's is to see the uniqueness in each one and treat them with the dignity they deserve.

As part of the 125th Jubilee celebration of St. Vincent's, the community had the opportunity on January 8 to celebrate with their Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim friends and benefactors. The guest of honor was the government's Secretary for the Environment. At the end of the celebration, keys were handed over to 20 families for the new homes that had been built to replace the ones they lost during the tsunami. (Information from *Der Weinberg* May 2006 and from the St. Vincent website: www.svh-lanka.com)

PAKISTAN

Oblate growth in a Muslim nation

Oblate scholastics in Pakistan contributed information to this article taken from the newsletter of the Lacombe Province.

As is the case in several other Oblate Units, those in formation in Pakistan count for half of the Oblate Delegation in Pakistan. Fifteen Oblate priests are active in Pakistan. Sri Lankan Oblates founded the Oblate mission here in 1973 and they are still seven. Among the other priests, three are Pakistani, three are from western countries: Poland, Austria and

Canada, and two arrived a year ago from Indonesia; thus, we are a diverse international group and the hope for the future lies very much in the scholastics.

Twelve Brothers make up the Scholasticate community in Karachi – while three others are in parish work outside of Karachi, in the Quetta Prefecture in the Province of Balushistan bordering Afghanistan. We are all Punjabi even though some of us come from provinces other than Punjab. Punjab is the most populated province of Pakistan in the northern area – the land of five rivers, thus the name *Punjab*. It is a productive, fertile area. Our families are basically farmers and villagers, not city folks. The Capuchin missionaries began to Christianize minorities in this area in the late nineteenth century. Since then, Christians have grown and spread to other parts of the country. Christians continue to be a minority in Pakistan, about three per cent of the total population; nevertheless, Punjabi Christians are proud of their faith. All denominations sing the same Punjabi hymns in their worship. The Punjabi converts are not the only source of Christians in Pakistan since Goans and Tamils had come from the southern part of the subcontinent before partition and others had accompanied the English occupation.

On March 25-29, Karachi hosted an important international event called the *World Social Forum*. Thirty thousand delegates from more than fifty-nine countries came to share talks, dramas and hopes for another world that is possible. A story is told of a local lady who was amazed as she observed so many foreigners entering the sport's complex where the gathering was held. When she asked about it one of our Brothers, who was wearing the tag of a volunteer helper, explained to her why these people had

come from so many countries; her comment was: "Don't they know that this is Karachi?"

This story shows the reputation of our city. A history of violence has instilled fear in the minds of local people and many avoid public gatherings because it is the place where violence is most likely to occur. Indeed, the recent suicide bomb blast of April 12th, killing forty-seven Muslim leaders united in prayer to celebrate the birthday of their founder, corroborates such a fear. But Karachi is now our city. We live here and it is a friendly place most of the time. We just know when we have to be careful because tempers are riled. It is a metropolis which has mushroomed from a population of a half million to the present fifteen million in about fifty years. With such rapid expansion, problems are inevitable. Motor vehicle traffic for instance is rapidly increasing and causing so much pollution that even the sea breeze from the Arabian Sea cannot sweep it away.

Our studies and our pastoral experiences are very important to us because they are helping us to acquire the knowledge and the skills for our future ministry. Because we are Religious, that is not all of our life. We live our Oblate mission in the community life that we share. We strive to be faithful to our program of daily prayer not merely in punctuality but in real presence and devotion. We live in harmony amongst ourselves and with our Scholasticate staff, pursuing the ideal of St. Eugene. Just like the twelve disciples, we gather around Jesus whom we meet in the daily Eucharist and in the community life with our Brothers. We know the tests of living together, just as any family or any brothers and sisters who share a common life, but we live these trials as part of our mission. It is a joy and a blessing for us to be called to this mission.

Europe

FRANCE

Closing of the house in Sion

At a Sunday liturgy on May 7, Fr. Bernard DULLIER officially brought to a close the Oblate community at Sion. Participating at the Mass were Bishop Jean-Louis Papin of the Diocese of Nancy, along with about 40 diocesan priests, 18

Oblates, several lay associates, and about 10 Oblate sisters. The basilica was too small for everyone. It was the turning of a page in Oblate history: we had been at Sion since 1849!

Bernard preached the homily and, at the end, Bishop Papin made some beautiful remarks. The following are some excerpts from the

bishop's comments:

Mister President, dear Oblates, dear friends,

On a day like this, we should have a thousand reasons to feel sad. In fact, there is sorrow in our hearts. But we would be doing an injustice to what we have received from the Oblates if we focused only on that. Having neither the competence nor, much less, the time we would need to remember all that their presence on this hill has meant for a century and a half, I would rather like to mention a few aspects of their legacy, not just to remember it as a museum piece but as something to make use of in our own future efforts.

In the middle of the 19th century, the Oblates were called upon to take over a Marian shrine that had gone through some troubling times under the Baillard brothers. The apostolic zeal and the Marian spirituality of this congregation, founded 40 years earlier, could not help but promote this place dedicated for centuries to the Blessed Virgin Mary. History would show that it was a well-placed trust.

Their departure from the hill, as well as the appointment of a new team (...) should not mean the abandonment of this place as a center for Church life. (...)

Another fruit of the presence of the Oblates is the development of a missionary spirit, since that is part of the reason their congregation was founded: the mission at home and abroad. Here were formed many missionaries who went off to far-distant lands: the burning tropics and the icy Far North. The mission museum reminds us of this ancient and always up-to-date adventure in the life of the Church. I hope that this openness to far-off Churches and the development of a missionary spirit will continue to be the focus of the pastoral plan of Sion.

A third benefit that we derive from both the presence of the Oblates and the history of this place is their work for peace. I mentioned it a moment ago: the Oblates have opened us up to the many peoples of this world. At this time of globalization of the exchange of information, we are more sensitive to relations among nations and within nations; we are better informed about conflicts taking place here and there and which always affect our own lives. We

find ourselves more concerned about working for peace. A reminder and challenge of this is found here on the hill: the memorial of the different wars between France and Germany. (...)

I will conclude my remarks with one final point. Because of the total cooperation between the Oblates and the diocese, it has been possible to enjoy a partnership that will continue to give life to the hill in its various activities. Such a partnership is demanding. It requires an habitual spirit of cooperation while respecting the differences and the autonomy of each partner. (...)

Today, we don't close the book; we turn a page and we begin a new chapter. Following those who preceded them, the Oblates have written many beautiful pages in this book. After them and thanks to them, we take up the pen for a story that will continue, as written by others. In the name of everyone, I thank them from the bottom of my heart: those who could join us today, those whom distance or health have kept away, and those who long ago have left this earth.

GERMANY

Street in Dresden named for Father Franz Bäsch

On March 21, 2006, a street was inaugurated bearing the name of a fellow Oblate. The honor went to Father Franz BÄNSCH who, under the Nazi regime, accompanied more than 1000 prisoners to their execution. More than 1,319 executions are on record. In the codex of St. Paul parish, one finds these very courageous words: "Hitler still continues his rise to power - he will have to fall one day, but how? A regime based on lies and on crime cannot endure." These figures and this quotation are taken from a book by Christa Herkt: *Uncertainty is more fatal than the saddest truth*. Using many contemporary documents, the author describes the actions of Fr. Bäsch, as a prison chaplain under the Third Reich.

In the person of Fr. Bäsch, the town of Dresden honors an excellent priest and religious, whose commitment to working against injustice, terror and violence is still today a call to coexist in peace, not only in Europe but in the entire world.

Franz Bänsch died on April 8, 1961, at age 62; his tomb is in the new catholic cemetery on Bremerstrasse in Dresden.

GERMANY

“My Path” – a film project in Biberach

In 2005, Fr. Alfred TÖNNIS began a film project that would focus on programs for women in crisis pregnancies, such as the one located at the Ulrika Nisch House in Biberach. The film is neither moralizing nor propaganda, but is simply meant to show the conflicts and situations as they are lived.

“My Path” is about Sandra, a 17 year old who becomes pregnant by Hasan, a Turk. This leads to a series of problems in the two families, at school, and among their friends. Sandra is living a nightmare which leads her to an abortion clinic.

The film was shot between May 18 and 29 in Biberach. It will certainly produce heavy debates on abortion and on intercultural dialogue. The project is supported by the diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart and by the Oblates and many other sponsors. The premiere is planned for next November 2-5.

Latin America

MEXICO

The challenge of communication in a vast parish

Almost 50 years ago, the Oblates took charge of leading the evangelization efforts in this region organized as the Parish of San Pedro Huamelula, a center with more than 2,500 inhabitants (almost the same population that the parish had when it was founded in 1756). Today it encompasses 42 more communities, belonging to seven different municipalities.

Now that we are in the century of communications, these communities are a challenge for our organizational skills and for evangelization. A few facts are useful: the coastal highway, the backbone of our land-based communication, is 120 kilometers long. Offering Sunday Eucharist to the largest communities entails traveling on two Sundays per month some 250 kilometers. In 30 of the communities, communication by telephone is possible (with the local system, cellular and satellite), but in only one of the communities is it a local call. In the parish community, we are dealing with four different long distance area codes.

Only one of the communities is limited to access on foot or on horseback, but when rains increase, the number of communities with this problem increases to four; when the highway is damaged, the problem becomes worse. In order to take part in our parish assemblies, many catechists and celebrants must leave their communities at 3 or 4 in the morning be-

cause that is when the only transportation toward the highway leaves the community.

In order to maintain contact with the communities, we have created a monthly bulletin, now in its fourth edition, and little by little, we are solving the problems of delivering it through the organization of various zones (there are now seven of them). Our dream is that some day we might be able to communicate more rapidly and efficiently by RADIO, but presently there are serious technical problems, since a good number of our communities are located in the mountains. The coastal communities are bombarded with commercial radio from Istmo and Huatulco, and from time to time, they listen to stations from Central America. (*Benedicto FRÍAS in OMINFORMA January-February 2006*)

HONDURAS

Inter-congregational missions in Honduras

Fathers Rafael MARTÍN and Juan Carlos DELGADO from the Province of Spain joined a Redemptorist mission preaching team in Honduras in Central America in May 2006. Rafael sent us his impressions.

We have finished the first week of the Mission and are very happy with the results. I am in a town called Potrerillos some 50 kilometers from San Pedro Sula. It's an urban center with about 25,000 inhabitants divided into barrios or subdivisions quite distant from one another. Besides this, I must take care of three

villages in the mountains. I go out there by car, but when not even the car can get through, it means getting out and walking through the woods. In that way, we are bringing the mission to all the barrios and all the villages, repeating the celebrations, the Masses, the prayers and the meetings.

In Potrerillos, this week we managed to hold 66 Christian Family Assemblies. The people are responding very nicely. The assemblies were successful and the people got involved in them. They are like a soothing medicine for the life of these people. The Protestants (evangelical sects) are very active here; I believe that all together they outnumber the Catholics. There are one Catholic and 18 Protestant churches within Potrerillos alone. Sometimes a

Catholic feels overwhelmed; therefore our assemblies became a safe haven where they could share their faith, prayer with their families and get together with their Catholics neighbors.

The people here are poor; there are situations that would make you cry, especially in the villages. The houses are made of wood just like in the slums; there is no drinkable water...you can imagine...

Apart from first impressions, after you have been here a while, you discover many other forms of poverty: abuse, rapes, murders, violence...the mission needs to touch upon all of these things so that Christ might heal them.

Africa-Madagascar

GUINEA BISSAU

Bringing Christ through the swamps

Celso CORBIOLI is an Italian Oblate carrying the Lord's message to the people in the African nation of Guinea Bissau. In a newsletter to his friends and family, he tells of some of the surprises he encounters as he tries to get to know the people he serves.

Guinea Bissau is very flat. Frequently, the Atlantic Ocean branches off into the land for hundreds of kilometers. One of these ocean inlets is not far from N'Dame. Often I would ask myself: who lives on the other side? One day, I decided to go and see, with the help of the seminarian Mayuka who was at home for the Easter holiday.

We arrived on bicycle at the outer edge of the "river." Getting to the shore was not an easy task. There was a knee-deep swamp a hundred meters long to cross over. We finally got to the water. On the other side, there was a canoe. Mayuka called the young man who was taking care of it and in a short while, he came for us. When we got to the other side, we again got on our bicycles and in 15 minutes, we arrived at the village of Felum. There were many people gathered under a portico discussing their own problems; they paid no attention to us.

We went closer, greeting each one personally and introducing ourselves. I told them I was a "Padre" recently arrived at N'Dame and I thought it a good idea to go out and meet my new neighbors. So they gave me a stool to sit on. One of the women brought me some water to wash my feet. Then they continued to talk among themselves about their own business in a language I did not know. Mayuka told me in Creole that they were speaking about the problems of the village. Finally, one of them turned to me and asked if I had some sort of project for them, a plan of some kind. To tell you the truth, I had not even thought about that, but since they asked, I replied: "Yes, I have a plan, but it's probably not the one you are thinking about." And I began to talk to them about life, and how we are often absorbed by our material progress, but that often we do not think about our soul. Therefore, we don't commit ourselves to building among ourselves a community based on mutual love...in a word, where God is present. I continued speaking in Creole and one of them occasionally made a summary in their language. They all seemed pleased and listened attentively. Finally, they said to me: "We are ready to build a chapel, but how can we begin?"

I was not expecting such a quick decision. I responded by asking whether they could choose two young people who knew how to read and write and who could come someday to N'Dame for a pro-

gram. Then they could be the animators of the village. They told me that this was indeed possible and they mentioned the names of Augusto and Cesare (not bad as names!). I asked if they were in the village. Without answering, two of them took our bicycles and went to call them. In ten minutes, they were there. I asked them if they would like to come from time to time to N'Dame for some lessons in the Christian faith so that they could then help their people. They said they would be happy to do so.

Muyuka told me that the people were talking among themselves, saying that they had never had a visit by a "Padre" and that what was happening was, for them, a time for celebration because they felt that God was present. After a while, we said goodbye, with the impression that we were already part of the same family. Some of them accompanied us to the canoe and helped us cross the water.

NATAL

Bishop Dominic Khumalo: 1919-2006

Bishop Dominic Joseph Chwane KHUMALO passed away on April 27 in Nazareth House Durban after a long illness.

He was born on February 15, 1919, in Maphumulo, Kwa Zulu Natal. As a young man he enjoyed serving at Mass for his Oblate parish priest, Fr Joseph L'HOTE, the inspiration for his vocation. He was particularly inspired by Father's spirit of prayer and his love for the people. He frequently recalled how Fr L'Hote cared for them during an epidemic of malaria when Dominic was a young boy. When he was 13 years old he told Father L'Hote that he wanted to be a priest because he wanted "to do what Father did."

After his first vows in 1941, he studied for the priesthood at the Oblate Scholasticate in Lesotho. He was ordained priest, together with Father Jerome MAVUNDLA, on July 2, 1946, by Bishop DELALLE, OMI. This was the last ordination the bishop conferred before his death later that year. Dominic was the second Zulu Oblate Priest. Jerome was the first by a matter of seconds!

His first obedience was to the Oblate community at Inchanga. He remained there for 12 years. For many

of those years he was boarding master in the Juniorate. In 1962 he was appointed parish priest of Inanda. Then from 1964-1970, he devoted his time to preaching missions, largely in Zulu, throughout South Africa. Much of this was done together with Father Mavundla.

They complemented one another very well. Jerome was a great story teller who would evangelise by recounting in great depth many stories of his experiences, some of which, in the words of one of his Oblate brothers "were possibly true!" Dominic presented a warm heart and sound doctrine.

In 1970 he was appointed parish priest of Esigodini in Pietermaritzburg and also taught in the catechists' school there. At various times, he was a provincial councillor of the Oblates in the Natal Province. In May 1974 he was appointed Episcopal vicar of Vulindlela.

On May 4, 1978, he was ordained Bishop of Buxentum and Auxiliary Bishop of Durban. He was the second Zulu Oblate to be appointed a bishop in the church after Archbishop Peter BUTELEZI, thus continuing his charism of being number two!

His leadership style was to be close to people and care for them. He had a big heart and took an interest in individuals. He was a man who epitomized the manifestation of African Christian values in the Church. These included respect for people, the building of community, care and support of African Christian structures in the Church and spending time in being with people in their communities, at local events and celebrations.

He did a lot of work in helping to support and encourage the African women's organizations in the archdiocese. He also worked for the development of the local congregations of women religious. In these ways, his life and activity were a witness to true African inculturation. (*Natal Province OMI Update*, May-June 2006)

Canada-United States

ASSUMPTION

50th Anniversary of the Province

With gratitude to God for the many graces received through the ministry of the Oblates in Assumption Province, a Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated on June 15 at St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Mississauga, Ontario. Aloysius Cardinal Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto, celebrated the Mass and the Oblate Superior General, Fr. Guillermo STECKLING, preached the homily. A number of bishops concelebrated at the Mass and some 80 priests were present.

Of course, the first Oblate missionaries came to Canada as early as 1841 and began their work in Montreal, moving westward and into the Far North. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Oblate Archbishop Adelard LANGEVIN of St. Boniface sent distinguished Oblate missionary, Fr. Albert LACOMBE, to Europe to look for priests who spoke the various languages of the many new immigrants who were settling in Canada from Central and Eastern Europe. The Canadian Oblates saw the need to provide pastoral care for people in their native languages. In 1896, the first Polish Oblate, Servant of God, Brother Antoni KOWALCZYK, arrived in Alberta. After many years of humble service and a saintly life, he died in 1947 – a true saint, in popular opinion. Others followed and continued the task of evangelization, beginning with Western Canada.

In 1897, two Oblate scholastics, upon finishing their studies in Poland, received an obedience to Canada. They were two brothers: Jan and Wojciech KULAWY. Immediately after their ordination, they traveled to Winnipeg, where Fr. Wojciech was named pastor of the Poles, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Germans in the St. Boniface archdiocese, which stretched from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains.

Under the Oblates, Holy Ghost parish in Winnipeg developed and soon became a center of Polish life there. In a few short years, more and more Polish Oblates from Europe began to settle in Winnipeg. Holy Ghost parish became the focal point from which the missionaries headed out towards other settlements

with the Good News and sacramental ministry. It did not take long for new vocations to arise from the Polish families who had settled in Canada. On December 22, 1920, Fr. Stanislaw BADERSKI was ordained in Edmonton. He was the first Oblate of Polish descent to be ordained in Canada.

The 1920's in Western Canada was a significant period in the expansion of Oblate missionary activity where the religious community saw the formation of new organizational structures. In 1926, a province was formed for the German and Polish Oblates and was based in Regina: St. Mary's Province. This province covered all the communities served by Polish and German Oblates in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The many ethnic parishes administered by the Oblates played an important role in the lives of the parishioners. In addition to meeting the spiritual needs of the faithful, the parishes needed to serve both older and newer immigrants with services that they could not obtain without a working knowledge of English. Therefore, the parishes had to respond by taking part in the formation of social life. One of the Fathers began to offer English-language instruction, first on his own, but later as the number of people attending grew, with the help of competent lay-people. In time, the Felician Sisters took over this task and continued it until such time as the government instituted English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

After World War II, the focus of ministry with Polish immigrants changed significantly. According to statistics, 35,819 Polish immigrants came to Canada from 1946-1950. The parishes, despite all efforts, could meet only the most basic needs of the new immigrants. Social life also changed in significant ways after the war. In the past, relationships seemed to be more developed and heartfelt, and more tied to the ethnic group. This was easy to see at family and parish gatherings as well as at cultural events. After the war, things changed considerably – and the standard of living also improved. Poles now stepped outside the confines of their own ethnic group. This also influenced parish life. The Polish community began to feel much more a part of Canadian society, but remained proud of its heritage and achievements.

The idea of forming a separate Polish Oblate province in Canada had existed for quite some time. For years, there was a desire to make the work of the Polish Oblates in Canada run more efficiently. For a time, the Polish Oblates felt that they were too few in number to form an administrative body. But by the end of the 1940s, the vision of an independent Polish province seemed ever more realistic. On August 22, 1956, Fr. Leo DESCHATELETS, Superior General, established a new vice-province under the name of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for Polish Oblates in Canada. The first provincial was Fr. Michael SMITH. The new vice-province had 42 Fathers, 11 scholastics, and one novice. All of the brothers at that time remained part of St. Mary's Province.

Some 50 years later, the legacy of the early Polish Oblate pioneers covers almost a hundred established parishes and churches built across all of Canada. Today, under the leadership of the current provincial, Janusz BLAZEJAK, over 50 missionaries in Assumption Province are working from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the South to the North of the beautiful land of Canada.

UNITED STATES

A mission program adapted to a new setting

For several years now, the Oblates in the Province of Italy have been presenting parish missions in a format adapted from that used by the young preacher Eugene de MAZENOD and the Missionaries of Provence, years before they became the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. That Italian model was, in its turn, adapted by Oblates in Western Canada. During Lent of 2006, the United States version of this parish mission program was inaugurated. Leading the mission teams in the United

States were Fathers Ronald MEYER and James DUKOWSKI

A core team of Oblates and laity work with volunteers from the local parish in visiting Catholic homes, creating "Listening Centers," and providing other social and religious activities during the mission.

Jim Dukowski guided a team for a mission in Spanish at St. Mary's Parish in Lawrence, Massachusetts. His team included Oblate scholastic Porfirio GARCIA and Sister Angela Zapata, MSS. They worked with over 200 local volunteers to visit more than 300 Catholic homes. Youth from the area formed a drama group, while other parishioners used their cultural, cooking, and musical talents to enhance the 6-day main mission. There were 32 "Listening Centers" created during the mission; 17 of them continue to operate.

Parishes in the towns of Independence and Cherryvale, Kansas, came together for the mission led by Ron Meyer. His core team consisted of 21 other missionaries, many of them coming from their own experience of mission in their native Canada. Oblates Andrew CHALKEY and Michael POWELL also joined that team. This three-week mission worked with 250 volunteers from the two parishes, visiting 500 homes. An eight-member youth team from Canada had 25 gatherings with students from five local schools, kindergarten through high school. One of the discoveries during the home visits was the presence of many Spanish-speaking Catholic families. As a result, a "Spanish Listening Center" was established and the parishioners have asked that the missalettes used at Mass be bi-lingual. Since some parishioners in this largely rural area are far removed from one another, there is also a "Mobile Listening Center."

General Administration

Joaquín Martínez Vega: New General Postulator

The Superior General in Council has named Fr. Joaquín MARTÍNEZ to replace Fr. Frank SANTUCCI as General Postulator for the causes of Oblates whose lives are under study for possible

beatification and canonization. The new postulator will also continue in his present role on the formation team of the International Scholasticate in Rome.

Frank Santucci will continue to travel the world giving lectures and retreats on the Oblate Founder, but he will work with a team of Oblates located at the

De Mazenod Center in Aix-en-Provence.

A native of Spain, Joaquín did his scholastic studies in Rome where he was ordained in 1960. His priestly ministry has given him a broad experience, not only in his native Spain but also in West Sahara, Rumania, and Venezuela. He has served in a variety of ministries: as a formator, a parish priest, the founder and editor of several publications, master of novices, and, from 1994 until 2000, Provincial of Spain. He was also the founder and director of the Emmaus Spirituality House in Pozuelo (Madrid).

While he was provincial, he initiated the diocesan process for the canonization of the 22 Oblate Martyrs in Spain. By the end of his tenure as provincial, the cause had been moved to Rome to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

He will assume his new responsibilities in October 2006, at the end of the tenure of Frank Santucci.

The day of the four Generals

The audience that Pope Benedict XVI had with the Superiors General of religious communities on May 22, 2006, brought important guests to our own house on via Aurelia in Rome. Some called it the “day of the four Generals.” Besides our own Superior General, Fr. Wilhelm STECKLING, the Oblates hosted the Superiors General of three other communities. Visiting Rome for the papal audience were the following community leaders: from Spain, Sister Cristina Jiménez Domínguez, of the Associa-

tion of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (las Oblatas); from Poland, Sister Joanna Wróbel of the Franciscan Sisters; and from the Philippines, Sister Teresa E. Examen, OP, of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Sienna.

Six Franciscan Sisters from Poland carry on a ministry of service and hospitality in the kitchen and laundry of the Oblate General House. Five Dominican sisters from the Philippines provide support services in the Oblate Archives, the General Secretariat, and the Treasurer’s Office.

The audience of the Holy Father was the first such gathering in many years. After brief speeches by the Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and the presidents of the Unions of Superiors General (Men, Women, and Secular Institutes) the Holy Father addressed the assembly.

The Pope reminded them that “the service of authority calls for a constant presence, one capable of offering encouragement and proposals, of recalling the *raison d’être* of consecrated life, and of helping the people entrusted to your care to respond with ever-renewed faithfulness to the call of the Spirit.”

“You are called,” he said, “to support and guide your brothers and sisters during uneasy times characterized by multiple snares. Consecrated people today have the task of being witnesses to the transfiguring presence of God in an ever more disoriented and confused world.”

Books

BEAUDOIN, Henri; DEMERS, Jean-Paul; LANDREVILLE, Gérard (Notre-Dame-du-Cap). Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de Marie Immaculée au Canada, Tome V (*Biographical Dictionary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Canada, Volume V*). The fifth volume of this series contains brief biographies of 528 Oblates. Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée, Montréal, QC, 2005, 505 pp.

BOUDENS, Robrecht and KATZER, Josef. Eugenii

de Mazenod. Serdce Bolchoe kak mir (*Eugene de Mazenod. A Heart as Big as the World*). This is a Russian translation of a book on the Founder originally written in German under the title, Eugen von Mazenod. Leben für eine missionarische Kirche (*Eugene de Mazenod. A life for a missionary Church*). Obukhiv, 2005, 243 pp.

CARIÑO Alfonso E. (Philippines) Verdant Pastures. Reflections on the Sunday readings for all three liturgical cycles. St. Paul’s, Makati City, 2005, 537 pp.

Cogan, Patrick, S.A., Editor. *Sacerdotes Juris: Miscellanea in Honour of William H. Woestman, OMI*. A collection of essays presented in honour of Father William WOESTMAN, OMI, professor emeritus of Canon Law at St. Paul University, Ottawa. The essays focus on subjects with which the former professor was closely associated: marriage, sacraments, sanctions, religious, rights and protection of rights. Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, 2005, 296 pp.

(German Province). *Die ganze Welt zu Besuch. (The whole World our Guest)*. An illustrated account of the Oblate participation in World Youth Day 2006 in Cologne, with text in both German and English. OMI Jugendbüro, Hünfeld, 2006, 108 pp.

Haché, Raymonde. *Jules Dion – Cinquante ans au-dessous de zéro. (Jules Dion – 50 Years Below Zero)* A biography of Oblate Father Jules DION who spent 50 years among the Inuit of Nunavik. The story of his ministry includes insights into the Inuit culture and their way of understanding the world. Anne Sigier, Québec, 2005, 255 pp.

Herkt Christa. *Die Ungewissheit ist schlimmer als die traurigste Wahrheit (The Uncertainty Is More Fatal than the Saddest Truth)*. A tribute to Fa-

ther Franz BÄNSCH on the occasion of the centennial of his birth (1999). As pastor of St. Paul Parish in Dresden during the Nazi years, he served as chaplain to many condemned prisoners, many of them Poles and Czechs. He would secretly see to it that their families received their final letters. Druckerei & Verlag, Christoph Hille, Dresden, 1999, 94 pp.

MUKABI, Misik Senga Pierre (Congo). *Nicolau Maquiavel-Filosofia e Politico Confrontado. (Nicola Machiavelli—the Philosopher and Politician Meet Head-on)*. The author explains the political philosophy of the 16th century writer. Gráfica e Editora Quatro Irmãos, Vila Velha ES, 2005, 136 pp.

NSOLO Abel (Congo). *Libérer l'amour. (To Set Love Free.)* The author uses his background in spirituality and psychology to show how living the vows of chastity and obedience can have a liberating effect on the lives of those who pronounce these vows. Baobab, Kinshasa, 2005, 47 pp.

VYSZKOWSKYY Pavlo (Ukraine) *Christian Ethics in the Communications Media* (written in Ukrainian). An instruction on a reasonable use of mass media: a manual for children, parents, catechists, and formators. Catholic Media Center, Kiev, 2006, 104 pp.

Anniversaries for August 2006

75 Years of religious life

1931.08.02	05145	Fr. John Boser	Lacombe
1931.08.02	05143	Msgr. Albert Sanschagrin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1931.08.15	05112	Fr. Julio Rodríguez	Argentina-Chile
1931.08.15	05102	Fr. Alfred Rozynek	Poland

70 Years of religious life

1936.08.15	06344	Fr. Giuseppe Affinita	Italy
1936.08.15	06928	Bro. Jules Auclair	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1936.08.15	06390	Fr. Charles Borgers	United States
1936.08.15	06860	Fr. Aloïse Lichtenauer	France
1936.08.15	06339	Fr. Antonio Sgambati	Italy
1936.08.15	06335	Fr. Boniface Wittenbrink	United States
1936.08.19	06392	Fr. Leonard Stocker	Lacombe

65 Years of religious life

1941.08.02	07318	Fr. Jacques Croteau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.08.02	07315	Fr. Roger Gauthier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.08.02	07316	Fr. Lionel Goulet	Argentine-Chile
1941.08.02	07324	Fr. Roland Houle	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.08.02	07314	Fr. Joseph Vaillancourt	Haiti
1941.08.15	07375	Fr. Antonio Coletta	Italy
1941.08.15	07369	Fr. Tomás Domínguez	Spain
1941.08.15	07278	Fr. Francis Ebner	Grandin
1941.08.15	07820	Bro. Marcel Ethier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.08.15	07329	Fr. Jean Girouard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.08.15	07327	Fr. Yvon Saint-Arnaud	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

60 Years of religious life

1946.08.02	08176	Fr. Guy Boulanger	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.08.02	08172	Fr. François Buteau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.08.02	08177	Fr. Garcia Lussier	Argentine-Chile
1946.08.02	08174	Fr. Paul Plamondon	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.08.15	08146	Fr. Robert Allie	United States
1946.08.15	08187	Fr. Raymond Bastien	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.08.15	08150	Fr. Tommaso Campagnuolo	Italy
1946.08.15	08149	Fr. James Datko	United States
1946.08.15	08188	Fr. John Doetzel	Saint Paul's
1946.08.15	08148	Fr. James Donovan	United States
1946.08.15	08183	Fr. Paul Hurtubise	Lesotho
1946.08.15	08823	Bro. Jules Loranger	Lacombe
1946.08.15	08185	Fr. Santiago Monast	Bolivia
1946.08.15	08650	Bro. Joseph Morin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.08.15	08191	Fr. Waldemar Reschny	Lacombe
1946.08.15	08192	Fr. Anthony Schmidt	Lacombe

50 Years of religious life

1956.08.02	10158	Fr. Real Corriveau	Haiti
1956.08.02	10160	Fr. Wilfred Harvey	United States
1956.08.02	10163	Fr. Jean Saint-Cyr	Haiti
1956.08.15	10122	Fr. Vincenzo Abbatinali	Italy
1956.08.15	10217	Fr. Francisco Arrigo	Italy
1956.08.15	10121	Fr. Leonhard Bianchi	Austria/Czech Rep.
1956.08.15	10171	Fr. Michel Bissonnette	Central S. A.
1956.08.15	10192	Fr. José Devlin	Peru
1956.08.15	10184	Fr. Marcel Dumais	General Administration
1956.08.15	10214	Fr. Stefano Ferrara	Italy
1956.08.15	10191	Fr. Gerald Guillet	Lacombe
1956.08.15	10179	Fr. William Hagen	United States
1956.08.15	10181	Fr. Gerardo Leclair	Bolivia
1956.08.15	10183	Fr. Francis Morrissey	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.08.15	10187	Fr. Denis Paquin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1956.08.15	10188	Fr. Carroll Parker	Scandinavia
1956.08.15	10167	Fr. Paul-Eugène Plouffe	Grandin

1956.08.15	10178	Fr. Alphonse Roy	Lacombe
1956.08.15	10168	Fr. John Schoeberle	Scandinavia
1956.08.15	10174	Fr. Cletus Ternes	Philippines
1956.08.15	10190	Fr. William Thompson	Saint Peter's

25 Years of religious life

1981.08.01	13025	Bro. Henry A. Arruda	Lacombe
1981.08.01	12602	Fr. Bryan W. Silva	United States
1981.08.22	12655	Fr. Vincent Le Phu Hai	France

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Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 42-45

NAME	PROVINCE	BIRTH	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. José Velasco	United States	07/11/1929	San Antonio	29/05/2006
Fr. Robert McGrath	United States	25/08/1929	San Antonio	30/05/2006
Fr. James P. Carroll	Australia	22/12/1919	Brisbane	05/06/2006
Bro. Aloysius Putsoa	Lesotho	27/12/1934	Bloemfontein	09/06/2006

“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)