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International Scholasticate celebrates 125 years

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of the International Roman Scholasticate, the present scholasticate community (21 scholastics and 4 staff) joined the General House community for Eucharist on the Feast of Christ the King, November 26. Presiding at the Mass was the Superior General, Fr. Wilhelm STECKLING. Fr. Roberto SARTOR, Superior of the scholasticate and Procurator General preached the homily.

In the January 1981 edition of *OMI Information*, Fr. Alexandre TACHÉ wrote a brief article about celebrations that had occurred the previous November to commemorate the centennial of the founding of the International Scholasticate in Rome. The celebration took place somewhat early because there was a General Chapter going on in Rome at the time and 22 “old Romans” were there for that event.

Fr. Taché, formerly a student, formator, and superior at the International Scholasticate, wrote these words 25 years ago: “The birth of the Roman Scholasticate is indirectly linked to the infamous Decree of 29 March 1880, voted by the French Government, whereby religious congregations without recognized legal status had no right to exist on French soil. The Oblate scholastics, who had had to leave Montolivet (Marseilles) after the Founder’s death, were expelled from Autun on November 4, 1880, and took refuge in Inchicore, Ireland.

That same year the General Council decided to buy a home in Rome for the Procurator to the Holy See and a few seminarians. In 1881, Fr. Cassien AUGIER was appointed Procurator and Superior of scholastics, with residence at Piazza Sant’Ignazio. Fifteen scholastics arrived from France on November 16 and started classes seven days later at the

Collegio Germanico, where the Gregorian University had sought refuge after 1870.”

Since those days on Piazza Sant’Ignazio, the Roman Scholasticate has had three other homes: Via Vittorino da Feltre, 15 (1887-1961); Via Aurelia, 290 (1961-66 and 1972-present); Via Gioacchino Ventura, 60 [Pineta Sacchetti] (1966-72). Besides the house in Rome, generations of scholastics enjoyed their summers at Casa dell’Assunta in Roviano until that house, built in 1900, was sold in the 1970’s.

Current staff members, along with Fr. Sartor, are the Postulator General, Joaquín MARTÍNEZ (Spain), Chinnappan SANDHAPPAN (India), and Cornelius NGOKA (Nigeria). Among the scholastics, the following countries are represented: Bangladesh (2), Congo (1), Germany (1), Haiti (2), India (2), Lesotho (2), Madagascar (2), Nigeria (1), Philippines (2), Sri Lanka – Colombo (1), United States (2), Zambia (2), Zimbabwe (1).

There is no up-to-date record of how many Oblates have experienced the International Scholasticate in the past 125 years, but wherever “old Romans” meet one another, they love to tell stories of “tempi nostri” (our times). Many have served the Church in difficult situations (even to the point of shedding their blood) and many have been called upon by the Congregation to roles of leadership: formators, professors, provincials, General Councillors, and two Superiors General (Richard HANLEY and Marcello ZAGO). Others have served the Church as bishops and one wore the red hat of a cardinal (Thomas COORAY of Sri Lanka).

At the Mass celebrating the 100th anniversary of the International Roman Scholasticate, the Superior

General, Fr. Fernand JETTÉ, described in these few words the main purpose of this community which is now completing 125 years: "The Congregation is universal ... its heart is as large as the world. This

makes it necessary that, at its centre, some young Oblates be able to experience better this international dimension and live it more intensely."

General Administration

GENERAL HOUSE

The "Sacristan General" moves back to Canada

In a house where one finds a Superior General, a Vicar General, two Assistants General, etc., it is no strange thing that someone invented the role of "Sacristan General." For the past 35 years, Brother Jean-Paul BEAUDET has faithfully taken care of everything needed for a smooth and comfortable celebration of the liturgy, not only in the main chapel but also in several smaller chapels. On December 8, 2006, the General House community officially bade farewell to their faithful confrere as he prepared for his return journey to his homeland, Canada. There, he will join the Province of Notre-Dame-du-Cap. Fr. Wilhelm STECKLING, the Superior General presided at Brother's farewell Eucharist and the local superior, Fr. Jean-Pierre CALOZ preached the homily on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Born two days before Christmas in 1919, Jean-Paul began his career as a mechanic on a merchant ship. During the Second World War, he found himself in the famous Bermuda Triangle helping to refuel American ships.

After the war, he was able to follow his dream and enter the Missionary Oblates as a Brother. He pronounced his first vows at Richelieu in 1948. To his great surprise, in 1950, he received word that the Superior General was inviting him to be part of the team of Brothers who would help maintain the new General House in Rome. In those days, the Brothers did all of the physical maintenance of the house and property (including cleaning rooms, corridors, offices, etc.)

From 1965 until 1971, Jean-Paul experienced his "Paris years." At that time, the General Administration maintained a house on Rue de l'Assomption, the "Procure," for Oblate visitors to the French capi-

tal, especially the many missionaries who would pass through the city during their holidays. Brother found that getting around the city on a motor scooter gave him a new perspective on his life in France.

Thirty-five years ago, Jean-Paul returned to the General House where he became "Sacristan General." With a simple glance at the size of the congregation, he knows how much wine to prepare for Mass and how many hosts to put on the paten. He is careful to prepare the liturgical books so that they are of the right language (Italian, French, English) for the right day and that the ribbons mark the correct prayers of the day. As sacristan, he takes pride in the fact that he is the only keeper of the key to the reliquary where the relic of the Founder's heart is enshrined.

Outside of the sacristy, he also performs a special and delicate role for the community. He is the one who knows the secrets of the inner working of the coffee machine in the community room. He knows how and when to replenish the supplies that will provide "café lungo" and "café corto," "cappuccino," hot chocolate and even a cup of tea. He is also known for his predilection for maple syrup. Many Oblates coming from Canada have brought some along with them, especially for Brother Beaudet.

Jean-Paul's quiet and faithful presence will be missed at via Aurelia 290. He is no longer the young Brother he was 55 years ago when he arrived, but he is still the man of great heart who was willing to be a missionary in a very unique and special service to the whole Congregation.

ROME

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI: "The spiritual dimension of the work of Justice and Peace"

The Justice and Peace Committee of the Unions of Superiors General invited Father Ron ROLHEISER

to conduct two days of discussion on the topic, "The spiritual dimension of the work of Justice and Peace." The gathering took place on November 16-17 at the house of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Father Wilhelm STECKLING, the Superior General, is the chairman of the committee and he opened the meeting. The General House community was represented by six participants. Father Rolheiser presented his reflections to the assembly with major talks in the morning and afternoon, decidedly appreciated by the great majority of the 100 or so participants.

Here are a few of Ron's points that particularly impressed me:

The Justice and peace movement was a product of the enthusiasm of the 1960s, but today's context is quite different. In the long run, individualism makes one lose long term perspectives; there is the impression that nothing changes in spite of our best efforts; there is a focus on one's self and one's immediate interests; there are the conservative movements and liberal ideology. All of those things have created a climate hardly favorable to making a commitment. It is, therefore, urgent to rediscover the motivation, the inspiration and the conviction that nourished generosity and faith in possible changes.

The poor are at the very heart of the Christian message. If you cut out from the Bible all the references to the poor, you would have nothing left but some holes! Ron quoted Jim Wallis saying that the Christian quality of a country is measured of by the way the poorest are treated. God is more concerned about the poor than about rubrics, Canon Law, and rules and practices.

Nonviolence, turning the other cheek, for example, is fundamental. All the great personalities such as Gandhi and Mandela practiced it. Its effectiveness comes from the fact that it confuses the adversary and takes the wind out of any escalation toward violence. David didn't play the game; he did not enter into the fighting logic of Goliath who was thus completely disarmed! Through a series of Bible passages, Ron showed the effectiveness of a refusal to respond in the same way as the adversary. The cross is the most stunning example and it is located at the

very heart of the practice of justice and peace!

To conclude, here is a quotation from Cardinal Sin of the Philippines whom Ron quoted several times: "Strength without compassion is violence; compassion without justice is sentiment; justice without love is Marxism; and - love without justice is baloney" (Jean-Pierre CALOZ)

GENERAL HOUSE

New Doctor of Philosophy: Andrzej Jastrzebski

A few months ago, Fr. Andrzej JASTRZEBSKI arrived at the General House to begin his new role as executive assistant to the General Council. Besides learning a new language (Italian) and brushing up on those he had already studied (French, English, German), the young Oblate from Poland also had to work on the completion of his degree in philosophy at the University of Lublin.

In October, Andrzej returned to Poland to pass his comprehensive exams. On November 24, he was back in his homeland to defend his doctoral thesis entitled: *The Concept of Personalism of the Bostonian School: Borden Parker Bowne's Attempt at conquering Materialistic Evolutionism and Naturalism in the Understanding of Man.*

The thesis is a description of the development of Bowne's personalism in its historic context, especially in the field of philosophical idealism. Bowne was a 19th century philosopher and theologian in the Methodist tradition, a long-time professor at Boston University.

Besides his work for the General Council, Andrzej puts some life into General House liturgies with his guitar playing and singing.



Africa-Madagascar

SAHARA

Like a tree, alone in the middle of the Sahara desert

Fr. Jean-Bosco MUSUMBI, General Councillor for the Region of Africa-Madagascar, recently visited the Sahara, a Provincial Delegation of Spain. Here are his impressions.

After Madrid and Barcelona, I moved on, via Las Palmas (Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean) to Laayoune, a town in Western Sahara, accompanied by Fernando (DE LA PAZ), the provincial of Spain. It was my first direct contact with the Sahara desert. In my geography class in secondary school, I never imagined such a reality.

An eco-region situated in the northern part of Africa, the Sahara is the largest desert in the world. It divides the continent from east to west and stretches across eleven countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, and Western Sahara. The word "Sahara" is Arab in origin (Al-Saharra or Ar-Sahhra), meaning desert or steppe. As for climate, the Atlantic coastal zone, covered by cold currents from the Canaries, is prone to sea breezes and to occasional fog.

This northwest African territory of 266,000 km² is bounded by Morocco on the north, Algeria on the northeast, Mauritania on the east and south, while its west coast is on the Atlantic Ocean.

"A vast desert land, this former Spanish colony has yet to get a definitive juridical status, more than 30 years after the departure of the Spanish in 1975. Western Sahara is caught in a conflict that reflects both the struggle of certain Saharans for their independence and the rivalry between Morocco and Algeria for supremacy in the region. In 1982, recognition of Western Sahara's independence by the majority of African states and its membership in the OUA [Organization for African Unity] brought about the departure of Morocco from that organization in 1985."

For several years now, three Oblates, one of whom

is the Apostolic Prefect of Laayoune-Sahara, have engaged in an "apostolate of presence" in this Muslim country. During our visit, 9 Spanish professors took part in the Saturday Mass (in Spanish), and 10 members of the United Nations Mission for the Organization of a Referendum in West Sahara (MINURSO) were at the Sunday Mass (in Spanish and English). No one comes during the week because there are no Christians. In this context, what is the purpose of a Catholic mission, or "is it really worthwhile to be here?"

"It all depends on one's notion of Church... That is the world where we find ourselves, seemingly standing alone. Just as the lonely tree or the hidden spring are there in case someone needs shade or a bit of water, there is someone trying quietly to bear a grain of sand in this dune of hardships, poverty and punishment, even though unfortunately, it is not as much as would be needed or as much as we would want." " (*OMI Info, N. 453, April 2006*).

For the Oblates of Spain, it's worthwhile! It's a matter of a special mission that consists in being a witness of Christ among the Muslims; a presence motivated by the interreligious dialogue called for by the Church and by the last General Chapter of our institute. "Dialogue with other cultures and religions is a demand of the times that calls us to develop an attitude of listening to the world."

I left Laayoune with mixed feelings. First of all, I felt admiration for our brother Oblates who, on the surface, have nothing to do, but who have friends and are happy. One needs a special gift in order to stay with it. Then I experienced the fear of futility. My sincere thanks to these brave missionaries for their welcome and their joy of living as witnesses of the One who called them to be his followers.

NATAL

Cedara: Oblate scholastics launch their CD

In early 2006, the scholar singing group of St Joseph's Oblate Scholasticate in Cedara began to work on a new project, the recording of a CD. On the evening November 3, 2006, the *Ama-Oblates*

kaMaria Ongenasici launched *UDUMO*, their debut CD, at the Winston Churchill Theater in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

UDUMO is an album that mixes the sounds of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia in a unique blend of classical singing, modern music, energy and faith.

Fr Mxolisi NGCOBO, one of the coordinators of the project, announced that proceeds raised from donations will be used to help youth.

SENEGAL

We need a symbol!

In Senegal, symbols are very important within a family circle, an ethnic group, a religious tradition. In a country that is predominately Muslim, the half-moon under a star is seen everywhere atop the minarets of the mosques. In the few Christian areas, the cross on a bell tower or on a dome has very important meaning for those who believe in Jesus Christ. That cross is a message, not only for the Christians, but also for their Muslim brothers and sisters. In a sense, it is a symbol by which the Christians can say: "We are here!"

Arriving at one of the Christian places of worship in

the mission of Koumpentoun, one can see within a half kilometer two minarets on the left and four on the right: two new mosques built in the past five years.

Here, the Italian Oblate missionary, Fr. Danilo CECCATO, gathers the faithful for Sunday Mass in a large hall that is inadequate for the numbers that come. They have no symbol yet, no bell tower, no cupola. But that will change. In the village of Koukou, the seven Christian families who live there gathered sand a few months ago to make 1200 bricks to construct a 6x8 meter chapel. Even the Muslim families of the village want to be involved in the building of the small house of worship. They have promised to loan to the Christians their horses and carts to bring in 80 more loads of sand.

But the cross remains a scandal to the Muslims. They say: "How is it possible that the greatest prophet of mercy, Jesus, ended up on a cross?" This makes it all the more important that the Christians build their chapel with a bell tower topped by the cross, to establish a more visible presence among the mosques and minarets. It will be their way of telling their Muslim brothers and sisters that "the one who was crucified is more than a prophet, He is the Son of God himself!" (*Missioni OMI*, 11/2006)

Asia-Oceania

PHILIPPINES

Message of support for the peace process

Following their recent Provincial Assembly, the Oblates of the Philippines made this public declaration of support for the delicate negotiations that they hope will one day lead to an end to the years of conflict and violence that have taken many lives, including those of some Oblates. The statement was signed by the provincial, Ramon BERNABE and by Roberto LAYSON, Chairman of the Committee on Christian-Muslim Relations and Inter-faith Dialogue.

On October 16-18, 2006, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) of the Philippine Province gathered for their Provincial Assembly, with a focus on Peace and Dialogue. About 60 Oblates—a

bishop, pastors of parishes and mission stations, heads of schools and media institutions, chaplains, seminary formators, retreat directors, ministers to indigenous peoples and people of different faiths, and their leaders—prayed, listened, and reflected together on their ministry in communities of diversity and of conflict, especially in Mindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

We acknowledged the gift of God that has allowed the Oblates to minister in this part of the country for the last 67 years. We rejoiced in the good that God has worked through us and in us even if, only as his humble instruments. We delighted as well in the many wonderful friendships painstakingly built over the years. But we agonized as well at the continuing hostilities that have wracked this land and caused untold suffering on the people we have vowed to

serve. We have shared the pain and the loss of life. In the days of our Assembly, we sought to understand anew the roots of this violence, and there saw a tangled web of historical events, perceptions, policies, decisions, and actions, that through the years have ensured dispossession, discrimination, despair, distrust, and the bloodshed that ensued. We realized the enormity of the task to untangle this web, and to rectify the injustices of the past and present.

We saw a glimmer of hope in the evolving program and expanding constituency for peace and dialogue among our grassroots communities and institutions, in solidarity with many others who share the same dream. We commend their efforts, encourage them in their endeavors, and offer our own modest share in engaging the various fronts of peace-building.

In a special way, we offer our support to the peace process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, believing in the window of opportunity that is at hand, to secure a just and honorable peace for people who long to live in harmony-in-diversity. We encourage the panels not to cease in the search for non-violent solutions to the conflict despite the difficulties, and urge our communities and institutions to seek ways to complement the peace process by building genuine relationships of mutual dialogue and shared aims.

Lastly, we vow to pray for the peace that God, in his mercy and compassion, desires for all of his people, for ultimately, peace is his gift.

PHILIPPINES

Oblate schools welcome Muslim students

The Internet Encyclopedia, *Wikipedia* (found in many languages), states that the Oblates "... administer the Notre Dame schools and universities in Mindanao, including Notre Dame University in Cotabato City and Notre Dame of Midsayap College in North Cotabato, and the Notre Dame of Greater Manila in Caloocan City, which are located in the Philippines. Currently, an OMI holds the presidency of the Notre Dame Educational Association, a group of approximately 98 Notre Dame Schools, Colleges, and its 5 Universities in the Philippines, which were

originally established by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate."

At a meeting of the Central Education Association of the Philippines in September, Oblate Fr. Eduardo TANUDTANUD, the president of Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, said that of 152 Notre Dame schools in Mindanao, 29 teach students who are predominantly Muslims.

He added that Catholic administrators believe "a Catholic school is not reserved for Catholics only but is open to all those who appreciate and share their qualified educational project."

Catholic students are the majority in 123, or 81 percent, of the Notre Dame schools in Mindanao, according to Father Tanudtanud. He said schools without Catholic majorities are concentrated in Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces in western Mindanao. Students belonging to various communities among the region's 50 ethno-linguistic groups, including indigenous *lumad* peoples and migrant families from other regions, attend the Notre Dame schools.

Father Tanudtanud explained that Notre Dame schools are either administered or owned by a religious congregation or the local diocese. Retreats and days of recollection for Christian and Muslim students, faculty and staff members, and parents of students are common in these schools. They have chapels and prayer rooms for Christians and Muslims, as well as varied religious studies programs.

Christian students must take a course on the fundamentals of Christianity and another on Jesus and his message. Catholic students must also take a course on the sacraments and liturgy, while other Christian students take a course on churches in the Philippines.

Muslim students, on the other hand, are required to take a course on Arabic writing and on reading the Qur'an, as well as a course on the essentials of Islam and another on the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

All the university's students are required to take a

course on phenomenology of religions and peace.

Father Tanudtanud said the university's academic and other programs are geared toward promoting catholicity by enriching the lives of the Catholic community, while helping students of other faiths grow in their own faith.

Religious of the Virgin Mary sisters established the first mission school for non-Catholic children in the Cotabato area in 1904. The Oblates, who arrived in 1939, established Notre Dame Academy in 1941 and, in the next eight years, 14 other Notre Dame schools for boys and girls began around Cotabato.

Europe

POLAND

Lublin University honors an Oblate professor

On November 20, 2006, the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), honored a long-time Oblate professor, Father Waław HRYNIEWICZ, on the occasion of his 70th birthday. This birthday provided an opportunity to recognize his considerable academic work.

During the celebration, Fr. Hryniewicz was presented a *Festschrift* entitled *Instaurare omnia in Christo*. It is dedicated to "Fr. Professor Waław Hryniewicz on his 70th birthday" and it includes the themes of salvation, theology, dialogue and hope. This book is a collection of articles by his friends in academia. One of them is Cardinal Walter Kasper, the Prefect of the Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

During his years as a professor at the University in Lublin, Fr. Hryniewicz published 822 books and articles (of which 164 are in languages other than Polish). Some of his best known books are: *The Paschal Trilogy: Vol. 1 – Christ, Our Passover: An Outline of Christian Paschal Theology (1982); Vol. 2 – Our Passover in Christ, An Outline of Christian Paschal Theology (1987); Vol. 3 – The Passover of Christ in the History of Man and the Cosmos, An Outline of Christian Paschal Theology (1991)*. Others include books on Christianity and the Hope of Universal Salvation: *Hope of Salvation for All: From an Eschatology of Fear to an Eschatology of Hope (1989); Drama of the Hope of Salvation (1996)*, and many others in the fields of early Russian studies, Catholic–Orthodox dialogue, and ecumenical studies.

Born on July 23, 1936 in Lomazy (Eastern Poland), he was ordained a priest in 1960. He achieved a

doctorate degree in dogmatic theology at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) in 1966, with the dissertation: *The Soteriological Significance of the Resurrection of Christ in the Teaching of Contemporary Catholic Theologians*.

His *curriculum vitae* is impressive. He is one of the founders of the Ecumenical Institute at KUL, and since 1983, he has been the head of the Department of Orthodox Theology at this Institute. From 1980-2005, he was a member of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Since 1988, he has been a member of the European Society for Ecumenical Research "Societas Oecumenica;" from 1997-2005, director of the Ecumenical Institute at KUL; a member of the advisory board of "*Eastern Churches Journal*" (Fairfax, Virginia, USA). He was, from 1998-2000, a member of the drafting committee preparing the text of the *Charta Oecumenica: Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe*, officially signed by the Presidents of the Conference of European Churches and of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences in Strasbourg on April 22, 2001.

He has lectured abroad, in Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, the United States and Belgium. He participated in and organized many international symposiums and ecumenical conferences. His main research has been dedicated to Christian paschal theology, the theology of hope, the universality of salvation, Old-Russian theology and ecumenical issues. Inspired by the tradition of Eastern Christianity, he has been developing an ecumenical theology open to other Christian denominations and other religions – a theology looking for ways of reconciliation for Churches, nations and cultures.

ITALY**The Family Center celebrates its 40th birthday**

The years ago by,
The babies grow up,
And the mothers...

That was a song from many years ago. We could sing that same song today at the Family Center (Centro la Famiglia) founded in Rome 40 years ago by Father Luciano CUPIA. Yes, the years go by for everyone, for every mother, in every family, and for the center...

Those who work at the Family Center of Rome know that very well. For them and for all those who are connected with it, it's an important anniversary, for they are extinguishing 40 candles, along with 30 others for the School for Marriage and Family Counselors. They are completing 40 years of life, 40 years of history.

In far-off 1931, in Canada, the Novalis Center run by the Oblates at the University of Ottawa, there began the Catholic Center for Marriage Preparation.

In 1966, the Oblates founded a similar center in Italy, under the care of Fr. Luciano Cupia. Together with him at the inauguration of the center were Frs. Gianni COLOMBO and Vittore DALLA LIBERA. Rosalba Fanelli was also there from the very beginning as a collaborator. That's how a structured and modern method of marriage preparation began in Italy.

Ten years after the opening of the Family Center, they made another major step with the creation of the Counseling Center where engaged couples could bring their problems. It was a branch office dedicated to helping families with their relational problems: couples working together as spouses and parents; adolescent children; pregnant women; and people with all sorts of sexual problems in all their complexity.

Today, 30 years later, there are 45 staff persons, among whom are family counselors and ethicists, psychologists, psychotherapists, medical doctors,

social workers, family legal experts, and the School for Family Counselors, all responding to old and new needs of the family.

In its long experience, with tens of thousands of people touched and listened to, there are about 120 encounters each week at the main center, with persons coming not only from Rome, but from all over the region. The school is present all over Italy, with about 40 centers. Unique in its kind, this school distinguishes itself by its educational methodology, as well as by its content. Up to this point, it has formed almost 5000 persons as family counselors and every year they are adding new courses. Father Cupia says: "They have been 30 and 40 years rich in experience and of deep spirituality in respect to the freedom of others." (Giuseppe CELLUCCI in *Missioni OMI*, 11/2006)

ITALY**To give joy to God**

The Oblate community in Gesso (Sicily) resembled a farmyard for a short time on November 1, as children from various parts of Messina brought animals to be blessed: dogs, cats, cows, sheep, chickens, and donkeys. The occasion was a gathering of "pre-MGC", the children who one day hope to become part of the Movimento Giovanile Costruire (Youth Movement – To Build).

The topic of the day was "To give joy to God" through the gift of the Holy Spirit, "Fear of the Lord." Presenting the theme was Fr. Francesco VOLPINTESTA, who used three selections from the Walt Disney film, "The Lion King." He showed how the young lion learned, through his father's teachings, the true meaning of being a king, which consists in nurturing harmony and respect among all living creatures, being courageous when necessary, and being open to forgiveness.

The central message of the day was the difference between awe and fear. The children met in small groups to discuss this and talk about their own experiences.

Fr. Angelo CAPUANO celebrated Mass with the children and in his homily, he told them about three

different kinds of happiness which they could seek: happiness for self; happiness as a gift to others; and the happiness which they, as young Christians, can offer back to God. The day closed with a visit to the church of Saint Anthony the Abbot in Gesso, where the theme of their prayer was the Fear of the Lord. They listened to readings that spoke of the fears of three great personalities: Abraham, Jeremiah, and Mary. The lesson to be learned was that fear need not be an obstacle in one's relationship with God. To symbolize this, the children wrote some of their fears on pieces of paper and burned them.

FRANCE AND BENELUX

Polish Delegation celebrates its 60th anniversary

A beautiful anniversary celebration took place on September 16-17, 2006, in Vaudricourt and Lens, France, the home of the Polish province's delegation, France and Benelux, celebrating 60 years as an organized Unit of the Oblate Congregation.

A symposium took place at the old St. Casimir Institute in Vaudricourt, under the direction of the Delegation Superior, Fr. Jan DOMANSKI. Among the speakers were Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly who traveled from Rome to be there; Fr. Teodor JOCHEM, Provincial of Poland; and Fr. Bernard DULLIER, Provincial of France. A number of Oblates and Oblate parish representatives were awarded medals and certificates for our many years of cooperation.

Polish President Lech Kaczynski wrote a letter for this occasion. Among other things, he wrote: *"Evangelizare pauperibus misit me – He sent me to evangelize the poor. The Polish Oblate missionaries, guided by the call of their founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, decided over 60 years ago to bring the Word of God to those whom they saw as the most abandoned and the neediest – their countrymen, who for various reasons, were living away from their homeland. As President of the Republic of Poland, I wish to convey my sincerest respect, and thank all members of your Congregation who to this day continue to give spiritual and material assistance to Poles living in France, Belgium and Luxembourg. Our great compatriot, the late Holy Father John Paul II, pointed out many times that the maturity of a*

Christian in his faith can be measured by the readiness with which he undertakes missionary work. Your Congregation, present in nearly twenty countries all around the world, is a shining example of this."

It was actually 70 years ago, (1936) that an Oblate from Poland, Fr. Feliks ROZYNEK, emigrated from his homeland to France to establish pastoral care for Polish immigrants living in southern France.

Over the past 60 years, the Polish Delegation has undergone significant change. In 1949, it came under the direct control of the Superior General, and in 1964 it became an independent vicariate under the patronage of Our Lady of Czestochowa. Some time later, in accordance with the new Constitutions and Rules, its name was changed to the Polish Vice-Province in France, Belgium and Luxembourg, though its superior used the title of Provincial. Finally, when the new division of the Congregation into provinces, delegations and missions took place, the vice-province was reclassified as a delegation. On April 25, 2004, it was officially renamed the Delegation of the Province of Poland in France and Benelux.

After World War II ended, 26 priests who had served as military chaplains and who had accepted other pastoral assignments began to ponder the future. Most either did not want to return or could not return to Poland because of Soviet occupation there. Convinced that Polish immigrants without pastoral care were losing their souls, they decided that they would dedicate themselves to ministering to them.

In September 1947, the Bethune juniorate was opened with 40 students. Later, the juniorate moved to Vaudricourt and a novitiate was opened at La Ferté. At first the scholastics studied in Verlaines, Belgium, or in Rome, but in 1966, the delegation opened its own scholasticate in Lille, France.

As happened in many Units in Europe and North America, vocations to priesthood and religious life in the delegation diminished, beginning in the late 1960's. Consequently, the houses of formation ceased to function.

Over the course of the past 60 years, the Polish pas-

toral presence in France was greatly developed and at one time, the Oblates were the largest community of Polish clergy in France. To this day, the Oblates in Belgium comprise the largest number of Polish priests in that country. The Oblate delegation, as an autonomous body under the guidance of the Polish province, continues to have a future – especially with the entry of Poland into the European Union. Hundreds of Poles travel to France, Belgium and Lux-

embourg. Oblates must provide them with pastoral care, not only to conserve their faith, but also to assist them in any number of practical matters, such as finding homes, work and, at the very least, temporary residency permits. The houses, parish halls and churches must remain as pieces of their homeland in the countries where they have settled. (Janusz BLAZEJAK)

Canada-United States

OMI LACOMBE

St. Joseph's Parish, Ottawa: 150th Anniversary

St. Eugene de Mazenod was the Superior General of the Congregation when his Oblates established St. Joseph's Parish in Ottawa in 1856. The Oblates continue to minister there. The first phase of the anniversary took place on September 23-24, 2006, with a "Homecoming Weekend." It was an opportunity to invite people to come back to the church and to welcome all. The celebration started with a concert in the church on the 23rd. The concert featured past and present choir members and musicians performing a number of songs that were favourites over the years. The profits will serve to improve the sound system.

On Sunday, September 24, there was a Eucharist in the morning that was concelebrated by 3 Oblates: 2 former pastors, Fr. Laurie CONLON and Bishop Douglas CROSBY, and the present pastor, Fr. Richard KELLY. Bishop Crosby offered a time of reflection and spoke of the many doors of this church. It is open to the community and has a rich history of providing for the poor, as well as offering high quality liturgies. There are the church doors, the door to St. Joe's Supper table, and the door to the St. Joe's Women Center: all of these doors are open to the community. At the end of the Mass, two young people blessed the elders; afterwards a couple blessed the younger generation. It symbolized the passing of the blessing from one generation to the next.

The Eucharist was followed by a well attended gathering and BBQ on the lawn of the University of Ottawa across the street. A big cake was prepared for the occasion. Tours of the church were offered to

recall the history of the parish.

Another event to mark the 150th anniversary was held on Friday, December 8, 2006. There was a Eucharist celebration in the afternoon and the installation of the next Leadership Team for the OMI Lacombe Canada Province. It was followed by a supper and a talk from Father Eugene KING, the Oblate Vicar General, on Oblate spirituality, to help the parish better understand the Oblate charism.

ASSUMPTION

A crown for Our Lady

A special ceremony took place at Holy Rosary Parish in Edmonton recently: the coronation of the portrait of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Leading the ceremony and performing the coronation was Archbishop Adam EXNER, Archbishop-emeritus of Vancouver. Also participating in the ceremony was Fr. Janusz BLAZEJAK, Provincial of Assumption Province and Polish priests from surrounding parishes. Fr. Roman MAJEK, pastor of Holy Rosary Parish, prepared a truly beautiful event.

When asked where the idea came from to crown the portrait of Our Lady, he replied: *It's clear that since our parish bears the name Holy Rosary, we maintain many forms of Marian worship in our community. For example, we have a number of rosary prayer groups at the parish. There are other ways as well in which we express our devotion. And, so, three years ago, over a hundred people, having prepared in advance, devoted themselves to Jesus through Mary using the act of devotion created by St. Ludwig Marie Grignon. A group called "We Need Him to Rule"*

was formed at the parish, its members dedicating themselves wholly to Christ as the one Lord and Savior of their lives. The idea for the coronation of the portrait of Mary, the Mother of our Savior, came from these groups as a means of emphasizing Christ's and Mary's presence among us. It should also be noted that we have had a devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the parish for years. And, in speaking of this coronation, we're not thinking of it as a one-time event, but with the hope that the spiritual good that will emanate from it should grow and set down roots. Thus was also born the idea of the peregrination of Our Lady's portrait – two versions of which will visit families belonging to our congregation, fostering a climate of prayers for vocations, marital unity and unity in the Church, and all other intentions. Queen of Poland, pray for us...

It should be noted that over a kilogram of gold was used for the crown – this was a gift from the parishioners, who over a number of months donated their gold rings, earrings, bracelets and other jewelry. Fr. Blazejak presented the portrait for its coronation and spoke about the history of the portrait and gave a specific indication of its significance for the faithful.

Archbishop Exner explained the meaning of a crowning in Church tradition: *On the occasion of a crowning of an image of the Blessed Mother, Pope John Paul II pointed out that according to an ancient tradition not every image of the Blessed Mother is worthy of being crowned. In his own words he said: "A particular image of the Blessed Mother, in order to be considered for crowning, has to have earned the honor of being crowned, because for centuries many, many people have reported that they received Perpetual Help. Devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the power of this devotion have been recognized and commended by the Church for many, many years. The Tuesday evening devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help were first started in the United States at Roxbury, near St. Louis Missouri, shortly after the Redemptorist Fathers came to the U.S. in 1870. Without doubt, Our Lady of Perpetual Help has earned the honor of being crowned."* (Janusz BLAZEJAK)

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP

The Shrine: an oasis of peace

Pilgrimage season at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Cape ended on October 9, Thanksgiving Day, after a very busy summer of 2006. In other places such as ours, they have experienced a slight reduction in attendance. Here we have experienced no slowing down.

Here are some numbers that illustrate that. From May 1 until October 9, 2006, we housed at the "Madonna Hotel" more than 17,800 pilgrims, arriving from Québec, Ontario, the USA and elsewhere. We realize that we are offering our visitors a very much appreciated service. The Shrine has become for everyone a place of silence, reflection and an oasis of peace. More and more, people need special places where they can find once again a little hope in their day-to-day lives.

Ever conscious of the pastoral service that we offer here, we are encouraged by the appreciation of our visitors who are in awe at the places and the services offered. May we always be ready to meet the needs of our pilgrims. That is our mission. (Pierre RACETTE)

OMI LACOMBE

Generating Momentum

Since September, Brother Thomas NOVAK has been mentoring 8 Winnipeg high school students, all of them refugees from Africa or children of African refugees. Their task was to produce a piece of theatre based on their own experience and that would illustrate the development goals of the United Nations for the continent: universal primary education, eradicating HIV and malaria, equality for women and girls, sustainable development, etc.

The short play, entitled 'Isata's Story', was presented today, December 1 at 'Generating Momentum', an annual day long event sponsored by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation where high school students from all over the Province come together to learn about international development issues (such as the challenges facing Africa) and to express some of what they learn through their cho-

sen medium: painting, dance, video, spoken word, creating a magazine, etc.

Brother Novak was working with Mrs. Reena

Kreindler from *Just-Theatre*. In addition to preparing the play that kicked off the day, Thomas and Reena led some of the participants in a 6-hour workshop on creating popular theatre.

Books

Books published recently by or about Oblates. The information is in the language in which the book was written unless otherwise noted.

DADDIO, Angelo (Romania). *Eugène de Mazenod* (in Rumeno). Maracineni: Editura OMI, 2006, 94 pp.

LABELLE Joseph (USA). *Apostolic Life in the 1812-1826 Thought and Founding Charism of Eugène de Mazenod, O.M.I.* (unpublished dissertation). Rome: Pontifical Institute of Spirituality "Teresianum," 2006, 244 pp.

NSOLO HABELL (Congo). *La Politesse au Deuil*. Kinshasa: Paulines, 2006, 31 pp.

Redenius, Hans Tönjes (ed.). *In Honorem: Pater Clemens Kubitzka, OMI* (auf Deutsch). Bingen, 2005, 83 pp.

SMITH Arthur (red.) (Chile). *Mártires Oblatos 1831-1997*. Antofagasta:Chile, 2006, 176 pp.

WOJTCZAK Adam (Poland). *Disciple and Mother. On the Christocentrism of John Paul II's Mariology* (in Polish). Poznan: Adam Mickiewicz University, 2005, 288 pp.

Anniversaries -- February 2007

65TH Anniversary of Religious Profession

1942.02.17	07412	Fr. Henry McFall	Australia
1942.02.17	07403	Fr. Jean-Marie Mouchet	Saint Paul's

60TH Anniversary of Religious Profession

1947.02.17	08277	Fr. Thomas Barry	Northern S. A.
1947.02.17	08272	Fr. Léon Canelle	France
1947.02.17	08798	Bro. Raymond Des Chênes	Lacombe
1947.02.17	08446	Fr. Jean Lerayer	France
1947.02.17	08267	Fr. Josef Mathuni	Austria-Czech Rep.

60TH Anniversary of Priesthood

1947.02.14	07294	Fr. Francio Montalbano	United States
1947.02.23	07375	Fr. Antonio Coletta	Italy
1947.02.23	07568	Fr. Savio Crevacore	Italy
1947.02.23	07773	Fr. Paul Michalak	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

50TH Anniversary of Religious Profession

1957.02.02	10824	Bro. Jeremiah Prazma	Lacombe
1957.02.17	10245	Fr. Roberto de Valicourt	Brazil

50TH Anniversary of Priesthood

1957.02.10	09343	Fr. Lorne T. McDonald	Lacombe
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25TH Anniversary of Religious Profession

1982.02.17	12648	Fr. Antonio Diaz	Mexico
1982.02.17	12640	Fr. Antonio B. Mesquita	Brazil
1982.02.17	12874	Bro. Grzegorz Rosa	Cameroon

25TH Anniversary of Priesthood

1982.02.19	12425	Fr. Stuart Clifton Bate	Natal
1982.02.19	12382	Fr. Paul Horrocks	Natal
1982.02.20	12428	Fr. Mario Camarda	Italy
1982.02.20	12427	Fr. Enrico D'Onofrio	Italy

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Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 85-88

NAME	PROVINCE	BIRTH	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Manfred Förg	Namibia	08/06/1934	Hünfeld	21/11/2006
Bro. Herbert Stommel	Namibia	26/11/1944	Mariental	03/12/2006
Fr. Henri Barcet	France	08/05/1911	Saint-Etienne	04/12/2006
Fr. Nivonjaka Michel Josoason	Madagascar (Poland)	10/05/1970	Tamatave	10/12/2006

“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)