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Kenya: Oblates attend World Social Forum and visit the mission

A little more than 20 Oblates from several continents attended the January 20-25 World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya. WSF participants passed resolutions pledging to strengthen the campaign against poverty, the global trade imbalance and gender inequality. Nearly 50,000 representatives from social movements, faith-based and Catholic organizations, trade unions and nongovernmental organizations passed the more than 100 resolutions. The forum provided a global platform of meetings, debates and marches to address international policies that exploit the poor, women and children, and the environment. The forum's theme was "Another World Is Possible." Participants denounced the amount of money nations spend on military buildup. They said those funds should be used to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which call on richer countries to commit resources in order to halve global poverty by 2015. They also pledged to vigorously campaign against foreign military bases and nuclear weapons.

At the end of the meeting, the Oblate participants left Nairobi to visit the Oblate mission in Meru and in the surrounding area. The large group was hosted and at the Oblate pre-novitiate in Meru, at St Stephen's parish in Kionyo and at the mission station in Igandene.

Over the next four days, the guests visited with the Oblates in the Meru area and the people in the local community. The many programs and projects which are part of the mission in Meru include primary and secondary schools, a water project, a bakery, a wood workshop and other initiatives. The water project has been in development for a number of years and now includes

three major tanks in the mountains with nearly 40 collection tanks scattered on various hills at a lower level. Distribution pipes are attached to these tanks and take water to more than 2,800 farms throughout the area.

On the Saturday the delegation traveled together to visit a game park in Olejepta, about a two hour ride from Meru. Over the three-hour visit the group was entertained by the strutting, grazing and playing of elephants, deer, ostrich, rhinoceros and giraffes. On Sunday the visitors took part in liturgies at the local prison, St Stephen's parish in Kionyo and at the stations in Igandene, Ngongo and Njogune. In each place, the local congregations warmly welcomed each guest and included them in the celebration. The liturgies flowed smoothly and were alive with singing and traditional dancing. The entrance, offertory and communion were accompanied by upbeat singing and congregation-wide swaying and hand gestures.

On Sunday evening at the pre-novitiate in Meru, as the guests prepared to depart, they were joined by members of the Oblate mission in Meru for a barbecue. Over dinner conversations, one member of the group described their visit to Kenya as "having uncovered many points of view that he had not previously considered." Others spoke of their experience of the great diversity of language, race, ethnicity and culture that was represented in the Oblate group. Still others talked about the many faces and stories of the poor that were represented in the forum and in the post-forum experience and of the energetic response that Oblates are making to their plight in various regions of the world.

General Administration

New superior at the General House

The Superior General in Council has named Fr. Gilberto PIÑON from the Province of Mexico as the new superior of the General House in Rome. He succeeds Fr. Jean-Pierre CALOZ who is completing six years as superior at via Aurelia 290.

Born in 1943 in Villa Gonzalez, diocese of Zacatecas, Mexico, Gilberto spent most of his youth in Laredo, Texas, before joining the Oblates in the former Southern Province of the United States. After completing his first formation at the International Scholasticate in Rome, he was ordained a priest in 1971. Upon his return to Mexico, he worked in rural parish ministry from 1972 to 1974 and served as diocesan coordinator of youth ministry and of the catechetical program for Indian villages. He was successively director of vocations, director of the prenovitiate, provincial director of formation and Master of novices in Paraguay. In 1986, he was elected to the first of two terms as Provincial of the new Vice-Province of Mexico. He was serving as Superior of the Mission of Cuba when elected once again as Provincial of the Province of Mexico (2004-07).

AIX: ANIMATION SERVICE

An Oblate Cyber Filing Cabinet

A new section has just been opened in our website. You can reach it through the link "Files for Animation", found on the home page (www.omiworld.org), or directly, by typing this address: www.omiworld.org/animation.

Why this new section? Think of it as a filing cabinet in which all sorts of items relating to the Founder and charism animation are stored. Often Oblates or Associates search for material for a particular Oblate occasion or theme. A lot of material has already been prepared in the Oblate world, but it is not always easily available – hence this "filing cabinet" through which we can share what we have in a more accessible way.

I invite you to submit anything that you have prepared or have found useful on a theme related to

our Founder and our charism – in whatever language it may be. I will put it on the webpage and it will be available to whoever may wish to download and use it. You can submit your material to the following address: f.santucci@yahoo.fr

If you download something and then translate it for your use, I would request you to send me a copy of the translation so that it can be filed for use by others of the same language.

We look forward to your active participation in making the spirit of St. Eugene more alive and relevant in its communication! (Frank SANTUCCI, Founder and Charism Animation Service, Aix en Provence)

GENERAL HOUSE

Doctor of Missiology: Fr. Marek Rostkowski

Before an audience that included a bishop, the Oblate Superior General, and his parents from Poland, Fr. Marek ROSTKOWSKI of the General House community defended his doctoral thesis in Missiology at the Pontifical Gregorian University on January 30, 2007. Several other family members from Poland were present, as well as friends and fellow Oblates from Rome.

The title of Marek's five year's of research and writing is "The Cooperation of the Laity in the Missionary Activity of the Church in the Teaching of John Paul II." The original is written in Italian. As his thesis director pointed out, Marek was faced with the daunting task of going through some 464 writings of the late pope. In his paper, he showed how the pope's encyclical, "Redemptoris Missio" is the key to understanding the role of the laity as cooperators in the Church's mission. In Chapter 7, the pope gives the basis for this teaching: "Since they are members of the Church by virtue of their Baptism, all Christians share responsibility for missionary activity."

Marek accomplished his doctoral studies while at the same time serving as Director of the Urbaniana University Library. He is also responsible for *Bibliographia Missionaria*, an annual publication of the Pontifical Missionary Library.

Africa-Madagascar

NATAL**Aids Action Group in Cedara**

“No-one deserves to have AIDS” is the motto of St Joseph’s Theological Institute Aids Action Group which has been functioning for seven years. It is a ministry of the students at SJTI who wish to respond to the need for awareness and education about HIV/AIDS in schools. Brother Festus ZULU, a scholastic from the Delegation of Zambia, is the current chairman of the group. Their particular concern is to combat immature and uninformed attitudes amongst school children leading to promiscuity and irresponsible sexual activity. The programme focuses on youth in government schools within the Pietermaritzburg district. The goal is to restore moral behaviour among youth and accompanying them in decision making in the area of sexuality.

Their “Youth for Life” programme runs workshops for various grades of school learners as well as retreats. The programme tries to develop a mentorship programme within schools to encourage life-giving patterns of moral behaviour among the youth. The programme has a clearly spiritual input.

Imparting moral values around the issue of HIV/AIDS is a priority of all Aids Action group members; and this is always done for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Young people are the most vulnerable to infection as a result of uninformed attitudes. They are a majority of those who are dying in society as a result of HIV/AIDS. One of the reasons why youth are dying at an early age is because they are not given proper information, which is normally influenced by the media and peers. Parents are now finding it difficult to control and teach their children who are moving with great speed to their graves.

Among the various topics discussed in the workshops are self-esteem, decision making, peer pressure, goals, vision for life, love and lust, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and intoxicating substances, abstinence, sex, love and happiness. All these topics are meant

to help young people in their human growth and development. (*OMI Natal Update*, Jan-Feb 2006)

GUINEA BISSAU**An Italian family honors their son’s memory in Africa**

On December 28, 2006, Feast of the Holy Innocents, a large crowd gathered in Farim, at the Oblate Mission in Guinea Bissau. The children from the kindergarten were there in uniform; two of the smallest of them held a blue ribbon. Then Marco, Maria Grazia, and Chiara cut the ribbon and the doors of “Casa Emanuele” opened. The bishop blessed all of the rooms while warm applause rose from the crowd, which included some of the civic authorities.

All of this began on August 11, 2004, when Emanuele, son of Marco and Maria Grazia Trovalusci from Italy, lost his life in a tragic accident. For his parents, there were days of inconceivable sorrow: a boy of almost 18, while coming home to celebrate his sister Chiara’s feast day, was run over by a bus. Humanly speaking, there is no explanation, but faith, friendship, solidarity, and fraternity led his parents to decide that their son’s dream of one day being a doctor and spending a few years of his life working for the children of Africa should not end with his death. Today, that dream is a reality at the mission in Farim.

The Trovalusci family arrived a few days ahead of time and helped prepare the celebration.

First, there was a Mass presided by the bishop. Then the people and the authorities moved over to “Casa Emanuele.” Before the dedication, Father Carlo ANDOLFI and Sister Maddalena spoke of the purpose of the Center. Emanuele’s parents, with simple but emotion-filled words, told their story: they wanted to carry on the dream of their son and to show the importance of a gift freely given. Of course, the people already knew the story behind the Center, but it took on new meaning when told by the parents.

Among the crowd, there was also a delegation from Mansaba, including two adult Muslims who asked to say a few words. They announced that they were giving the mission a property of 27,000 square meters. One of them explained that Muslims and Catholics alike are religious people, and that in the light of the generosity behind "Casa Emanuele," it was only right to make this gift to the mission to continue its good work for all the people.

The bishop concluded by thanking the family of Emanuele and all the others whose sacrifices made the Center possible. Referring to the example of the Trovalusci family, he reminded his listeners that one must be attentive to the good of all; he did not let the occasion pass to underline that if the Mission is looking for terrain for a school in Farim, it is for the good of the whole population. The message was directed at the authorities who were there, among whom were those in charge of schools at various levels. To the joy of the students, school has not yet begun. But the situation is truly unhealthy: education and health care are essential for a country to stay alive. For this reason, the bishop and Father Carlo believe it is urgent to build a school in Farim.

In this little corner of the earth, the human and health needs are immense. A project such as "Casa Emanuele," besides responding to the situation of mothers and children who are sick and malnourished, will serve as a nutrition center. It will also serve as a reference point for other projects being promoted and supported by communities in the Castelli Romani and Prenestina districts of Italy. They are currently setting up health centers (small dispensaries and pharmacies) in 13 villages of the Mission. The project was the idea of Mauro Salvatori who considers himself a "lay Oblate." Members of COMI (Cooperatrici Oblate Missionarie dell'Immacolata), a women's Secular Institute

closely allied with the greater Oblate family, are organizing the project and will offer on site training to those who will operate the 13 health centers in the territory of the mission of Farim. A kindergarten supported by "long-distance adoption" has already begun; there are now two classes with 56 children, but there are 500 requests to enroll. (Marcello SGARBOSSA)

SUDAN

Jun Mercado: still working for Justice and Peace

Even though Fr. Eliseo "Jun" MERCADO is officially "on sabbatical" after his work as Director of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office in Rome, he is still very involved in justice and peace ministry.

In early 2006, he was part of a delegation representing the Union of Superiors General in Rome that visited Sudan to assess the horrendous situation that is best described as genocide, and which has caused thousands of persons to become refugees, especially in the Darfur region.

Besides attending the World Social Forum in Nairobi in January, 2007, he is also working with the Sudan Bishops' Regional Conference Secretariat in helping them develop their own skills in several areas:

- Organizing JPIC at the diocesan level.
- Helping them to work with the South Sudan government, multi-donor countries, and civil society in the reconstruction of South Sudan and in the monitoring of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
- Helping them to find ways of healing and reconciliation after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Latin America

HAITI

The Oblate Missionaries of M.I.: 50 years in Haiti

On December 27, 2006, the Oblate Missionaries of M.I. celebrated 50 years in Haiti during a solemn

Mass and a reception rich with speeches. During the homily, Bishop François Wolfe Ligondé expressed warmth, affection, and recognition for Fr. Louis-Marie PARENT for the role he played in establishing the Haitian clergy. Claire Nantel, the President-General Directress of the Oblate Missionar-

ies, passed on a greatly appreciated message from Fr. Parent. Surrounded as they are by daily violence, these Canadian women, Oblate Missionaries, are considered “brave and heroic.” But could one expect anything less from our missionary cousins? It was a good occasion to express our esteem and our joy. (INFO OMI, January 2007)

MEXICO

Our Lady of the Rosary among the Chontales* of Oaxaca

About 46 years ago, the Oblates took over the Parish of Saint Peter Huamelula, founded by the Dominicans in 1710. The work of those first missionaries left profound roots, as is evident in the following story.

The old folks speak of a young woman who used to greet and encourage travelers, worn out by the intense heat along the Oaxacan coast of the South Mexican Pacific, as they sought a bit of shade among the trees that grew beside enormous rocks and as they refreshed themselves with water from a well that had been dug there. Some pious persons had constructed a little chapel for an image of Our Lady which some of the travelers recognized as having been stolen from an ancient mountain village called Santa Maria Shadani. After some complaints to the authorities, the image was restored to its owners.

Nevertheless, according to a legend, the image returned miraculously to the chapel. For some time, the young woman no longer showed up at that site, but she was seen in various places announcing that she would go back to the chapel and stay there as long as no one else claimed their property. And so, there the image has remained for more than 150 years, listening to and consoling hundreds of pilgrims that visit it.

It is a very simple image, painted on wood and for a long time protected by a very delicate sheet of glass, but amazingly it is still in very good condition. Since the parish church, constructed more than 300 years ago, needed maintenance, and since celebrations were also costly, the community came up with a good way to bring in some cash. They started a cattle ranch that after a while would bring in the necessary funds with its livestock. And who could better take

care of the needs of the community and the Church than Our Lady? Thus began the cattle ranch known today as “Hacienda del Rosario,” under the care and the protection of that same Virgin Mary, known here as Our Lady of the Rosary. Undoubtedly, it is the patrimony of the first missionaries of this area that was evangelized by the Dominicans since the beginning of the 17th century.

For more than 50 years, our parish had rare pastoral visits from various diocesan priests who would primarily administer the sacraments of Baptism and Marriage. Therefore, the community took charge of the church and the traditional popular piety, as well as of the earnings of the “Hacienda del Rosario,” all managed by the civil authorities.

Depending on their honesty and on good weather, this property provided meat for the village celebrations, both civil and religious, as well as some extra funds. Today we can see that the original evangelization set down deep roots in our town, so much so that they continue with rituals, prayers and songs from 300 years ago, even in Latin, even though no one understands it, but the people like the way it helps them express their religious sentiments.

Our Lady of the Rosary is a symbol of unity among the nearby villages. Even though historically they have had serious problems and difficulties, year after year they come together on the last Tuesday of September to carry on their shoulders for more than 25 kilometers the image of Our Lady who visits each community. Thus, she has won the heart of every person in these “pueblos Chontales*” along the Oaxacan coast. *Chontales = *Ethnic group of this region.* (Vicente LOPEZ)



Asia-Oceania

AUSTRALIA

An Oblate's dream continues

Over 30 years ago, Oblate Brother Ignatius HANNICK realized his dream to bring good news to the poor when he began a program to serve them meals in Fremantle, Western Australia. Today, St. Patrick's Community Support Centre is a continuation of that dream. Inspired by his vision and hard work, and with the help of the consistent efforts of volunteers, the Centre is able to serve more than 72,000 low-cost meals a year.

Recently the Centre and its sister organization, Hands on Health, were the recipient of a Community Services Industry Award in recognition of the many volunteers regularly offer their services. The award was presented by the state's Department of Community Development.

The Community Services Industry Awards celebrate and recognize the enormous contribution and tireless efforts of people and organizations statewide which make up the Western Australian community services industry – and whose work continues to make a positive difference in the lives of all Western Australians.

St Patrick's Community Support Centre Volunteers and Hands on Health work together in Fremantle, offering meals, accommodation, welfare services and holistic healing to Fremantle's homeless and disadvantaged people in crisis. The 60 volunteers of all ages give support which is practical, compassionate, spiritual and realistic.

St. Pat's, as it is fondly known, is home and family for hundreds of the clients who often find themselves estranged from their own families of origin. Because many of the volunteers have been serving the Centre for several years, they are sources of strength for clients who have bonded with them over time.

Steve McDermott, Executive Director of the Centre, said that Brother Hannick, who died in 2005, would be extremely proud of the volunteers who gave of themselves so freely in order to help others. "Some of them have been volunteering here for over

25 years and that speaks volumes about how they value what they do and their dedication to our clients. Some of the volunteers help with pick up and delivery of donated goods while others work on reception or in the kitchen. Everyone pulls together because they believe in what they are doing and want to help."

SRI LANKA

Formators meet with Assistant General

Oblate formators in Sri Lanka met with Fr. Paolo ARCHIATI, the Assistant General entrusted with the portfolio of Oblate formation, on November 28, 2006 at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya.

Welcoming Fr. Archiati, Fr. W. Emmanuel FERNANDO, the Chairman of the Oblate Formation Committee, said: "South Asia, as part of the global society, is experiencing very rapid changes. These changes are affecting profoundly the individuals, the groups and the institutions, including formal religions. As a result, new ways of perceiving the world, the society and the individuals are also emerging daily. A new historic consciousness has emerged and it continues to grow daily.

In this situation, the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) speaks of a new way of being the Church in Asia and new ways of expressing our faith. We, the Oblates in formation ministry, too feel called by God to a new way of being Oblates to respond to the people's need for liberation, wholeness and salvation and also to respond to the call of eco-crisis. Such a mission-vision demands an integrated spirituality, prophetic thrust, ongoing conversation and dialogue with cultures and our major religions, openness and response-ability to the issues of poverty, justice, peace, ecology etc. Besides these issues, we are also compelled to think of the psycho-sexual development of individuals and families and the serious conflicts within and outside individuals.

To meet the new demands of this new historic situation, a new formation programme, 'Asian Institute of Theology' has emerged to try and form the future Oblates to listen, analyze and understand what is

taking place in the world and in the Church, especially in South Asia, and respond meaningfully. The Oblate Formation Committee tries to be at the service of this programme. The members of this committee meet regularly to reflect together on the formation process at different stages and be of service to the candidates in formation. There is a need for a holistic spirituality at the different stages of Oblate formation that will resonate with the call for conflict management and resolution, wholeness and total health of the candidates in formation and which will energize them to listen, connect and collaborate with people and nature.”

The ensuing discussions brought out a number of issues that are of particular concern to formators in the Sri Lankan situation. For example, the provincial of Jaffna, Fr. S.M. SELVARATNAM, updated the group on the violent and dangerous situation in his area, where not only many persons are displaced and children are left orphans, but formation itself is taking place in extremely stressful circumstances.

Father Archiati, sharing his impressions, noted that the Oblates are alive and are searching new strategies to translate the Oblate vision-mission in the formation process. He also emphasized the importance of having a team of formators in each House of Formation, interacting with a common vision and common criteria for assessing the candidates. (W. Emmanuel Fernando)

PHILIPPINES

I-Watch: Oblate Documentaries for Justice

The major television networks all over the world produce documentary videos to inform the public on issues as varied as global warming and how to plant a vegetable garden. At the annual honors for excellence in cinema or television, there are awards in the “best documentary” category.

Whether there will ever be such an honor for the Filipino Oblate documentary project, *I-Watch*, is unknown. Nevertheless, carrying on the Oblate tradition of “leaving nothing undared,” Father Eduardo “Ponpon” VASQUEZ, began the *I-Watch* project with the mission to awaken, inform, educate and inspire persons or communities through video pro-

ductions and presentations. It aims to motivate people to act together on urgent issues like poverty, the environment, peace, justice, culture and faith, especially as these issues have an impact on their local communities. It also aims to help the local indigenous groups (the *lumad*) in their struggle for equality, peace and justice.

Since its foundation, the *I-Watch* team has received requests for documentaries from various organizations and groups. Thus far, they have produced videos on such topics as the life of the new auxiliary bishop of Cotabato, the life-situation of the Dulangan-Manobos indigenous people of the island of Mindanao, and a presentation on the pros and cons of changing the Filipino Constitution. They have also produced a video on the history of Mindanao.

A graduate of the Social and Religious Communications program, Crec-Avex, in France, Ponpon would also like to make documentaries that tell the story of some of the Oblates who have worked and even given their lives in their ministry in the Philippines, such as the assassinated Bishop Benjamin de Jesus.

AUSTRALIA

Rosies Youth Mission: preaching through action

Rosies is a simple ministry of *friendship on the streets* (and now in prison and the courts). Over a hot cup of tea or a cold drink, volunteers listen to the people who live on the streets or live lonely lives in boarding houses. Over time they develop friendships and help the poor discover who they are in the eyes of God. They have four rules they follow as they go around in their van: no violence, no drugs, no alcohol and no preaching! They preach instead by their actions of presence, non-judging acceptance and caring.

Fr Tom SHORTALL started the mission at Rosebud, Victoria (hence the name Rosies) in 1974. From there, it migrated to Melbourne in the early 1980's and was exported to the Gold Coast, Queensland, in 1987. As Rosies begins its 20th year in Queensland, they are intent on giving thanks to God for all the people that have been healed and befriended through an army of 500 volunteers over 8 (soon to be 9) centers.

On the Sunday 17th December, 2006, Rosies hosted their annual *Christmas on the Street* at the Gold Coast, Queensland. About 110 visitors came to the afternoon event which was hosted by about 20 of the Rosies volunteers. Over the last week leading up to and including Christmas day, smaller *Christmas on the Street* events were also hosted by Rosies at Cairns, Sunshine Coast, Caboolture and Brisbane city.

It was touching that Rosies' friends on the street appointed a leader who presented a signed card to the lead volunteer, Mrs Claudette Neave. Claudette is a powerhouse of energy and has been volunteering for over 15 years on the Gold Coast Rosies team. Other Rosies stories can be found on their website under *Newsletter*: www.rosies.org.au

INDIA

Europeans experience Inter-Religious Dialogue

Together with 17 companions from Germany (16 laity and 1 religious sister), Fr. Alfons KEUTER, former General Treasurer now working in Hünfeld (Germany), recently traveled to India for a seminar on Inter-Religious Dialogue at the Center of St. Thomas Mount, Chennai. The theme of the encounter was "Searching for the Sacred."

Also present were 23 persons from India from different religious traditions. The seminar focused on how the sacred can be found in such varied traditions as Hinduism, Saivism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, and Islam. The event was organized by Daughters of Mary Immaculate, Sisters Josephine and Rose, and by Oblate Swami Joseph SAMARAKONE.

Each evening, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI), the Missionary Brothers of Mary Immaculate (MMI), and Oblate scholastics presented cultural performances on the theme of searching for the sacred. (Loorthusamy SOWRIAPPAN)

AUSTRALIA

Preparing to Welcome the Oblate World

Oblate Youth Australia recently witnessed the next milestone in their planning for the International Oblate Youth Encounter which they will be hosting in July next year. For the first time, their International Oblate Youth Encounter (IOYE) Team from across Australia gathered in Melbourne for a weekend of planning and development.

The meetings, from January 19 to 21, were held primarily at Mazonod College, the main site for the event. Gathering at the site, together with the participation of over 50 members of Oblate Youth Australia, was a fantastic opportunity for brainstorming, discussion and sharing. Throughout the weekend there were presentations, small group discussions and open-forums which all proved highly rewarding. With the combination of many talented minds, they were able to build an exciting vision; their dream for what the IOYE will be, and what it can achieve.

The Team came away with a real sense of enthusiasm and a commitment to make the International Oblate Youth Encounter an experience like no other. Everyone looks forward to welcoming the Oblate world to this exciting event in July next year!

For enquiries about the International Oblate Youth Encounter in 2008, please visit these websites: www.oblates.com.au and www.oblateyouth.com.

Europe

FRANCE

Evangelizing: teaching people to act rationally

The 'Albini' Oblate community is situated on the outskirts of Strasbourg, in a neighborhood called 'Neuhof.' Father Jean PHILIPPE, a member of this community, is a member of several associations. For him, this is part of his Oblate mission to the poorest of the poor.

Roger, the former pastor at Neuhof, is a member of the Prado Institute of Consecrated Life. When he asked me to replace him at *Trampoline Neuhof*, an association founded by him, I had no idea of how much of my time it would take.

What's it all about? It's about moving people beyond public aid and teaching them responsibility.

The active members of the association are 'clients' and not dependants. They are sent to us by social workers. They come every two weeks, with a voucher that specifies what they can buy. It's up to them to manage their own budget. They must also learn to respect the day and the hour; otherwise, they have to wait outside or come back later.

We sell them things received from the 'Food Bank' at 10% of their value; we charge 30% of the value for things we ourselves have purchased. Usually, the bill for each family rarely goes over 10 •, but the real value is 80.

Sometimes a client does not have enough to take care of his bill. We give credit, but never twice in row; otherwise they are disqualified. It's severe but necessary. These refusals (rare indeed) are meant to help them reinsert themselves in society and an occupation. It's part of the contract that each one signs at the beginning.

Each family commits itself for three months, renewable. They also commit to take part in one or the other workshop: learning to read, sewing, cooking, etc. Or they promise to come and help with unloading merchandise, whether sorting or putting it on shelves or labeling it or cleaning the store.

The store is open Monday through Friday. Usually I am there at about 8:30 a.m. and at 2:00 p.m. I stay as long as necessary. Since I am a volunteer, I am not obliged to be there since I need to be free for other activities in the community and the parish.

One reads in the Oblates' Rule of Life that they dedicate themselves to those groups least touched by the Church; that they devote themselves principally to the evangelization of the poor; that one must teach people to act rationally... In our neighborhood, so multi-ethnic and so poor, that is indeed our mission. (*Audacieux pour l'Évangile*, janvier 2007)

POLAND

A surprise for Father Pielorz

Recently, while he was visiting his birthplace, the town of Imielin, near Katowice, Poland, Father Jozef PIELORZ had a pleasant surprise. The local library has installed a glass display case dedicated to "Dr. Jozef

Pielorz, honorary citizen of the city of Imielin."

In the case are displayed many of the books he has published, as well as his decorations: he is an Officer of the Order of Polonia Restituta and is a recipient of the Cross of Auschwitz.

Now residing in Belgium as a member of the France-Benelux Delegation, the distinguished Oblate author published in 2005 a very significant book entitled *The Martyrology of Polish Oblates 1939-1945*. As a former prisoner of the concentration camp in Mauthausen-Gusen, he undertook the task to describe the fate of his 126 companions coming from the Polish Province.

The work took about ten years of gathering materials, doing research in archives and libraries, and visiting the places of torture. He also recounts his own wartime experiences.

SCANDINAVIA

A new Oblate reality in Scandinavia

On January 1, 2007, Father General signed a decree by which all the Oblates who belonged to the General Delegation of Scandinavia became members of the Province of Poland. In a letter addressed to the Oblates of Scandinavia, Father STECKLING said: "Scandinavia has a proud mission history of almost 50 years in which the Gospel has been proclaimed in Greenland, Denmark, the Faeroes, Sweden and Norway. This mission is far from over and will continue for many years to come, because the Catholic Church in Scandinavia still needs and welcomes Oblate missionaries.

In order to fulfill the mission more effectively and to enrich all the aspects of Oblate life, many conversations have taken place in recent years in an effort to find the appropriate structure for our missionary presence in the northern countries of Europe. After these consultations, the decision was reached to reconfigure the General Delegation of Scandinavia into two district communities forming part of the Province of Poland. On this occasion I would like to thank all the missionaries of the General Delegation of Scandinavia for their missionary work."

Father Teodor JOCHEM, the provincial of Poland,

after consulting the Oblates working in Scandinavia, established two new "Districts" with specific statutes: the Districts of Denmark and of Sweden-Norway. Father General explained in his letter: "Ultimately, this is more than a question of rules and regulations, which exist only to serve Oblate life and mission. With this change, you, the Oblates of Scandinavia, are turning a page in history. In the whole of Europe, the members of our Congregation are increasingly working together, and with the new structure, you become clearly part of that movement. Your mission is a specific one; working with minorities and immigrants has always been part of

our apostolate, from the time of the Founder on. I hope that all Oblates in migrant ministry worldwide are able to cooperate more and more in the future, for the benefit of so many people who migrate, Christians and believers of others faiths as well, who must not be left abandoned."

He concluded: "I send you every best wish for the missionary life and work in two new Scandinavian district communities of Poland. May you have a good beginning to this new part of your history, on New Year's day of 2007, solemnity of Mary, Mother of God."

Canada-United States

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP Christmas on the street

For the second year in a row, 25 young people from the Tisonnier Community in Quebec joined Father Pierre-Olivier TREMBLAY for Midnight Mass, on the street, in the neighborhood of Saint-Roch. A balmy temperature facilitated the gathering which included young people, passers-by, lonely people, and drifters of various nationalities (France, Brazil, New Zealand, and Iran). A youth choir had prepared traditional carols which were greatly appreciated by the mixed crowd of about 60 persons. About half of the participants had come to spend Christmas Eve at the CAPMO Center (a pastoral center for workers) where they ate and sang carols. There was also traditional story-telling and a "rap" song by a young street person in a wheelchair. It was an unforgettable Christmas Eve, lived simply and outside of the usual places. (INFO OMI, January 2007)

UNITED STATES An Oblate hermit

On the shore of a beautiful lake in the Catskill Mountains of New York, Father John KING passes his days in solitude, silence and prayer. Every Oblate is called to be a man of prayer. Fr. King lives this call in a radical and remarkable way.

The first thirty years of Fr. King's life as an Oblate priest were filled with activity and accomplishments.

He was professor of theology at the Oblate scholasticate in Washington, D.C. He was a consultant to the bishops during the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's. From 1968 until 1972, he served as Assistant General in Rome and then, from 1972 until 1974, as General Councilor. Upon completion of his service in Rome, he went to the Oblate mission in Puerto Rico and, a few years later, he worked among Hispanic Catholics in Lowell, Massachusetts.

While he lived this very active life, he felt a call deep within himself to seek the Lord in a more profound way. He asked his Oblate superiors for permission to explore a more contemplative life-style. What began as an experiment became a way of life.

The first five years of his spiritual journey was a time of discernment with masters of the contemplative life. After this time of guidance, and for the past 18 years, Fr. King has served as chaplain to a community of monastic religious women at the Monastery of Bethlehem and the Assumption of the Virgin in Livingston Manor, New York. This monastery is part of a world-wide network of communities of contemplative religious, founded in France in 1950.

Each day, the religious gather with Fr. King to pray and celebrate the Eucharist. The rest of their day is spent in solitude with the Lord.

During the past summer, Fr. King's life as a hermit was threatened when he underwent major bypass

heart surgery. At age 78, he was concerned that he would not be able to continue his life of solitude and prayer. But in less than a month, he returned to the monastery to resume his regular schedule.

While not all Oblates are called to this level of the contemplative life, Fr. King continues to keep the Oblates and their mission in his thoughts and prayers. (*Oblate World*, December 2006)

We are missionaries of hope, not of immediate fulfillment. Bringing immense hope with limited resources, is our mission. Even if in a given place we are many, we still need to focus, matching our means with the work at hand and then making prudent, strategic choices in favor of the most abandoned, those in most need. (*Oblate Mission today ... A letter to the Congregation from Father Wilhelm Steckling, OMI, Superior General*)

Anniversaries for April 2007

50TH Anniversaries of Vows

1957.04.05	10286	Fr. Noël Peters	Natal
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50TH Anniversaries of Ordination

1957.04.06	09037	Fr. Felicísimo Abella	Spain
1957.04.06	09175	Fr. Julien Belin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1957.04.06	09039	Fr. Amador de Lucas	Spain
1957.04.06	08837	Fr. Donald Dietz	United States
1957.04.06	09215	Fr. Józef Kuc	Poland
1957.04.06	09040	Fr. Otilio Largo	Spain
1957.04.07	09229	Fr. Gustav Grosse-Venhaus	Germany
1957.04.07	09227	Fr. Albin Hahn	Germany
1957.04.07	09228	Fr. Walter Lange	Germany
1957.04.07	08993	Fr. Heinz Püllen	Austria/Czech
1957.04.07	09226	Fr. Johannes Terhorst	Germany

25TH Anniversaries of Ordination

1982.04.16	12442	Fr. Eleno Balboa	Philippines
1982.04.17	12406	Fr. François M.J. Thomas	Haiti
1982.04.23	12472	Fr. Anthony Maher	Australia

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Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 6-14

NAME	PROVINCE	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Leonhard Bianchi	Austria-Czech	13/08/1914	Pitten	11/02/2007
Bro. Firmin Vien	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	09/03/1909	Richelieu	21/01/2007
Bro. Paul Le Verge	France	13/01/1930	Pontmain	23/01/2007
Bro. Johannes Waniek	Germany	08/02/1927	Hünfeld	28/01/2007
Fr. Konrad Stolarek	Poland	31/10/13	Maisnil les Ruitz	02/02/2007
Fr. Floyd Boeckman	United States	21/01/1930	Swansea	03/02/2007
Bro. Gonzague Laferrière	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	16/01/1922	Richelieu	08/02/2007
Fr. Herménégilde Charbonneau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	03/12/1914	Richelieu	11/02/2007
Fr. Francis Hennessy	OMI Lacombe	03/12/1915	Toronto	11/02/2007

“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)