



Church and City honor Archbishop Denis Hurley

The Church and the city of Durban, South Africa joined to honor the memory of Archbishop Denis HURLEY, the former Archbishop of Durban, who died suddenly February 13.

The archbishop's remains were received at the Emmanuel Cathedral, Durban, on Thursday February 26 and lay in state for two days. On Friday there was an all night vigil. The doors of the cathedral remained open to the public, who came in great numbers to pay their respects to the late archbishop and to sign the book of condolences. There was a civic service for him Friday afternoon in the Durban City Hall conducted by the Mayor of Durban.

The funeral Mass was celebrated at the ABSA Stadium (King's Park) on Saturday February 28. Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, Archbishop of Durban, presided. The sound of African drums accompanied the procession of about a hundred and fifty deacons, priests and bishops as they entered the huge and impressive stadium where a large altar had been erected. A crowd of more than five thousand people had gathered to bid farewell to the man who had been their pastor for more than fifty years.

Church and civil authorities, including the Papal Nuncio to South Africa, Archbishop Blasco Francisco Collaco and the Deputy President of

South Africa, Mr. Jacob Zuma, delivered brief eulogies. They portrayed Hurley as an outstanding churchman and leader, who was tireless in his efforts to overcome poverty and injustice, a giant in the struggle against apartheid, respected by all Christian denominations and other faiths, a national and international figure, yet humble and simple in his life style, respectful to all, full of humor and a heart of compassion and kindness.

At the end of the service as the coffin was lead away flanked by the Durban Metropolitan Guard of Honour, while the Zulu choir sang '*O hamba kahle, sihlobo sethu*' (Go well, our brother), a solemn and moving farewell.

The body was taken to Emmanuel Cathedral and laid to rest in the tomb in front of Our Lady's altar beside his predecessor, Bishop Henri Delalle whom Archbishop Hurley succeeded in 1947. He ended where he began 63 years ago when he returned from Rome a newly ordained priest and was appointed curate at the Cathedral. (From material by George Purves OMI)

Africa-Madagascar

CAMEROON

Bishop Pasquier passed away

The former bishop of Ngaoundéré (Cameroon), Jean PASQUIER died on March 7th in Douala. He was 80 years old and had been a missionary in Cameroon for 54 years.

Bishop Pasquier was born in 1924 at St-Macaire-en-Mauges in France. He made his first vows at Pontmain in 1945. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1950 his first assignment was to Cameroon. In 1966 Bishop Yves PLUMEY appointed him Vicar General for the diocese of

Garoua. Three years later he became the Auxiliary Bishop of that diocese. He was among the twelve bishops from African countries consecrated by Pope Paul VI during the first papal Mass on African soil in Kampala on August 1, 1969 during the pope's historic visit to Uganda.

In 1982 the Diocese of Ngaoundéré was created from part of the territory of the diocese of Garoua. Jean Pasquier became the first bishop of the new diocese. During his twenty-eight years of pastoral care he saw the population of the area as well as

the number of faithful almost double. The overall population of the diocese today is 655,000. It covers the entire civil province of Adamaoua (63,930 sq km). The diocese's 35,000 Catholics are spread throughout this area.

Having reached the retirement age for bishops in 2000, Bishop Pasquier turned over the pastoral care of the diocese to Joseph DJIDA, a native Cameroon Oblate. He chose, however, to remain in his adopted country.

Latin America

HAITI

Statement by OMI Archbishop

The Most Rev. Hubert CONSTANT, Archbishop of Cap-Haïtien and President of the Episcopal Conference of Haiti, described the present situation in this Caribbean nation as a "nightmare and disaster," even after the departure of ex-president Bertrand Aristide.

In a message sent to the organization "Aid to the Church in Need", the prelate explained that "the worst violence" was in Port-au-Prince: looting, deliberate fires and executions. There was also trouble in the North, around Cap-Haïtien and Fort-Liberté. The disturbances that erupted on February 10 to overthrow president Aristide left behind them death, looted public offices and stores set afire.

According to Archbishop Constant "the number of victims is difficult to estimate." It is said that approximately one hundred people died and that the losses amount to several million dollars. The Archbishop declared that "only because of faith are people able to bear these extreme evils and tragedies that overwhelm them: violence, hatred, death. "Our hope is in the Lord." (ACI March 8)

GUATEMALA

Immigrants and the people

Immigrants from various countries of South America pass through Guatemala, without

documents, before moving towards the Mexican, American or Canadian borders in the search of a better future for their family. Many of these people flee misery, lack of work, and impossible living conditions. This problem is increasing.

When the Canadian Oblate magazine *Apostolat International* interviewed Bishop Ramazzini, he suggested that the Canadian immigration authorities open the borders more to let in this flood of misery. Ramazzini, Bishop of the Diocese of San Marcos, located on the Mexican border, was recently a victim of harassment and threats because of his position in favour of the poor and for his social apostolate. He is interested especially in land reform. His concern is that the natives of Guatemala, driven out by rich property owners who seized their lands, can now benefit from a better distribution of the land. *Apostolat* asked him: "Do the religious authorities have some contact with representatives of the Government of Guatemala to find a way to improve the lot of these people?" He answered that it is obviously an attitude to be encouraged but personally he prefers to keep his independence in order to continue to help the people. The coffee crisis and the seasonal workers – Guatemala is a coffee producer and exporter – are part of his concerns.

There are 14 Oblates (including 1 scholastic) in this delegation of the Oblate Province of Mexico.

GUATEMALA

A Maya teachers' training college

In Guatemala, there is a Maya community living in the Department of El Quiché in the northern part of the country. Five years ago its members founded a teacher's training college, called Cunen. Colleges for teachers are nothing new! Guatemala has many of them; some are privately owned and managed, others are governmental institutions. The distinction of Cunen, is that this college was opened by local indigenous professors, without financial contribution of the government. Moreover, it is a co-educational school, bilingual and bicultural, where the students must speak both Spanish and Quiche fluently.

All these characteristics make the college quite a special operation; moreover, the professors receive only negligible wages. That points to their strong motivation: they are convinced that only by education will they succeed in transforming their community, and that the success of their project will lead to a better life for their children and grandchildren.

This year, the fifth group of students will receive their diplomas. There are about thirty-five each year. These diplomas enable them to be present in all the small villages in the interior of the country, where the other professors of the city dare not to venture. This new type of teachers, young men and young women, bring a new energy to the classroom that interests the children, because each teacher speaks the children's language and can thus provide a more complete education for them.

Father Gerardo LE STRAT recently accompanied a group of teachers from this College to Canada. The goal of the trip was to call the attention of Canadians to the cause of the indigenous professors who began the Cunen project. They visited schools and universities in Saskatchewan and Alberta. They also shared their experiment with people of the First Nations. Meetings were organized during which the Quiches helped the participants to discover the Maya culture, as well as the situation of the natives of Guatemala who form 65% of the population but are still considered marginal.

General Administration

Aix-en-Provence

De Mazenod Experience 2004

The English language De Mazenod Experience (Jan. 9 to March 28) has brought together the largest group so far in the history of the institution. There are eighteen Oblates from ten countries: Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Ireland, Lesotho, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the United States. All available rooms are occupied at the International Centre at 60 Cours Mirabeau.

The community building of the first week might seem something of a challenge but was handled very expertly by Sister Sheila O'Dea. No doubt there were contributing factors: the welcoming atmosphere provided by the local community, the outings to trace the footsteps of the Founder and his first mission preachers in Aix and the surrounding villages, a cultural day to visit the

Camargue and make a pilgrimage to the gypsy shrine of the Three Marys and to see the flamingos, the wild bulls and horses of the marshes. Al Hubenig gave his, by now customary, two-week in-depth analysis of Saint Eugene's life, to be followed by Frank Santucci, Richard McAlear and John O'Doherty with a further two weeks on the Oblate charism. Visiting the church of the Curé of Ars provided the occasion to reflect on the priesthood. That was followed by a day spent with the various Oblate activities in Lyons and a night spent in Taizé to experience a modern day Christian community. A further enlightened and enlightening ten days on Christology and the Church by Ron Rolheiser, with a two-day pilgrimage to Lourdes, prepared the way for the lengthy period of silence and contemplation among the vineyards and woods of Notre Dame de Lumieres, directed by John O'Doherty. By the time that concludes on March 22, the group will

be ready for the crowning week on Mission to be animated by the Vicar General, Gene King.

Of course, one of the more memorable events was Oblate Day on February 17. On that evening the local community and the members and staff of the "Experience" shared in the liturgical celebration in the oratory where Saint Eugene and his first companions gathered so often in the early days of our religious family. The highlight was certainly the mimed homily portraying the Founder and Fr Tempier in the years that led up to the approval of the Rules by Pope Leo XII. Naturally, the ceremony was followed by a more material celebration in what is suitably called the "Mazenod Hall".

Soon the members of the group will be dispersed to their various missions to carry on the work of evangelizing the poor. Life at the International Centre in Aix goes on as well. In the course of 2004 at least a further four Oblate or Oblate-

associated groups plan to spend some time here "following in the footsteps of Saint Eugene".

Next sessions:

French - September 8 to December 8, 2004

English - January 5 to March 20, 2005

Applications should be made through the candidate's Major Superior who will have to sign the application form.

General Secretariat e-mail address

All e-mail communications to the General Secretariat should be addressed to gensec@omigen.org, while all messages for the Secretary General, should be sent to coughlin@omigen.org. The Secretary General notes that the **old secretariat e-mail address** (omigen@pcn.net) **has been discontinued**. Any mail sent to that address will be returned to the sender with the notice, "User unknown."

Europe

SPAIN

Provincial speaks on the Madrid Attack

After the brutal terrorist attack that we have just experienced in Madrid, I wish to thank the many friends who have expressed concern for us and have supported the Oblates of Madrid and the Province of Spain. As far as we know there have been no deaths among the Oblates or their relatives who live in Madrid, although we have been very shaken by this act. Like the whole city of Madrid we consider ourselves victims of this attack.

In Madrid we are unfortunately accustomed to terrorist attacks, but this has surpassed in cruelty any previous incident. At present there are more than 200 dead and all those who know Madrid trains during the rush hour when these devices exploded cannot help but think of those who devised this attack as diabolical.

The suffering of the relatives of the deceased has been immense: as soon as they heard the news

they called on their cell phones but without receiving an answer. There is the moving testimony of the first police officers to arrive at the scene. In the midst of a sepulchral silence they heard the telephone calls of relatives who would never receive an answer. If they did receive one, it was the voice of a police or medical officer who told them how they could get information. The relatives soon began making the rounds of Madrid's hospitals, filled with more than a thousand injured people, finally to arrive at the immense pavilions on the Juan Carlos I fairground, set up to receive the relatives and make the identification of victims. They became unimaginable scenes of pain.

Psychologists and health care workers were summoned to attend the families. The Archbishop of Madrid also called for voluntary priests to accompany the people in their moment of pain. Among them was Fr. Rafael MARTÍN, OMI, only two years and a half ordained. He spent the entire afternoon and the whole night until 8

o'clock the next morning with the people. In addition to caring for the families during the afternoon and night, before dawn from 4 to 7 a.m. he accompanied the relatives who came to identify the remains, in many cases unrecognizable. He tried to be a sign of the comforting love of God and a sign of hope in the midst of this pain and madness.

Now we are overcome with emotion. Soon, with more calm we will have to reflect: What is this situation asking of us Missionary Oblates who live in Madrid and in Spain? How can we be promoters of solidarity with the victims, of that solidarity that, according to the Pope, goes beyond a fleeting feeling, in order to become an effective and sustained effort over time, and that totally commits us to people? How can we contribute effectively to end this violence? How to announce Jesus Christ the Saviour in this situation? At the moment I am only able to ask myself these questions. Let us hope that we together can find the answers that will give birth to hope among us. (From *El correo de la semana* – Weekly News)

FRANCE

March 23-24 a meeting on "Justice & Paix"

"*Justice and Peace*": it is a concern of the Province of France. To differing degrees and each in their own way, every Oblate is doing something (direct involvement, through associations, sending gifts, signing petitions, praying).

That is why the provincial commission for Justice and Peace proposed this two-day meeting in March at St. Joseph de Francheville (Lyon). About thirty Oblates are invited to take part. The two days will focus on two questions:

- 1) How to define better the commitment of the Province to Justice and Peace? Each participant will be asked to put in writing how he is involved in this ministry, the questions that this poses for him, his suggestions.
- 2) How to go further? For that the participants will turn again to the calls of the recent General

Chapters and will hear the testimony of some Spiritans on their activities in the Province and in Europe.

"It should be quite clear, said Fr. Bernard NOYER, chair of the commission, that although all the members of the Province are not invited, nobody is excluded. Commitment to Justice and Peace is the business of each one of us."

SPAIN

Cardinal Archbishop of Madrid makes a pastoral visit to the Virgen Peregrina de Fátima parish

On February 20, the Oblates of Madrid were privileged to receive the pastoral visit of Cardinal Don Antonio Maria Rouco Varela, at their Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima parish. It was the only parish of the six in the deanery that the Cardinal visited. The auxiliary bishops visited the others. This visit was the occasion for a joyful gathering of the parish groups around the Shepherd of the Church of Madrid.

The entire community welcomed the Cardinal at the entrance to the church. Then Fr Ignacio ESCANCIANO presented a group of immigrants, mostly Latin Americans and Maghrebis. The Cardinal greeted them warmly and spent time speaking with them. The immigrants greeted him enthusiastically and sang "The Rianxeira" for him in Gallician, his native dialect.

The meeting with the other parish groups was held in the church, since the parish hall was too small. The church was practically full for the Eucharist that followed.

The pastoral visit of the deanery included other meetings. It is worthwhile noting the meeting with the young people of the six parishes on the evening of February 28. It took place in the auditorium of the Jesús María College. It was a touching moment. Monsignor Rouco greeted individually each of the 120 young people. The question-answer session with the youth was the highlight of the evening. Here are some of their

questions: “How can a young person today meet Christ? What can the Church offer youth? What would you say to the young people of Madrid? How can a young Christian enjoy what society offers today?” The Cardinal answered that a young person can surely meet Christ today in the Church, and that one can judge leisure and entertainment by its effects the following day: “Did we do things which lead us to death or to a fullness of life, friendship, and joy?”

The “Virgen Peregrina” parish is dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. It is located next to the Provincial House at 36 bis Diego de León Street. Founded in 1882, just 21 years after the death of St. Eugene de Mazenod, our Founder, it is more than a hundred years old. There are twelve Oblates in the community; three of them are Brothers. The Provincial and treasurer reside there. The superior of the community, Fr Eutimio GONZÁLEZ, is also the Provincial Treasurer.

Asia-Oceania

PHILIPPINES

Jolo – Muslim man killed trying to save Christian child

Racheal Ann L. Gujit, a seven-year old Christian pupil of Notre Dame of Asturias primary school in Jolo was kidnapped at about 7:00 a.m., February 19 while the pedicab she was riding in was nearing the gate of the school. The 40-year-old Muslim pedicab driver, Salip Iston Abubakar, who held the girl to protect her from the kidnappers, was shot in the head and killed. The kidnappers, riding in a yellow van sped away carrying the girl. The pedicab driver, who was mercilessly killed, leaves a wife and 10 young children.

The Oblate Justice and Peace office in Jolo (Sulu), in a Tausug radio broadcast, decried the kidnapping and the brutal shooting of the man. While appealing to the civil and military authorities to strengthen checkpoints in and around Jolo, and to take severe measures to prevent kidnappings, the JPIC director, Fr. Romeo P. VILLANUEVA, appealed directly to the kidnappers to release the child and compensate the widow and family of the driver.

“In the name of Allah, the most powerful, whose judgment you cannot escape, start acting like true believers of Islam, make compensation to the poor family of Salip Iston Abubkar and return the girl right away.”

Canada

GRANDIN

Fr. Tardy’s homily for his own funeral

On February 27, 2004 a great missionary died in Edmonton (Canada) – Fr Henri TARDY. He was born in France at Davézieux in the diocese of Viviers on November 28, 1917. He made his first vows in 1942 and was ordained at Lumières in 1947.

“I am the Catholic priest of a little Eskimo community at Holman Island, the farthest north of the Central Arctic. We are 40 Catholics.” This was how Father Tardy introduced himself when

he first wrote to Church Extension. The Holman mission, where he worked, was established by the late Father Roger Buliard, OMI in 1939 and dedicated to Christ the King to recall Jesus’ command to His disciples to establish the kingdom of God throughout the whole world and “to be my witness ... to the ends of the earth.” Quite literally, at Holman, Father Tardy and his little community of believers were “witnesses” at the end of the earth.

Father Tardy was raised in France just south of Lyon. In June 1948, when it is the hottest in his

native land, he left family and friends to come to one of the coldest parts of the earth.

Arriving in the Mackenzie Diocese, Father Tardy was sent to Holman to be taught the Eskimo language and ways by Father Buliard. Six months later, Father Buliard injured his hand in a shooting accident. Forced to leave for medical treatment, the veteran missionary later returned to France. Novice missionary, Father Tardy was left at the mission.

In those early days, Father Tardy also cared for the mission at Bach's Harbour, a five-day trip by dog team from Holman.

Mail was received only once a year in those days. Picking up mail meant a 10-day trip by dog team to Coppermine, usually after Christmas. Ten days to rest the dogs and visit with the missionary there and then a 10-day return trip home. Depending on weather conditions, getting the mail could mean a six to seven week trip.

Life with the Eskimo people, Father Tardy used to claim, taught him a great deal about life and dying. Eskimo beliefs and insights helped him to understand better and to deepen his own faith. His own experiences showed him that it would be a great mistake for a missionary to disregard traditional beliefs and practices in evangelization. Rather a missionary must try to understand and build upon them.

When someone remarked to Father Tardy that the long winter nights would give him time for study and reading, he replied that he doesn't read much now but spends more time in quiet reflection and prayer. "Eskimos," he remarked, "spend long periods standing on the shore looking out to sea and communicating with nature. I think something of that has rubbed off on me."

So, it's not amazing that he has written the homily for his own funeral.

Homily for Fr. Tardy's Funeral
(written by Fr. Henri Tardy himself)

My dearly beloved brothers, sisters and friends,

First of all, let me thank you for having come to celebrate with me my resurrection, and also to place my body in the Earth.

Since I was very young, God has given me the grace to reflect on death. Not a sad death, not a separation, not a punishment for sin, but a real birth, like a child that comes out of his mother's womb and can finally see the day and enjoy the tenderness of his mother. The birth of my death finally allows me to see God, who has loved me from all eternity, who wanted to become one of us here on Earth to reveal to us the Father, to share our suffering until death, and finally to reveal to us the resurrection.

I believed all of that, but it remained somewhat hidden under the cloak of our materialism. But now, I don't believe anymore, I see. Everything has become simple, everything has become one, everything is love without limit. The few times that, as priest, I had the occasion to celebrate funerals, in respect for the family that was grieving, I felt somewhat paralyzed to express my joy in the resurrection. Today, in all freedom, I can celebrate my proper resurrection, on the occasion of this fraternal gathering for my funeral.

Although I was revolted during the war at seeing the many corpses of my companions, it sort of made me wonder about the sense of life. Later on, as I assisted at wakes, I found peace. It spoke to me of the infinite, of the absolute. The death of Fr. Maurice Metayer, my friend whom I

accompanied the last five weeks of his life, was so detached and so peaceful that as I gazed upon his face, there was such a celestial beauty emanating from his face that death has become for me a companion that speaks to me of freedom, of liberation, of entrance into the infinite and intimate love of God. It speaks to me of my real birth, the birth that we are celebrating today.

I always loved wide-open spaces, the ocean, high mountains, the infinite of the Arctic silence, but like the cocoon, I always felt somewhat closed in, limited. I needed, during these last years, to fly away towards the one who slowly but deliberately was revealing himself to me, while at the same time remaining hidden. Finally the day of the encounter has come. Let us celebrate together.

Separation does not exist. To be in God is to be intimately at the heart of Creation. By contemplative meditation, I had already had that experience. To make interior silence is already to experience death, as your body has to remain immobile, and your mental faculties have to be free of distraction to leave the entire place to God, who carries within Him the whole world.

At present, I am in a special way with my dear parents, my brothers and my sisters, my brother Oblates, my friends, the Inuit... I am totally present at the same time to this world as I am to the other world.

If I had, perchance, hurt anyone here on earth, I humbly ask forgiveness. God will, in his mercy, do the rest.

The sadness that abides in me is to see all the suffering and misery and to remain impotent in front of all the misery and suffering in the world. But during these last years I became conscious that the help I could give was exactly my inability, calling on Jesus who seems to be sleeping, to calm the tempest. And I remained at peace. The entire world that suffers, at times of boring life, or because of sickness, of war, of deportation, of hunger, of prison, separations that are very, very difficult... the list goes on and on. This entire world that is nailed to the cross with Jesus, I will find them now, and join the happiness of the Risen One. And the others, who have been abusing or persecuting, those that have without mercy pursued an easy life, money or power? The way I understand is that God's justice is much different than human justice. I am totally confident in God's mercy.

As I leave this world, I still have one thing to talk about. Every time I was asked to give a homily on the occasion of the Feast Day of Mary, the mother of Jesus, I have to admit that I was unable to do so. So I asked myself, how is that possible that an Oblate of Mary Immaculate cannot talk about his mother? Well, I reflected. I thought that all the sermons about Mary, the libraries that talk about her, the books on Marian theology, the golden statues and all the rest, during all these many years I've sort of hidden the virgin that I love so much, and that the gospel talks about in only a few words. During these last years especially, I really loved to find myself alone with her, to stay with her in silence, to fix my gaze on this icon, which spoke to me of the mystery of Mary. I am sure that when she sees me, it will be a loving encounter. As to our holy founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, he will have pity on my ignorance. I know practically nothing of him, but due to him, I was able to bring Christ to the ends of the world, to the land of the Inuit. I believe he will be happy with me.

So here we are: I believe I have said all I had to say. So I will remain quiet now, to enter into eternal silence, where all is one, where all is love. (Henri Tardy, o.m.i.)

Books

BLANCHETTE Guido (Argentina-Chile): *Desde la naturaleza – Jesús habla a los jóvenes* (From Nature – Jesus Speaks to Youth). Thirty themes for reflection prepared by one who has worked with youth. This pocket-size book illustrated with attractive photos is directed to all youth, both Scouts and others not related to the Scout Movement. Ediciones Scouts, Fundación Mundo Ideal, Santiago, 2003, 112 pp.

CLAERHOUT Frans (Central S.A.): *Blomme Sonder Grond* (Flowers without Ground). Poetry illustrated with photos of some of this Belgian artist's paintings. DREYER, Bloemfontein, 36 pp.

LUBOWICKI Kazimierz (Poland): *Nowenna* (Novena). Meditations and prayers for the novena in preparation for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. 2003, 40 pp.

Misjonarze Oblaci Maryi Niepokalanej (Poland) *Homilie, Kazania, Mowy okolicznościowe*. Homilies, sermons and discourses for special occasions by several Oblates in five volumes published between 1998-2003, Krakow, UNUM, Vol. I, 243pp; Vol. II, 239 pp; Vol. III, 222 pp; Vol. IV, 204 pp; Vol. V, 208 pp.

PIELORZ Józef (France-Benelux): *Duszpasterstwo Polskie w rejonie Amay* (Polish Ministry in Amay) A brief history of the ministry to Polish immigrants in the Amay-Flône region. Includes photos and a thirteen-page summary in French. Private printing. Liège, 2003, 108 pp.

PROVENCHER Normand (N.D.-du-Rosaire) : *Dieu! Réponse à Albert Jacquard*. A discussion with Jacquard on his book *Dieu?* A few thoughts on the question of God and the Creed. The author does not propose an answer, since that is a personal decision of each person. Novalis, Ottawa, 2003, 133 pp.

WINTER Harry (United States): *Dividing or Strengthening?* The author describes the five ways into which Christians divide: catholic, evangelical/charismatic, Vatican II/reformed, fundamentalist and liberal. Keller Bros. & Miller, Buffalo, N.Y., 2003, 179 pp.

WINTER Harry (United States): *Dividing or Strengthening: Five Ways of Christianity Supplement – Sources and Development*. A companion booklet meant to be read with the first volume. Keller Bros. & Miller, Buffalo, N.Y., 2003, 140 Pp.

Anniversaries – April 2004

75TH Anniversary of Vows

1929.04.25	4653	Fr. Alfred Mock	Germany
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70TH Anniversary of Vows

1934.04.25	5772	Fr. Johannes Mühr	Germany
1934.04.25	5773	Fr. Alfons Schmitz	Germany

65TH Anniversary of Ordination

1939.04.02	5772	Fr. Johannes Mühr	Germany
1939.04.02	5773	Fr. Alfons Schmitz	Germany

50TH Anniversary of Vows

1954.04.05	10256	Bro. James Beggan	Anglo-Irish
1954.04.25	9658	Fr. Jose Frisch	Paraguay
1954.04.25	9659	Bishop Erwin Hecht	Central S.A.
1954.04.25	9656	Fr. Josef Krasenbrink	Germany

50TH Anniversary of Ordination

1954.04.11	8785	Fr. Rudolf Rüttinger	Germany
1954.04.11	8567	Fr. Adolf Volk	Namibia
1954.04.11	8622	Bishop Bernardo Witte	Germany
1954.04.25	8677	Fr. Jules Dion	N.D.-du-Rosaire

25TH Anniversary of Ordination

1979.04.07	12179	Fr. Henry Lemoncelli	General Administration
1979.04.22	12339	Fr. John Khutlang	Lesotho

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C.P. 9061, 00100 ROMA-AURELIO, Italy
Fax: (39) 06 39 37 53 22 E-mail : information@omigen.org
<http://www.omiworld.org>

Editing Team: Ronald LaFramboise (director), Fermín del Blanco,
Raúl Castro, Maurice Lesage, Antonino Bucca
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Suffrages for our Deceased

(No. 24-30)

Name	Province	Date of Birth	Place of Death	Date of Death
Fr. Klemens Schneiders	Germany	22/08/1937	Hünfeld	21/02/2004
Fr. Henri Tardy	Grandin	28/11/1917	Edmonton	27/02/2004
Fr. Albert Lirette	Haiti	28/10/1917	Lowell	05/03/2004
Bishop Jean Pasquier	Cameroon	31/07/1924	Douala	07/03/2004
Bro. Raymond Morier	St. Joseph	14/08/1915	Richelieu	08/03/2004
Fr. Giuseppe Signore	Italy	20/11/1917	Curti	13/03/2004
Bro. Philippe Paquette	St. Joseph	28/06/1913	Richelieu	15/03/2004

*“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)*

Chapter News No. 1

(The Precapitular Commission, Rome – February 29, 2004)

Six months to the General Chapter!

In six months our 34th General Chapter will take place. The Superior General, Father Wilhelm Steckling, will open it officially on the morning of August 30, 2004. The closing is foreseen for September 28, 2004. It will be held in Rome. This Chapter should last 30 days, as was the case for recent ones (1998: 30 days; 1992: 30; 1986: 33). The record stands with the General Chapter of 1966, which lasted 58 days!

The Chapter delegates of 2004: how many, and who are they?

The delegates to the Chapter (*ex officio*, elected, and invited) will form an assembly of 97, representing 4,432 Oblates (as of December 31, 2003). Starting from the 26th Chapter, in 1959, the number of delegates reached a hundred. At the Chapter of 1972, there were 143 for 6,967 Oblates. We now find ourselves once more below 100... This lower number is due partially to the reduced number of provincials who are *ex officio* members of the Chapter.

Composition of the coming Chapter:

Regions	Ex officio	Elected	Invited	Total
Africa-Madagascar	7	11		18
Latin America	6	6		12
Asia-Oceania	5	8		13
Canada	3	7		10
United States	1	4		5
Europe	7	15		22
General House		1		1
Central Gov./Gen.Adm.	12			12
Invited			4	4
Total	41	52	4	97

Age of the delegates? Previous experience in Chapters?

The average age will be about 53. The oldest will be 76 and the youngest only 29 at the end of the Chapter! – Thirty-six have already experienced a Chapter. Two of them will be attending their fourth Chapter! Six others have participated in three Chapters, and for 28 it will be their second experience. It will be a first for the majority of the delegates!

The languages?

We can count about 35 languages familiar to the delegates to the Chapter of 2004. Considering the three languages of the Chapter (English, Spanish, and French) the delegates may be divided thus:

- Number of delegates who speak only **one language**:
English: 37; French: 23; Spanish: 4
- Number of delegates who can speak **two languages**:
English-French: 15; English-Spanish: 8; French-Spanish: 1
- Number of delegates who can communicate in **three languages**:
English-Spanish-French: 9

How do they communicate?

95 of the 97 delegates have an e-mail address! So this time, communication is done practically only by e-mail and by the Internet. We are in the 21st Century...

Chapter News – No. 2 **(The Precapitular Commission, Rome – March 12, 2004)**

More exact and better understood....

After having carefully read the “Major Elements” document, Fr. Rufus Whitley, the Treasurer General, has called our attention to a few inaccuracies in the 9th element, entitled “Finances for Mission”, that may mostly affect the English version.

- The term “Capital Sharing Fund” (which was a program, and not a fund!) was meant to refer to the “Oblate Solidarity Fund”. It would therefore be more exact to replace it with the term “Oblate Solidarity Fund”, “Fonds de solidarité oblate” (French version), and “Fondo Oblato de Solidaridad” (Spanish version).
- Also the letters “O.I.P” refer to the “Oblate International Pastoral Investment Trust.” (English); “Fonds oblat international d’investissement pastoral” (French); “Fondo Oblato Internacional de Inversion Pastoral” (Spanish). This is well known, yet...

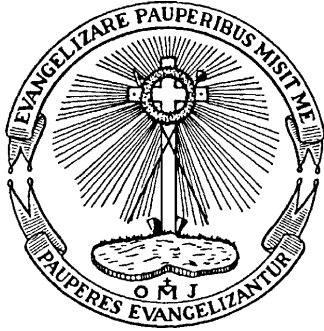
The “Major Elements” document is on the Website in the section on the 34th General Chapter entitled Documents. Check it out!

“Major Element Priorities”: Discernment is moving along....

The answers concerning the “Major Element Priorities” continue to arrive. So far 30 of 97 reports have come in, just under one third.

Several delegates took the time to consult with the Oblates around them. Thus, a greater number of Oblates are finding a way to participate actively in the coming Chapter. We wish to thank all those who took this initiative and took part in it!

The results of this consultation will be on the site in May 2004, or even sooner if all the reports come to us, as foreseen, by March 31, 2004.



Formation Desk

Bulletin

No. 9

March 2004

Week of prayer for Oblate vocations
May 21 – 29, 2004

A Return to the Sources

We are preparing for the General Chapter of our Congregation. It is a journey of faith and hope. The Chapter being the occasion for fraternal meeting and sharing around the One who called us to religious life, it is also the occasion and place to rediscover the inspiration or the original intuition of the Founder in order to evaluate our life and our missionary action before recommitting ourselves. Living our charisma well in today's society is the guarantee of our future. That is why a Chapter is an important event in the life of a religious missionary Institute.

For a future that integrates the reality of the charism in society, we will need men capable of a creative fidelity, men who know the needs of society and also the grace of the charism. It is necessary to call these men and to form them. *"Vocations must always remain a priority if, as a Congregation, we want to stay young, creative, daring, acting with the dynamic power of faith in a style unceasingly renewed."* (F. Jetté, *Letters to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, p. 84) That is why youth and vocation ministry are increasingly important today. What young people expect of Oblates is someone who listens, understands and answers their questions. Our Founder attracted young people in this way.

"A Congregation which ceases to attract vocations must always question itself about its manner of life and about the quality and dynamism of its missionary action... If there are no new candidates to join us and persevere with us, there is no future for our Congregation." (F. Jetté, *Letters to the Oblates...* pp. 88, 188) The *Immense Hope* process helped us to look at our vocation and missionary action. During this week of prayer for Oblate vocations, may we be this fraternal presence to these many people, especially young people, who hope to find attentive and understanding ears, generous and loving hearts. Even though all Oblates are not involved in vocation ministry, all must recognize that by the witness they give they are partly responsible for young people coming to the Congregation or not.

The young people are there. It is necessary for us to find new ways to meet them. We know that a vocation is a call from God and that a generous answer depends on the attitude of the one who hears it and on his environment. It is up to us to create the proper environment. Let us keep our lamps lit and our hope alive by putting our confidence in the One who calls and in the young people around us. May Eugene de Mazenod inspire us and remain our privileged intercessor.

Suggested themes for prayer and meditation

May 21: **Eugene, a welcoming father.** “*Come now and learn from us what you are in the eyes of faith.*” (Lenten sermon 1813, *Selected Texts*, No. 37)

May 22: **Eugene, an attentive father.** “*Adopt a very amiable manner with the seminarians.*” Letter to Mye, Honorat and Guibert, *Selected Texts*, No. 411)

May 23: **Welcoming and listening are acts of the heart.** “ ‘*Come and see.*’ *Some (youths) need only a clear invitation from us to begin seriously thinking about it.*” (F. Jetté, *Letters to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, p. 103)

May 24: **These young people speak to us.** “ ‘*Continue giving us your confidence.*’ *Only trust and love can make this potential for good grow (in us).*” (F. Jetté, *Letters to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, p. 109)

May 25: **For a new Church.** “*It (the world of youth) dreams of a Church that would be exclusively a service of love, mercy, sharing, and communion.*” (F. Jetté, *Letters to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, p. 99)

May 26: **The grace of being an Oblate.** “*The Oblate charism is not dead.... It shall not die.*” (F. Jetté, *The Missionary Oblate...*, p. 67)

May 27: **Mary, a Mother whose faith was listening.** (Lk 2:19)

May 28: **Józef Cebula, always available.** “*I do not want to resist the call... so, I will come.*” (Letter of Cebula to Karol Brzezina, April 1, 1936, *Ecrits Oblats* II,6 p. 148)

May 29: **Joseph Gérard, a love as wide as the world.** “*The world belongs to who will love it the most and will prove it.*” (*Ecrits Oblats* II,4 p. 201)

Prayer

“*Whoever drinks water downstream must not fail to go upstream and remember the source.*”

What a frantic rhythm, our life!
What immense needs assail us!
Our immediate needs, once satisfied,
We pass to the following
And forget the source from where the grace to overcome came.
We miss going up to the source.
When night falls in our hearts,
We are distressed and fail going to you, Father of Light,
Who always enlightens us with new light.
Teach us how to go up to the source to discover you;
Teach us how to go up to the source to hear you;
Teach us how to go up to the source to drink of You;
Teach us how to count on You, immovable Rock;
Teach us how to remember. To remember that

“*Whoever drinks water downstream must not fail to go upstream and remember the source.*”

Baudouin Mubesala, O.M.I.
Assistant General

March 2004

OMI LAY ASSOCIATES

Representatives of Oblate Lay Associations at the 2004 Chapter

In continuity with the General Chapter of 1998, when for the first time in Oblate history representatives of the lay associates were present, the Superior General in Council decided to invite again some members of the Oblate lay associations to the General Chapter of 2004.

The expression *Oblate Lay Associations* was born after 1998, when the General Council began to promote a spirit of communion between the groups of laypeople who maintain special bonds with the Congregation and the charisma of Saint Eugene: the MAMI, honorary Oblates and those who share the Oblate charisma in accordance with Rule 37a. Thus during the first four days of the coming Chapter (August 30 - September 2, 2004) seven members of these associations have been invited to represent those who share the Oblate charisma and apostolate:

1. **Carlo Capobianco**, Province of Italy M.A.M.I.
2. **Regina V. Espinosa**, Province of Philippines M.A.M.I.
3. **Veronica Ntja**, Province of Lesotho M.A.M.I.
4. **JoAnne Chrones**, Associate, OMI Lacombe Province
5. **Denise Héon**, Associate, Notre-Dame-du-Cap Province
6. **José Refugio Reyes Diaz**, Associate, Province of Mexico
7. **Thomas Kennedy**, Honorary Oblate, United States Province

Logo for the Oblate Lay Associations

A new logo or a distinctive sign for Oblate Lay Associations has been created. The General Council chose it after having consulted the various groups of Associates throughout the Oblate units. The Provincials of the Congregation were informed and they received an electronic copy to share with their Associates.

The General Administration will use this logo on all its correspondence with the various lay associations: MAMI, lay associates, honorary Oblates, in order to note the common identity of the members of these groups.

All the associations are invited to use this logo as they want. Having obtained the permission of the authors, you may adapt this logo to your needs, adding for example text and colors as you like.

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