



A successful “cyber-Congress”

“For years, I have dreamed of this Congress. Now I can tell you: the reality has been more beautiful than the dream!” These words were spoken by Father Fabio CIARDI, Director of the General Service for Oblate Studies, at the conclusion of the recent Congress on the Oblate Charism in Context. The groundbreaking event took place on June 30-July 3, 2015, on two levels: local and intercontinental.

Thanks to the cooperation of many, the creativity of the organizers, and the forward-looking use of such modern means of communication as streaming video and Skype, as many as 1,000 Oblates and their associates were able to participate in all or a part of the proceedings.

The Congress was organized so as to respond as much as possible to its very title. A “Congress on the Oblate Charism in Context” had to be held... in context! Thus there came the idea to hold the Congress at the same time in all the Regions of the Congregation, in eight places, via internet connection: San Antonio (USA); Mexico City (Mexico); Rome (Italy); Obra (Poland); Kinshasa (D.R. Congo); Durban (South Africa); Colombo (Sri Lanka); Manila (Philippines).

Every day, the Congress was held in two time frames: a moment of connection among all the places where it was being held; a moment at the local level, with presentations prepared at the regional level and dialogue among the participants.

There had been a preparatory meeting in Rome in March 2015, called by Fr. Fabio to bring together the local organizers: Frank SANTUCCI and Fernando VELAZQUEZ (San Antonio); Francisco MARTÍNEZ (Mexico City); Romesh

LOWE (Colombo); Federico LABAGLAY (Manila); Jean Baptiste MALENGE (Kinshasa); Neil FRANK (Durban); Paweł ZAJĄC (Obra). The ongoing contacts among this group, in ensuing months, created a strong bond among them. A worldwide network has been created, in the service of the Charism.

On the local levels, there were Oblates and lay people associated with the Oblate charism, from neighboring countries, in various numbers, from 30 to 70. The focus of the four half-days was around the contextualization of the charism in their geographical area. Final reports from these levels are yet to be received, but a participant from Durban summed up what could very likely be described as the experience of all the areas: *“Something very special happened at the Durban local meeting. Despite the simple, low-budget organization all those who participated were enriched, inspired and experienced even a sense of inner healing by our open fraternal sharing.”*

On the intercontinental level, the connections worked well, from the technical point of view as well as for the dialogue. From every corner, it was possible to follow and interact in an easier and more active way than foreseen. After every presentation, there was open dialogue among all the geographic areas. The main language was English. When there were talks in French or in Spanish, the participants had the English translation available.

In his conclusion, Fr. Fabio stated: *“My intention, in preparing this Congress, was also to reach out to the young Oblates and to instil in them a passion for our life and mission and to encourage them to take up the systematic study of Oblate*

history, spirituality and missiology. I think the Congress has aroused great interest among some of them, especially because of the way in which it was held.

“The Congress experience, in addition to the deepening of the topics discussed, was an instrument of great communion within the whole Mazenodian Family.

“Dialogue bounced from one part of the world to the other. It is as if the world was all in one room (contextualization?). Or perhaps better still, maybe it is the room that has spread throughout the world (inter contextualization?).

“As it has been said by many during these days, ‘We felt really one family; the distances are no longer a barrier’.”

The many reactions, communicated by e-mail or with other social network instruments were all extremely positive -- above all, the surprise and the joy at being able to live directly an event that gathered in the same arena Oblates of the whole world, overcoming the barrier of space. Someone compared it to the event of the canonization of the Founder which brought together 800 Oblates from the whole world. Hence the experience of a sense of family in seeing familiar faces and

meeting people hitherto unknown. This has strengthened the sense of belonging and the joy of being Oblates. Also appreciated were the content and method of wide-ranging dialogue among the participants from around the world.

At the end of the Congress, Fr. Frank Santucci expressed very well the sentiments of many of those who had participated either directly or via the internet in the Congress: *“During this week of our Congress, I have understood what St. Pope John XXIII meant when he said, on the occasion of Vatican II, that the windows had been opened to let in a new life-giving wind – and after 50 years there is no closing them. Thank you, Fabio and your helpers, for being instruments to allow God and Saint Eugene to blow new enthusiasm and immense hope into our experience of the charism. Thank you for having had the courage to impel us into the 21st century cyber world and allowing the charism to touch so many during these days. I hear the words of St Eugene when he embarked on the adventure of foreign missions echoing again as he looks at our use of the media: ‘Here is a vast field that is opening up to our zeal’.”*

The proceedings of the entire Oblate Congress on the Charism in Context will be published in several future editions of *Oblatio*.

Holy See

VATICAN RADIO

Oblate at UN speaks of ‘Laudato si’

Pope Francis’ recently-released Encyclical *Laudato si’* includes practical suggestions aimed at influencing government policies regarding climate change.

Daniel LEBLANC is a non-governmental organization (NGO) representative at the United Nations in New York for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) and VIVAT International.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are a world-wide, missionary religious congregation of priests and brothers founded in 1816 by St. Eugene de

Mazenod in southern France to preach the gospel to the poor and most abandoned. Their nearly 4,000 members are present in 67 countries.

VIVAT International, founded in 2000, is an NGO in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and is comprised of 12 member Congregations.

Canadian-born Oblate priest, Father Daniel LeBlanc, spent almost 30 years of his missionary life in Peru before being tasked to the Congregation’s General Administration to represent both the Oblates and VIVAT at the UN.

Devin Watkins (*ed. note: former OMI scholastic, now working at Vatican Radio*) asked him how

the Encyclical is affecting his advocacy work at the United Nations.

Drawing on his missionary work in Latin America, Fr. LeBlanc notes a “growing consciousness of indigenous peoples and their rights and their relationship both social and spiritual to the Earth”. The development seen in the Encyclical originates in a “long, progressive development in the Latin American Bishops’ Conferences”.

As an observer to the UN, Fr. LeBlanc sees an “openness” toward *Laudato si’* among politicians and representatives of governments, but that “when it comes down to negotiating they often mention to us that their personal way of seeing things and feelings may not come through very much because they have to represent their governments’ position. And the political position really often comes in opposition to what we who work in the Justice, Peace, and Development area would like.”

Fr. LeBlanc asserts that larger countries “know and understand that they have a responsibility to helping developing countries, but they don’t find it at all easy to commit to anything.” Pope

Francis, he said, “mentions this in the Encyclical, that one of the difficulties is the political realm, because political leaders are elected for a short period of time [...] while what we are talking about here, what Pope Francis is talking about, is a long-term relationship of the human being with his and her environment”.

Fr. LeBlanc says that, despite the gap between political shortsightedness and the long-term vision of Pope Francis, there is hope for change. “Apart from the political realm, which is going to be maybe a little more difficult”, he says, “from the business perspective, there are more and more business leaders who are coming to realize -- thanks in great part to the work of members of the Church, especially religious congregations in working with the business sector to help them realize that doing the right thing may be just as or more profitable than doing the wrong thing.”

Concluding, he says that “Pope Francis seems to insist much more on renewable energy and on recycling what has already been taken from the ground, the sea, and the air.” (Devin Sean Watkins) (The entire interview may be heard in English at <http://goo.gl/39633J>)

General Administration

INTERNATIONAL ROMAN SCHOLASTICATE

Welcoming a new superior

On July 4, 2015, the International Roman Scholasticate (IRS) witnessed the installation of their new Superior. After six years of service to the scholasticate community Fr. Mario BRANDI passed the ‘baton’ to his successor, Fr. Wojciech POPIELEWSKI, during a solemn celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by Fr. Louis LOUGEN, the Superior General. He was accompanied by eighteen concelebrants, all Oblates, and the few scholastics who were present in Rome on the day.

Fr. Wojciech was born in Poland in 1966. He made his First Vows in 1986 and was ordained a priest in 1992. In his years of specialization at the *Biblicum* (1995-1998), he had already been part of the formation Team of IRS. Until now

he was Novice Master in the Poland province. Meanwhile, Fr. Mario Brandi, after a short period of well-deserved rest, will be welcomed into the Oblate community of Aix for the moment.

EUGENE DE MAZENOD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Oblates from France return to the OMI cradle

We were about twenty Oblates from the Province of France and one from the Province of Cameroon; we came to deeply immerse ourselves in the source of the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod. A week of retreat in Aix-en-Provence, the cradle of the Oblates; it is indeed a grace! It was good to be here, in this lively city, so rich in history, and in this house where each corner tells this or that aspect of the founding events: The Foundation room, the Church of the Mission, the Chapel of the First Vows, and the Founder’s Room.

We felt at home in Aix and yet... overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the missionary project that arose here 200 years ago and has spread throughout the world, from the pole to the tropics. One would have to be Father General to be able to embrace the Oblate presence all over the world! However, each one of us has been called by the Lord to give his small contribution. This is our pride and our joy!

The general theme of the retreat was that of the 2nd year of the triennium: Formation.

Joseph BOIS helped us to reflect on our first and only love, the love we bear for Christ, to continue to let ourselves be formed by Him. Henricus ASODO from Indonesia, made us discover how his missionary experience has helped to form him as an apostolic man; is it not so for each one of us? He also presented the apostolate of our Oblate brothers in his vast country: Oblates from Australia, France, and Italy and now from Indonesia who brought and continue to bring Christ to the poorest of the poor in Java and Borneo. Benoît DOSQUET made us to relive the 200 years history of our beginnings, and revealed the face of our founding fathers. It was good to hear about their wealth or their weaknesses or their experiences; it was all helpful to us for it allowed us to interpret our own experiences. Bonga MAJOLA, from South Africa, put his young missionary experience at our service to make us discover how the many crises that we might have been through have also formed us and how the cross is present in our mission. How do we accept it, how do we live it? And all this with reference to Eugene de Mazenod's experience of the Cross. Krzysztof ZIELENDĄ, from Poland, challenged us concerning the place of the Virgin Mary in our life as Oblates. The stories leading to the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the role our Founder played in this regard left us surprised and amazed.

Every day we went out on a pilgrimage in town to visit the sites in which Eugene de Mazenod and our First Fathers lived. These places are now engraved in our hearts.

We leave Aix, already prepared in heart and spirit to live this 200th anniversary of our Foundation

in communion with all our Oblate brothers of the world. We have had more than a pilgrimage, more than a retreat; we have contributed to what could be seen as a "new Foundation" of the congregation in the world on the occasion of its bicentenary. Thanks to the wonderful and generous team which received us and animated our retreat. (François CARPENTIER at <http://www.centremazenod.org/>)

EUGENE DE MAZENOD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Scholastics gather in Aix

The summer session for Oblate scholastics is a session that allows participants to live in the cradle of the Congregation, a spiritual experience which helps them to make a concrete step in their formation to missionary life.

This year there were 15 scholastics who attended the session. They came from Poland, India, Italy, USA, South Korea, Czech Republic and Guatemala. During the session, they followed lectures on the life of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the history of the Congregation and the Oblate Charism. The lectures were followed by visits to places where Eugene had lived as well as by sharing in smaller groups. All those were done in a climate of openness to the linguistic and cultural differences of each participant.

On the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Church of the Mission hosted a beautiful International Mass animated by the participants of the Scholastics' Summer Session. The richness of our Oblate family in culture, language and diversity became evident and was highly appreciated by the parishioners of the Church of the Mission. During the Mass three young Oblates shared their vocation stories and gave inspiring testimonies of their experience of the Session.

The session was animated by two members of the European Office of Formation (BEF), three formators and the Aix community. The session closed with a Mass and renewal of vows presided by Father General at the tomb of the Founder in the Cathedral of Marseille. (Krzysztof ZIELENDĄ in <http://www.centremazenod.org/>)

Europe

POLAND**WYD OMI 2016 -- website and registration**

Every day, Oblate World Youth Days in Wrocław (Poland) in 2016 are coming closer! Do you want to know more about it? Are you organizing your group's arrival? Please visit the official English website <http://wyd2016omi.org/en/>! The website has been up since January, and now all of its contents are translated into English; they will be soon in other languages.

Registration for Oblate World Youth days began on July 13. We invite youth leaders and other organizers from all around the world to register their youth groups at <https://register.wyd2016omi.org/en/>.

Detailed instructions for leaders are on the main site of the Registration System and at this address: <http://wyd2016omi.org/en/rejestracja/>. Please read it carefully before you decide to register your group!

Rates for participation in WYD 2016 have been set. More information about them can be found here <http://wyd2016omi.org/en/oblackie-sdm-2016/pakiet-pielgrzymy-sdm-omi/> and at <http://wyd2016omi.org/en/oblackie-sdm-2016/stawki/>.

Register your group now! The Oblates and organizers in Poland are waiting for you!

FRANCE**Return to Solignac**

It was 1945. The Oblates were looking for a place big enough to accommodate the large numbers who were entering the Congregation. Their destiny took them to the Abbey of Solignac which they knew from preaching parish missions in the area before the war.

The scholasticate started in the fall of 1945. It would soon accommodate the young formandi of the three provinces of France (North, South and East). The adventure lasted until the early 70's. After the vocation crisis of the 70's, an OMI

community stayed on: University Seminary, retreats. The community left Solignac in 1991.

Saturday, July 3, 2015 - On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Oblates, the association "Renaissance of Solignac - Le Vigen" opened an exhibition that will remain in the abbey throughout the summer. Some Oblates "of the era" made the trip to attend and arouse some old and beautiful memories with the good people of Solignac...

Excerpts from the homily of François Carpentier:

Seventy years ago, the first Missionary Oblates arrived in Solignac and brought back to life the old abbey. Soon there were about a hundred young men, deeply rooted in the love of Christ and ready to leave for the mission, in whatever part of the world in the footsteps of the apostles of Jesus just as St. Eugene de Mazenod, their Founder, had asked of them. [...]

While awaiting the great departure, the send-off to the mission, together we studied within these ancient walls: philosophy, theology, the Bible. Together we prayed in this wonderful abbey church. We also went out to teach catechism or animate the Mass in neighboring parishes.

And then several of us joined the local football team: Roland CHRIST whose shots were feared and about whom the opponents would say: "They put Christ on their team! That's it for us!" Roland is still in Cameroon. And Gaby CRUGNOLA (also still in Cameroon) and Jo FENART, "the great Fenart" as he was called. I saw him at Lyon a few days ago on his bed of suffering. He is very ill, but he told me to say that he had had some unforgettable moments of friendship with the football team of Solignac.

And there were the Brothers: those who cultivated the garden and assured our nutrition; and Bro. KEHREN who operated the turbine; Bro. HELBERT and his pig farm; Bro. LELOUP who repaired our shoes. We cannot name all of them. We formed a very lively, joyous and brotherly community.

We have not forgotten any of that... nor the village where our formation took place. And there are hundreds of missionaries who left from Solignac to carry the Good News of Jesus into the world! How will future generations remember this? [...]

Let's just say that the word of the missionaries was received in a variety of ways.

In France, many were sent out as missionaries, for France had become a real "mission country". The faith had fallen asleep in the hearts of many Christians. So many Oblates took part in the great "missions" to awaken it. Others went out in caravans, through the Creuse, from village to village in order to make the Lord present. Others went out to share the difficult conditions of life and labor of the workers. Everyone could tell of the joys and sorrows that his apostolate has brought him.

In Cameroon and in Chad where many of us were sent, we saw wonderful Christian Communities being born very rapidly in all the ethnic groups (there are 60 of them in North Cameroon!).

Perhaps the Word shocked and even pushed some of them! But it is the Word of God! Even if it is not wanted, we nevertheless must continue to proclaim it, like Ezekiel.

At this time, the young Church of North Cameroon is living a difficult moment, but it's holding on, in spite of the cruelty of the Boko Haram which has given it its first martyrs: some catechists, a community leader, some Christians...

In Laos, considered the most difficult mission, there was a situation of war until 1975.

Several missionaries there were killed for the sake of the Gospel which they were proclaiming and because of their religious and charitable activities in service of these very poor peoples. Pope Francis just recognized as Blessed a Laotian diocesan priest, some catechists, some youth, some missionaries of the Foreign Missions of

Paris (MEP) and seven Oblates whom some of the former students at Solignac knew here. Like Saint Paul, they "accepted wholeheartedly for Christ: weakness, persecutions and painful situations." Finally, the Oblates had to leave Laos. Only the Laotian Oblates remained, one of whom is bishop of the capital, Vientiane.

God had promised that his Word does not come back to him without having borne fruit: in Vietnam, a beautiful mission has been born in the last 10 years. It already has some 60 Oblates.

Just as Jesus continued to go through the cities and villages, even after his disappointment in Nazareth, the Oblate mission continues. (<http://www.oblatfrance.com/>)

UKRAINE

Missionaries in a time of war

This is a very difficult time for us in Eastern Europe. No one among us could have imagined that in the 21st century there could be a war and that people would be killing each other. The world and neighboring countries were surprised at the beginning, but now that more than a year has passed, we have the impression that the world is not very interested in the conflict in Ukraine. But here, people are dying every day, more than 600,000 victims; many families have lost their homes. The conflict isn't finished yet, but we can imagine what the future has in store: terrible psychological suffering is awaiting our people.

The Oblates in Ukraine are also involved in this situation with the people. We hear them; we try to console them, to be with those who have lost their children and who are afraid about the future of their sons who are defending our country. We also collect things for refugees; we ask people to open their houses for those who knock. We also share food and other aid with those in need in our community houses.

Two times a week, Brother Sebastian JANKOWSKI provides food at six places in Kiev for more than 300 homeless. Fr. Rafal STRYZEWSKI was on the defense line in eastern Ukraine to deliver food, to be close to

ours soldiers and to speak with them. He spoke with so many people whose wish is that the war would be finally finished.

Only God knows when that will happen. To help people to live during such a difficult time, the Delegation in Ukraine started a contest based on knowledge of the life of St. Eugene de Mazenod. To do this, we published a third book in Ukrainian about our Founder: “He has chosen the poor”. This book speaks about the difficult 11 years of exile of St. Eugene de Mazenod and it is quite useful for the Ukrainians because it shows how to live in such difficult time.

Many, including children, teenagers and young adults, especially from Oblate parishes, have

taken part in the contest. The final contest took place in Tyvriv on May 2. The grand prize for young adults was a trip to Aix-en-Provence; for adults, a pilgrimage tour of Rome; and for teenagers, a bicycle. (Photos can be found at: <http://goo.gl/LUVnjU>.)

As a special way to live the ongoing Oblate Triennium leading up to the 200th anniversary of our founding, the Oblates are offering three-day retreats in 80 parishes in Ukraine. They are accompanied on the retreats by the statue of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima. This encounter with the Virgin Mary is the Oblates’ way of contributing to the much needed prayers for peace in Ukraine. (pictures: <http://goo.gl/XvC9Z0>) [Pavlo VYSHKOVSKYI, Delegation Superior]

Asia-Oceania

INDONESIA

Youth experience compassionate action for the poor

The 2015 “Temu Raya Orang Muda OMI Indonesia – TERAMO” (OMI Indonesia Youth Encounter) was held from 25-30 June at the District of North Borneo. Around 472 participants from 10 Oblate parishes attended the event. Two other nearby parishes joined the program: Mensalong and Sebuku, both established by the Oblates before being handed over to the diocese.

TERAMO was opened by Archbishop Yustinus Harjo Susanto, MSF, of Samarinda and the Apostolic Administrator of Tanjung Selor Diocese. He was joined by with Fr. Antonius RAJABANA, the Oblate provincial of Indonesia. The opening ceremony was conducted in the tradition of the Tidung culture (the local tribe). Holy Mass followed, presided by the archbishop, with 13 Oblates and one MSF priest concelebrating. Their presence showed the big support of the Oblates and the Church for this youth gathering.

The entire program highlighted the TERAMO theme, “A New Spirit Actualized in Compassionate Action for the Poor”. The

participants experienced many interesting and new things. It was the first visit to Borneo for many of them. They traveled by speedboat and were carried on a dump truck; they swam in the river; they enjoyed native delicacies of the Dayak and experienced Dayak customs. Staying with the local people, the participants could learn and feel a simple and community life style.

There were seminars and faith sharing led by several lay dignitaries. The Oblate provincial helped the participants reflect more deeply on the spirit and values of the Oblates.

The whole event was concluded with a Mass led by Father Rajabana. In his homily, he sang an Indonesian song entitled “Sampai Akhir” (Till the End), to show that the Oblates will accompany, support, and walk together with the youth forever. At the end of the Mass, the TERAMO candle was handed over to the OMI District of Balikpapan (East Borneo) who will be the host of the 2019 OMI Indonesia Youth Encounter. (*Indonesian Triennium Team*)

LEBANON

Death of an old friend of the Oblates

ZENIT Information Agency announced on June 25, 2015, that the Patriarch of Cilicia of Armenian

Catholics, His Beatitude Nerses Bedros XIX Tarmouni, died in Beirut that same day. Born in Cairo in 1940, he was ordained a priest on August 15, 1965 in his hometown. Later, already Bishop of Iskanderiya (Alexandria) in Egypt since 1989, he was elected in October 1999 as head of the Armenian Catholic Church.

During the years in Rome for his preparation for the priesthood (1958-1965), the young man, who then bore the name of Peter Taza, was a student at the Pontifical Armenian College. At the request of Cardinal Gregory Peter Agagianian, prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda, a dozen seminarians of the college came in July-August 1959, for a few weeks of relaxation with us at our holiday home in Roviano. Their presence made the community more international as these young Armenians came from countries not represented among their Oblates friends: Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Greece, Egypt and Argentina. They participated fully in our community life - prayer, sports, walks, conversations, etc. -- and they wove with us lasting friendships. The experience was repeated the following two years.

The years passed. And then, fifty years later, one of those seminarians was now the Armenian

Patriarch. During his first visit to Rome after his election, he remembered the pleasant holiday once spent in Roviano with his colleagues and also the Oblates who had welcomed them. By accepting the invitation to dine by Father STECKLING, Superior General, on February 7, 2000, His Beatitude wanted to express once again his gratitude and fond memories of the beautiful weeks spent in the Sabine hills with young Oblates of that time.

The Roman Oblate students of more than a half-century ago also remember their friend, the Patriarch of the Armenians, who, during the commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian "martyrdom" in St. Peter's Basilica last April 12, delivered an address for the proclamation of St. Gregory of Narek (950-1005) "the most loved and most widely read among the saints of the Armenian people", as a new doctor of the Church. Later, on April 21, he would assert "that 2015 was of paramount importance for all Armenians of the world (because) it was an opportunity for them to claim their rights and justice."

In union with the so proven faithful of the Patriarchate, we ask the Lord to welcome their deceased Pastor into his peace. (Alexandre TACHÉ)

Africa-Madagascar

LESOTHO Closing of Joseph Gerard Centenary

The Oblates of Lesotho recently closed a year-long celebration of the centenary of the death of Blessed Joseph Gerard. For the occasion, Archbishop Gerard LEROTHOLI of Maseru wrote about the apostle to Basotho.

The year 2015 marks the end of the centenary of the death of Blessed Joseph Gerard, the Oblate apostle to Basotho. As we celebrate the end of his centenary, we need to reflect on his legacy, as a person, a religious, a missionary, and apostle. He has left us a legacy of holiness and simplicity of life. He embodies Oblate religious values and the founder's charism. He epitomises the best-version-of-being an Oblate Missionary. Indeed, he was a godly person and a man of prayer. He

was fully committed to his vows of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty. He proved to be a dedicated missionary. He was an apostle in the true sense of "the one sent." He was sent to Lesotho and never went back to his native country (France). He died in this country in 1914. The best-version-of-an Oblate missionary is to aspire for holiness. "They must strive to be saints...They must wholly renounce themselves, striving solely for the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the growth and salvation of souls," (Preface). Blessed Gerard made holiness his top-priority. The secret of his holiness was his humility and spirit of prayer. Holiness is the essential purpose and the goal of being Christian.

We are all called to lead holy lives, every man and every woman, regardless of age, state of life, or culture. The call to holiness is for everyone.

Blessed Gerard is a living example of a saintly life amongst the Basotho, whom he loved dearly. He is a living witness of the value of holiness. He teaches us by his life that holiness is achievable and still makes sense. It is an authentic way of living for God. God still calls human beings to aspire for holiness. Blessed Gerard makes leading a holy life ordinary and simple. He accepted the will of God without any reserve. He allowed God to use him for his Church. The saintly life

of Blessed Joseph Gerard speaks to us volumes about holiness, humility and prayer. We should be encouraged by the benefits people derive from making their intercessions to God through Blessed Gerard. May we join our voices in prayer to ask that “the sanctity of Blessed Gerard be acknowledged and recognized by the whole world and may his name be written in the canon of the saints of the Church.” (MAOBLATA A LESOTHO, July 2015)

Canada-United States

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP A hundredth birthday!

Brother Louis RIOUX, the oldest Brother in the Congregation, celebrated his 100th birthday on August 9, 2015. The community at Richelieu celebrated his birthday with a Mass, followed by a festive meal. His brief biography published on the message board told of his uncommon life-journey, much to the surprise of several of his confreres. His own comments, spoken with ease, were greatly appreciated. (INFO OMI, August 2015)

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP The “tweeting priest”

Fr. Ali C. NNAEMEKA is a Nigerian Oblate from the Province of Cameroon, working in Northern Canada.

Between the 1 and 11 July 2015, I took part in the native inter-band games, (J.A.I.B. 2015). The competition this year took place in the Innu community of Mashteuiatsh, (Pointe-Bleu). I participated as a member of the delegation of Uashat mak Mani-Utenam - my community of residence. The J.A.I.B. is a sports competition among the youth of First Nation communities of Quebec: among them, the Innus, the Cris, the Abénaquis, the Algonquins, the Attikameks, the Malécites, the Micmacs, the Naskapis, the Hurons-Wendats, the Mohawks etc. I went, first as an assistant basketball coach and one of the supervisors but also with the intention of continuing my integration among the First Nations.

This year’s competition was attended by 950 youth and 250 supervisors from 15 First Nation communities. This fraternal competition was really a gathering of indigenous peoples and cultures.

The desire to attend the competition grew during training sessions I had with the young from the Innu community. Following a number of sports activities on the basketball court, I guessed that it would be an ideal time for being able to meet native youth coming from other places. So at the suggestion of Fr. Gerard BOUDREAULT, I contacted the organisers from the Innu community of Uashat mak Mani-Utenam who joyously accepted my request.

My presence at first aroused the curiosity of the participants and especially of the younger ones who could not grasp the idea of a Black African who, to top it all, is a priest living in Quebec. But slowly, many of them approached me to know more about me. What surprised them most of all was no longer my origin but my vocation. They could not understand how a young Nigerian priest could also be a basketball player. Many went to confirm my identity with the members of our delegation before accepting that I was a priest. While some were curious over my identity as a priest and a basketball player, others were amused at my passion for the social media, and seeing on my Twitter account (@aTweetingPriest), they were asking “Who is this tweeting priest?”

Anniversaries for October 2015

75 Years of religious life

1940.10.15	07388	Fr. Adolphe Careil	France
------------	-------	--------------------	--------

70 Years of religious life

1945.10.15	08255	Fr. Georges Laudin	France
------------	-------	--------------------	--------

60 Years of religious life

1955.10.15	10449	Fr. Daniel Taillez	France
------------	-------	--------------------	--------

60 Years of priesthood

1955.10.09	08665	Fr. Natale Lessio	Mediterranean
1955.10.09	09154	Fr. Arsène Perbost	France
1955.10.09	08933	Fr. Jean Remy	France
1955.10.09	08986	Fr. Pierre Ven	France
1955.10.23	08922	Fr. Alfons Kupka	Poland
1955.10.28	08913	Fr. Yves Desmet	Belgium & Holland
1955.10.28	08904	Fr. Frans Samyn	Central S. A.
1955.10.30	08616	Fr. Paolo D'Errico	Mediterranean
1955.10.30	08908	Fr. Pierre Fourman	Belgium & Holland
1955.10.30	08669	Fr. Léo-Paul Nobert	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1955.10.30	09331	Fr. Jorge Wavreille	Bolivia

50 Years of religious life

1965.10.07	11700	Fr. Giorgio Del Col	Mediterranean
1965.10.07	11701	Fr. Giovanni Fustaino	Mediterranean
1965.10.07	11970	Bro. Ambrogio Maspes	Mediterranean

25 Years of priesthood

1990.10.13	12993	Fr. Ciro Barbato	Mediterranean
1990.10.13	12994	Fr. Roberto Bassu	Mediterranean

Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 51-60

Name	Prov./Del.	Born	Died at	Date
Fr Michael Clarke	Australia	03/06/1928	Camberwell	17/06/2015
Fr. Renato Ciccone	Mediterranean	27/05/1923	Maddaloni	02/07/2015
Fr. Antonio Marton	Mediterranean	26/11/1923	Santa Maria a Vico	24/07/2015
Bro. Hermann Elsbernd	Central European	03/03/1921	Hünfeld	01/08/2015
Fr. Raimundo Poulin	Argentina-Chile	27/08/1928	Salta	04/08/2015
Bro. Bertrand Morin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	23/01/1931	Richelieu	05/08/2015
Fr. Thomas Brown	Brazil	21/09/1926	São Paulo	18/08/2015
Fr. Piotr Pużyński	France-Benelux	10/08/1923	Vaudricourt	24/08/2015
Fr. Thomas Murphy	Brazil	16/06/1938	Goiânia	27/08/2015
Bro. Fernand Savard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	30/09/1925	Richelieu	30/08/2015

“They are before God, bearing the sign, the kind of character proper to our Institute, the vows common to all its members, the firm habit of the same virtues. We are linked to them by the bonds of a special charity. They are still our brothers and we are theirs. They now live in our mother-house, our main residence. The prayers and the love they retain for us will one day draw us to them and we shall live in our place of rest together with them.” (Letter of Founder to Fr. Courtès, 22 July 1828)

OMI INFORMATION is an unofficial publication
of the General Administration of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
via Aurelia 290, I 00165 Roma, Italy
Fax: (39) 06 39 37 53 22 E-mail: information@omigen.org
<http://www.omeworld.org>
Editor: James Allen; Webmaster: Shanil Jayawardena
Printing & circulation: Shanil Jayawardena