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## Celebrating 200 years of missionary service in the Church 1816-2016

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### Youth united with Oblates around the heart of St. Eugene de Mazenod

*The Second International Congress on Mission with Youth was held at Aix-en-Provence on March 7-13, 2016. At the end of the Congress, Father General and the other participants signed the following letter to the greater Oblate Family:*

Sunday, March 13, 2016

Dear Oblates, Lay Associates and Oblate Youth,

God has much to do with Youth and their joy. This is a truth that St. Eugene de Mazenod felt at the beginning of his priestly ministry and it was, in part, through his work, with and for the youth, that the Oblates were born. This is why, we Oblates from around the world, with Father General, Louis Lougen OMI, his council members, Lay Associates and Youth Representatives gathered in Aix, in the year of the Congregation's 200th anniversary of existence, to further articulate and re-elaborate our Ministry with Young People at the Second International Congress on Mission with Youth.

We acknowledge the importance that the Oblate youth gatherings before the International World Youth Days have had in underlining the vital place of youth in our mission, and are strengthened by the changes that came to be through the Chapters of 2004 and 2010, where the mission of the youth was re-centralized and emphasized in our Constitutions and Rules. We recognize the great efforts made world-wide after

the First International Congress and see the fruits of efforts put forward to put youth ministry back as a central priority in our missions. We want to thank all those Oblates, lay and youth, who have made this happen, but we also realize that a lot still needs to be done. The problems of our young people need to receive central attention. Seeing no meaning in life, they are without hope for the future, but in this difficult reality, youth have a special role to play, particularly in ministering to each other." [cd. EPM 5 and 13]

As we gathered at the birthplace of our Congregation, accompanied in this process by the International Community of Aix, we centred ourselves around the example of St. Eugene himself as a youth minister and model for us Oblates. According to our Founder, our presence among youth is essential to our evangelization. The widespread poverty of today's youth is not just a question of material deficit, but is also a deeply spiritual one that touches every area of their humanity in our diversified contexts. Despite this, we know and experience that you, our youth, have immense capability to transform this situation through your incarnating of Gospel values through the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod. This capability is expressed in your generosity, commitment to face challenges, authentic openness to diversity, thirst for spirituality, sense of justice, readiness for change, but most of all your zealous charity in its different forms. This is very important to us. Your

presence is a gift to us. Your enthusiasm gives us courage. Your love for St. Eugene encourages us to rediscover him in today's world and gives us new gratitude for our mission. Your love for the church enkindles in our hearts the joy of our Oblate mission. At the same time, we Oblates are moved by your situation in today's world; like the Founder, we want to respond to these calls, not only re-affirming that mission to youth is a fully Oblate ministry, but challenging ourselves to do more for you and with you.

We Oblates want to be challenged by you. We want to grow in a common vision that Oblate youth ministry is not just faced with the diversity of our contexts, but that we have one charism that unites us all. We want to listen to you, the young people of the world, and hear your needs, so that by working together we can focus on how to get the message of Christ out into the world. In this mission we want to return to the example of St. Eugene who calls us to help each other become first human, then Christians and lastly saints, realizing, that this is our common patronage. Only this way will we be able to help you find your true vocation and the call that God has specific for each one of you.

In order to do this, we echo again the vital need of collaboration. We recognize the need of a centralized and common vision for ministry with the youth on all levels of the Congregation. We also work closely with our lay partners, adults who help us in the ministry with young people. In this collaboration you, the youth, are, in a special way, co-responsible for these ministries, not just as receivers, but as active participants of the Oblate mission. We want you to feel welcome in our communities, taking the example of our lives and challenging us to be more like St. Eugene, witnessing that we are true Apostolic Men. We want to be evangelized by you and see you as partners in our missions to the poor and most abandoned.

The Oblates have a responsibility for an integral growth of each young man and woman who put their trust in us. We want to build strong and healthy relationships with our young people so as to be mutual witnesses of God's love to the world.

In getting this message out, we want to be courageous in using all the accessible methods of communication and social media. We know the dangers these resources have, but we want to work together with you to encourage all types of media to be an edifying source of God's word to all its users, not tools to enslave them. For this to happen, we must work towards well-made and sustained media ministry directed to all the youth in all accessible forms.

Dear young people united with us around the heart of St. Eugene de Mazenod, we as Oblates realize that this is your time: a time full of amazing changes, where everything seems possible and impossible all at once. Remain with us steadfast in the journey of faith, with firm hope in the Lord and the light of the Holy Spirit. This is the secret of our journey together! It is the Lord that gives us the courage to swim against the tides of relativism, materialism and individualism in today's world. Listening to the examples of the life of St. Eugene, we invite you to go against these currents. Like the young people who gathered around the Oblates' Founder in the Youth Congregation, commit yourselves to great ideals, to the most important things Christ gives us. We Oblates promise to help you in this task, but ask you to walk with us.

Carry with you the flame of Christ's love that burned in the heart of St. Eugene de Mazenod for the entire world – in every sphere of your daily life and to the very ends of the earth. In this mission we are not alone, but united worldwide in prayer, we entrust ourselves and each one of you to our Immaculate Mother. May Mary, Patroness of the Oblates, watch over us all and grant us the needed graces for this mission.

United in prayer with all our brother Oblates, Laity and Youth,

Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI, Superior General, and the other participants of the Second International Oblate Congress on Mission with Youth.

Aix-en-Provence  
Fifth Sunday of Lent  
In the Year of our Lord 2016

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## Holy See

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### **CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES New responsibility for a Canadian Oblate**

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, on 8 January 2016, appointed National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in French speaking Canada for a five year term, Fr. Yoland OUELLET, a member of the Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate .

The new National Director was born at Grand Sault, NB, on 20 March 1959. He studied philosophy at the University of Moncton and

theology at the University of Laval. He joined the religious community of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1984, and obtained a degree in theology at Saint Paul's University Ottawa. He took his perpetual vows in 1988 and was ordained a priest on 24 June 1989. He has served as pilgrimage director at the Shrine of Notre Dame du Cap, parish priest in Montreal, then director of pastoral and rector of the Shrine of Notre Dame du Cap. He has made pilgrimages to different continents, taken part in major international church events and is particularly involved in preaching and new evangelization. (Fides News Agency)

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## General Chapter 2016

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### **PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION Chapter program prepared**

The pre-chapter commission had its 4th meeting during the first week of February, working on some of the final details for the 36<sup>th</sup> chapter which celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Congregation.

The list of capitulars has been completed, the arrangements with the host venue, the Christian Brothers in Rome, have been settled, and the commission worked out a program for the chapter, and presented it to the Superior General and his council. The Chapter will decide on the final schedule when it convenes on September 14.

Focusing on the foundation theme: "Evangelizare Pauperibus Misit Me—Pauperes Evangelizantur" (*He sent me to evangelize the poor and the poor are evangelized.*), the commission devised a plan which focuses on the past, the present and the future. The required reports will describe the

past; the discussion of Mission (evangelization) will look at the present and prepare the way for the election of the Superior General and his council, and give a direction for the future.

The commission also reviewed the proposals it has received from Oblates, the proposed changes in the Oblate Constitutions and Rules, and alterations suggested for the Chapter Directory.

The commission will meet again, by Skype, in late May. Fr. Claudio BERTUCCIO, the Chapter commissioner, will move to Rome in mid-May to oversee the final details leading up to the opening of the Chapter on the morning of September 14, 2016.

The commission urged all Oblates and friends of the Oblates to continue praying for the success of the chapter, especially by using the chapter prayer, which can be found on the [www.omiworld.org](http://www.omiworld.org) web site.

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## General Administration

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### **GENERAL COMMITTEE OF OBLATE BROTHERS 2016 Meeting**

The General Committee of Oblate Brothers gathered in Aix-en-Provence on February 11-20, 2016, for

a meeting that was fraternal and strengthening in its sharing. Present for the meeting were: Jean-Marie DIAKANOU (Africa-Madagascar), Noel GARCIA (Asia-Oceania), Ivar Ruiz (LATIN AMERICA), Jason Rossignol (CANADA-USA), Rafal DAKOWSKI (Europe), Zygmunt

WOLNIAK (General House), Jacques LANGLET (France), Benoit DOSQUET (Permanent Secretary), and Gilberto PIÑÓN (Assistant General, Delegate of the Superior General).

The Aix community made a presentation on the beginning of Oblate fraternal life in the Congregation. We had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to Marseille and on February 17, we made a day of retreat at the Shrine of Notre Dame de Laus to celebrate the expansion of our Congregation outside of Provence and the community where we received our first vocation of an Oblate Brother.

The committee also took time to share the regional reports from the respective delegates. These reports included not only the statistical data but also presented various issues and concerns. Since each delegate will also participate in the 2016 General Chapter, we prepared various documents, statements, and other materials necessary for the Chapter in September/October.

The committee also spent some time studying the recent Church document: *“Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother.”* This document presents not only a theological framework for religious Brothers but it also very clearly explains how crucial the vocation and presence of religious Brothers is in male religious communities. The document illustrates the foundational truth that all Christians, by virtue of Baptism, both brothers and sisters, share the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, religious Brothers express it in a special way through their consecration. Thus, both religious Brothers and priests fulfill the mission to evangelize through community. “Ministry is not a personal ‘task’ but a call from Jesus Christ to *BE* in community.”

While the previous meeting recommended a workshop on Oblate fraternal life, at this meeting, as a follow-up to the document *“Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother,”* it was decided to prepare a retreat on Oblate Fraternal Life. At the request of the General Council, this retreat will be proposed to the Regions.

The committee extends a special thank you to the community of Aix for providing us with Oblate hospitality, translations, and leading us in prayer.

## COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE

### From Notre Dame du Laus until today

As part of the Jubilee of Mercy, on October 8-9, there will be a special event honoring Mary, the Mother of God. Many of our Oblate Marian shrines will probably commemorate this event in a special way. It is not surprising that this Congregation with a special devotion to Mary serves in 21 Marian Shrines. The Oblates also serve in 6 other shrines dedicated to various mysteries of Christ or of the saints. Perhaps there are even more! Some of these shrines were established by the Oblates themselves. Other shrines, such as the world-famous Shrine of Our Lady at Lourdes, France, have different origins, but the Oblates have been called to minister there.

We are celebrating this year the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Congregation when St. Eugene de Mazenod and a few diocesan priests came together primarily to evangelize through the preaching of parish missions. Essentially, they were working only in Provence and were still attached to their bishops. However, in 1818, the Missionaries of Provence received an invitation from the Vicar General of the Diocese of Digne to take charge of ministry at the Shrine of Notre Dame du Laus in the High Alps, some 160 km from Aix. It included the care of a parish community.

That would mean an entirely different type of ministry for Eugene de Mazenod’s missionaries. But even more significantly, since they would no longer be ministering only in Provence, the very nature of their community life would change. In well researched articles found on our international website ([www.omiworld.org](http://www.omiworld.org)) under the “Library” link, Fr. Michel COURVOISIER goes into interesting detail about the soul-searching the missionaries went through and their ultimate decision to take on a new way of preaching missions at a Marian shrine. The Founder also decided to take some time at St-Laurent du Verdon to write a revised rule of life to fit their new circumstances of having more than one community. In effect, they were gradually becoming a congregation of religious. (*1818-1819 Le projet de fondation au Laus et ses conséquences* [in two parts]; texts in French only)

In August 2012, Fr. Frank SANTUCCI wrote in the blog “Eugene de Mazenod speaks to us” (<http://www.eugenedemazenod.net/?p=1621>) an article entitled: “The prototype of Oblate Shrine and Retreat House Ministry.”

“Notre Dame du Laus was the first establishment of the Missionaries outside of Aix and it was a Marian sanctuary: a place of pilgrimage and a place where people came for some days of retreat. Because it was our first, it remains the prototype for this ministry in the five continents of the Oblate world today and sets the direction.

“It was first of all a place of ‘PERMANENT MISSION’. In other words, all that the Missionaries worked to achieve when they went to a town for a prolonged mission, they hoped to achieve during the short time spent by the pilgrims to the sanctuary. Sometimes in the space of a few hours!

“The pilgrims came to honor Mary and to express their devotion to her. Building on this, the missionaries, made the experience of being with Mary an opportunity to focus with her on Jesus the Savior. All our Marian shrines were to be Christocentric.”

Some 197 years after the acceptance of shrine ministry by the Missionaries of Provence, the sons of St. Eugene de Mazenod continue to offer a place of peace and healing to men and women of many, many cultures.

### **OBLATE MISSION WITH YOUTH Second International Congress in Aix**

It was in 2008 that the first ever International Oblate Congress on the Mission with Youth was held in Sydney, Australia. It was mainly to re-emphasize that the ministry with young people is of great importance in our Congregation. Eight years later, the second such Oblate Congress was held in Aix-en-Provence, France, from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2016.

Five participants from each Oblate region, both Oblates and youth, along with Fr. Louis LOUGEN, the Superior General and several

members of the General Administration, gathered there to initiate a process to develop a missionary vision and a strategy for the coming years concerning the Congregation’s mission with youth.

Following Cardinal Cardijn’s methodology for Young Christian Workers, “See-Judge-Act”, the Congress discussed the Congregation’s future plans for mission with youth with much interest and enthusiasm. The first two days were dedicated to SEEING. The participants, together with Fr. General and Fr. Gilberto PIÑÓN, Assistant General, discussed common trends among youth today and how far, at present, the Congregation responds to these trends.

The third and fourth days were dedicated to JUDGING. Fr. Bonga THAMI from the community of Aix helped the participants discern their own call to the service of youth in the light of the life of St. Eugene de Mazenod. These talks were complemented by our visits to the cities of Aix and Marseilles. Frs. Asodo ISTOYO and Bonga were our ‘tour guides’. These visits reiterated the fact that the Founder had a great concern for the youth of his day. The highlight of the visits was the Holy Mass celebrated at the tomb of St. Eugene in the Cathedral of Marseilles; Fr. General presided at the Mass.

The final phase of the Congress was ACTING. Focusing on the results of the discussions of the previous days, the participants divided into small groups where they would discuss and develop concrete proposals for various areas of concern. Finally these proposals were gathered together and formulated into a final draft as a proposed working document for the Oblate Mission with Youth in the coming years. At the end, in an atmosphere of prayer in the Foundation Room, the participants signed a letter to the whole Congregation and it was then presented to Fr. General.

Special thanks go to Fr. Chicho ROIS, the General Councillor for Europe, who was the main organizer of the event and to all the members of the community of Aix. (Fr. Shanil JAYAWARDENA)

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## Asia-Oceania

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**KOREA****A special “Holy Door”**

*Fr. Vincenzo BORDO tells of a special initiative for the Holy Year of Mercy.*

Having been challenged and encouraged repeatedly by that “dear old man” Pope Francis, we could not resist being drawn into his ideal world. “Leave your comfortable and lovely churches and go into the dirty and dangerous outskirts of humankind. Seek out the sinners, the rejected, the marginalized, the least ones in our society and bring them the mercy of God.”

With this spirit, the Pope has opened the Jubilee Year and the “Door of Mercy” in every diocese so that everyone would be able to cross the threshold and receive the grace of pardon and hope for a better life. Guided by his words, we too have gone out of our beautiful Center that does so much good (every day we serve 550 meals to the poor), to learn that there are further places to explore, other than the miserable situations we were already caring for and helping: the homeless. So in order to go even farther, toward those outskirts that no one ever reaches, we bought a bus. We equipped it for every contingency, and in the cold winter nights, we went into the dangerous hinterlands of the city where we discovered a new and more dramatic form of poverty: STREET KIDS. Little boys and girls, teenagers and youth who, because of violence, bullying, abuse, have to leave their homes and get by as best they can in the brutal nights of the off-limits areas of the “good life:” night clubs, discotheques, karaoke’s, betting and gambling halls, beautiful clothing, big cylindered cars, drugs....dazzling districts with their colored lights and attractive with their offer of easily attainable happiness, but a lethal stranglehold for those who are too young and lacking in life experience.

And while Francis has opened the Holy Door in Rome, with the authorization of the bishop, we have invented a “Holy Door.” The door to our bus has become the “Door of Mercy.” In fact, those who go through the “Holy Door” of the Jubilee

receive jubilee indulgence. But whoever goes through the “Holy Door” of our bus is invited to practice all the Works of Mercy for those whom we meet on the street. It is a door meant to “make holy” those who enter it.

Just as the 1,200 missionaries of Pope Francis are going through the streets of the world bringing to everyone the gift of reconciliation, the love of God and His infinite mercy, as we drive our bus, we bring into the hinterland of our city the “Holy Door of Mercy” to invite everyone to cross this wonderful threshold that leads to doing the good and beautiful and to committing oneself to helping the least of the least, the children abandoned by their own parents and by society and who are being lured by the underworld.

This and our jubilee...not made of prayers to be recited while sitting comfortably in a nice church smelling of incense, but of life lived alongside the dispossessed. It consists of deeds and works of mercy practiced in nasty and inhuman areas of our cities. Isn’t this perhaps the spirit of Pope Francis? Isn’t this what he is inviting us to do and what he himself does in his travels?

This “dear old man”, who is much livelier and enthusiastic than many young people, is there shouting for dear life that Christianity is not so much a beautiful and charming morality to practice or so many prayers to be recited by rote or solemn ceremonies, but a living person present among us: Jesus, a person to love and follow along the way of merciful love through the streets of life.

**CHINA****50 years of Oblate presence**

The Hong Kong-China Delegation celebrated 50 years of missionary presence on 26 February 2016. The Eucharistic celebration was held at Notre Dame Parish where Cardinal John Tong Hon, Bishop of Hong Kong, and Cardinal Orlando QUEVEDO of Cotabato, Philippines, graced the occasion. Also present were all the

Oblates of the Delegation and those Oblates from the Asia-Oceania Region who came for the JPIC and Asia-Oceania Regional Conference (AORC) meetings, the religious, the priests and lay faithful of the diocese of Hong Kong. The Cardinal in his homily expressed his appreciation of the Oblate presence in China. During the Eucharist two received the title of Honorary Oblate, Father Joseph So, SDB (Salesian) and Mr. Peter Liu Wing Sun.

The Oblates first arrived in Hong Kong from the Philippines Province on 25 February 1966, with Fr. Michael MOLLY as the Mission Superior. Soon after their arrival, the Oblates got involved in school work with the construction of Notre Dame College. The Oblate presence was aptly called the “Hong Kong Mission” and was focused on education and pastoral work from the chapel attached to Notre Dame College. Later the Oblates became supervisors of other schools and took on another parish. In March 1990, the China Mission was entrusted to the Australian Province. This Oblate unit became the “China Delegation,” highlighting the change in missionary focus.

The jubilee celebration coincided with a joint meeting of the JPIC commission and of the AORC. There were 24 participants who participated at the joint meeting. The theme of the JPIC workshop was migration. Asia has its own share of migration problems, with people who are forced to cross borders because of wars, conflicts, economic reasons, etc. The workshop was facilitated by Fr. Kennedy KATONGO, the Director of OMI JPIC, together with Fr. Bradley ROZAIRO the JPIC-AORC coordinator. There were talks by various speakers as well as exposure programmes.

The annual AORC meeting continued as usual. Fr. Derrick WARNAKULASURIA, Delegation Superior of Pakistan, could not attend the meeting due to problems renewing his resident visa so as to leave the country. The major and mission superiors spent time discussing and reflecting on the reports that were written by the Units for the forthcoming General Chapter. There was also a brainstorming session on what would be

the vision, mission, and possible future focus the AORC Region could offer to the Congregation at large, beyond 200 years of Oblate Foundation.

On the day of their arrival, the participants were given a rousing welcome by the Oblates of the Delegation and their associates with Chinese cultural entertainment and a sumptuous Chinese dinner; at the end participants were given various kinds of gifts and souvenirs. What wonderful Oblate hospitality and brotherhood accorded by Fr. Slawomir KALISZ OMI, Delegation Superior, and his team!

### **COLOMBO: SRI LANKA**

#### **La-Kri-Vi. Sports Day**

The La-Kri-Vi movement is an action-oriented Roman Catholic organization working for the integral development of Sri Lankan children, irrespective of race, religion and gender, open to all children between the ages of 5 and 15. It is run by the children themselves under the guidance of volunteers who serve as animators of the movement. The name La-Kri-Vi is an abbreviation, with the initial letters in Sinhala meaning “Valiant children of action.”

The year 2015 – 2016 has been named the year of sport. Accordingly, having finished the organized sports meets on the deanery, and diocesan level, the National Sports Meet was held on 20 February at Vesly College where all the field events took place and on 21 February at St. Joseph’s College where the track events and the distribution of awards took place. Special to this event is that children from North to South came together to play, irrespective of all petty differences, under the banner of La-Kri-Vi.

Fr. Romesh LOWE, the superior of the Oblate Scholasticate, and Susanthika Jayasingha, an Olympic medal winner (100m event in the 2000 summer Olympics) graced the occasion. Approximately one thousand children participated in the event. The primary aim of the event was achieved: to develop the sports skills of children, to inculcate discipline, self-control, and patience and to face challenges.

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## Europe

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**ENGLAND****Outreach to the Homeless Shelter**

Following on from the example of Pope Francis who constantly encourages followers of Jesus to look for ways to reach out to those on the margins of Church and society, the parish community in Quex Road, Kilburn, London, have taken upon themselves the task of helping at a homeless shelter in the next parish in Cricklewood.

We began by providing food one night a week, but this soon spread through an appeal in the Quex Bulletin. The generosity of people in Kilburn is outstanding. Now, we, as a parish, support Ashford Place, three nights a week, each night having its own team. There is a great atmosphere in the kitchen and in the dining room as we work together in cleaning plates, chopping vegetables, slicing chickens, frying sausages or hamburgers as we try to make a meal for the group of between 17 to 27 men and women.

Every Sunday evening the young people from Quex Youth Club and the Confirmation Group join in and help to prepare the food. It is fabulous to see the young people making such a fantastic contribution to the project. Some nights after the meal has finished and we have cleaned up with the residents, we have arts and craft classes, play bingo, take part in guitar classes or just sit around and sign together. Some of the nights the young people prepare some homemade cakes to share at the end of the meal.

With the support of the staff at Ashford Place the residents are helped to find rented accommodation and, if possible, employment as soon as possible. This means that there is a high turnover of residents at the Centre. It is great to see former residents coming back to join us for a meal.

The residents come from many countries and therefore speak many languages. At times the group is predominately Muslim and this means that the majority of the food has respect their rituals and customs. What is really striking each evening is how grateful the men and women are

to the volunteers. They really appreciate that people they don't know would go out of their way to feed them and befriend them.

The parishioners at Church donate the money each week to cover the costs of buying the food. There is a real sense of the faith community supporting this venture. This is a practical way of us reaching out to those on the margins of our community whilst making a difference in this Year of Mercy and helping to keep the flame of faith alive. (Fr. Terry MURRAY in *Oblate Connections*, February 2016)

**POLAND****Remembering our first community**

Each Oblate community of the Polish Province has its own schedule of celebrations to mark the Congregations' bicentenary. Three of them – the Provincial House in Poznań, the scholasticate in Obra and professors' community in Warsaw – commemorated the first community of Aix-en-Provence in a particular way.

At Obra, on Sunday, January 24, after each Eucharist the parishioners and the MAMI communities were welcomed in the scholasticate cloister. There, they were offered cake and coffee. The Oblates were around to chat with guests and express personally their joy of 200 years of Oblate history. MAMI members stayed with us also for lunch and enjoyed the traditional afternoon recreation with the community.

The next day, January 25, upon entering the refectory, we found a touching symbol: two barrels and a piece of wood on top of them, clearly resembling the Founder's recollection of the first days in Aix. Everybody could sign a petition to the vicar capitulars with an old style pen, presumably similar to the one used by Saint Eugene. There was also a small exhibition of original texts written by the Oblates in 1816 and photographs of our mother house in Aix.

In the afternoon of January 25, the whole scholasticate community went to the provincial



house in Poznań, where the main liturgical celebration took place, with the auxiliary bishop of Poznań presiding (the archbishop couldn't be with us as he was at that time on an official visit at the Vatican). The main celebrant was accompanied by Father Provincial, his administration and council and all the superiors of the Oblate communities in Poland. In the homily, the bishop referred to many aspects of Oblate spirituality which he perceives embodied in daily collaboration and help offered to the local church.

The Eucharist was broadcast worldwide by the Polish Catholic TV station and it was followed by several hours of conversations and interaction with the listeners of Catholic Radio. The Fathers gathered in an improvised studio at the Provincial House presented different aspects of Oblate history, spirituality and current involvements and were ready to answer any questions. It was touching to receive many phone calls from listeners who had a chance to meet the Oblates in one place or another and had warm words of appreciation for their witness of religious life.

A month later, on February 25, the professors from Oblate community in Warsaw organized a symposium on Oblate missions, with the active participation of the majority of the Polish Oblates

involved in higher learning. The symposium was held at the Cardinal Wyszyński Catholic University, where the Oblates hold various teaching positions, especially in psychology, philosophy, patristics and missiology.

The day began with the Eucharist and then the participants proceeded to a comfortable conference hall. A series of papers was given concerning Oblate missions in each continent, as well as the charism of the Founder and Oblate missionary spirituality. Since the missionary themes were numerous, the last talk given by a professor from the Congregation of the Divine Word turned into an extremely kind appreciation of Oblate contributions to the development of missiology in Poland. Among many distinguished guests were the authorities of the Faculty of Theology, the director of the Pontifical Mission Societies, the director of the Polish section of "Aid to the Church in Need" foundation, as well as several friends and collaborators, including professors, local pastors and sisters of religious congregations with whom the Warsaw Oblates are involved in their ministry. Everyone received as a gift the book published by the organizers of the symposium, with most of the conferences already printed and some extra texts concerning Oblate history. (Frs. Marcin WRZOS and Paweł ZAJĄC)

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## Latin America

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### **BRAZIL**

#### **A visit to Paranaiguara**

*Fr. Miguel FRITZ, General Councilor for Latin America, recently visited the Oblates in the State of Goiás in the Central-West of Brazil.*

The Oblates arrived from Ireland in the 1960's and continue to work in the southernmost part of the State of Goiás in the Central-West of Brazil. The parishes of Paranaiguara and São Simão were established by them. Above all, Fathers Jeremia and Thomas (called "Martin") were there for decades, during the big changes that occurred when villages were flooded for the construction of an enormous dam in the 1970's.

Miguel BRADY is still somewhat new in Paranaiguara. Among his ministries, I would like to focus on three areas that are worth knowing about in the context of Oblate commitment to JPIC.

**Prisoners:** The little town has a small jail. Miguel is by no means unknown there. He got permission for me to accompany him. There are only seven cells along a single corridor. Twelve prisoners in five cells looked at us behind barred doors and windows. It was a bit strange to greet them, one by one, shaking their hands through the bars. The guard stays in front of us at all times. Miguel introduced me and invited me to speak. I told them about Eugene who had to suffer being far from his country and from his mother. And

I told of how he in turn got together with the youth (the majority of the prisoners are youths); how he visited the prisoners, even giving the sacraments to the condemned. How attentive they were! When Miguel spoke to them about the Bible, five of them had one at hand and they looked up Matthew 25 (When did we see you in prison?); and John 19 (The mother stayed next to her son..). They joyfully took the oranges we had picked in the Oblates' garden.

**Water:** That's the theme of the "Campaign of Brotherhood" for this year (an ecumenical Lenten campaign). Representatives of different churches, together with government agencies, are planting trees to protect the springs. At the same time, they are investigating reports that the drinking water of the city is already in bad shape. Pesticides are suspected: Goiás is an area of huge sugarcane farms -- for the production of ethanol; i.e.: to give "food" to vehicles.

**The landless:** This very situation of bigger and bigger farms always leaves more peasants without land. So a large estate, where a landowner plants a large amount of sugarcane (they say he has seven other farms) was declared free for agrarian reform in 1999. We went to visit the farming community in the middle of the cane field: after kilometers of cane, suddenly there were beautiful plants of corn, cassava, etc.

In the first humble little house, an old bachelor excitedly told us what we had already heard. A little further on, near the community shelter, we could see the car: all the windows were broken and the radiator shot out. And a little further on, two young men show us their injuries. A few days before, at nine in the morning, there arrived a beautiful and armored black truck, with three guys. They got out and began to attack the car, damaging it with the lug wrench and a revolver, and then beating the youth with their feet and their fists, shouting that next time they would kill them.

We listened to them calmly; Mike encouraged them, told them that they have done well, that they should go to the hospital and to the police. He encouraged them also to contact the "Land

Ministry" with their lawyers. He told them that they are within their rights. We prayed with them. Of course, in an interview on a local radio, and in the next Masses – the issue was brought up.

## PERU

### Thoughts of a newly arrived missionary

*Fr. Nicholas HARDING arrived at his new assignment in the Delegation of Peru in February 2016. The 64 year old Oblate from the USA had spent several years in the Mission of Baja California, Mexico. Here, he describes some of his first impressions in his new mission.*

I have now met all of the men (fewer than 20) and can say they are remarkably amiable and easy-going. ... Peru has three main geographical areas and the Oblates have at least one mission in each: (1) The coast: missions in Comas and Chincha; (2) The Andes mountain: Huancayo; (3) The Amazon jungle: Aucuyacu.

### Parish Mission at Chincha (Pueblo Nuevo):

Geographically it is many times bigger than the mission I was at in La Morita, Tijuana (Mexico). And the mission serves two or three times as many people as in Tijuana. The parish of Cristo Rey has three main areas. The first area is a lot like Tijuana...a main church with 16 satellite chapels which in turn have *comunidades de base*. The estimated population is over 100,000 people. They are still paving roads. There are over 1,000 little adobe houses which the Canadian Oblates have built over the years. An 81 year old Brother, Blaise MacQUARRIE, is still active in that work after 30 years. He proudly says that only the Oblates in Peru have a gravel pit. There is still visible destruction from a terrible earthquake in 2007. ...

The second section is a vast area of shacks (estimated population, 100,000) where there is no running water or sewage. One sees children bathing in the *acequia*, a canal fed by river water. As in Tijuana, trucks with water tanks come around to fill barrels. None of the roads are paved so there is a lot of dust. At the far end is a prison served by the parish. Brother Blaise recently obtained 1,000 blankets and material for handicrafts, even though it is a high-security prison. He told me he began

outreach there after he had a mystical experience telling him to go there. The government only provides food...nothing else. There are 2,000 men incarcerated there.

The third sector is the sierra...high mountains with river valleys populated only by indigenous people. There are a few towns like Chavin and San Pedro Huanacapa (a six hour drive from the parish on unpaved road). There are only two Oblate priests and the Brother, but several religious sisters and many laypeople take seriously their baptismal call of co-responsibility as disciples in mission. ...

#### **Comas:**

Recently we had a big event here to celebrate 50 years of OMI presence and the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the OMI's. The bishop came

for the main mass and afterwards there was entertainment, mostly folklore dancing by the youth. This parish is also quite extensive. A Dutch Oblate has, over the years, constructed one hundred *comedores* (food pantries) for nutrition and building community.

**Future:** I will soon head out for a week or so to the mission in the Amazon and then, for Holy Week, the one in the Andes with the indigenous people. Afterwards, there will be a discernment of where I should go...where I best fit to serve the Lord and help build his Kingdom. ... Each site has its blessings and crosses/challenges. I will try to heed the advice given to me by old missionary priests: "Be natural, be yourself."--"Be like a child."--"Waste time with the people."--"Help everyone see they are called to be disciples and missionaries."

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## Canada-United States

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### **NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP**

#### **Honorary doctorate for the Superior General**

On, March 15, 2016, Saint Paul University granted an honorary doctorate to Father Louis LOUGEN, Superior General of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Doctorate Honoris Causa is the highest honour a university can bestow. It is granted to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the University, to their profession or to society in general.

The Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate played a major role in Ottawa. One of the great lasting achievements of the Oblates is an educational endeavour that continues to this day through Saint Paul University. (Video of the ceremony: <http://y2u.be/h5Ld6YZYvMA>)

The next day, the Superior General met with his confreres in the area. In Ottawa, as we know, the Oblates of three provinces have a significant presence, besides confreres from other Unites and Delegations in the Congregation who are studying at Saint Paul. (Video: <http://y2u.be/MAZbQqX-hmU>)

### **ASSUMPTION PROVINCE, CANADA**

#### **Jubilee Year provincial congress**

Assumption Province began this jubilee year with a Provincial Congress entitled "The Emerging Future of Life and Mission – Responding to the Signs of the Times in a Transformative Way." From January 18-22, all members of Assumption Province and invited guests prayed, shared their experiences, and also tried to discern the future directions for their ministry and mission. Among many guest speakers were the following individuals:

- Father Superior General Louis LOUGEN, from Rome (by Skype);
- Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche Community (by pre-recorded video): *Who are the poor in today's society?*;
- Gabriela Kasprzak, a young history professor from the University of Toronto: *What's Emerging from our History? – A Lay Person's Perspective*;
- Fr. Pawel RATAJCZAK, from Rome (by Skype): *How I see the future of Assumption Province*.

Here are some memorable quotes from the Congress:

- Jean Vanier: “Who are the poor? Those who have been humiliated, those who have been pushed aside. Those who have been seen as no good, as no value. We see it in St. Luke; the mission of Jesus is to announce the Good News to the Poor. What is that Good News? It’s not just that they are loved by God! But you are precious, you are important, you have value! And how can we reveal that? By entering into a relationship with them. The way we listen to them. The way we give them a place in our hearts, but also in our society.”
- Superior General, Fr. Louis Lougen: “Your job is not only to take care of those who go to church, but those who do not. That voice of the founder needs to be heard in Canada today...”
- Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto: “... I encourage you to look forward with renewed hope as you continue your mission to evangelize those marginalized and abandoned in the world.”
- Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop. Luigi Bonazzi: “... through your witness show the merciful and compassionate face of Christ ...”
- Archbishop. Terry Prendergast, S.J., of Ottawa: Providentially this special year occurs within Pope Francis’s Jubilee of Mercy in which the whole Church

is exhorted to go into the peripheries, searching out the marginalized, sharing the mercy of God and the Good News of Jesus Christ. This mission continues to be at the heart of your mission and identity.

- Gabriela Kasprzak PhD: “In your particular case, I say ‘let your [collective] history define you’. Do not be afraid to be radical.” (News and Views, January-February)

## UNITED STATES

### Two awards for former General Councillor

Father Ron ROLHEISER, General Councillor from 1998-2004, and currently the President of Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, has been named San Antonio’s ninth Peace Laureate by the San Antonio Peace Center on January 31 during the organization’s annual Blessing of the Peacemakers at OST’s Whitley Theological Center.

The Canadian-born Oblate will also receive the 2016 Touchstone Award from the National Federation of Priests’ Councils during its annual convocation on April 19 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The award is presented annually to “the priest who, in the view of the federation, is one whose service in the Gospel of Jesus Christ exemplifies the purposes and goals of the federation,” according to a news release. “In particular, his leadership enhances the ministry of others and his words and deeds support the life and ministry of priests; thus, he is, as it were, a Touchstone for genuine quality priesthood.”

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**Anniversaries - May 2016**


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**70 Years of religious life**

11.05.1946	08627	Fr. Hubert Bertrand	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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**65 Years of religious life**

31.05.1951	09014	Fr. Gerard Brunet	United States
31.05.1951	09018	Fr. William Davis	United States
31.05.1951	09019	Fr. Michael Levy	United States
31.05.1951	09009	Fr. James Miller	United States

**60 Years of religious life**

01.05.1956	10098	Fr. Rainer Rack	Central European
03.05.1956	10633	Fr. Edward Kosa	Lacombe
21.05.1956	10636	Bro. Wilhelm Dickmann	Namibia
21.05.1956	10638	Bro. Hannsgeorg Seiwert	Central European
31.05.1956	10143	Fr. John Castro	United States
31.05.1956	10144	Fr. Ruben Elizondo	Mexico

**60 Years of priesthood**

31.05.1956	09057	Fr. Andrew Chalkey	United States
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**50 Years of religious life**

01.05.1966	11925	Fr. Robert Terliesner	Central European
21.05.1966	11983	Bro. Manfred Pietsch	Namibia
31.05.1966	11748	Fr. Angelo J. Martyn	Colombo
31.05.1966	11743	Fr. Damian Soosai	Jaffna

**50 Years of priesthood**

31.05.1966	10747	Fr. Edward Hauf	United States
31.05.1966	10740	Fr. Jerry Orsino	United States

**25 Years of religious life**

21.05.1991	13337	Fr. Jaime del Rosario	Philippines
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**25 Years of priesthood**

15.05.1991	13013	Fr. Dilip Sarkar	Colombo
18.05.1991	12947	Fr. John Malazdrewich	Lacombe
18.05.1991	12929	Fr. Abel Tlali Phohlo	Lesotho
26.05.1991	12995	Fr. E-Mpey Jacques Ompey	Congo
31.05.1991	12931	Fr. Eric Alleaume	Australia

### Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 20-26

Name	Prov./Del.	Born	Died at	Date
Fr. Tadeusz Krzeminski	France - Benelux	16/09/1931	Vaudricourt	03/03/2016
Fr. Clarence Menard	United States	12/08/1931	San Antonio	04/03/2016
Fr. Pablo Feeley	OMI Lacombe	05/10/1938	Ottawa	06/03/2016
Fr. Heinrich Niemann	Namibia	03/10/1929	Durban	13/03/2016
Fr. Lucien Sawyer	United States	07/07/1924	Tewksbury	18/03/2016
Fr. André Ripoché	France	30/12/1932	Lyon	19/03/2016
Bro. Jules Loranger	OMI Lacombe	04/02/1923	Winnipeg	27/03/2016

*“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)*

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