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

Towards a Spirituality of JPIC: the Oblate Charism at the service of the poor

By Fr. Kennedy Katongo, OMI, OMI JPIC Director – Rome

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Ministry is central and at the heart of our mission as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. JPIC ministry is our way of life and our way of mission and forms an integral part in our process of Evangelization. This is important to remember especially as we go through the third year of the Oblate Triennium, as we reflect on the 200th anniversary of the Congregation and as we approach the forth-coming 36th General Chapter. It is important to note that we live in a world today that is characterized by rapid changes that create both opportunities and challenges.

Therefore, the ministry of JPIC begins with seeing, to 'really see' – to have a truthful and deeper look at – to take a contemplative stance and a prophetic reading, to be able to discern in light of the values of the Gospel what is happening in our world today – our common home. JPIC ministry assists us in analyzing the current reality with a contemplative perspective to see more deeply the structures that generate poverty, devastation of the environment, conflict and violence and how we might more fully make the values of the Kingdom more visible and functional. This is the reality and the world in which we as Oblates live and minister to the people.

As Oblates, we look at the world through the eyes of the Crucified Savior so that those who suffer will be strengthened with the hope of the power of the resurrection (C#4); this was the perspective

of our Founder St. Eugene de Mazenod and the Oblate charism. As Father Louis LOUGEN, our Superior General, says about the Oblate Charism: "We are fired by a charism that is unique and special in the Church, one that makes us very close to the poor, the rejected, the forgotten, the people that society ignores, and the people who don't feel accepted in church... We show a very human face of Jesus to the world, one full of compassion and solidarity." Thus, many Oblates all over the world are working with, among and for the poor and are therefore exercising this ministry, even though they may not use this JPIC terminology.

Therefore, as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and our associates, we strive to integrate into our ministry this vital aspect of the "liberating presence of Jesus Christ and the new world born in his resurrection" (C 9). We do this through our OMI JPIC congregational priorities.

These four Priorities were first developed in 2009 and were revised in 2012 following a process of both consultation and discernment by the Central Government and the OMI JPIC General Service. This process took into account the 2010 Chapter mandate "to develop fresh animation for mission and for discerning new missionary strategies and major missionary challenges". It is also very clear that these priorities are *ad intra*: Witnessing Jesus Christ faithfully through our Oblate Charism

demands that we put these priorities into practice first in our own Oblate community life; and *ad extra*: The way we organize our community is our first missionary commitment in witnessing and building the Kingdom of God, preached by Jesus, as the Good News for all Creation, all men and women. These priorities are:

HUMAN RIGHTS

We commit ourselves to work especially in promoting the rights of all peoples, as individuals and as communities, with special emphasis on indigenous peoples and migrants. We commit ourselves so that all peoples should be respected in their right to life from conception to life's natural end and to have access to basic human needs as well as the right to enjoy the free exercise of civic, political, social, religious and cultural rights, and to have a healthy community to live in.

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

We are also attentive to include in the initial and ongoing Oblate Formation curriculum the specific training in the area of conflict resolution and reconciliation at the social, religious and political levels, for instance between ethnic groups in the regions that we are currently ministering.

ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

We commit ourselves to an integral relationship between humanity and nature as gifts of God, and protection of the environment and commitment to ecology.

EDUCATION AND FORMATION

We are committed to the promotion of basic literacy and education as a fundamental right

so as to empower people in their search for greater dignity and opportunities. We believe that preparation and updating for this dimension of our mission should be included in all of our formation programs. This includes the different stages of initial formation, ongoing formation and leadership training programs that are planned at different levels of the congregation. We act so that lay people and Oblates together assume responsibility for our mission. Catholic social teaching and JPIC training needs to be an integral part of our formation programs for Oblates and the laity.

As Pope Francis states: "the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet, the poorest and the excluded, who are the majority of the planet's population, and who are often treated in international discussions as an afterthought or as collateral damage." He notes that "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS 48-49).

Therefore, in this Year of Mercy and the Oblate 200th anniversary, let us be renewed and resolved in our commitment to our mission and the ministry of JPIC. For this is the call and invitation from the forthcoming General Chapter, "Evangelizare pauperibus misit me". May Mary Immaculate strengthen and inspire us, as she herself is a woman of justice who sang of the new world of God's kingdom where the poor would be given their fill and find freedom as sons and daughters of God.

36TH GENERAL CHAPTER

Capitulars and Auxiliary Personnel

On 14 September 2016, 82 Oblates of Mary Immaculate will begin an historic journey that occurs approximately every six years: the 36th General Chapter. From the chapel of the General House of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rome, while singing the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, they will move in procession to the great *Aula* where the Superior General,

Fr. Louis LOUGEN, will officially open the meeting.

Some of those at the Chapter will be there "ex officio" (see names in **BOLD**). Five Brothers (names in *ITALICS*), one from each Region, have been invited by the Superior General. The rest were elected by their fellow Oblates from the various Regions, their number based on the number of professed Oblates in the Region.

There will be the “wisdom of age” and the “wisdom of youth.” The youngest capitular is 34 years old; the “senior capitular” is 79; both are from the Region of Africa-Madagascar. The median age is 52. The mean or average age is 53.8.

In addition to the capitulars, there will be some 48 Oblates (31 priests, 1 Brother, and 16 scholastics) serving as *auxiliary personnel*

to help the smooth day-to-day operation of the Chapter. The scholastics are students at the International Roman Scholasticate and the Italian Province’s International Scholasticate in Vermicino, just outside of Rome.

Throughout the Chapter, the Oblate Information Service will provide updates on the Congregation’s website (www.omiworld.org).

Capitulars

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

CAPITULAR	AGE	UNIT
Anthony David Kumar	47	General Administration
Archiati Paolo	64	General Administration
Brown Warren	61	General Administration
Dessureault Marc	53	General Administration
Fritz Miguel	61	General Administration
Lougen Louis	64	General Administration
Mosoeu Emmanuel	58	General Administration
Ngoka Cornelius	47	General Administration
Piñón Gilberto	73	General Administration
Rois Alonso Luis Ignacio	52	General Administration
Waidyasekara Clement	70	General Administration

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AFRICA-MADAGASCAR

CAPITULAR	AGE	UNIT
Azrak Mario	50	Kenya
Boatile Mothusi Sidney	34	Botswana
Cairns Ronald	69	S. Africa, Northern
Dagavounansou Edouard	39	Cameroun
<i>Diakanou Jean-Marie</i>	47	Cameroun
Favero Bruno	57	Senegal
Kasperski Mariusz	53	Madagascar
Kibombwe Freeborn Fr.	45	Zambia
Matsoso Antony	79	Lesotho
Mazibuku Vusumuzi	51	Natal
Mosemedi Lukas	43	Namibia
Muthunda Hengelela Guillaume	48	Congo
Nabwenje Charles	42	Zimbabwe
Nsolo Habell	56	Congo
Owono Ndihi Ferdinand	42	Cameroun
Rathokoa Mokone	50	S. Africa, Central

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ASIA-OCEANIA

CAPITULAR	AGE	UNIT
Daly Peter	61	Australia
De Guia Lauro	60	Philippines
De los Reyes Gerry Gamaliel	52	Thailand
<i>Garcia Noel</i>	50	Philippines
Giorgianni Maurizio	53	Korea
Kalisz Slawomir	45	China
Madej Andrzej	64	Turkmenistan
Rajabana Antonius	47	Indonesia
Rozairo Bradly	51	Japan
Sandhappan Chinappan	49	India
Sarkar Dilip	55	Bangladesh
Selvaratnam Edwin	51	Jaffna
Silva Jude Rohan	57	Colombo
Tran Quang Khuong Emmanuel	56	Vietnam
Warnakulasuriya Derrick Vernon	52	Pakistan
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CANADA-UNITED STATES

CAPITULAR	AGE	UNIT
Antone William	64	United States
Bleackley James	68	Lacombe
Forster Kenneth	69	Lacombe
Gil Marian	54	Asumption
Lepage Remi	41	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
Pulchny Christopher	65	Assumption
<i>Rossignol Jason</i>	38	United States
Studer Louis	66	United States
Taggart James	65	United States
Tardif Luc	64	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
Thorson Kenneth	50	Lacombe
Tremblay Pierre-Olivier	45	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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EUROPE

CAPITULAR	AGE	UNIT
Bochm Antoni	47	Poland
Coryn Daniel	73	Belgium-Netherlands
<i>Dabkowski Rafal</i>	36	Poland
Garcia Moreno Ismael	40	Mediterranean
Gnemmi Alberto	52	Mediterranean
Griffin Liam	64	Anglo-Irish
Gruber Vincent	54	France
Jastrzebski Andrzej	43	Poland
Kadlec Vlastimil Jan	43	Central European
Kluj Wojciech	50	Poland

Langlet Jacques Fr.	44	France
Obergfell Stefan	56	Central European
Rosato Gennaro	53	Mediterranean
Vervust Georges	74	Belgium-Netherlands
Warren Raymond	53	Anglo-Irish
Wyszkowski Pawel	41	Ukraine
Zajac Pawel	40	Poland
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LATIN AMERICA

CAPITULAR	AGE	UNIT
Albergati Tejera Jorge	53	Uruguay
Carrillo Francisco	65	Paraguay
Castillo Villegas Jose Luis	50	Mexico
Huaman Camayo Alberto	46	Peru
Mamani Calixto	46	Bolivia
Mariangeli Antonio	58	Argentina-Chile
Martinez Morales Jose Ariel	50	Mexico
Mazile Loudeger	59	Haiti
Printemps Jean-Francois	47	Haiti
Rubeaux Francisco	77	Brazil
<i>Ruiz Iriarte Ivar</i>	52	Bolivia
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Auxiliary Personnel (*Scholastics in italics*)

Auxiliary Person	Age	Unit	Role at Chapter
Allen James	78	United States	Secretary, Communications
<i>Amirhanathar Jenis</i>	29	Jaffna	Hospitality
Bernabe Ramon	52	Philippines	Moderator
<i>Berrutti Fernando</i>	26	Mediterranean	Liturgy
<i>Branda Danilo</i>	36	Mediterranean	Hospitality
Ciardi Fabio	67	General Admin.	Ambience
<i>Deurnoudj Omdel</i>	31	Chad	Secretariat
<i>Diodati Antonio</i>	27	Mediterranean	Secretariat
Doolalila Noel	44	Cameroun	Translator
Glabas Grzegorz	32	Mediterranean	Information Tech.
Harding Nicholas	64	United States	Translator
<i>Havlich Andriy</i>	37	Mediterranean	Hospitality
Igbozurike Alexius	39	Cameroun	Translator
<i>Jacinthe Vedely</i>	24	Haiti	Secretariat
Jasmin Jean Hérick	44	Colombia	Moderator
Jayawardena Shanil	35	General Admin.	Communications
Jazgier Marek	51	General Admin.	Secretariat
<i>Johannes Vitalis</i>	26	Namibia	Secretariat
Joseph Jean-Beauduis	36	Colombia	Translator
Keradec Bernard	70	France	Moderator
Khathali Calistus	48	Intern. Scholasticate	Liturgy, Hospitality

Klosterkamp Thomas	51	General Admin.	Hospitality
<i>Kulla Andre</i>	25	Central European	Liturgy, Hospitality
Laframboise Ronald	75	United States	Translator
Leblanc Daniel	65	United States	Translator
León Mario A.	42	Western Sahara	Translator
Lesage Maurice	80	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	Translator
Majola Bonga	35	General Admin.	Liturgy
<i>Malczewski Piotr</i>	22	Poland	Ambience
Muñoz David	34	United States	Translator
O'Donnell William	73	General Admin.	Secretariat
Olea Hipólito	39	Guatemala	Translator
<i>Orth Christian</i>	25	Central European	Liturgy
Ovalle Thomas	66	United States	Translator
Ratajczak Pawel	40	Assumption	Translator
Rozario Arun	43	General Admin	Secretariat
Saez Martín Diego	37	Ukraine	Translator
Saliba Renaud	46	France	Translator
Sartor Roberto	64	General Admin.	Hospitality, Ambience
<i>Sene Joseph</i>	27	Senegal	Liturgy
Serwin Marcin	30	Assumption	Information Tech
<i>Surenthirarajah James</i>	29	Jaffna	Liturgy
Velazquez Fernando	38	United States	Translator
<i>Vey Patrick</i>	25	Central European	Ambience
Wolniak Zygmunt Bro .	57	General Admin.	Assistant
Youngten Emmanuel	35	Cameroun	Translator
<i>Zulu Matthews</i>	33	Zambia	Liturgy

General Administration

INTERNATIONALEUGENE DE MAZENOD CENTRE

Congress on vocations to missionary life

Beginning on 7 July, some 32 Oblates coming from all the continents took part in a Congress on vocations to missionary life, one of the events organized by the Central Government during the bicentennial year of our foundation. Fr. Réjean VIGNEAULT from the Notre-Dame du Cap Province wrote this report on the congress.

We remember that three years ago, Father General invited us to enter into a Triennium to celebrate the jubilee of our 200th anniversary of foundation. Since then, many activities have taken place to highlight this great event. As part of the bicentennial, it was obvious that we should look at our involvement in the developing and formation of candidates for Oblate life. This is why two congresses were held, including one on our mission of ministry with youth, held in

March, and the one that brings us together now, concerning vocations to Oblate life. Father General, in his letter for the opening of the Triennium that began with the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception December 8, 2013, confirmed the need for vocation ministry as something vital for the Congregation.

We are 32 participants, coming from practically 30 different Units; the Aix community has welcomed us into this holy land of our Oblate origins. Everything began with a word of welcome from our Superior General, Father Louis LOUGEN and from Fr. Cornelius NGOKA, Assistant General in charge of formation.

Father Lougen reminded us that our coming to this Congress on vocations to missionary life is a reminder that we do believe in the future. Therefore, we are gathered in this place to deepen our family spirit. The Oblate Spirit is unique and

remarkable for our community. Knowing that our vocation ministry is so important, it is necessary that all our confreres remember this ministry in prayer.

“Come and see,” the theme for our meeting, allows us to hear Christ once again and also our Founder who challenges us in this “holy land.”

After the presentation of the program, we gathered around a small fire and lit small candles which we carried in procession to the chapel of the vows. There, we celebrated the opening liturgy of our congress.

For the following two days, nourished by prayer and celebrations, we started listening to the experiences of vocation ministry in our respective communities. They were intense days and rich in experiences of all kinds. For some, there is an abundance of wealth in manpower and material; for others, there is poverty humbly shared, but for all, the main thing is this: “Come and see.”

For two days, Brother Paul Bednarczyk, of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, spoke to us about the importance of discernment and accompaniment in our vocation ministry.

On the following days, we came to a better acquaintance with the first confreres of our holy Founder: Fathers Suzanne, Courtès and Marcou, Albini and Baveux. We went to Fuveaux and celebrated in the native village of Father Suzanne, a fruit of the first Oblate missions.

Thursday was a day of retreat. We spent the day in silence and we went to the Church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Seds for Eucharist. In the evening, before the Blessed Sacrament, we put our young aspirants into the hands of the One who calls us. During this entire time, we were accompanied by our confreres from the Aix community.

On Friday, during an evening liturgy, each participant signed the petition that the Founder and his companions had signed and sent to the Vicars General of Aix, two hundred years ago. On Saturday, 16 July, a pilgrimage to Marseille

gave closure to the Congress. Father General sent us into our mission and blessed us with the cross of the Founder.

INTERNATIONALEUGENEDEMAZENOD CENTRE

The COMI in Aix

The Secular Institute of the Cooperator Oblate Missionaries of the Immaculate (COMI: *Cooperatrici Oblate Missionarie dell’Immacolata*) spent ten grace-filled days (19 – 29 July) at the foundation house of the first Oblate community in Aix-en-Provence.

The first part was dedicated to the biannual report on the work accomplished by the General Directors. Immediately afterwards, the COMI took part in spiritual exercises in the footsteps of St. Eugene de Mazenod, wisely guided by Fr. Fabio CIARDI, Director of the General Service for Oblate Studies. Then, at the end of the retreat, there was a meeting of the General Council.

Special moments in these days were the missionary send-off of two COMI who will be opening a new mission in Argentina, the renewal of temporal vows by three COMI and the 50th anniversary of oblation of one member.

This experience provided the opportunity to return to the font of the charism of St. Eugene and to live, with renewed missionary zeal, the COMI vocation in the world, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the OMI Congregation.

For each COMI, it was a great gift to be welcomed into the “motherhouse”, thanks to the fraternal and warm welcome of the OMI community in Aix, and to have a special opportunity to live concretely among ourselves the commitment and the grace to be “one heart and one soul,” as St. Eugene recommended to his children.

The COMI, founded by the Oblate, Fr. Gaetano LIUZZO on 22 August 1951, as the “feminine face of the Oblates,” were granted papal approval in 2001. Currently, they are present in Italy, Congo, Uruguay and Argentina.

Africa-Madagascar

SENEGAL**The keys to the city for an Oblate**

During an evening gala, in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the township of Parcelles Assainies, a big area of three hundred thousand inhabitants on the outskirts of Dakar, Father Flavio FACCHIN, parish priest there from 2003 until 2013, received the keys to the city from the Mayor, Mr. Moussa Sy. The Missionary Oblates have taken care of Mary Immaculate Parish there since 1982.

This highly symbolic distinction was established for the first time by the chief magistrate of the city as a sign of exemplary collaboration between the two institutions. The Mayor was able to briefly trace the highlights of this collaboration in his speech, presenting Father Flavio as someone who was able to work to bring the two institutions together by promoting the commitment of Christians in the political and administrative life of the city.

Indeed, throughout his service as pastor at Mary Immaculate, Father Flavio has always tried to urge Christians to become involved in the social and political life of their communities by encouraging the commitment of several of them to political life. Christians are a small minority in Senegal in general and especially in Parcelles Assainies, but today their presence and commitment are hailed as an example in the context of Muslim-Christian dialogue and in taking charge of the destiny of the town. It is a huge challenge because Parcelles Assainies is one of the major townships in the suburbs of Dakar, with its problems and its many challenges.

Addressing the three hundred guests at the gala dinner – authorities, local dignitaries, traditional leaders, imams, people from show business and culture, administrators -- the Mayor praised these relationships by tracing the steps, over the course of years, that have worked for the welfare of young people in particular. Today, all the civil and religious events which the City Hall and Mary

Immaculate Parish organize are the result of intense collaboration and reflect the deep and lasting relations between the two institutions. With this symbolic handing over of the keys of the city to Father Flavio, the entire effort of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate who have worked in the area since 1982 is rewarded. In this year of the bicentennial of the founding of the Congregation and the 40th anniversary of the arrival of the Oblates in Senegal, this honor only provides further evidence, if it was need, of the involvement of the Oblates in their mission and of their concrete service to the promotion of dialogue and the growth of a conscious and responsible laity.

SOUTH AFRICA**Thousands celebrate OMI bicentennial**

In 1852, shortly after the first Oblates of Mary Immaculate arrived in Africa, they established a chapel and residence in Pietermaritzburg. Some 164 years later, that city was the site of the bicentennial celebrations of the Foundation of the Congregation and the ministry of the Oblates in Southern Africa. On 6 August, the 2000 seats of the Royal Agricultural Hall were filled with people who came to rejoice with the Oblates who have been such an historic presence of the Catholic Church in that part of the world. Many bishops, both Oblates and non-Oblates, from dioceses in South Africa, Lesotho, Zambia and elsewhere graced the occasion. Hundreds of priests, Oblates, diocesan and other religious, concelebrated. The President of the Africa-Madagascar Region, Fr. Edouard DAGAVOUNANSOU, came from Cameroun to join the festivities.

The Provincial of Natal (the Mother Province of Africa), Fr. Vusi MAZIBUKO, on behalf of the Inter-Provincial Conference, welcomed everyone. He said it was only fitting for the Oblates and the faithful in Southern Africa to honour the initiative of St. Eugene De Mazenod who spared nothing to make sure that the Gospel reached this side of the world.

After the welcome address by the Provincial, the history of the Oblates in Southern Africa was read by Fr. Zaba MBANJWA. He noted that if it were not for the Will of God and the insistence of the Founder, because of the early setbacks (departures, illness, local resistance), there would be no history to celebrate today. He spoke of the beginnings of the Oblates in South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Kenya.

The Archbishop of Durban, Wilfrid Cardinal Napier, OFM, stated: "With such history, it is only fitting that I hand this over to the Oblates!" Then the Cardinal invited the Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, to be the main celebrant at the Mass.

Bishop Barry WOOD, Auxiliary Bishop of Durban, in his homily, stressed the virtue of hope: "I see life! I see the Church growing! I see faith all over the land!", and the commitment of Oblates to their mission in the world. "We are known as specialists in difficult missions, and not specialists in making missions difficult! We are called to spare nothing, to dare, even if it means our giving our lives as Jesus did for our missions." After the closing prayer at Mass, the Preface to the Oblate Constitutions was read in English, Zulu and Sotho.

On behalf of the many people who work with the Oblates, Dr. Ben Ngubane, a respected statesman, civil rights activist and former student of the Oblates expressed his joy at being part of the family. He thanked the Oblates for the education and formation given to him and many others. He exhorted the people to have profound love and respect for priests who are saddled with the difficult task of forming and guiding the people.

Several others spoke words of thanks on the occasion. First was the Chairperson of the Interprovincial Conference and Superior of the Delegation of Zambia, Fr. Freeborn KIBOMBWE.

Wilfrid Cardinal Napier, OFM, exhorted the Oblates never to relent in their collaborative ministry with the MAMI as this clearly gives a sense of belonging to the people. He called the Oblates to live a life of gratitude while looking

at the past and to live the present with passion which begets hope for the future. He stated his happiness at having met the Oblates, journeying with them and working with them. His message to the Oblates was a message of hope and blessings. The Superior General, in his final words of thanks, expressed how emotional the whole celebration was for him: "An Oblate from this part of the world told me that men here don't cry. While that is true, for me, I could not help but shed tears of joy at that moment when I saw the statue of the Founder being carried in amidst songs and cries of joy." He said St. Eugene De Mazenod spared nothing to make sure that this Mission succeeded! He constantly prodded Bishop Jean-François ALLARD, first Superior of the Natal Mission, with letters to make sure that the Oblates went to the indigenous people to evangelize. Fr. General thanked everyone who contributed to make these bicentennial celebrations a success. Finally, Fr. General blessed the assembly with the cross of St. Eugene de Mazenod. (Emmanuel YOUNGTEN TEMSWANG)

ZAMBIA

Delegation celebrates bicentennial

The journey towards the celebration of our 200 years of existence was indeed successful after a series of committee meetings to plan the event. The grace of the Lord indeed was upon us. The anniversary is not just a historical event that needs to be recalled, but rather the story of how God prepared Eugene De Mazenod and used him as an instrument to bring about the creation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate whose number is now at almost 4,000 worldwide.

The anniversary Mass took place at Mary Immaculate Parish with Archbishop Julio Murat, Apostolic Nuncio to Zambia and Malawi, as the Presider. The homilist was the Oblate Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN. He pointed out in his homily that the 200th anniversary celebration was an achievement of God's grace. He said Oblates need to unite and support each other in order to continue their mission of serving the poor. "Together we will study God's words and help each other to be holy. By being united, we will reach to the poor, such as the prisoners".

He said celebrating the 200th anniversary during the Jubilee Year of Mercy was a great thing, because St. Eugene De Mazenod met mercy at the cross of Jesus, had passion for Him, the Church, and the poor. "When he was going to the prisons, he celebrated mass, had compassion for prisoners, and gave them Holy Communion. Many people did not like it at the time, because they believed that God was a God of vengeance and that for one to receive Holy Communion, they needed to confess several times".

As Oblates, we are thankful to God for the 200 years of existence; we have not come here to blow our own trumpet about how we have served in difficult missions and many other wonderful things we have done for the Church. We could say many things about that, but we want to thank God. Let's continue today to praise God for his amazing grace and for Eugene de Mazenod, the Missionary of Mercy. (By Nella Mukalenge)

NATAL Congress of young Anglophone Oblates

On 1 – 6 August, in beautifully warm and humid Durban (Marianhill), young Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the African Anglophone region gathered. Among those in attendance at the Congress were Oblates from Kenya, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and South Africa (Central Province, Northern Province and Natal Province) -- more than 45 in total.

The young Oblates were welcomed by Fr. Wayne WELDSCHIT (Vicar Provincial, Natal Province). Various speakers addressed the young Oblates throughout the week: Fr. Stuart BATE (Researcher at St. Joseph's Theological Institute); Fr. Emmanuel MOSOEU (General Councillor for Africa-Madagascar); Fr. Nkululeko MEYIWA (Assistant Rector at the Ngome Marian Shrine); Fr. Ewen SWARTZ (Dean of St. Joseph's Theological Institute and Canon Lawyer) and Fr. Siyabonga DUBE (District Superior and parish priest in Cape Town). They contributed to the Congress theme according to their fields and spoke to the hearts and minds of the young Oblates. They remembered the roots of the Congregation; they

celebrated successes and failures throughout the 200 years of the history of the Congregation; and they helped the young Oblates recommit themselves for the future.

Reports were then delivered by the different Provinces, Missions and Delegations. These reports revealed the wonderful news of joyful ministry and mission happening in various parts of Africa through the service of these Oblates. Young Oblates are involved in many spirit-filled ministries/missions: parish administration, province administration, media, chaplaincies, further studies, hospitals, academic ministries, youth ministries, to name but a few.

The Holy Eucharist, through the celebration of Holy Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, formed a unique part of each day. The homilies, the music, the sharing of peace and joy expressed hope for the future. The Holy Spirit was indeed present to these sons of St. Eugene de Mazenod!

Towards the end of the YOMI regional congress, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, Superior General, paid a visit. He brought with him a gift they will forever cherish: the Oblate cross of the Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod. Each Oblate had an opportunity to embrace the cross of the Founder. The cross went around slowly and reverently from one Oblate to the next, accompanied by a soft chant of the chorus composed using the last words of the Founder "Among yourselves, charity at all times."

Indeed, the young sons of St. Eugene are blessed. Upon them rests now the immediate future of the Congregation -- in Africa and beyond. The YOMI assembly 2016 was a resounding success, all thanks to the Natal Province in partnership with the Zimbabwe Mission.

The next YOMI regional congress will take place in Kenya in 2019, pending the approval of the regional Inter-Provincial Council (IPC). (Fr. Phumlani Charles NDLOVU)

CONGO Program of preparation for perpetual vows

From 10 July to 10 August 2016, 10 young

Oblates who have been admitted for final vows in the francophone sub-Region of the Africa-Madagascar Region gathered in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo for a preparatory retreat for perpetual vows. Fr. Gabriel KINZE from the Province of Congo was the coordinator and guide for the program. It was a privileged moment not meant to substitute the formation they had already received, but to help the candidates to make an informed choice once again and to deeply nurture to maturity their decisions by looking closely at the themes that are particularly important to religious life and the Congregation.

The themes that were developed during these four weeks of preparation are as follow:

1: Consecrated Life: concrete problems and present challenges (Fr. Gabriel KINZE)

2: Spirituality and sense of belonging (Fr. Beaudouin MUBESALA)

3: Formation on group dynamic (Fr. Cyril MPUKI)

4: Mary Immaculate: concrete model of the Oblate Charism (Fr. Abel NSOLO)

5: Vows: Foundation of our religious consecration (Fr. Clement MAYULI)

The young Oblates came from different Units of Africa. From the Province of Cameroon: Dieudonne TIZI, Gerard VONDOU and Gerald DJABARDE; from the Delegation of Senegal: Joseph SADIO and Joseph NDIAYE; from Congo: Dider INDIBI, J erry KAMBINYAM, B enjamin KIKWETE, Serge MPIANA; and from the Province of Natal studying in Cameroon, Andile DLADLA. (Emmanuel YOUNGTEN TEMSWANG)

Asia-Oceania

LAOS

19 young Laotians at WYD

The little Church of Laos lives in difficult conditions. However, 19 young people from the four dioceses of the country participated in World Youth Days, held in Poland in July. A confrere, who is a long-time Laotian Oblate missionary, speaks about the country, the Church and the youth.

Tell us about Laos.

Laos is a country of Buddhist culture. For example, when parents are not happy with their children, they tell them: "What karma did I do to have such children?" And when a child is born and they are going to visit the family, they say: "I am going to make a vigil at the house of karma." It's even part of their vocabulary.

What is the situation of the Church?

It's not something simple. In some respects, it's a little Church, a bit like the situation of the early Church: I know a catechist who must sell chickens to pay for the bus ticket for his visits to the communities! I also think of the priest (yes, singular!) who works with Bishop Ban Tchung in the north, toward Luang Prabang (the diocese where two martyrs were killed, Mario BORZAGA and his

Hmong catechist, in the 60s). Each year, he must request a letter with a list of all the villages that he wants to visit! And arriving in the village, he must report to the government official...

What is the relationship with Buddhism?

Due to pressure from the government, there is mutual participation in ceremonies, but this is very formal. Buddhists do not understand a religion of the cross, with a bleeding God. In Buddhist logic, if he died that way, it's because he had very bad karma! In dialogue, I try to say: Yes, indeed, he carries many karmas, but not his -- ours! As for Christians, they are a minority and they encourage the difference, which does not prevent Christians and Buddhists from getting together without daily conflicts.

Who are the young Christians who went to WYD?

They are very motivated. Some are children of officials. Their parents do not practice much. Several of these young people at times participate against the advice of their parents. I think of a young girl. Her father found her a government job. She refused. She works for an American Protestant NGO which subsidizes school children and small projects. Otherwise, most of the young people come from a Taiz  prayer group created

by a Daughter of Charity. Initially, in 2001, the group met in Vientiane. Now each diocese has its

own group. Some are young workers; others are students. (*Audacieux pour l'Évangile*, June 2016)

Canada-United States

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP

Celebrating bicentennial with Innu Elders

In the spirit of our bicentennial anniversary, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Notre-Dame-du-Cap Province, who work with the Innu Nation, joined hands with the Elders of the eleven Innu communities of Quebec and Labrador to underline this important part of our history. The relationship between the Oblates and the Innu Nation is as old as the history of the Oblates in Canada. The Oblates have been in contact with the Innu Nation (formerly called *les Montagnais*), since 1849. As a matter of fact, 8 years after the arrival of the Oblates in Canada, Fr Charles ARNAUD (1826-1914), was sent to work with the Amerindians of the Northern Shore of the Saint Lawrence River estuary and the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, beyond Tadoussac. He was in charge of a vast land of 247,633.94 km².

The mission with the Innus was, at its beginning, very difficult, although relatively fruitful. The effort to evangelize other Nations such as the Neskapi proved less successful.

On the occasion of the annual gathering of the

Innu Elders, in order to emphasize the good will between the Oblates and the Innu Nation, a Nation of people with a heart of gold, Fr. Gerard TSETSALAM, the parish priest of the host community, Nutasquan, worked with the people to organize a special celebration.

It was indeed a joyful moment, as the Elders had the opportunity to remember many influential Oblates whom they had known in their childhood. They showed much joy as the names of Oblates who had worked in various communities of the North shore were read.

Towards the end of the Eucharistic celebration, Fr Alfred RAVELOMAMPISANDRAIBE briefly reminded the congregation of the journey of the Oblates, starting from the founding days at Aix-en-Provence to our present day. He concluded by reminding the audience of the role played by the Oblates in the evangelization of the First Nations of Canada and called upon the members of the Innu Nation who wish to share our charism as Oblate Associates not to hesitate in contacting any of our missionaries present in their different communities.

Europe

POLAND

Oblate World Youth Encounter

What a wonderful sight it was to see over 1300 youth from around the world gathering in one place, for their love of St. Eugene and his charism! All those who participated in the Oblate World Youth Encounter in Wrocław, Poland, were able to witness this from July 20-25, 2016. The Oblates of the Province of Poland joined hands with their youth association, NINIWA, in organizing this beautiful event.

It brought together youth and Oblates representing all the Oblate Regions. After the formal registration, a grand opening ceremony was held on the evening of the first day. All the participant

countries were warmly welcomed, one by one, to the loud applause of all those present at the *Orbita* Indoor Stadium. A spectacular musical drama, which narrated the vision of St. John in the book of Revelation, was the highlight of the night.

The next three days were dedicated to various activities which helped the participants not only to have more interaction among themselves, but also to immerse themselves in the Oblate spirituality in the light of the life of St. Eugene. Each day featured a talk; principal speakers were delivered by Fr. Luis Ignacio ROIS (General Councilor for Europe), Fr. Louis LOUGEN (Superior General) and Mons. Jan KOT (Bishop of the Diocese of Zé Doca, Brazil). The daily

Holy Masses were lively, made all the more beautiful by melodious hymns sung in various languages and cheerful action-songs. All these took place in the Oblate Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wrocław.

The Way of the Cross that was held on July 22nd was a unique. The reflections were based not only on the traditional Stations of the Cross, but also on the challenging life and mission of Bl. Josef CEBULA, the Polish Oblate martyr. The streets of the little town of Popowice were filled with the Oblate youth and the parishioners who also came in great numbers to attend the Way of the Cross. It was followed by a charismatic prayer service and adoration, conducted by Fr. Błażej MIELCAREK and the NINIWA band. Their music kept the participants in the mood of prayer already created by the Way of the Cross. One afternoon was also dedicated to sightseeing around the beautiful city of

Wrocław. The friendly football match between the Oblates and the youth (during which Fr. Superior General played as well) should also be mentioned as a much appreciated event.

On the final day, the mixed feelings on the faces of the youth were obvious. They were happy as the event helped them find new friends. They were also sad, as they had to say good-bye to one another before heading to Krakow for the World Youth Day. Certainly, the Oblate Youth Encounter opened the eyes of those young people to a unique ‘Oblate reality’: Unity in Diversity.

Special thanks should go to Fr. Antoni BOCHM, the Provincial and the Oblates of the Polish province, the NINIWA youth group, the volunteer team and all those who worked with them to make the event a huge success. (Fr. Shanil JAYAWARDENA)

Latin America

PARAGUAY

Nivaçle Dictionary: new edition

“A final gift from the unforgettable Fr. José SEELWISCHE:” with these words, they announced the presentation of the third edition of the Nivaçle Dictionary, whose author was the great missionary of this indigenous people in the Paraguayan Chaco, where the Missionary Oblates opened their first mission in all of South America in 1925.

From 1954 until 2000, Fr. José Seelwische dedicated his whole life to the Nivaçle – a people who would no longer exist if it were not for the arrival of the Oblates. After having formed the first teachers of this culture (beginning in 1972), he began preparing books in the native language; hence, the first dictionary in 1980. A new edition, ten years later, added a Spanish- Nivaçle column.

The interest of the Mennonite missionaries, who already were using the dictionary in schools and communities belonging to their religion, helped promote a new edition, enlarged and corrected. Two linguistic congresses of the indigenous people, organized by them, with the support of the missionaries of both religions, finally prepared this new book. The Nivaçle, who had already formed an Academy of their language, recognized by the State of Paraguay, updated the script and the alphabet.

Therefore, after several years of work, at the end of August 2016, the “Center for Anthropological Studies of the Catholic University of Asunción” was able to present this new edition of the Nivaçle Dictionary, once again rendering homage to its original author, José Seelwische OMI. (Miguel FRITZ)

Anniversaries -- October 2016

70 years of religious life

11.10.1946	08770	Bro. Pasquale Valiante	Mediterranean
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60 years of religious life

15.10.1956	10781	Fr. Xavier Mandron	France
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50 years of priesthood

13.10.1966	10656	Fr. Leopold Ratnasekera	Colombo
20.10.1966	10895	Fr. William Stang	Lacombe

25 years of religious life

15.10.1991	13471	Fr. Luca Mancini	Mediterranean
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25 years of priesthood

05.10.1991	13065	Fr. Pasquale Castrilli	Mediterranean
12.10.1991	13010	Fr. Marc Dessureault	General Administration
19.10.1991	12996	Fr. Claudio Bertuccio	Thailand
19.10.1991	13063	Fr. Domenico Di Meo	Uruguay
19.10.1991	13062	Fr. Maurizio Giorgianni	Korea
19.10.1991	13068	Fr. Francesco Volpintesta	Mediterranean

Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 53-61

Name	Prov./Del.	Born	Died at	Date
Fr. William McHugh	United States	30/09/1925	San Antonio	18/07/2016
Fr. Jean-Eudes Boudreault	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	14/05/1933	Richelieu	27/07/2016
Fr. Joseph Daudier	Haiti	06/11/1924	Gonaives	28/07/2016
Fr. Pedro Rotger	Argentina/Chile	28/12/1932	Palma de Mallorca	31/07/2016
Bro. Wilhelm Dickmann	Namibia	25/01/1929	Windhoek	09/08/2016
Fr. Jean-René Talabo	Zambia	12/12/1962	Lusaka	14/08/2016
Fr. Johannes Terhorst	Central European	19/10/1930	Hünfeld	16/08/2016
Fr. John Pilaczynski	United States	08/02/1932	San Antonio	27/08/2016
Fr. Józef Pielorz	Poland	22/01/1921	Tychy	01/09/2016

“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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