



OMI INFORMATION OMI INFORMACION OMI INFORMAZIONE OMI NACHRICHTEN OMI WIADOMOŚCI OMI

Information No. 506 (English)

December 2010

Generous cooperators in the work of new evangelization

Father Jean Hérick JASMIN, the director of the Oblates' prenovitiate in Colombia, was a translator during the XXXV General Chapter. Upon his return to Bogotá, he wrote this editorial in the prenovitiate's newsletter.

On Wednesday, October 6, 2010, at the conclusion of his catechesis on Saint Gertrude, Pope Benedict XVI greeted, in Italian, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, stressing that the goal of the XXXV General Chapter being held in Rome was to renew apostolic zeal and to make more present the charism of the Institute "so as to cooperate generously in the work of the new evangelization."

Obviously, at that wonderful moment, I felt very proud of being an Oblate, as I heard the pope, in just a few words, highlighting the distinctive mark of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Little by little, this pride, without being lost, transformed itself for me into a question: What does it mean to be a cooperator in the new evangelization, today, at the beginning of the third millennium? Better still, what is the real meaning of this renewal of Oblate identity?

The Fourth Santo Domingo Conference reminded us that "all evangelization begins with the mandate of Christ to his apostles and their successors; it develops within the community of the baptized, in the midst of living communities that share the faith, and it is aimed at strengthening the life of filial adoption in Christ, expressed primarily in fraternal love (cf. S.D. #23). Thus it proclaims

that the New Evangelization "has its point of departure in the Church, through the power of the Spirit, in a continuous process of conversion, seeking to give witness to unity in the diversity of ministries and charisms and living intensely its missionary commitment." (S.D. #23)

To speak of the New Evangelization in the context of Oblate life, a few months after the celebration of the XXXV General Chapter, means that, in the face of the tragic situations of injustice and suffering of our people, amidst the cries against social inequality and situations of violence, secularism, wasteful hedonism, we are called to give answers that "only the Church can give, as the sign of reconciliation and bearer of life and hope." (S.D. #23)

The New Evangelization becomes for us Oblates today one of the inspiring images to glean from the gospel message as "new lights for new problems." (S.D. #24) Being cooperators in the New Evangelization as Oblates today means being able to receive, consciously and freely, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the threefold gift of conversion (a new heart, a new spirit, a new will). It means being able to create a truly human and multicultural history; being able to form men and communities that are mature in the faith and provide an answer to the new situation in which we live. It means being pilgrims among pilgrims, living not only spiritual fatherhood but also spiritual brotherhood. (A.Cencini, 1996:42)

General Administration

GENERAL HOUSE

Celebrating a new Central Government

On January 6, 2011, there will be a special celebration at the General House in Rome. The new Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, and his General Council will ask God's blessing on their new ministry of service to the Congregation.

To join them for the occasion, besides the local communities of via Aurelia, 290, other Oblates from the area have been invited. There will also be guests from religious general administrations in Rome and other friends of the Oblates, lay and religious.

While the new Central Government elected at the 35th General Chapter in late September did have the opportunity to meet after the Chapter concluded, in January they will begin their first month-long Plenary Session. Besides the usual business that occurs during such sessions, this meeting will give them the opportunity to begin making plans for their six-year mandate and to assign portfolios and internal committee positions.

FOUNDER AND CHARISM ANIMATION SERVICE

Eugene de Mazenod speaks to us every day

The Founder and Charism Animation Service was born from the conviction that we Oblates have not done enough to make Eugene known. Yet whenever we speak of his spirit and charism to others, we find that they are attracted to him and to his vision because he continues to have something of great value to say to us today.

With this in mind, a personal blog was started in which I published a text from Eugene's writings each day for a small group of English-speaking Oblate animators. Some liked it and suggested that I make it generally available as an open blog on the internet. I did so in May, and the reaction and interest surprised me, so that from this initiative were born three further versions: in French, Spanish and Italian. In December a German version will come into existence.

What is its purpose? Firstly, it is to make the person and writings of Eugene known by publishing a daily text with an explanatory comment. It is the fruit of a daily meditation on a text of our Founder in the hope that others will pause to reflect on it and will find it helpful. I go through his writings basically in a chronological way (and sometimes around a theme) – so some days the text may not say much to some, but be useful to others.

Secondly, by means of the search engine and of the tags on the site it is possible to look up a word or concept and find Eugene's thoughts and words on it. At this stage in English there are only some 180 daily entries, but over the years it will increase and should become a useful research tool. For this reason I keep it as scientifically correct as possible, indicating the source of all references.

Thirdly, it is possible for all to publish comments on the writings, and to bring some reactions and thought-provoking insights to the site.

The addresses are:

In English: <http://www.eugenedemazenod.net>
 Spanish: <http://www.eugenedemazenod.net/esp>
 French: <http://www.eugenedemazenod.net/fra>
 Italian: <http://www.eugenedemazenod.net/ita>
 German: <http://www.mazenod.de>

We hope that through this work, many others will be as inspired as I am by the spirit of Eugene de Mazenod and the difference it can make to the lives of people in our world. (Frank SANTUCCI, OMI, FCA: Founder and Charism Animation Service)

JPIC

An Oblate represents VIVAT in Vienna

Fr. Tomas VYHNALEK, a member of the Central European Province and a native of the Czech Republic, was appointed in July as an official representative of VIVAT International at the UN headquarters in Vienna.

The UN in Vienna focuses on Drugs and Crime and Fr. Vyhnalek intends to focus on Human Trafficking, Migrant Smuggling, Criminal Justice, Prison Reform and HIV-AIDS. All of these are issues that are of prime interest to the Oblates as well as to VIVAT. The mission of VIVAT is designed to provide opportunities for the “voices of the poor to be heard where decisions are taken affecting their lives” (CC. RR 9a).

The VIVAT International website defines the

NGO as: “an organized network of all the members of SSpS and SVD, ASC, CMS, CSSP, MCCJ, MSHR, OMI, whose work, expertise, and experience has a direct bearing on issues related to social justice, development, peace and ecology, and whose work, expertise, or experience has direct bearing on issues related to social justice, development, peace, or ecology. It also includes those directly associated with these congregations in their apostolate and activities related to the above issues.” (see <http://vivatinternational.org/>)

Latin America

COLOMBIA

Living the Chapter at the prenovitiate in Bogotá

During the 35th General Chapter of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the community of the Oblate prenovitiate in Bogotá was in constant prayer, with the participation of all its members.

These moments of prayer were not only constant but also intense. We also invited the ladies who live near our house of formation, as well as some friends, especially the members of the Oblate friends' club in Niza Antigua. We truly lived the Chapter with enthusiasm, even though we were more than seven hours of time difference from the locale of the Chapter itself; yet we heard the summons of the Lord Jesus, calling us to the most important gathering in Oblate life. It was a moment of communal life as we gathered around Jesus Christ (as in the scene from the Acts of the Apostles) to learn about the norms of the community.

We learned how much our neighbors and friends appreciate the Oblates, even more so during the Chapter, since they asked about the community and what the capitulars were experiencing. They also expressed their affection for Fr. Hérick, wondering how he was doing in the Eternal City of Rome and how he was doing at the Chapter.

Throughout all of this, as prenovices, we were proud to be part of this community and we can testify that the Oblates of Colombia, in their mission, are little by little imprinting in the heart of the neighbors and friends of the prenovitiate of Niza Antigua a very large mark of God's love.

During the Chapter, we prenovices held a day of retreat with the postulants from Calvo Sur. It was a good time to talk about the nature of a General Chapter and what they were discussing in the chapter assembly at the Casa La Salle in Rome. For us prenovices, it was moment of renewal of our vocational commitment through our sharing and the strengthening of our fraternal and communal bonds.

At home, during the whole Chapter, our prayer and the daily Eucharist were offered for the intention of the Chapter and the whole Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Thanks to the online coverage of the Chapter, the news, updated daily by those responsible for the web page of the Oblates, was a means by which we felt connected to the reality of the Chapter. It was awesome, the way all the news was provided in a timely fashion and the way that communications within and beyond the Chapter were handled. We really felt very proud of the human talents we have in the Congregation.

Finally, during the retreat preceding the election of the new Superior General, we too were able to pray that the Holy Spirit would enlighten the voters to make the right decision about who would direct the course of the Oblate family which some day, our father, St. Eugene de Mazenod, will reunite in the community of the Lord Jesus so as to receive the crown of glory. (Marlon David Espitaleta Mejía, Prenovice OMI-Bogotá, in the *Boletín Institucional*, November/December 2010)

Africa-Madagascar

CAMEROON

Missionaries celebrate Polish Independence Day

Even though they are far from their homeland, Polish Oblates working in the African Republic of Cameroon gathered with other missionaries at the Honorary Consulate in Yaoundé to celebrate Polish Independence Day on November 11. It was the end of the First World War, November 11, 1918, that once again established Poland as an independent nation.

Presiding at the Eucharist on this occasion was Bishop Jan Ozga of the Diocese Doumé-Abong' Bang, one of two Polish missionary bishops in Cameroon. The other is an Oblate, Bishop Eugene JURETZKO of the Diocese of Yokadouma.

In his homily, Bishop Ozga recalled that part of the missionary vocation is to respect every human being. "Cameroon is our homeland, because here we live, work and fulfill our

missionary vocation. This is our second home and it merits the same respect as Poland. We should respect every citizen of this country, even those who have caused us harm or deceived us or offended us... That is the law of love. Each person is a sanctuary where God dwells." The bishop stated that the road to independence was a difficult one for the Polish people. "The painful events of 1918 have made us sensitive to all who come together for political freedom and freedom understood in all of its dimensions."

The vast majority of Poles living permanently in Cameroon are missionaries: religious men and women, *fidei donum* priests and laity. Among them are 16 Missionary Oblates. Missionary work consists primarily in proclaiming the Gospel and building up Christian communities. But for years, many of the missionaries have been involved in the work of development and activities to promote justice and peace. (*from www.oblaci.pl, Fr. Chris ZIELEND*)

Europe

BELORUSSIA

The parish apartment

Since September, the Oblate community in Minsk has had three members: Frs. Piotr BIELEWICZ, Andrzej JUCHNIEWICZ and Dymitr ZANIAMOŃSKI, all of them citizens of Belorussia, since the local authorities will not register foreign pastoral ministers.

The Oblates' "monastery" is on the tenth (and last) floor of an apartment building. Since there is no parish church, the 120 square meter apartment is the only parish structure available.

The Oblate parish is in its beginning stages. They have already received State and Church approval as an administrative entity. In practice, this means that people who live in the neighborhood are slowly beginning to identify with their pastors, the "Oblate Fathers," but it will be a long process taking many years.

Since there is no church or oratory, they meet with the parishioners in one of the existing churches on the "Golden Hill" of Minsk, the Church of the Most Holy Trinity.

Besides pastoral care, the ministry includes other interesting services such as the preparation of couples for the Sacrament of Matrimony, usually in their homes; and there is the preparation of children for Baptism or the Sacrament of Reconciliation or First Communion.

The Oblates also contribute to the pastoral care of families; Fr. Piotr is the diocesan coordinator of this ministry and has acted in defense of the unborn at abortion clinics. He has often spoken with mothers who wanted an abortion and he has conducted training for family counseling. More recently, they organized a demonstration for life. In central parks in the Belarusian capital, Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants came

together in various ways to defend life.

Every Friday evening, there is meeting for scripture study and depending on the season, 30 to 80 people take part, highly educated people such as doctors, teachers and students.

Minsk is a city of students; therefore, on Sunday evenings, there are meetings with young people. We have to meet in our Oblate apartment. These meetings are “illegal” because, according to Belorussian law, every meeting place for youth must be registered, especially if it is religious.

Many of the young people come for private conversations. Some of them are getting ready to approach the first of the sacraments, Baptism, Confession and Communion. Often, they are just discovering the reality of God which they generally have not experienced before.

There are also sessions for learning to play the guitar and for learning the Polish language. It will be a long wait before a church can be built because they issue only two building permits per year. But in the near future, the Oblates will introduce something new for the people: parish missions. (www.oblaci.pl)

POLAND

Nineveh Youth gather for their 13th Congress

The Nineveh Evangelical Communities have given new life to Oblate parish youth groups in Poland. Their spirituality is based on the apostolic person and they see themselves as sent into the world, the Nineveh of today, to call others to conversion.

This year, the Nineveh youth took up the problem of human freedom at their 13th Congress in Markowice. Some 230 people convened for a four-day meeting from Oblate parishes in Katowice, Kędzierzyn-Koźle, Poznań, Iława, Gorzów, Lubliniec, Laskowice and Kokotek. The Congress was also attended by Oblate Sisters from Spain and Sisters Servants. Father Krzysztof JUREWICZ, Director of the Vocation Department was also present.

On the first day, Father Tomasz MANIURA from the Nineveh Formation Centre greeted all those who had arrived and after a short joint prayer, the participants went to their assigned places around Markowice to spend the night in the houses of the parishioners.

On the second day of the Congress, the young participants not only prayed together but they also listened to two lectures on freedom. The first one was given by the honorary Oblate Mr. Edmund Mikołajczak, a history teacher, in which he spoke of freedom against an historical and political background. The second lecture was given by Father Wojciech POPIELEWSKI, biblical scholar and director of a divinity school, who showed freedom in the framework of Holy Scripture.

An important event of that day was the Way of the Cross that led to the Oblate cemetery, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the Eucharist presided by Father Andrzej ALBINIAK. Father Łukasz ZAJĄC delivered a fiery sermon.

Saturday morning began with a prayer service in the Shrine of the Mother of God, Our Lady of Kuyavia, and a lecture by Fr. /Dr. Paweł Gabar, who spoke about modern threats to freedom.

After the lecture, the participants had an opportunity to visit the sites at the Shrine of Our Lady of Kuyavia. Before noon, the participants of a cycling tour to Jerusalem shared their experiences during their journey to the Holy Land.

After dinner, the whole community went to take part in Holy Mass presided by the Oblate Provincial, Fr. Ryszard SZMYDKI. In the afternoon and the evening, the participants went on a sightseeing tour of Inowrocław and attended a concert performed by a Katowice band TEA.

The last day of the Nineveh Congress began with Morning Prayer and then the young participants were invited to take part in the activities of the missionary volunteers who will go on a mission to Ukraine in July and August.

Those who were particularly touched by God's

presence during the Congress had an opportunity to give witness. Before the Congress came to an end, all the participants were invited to the next one in the Spring. (Błażej MIELCAREK)

POLAND

Meeting a bishop from Iraq

On November 12, several members of the Oblate scholasticate community at Obra participated in a meeting with Archbishop Louis Sako of Kirkuk, Iraq.

The first part of the meeting was a poignant Way of the Cross, led by the pastor of the Cathedral of Poznan, Fr. Irene Szwarc. The participants prayed for countries where Christians are being persecuted and murdered; they associated with the pain of followers of Christ in China, India, Sudan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and many other places.

Then Archbishop Sako spoke of the situation of Christians in Iraq. He told of murdered priests, of attacks on churches during services, about the fear that haunts Christians every day. He also spoke of the heroic priests who devote themselves totally to God and to His people. He talked about the October 31 massacre of priests and faithful when armed militants entered a Church during Mass.

The archbishop begged the participants not to abandon the Christians of Iraq. The worst thing would be for them to think that the Church has forgotten them. They feel very lonely. (*Bro. Bart PAŁYGA in www.oblaci.pl*)

SPAIN

The Oblates are getting ready in Málaga

Málaga is full of excitement because of the preparations for World Youth Day (WYD). The Spanish Oblate youth are preparing to welcome the thousands of pilgrims that will visit them next August in the days leading up to WYD.

The Oblates' greatest contribution to "Madrid 11" will be the International Oblate Youth Encounter held in the Diocese of Málaga. It is a gathering of Oblate youth from all over the world that will take

place in the week previous to WYD (from August 11th-15th), to welcome over 2,000 young people from Spain and other parts of the world such as Australia, Sri Lanka, Canada, or Paraguay. This isn't the first time that this encounter takes place; it was also done in Sydney and Cologne.

The objectives of these days in Málaga are to prepare the young people for WYD, to hear testimonies that will help them go deeper into the missionary spirit in their lives, and to encourage an intercultural exchange in the Oblate family through an interpersonal encounter, for which catechesis, Masses and meetings are organized. All of this will be done in the different languages of WYD. To be able to reach their goal, the Oblates are counting on eight parishes and a sports center to receive the pilgrims.

Lorena is one of the young people that collaborate with the congregation. She is 21 years old, and tells how excited she is for WYD to arrive. She participated in other World Youth Days in 2005 and 2008, and from her own experience she affirms that she is looking forward to "seeing so many people that live the faith like you do, that have the same experience as you. To share this is a very powerful feeling."

Fr. Ismael GARCÍA is in charge of coordinating the preparations of this massive encounter. This includes speaking to the local authorities to find places for the youth to stay, asking banks to help to finance the costs, and even contacting food chains to be able to nourish the pilgrims. His work also includes looking for cultural activities that will show the Spanish culture to the young foreigners, or searching for translators to facilitate communication during those days. They are also doing everything that is possible to get help in order to bring in young people from disadvantaged countries, like Bangladesh.

But Fr. Ismael is not alone. Lorena and the rest of the young volunteers are getting together regional choirs and flamenco groups, who with their art will give testimony of the Andalusian patrimony and culture to the foreigners who will come to the International Oblate Youth Encounter. They are also going to the schools of Málaga to make

the youth aware of the unforgettable experience that this great Catholic youth event will be.

After the days in Málaga, they will all travel to Madrid to meet up with the thousands of other young people who will be waiting for them in the Spanish capital. There, they will stay in Pozuelo de Alarcón, a city close to Madrid, where the Oblates have a house of formation. During those days they will have a ceremony in commemoration of the martyrs that died in that house, and who will soon be beatified.

For those two weeks the Oblate theme has been adapted from the WYD theme: "With the Oblate martyrs, planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith." (www.madrid11.com)

POLAND

Celebrating a 90th anniversary

There have been Polish members of the Oblate Congregation since the late nineteenth century. However, after their vows and ordination, they exercised their ministry primarily among Polish immigrants in Germany and in Canada.

Eventually, especially after the 1918 independence of Poland, they desired to spread the charism of the St. Eugene de Mazenod in their homeland. On June 6, 1920, the first Oblate community was established in Krotoszyn, Poland, directly dependent on the General Administration in Rome. Shortly thereafter, a second house was opened in Markowice and a vice-province was created, the beginning of the present province. It was governed by a vicar-provincial and four councillors.

On June 13, 1925, Poland became the twelfth province in the Oblate Congregation. It consisted of only 12 priests and 5 Oblate Brothers.

After years of domination by other countries, Poland was experiencing an extraordinary religious revival, so much so that it was, before long, able to send missionaries to the ends of the earth.

On September 20 until October 18, 1926, the

21st General Chapter was held in Rome. It was attended by 64 provincials and delegates, among whom the first two Poles: the provincial, Fr. Francis SMITH, and Fr. John PAWOLEK. They were able to report on the first successes and joys of the young province: the increasing number of juniors in Lublin and Krobia; the developing houses of formation: a novitiate at Markowice and scholasticates in Krobia and Obra. They also reported on the pastoral work in Poland: hundreds of sermons preached and dozens of missions and retreats conducted. They also mentioned the missionary magazine, *Oblat Niepokalanej (Oblate of Mary Immaculate)* which had many subscribers. It was clear to everyone that the youngest province, Poland, was one of the most thriving in the Oblate world.

A paper that emphasized the participation of the Poles in the General Chapter of 1926 was presented at the 90th anniversary celebrations held at the scholasticate in Obra on October 11, 2010. It complemented the witness of the oldest men in the Polish Province who still remember the good men who shaped it from the beginning. (*Paweł ZAJĄC in www.oblaci.pl*)

ITALY

European Mission Congress 2010

The European Commission for Mission (CEM) held a Congress in Vermicino, Italy, on November 10-15, 2010. The theme for this year's encounter was: *How to live family life so as to be a witness to Christ in society.*

The vicar provincial of the Province of Poland, Fr. Marcin SZAFORS, organized and chaired the meetings. The provincial of the Anglo-Irish Province, Fr. Willy FITZPATRICK served as liaison for the provincial of Europe. The Oblate Vicar General, Fr. Paolo ARCHIATI, was also present and gave a talk summarizing the proceedings.

There were 21 participants and three translators at the Congress, including 10 Oblates from the various European provinces, representing eight different nations; and there were nine lay participants.

The overall purpose of the meeting was to learn

about the involvement of the Oblates in the Family Apostolate in the European Region. Both the Oblates and the lay people working with the Oblates in this area shared their experiences from their respective countries.

In some places, the involvement with families is less (e.g., it is limited to preparation for marriage in the parishes). Much more is being done in Italy, Poland and Spain.

During the encounter, there was emphasis in particular on the Oblate charism, family life and a vision for the future.

Everyone agreed that the Congress was only the beginning, a first step toward a future Congress, which would be much broader and include the help of specialists such as sociologists and psychologists.

The participants hope that the provincials of Europe will make the Family Apostolate a priority and set up a commission to review the situation and organize both local meetings and a future Congress. (Robert WAWRZENIECKI and Richard WOLAK)

SPAIN

Meeting about Youth and Vocation Ministry

The European Commission for Youth and Vocation Ministry met in Malaga, Spain, on November 19-24, 2010. Oblates from most of the European Units prayed and discussed important topics related to their commission's portfolio.

Fr. Ismael GARCIA gave a progress report about preparations for the Oblate World Youth Days to be held next summer in Malaga, prior to the WYD events in Madrid. Further proposals were offered and some concrete plans were made for the program of this gathering of Oblate youth from all over the world.

A retreat for European youth had been held in Marino, Italy, during the summer. There was an evaluation of this event and the decision was made to have such retreats every three years. For the youth, it was a good opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Oblate charism, to become

more familiar with St. Eugene de Mazenod, and to create a network among youth of the various Units in Europe. The commission appreciated the contributions of Frs. Frank SANTUCCI and Fabio BASTONI during the retreat.

Guest speakers at the commission's meeting were the General Councillor for Europe, Fr. Chicho ROIS, and the provincial of Spain, Fr. Otilio LARGO. They helped the participants integrate their ideas and plans with the goals of the whole Congregation. (Bartosz MADEJSKI)

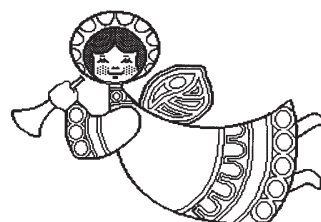
ITALY

In the steps of St. Eugene in Naples

On Sunday, November 7, there took place in Naples an event for the youth of Campania who are in contact with the Missionary Oblates. It was called: "In the steps of St. Eugene in Naples." The agenda for the day focused on the year 1798, the year when young Eugene de Mazenod, the Founder of the Missionary Oblates, lived in Naples.

The day began with the celebration of Holy Mass in the Church of the Immaculate at Pizzofalcone where the Oblate community resides. Then the participants came together to listen to biographies of St. Eugene during his Neapolitan period. In the afternoon, there was a visit to the Church of Santa Maria in Portico on Riviera di Chiaia, the neighborhood where sixteen year-old Eugene lived with his father.

Besides the young people from Naples, there were also youth coming from Santa Maria a Vico, Aversa, and Nocera Superiore, a total of 80 participants. Among the participants, there was also the Oblate novitiate community from Marino near Rome. Organizers for the gathering were Frs. Pasquale CASTRILLI and Ciro ANDREOZZI.



Canada-United States

OMI LACOMBE**Suffer the little children to come unto me**

Fr. Mark BLOM is a missionary among the First Nations communities in the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas.

One of the prominent features of life in First Nations communities is how many young people there are. Since my assignment to Southend began nearly three years ago I was amazed at how many children there were in the community of about a thousand people.

For the first year, I was not invited often to the school but I met young people while on walks around town and at the seasonal events. As many Oblates know, I like to ring the church bell for a long time and gradually the kids were curious to see what all the noise was about. Over time, a regular knot of kids began to gather during the half hour before the evening Eucharist in the church.

I got to know all their names and families; then I began to talk to them about the meaning of the symbols in the church and then we started to practice prayers.

I found that the more that I wanted to teach them, the less they wanted to pay attention. So for a while we spent time learning to make the simple string rosaries and later clothespin crosses.

During the second summer at Southend, I spent afternoons in a large shack on the church property making rosaries with kids, colouring and doing other religious crafts. Recently I have gone to the popular “open concept” in the rectory by moving the stairs, knocking out a few walls and making a long serving counter. Now the kids come over to the rectory after school and I serve bannock, jam and apples. The children often spend time writing faith messages on a large white board in the living room. It can often be quite chaotic with nine youngsters running around the house, all wanting something or other.

My high hopes of catechizing the youth of the area hasn't panned out the way I wanted because they don't want to be talked at a lot. Instead, what is emerging is community. With all those needy kids, there are always lots of upsets, fights and conflict. But I am trying to bring their energy and needs to the promise of the gospel by helping them see not only their needs but those of others around them. By addressing the issues that arise from their lives: shoplifting, sniffing and the sudden death of their friends, widespread addictions and broken families I am working to help these young people see their struggles in the compassion of Christ who meets them even in their hardships.

I go through a lot of flour, jam and apples these days and sometimes the kids show up just when I am ready to start some work around the property. I try to stop and give them the attention and encouragement that they come for. And perhaps because of this, they also respect me when I tell them that I need to rest and can't visit.

I hadn't planned this style of ministry to youth and it has been challenging but more rewarding. I have made many more connections within the parish and the community because of the relationships that have been formed around the simplest of hospitality. God's blessing to all the little ones that we are sent and who learn to speak the Gospel in new words because of our ministry. (www.omilacombe.ca)

UNITED STATES**The homeless teach Oblate scholastics**

Scholastics at the Oblate School of Theology (OST) in San Antonio, Texas, are taught by professors with extensive knowledge of Christianity. But the students are also taught by people with a wealth of “street smarts” – the homeless people of San Antonio.

OST has recently become a partner with *Haven for Hope*, a non-profit organization that provides comprehensive services to the homeless

population of San Antonio. Students from OST are providing spiritual guidance to *Haven for Hope* clients at the organization's new center that opened in April.

Brother Jesse ESQUEDA, an Oblate scholastic studying at OST, is one of the first participants in the new partnership program. He said the program provides him an opportunity to take what he learns in the classroom and apply it to the real world.

"I feel blessed to be part of the *Haven for Hope* family because I am certain that the experience will help expand my view and understanding of homelessness, and it will challenge me to grow as a human being and as a Christian," said Bro. Jesse.

Brother Jesse is involved in direct ministry with the homeless at *Haven for Hope*. This includes meeting with clients upon their arrival, in the chapel and in the cafeteria.

Haven for Hope is more than a shelter. It works to help the homeless become self-sufficient individuals on a long-term basis. It seeks to transform lives by addressing the root causes of homelessness through education, job training and behavioral health services.

Patti Radle, a member of the Oblates' Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation committee, was a leader in the effort to create *Haven for Hope*. Radle is a former City Council member in San Antonio and presently serves as the vice chairman of the *Haven for Hope* Board of Directors.

"We hope that this place will serve as a national model of opportunities for human transformation," said Radle. (www.omiusa.org)

OMI LACOMBE **Cured by St. Eugene**

(Ron Lewis was born in 1929. His father was convicted of income tax evasion and sentenced to jail in 1948. He was devastated. He suffered from bouts of depression until an "encounter" with St. Eugene de Mazenod in 2002.)

My attitude towards society and authority in general was broken. I did not know it at the time (1948), but I was drifting into depression. This affected my ability to concentrate and remember things. After this I had four unsuccessful years at university, including three years at St. Patrick's College in a commerce program. I repeated my sophomore year twice and failed my junior year. I left college after this and did not feel welcome because of some remarks by my teachers. I promised myself that I would not go down their road again and very seldom attended any reunions.

Keep these comments in mind as I relate my spiritual encounter with St. Eugene de Mazenod, the founder of the Oblate order.

The affects of this depression remained with me for many years. I improved some over time, but it was not until I had my encounter with St. Eugene that I was completely cured. Here is how it happened.

My wife Margaret and I were in Aix-en-Provence for two weeks in the spring of 2002. We enjoyed this old city and the area very much. The first Sunday, we attended mass at a Catholic church in the Italian section. The following week we heard about another church that was much closer.

The church was packed. After mass I noticed a corner dedicated to St. Eugene de Mazenod, the founder of the Oblates. His followers taught me at St. Patrick's College in Ottawa.

About 15 minutes after we left the church, I had a warm feeling come over me. It certainly got my attention. In my mind, I could see St. Eugene, and he was accompanied by Father Maurice PEAKE, the head of the athletic department at St. Pat's. St. Eugene was laughing and walking very quickly, and Father Peake was right beside him. St. Eugene said: "This is an easy one; you did not know what you were doing and neither did your teachers." Father Peak then encouraged me to be a supporter once again. Father Joseph BIRCH, another Oblate priest, was in the forefront of this scene. He did not say anything or move. Both priests had been dead for some time.

What can we learn from this? There are many things that can knock us off balance - a jail sentence, a sudden death by accident or illness, a failed relationship and divorce, mental illness, sexual abuse, financial challenges and the list goes on. We should always seek the best help

from professionals, but we should also pray and seek the help of Jesus, Mary, the saints and our past relatives. They all can and want to help, as witnessed by my story.(by Ron Lewis in *Oblate Spirit*, November 2010)

Anniversaries for January 2011

65 Years of religious life

1946.01.06	08113	Fr. John Ngubane	Natal
1946.01.25	08102	Fr. Jozef Pielorz	Poland

60 Years of religious life

1951.01.01	08962	Fr. Marcus Rupesinghe	Colombo
1951.01.06	08974	Msgr. Sebastian Khoarai	Lesotho
1951.01.06	08973	Fr. Alphonse-Liguori Taele	Lesotho

60 Years of priesthood

1951.01.28	07965	Fr. Maynard Kegler	United States
------------	-------	--------------------	---------------

50 Years of religious life

1961.01.01	11502	Bro. Georges Nadeau	Lacombe
1961.01.06	11188	Fr. Enoch Shomang	Northern S. A.

25 Years of religious life

1986.01.06	13080	Fr. Martin Serabele Lekarapa	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13084	Fr. Philip Tumisang Mabetha	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13079	Fr. Benedict Tseko Makara	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13146	Fr. Anthony Kabelo Makatjane	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13077	Fr. Lawrence Mokete Moeketsi	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13078	Fr. Lawrence Tanki 'Motsi	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13145	Fr. Joseph Thabelo Ntlai	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13082	Fr. Francis Shopane Shopane	Lesotho
1986.01.06	13076	Fr. Lucian Phokojoe Tsehla	Lesotho
1986.01.09	12908	Fr. Jose Cassio da Costa	Brazil
1986.01.09	12987	Fr. José Valter Ferreira da Luz	Brazil
1986.01.19	12936	Fr. Oscar Carricaburu	Argentina-Chile
1986.01.19	13003	Fr. Wladimir Rojas	Argentina-Chile
1986.01.25	12925	Fr. Vusimuzi Henry Mazibuko	Northern S. A.
1986.01.25	12916	Fr. Thabang Joseph Molefi	Central S. A.

25 Years of priesthood

1986.01.25	12648	Fr. Antonio Diaz	Mexico
------------	-------	------------------	--------

Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 81-85

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Pierre Sikasak-Khamhung	France	18/03/1947	Nîmes	12/11/2010
Fr. Jean Pochat	OMI Lacombe	18/04/1928	Fort Rae	28/11/2010
Bro. Joseph Morin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	03/02/1924	Richelieu	30/11/2010
Fr. John Leddy	United States	06/06/1919	Belleville	01/12/2010
Bro. Donat Daigle	United States	04/09/1931	Tewksbury	04/12/2010

“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
 C.P. 9061, 00100 ROMA-AURELIO, Italy
 Fax: (39) 06 39 37 53 22 E-mail: information@omigen.org
<http://www.omeworld.org>
 Editor: James Allen
 Printing: Kamal Mendis
 Circulation: Théophile LePage