



Information No. 511 (English)

May 2011

A big family's dream

(By Paolo Archiati, OMI, Vicar General)

This May is certainly special for the Oblates and for what we now call the “Mazenodian family.” On May 21, 150 years ago, our “father” ended his pilgrimage on this earth and entered into eternity. We owe him our existence as Oblates of Mary Immaculate, missionaries to the poor.

How could we celebrate this anniversary without calling to mind his final wish, a veritable spiritual testament which he left the Oblates just before he died? We can never do enough to make it the source of our inspiration and of our religious and missionary commitment. Eugene de Mazenod was well aware that he was living his final moments on this earth, and that adds even more importance to the occasion and to the spiritual instruction that he left to his family, to his “children” whom he loved with a father’s heart.

“Among yourselves, charity, charity, charity.” He had wanted his Oblates to consider Jesus himself as their founder and the apostles as their first fathers. In these words with which the breath of life of this apostle was stilled, don’t we find the very words of Christ? “I give you a new commandment: love one another.” (John 13, 34a) Among yourselves, charity: there is our way of life, revealed to us by our holy Founder at the most sacred moment of his life, the moment when he was called to reveal to his sons the secret that will keep them alive when he is no longer with them; there is the road to conversion to which we are constantly called. It’s as simple as that, even though our actual and ordinary daily life reveals to us each day the difficulties flowing from our weakness, our fragility, and our personal problems. Among yourselves, charity: that is the rock on which we are called to build our

community life. Therein lies the essence of our life, of our relationships, that which should help us live as brothers. St. Eugene wanted his Oblates to be the most united family on the face of the earth, and now the secret, the way to accomplish this, has been revealed. He knew that the strength of his little family would be unity, communion, and to that end, in his letters he never stopped reminding his children. His invitation that they be of one heart and mind, which one finds hundreds of times in his letters, addresses this need.

“And on the outside, zeal for the salvation of souls.” Once this unity is assured within our family, our communities, we must look outwards, toward the world to which our mission sends us. We are not monks; our community life is oriented to the mission. And our mission is this “zeal” for the salvation of souls. “Zeal” is a word that has had its day, a word which might make us smile a little, like another similar word in the dictionary, “fervor.” They are two words that were very dear to our Founder.

Words might well have had their day, but the reality is timelier than ever, especially in a world that shows how much it is in need of salvation. This word energized our Founder; it was at the very beginning of his conversion and inspiration to found a missionary society. Having discovered that he has been “saved” by the mercy of God, he wanted to bring together some companions in order to reveal to the world – and especially to the poor – how much God loves them, so much so that He sent His own Son to save them. Zeal: it’s a fire that should burn in the heart of each Oblate, of each member of the family of St. Eugene, a fire

that is meant to engulf the whole world. That was the dream of the young Eugene at the moment he gave origin to his little family; that was his dream

at the moment of his death; may that be the dream of his “big” family today, at the moment when we celebrate his departure from here below.

General Administration

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Fr. Emmanuel Mosoeu: new General Councillor

When Fr. Evans CHINYEMBA, OMI, was named Bishop of Mongu in Zambia in February 2011, there was left a vacant seat on the General Council. He had been elected General Councillor for the Africa-Madagascar Region in September of 2010.

On May 2, 2011, Fr. Emmanuel MOSOEU, Provincial of the Central Province of South Africa, was elected General Councillor for the Region of Africa-Madagascar by a collegial vote of Fr. General and his Council, after Consultation of the Provincial and Delegation Superiors of the Region as provided by article 147a of our Constitutions and Rules.

Fr. Mosoeu was born in 1957 in Westminster, South Africa. A graduate of Mariasdal High School Tweespruit, he began his novitiate in Germiston in 1980, and following first profession continued his formation with philosophical studies in Cedara. From 1983-86 he studied theology in Rome as member of the International Scholasticate community. In 1988 he made perpetual vows in Bloemfontein and was ordained priest in 1989 in Botshabelo. After receiving his first obedience for the then Kimberly-Bloemfontein Vice-Province, he was engaged in pastoral work, particularly with youth and was elected Provincial Councillor. During the years 1992 to 1995, he was engaged in philosophical studies in Louvain. Upon his return to South Africa, he continued his pastoral work first in Bloemfontein and then in Botshabelo, serving also as District Superior. In 2002 he was appointed lecturer at St. Joseph's Theological Institute, Cedara. Fr. Mosoeu served as Provincial Councillor from 1996 to 2002 and was a member of the Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter of 2004. He holds a doctorate in theology from the University of the Free State. He was appointed provincial of the Central Province of South Africa in 2005 and again in 2008.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Communications from the plenary session

During the first week of the current Plenary Session, Fr. General with the consent of his Council, made the following appointments: Fr. Mariampillai Paul NADCHETHIRAM to a second term as Provincial of the Province of Jaffna, Fr. Marian GIL to a first term as Provincial of Assumption Province, Fr. Yves CHALVET DE RÉCY to a second term as Provincial of the Province of France, Fr. Loudeger MAZILE to a first term as Provincial of the Province of Haiti, and Fr. Terrence BARNARD to a second term as Provincial of the Northern Province of South Africa.

With the consent of his Council meeting in Plenary Session, Fr. General has appointed Fr. William ANTONE as Provincial of the United States Province and Frs. Louis STUDER and Gregory GALLAGHER as his Administrative Councillors. The other members of the Council will be appointed later in the current Plenary Session.

Father General and his Council also examined and approved the audited financial reports of the General Administration for financial year 2010.

GENERAL POSTULATION

Promulgation of the decree of martyrdom

VATICAN: “Today, 2 April 2011, the Holy Father Benedict XVI has received in a private Audience His Eminence, the most Reverend Cardinal Angelo Amato, S.D.B., Prefect of the Congregation of Causes of Saints. During the Audience, the Sovereign Pontiff authorized the Congregation to promulgate the Decrees concerning... (there are 13 of them and the 7th one says:)

The martyrdom of the Servants of God, Francisco Esteban Lacal, a professed Priest, and 21 companions from the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate,

as well as that of Cándido Castán San José, a layman, killed because of hatred of the Faith, in Spain in 1936.”

This is the official notice. It is the final step prior to the celebration of the Beatification which will take place in the Cathedral of Nuestra Señora de la Almudena in Madrid, during the month of November 2011, anniversary of the martyrdom of the 23 and for the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the “dies natalis” of St. Eugene de Mazenod.

To understand the emotions of all of them, here is the testimony of one of the survivors, Fr. Felipe DIEZ, for many years a missionary in Argentina, and who died recently:

“When we were ‘enjoying’ the moment that we were going to be killed (at gunpoint, arms up, facing the wall, crammed into a small compartment), we wanted to say a prayer but we could not manage it; nevertheless, what did come forth spontaneously were our feelings of love for God, affection for our brothers and forgiveness toward those who were going to kill us, as well as seeking pardon for our sins and weaknesses.”

For more information, go to the BLOG: <http://martiresomimadrid.blogspot.com> and/or get in contact with the General Postulator by e-mail: martinez@omigen.org.

OBLATE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE

New version of our Oblate web site

Beginning on 31 March 2011, a new version of the official web site of the Congregation is on line, still at the same address: www.omiworld.org.

Besides its new look which is decidedly more attractive, there are some innovations. Right now, we would like to point out two of them:

1. A new set-up for the OMI Personnel; this will make frequent updating possible.
2. Access to the reserved area: it will no longer be possible to open it with the old login and

password which were the same for all Oblates. Every Oblate who wishes to access this area will be asked to fill out a form in which he will need to give his oblation number (Please place a 0 before the 4-digit numbers), his name and surname, and his e-mail address. Only if his oblation number coincides with his name will he be given access. From now on, one can change his password whenever he wants, but the login will stay the same and will be unique for each Oblate.

There is much material to transfer to the new site and we will need several months to complete this task. For this reason, we have considered it useful to leave open the possibility of consulting the old site by clicking on a banner at the bottom-left of the Home Page.

Obviously, we are hoping for a good reception of this new web page which has been in construction for a year. Our intention is to enrich the site with ever new material, in service of the whole Congregation and the Oblate Family.

GENERAL POSTULATION

The cause of Brother Anthony Kowalczyk moves forward

Some months ago, the new Relator General for Causes of Saints told Fr. Joaquin MARTINEZ, our postulator, that according to a note left for him by his predecessor, the Oblates had abandoned the Cause of our humble and pious Brother “Ave Maria,” Anthony KOWALZCYK. After hearing the surprised reaction of the Postulator, who told him that at that precise moment, he was studying a presumed miracle attributed to Brother’s intercession, the Relator went to the records to verify the status of the Cause; he noted that the cause was neither dormant, much less abandoned by the Oblates.

The Postulator recently received a call asking him to send as quickly as possible to the Congregation for Saints ten copies of the "Positio" on Brother Anthony. His was the first cause on the waiting list and the theologian consultants would proceed to study it in order to give their verdict on his heroic virtues so as to proclaim him “Venerable.” It is a crucial

step in the journey to canonization. Let us ask God for a miracle through the intercession of the Servant of God, so that we achieve soon the beatification of an Oblate who is not a priest. This will help us understand that our religious consecration goes before ordination and not just chronologically. (Joaquín MARTÍNEZ, General Postulator)

OBLATE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE “Missions” at the click of a mouse

It was a dream that St. Eugene cherished for a lifetime: to bring together at the center of the Congregation the testimony of the missionary work of the Oblates in order to communicate this to all the members throughout the world, so that everyone could be inspired and encouraged to move forward in spreading the Gospel.

This dream was realized immediately after his death, thanks to his successor, Father Joseph FABRE, who began a quarterly review: “Missions of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.” From its beginning, together with stories from the missions, the review published documentation about the origins of the Institute, the Acts of the General Chapters, and studies on the history and works of the Congregation. There are over 100 volumes that make up a precious and unique patrimony for knowing the life of the Oblates.

Begun in 1862, in 1971 there was a name change: it took the Latin name “Missio.” Publication ceased the following year, in 1972.

Today, thanks to the work of Fr. André DUBOIS at the Deschâtelets Archives, the digitalization of the texts has begun. The first volumes can be found at the click of a mouse on OMIWORLD: <http://www.omiworld.org/missioni.asp>.

INTERNATIONAL DE MAZENOD CENTRE An international community at Aix

On April 11-15, 2011, there was a meeting in Aix-en-Provence to continue the dialogue regarding important decisions that need to be made in the coming months concerning the future of the house and the international community at Aix.

Taking part in the meeting were representatives of the various bodies that have been dialoguing on this subject for some time now: the General Administration (the Vicar General, the General Bursar, and the General Councillor for Europe); the Province of France (the Provincial and the provincial bursar); the International de Mazenod Centre (the director) and the local community (the superior and the house bursar who is also bursar of the Centre).

The participants of the last General Chapter were brought up to date about this project which is in the process of being realized and which essentially impacts the house and the community at Aix. As far as the house is concerned, we spent a morning working with Mr. Eric Ferment, the project manager who is working on a plan to remodel our building, in order to discuss with him several matters relating to the work being considered for restructuring the house. Concerning the total project and the future international community, we worked a whole morning with three other experts (an accountant, a member of the Province of France’s finance committee and the lawyer of the General Administration) to discuss the juridical aspects involved in this project.

As was already communicated during the last General Chapter, the international community of Aix-en-Provence will be the responsibility of the Superior General while the location will remain the property of the Province of France; this facilitates the legal questions and other issues related to the civil authorities.

The “new” community will be made up of five members “*coming from different places in the Congregation and having a clear communal and missionary identity.*” Its main objective will be “*the service of formation and animation about the charism for the entire Congregation and the mazenodian family.*” An integral part of this objective will be ministry at the Church of the Mission, as well as other activities that will be better defined in the future, always keeping in mind the preference of Eugene for youth and the most abandoned.

The recent meeting also continued the process of studying the arrangement of the house so that this structure will allow the Oblates who live there to “consecrate themselves entirely to the mission that will be given them and to achieve a level of self-sufficiency so as not to impose an added burden on the Congregation.”

As was emphasized at our last Chapter, this project cannot happen without the solid commitment of all Oblates and all Units of the Congregation. That is why we think it is important that information concerning this project reach all Oblates and that each Oblate feel that he is involved in making it happen. (Fr. Paulo ARCHIATI, Vicar General)

Europe

FRANCE

Aix: Colloquium on the Founder

To mark the 150th anniversary of the death of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, on Saturday, 5 March, the Missionary Oblates, together with the Mazenod Foundation of Méjanes, offered a series of lectures at the Verrière Amphitheatre, Aix. Nearly 200 people gathered to participate in this event.

Brother Dominique DESSOLIN, director of the International de Mazenod Center, opened the conference by introducing the theme and the various presenters. He said it would be two days dedicated to the “two feet” of Eugene de Mazenod: one, Aix and the other, Marseille; or rather, that of the Founder of a Congregation and that of a Bishop, head of the Church of Marseille.

To better understand Eugene de Mazenod, Mrs. Chelini-Pont, a professor of history, law and religion at Paul Cézanne University, introduced us to the situation of the Church in Provence between 1810 and 1830. This enabled us to better understand the pastoral directions of Eugene de Mazenod for his time, so as to help better situate our own.

Archbishop Dufour of Aix and Arles, president of the Bishops’ Commission for Catechesis and the Catechumenate, gave an analysis of the passing on of the faith today in Provence.

The day continued with three interventions on the passing on of faith and the founding of the Missionary Oblates. Frank SANTUCCI, animator of the Oblate charism for the Congregation, presented the legacy of Eugene de Mazenod, Founder of the Oblates, from the point of view of activities experienced today at 60 Cours Mirabeau. Fabio Ciardi, Director of Oblate

Studies and Research, focused on the current reality of the Oblate missions worldwide; and Lorraine Sainte-Marie, a professor at the University of Ottawa (Canada) developed her talk around the place of Saint Paul University in the formation of understanding the faith and the integration of faith in one’s life.

On 6 March, we gathered at the diocesan building for a three-fold conference.

Frank Santucci presented the transmission of faith by Eugene de Mazenod, Bishop of Marseilles, during the expansion of the city between 1837 and 1861. Lorraine Sainte-Marie presented the evolution of ministerial training, from the point of view of the reality of the Church of Canada. Luc TARDIF, Provincial-elect of the Notre Dame du Cap Province in Canada, used the writings of Eugene de Mazenod to introduce the latter's relationship with the Oblates of America.

In the afternoon, we met in the De Mazenod Room of 60 Cours Mirabeau Mazenod for a dialogue with those who had nourished us with their words throughout these two days.

One of the final interventions was in response to the question: how would Eugene de Mazenod have passed on the faith in our context, as bishop of Marseilles? Referring to the 35th Chapter, in which he participated and during which the capitulars heard the call to take the Gospel seriously, Luc Tardif said: “Before we even begin to consider passing on the faith, we must live the Gospel among ourselves.” He added: “I think that as Oblates in the Church, we take the Gospel too much for granted. We concern ourselves with others so that they might become more or less like us. But the constant return to the practice

of the Gospel is an indispensable roadmap for us if we are to be minimally credible witnesses to those around us who do not share our beliefs.

At 17:00, a large number of people had joined us to bring all that we had heard during this conference, as an act of Thanksgiving, to the liturgy, where we took the time to recapture these two days, while opening our hearts to the whole world. (Bro. Benoît DOSQUET)

DENMARK

Oblate parish celebrates 50 years

In 1956, the Superior General, Fr. Leo DESCHÂTELETS, asked the Oblates of the Central Province of the United States to begin a Catholic mission in Greenland. There had been no official Catholic presence there since the Reformation. But to facilitate their passage into Greenland, the Oblates learned that it would be helpful to establish themselves in Copenhagen, Denmark, since Greenland, at that time, was still governed by that Scandinavian country.

The first superior of the Scandinavian mission was Fr. John TAYLOR who, in 1962, became the Bishop of Stockholm, Sweden. The Oblates moved to Copenhagen in 1958. In 1961, they were ready to found a parish in the suburb of Herlev.

Vor Frue Kirke (Our Lady's Church) in Herlev celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding on Jan. 30, 2011, with a pontifical high Mass presided by Bishop Czeslaw Kozon of Copenhagen. Fr. Urban FIGGE, who founded the parish and now lives in the USA, was present to greet the parishioners of Vor Frue Kirke. Also present was the provincial of Poland, Fr. Ryszard SZMYDKI and his predecessor, Fr. Teodor JOCHEM.

The Oblates no longer minister in Greenland, but they continue to serve the Church in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. In 2007, the General Delegation of Scandinavia took on a new juridical status. The Oblates there, originally from Poland, the United States and Sri Lanka, now belong to the Province of Poland.

When this change in status took place, the Superior General, Fr. Wilhelm STECKLING, wrote: "Scandinavia has a proud mission history of almost 50 years in which the Gospel has been proclaimed in Greenland, Denmark, the Faeroes, Sweden and Norway. This mission is far from over and will continue for many years to come, because the Catholic Church in Scandinavia still needs and welcomes Oblate missionaries."

Africa-Madagascar

CAMEROON

Day of the Martyrs: Bishop Yves Plumey

On Saturday and Sunday, March 26 and 27, 2011, the Archdiocese of Douala, under the patronage of Archbishop Samuel Kleda, celebrated the 1st Diocesan Day of Church Martyrs.

Indeed, the initiative for this day goes back to Pope John Paul II during the Great Jubilee of 2000 when he sought to "gather the precious memories of the witnesses of faith in the twentieth century." These memories were brought to mind on May 7, 2000, with representatives of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities in the suggestive setting of the Coliseum, symbol of the ancient persecutions.

On April 7, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated, at the Basilica of Saint Bartholomew, the Shrine of New Martyrs, desired by John Paul II and completed, thanks to the care of the Saint Egidio Community. The Basilica of Saint Bartholomew is the titular church of Cardinal Francis GEORGE.

Taking its cue from the initiatives of many dioceses in the world, the Union of Religious of the Archdiocese of Douala, with the support of Bishop Samuel Kleder, organized the 1st Diocesan Day of Martyrs of the Church. Alongside the Monks of Tibhirine, Sister Clementine Anwarite, Isidore Bakandja, Maximilian Kolbe, Gabriel Soho and Bishop Oscar Romero, the presentation on the life and work of Bishop Yves PLUMEY

was the highlight of the day. The many people who came to Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral of Douala and the audience of the diocesan Radio Veritas, which followed the ceremony live, were quite edified by this man who, with companions of the first team, would be the new pioneers of faith in these wastelands of northern Cameroon and Mayo-Kebbi (Southern Chad).

They heard about Bishop Plumey, who has given so much to the Church of Cameroon and finally was assassinated on the night of September 2-3, 1991. Some of us say that the Oblates have to break through the anonymity of his sacrifice.

As he is ranked among of the Martyrs of the Faith, the problem of his death remains a mystery, twenty years after his assassination. (Charles EKO)

KENYA

Postulancy program reopens

A significant moment in the life of the Oblate Kenya Mission took place at the Blessed Gerald Girard House in Meru. On March 15, the Oblate Community of Kionyo and Meru gathered to celebrate the reopening of the postulancy program and to receive four new candidates.

The Blessed Joseph Gerard House has been closed for the past year to facilitate the study leave for Fr. Fidele MUNKIELE. He is currently studying at St. Paul's University in Ottawa. It became clear however that we must reopen this program in order to insure the continuance of our formation programs.

Fr. Alfred GROLEAU, the former Mission Superior moved to Meru to join Fr. Faustin LITANDA and Brother Joseph MAGAMBO to begin again the postulancy program. This is a nine-month program that will prepare the candidates to advance to the Blessed Joseph Cebula pre-novitiate in Karen, Nairobi, where they will begin their philosophical studies.

In a simple but solemn ceremony in the context of the Eucharist I, as the Mission Superior, had the privilege of calling four young Kenyan men to begin their journey with the Missionary Oblates

of Mary Immaculate. After the homily each candidate was called to begin their formation with the Oblates. Each was presented with a cross and a rosary.

We are pleased and privileged to welcome into our community: Moses Owino Odhiambo, James Ibare Gatehi, Phelix Johya and Job Wangwee. It is significant that all these men come from the west side of Kenya where there are no Oblates.

Following the induction service, all gathered in the dining room for a simple but festive supper. Celebrating is something we are very good at and lately we have had many causes to rejoice and be glad. As has been previously reported, we recently gathered in our parish in Kionyo (35 kms south east of Meru) on the east side of Mount Kenya to witness the final profession of Scholastic Brother Gideon RIMBERIA and Brother Joseph MAGAMBO. These are the first Kenyans to become members of our community. It is significant that Brother Joseph was present to welcome these new candidates to begin the journey that he has just completed.

OMI Lacombe Canada has been entrusted with the task of establishing and supporting this new mission with the intention of hope that it will truly become a Kenyan Mission. Our hope is that it will grow and become a delegation and an Oblate Province. With the reception of new candidates it is clear that the vision and mandate are indeed unfolding. In the words of Julian of Norwich "All shall be well, all shall be well." We rejoice and are glad. (By James FIORI in www.omilacombe.ca)

LESOTHO

Former General Councillor dies

Fr. Alexander MOTANYANE, former General Councillor for the Region of Africa-Madagascar, died on 9 April 2011 at Loreto Parish in Lesotho. He was chosen by the Superior General, Fr. Fernand JETTÉ and his Council to serve as a replacement for Fr. Thomas MAYELI who had resigned his office. Fr. Motanyane was re-elected General Councillor at the Chapters of 1986 and 1992, thus serving during the entire mandate of Superior General, Fr. Marcello ZAGO.

Born in Lesotho in 1933, he made his first profession of vows as an Oblate in 1955. He did part of his scholasticate in Rome and part of it at St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa. In 1963, he was ordained a priest in Lesotho.

Prior to his election as General Councillor, he served as Rector of the Major Seminary in Lesotho (1970-78) and as Secretary to the Lesotho Catholic Bishops' Conference (1979-85).

He returned to his homeland after his mandate on the General Administration. At the time of his death, he was serving at the Loreto Mission.

LESOTHO Preparations for 150th anniversary

The year 2012 will mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Lesotho. The same year will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Mater Jesu Oblate Scholasticate at Roma. It is the *Year of the Jubilee!!* Preparations for this grand occasion are underway, and the "*ad hoc*" committees of various kinds have been mobilized.

Father Michael *Sekoati* presents here a concise history behind this momentous occasion:

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were sent by their Superior General, Bishop DE MAZENOD, to South Africa to carry-out missionary activities. They arrived at the port of Durban on 15th March 1852. For 10 years they laboured in Natal without any notable success; and in October 1861, it was regretfully decided to abandon the mission there and to journey towards the North.

Along the way, the missionaries heard about a certain Chief, on the other side of the Drakensburg, who had succeeded in unifying a good number of run-away tribes to form one nation. He was open to new ideas that could be beneficial to the development of his people. That is how the Oblates came to establish contacts with King Moshoeshe I, and finally came to Lesotho.

Bishop Jean-Francois ALLARD, Father Joseph GERARD and Brother Francois BERNARD arrived at Thaba-bosiu on 11th October 1862. They were welcomed with open arms by King Moshoeshe I, who allotted them a site in the Tloutle Valley to establish their mission. "I have chosen a site which may be suitable for your work... I want you to be near my residence so that I may be able to hear you and to know your doctrine..." he told them.

On 21st October, the Oblate missionaries left Thaba-Bosiu for Tloutle Valley to start the work. They pitched their tent at Ha Mafefoane and immediately they started the construction projects. Actually they did not wait for any converts before they began building the church. Bishop Allard noted that there were marvelous elements wherein grace could take root, and which only awaited the Gospel preaching to be transformed into Christian virtues.

As they were building, they were also learning Sesotho, which would soon become the medium of instruction. On Sundays, Father Gerard was preaching in Zulu; and the man called Qhobosheane Tau was his interpreter. Other missionary activities included regular visits to the surrounding villages, opening of the school, and the translation of the catechism. The Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux arrived in 1865 and took charge of the school and other works of charity.

This is how the Oblate presence and missionary activity in Lesotho began, about 150 years ago. The first Catholic mission was given the name of Motse-oa-M'a Jesu (*Village of the Mother of Jesus*). It was officially opened on November 1, 1863, on the occasion of the solemn opening of the first chapel, at which King Moshoeshe I himself was present, together with his ministers and a large crowd of Basotho. *From there the Oblates never looked back!* (Maoblata, April 2011)



Latin America

BRAZIL**Evangelizing among the Indians of Brazil**

Fr. Robert DE VALICOURT recently followed a formation program of three weeks in order to work more competently among the Indians of Brazil.

During this course I chatted at length with an Indian chief who was nursing a serious illness. He told me how his people, the Surui, lived forty years ago. They lived in a primitive state, naked, nomadic, hunting and fishing to survive.

Contact with the “whites” (as they call non-Indians) was cruel. They were decimated by influenza, because their organism was not equipped for these white diseases. Now they are more numerous and engaged in farming cassava, corn, rice, black beans ... and some livestock. They have 250,000 hectares and live in 25 villages.

The children and adolescents study in both languages in public schools built in the villages.

The youth are studying in the nearby town. Some are at the university. If you have problems with your computer, they will fix it for you. In forty years, they are progressively moving from the bow and arrow to modern studies.

On their reserve, there are still some isolated tribes which have never had contact with whites. The National Foundation for Indians, which knows that contacts are deadly, has adopted a different policy: there are reserves created to protect them. There are still 69 such small and isolated groups throughout Brazil. Unfortunately the gold diggers or timber merchants do not respect these reserves; they go into the forest and kill the defenseless Indians.

The Indians of Brazil are a tiny minority: about 350,000 among 190 million. But they are among those minorities who suffer discrimination. These are the poor whom Jesus prefers.

I am excited about all these discoveries and I would like to be 30 years younger, but...
(*Audacieux pour l'Évangile*, avril 2011)

Asia-Oceania

AUSTRALIA**Remembering Oblate heroes**

St. Eugene College is a Preschool to Grade 12 school in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Australia. The College is conducted by the Parish of St. Eugene de Mazenod, Burpengary, which is under the pastoral care of the Oblates.

On Saturday, 20 March, three new buildings were blessed and officially opened at the College. Each building bears the name of an Oblate hero: the Administration building is named after Fr. Henri TEMPIER; the Senior building is named after Blessed Josef CEBULA and the multipurpose hall is named Rodrigo Hall (after the martyred Sri Lankan Oblate Fr. Michael RODRIGO).

The State Government of Queensland and the Commonwealth Government of Australia contributed over \$10 million to the new educational facilities at St. Eugene's. Present at the opening was Senator Furner of the Commonwealth Government and Mr Ryan of the State Government and a parishioner of St. Eugene parish.

The Oblate charism is truly alive at St Eugene College and these Oblate heroes deepen the lived experience of what it means to be Christian and Oblate. The senior students, as part of their religious education classes, are exploring different Oblate ministries, such as Rosies and other social justice works and are considering sending some students for a missionary experience in China later this year. The Grade 11 students will start volunteering for Rosies street van next term. (Fr. Paul SMITHERS, Chaplain)

Canada-United States

OMI LACOMBE**Prayers for our leaders**

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Friends of St. Eugene, an Oblate associate group from Labrador West, have undertaken a special year-long prayer project as a sign of support and encouragement for our new Superior General and Council.

Beginning February 17, 2011, Fr. Louis LOUGEN has begun a symbolic visit to many homes in Labrador West as his picture and a prayer card are passed from one Friend to another. Each associate will be in charge of the picture and asked to offer a daily prayer for seven days. At the conclusion of the week, the Friend of St. Eugene who has offered these prayers will send Fr. Lougen a card with a heartfelt note of encouragement and prayerful support for his ministry and administration of the Congregation.

God has indeed richly blessed the holy charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod and his sons and daughters down through those 150 years. Today we are the ones who have been graced and blessed to hold the candle, the light, the flame that radiates from that charism. We are the ones invited and urged to pay it forward – “it” being the love, the goodness, the good news message so that hearts and lives will continue to be touched by the holiness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Members of our faith family in Labrador West will be well aware of the Friends of St. Eugene prayer project since on each Sunday, they will witness the passing of the prayer card and the picture at the conclusion of our liturgy. It is our hope that parishioners will, through these exchanges, learn more about the charism of our founder and the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The heart of St. Eugene de Mazenod continues to beat strongly in this cold, northern climate, far from the docks of Marseille where he once reached out to the poor and marginalized in his own unique way.

This prayer chain for our Oblate Superior General and Council will continue until February 17th, 2012. This is the prayer the parishioners will offer:

O God, our merciful Father, assist and protect our father in Christ, the Superior General of our Congregation. Look on him with love and strengthen him with every blessing. Open to him the storehouse of your wisdom, that he may bring out from it treasures both old and new. Help him to fulfill his obligations as our father and guide. Grant that through his ministry, we may remain faithful to our mission and ever grow in that unity of mind and heart which our Founder wished for us. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (by Tony O’DELL in *Oblate Spirit*, April 2011)

UNITED STATES**Oblate named director of Pontifical Missionary Societies**

On March 4, 2011, Cardinal Ivan Dias, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, named Oblate Father Andrew SMALL as National Director of the Pontifical Missionary Societies (*Pontificie Opere Missionarie*) in the United States. His mandate will last until 2016.

In 2009, Father Small had been named Director of the Collection for the Church in Latin America by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In that role, he was very involved in the relief to the people and the Church in Haiti after the devastating earthquake of 2010.

Born in Liverpool, England, in 1968, he has been a professed Oblate since 1991. He was ordained a priest in 1999 for the Anglo-Irish Province. He later received an obedience to the United States Province.

The Pontifical Mission Societies consist of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood Association, the Society of St. Peter Apostle and the Missionary Union of Priests and

Religious. The four Societies each received the title “pontifical” in 1922 to indicate their status as official instruments of the Holy Father and of the Universal Roman Catholic Church.

National offices exist now in more than 120 countries. Today, this “family” of mission societies is the Church's primary means to inform Catholics about her worldwide missionary work and encourage their active participation - through prayer and sacrifice - in those efforts.

OMI LACOMBE Preaching the Vocation Gospel

Fr. Ken THORSON, the Vocation Director of OMI Lacombe Province, gives some food for thought for the Oblate Family throughout the world.

At the end of January, ten women and eight men attended a retreat, hosted by our pre-novice candidate Bradley Clark and me, and three Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. These eighteen people came to Discernment House, run by the Presentation Sisters, serious about knowing God’s will for their lives, curious about religious life, and open to it as a possible vocation choice. Over the weekend, these young adults learned a little about our vows, our community life and prayer, and they learned some good discernment methods, and we Oblates, along with the Sisters, learned something about the possibilities for collaboration.

Since that weekend, I’ve been thinking a lot about our provincial approach to vocation ministry. In the last two years we have worked hard to lay some good foundations: the opening of the vocation office in Ottawa; vocation contacts in each district; the development of literature for candidates; the vocations website, numerous discernment weekends across the country, etc. While significant foundational work remains we are at a point where we need to begin asking some serious questions about the future of vocation ministry in our province.

As I speak with Oblates and Associates across the country it’s clear to me that most of us still

want men to enter our community. At some point in these conversations however, my question is, “Why do you want that?” and although the answers vary from Oblate to Oblate and Associate to Associate, most can be summed up in this way: “We want men to enter the Oblates, because the world still needs the Oblate charism”. If we believe this then we obviously need to heighten our vocational efforts, and find new energy and means for inviting those gifted with our charism to join us.

But how will we do this? While we are not yet at the point of answering this question, we are working on it. In the meantime I want to encourage Oblates and Associates to be zealous in looking for opportunities, large and small, to promote vocations. Some examples of what each Oblate and Associate might do:

- Commit to inviting one young person per year to consider taking in a discernment retreat.
- Pray daily for vocations to the Oblates.
- Reflect upon and write your own vocation story, and experience of ministry and community life and how you’ve come to know God in it. Send this to the vocation office for use in various promotional efforts.
- Preach or speak publicly at least twice a year on the subject of vocations. Tell your vocation story – people love to hear our stories. Invite your hearers to share their stories and start a conversation about how God works in our lives.
- As appropriate invite potential candidates to join you in your ministry, and to join you at your table and in your chapel. Let them get to know you.
- Finally, reflect on your life as an Oblate or Associate. Where are you living your commitment well, and where is there room for change and growth? Recommit to the non-negotiables of community life.

St Francis famously said to his brothers, “Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words.” This is good and inspiring advice, but when it comes to vocation ministry it is not enough. To be sure we must live lives that are

themselves a joyful invitation, but if we believe that the church and the world still has need of our charism today we must all of us be explicit about inviting people to join us... and in this work of invitation, words are necessary.

OMI LACOMBE

A home away from home

Within the community of the Oblate parish of St. Joseph in Ottawa, there is a day program dedicated to the needs of vulnerable women. "St. Joe's Women's Centre" first opened its doors on May 6, 1984, to meet the needs of vulnerable women who were sleeping in a make-shift shelter or living on the streets of Ottawa. Many of the women had lost contact with family members for a variety of reasons such as mental illness and addictions.

A unique family began to emerge, one made up of Centre and parish staff, volunteers and women from all walks of life. Many of these women were searching for a safe and non-judgmental environment which they would, with time, call their "home away from home". The age of the women coming through our doors ranged from 16 to 80 years of age; with such a large span of ages the needs of the women were equally diverse.

In the beginning our means were meager and we strived to do our best for those who relied on us each day. We opened at 9 a.m. and served a light breakfast, hoping that someone would arrive at our doors with a hot lunch for the women. The coffee pot was brewing all day and there was always someone there to listen. All of this took place on the second floor of the Oblate Hall in a small space that had previously been used for storage. The Centre would close its doors for the evening at 10 p.m., at which point the women would walk down Laurier Avenue to the make-shift shelter for the night.

With time the City of Ottawa recognized our endeavors and offered emergency funding to assist us with staffing and the purchasing of food and other items that the women desperately needed. And just as the women relied on us for

support, we too relied on our community for donations of clothing, toiletries and food. We were often overwhelmed with the generosity of their many donations, which frequently included money to purchase whatever was needed.

In June of 1989 the Centre moved from the small upstairs space of the Oblate Hall to our present location. This space was previously the kitchen, dining room and other rooms of the residence for Oblates who lived upstairs and served at St. Joseph's Parish. This move brought even more women through our doors. We now had the space for offering different services and programs. Over time we saw the range of our population expand to women who were at risk of being homeless, women living in subsidized housing or rooming houses and those who were couch-surfing (sleeping from one friend's couch to another friend's couch) and we began to see women with their children.

It was quite evident to us that, with a shift in our population, we needed to look at programs, services and community partnerships that could enhance the overall quality of life for some of our newest family members. We believed that quality of life included being able to have access to laundry facilities, an emergency grocery program, a nutritional hot meal, the services of in-house nurses who specialize in addictions, mental and chronic health issues, and a social work advocate who would help them attain social assistance and lost identification cards.

Now in 2011, our space has spread out to include a clothing and computer room, a playroom for the children, two full bathroom facilities with showers, staff offices and the availability of several of the parish meeting rooms and the parish hall for our events and programs. Today the staff is made up of a director, a coordinator of volunteers and student placements, a front-line worker, a family resource worker and a part-time cook. Programs being offered include yoga classes, a walking club, arts and crafts, children's programs, New Beginnings and a variety of workshops. (By Marsha Wilson, Director, in www.omilacombe.ca)

Anniversaries for June 2011

75 Years of religious life

1936.06.07	06916	Bro. Alexander Sampson	Lacombe
------------	-------	------------------------	---------

75 Years of priesthood

1936.06.21	05102	Fr. Alfred Rozynek	Poland
------------	-------	--------------------	--------

70 Years of religious life

1941.06.09	07795	Bro. Lucien Morin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.06.12	07800	Bro. Vito Di Biase	General Administration
1941.06.12	07799	Bro. Giuseppe D'Orazio	General Administration
1941.06.29	07294	Fr. Francis Montalbano	United States
1941.06.29	07291	Fr. Robert Vreteau	United States

70 Years of priesthood

1941.06.12	06438	Fr. William O'Donovan	Anglo-Irish
1941.06.13	06169	Fr. Timothy Riffel	Lacombe
1941.06.15	06142	Fr. Jean Laperrière	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.06.15	06541	Fr. Roma Payant	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1941.06.15	06151	Fr. Léo-Paul Pigeon	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

65 Years of religious life

1946.06.29	08136	Fr. Carlos Krzewinski	Mexico
1946.06.29	08134	Fr. James Pfeifer	United States

65 Years of priesthood

□ 1946.06.03	07149	Fr. Edmundo Leising	Brazil
1946.06.09	07356	Fr. Joseph Smith	Northern S. A.
1946.06.15	07126	Fr. Roger Brouillet	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.06.15	07329	Fr. Jean Girouard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

60 Years of priesthood

1951.06.01	08004	Fr. Marc Bilodeau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1951.06.01	08340	Fr. Jean-Paul Demers	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1951.06.02	08146	Fr. Robert Allie	United States
1951.06.17	08338	Fr. Maurice Robitaille	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1951.06.20	08049	Fr. John Murphy	Anglo-Irish
1951.06.24	08360	Fr. Eugeniusz Laskowski	Poland
1951.06.29	08047	Fr. Dennis O'Connell	Anglo-Irish

50 Years of priesthood

1961.06.10	10324	Fr. Edmond Brouillard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1961.06.10	10062	Fr. Andrew Takach	Lacombe
1961.06.17	10011	Fr. Louis Hoffart	Lacombe
1961.06.24	10158	Fr. Real Corriveau	Haiti
1961.06.24	10198	Fr. Bernard Pinet	Lacombe
1961.06.24	10167	Fr. Paul-Eugène Plouffe	Lacombe
1961.06.24	10178	Fr. Alphonse Roy	Lacombe

1961.06.25	10322	Fr. Jean-Eudes Boudreault	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1961.06.29	09736	Fr. Laurent Desaulniers	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1961.06.29	10150	Fr. Fernand Dufour	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1961.06.29	09899	Fr. Elino Isip	Philippines
1961.06.29	09969	Fr. Dominique Levasseur	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1961.06.29	09968	Fr. Noël Poisson	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1961.06.29	09933	Fr. Bernard Quintus	Colombo

25 Years of priesthood

1986.06.01	12657	Fr. Tadeusz Michaluk	Poland
1986.06.14	12605	Fr. Jan Bartczak	Poland
1986.06.14	12616	Fr. Estanislao Biskup	Argentina-Chile
1986.06.14	12620	Fr. Krzysztof Borodziej	Poland
1986.06.14	12615	Fr. Andrés Czekaj	Paraguay
1986.06.14	12614	Fr. Gregorio Gorski	Argentina-Chile
1986.06.14	12618	Fr. Wojciech Kowal	Assumption
1986.06.14	12563	Fr. Kazimierz Kwiatkowski	Poland
1986.06.14	12564	Fr. Marek Okolowski	Poland
1986.06.14	12619	Fr. José Orzechowski	Paraguay
1986.06.14	12610	Fr. Piotr Alfred Pozoga	Poland
1986.06.14	12612	Fr. Ludwik Stryczek	Cameroon
1986.06.14	12624	Fr. Andrzej Urbanek	Poland
1986.06.14	12628	Fr. Marian Zeleznik	Poland
1986.06.19	12687	Fr. Francis Liguori Croos	Jaffna
1986.06.19	12686	Fr. Nicholas Sebasti	Jaffna
1986.06.22	12608	Fr. Jean-Pierre Wronski	Poland
1986.06.28	12629	Fr. Michel Legros	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

Prayers for our deceased

No. 29-35

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Michel Verzier	France	04/05/1934	Mons en Baroeul	05/04/2011
Fr. Alexander Motanyane	Lesotho	01/06/1933	Loreto	09/04/2011
Fr. Mario Ricci	Italy	24/10/1921	Santa Maria a Vico	18/04/2011
Fr. Jean-Noël Grandemange	France	19/11/1937	Lyon	19/04/2011
Fr. John Maher	Australia	12/04/1949	Sunshine	28/04/2011
Bro. Mathias Turcotte	Notre Dame du Cap	17/08/1915	Richelieu	03/05/2011
Fr. Acacio Valbuena	Spain	08/05/1922	Madrid	04/05/2011

“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.omiworld.org>
 Editor: James Allen; Webmaster: Nino Bucca
 Printing: Kamal Mendis
 Circulation: Théophile LePage