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Information No. 513 (English)

July-August 2011

A profound personal and communal conversion: our Oblate Mission

Father Louis LOUGEN, Superior General, wrote the following meditation for a recent encounter of ongoing formation for young European Oblates in their first 15 years of ministry.

There is a question in our Chapter document, “Conversion”, from the Report of the Superior General to the 35th General Chapter: “Today, do we discern God’s will as to our congregational mission to evangelize the poor or just keep doing by inertia what we are used to?”

This question could be forgotten and passed over quickly. It calls for attention in light of the profound conversion to Jesus Christ to which we have been called. Here I look at the five phrases, but not in order:

Do we discern God’s will?

- As to our congregational mission?
- To evangelize the poor?
- Or just keep doing by inertia?
- What we are used to?

1 – Are we operating out of inertia? Here is the definition of inertia: “A tendency to do nothing or to remain unchanged: ‘bureaucratic inertia’.”

What a terrible word! This is the exact opposite of our Founder’s zeal and goes against the very Gospel. This means we are no longer on fire with the life of God, with the Gospel, with forming the community of Church. Inertia is death. Is this our reality today? What are some examples of inertia? What causes inertia? What is the antidote for inertia? *Joel 3: 1* - Do we no longer dream dreams or have visions? *Luke 4:16* – Do we not drink from the well of the Spirit who has anointed us? *2 Tim 1:6* – “I remind you to stir the flame of the

gift you have received...” The Mission is God’s. As missionaries, we are simply called and sent in life-giving interaction with a passionate God. We may have retreated into inertia by a sense of being overwhelmed with the reality of the poor today, the power of mass media over society, the seduction of technological globalization and the indifference or antagonism toward religion/Church/God in our society. We must rekindle our faith in small things done with God’s power which topple Goliath or the walls of Jericho. Our faith sees the effect of the small mustard seed, the yeast in the dough and the power of the cross. Do we believe?

2 – Are we simply doing what we are used to doing? This is not mission at all. There is no vision, passion, energy or imagination. A missionary is in dialogue with God, with those around him and with the reality. He responds to needs, but not impulsively, without reflection or discernment. Saint Eugene’s heart embraced the poor and whenever he saw needs, he began to act and organize a response. His heart belonged to God and so it belonged to the poor, the suffering and the needy. His heart kept on giving of itself to his Oblates, his diocese and his people. We are called to a profound conversion, breaking out of old patterns and envisioning new responses to new situations of the poor. Being in touch with God through a living relationship with him will empower us as missionaries, called and sent, moved to embrace deeper, more committed missionary actions, to greater love and courage. It will be anything but the same old routine. Think of the calls of Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Mary. How have we left the known and familiar, to cross borders, as recent Chapters have called us?

3 – Do we discern God’s will? If we believe in a living God, and if we are in relationship to God, then we need to listen to him, to take direction and allow ourselves to be called by him both communally and personally. The Spirit’s Gift of Courage enables us to stand back and question what we are doing, why we are doing it, to evaluate our action and spend time in prayer to ask God, “Lord, what do you want of me, of us?” The call to a profound conversion made to us by the Chapter of 2010 is the Spirit’s call to become men of discernment, in dialogue with God, listening together as a community and as individuals to discover God’s mission, how we can cooperate with God and be missioned by him. A danger is to take it for granted that we know God’s will without the hard work of prayer, discussion, study and reflection. This is hard work and it is also a source of life and joy to be in dialogue with God and to be lead on a journey. A temptation is to presume that we are doing God’s will because we are doing good work and religious actions. We have lost the sense of mission when we do the same thing we have done for years because we like it, the people like us, it’s going well, etc.

4 – The congregational mission: our Constitutions and Rules give us the great missionary vision of Saint Eugene in contemporary words. We have general directions which give us an orientation and a framework for evangelizing the poor. Each Province, Delegation and Mission must be a discerning community which takes time together to listen to God’s voice speaking in the Scriptures, in our Constitutions and Rules, through the local Church and in the reality of the poor. As we listen to these voices in a prayerful attitude, we are allowing God to lead us so that we are participants in his mission. Together, with the Spirit’s light,

a Province of Oblates makes a project with priorities through the listening, prayer and discussion of all the members. Everyone commits himself to be available for the common project and enters into a dialogue with the leadership to discern how each Oblate might best serve. The vow of obedience lived in generous availability makes one a missionary. The congregational mission is extremely challenging, absolutely necessary and its “success” (in Gospel terms) depends upon its being planned and lived, in and through the community.

5 – To evangelize the poor: The whole objective of our lives is to evangelize the poor and to grow in holiness. Who are the poor today that are abandoned? Whom are we called to serve in this context? The courage to enter into a discerning dialogue with God and then the freedom and courage to leave what is known and familiar will lead us to those whom God wants us to serve today. We see new forms of poverty and the many faces of the poor question us. We must discern priorities and we will evangelize through small Gospel actions in favor of the poor. I am convinced that such evangelization is in and through the witness of a discerning community. Evangelizing the poor requires a community of Oblates who cultivate a living relationship with God, a life shared in common marked by simplicity and a commitment to pray, listen and discern. This apostolic community is the light of Christ shining in the darkness, a bright proclamation of the Gospel that evangelizes and draws people to follow Jesus. To participate in God’s mission to evangelize the poor, we ourselves must journey in a continual process of profound conversion. A community of missionaries that witnesses by its life that God is All holds (in earthen vessels) and radiates the power of God’s life/love. It irresistibly evangelizes and draws the poor by God’s grace.

General Administration

GENERAL POSTULATION

Beatification date is set

The Postulator General informs the Congregation that the beatification of the 22 Oblate Martyrs of the Scholasticate Community of Pozuelo (Madrid) has already been established by both the Congregation

for the Causes of Saints and the Cardinal Archbishop of Madrid. The celebration will take place in the Cathedral of Madrid on **Saturday, December 17, 2011.**

There are still several months ahead until the event. As time goes by, more details will be communicated. Oblates interested in participating

should reserve this date in their calendar.

The cost for this celebration is significant and it all falls under the responsibility of the Spanish Province, which has already assumed considerable expenses in hosting 1,300 *Oblate*

Youth for World Youth Day. The Spanish Province is very grateful to those Oblate Units that have already sent their donation. If other Units wish to collaborate, please contact with the Spanish Provincial Bursar or the Postulator General in Rome.

Africa-Madagascar

ZAMBIA

I pledge myself...

On May 29, 2011, Bishop Evans Chinyama CHINYEMBA became the second Bishop of Mongu diocese, the 149th Oblate of Mary Immaculate to become a bishop and the 20th African-born bishop. Below is an excerpt of his remarks following his episcopal ordination.

I come in humility to a land full of potential--the province of my birth!

My birth in Lukulu and my upbringing have taught me a lot about life and relationships. I am a witness to the growth of the Church of Western Province and also the many dynamics that shape our lives as a people. With this, I take up the role of leading the Church of Mongu Diocese. We shall share the stories of Sikongo, stories that shape the lives of the people of Kakwacha; we shall speak of Kashina Ng'ombe; we shall talk of the life in Siyombo; we shall share of the life of the people of Longe and of Likapai, of Nalonde and Muyondoti. That is our life. In humility we shall do that which the Lord Jesus Christ is telling us to do for the Church, and for the diocese. Above all, we shall be aware of what Jesus is telling each one of us to be and do for the poor and the voiceless of our society. Listening to the Words of Jesus, as recorded in the Scriptures given to me today, will help me to do that what Jesus tells me to do.

I pledge myself to work with everyone in the Diocese, both the Catholics and those from other denominations. I will work with the deacons, the local clergy of the diocese, the laity, the religious men and women in the diocese. My role will be that of a shepherd, a teacher in communion with other bishops. I pledge myself to preserve unity

in the Church. Our life as Church is missionary in nature. I will promote missionary works that leads to evangelization of peoples. Promotion of vocations will be fundamental in the diocese.

I extend my working relationship also to all the politicians that carry the political dispensation of our nation. My role is to animate and shepherd. Be free to interact with me. Welcome to my diocese, the Catholic Diocese of Mongu. Never be a stranger in this diocese. Let us work together so that our diocese and province can graduate from being the poorest and become like the rest of the provinces in the country. In fact, the province in its richness has already contributed a lot to the nation by providing leaders and other prominent persons who run the affairs of the nation.

Our voices on the issues of development will never be silenced. The Church's voice will always be sound and clear when it comes to issues of justice, peace, reconciliation, morality, development, economics, education, health, and other issues that affect our people. The people of Western province know the colour, shape, size and the taste of development. When we come face to face with development, we shall not hesitate to tell the nation that development has now visited us and has come to stay.... We are still being called the poorest province in the nation; then how can we be told that Western Province is experiencing development! My voice will be heard on these issues. My voice will not be silent and silenced. To be silent on issues affecting our people will be to betray what I have committed myself to today. I might be young, yet I know what development looks like when it comes knocking on our doors.

To the political leaders of the province, I will be your frequent visitor to look at various

issues that will bring about good political dispensation in the province. I know that working together as Church, the political leadership, government representatives and the Barotse Royal Establishment, we can achieve a lot for our province and also we can offer a lot to the nation. We can no longer live together separately. ... I shall speak, not because there is a certain political party in power, but because in the province there is the presence of the voiceless and poor. So, my voice will always be there [whatever] ... parties we have in Zambia are in power. This is a promise I make at this time. We shall never rest until our hearts rest in real issues of our nation.

NATAL

Meeting of Oblate Institutes of Higher Learning

The 4th meeting of the executive group of the Association of Oblate Institutes of Higher Learning convened at Red Acres Retreat Centre, Merrivale, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, from May 29-June 2, 2011. In attendance at this year's meeting were representatives of all six members of the Association: Jarek ROZANSKI, Obra-University of Warsaw (Warsaw); Dr. Chantal Beauvais, Saint Paul University (Ottawa); Dr. Scott Woodward, Oblate School of Theology (San Antonio); Didier MUPAYA, Institut Saint-Eugene (Kinshasa); Sylvester DAVID, St. Joseph Theological Institute (Cedara); and, Eduardo TANUDTANUD, Notre Dame University (Cotabato). Also present were Fabio CIARDI, Director of Oblate Studies and Research and Warren BROWN, liaison to the General Council.

Fr. Ciardi was invited to give his reflections to the group on the role of the Oblate institutes of higher studies regarding study and research on the charism of St. Eugene and the Oblate charism as it is lived today. In his presentations he offered several proposals to the Association members on how they might become better resources to the Oblate congregation in areas of study and research on the Oblate charism.

The Association invited the members of the faculty of St. Joseph Theological Institute to participate in the sessions with Fr. Ciardi. Fr. Paul DECOCK gave a special presentation on

the history of the Oblate formation program at Cedara and the development of St. Joseph's.

For the members of the Association, an important part of the meeting included one-on-one meetings where the representatives of the OMI institutes could meet individually with each of their counterparts in order to plan better coordination and collaboration of efforts in specific areas. The members also took the opportunity to reflect on the 35th General Chapter's calls to conversion and to discuss how these calls speak to the conversion of the institutes themselves and the Oblate ministry of education's involvement in the Congregation's mission. Following these reflections, some decisions were made by the group regarding how the institutes could be more active participants in the research and study of the Oblate Congregation's charism and mission, as well as of the Congregation's history and spirituality. Coordinated joint actions in areas of Oblate research and studies will be implemented in future months.

The meeting concluded with a tour of some of the Oblate historical sites in Pietermaritzburg followed by a festive supper. Next year's meeting has been scheduled for May 22-25, 2012, at Notre Dame University, in Cotabato, Philippines.

NORTHERN PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mrs. Obama speaks at famous Oblate parish

Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Denis HURLEY and many other men and women whose names are famous or not as famous played major roles in the downfall of the apartheid system in the Republic of South Africa. One of the shrines of that struggle is Regina Mundi Parish in the heart of Soweto near Johannesburg. On June 22, 2011, the wife of the current president of the United States, Mrs. Michelle Obama, visited the church and spoke to a large crowd.

In her speech, she made the comparison between the struggle for freedom of oppressed people in South Africa and in the United States. "The story of young people 20 years ago, 50 years ago, who marched until their feet were raw. Who endured

beatings and bullets and decades behind bars. Who risked and sacrificed everything they had for the freedom they deserved," she said. "And it is because of them we are able to gather here today. It is because of them that so many of these young women leaders can now pursue their dreams. It is because of them that I stand before you as first lady of the United States of America."

Mrs. Obama encouraged young people to work against a disease that is plaguing much of the African continent: "You can be the generation that ends HIV/AIDS in our time, the generation that fights not just the disease, but the stigma of the disease," she said.

Regina Mundi became an important symbol of the anti-apartheid movement especially after June 16, 1976, when protesting students were fired upon by the police. Many were killed. Others ran into Regina Mundi to find sanctuary. The police, however, stormed the church and continued to fire their guns. Many were injured and sacred objects in the church were damaged. One can still see the marks of the bullets in the altar, in the ceiling and a damaged figure of Christ.

The Oblates who often play host to many important visitors are the pastor of the parish, Fr. Vusimuza Henry MAZIBUKO along with Fathers Benedict MAHLANGU and Lizwelinjani MLOTSHWA.

CAMEROUN 20 years later...

From his days of Oblate formation, his confreres already called him Yves Cardinal PLUMEY because of his great solemnity of bearing. Everyone respected him.

Actually, he never was a cardinal. But he was a leader and a shepherd, put in charge in 1946 of the first team of Oblates who arrived in Northern Cameroun. In 1955, he became the first bishop of Garoua.

Under his guidance, the Church was truly implanted in Northern Cameroun. Most of its bishops today are Africans. The same can be said about most of the priests, diocesan and Oblate.

He was able to bring into Cameroun many communities of religious women. Thanks to them, schools and dispensaries were created and developed. Thanks to them, the promotion of women became and continues to become a reality today.

One cannot forget the Brother builders. The Oblate mission in Cameroun today has not only priests but also many Oblate Brothers.

Some, without awaiting a decree from the Vatican, would give him the title of "martyr." Indeed, no one has been able to find out who murdered him on the night of 2-3 September 1991. Nor why. At least, he lived as a witness. And this year, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of this final witness.

The prevailing feeling among those who knew him is one of thanksgiving for all that has been accomplished in Cameroun, thanks to his talents as an organizer and thanks to his gentle tenacity. "A trust given and never taken back, which energized us, maintained our momentum and our enthusiasm, and gave us wings," wrote one of his missionaries. (*Audacieux pour l'Évangile*, July 2011)

CHAD

She gives me a lot trouble...

Brother Hervé GIVELET is in Chad. In his latest circular letter, he tells us about his work with victims of AIDS.

I have greatly cut back my activities with AIDS patients. For the moment, it is Marie who is giving me a lot of trouble. She is sick and doesn't do anything all day long. With the nurse, we take care of her first of all, but at the same time, with the help of people in our group, I try to give her advice and find out how to help her; she does not speak French. But everyone says the same thing: "We are tired of Marie; we advise her, but she does not listen. We helped her start a little business and she uses the money for drinking. She refuses to take her medicine. We will not give her any more medicine. Let her go find it at the hospital if she wants it; and if she wants to die, let her die." That latest opinion, I heard today.

Everyone admits that I saved Marie from death; even the doctor shook his head when she was sick and said that there was almost no hope of saving her and now they tell me: "Leave her alone; if she wants to die, leave her to the fate that she has chosen." So why would we have saved her at any cost two years ago and now let her die of her own choice?

As if Christ, after having sweat blood in the Garden of Olives, after having taken upon himself all the sins and crimes of this earth, should still see people refusing to enter into his Kingdom; that's almost unthinkable.

During the month of May, seven of our patients died. They found under the mattress of one

woman all the boxes of antiretroviral medicine we had given her; so we could still use it!

The Lord in his kindness will surely welcome them. They are truly poor, like Marc who has AIDS and whom I met in prison. Fortunately, he got out rather quickly but he moved to Pala, abandoning his village and his field, to be closer to our Center. He has nothing; his children are in rags. The Center gave him a bit of food; I gave him medicine, milk, sugar. I bought him a mat, clothed his children, repaired the door, and gave him some money for his immediate needs, but for how long? He will have to find some work and support himself. He is too weak for farming. Stay tuned. (*Audacieux pour l'Evangile*, July 2011)

Latin America

PERU

Respecting natural resources

On June 14-16, Oblates from Bolivia, Peru and the United States participated in an international conference on Extractive Industries that focused on "the problem of natural resources in Latin America and the mission of the church". The conference, held in Lima, was organized and sponsored by the Justice and Solidarity Department of CELAM (Bishops Conference of Latin America) and MISEROR.

Roberto CARRASCO ROJAS, Edgar NOLASCO from the Oblate mission of Santa Clotilde, Peru, Gilberto PAUWELS from Oruro in Bolivia and Séamus FINN from the United States Province's JPIC office in Washington, DC, joined more than 70 participants from dioceses and communities that are on the front lines of the extraordinary expansion of the extractive industries in Latin America.

Extractive industries, including mining and petroleum, are under new pressure to respond to the demands for minerals and energy that are continuing to increase across the world. The price for basic commodities like gold is also an important driver in the increased demand for precious and rare metals. The development of new technologies and processes for exploration

and extraction has made it possible for mining and oil companies to penetrate deeper into areas and regions that were previously inaccessible. These developments have brought them into contact and conflict with communities and areas that were previously untouched by their activities, especially indigenous communities and peoples.

During the opening days of the conference, people from all regions and communities, including bishops, priests, religious, indigenous, and peasants, have shared their experiences, including the great suffering, destruction of livelihood and conflicts that have become a part of their daily lives as a result of this increased incursion of extractives into countries such as Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Guatemala and Colombia. Also included were an analysis of the input from the opening session and proposals and recommendations for actions.

The seminar was organized to search for a way to place the challenges of the extractives industry within the mission of the Church, the People of God. It sought to increase knowledge about the actual state of this type of industry in its global dimensions and the social, political, ecological and economic character of its consequences, beginning from a doctrinal, theological reflection

that will guide the design of certain lines of pastoral action. (*Séamus Finn*)

MEXICO

A soup kitchen for the poor

“There is a boy here with five loaves and two fish.” (John 6:9) So Jesus performed the miracle of the loaves.

The Oblates have had almost 25 years of missionary presence in Iztapalapa, east of Mexico City. Twenty years ago, there originated a project for the poor women of our community. The “Poor Women’s Center” was founded by Father Yvan TREMBLAY who is already enjoying the family of heaven. This center provides support to women in four areas: education, food, health and job training. Here, the woman has her own space for developing, forming community and for helping herself in her social obligations. The Center has passed through many stages in its life as an institution. Today, 20 years into this dream, we wanted to open a small soup kitchen for the poorest folks in our community. This has become a reality, thanks to the initiative of our psychologist, Doctor Cecilia Orellano, who has been working with us for half a year. She rendered this service with street children in the city’s downtown.

To achieve the goal of this new project, the Center took a census of the poor families in our community’s slums (also known as camps). These are areas where people were brought as squatters by political groups and whose papers are not in order. Very poor families live in this area.

Since we do not have sufficient resources, we selected 30 people, mostly children, to begin our soup kitchen. We offer one meal a day, consisting of soup, rice, stew and beans. The people pay only five pesos for the meal; some do not pay at all. At almost a month since we began this service, more and more people approach us, applying for support. I would like to stress that it is the mothers themselves of the children who have volunteered their services for cooking the food, and many people from our community have donated a chicken, water, rice, soup and

beans. Also, some friends of the association have made donations for this cause. This is a blessing because we feel that together, we make it possible to feed this small community.

I believe that God is working wonders in these people. Therefore, we have decided that at the end of the month of July, we will be able to invite more people to eat, of course, with the support of the community. We thank our brother Oblates for their support and also the people who, one way or the other, are kindly supporting this effort. (Fr. Roberto TOLENTINO)

URUGUAY

And the volcanic ash did not deter us...

In connection with restructuring of the Congregation, Playa Pascual, Uruguay, was the site of an early June first meeting of the Oblate commissions of Paraguay and Uruguay, seeking to deepen fraternal dialogue and mutual understanding in view of an eventual unification. In recent years, our Units have shared various activities, council meetings, exchange of personnel, preaching of retreats, missions, gatherings of young Oblates, of lay associates, etc. It was proposed to form a commission of 2 or 3 members from each Unit in order to find out what we have in common. Present at this first meeting were Guido ACOSTA, Anibal CASURIAGA and Roger BULAMBA from Paraguay, and from Uruguay, Antonio BUONANNO and Jorge ALBERGATI.

The first thing we noticed was the climate of sincerity and freedom as well as moments of laughter and joking. In this first stage, we want to know each other better. Therefore, we have prepared a paper in which we examine whether we have a common understanding of fundamental issues such as formation, mission, finances and community. The next step will be to dream together. This is the “key” to a process toward greater dialogue. To the extent that we equip ourselves with rationale and motives, we will move forward, secure and energized, toward that which the Congregation asks of us. These motives will help us “move beyond necessity to opportunity.”

What was unforeseen were the ashes from the Puyehue volcano that made us postpone the meeting by one day, since the airport was closed, and also to extend it by two days, thus giving us

the opportunity to visit “La Guadalupita,” our formation house, Oblate houses in the south and to take part in Eucharistic celebrations in our barrios. (Jorge Albercati)

Europe

POLAND

Continued growth...

In the Oblate statistics published last February, it was clear that the Province of Poland is the largest province in the Congregation. Those statistics (342 at the beginning of 2011) did not include the dozens of Polish-born Oblates in various delegations and missions throughout the world.

On May 28, 2011, the scholasticate in Obra rejoiced at the ordination of three new priests and four deacons. At St. James the Apostle Church in Obra, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki of Poznań conferred the Order of Priesthood on Fathers Krzysztof KOŚLIK, Piotr BOROWICZ and Jan WLAZŁY. He ordained as deacons scholastic Brothers Arkadiusz OCHLAK, Bartłomiej CYTRYCKI, Bogusław HARLA and Wojciech STANGEL.

Numerous Oblates, family and friends of the

newly ordained were present, including the provincial, Fr. Ryszard SZMYDKI and his vicar, Fr. Andrzej KORDA.

At the celebrations following the ordinations, the newly ordained priests thanked their parents, formators, professors and the people who work at the scholasticate. The celebration concluded with the conferral of first obediences from the Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN. Fr. Rafał CHILIMONIUK, who had been ordained earlier in Turkmenistan, was assigned to that mission. Father Borowicz will go to the delegation of Ukraine; Fr. Koślik will serve in Madagascar; and Fr. Wlazły will work at the parish in Siedlce, Poland.

The Polish Oblates continue to derive joy from the fact that these new Oblate missionaries will be proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to the poor; they give thanks to God who is the only source of our vocation. *(Reported by Scholastic Bro. Hubert PILARCZYK and translated from the Polish by Deacon Grzegorz NOWAK)*

Canada-United States

UNITED STATES

Excavating an historic site

You don't have to dig deep to find evidence of the Catholic faith in Lowell, Massachusetts.

A team of archeologists from the United States and Ireland recently conducted an excavation in Lowell to find clues to one of the country's earliest Irish settlements. They chose the grounds of the Missionary Oblates' St. Patrick Church as the excavation site.

One of the first artifacts the archeologists discovered was a rosary. They estimated it to be 150 years old. Over the next seven days, 1,300 artifacts were unearthed, most dating back to the early 19th century.

“We found a huge number of artifacts from that time period,” said Colm Donnelly of the Queen's Centre for Archeological Fieldwork in Belfast, Northern Ireland. “These items come from an early Irish shantytown where about 400 people lived.”

The archeological dig took place through a partnership between Queen's University in Belfast and the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. Items discovered during the dig included clay pipes, buttons, pottery and nails. The team also discovered evidence of former buildings that will be further excavated later this year.

Irish laborers began settling in Lowell in the early 1820s. Most found work digging canals that powered the new mills. At the time, the canals were the largest power canal system in the

world. As more Irish immigrants arrived, the area became known as “New Dublin.” In 1831 local residents built St. Patrick’s Church.

The Missionary Oblates arrived in Lowell from Canada in 1868. Much of their work focused on people working in the textile mills, which included immigrants from Ireland and Canada.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Oblates staffed most of the Catholic parishes in the city. It has been said that there have been more Oblate vocations from Lowell than from any other city in the world.

In 2004 the Archdiocese of Boston asked the Oblates to take over St. Patrick’s. The parish had become multicultural and the Oblates had a well-established reputation for ministering in diverse communities. Today St. Patrick’s is thriving -- liturgies are celebrated in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Khymer (Cambodian). One parishioner, An Ros, was America’s first Catholic Cambodian Deacon.

While the nationalities of its parishioners may have changed dramatically over the past 179 years, the mission of St. Patrick’s has always remained the same -- to bring local residents closer to their Catholic faith.

It is a mission that began long ago. Just ask the archeologists. (*Oblate World*, June 2011)

UNITED STATES **Riding the “Oblate Trail”**

Each year the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville,

Texas, sponsors the Oblate Trail Ride. People sponsor the bicyclists and the money raised goes to various charitable projects.

This year the ride occurred on the feast of the Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, commemorating the 150th anniversary of his death and beginning the year of St. Eugene.

At 6 o’clock in the morning, 500 participants arrived at the cathedral parking lot, wearing bright red, white and yellow jackets, emblazoned on the front with the word Oblate in bold black letters, with the Oblate cross beneath it. On the left of the cross were the 5 famous horsemen of the original Calvary of Christ. On the right were 3 modern day cyclists. On the back were the words, “Riding since 1849”, referring to the arrival of the Oblates at Port Isabel, Texas, on December 3 of that year.

The riders rode the same trail that Fathers Jean BRETAULT, Pierre PARISOT, Pierre KERALUM, Henri JANVIER and Antoine TELMON once travelled to bring the Gospel to the rancheros along the Rio Grande.

Brownsville’s Bishop Daniel Flores blessed the participants. A cowboy on a horse led them all to the front of the Cathedral. The bells of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral rang and the riders were off on the 62½ mile trail.

Two other Oblates, Frs. Roy SNIPES and James PFEIFER, greeted the tired bikers at La Lomita chapel, a small church outside of Mission, Texas. Both the Cathedral and La Lomita were designed by Father Pedrito Keralum, the Oblate architect and missionary!

Asia-Oceania

COLOMBO **Celebrating the Founder**

An aura of reverence pervaded the Fatima Church, Maradana, on Saturday, 21 May 2011. The occasion was the 150th anniversary of the birth into heaven of the St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The celebration was filled with

pomp and pageantry befitting the occasion.

His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, was welcomed at the entrance to Fatima Church and he hoisted the national, papal and Oblate flags. He then presided at a Eucharistic celebration. Concelebrating were Bishop Norbert ANDRADI of Anuradhapura and Fr. Rohan SILVA, provincial of the Colombo

Province. Also present were the Archbishops Emeriti of Colombo, the Most Reverends Nicholas Marcus Fernando and Oswald Gomis.

The Ampitiya Scholasticate choir, under the direction of Brother Sameera FONSEKA, added luster to the occasion with their singing. In keeping with the universality of the Church and the missionary character of the Oblates, the Mass was conducted and hymns sung in three languages. Bishop Andradi delivered an impressive and appropriate homily on the life and times of St. Eugene de Mazenod. A pictorial exhibition of St. Eugene's life was held on the church premises.

After the Eucharist, the guests proceeded to Hedges Court for a reception made available by Mr. Mohammed Nafiz. The celebration concluded with the presentation of souvenirs to some of the guests by the provincial, Fr. Silva. (Russel Fernando)

PHILIPPINES

Clean water for flood victims

In June, Cotabato City and the neighboring municipalities were in a state of calamity. Flooded rivers brought tons of water hyacinth or water lilies downstream, clogging the Rio Grande de Mindanao, overflowing both banks, and submerging almost 36 districts of Cotabato City and some areas in the municipality of Sultan Kudarat.

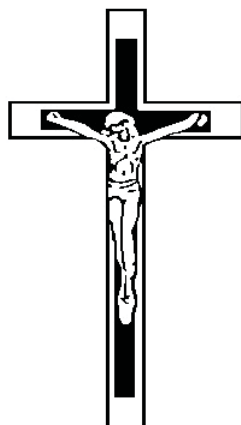
For almost two weeks, people practically lived in a "water world," wading through sometimes

waist-deep water. Classes in schools were suspended and people evacuated to higher grounds and drier areas.

At the height of the flood and the ensuing evacuation in Cotabato City and environs, Father Ramon BERNABE, Provincial of the Philippines, made the appeal for a modest effort to alleviate the plight of the evacuees. The immediate response was to organize a "Water Brigade" under the auspices of the Oblate Missionary Foundation (OMF).

Considering the need for clean and safe drinking water in the midst of floodwaters and the difficult conditions in the evacuation areas, the OMF concentrated its efforts in distributing purified drinking water. With the help of volunteers who included Oblate novices, pre-novices, and junior seminarians, and with the support of donors, the "OMF Water Brigade" started providing purified drinking water to 3 evacuation centers (Krislamville, Tamontaka and Notre Dame Village). As of July 1, 2011, the "Water Brigade" had served more than 2000 families with 18,927 liters (5,000 gallons) of clean drinking water.

Under its Calamity Assistance Program, the Foundation formed a "disaster response team" headed by Bro. Noel GARCIA and Bing Estela of the Provincial Office. In some evacuation areas, Frs. Mon Bernabe, Dennis GUI and Jonathan DOMINGO, Deacons Rockmoore SANIEL and Boyet PALOMO and other lay volunteers helped in the water distribution. (OMI Philippines, July 2011)



Anniversaries for September 2011

75 Years of religious life

1936.09.08	06438	Fr. William O'Donovan	Anglo-Irish
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70 Years of religious life

1941.09.08	07348	Fr. Patrick Healy	United States
1941.09.08	07427	Fr. Jean Michal	France
1941.09.08	07344	Fr. Alexander Shahun	Lacombe
1941.09.15	07362	Fr. Gerard Clenaghan	Anglo-Irish
1941.09.29	07398	Fr. Pierre Veyrat	Lacombe

70 Years of priesthood

1941.09.20	06335	Fr. Boniface Wittenbrink	United States
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65 Years of religious life

1946.09.08	08208	Fr. Francis Bagan	United States
1946.09.08	08202	Fr. Stanislaus T. Balasuriya	Colombo
1946.09.08	08204	Fr. Joseph Balthazard	Belgium/Holland
1946.09.08	08942	Bro. Oscar Delanghe	Lacombe
1946.09.08	08119	Fr. Jacques Dherbomez	France
1946.09.08	08310	Fr. René Fumoleau	Lacombe
1946.09.08	08215	Fr. Richard Harr	United States
1946.09.08	08247	Fr. Francis Kavanagh	Lacombe
1946.09.08	08203	Fr. Francis Kulas	Jaffna
1946.09.08	08212	Fr. Luc Lombart	Belgium/Holland
1946.09.08	08196	Fr. William McSweeney	United States
1946.09.08	08226	Fr. Joseph Meeùs	Lacombe
1946.09.08	08205	Fr. Valentin Nelissen	Belgium/Holland
1946.09.08	08219	Fr. Oscar Pauwels	Lacombe
1946.09.15	08423	Fr. François Demeaux	France
1946.09.29	08242	Fr. Cyril Canning	Philippines
1946.09.29	08394	Fr. Anthony Carroll	Anglo-Irish
1946.09.29	08243	Fr. Michael Clarke	Australia
1946.09.29	08240	Fr. Michel Frémaux	France
1946.09.29	08239	Fr. Edmond Houssais	France
1946.09.29	08296	Fr. Lucien Le Calvé	France
1946.09.29	08393	Fr. Peter McCluskey	Anglo-Irish

65 Years of priesthood

1946.09.21	07314	Fr. Joseph Vaillancourt	Haiti
1946.09.29	07129	Fr. Roger Guindon	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

60 Years of religious life

1951.09.08	09147	Fr. Szczepan Brzezina	Poland
1951.09.08	09420	Fr. Maxime Chaigne	France
1951.09.08	09158	Fr. Louis-Marie Chrétien	France
1951.09.08	09449	Fr. Michel Courvoisier	France
1951.09.08	09135	Fr. Victor A. Croos	Central S. A.

1951.09.08	09141	Fr. Paul Duda	Central European
1951.09.08	09112	Archbishop Adam Exner	Lacombe
1951.09.08	09380	Fr. Jean-Noël Fouquet	France
1951.09.08	09634	Fr. Gabriel Gerard	Belgium/Holland
1951.09.08	09129	Fr. Emil Glombica	Poland
1951.09.08	09110	Fr. John King	United States
1951.09.08	09139	Fr. Tadeusz Krzeminski	Poland
1951.09.08	09215	Fr. Józef Kuc	Poland
1951.09.08	09114	Fr. Lawrence Mac Lennan	Lacombe
1951.09.08	09108	Fr. J. Lorne MacDonald	Lacombe
1951.09.08	09137	Fr. Augustyn Matysek	Poland
1951.09.08	09125	Fr. Harold McIntee	Lacombe
1951.09.08	09098	Fr. John Mulligan	Lacombe
1951.09.08	09102	Fr. Piet Palm	Belgium/Holland
1951.09.08	09143	Fr. Antoni Pospiech	Poland
1951.09.08	09936	Bro. Jan Szczech	Poland
1951.09.08	09130	Fr. Jerry Talariski	Assumption
1951.09.08	09115	Fr. Hilarion Vethanayagam	Jaffna
1951.09.26	09151	Fr. Mieczyslaw Kuchcinski	Poland
1951.09.26	09152	Fr. Piotr Puzynski	Poland
1951.09.29	09164	Fr. Paschal Dillon	Anglo-Irish
1951.09.29	09160	Fr. Christopher Dunne	Anglo-Irish
1951.09.29	09165	Fr. Kevin O'Connor	Anglo-Irish

60 Years of priesthood

1951.09.15	07879	Fr. Henri Beaudoin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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50 Years of religious life

1961.09.08	11487	Fr. Joseph Bois	France
1961.09.08	11497	Fr. Jacques Chapuis	Indonesia
1961.09.08	11591	Fr. René Colin	France
1961.09.08	11145	Fr. José De Fruyt	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.08	11285	Fr. Hendrik Deceuninck	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.08	11149	Fr. Kamiel Degrieck	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.08	11148	Fr. François Dyjak	Assumption
1961.09.08	11642	Bro. Adélarde Gervais	Lacombe
1961.09.08	11156	Fr. Joseph Jacek	Lacombe
1961.09.08	11542	Bro. Wayne Jarvo	Lacombe
1961.09.08	11157	Fr. Teodor Jochem	Poland
1961.09.08	11132	Fr. Wim Joosten	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.08	11485	Fr. Michel Lenzen	Philippines
1961.09.08	11598	Fr. Terrance McNamara	Lacombe
1961.09.08	11144	Fr. Marinus Nijsten	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.08	11141	Fr. Miguel Pipolo	Brazil
1961.09.08	11541	Bro. Grzegorz Szymaniuk	Poland
1961.09.08	11134	Fr. Johan Van Calbergh	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.08	11137	Fr. Ad van der Meijden	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.08	11133	Fr. Achiël Vermeulen	Belgium/Holland
1961.09.15	11160	Fr. Costante Baron	Italy
1961.09.15	11158	Fr. Antonio Bocchi	Indonesia

1961.09.15	11159	Fr. Giuseppe Rebusi	Indonesia
1961.09.15	11162	Fr. Marcello Sgarbossa	Italy
1961.09.29	11168	Fr. Anthony Boyhan	Anglo-Irish
1961.09.29	11172	Fr. Anthony Clancy	Anglo-Irish
1961.09.29	11166	Fr. Michael McMahon	Australia
1961.09.29	11524	Fr. Dermot Mills	Anglo-Irish

50 Years of priesthood

1961.09.08	09911	Fr. Santiago Lyons	Mexico
1961.09.08	09914	Fr. Kelly Nemeck	United States
1961.09.08	09908	Fr. Richard Philion	United States
1961.09.10	10188	Fr. Carroll Parker	Poland
1961.09.15	10163	Fr. Jean Clarence Saint-Cyr	Haiti
1961.09.23	10183	Fr. Francis Morrissey	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1961.09.24	10050	Fr. Joao Cribbin	Anglo-Irish

25 Years of religious life

1986.09.08	13050	Fr. Piotr Bielewicz	Poland
1986.09.08	13037	Fr. Mirosław K. Biernacki	Poland
1986.09.08	13042	Fr. Franciszek J. Bok	Poland
1986.09.08	13108	Bro. Przemysław Byczkowski	Poland
1986.09.08	13020	Fr. Lesly Dauphin	Haiti
1986.09.08	13174	Bro. Józef Derewonko	Central European
1986.09.08	12966	Fr. Jeevanadas Fernando	Jaffna
1986.09.08	13125	Fr. Colamboge Jude Fernando	Colombo
1986.09.08	13046	Fr. Alfred Grzempa	Assumption
1986.09.08	13067	Fr. Marek Jazgier	Poland
1986.09.08	13051	Fr. Henryk Kamiński	Poland
1986.09.08	13034	Fr. Jan Kot	Brazil
1986.09.08	13105	Bro. Jacek Kubera	Poland
1986.09.08	13112	Fr. Andrzej Lachowski	Cameroun
1986.09.08	13107	Fr. Mariusz Legieżyński	Poland
1986.09.08	13110	Bro. Mariusz Lorenc	France
1986.09.08	12990	Fr. Jean-Pierre Loubeau	Haiti
1986.09.08	13043	Fr. Maciej Michalski	General Administration
1986.09.08	13111	Bro. Marek Motyka	Poland
1986.09.08	13161	Bro. Jean-Phanuel Neptune	Haiti
1986.09.08	12948	Fr. Emmanuel Ngamefula	Cameroun
1986.09.08	13045	Fr. Jacek Nosowicz	Assumption
1986.09.08	13041	Fr. Marek Ochlak	Poland
1986.09.08	13066	Fr. Mirosław Olszewski	Assumption
1986.09.08	13129	Fr. Jude Canisius Peirisulle	Colombo
1986.09.08	13047	Fr. Piotr Piasecki	Poland
1986.09.08	13089	Fr. Wojciech Popielewski	Poland
1986.09.08	13130	Fr. Bradley J. Rozairo	Colombo
1986.09.08	13040	Fr. Wojciech P. Ruszniak	Poland
1986.09.08	13124	Fr. Dudley D.D. Saparamadu	Colombo
1986.09.08	13127	Fr. Roshan J. Silva	Colombo
1986.09.08	13048	Fr. Zdzisław Sitek	Poland
1986.09.08	13038	Fr. Wiesław Szatanski	Lacombe

1986.09.08	13365	Fr. Chrysantha Thilakaratne	Colombo
1986.09.08	13035	Fr. Jacek J. Tomiczek	Poland
1986.09.08	13044	Fr. Kazimierz Tyberski	Poland
1986.09.08	13095	Fr. Gardy Valère	Haiti
1986.09.08	13128	Fr. Derrick Warnakulasuriya	Colombo
1986.09.08	13126	Fr. Angelo Dilan Wijewickrama	Colombo
1986.09.24	12976	Fr. José Manuel Cicuéndez	Spain
1986.09.24	12977	Fr. Fernando Vizcaino de la Paz	Spain
1986.09.27	12982	Fr. Günther H. Ecklbauer	Colombo
1986.09.27	12983	Fr. Gottfried H. Hofer	Central European
1986.09.29	13156	Fr. Alfonso Bartolotta	France
1986.09.29	13055	Bro. Silvio Bertolini	Italy
1986.09.29	13068	Fr. Francesco Volpintesta	Italy

25 Years of priesthood

1986.09.20	12690	Fr. Antonio Buonanno	Italy
1986.09.20	12691	Fr. Antonio Feltracco	Italy

Prayers for our deceased

No. 44-50

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Paul Peter	Central European	26/03/1935	Hünfeld	07/06/2011
Fr. Rolland Bennett	United States	16/04/1934	San Antonio	12/06/2011
Fr. Robert Guinchard	France	16/06/1926	Notre Dame de Lumières	18/06/2011
Fr. Pancrazio Di Grazia	Italy	27/03/1930	San Giorgio Canavese	23/06/2011
Fr. Piet Souren	Belgium/Holland	30/01/1931	Valkenburg	24/06/2011
Fr. Angelo Siani	Japan/Colombo	23/08/1936	Buffalo	08/07/2011
Fr. Charles Prass	United States	17/07/1918	Belleville	14/07/2011

“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