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October 2011

35th General Chapter: a year later

Paolo Archiati, OMI, Vicar General

A year ago, our last General Chapter concluded in an atmosphere of joy and brotherhood because of the work accomplished, the new Superior General, his Council, and the positive outlook of the Congregation as it looked to its future.

What's left of this experience a year later?

The key word that guided the chapter itself and which the whole Oblate family worked on is surely the word *conversion*. It is the first document from a Chapter that has a single word as its title! It is a word that perhaps we struggle with a bit in order to find focus as Oblates, but gradually it draws us together and unites us, a word that continues to speak to us and inspire us, inviting us to go deeper in order to understand the challenges that our life and our mission today present us.

The biblical image of the Chapter's final letter continues to accompany us: that of the disciples of Emmaus who are walking the road alone, discouraged and disappointed because their world is shattered. Two disciples who are joined by a traveler, a pilgrim like themselves, who by his words relights a fire in their hearts until the moment when they recognize him; he disappears, but they find themselves filled with fresh courage, so as to go back to their lives with a new way of looking at things, with new hope and new energy.

"*This General Chapter,*" we read in the last paragraph of the letter, "*has been an Emmaus walk. We have examined our crucified worlds, met the resurrected Christ on the road, and leave here with our hearts burning with new vision,*

new hope, and new energy." This, in brief, is the message and the hope that the Chapter wanted to offer the whole Congregation.

Conversion. To translate this word into a realistic and feasible call, the Chapter proposed five areas in which it asked us to go deeper, starting with our commitment as disciples of Christ, determined to follow him and to form a community around him.

What is the heart of the Oblate *community*? With this question, as old as the Congregation but always new, we are offered a first area for work and conversion. The second is that of our *mission*, centered on the person of Christ, and aimed at bringing the Gospel to the poor; today, this mission is facing one of the most important challenges of our time: to overcome the various barriers that continue to arise between individuals, between peoples, and between cultures. The *service of authority* is an area of conversion that involves every Oblate, within and beyond the limits of the community to which he belongs; we are called to live this service with courage and joy, keeping in mind the changes happening in our family today. *Formation* too, first and ongoing, is another area for conversion, one calling for a new excellence. Profoundly rooted in Christ and animated by the Oblate charism, it will be open to the needs of the community and of the mission. According to Constitution 47, formation involves us in a continual conversion to the Gospel and requires us to be ready to learn and to change in order to respond to new challenges.

Gathered around the teaching of the apostles and the breaking of bread, the first Christian community was of one heart and one mind. This ideal of life fascinated Saint Eugene and he wanted to pass it on to his Oblates, right from the beginning. The *communion of goods* in our family is an essential prerequisite for the communion of minds and hearts. Even regarding our worldly goods, we are called to be faithful and humble stewards and this requires a change of mentality that can lead us gradually from independence to interdependence and finally, to communion.

Conversion. One year after the Chapter, we find ourselves on the way to continue to live this message and this call. All Oblate Units have engaged, in different ways and according to their concrete situations, to respond to this call of the Spirit. This will make us grow and will keep us united, despite the fragmentation that we experience in our world at various levels. In the Central Government, at the end of our third plenary session, we have the impression that the Spirit is truly at work in each person and in the whole family. We hope to continue to let ourselves be guided.

General Administration

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

New Secretary General begins his work

At the April-May 2011, Plenary Session, Father General in Council appointed a new Secretary General, Fr. Marek JAZGIER, from the Province of Poland. Fr. Marek has now moved to the General House and taken up his new assignment.

Rule 148b gives a brief job description of the Secretary General. *“The Secretary General is a General Officer. He serves as secretary and notary of the Congregation and of the General Council. He sees to the preparation of dossiers for the meetings of the Council, he also makes certain that official documents of the Congregation as well as acts of the Council are properly preserved and, if need be, communicated to the parties concerned. He also supervises the work of the General Secretariat and collaborates closely with the General Archivist.”*

The work that these few lines describe entails a thorough knowledge of the Congregation in all its details. In a sense, the Secretary General holds things together, helping Father General and his Council, but also the other major superiors throughout the world, to steer through some of the complications of the ministry and service of administration. With the help of two Dominican Sisters in the General Secretariat, he oversees the maintenance of files and correspondence of all living Oblates. But to do this, he in turn relies heavily on timely and complete information coming

from the various Units of the Congregation.

The new Secretary General was born in 1965 in Sandomierz, Poland and entered the Novitiate at Swiety Krzyz in 1985, where he was professed the following year. After philosophical studies in Obra, he was to continue his first formation in Rome where he was perpetually professed in 1990 and, in the following year ordained to the diaconate, which order he exercised during a two-year regency in the Cameroon. Assigned to the Polish Province and ordained to the priesthood in 1993 in Obra, Fr. Marek completed a license in philosophy in Rome in 1996 and continued philosophical studies in Warsaw, where he also taught from 1998 to 2004. In the following years he was involved in missionary animation and since 2010 has worked in mission preaching in Poland. In addition to his native Polish, the newly appointed Secretary General is fluent in English, French and Italian.

Packing his bags and returning to the United States Province after some 12 years on the job in Rome, the outgoing Secretary General, Fr. Thomas COUGHLIN, was greatly appreciated for his keen intellect, his efficiency, his droll sense of humor and patience with those for whom a computer was still a mystery. In his free time, he could often be found in what he called his “garage,” working on someone’s errant computer or assembling a “new” computer from the parts of older ones. After a well-deserved period of rest, he will become the pastor of St. Ferdinand Parish in San Fernando, California.

GENERAL POSTULATION

The Beatification is approaching

The General Postulator, Fr. Joaquin MARTINEZ, informs us that the Beatification of the 22 Oblate Martyrs from the Scholasticate Community of Pozuelo (Madrid) has been confirmed. The celebration will take place in the Cathedral of Madrid on Saturday, December 17, 2011. On Sunday, December 18, there will be a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Oblate parish in Madrid.

All Oblates who wish to take part are asked to send their name as soon as possible (*before November 1*) to the person coordinating the event:

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Parroquia de S. Leandro
Escalona 59
29024 Madrid
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e-mail: egonzalezomi@gmail.com

Telephone: (34) 915 183 652 or (34) 679 588 338

Material for spiritual preparation can be found at:
<http://omipostulation.blogspot.com>.

There will also be a booklet published in Italian:
Oblazione e Martirio.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

New Treasurer General

With the consent of his Council in plenary session, Father General appointed Fr. Marc DESSUREAULT to the Office of Treasurer General on September 30, 2011. The date upon which Fr. Marc will take office will be announced later.

Fr. Marc was born in 1963 in Alma, Québec, Canada, and entered the Novitiate at Sainte-Marie, Québec, in 1985, where he made first profession the following year. He continued his first formation in Rome where he made perpetual profession in 1990 and in the following year was ordained to the diaconate. Before leaving Rome, he completed a license in moral theology. Upon receiving his first obedience to Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire province, he returned to Canada where he was ordained priest in 1991 and was involved in youth and vocation ministry for the province. From 1994 until 2001

he ministered on the pastoral team for campus ministry at Jonquiere College, Québec, during which time he earned a certificate in Psychology from the University of Quebec.

He returned to Rome from 2001 until 2005 and served in the General Administration as Executive Assistant to the Vicar General and also assisted the Treasurer General. Upon reassignment to Notre-Dame-du-Cap province in Canada, he returned to graduate school where he earned a master's degree in business administration at the University of Ottawa in 2006, and then served from 2007 until 2009 as Director of Human Resources and Finances at the Notre-Dame-du-Cap Shrine in Trois-Rivières, Canada. Since 2009, he has served as Vice-Rector for Administration and Government at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. The new Treasurer General is fluent in his native French, as well as in English, Italian and Spanish.

OBLATE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE

New photo available

There is a new photo of Father General and his Council available. The updated photo includes Fr. Emmanuel MOSOEU, General Councillor for the Region of Africa-Madagascar. He was elected by the Superior General in Council to replace Bishop Evans CHINYEMBA who was named to Bishop of Mongu in Zambia, just a few months after his election to the General Council.

This color photo is available for downloading at the following link: <http://goo.gl/nmBZD>.

VATICAN

Continuing an Oblate tradition

The Library of the Pontifical Urban University has published the LXXIV^o volume of *Bibliographia Missionaria* for the year 2010. This work is unique in its kind; it offers vast documentation on books and articles about the world of missionary activity and its various aspects, both historical and contemporary: religious orders, missionary congregations, mission territories, methodology of mission, interreligious dialogue, ecumenism, new religious movements...

Each year it presents an exhaustive panorama of over 4000 notices of what has been published on the subject of mission in more than 800 periodicals all over the world. Each volume also presents 30 to 40 book reviews prepared by experts in missiology. The volume is in English, and the citations from books and articles are in the original languages: English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Polish and Scandinavian.

Bibliographia Missionaria was founded in 1925

by Fr. Johannes ROMMERSKIRCHEN, OMI, and the publication was interrupted only during World War II. In these 76 years, it has seen a remarkable evolution and substantial changes have been introduced in its content and structure: from 80 pages in the first volume, there are now 568. Since 1978, *Bibliographia Missionaria* is a project of the Library of the Pontifical Urban University. The current editor is Fr. Marek ROSTKOWSKI, OMI, librarian. (S.L.) (*Agenzia Fides* 05/10/2011)

Europe

UKRAINE

Chernobyl, 25 years later

Father Andrzej MACKOW and Fr. Sebastian JANKOWSKI live and work in the town of Slavutych, Ukraine. Slavutych is located about 40 miles from Chernobyl, site of one of the world's worst nuclear reactor explosion in 1986. Most of Frs. Andrzej and Sebastian's parishioners at St. Eugene de Mazenod Church are victims of the Chernobyl disaster.

Robert Sturova is a parishioner at St. Eugene de Mazenod Church. He was an engineer for 22 years at Chernobyl and was present when the meltdown occurred. Today he has chronic breathing problems, but considers himself lucky because nearly all of his co-workers have been dead for many years.

In 1986, the Sturova family lived in the town of Pripyat next to the Chernobyl power plant. Robert's five-year-old daughter Anna watched the explosion from her bedroom window. Pripyat is now a ghost town because of unsafe radiation levels.

The former Soviet government tried to minimize the Chernobyl disaster, claiming at first that only a few hundred people were impacted. Today, an estimated 600,000 people are believed to have health problems caused by radiation from Chernobyl.

"The government told us that it was safe, so people stayed in the area," said Tatiana Makarowa, a member of St. Eugene de Mazenod Church. "Now the kids are paying for that lie."

Today, most of the residents of Slavutych are either victims of the Chernobyl disaster or work at the power plant in clean-up and monitoring efforts. Residents have high rates of leukemia and tumors, and many children have been born with illnesses that physicians are unable to identify. The World Health Organization reports that thyroid cancer among children living in Slavutych is 80 times higher than normal. Even "healthy" children have labored breathing and much coughing.

The first Missionary Oblate to minister to the Chernobyl victims was Fr. Henryk KAMINSKI in 1994. In those early years he celebrated Mass on the steps of an abandoned church building and in private homes.

In 2002 the Oblates established St. Eugene de Mazenod Church in Slavutych, the first Catholic church in the Chernobyl region. Four Oblates arrived to serve the people of Slavutych, despite warnings of high radiation in the soil and the local food supply.

Father Pavlo VYSHKOVSKYY, one of these four Oblates, said the new parish was a symbol that, while human beings can create horrible disasters, we can also create beautiful things like a new faith community.

"The Oblate missionaries strive to make this area a sign of hope, showing that humanity can return to God and build a civilization of love on the ruins of their mistakes and their sins," said Fr. Pavlo. The Missionary Oblates have focused a good portion

of their energies in Slavutych on the children. For years they have been coordinating month-long vacations for them. More than 1,000 children have taken part in these holidays to Austria, Poland and the Black Sea region of Ukraine.

“The doctors have told us that it is necessary for the kids’ health to get away for a little while from the contamination that surrounds them,” says Fr. Kaminski. “The earth that they live on is poisoned. The food and soil are no good.”

Slavutych continues to be a most unique city. None of its buildings is more than 25 years old. There are nice homes, excellent schools and public facilities. But the tradeoff for residents is that the soil remains contaminated, and they try to walk on concrete most of the time.

Near St. Eugene De Mazenod Church there is a small memorial to the victims of Chernobyl. The memorial is engraved, “From the ashes of the old we will build a new world.” (www.omiusa.org)

UKRAINE

A new “media” community in Kiev

A second Oblate community has been founded in Kiev, located 12 km from the community which has existed for years near the parish of St. Nicolas in central Kiev.

It is very likely the first male religious community in Ukraine whose main ministry is evangelization through the media. The three Ukrainian Oblates who make up the community will also take care of weekend ministry at parishes in Nizhyn and Pryluky, 150 km from Kiev.

The Oblates’ primary work is in the Catholic Media Centre, which belongs to the Ukrainian Episcopal Conference and includes several departments. The first is the *Information Agency*, which consists of sending, by means of the Internet, daily information in Ukrainian about the local and universal Church and the Holy Father. The Oblates are also the webmasters of the official web site, www.catholic-media.org which is visited daily by over 12,000 people. The second department of the Media Centre is the

“*Vodograj*” (*Waterfall*) magazine. It is a 20 page coloured monthly magazine, an educational and catechetical religious publication. It is the largest Catholic magazine in Ukraine and former USSR, with a monthly circulation of 10,000 copies. This magazine has existed in Ukraine for 10 years and is aimed mainly at young people, ages 8-13. A few months ago, the Media Centre began publishing a new magazine for younger children, ages 3-8, called “*Vodograjczyk*” (*The Little Waterfall*).

A completely new field of work will be the creation of a Ukrainian version of the American EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network). Presently we already have the web site in place www.ewtn.org.ua, but there is still a lot to be done before the Ukrainian version of the programming can begin. In Ukraine there are less than one million Catholics in a population of over 46 million. Through a television station in Kiev, we would have access to 800,000 homes and thanks to this, we will have the opportunity to proclaim Christ to those who have never heard of Him throughout the entire 20th century when it was forbidden to preach the Gospel in Ukraine.

Presently the construction of our home as well as our place of work is underway. At this moment, we feel the same joy that overwhelmed the heart of our Founder at the beginning of the Congregation, because, as he did, we also lack adequate housing and share the little we have.

Our community has chosen as our patrons the Oblate Spanish Martyrs, who will be beatified on December 17 of this year. We are planning to make large paintings of them for our future chapel. In one painting, they will surround the Founder and in the other, the statue of the Blessed Mother which is in the General House chapel. (*Pavlo VYSHKOVSKYY*)



Asia-Oceania

COLOMBO**Grotto Centenary at St. Vincent's Orphanage**

A hundred years ago, a virulent epidemic spread throughout St. Vincent's Orphanage. Many orphans, members of the Community and staff were affected by this dreaded epidemic. Fr. Charles CONRAD, Superior of the Institute, realising the seriousness of the situation, was considering the many remedies that should be taken. Being an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, he, with the children, knelt before the statue of Our Blessed Mother and prayed to Her, requesting Her motherly protection and intercession before God to eradicate this disease. He promised the he would build a Grotto on the premises. Our Blessed Mother responded to the pleading of the Superior and children; the epidemic was eradicated.

In the meantime, Fr. Conrad was transferred and a saintly Oblate, Fr. Charles CROCTAINE, was appointed as Superior. He had a strong devotion to Our Blessed Mother and it fell upon him to fulfil the promise made by Fr. Conrad. Fr. Croctaine was new to the environs of the Institute and lacked finances to start this project. Placing his confidence in God and Our Blessed Mother, Fr. Croctaine started to build the Grotto. The brother of a Franciscan, Bro. Joseph Gonsal, offered financial assistance to build the Grotto. Fr. Croctaine was grateful to God and Our Blessed Mother for answering his prayers and chose the most beautiful place on the property to build the Grotto. He requested that it be similar to the Grotto at Lourdes, France.

He ordered a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes from France and this statue arrived in August 1911. It was blessed and kept at St Vincent's Chapel until the Grotto was completed.

On November 3, 1911, the solemn blessing of the Grotto and installation of the statue took place. The Oblate community, staff and children of St Vincent's Home, the Franciscan Brothers and the children from their Institute were involved in the preparations to celebrate this event with much grandeur. The processional route from the Chapel to the Grotto, which was approximately three kilometres, was decorated and the parish

priests and parishioners of the neighbouring parishes and many others from the surrounding villages participated in the celebrations.

Richly decorated, the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was taken in procession from the chapel to the Grotto and along the route the faithful were praying and singing hymns to Our Lady unceasingly.

Fr. Jules COLLIN, Vicar of Missions, solemnly blessed the Grotto and installed the statue amidst resounding acclamations from the crowd and singing 'Ave Maria' as sung in Lourdes. On November 4, 1911, the first Mass was celebrated at the grotto by Fr. Croctaine; it was then decided to celebrate Mass every First Saturday at the Grotto.

The 75th Anniversary of the Grotto commenced with a three day Novena (Triduum) to Our Blessed Mother and celebrations were held on December 7-8, 1986. On December 7, the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was taken in procession and the Vespers was sung by the then Superior of the Institute, Fr. John CAMILLUS.

On December 8, 2011, we will be celebrating the centenary of the Grotto and we are grateful to Our Blessed Mother for keeping us in her maternal care. (*Bro. John GILBERT; Sources: Diary of Bro. Leo RENAUD and the Codex Historicus of St. Vincent's Home*)

KOREA**"Go to Anna's House!"**

Some were saying: "God must be really angry." Others added: "The end of the world is near!" The Weather Bureau confirmed it: "This year's was the rainiest season in the last 100 years." Some even claimed to have seen Noah wandering the streets of the city....who know? There certainly was a lot of water. It caused many deaths, devastating landslides, enormous inconveniences for the people and millions in damages to the country. If that were not enough, in only the most recent days of this period of rain, we had 250 mm of water, a real flood. In spite of all that downpour, even on that evening we had prepared the usual supper at Anna's House.

To tell the truth, we were doubtful and we were saying: “Today, no one will come. It’s impossible to move around in this beastly weather.”

In fact, at 16:30, when we open the center’s doors for the evening meal, there were only 7 or 8 persons at the entrance. But it could not have been otherwise, given the buckets of water pouring down. But a few minutes later, people began to arrive. At the beginning, a few dozen homeless persons. Then, more and more...hundreds of the poor -- battered, soaked, and drenched -- with their shoes in their hands because you could not walk on those streets that had turned into rivers. Upon entering the dining room, one of them told me: “I’m hungry. I have not eaten for two days.” Another said: “I feel sick. I came to get some medicine.” Still another said: “I need a change of clothes.”

In seeing these brothers and hearing their words, my heart was filled with deep compassion.

Yes, feeding 450 poor people every day is a great work (in these last 13 years, our volunteers have distributed more than a million meals!) Offering them medical care, showers, clothing, legal and employment advice, plus a school of basic human formation, is also very helpful. But without a doubt, the biggest service we offer to the street people is giving them **hope** in the difficult and arduous journey of life.

By now, all the poor of the city and its surroundings know us and know that we, directors and volunteers of the Center, are always there to welcome them, to listen to them and to help them with great love and respect. That gives confident hope to all of them.

A few days ago, while I stood outside the door to welcome our guests with a smile, I saw standing before me a young father holding by the hand his little son. I immediately realized that his was not the usual homeless person coming for supper. In fact, approaching me, he said: “I want to talk with you.” I had him sit down in my office and there, between sobs and tears, he began to tell me his story of sorrow and frustration. He began

by saying: “I had a small business that gave me enough to live with dignity. Gradually, things started to go wrong. To save my work, I took on more and more debt until I had a huge financial collapse. I ended up on the street with a great load of debt. I was angry with myself and with the world. One day, coming home I found on the kitchen table a note from my wife telling me to take care of the child because she could no longer take this life of hardship and she was going another direction. At that point, everything plunged me into an abyss of despair. Humanly speaking, I had only one solution before me: suicide for me and my child. We were alone, desperate, homeless, jobless...without food, without a future...without hope. I only wanted to die, taking my son with me. Then, one day while I was sleeping in a city park with other homeless men, one of them told me: ‘Try going to Anna’s House; there’s a priest there who knows how to listen to people like us.’ So I’ve come to find you.”

Now this man lives in a small room we have offered him. His boy goes regularly to school and the father has begun to work.

That’s Anna’s House: not a center than can resolve the infinity of problems that the poor carry on their shoulders – only God can eliminate them all – but a place that is able to welcome whoever is in need and give hope to whoever is suffering. Today more than ever, there is need for a lively and certain hope.

How nice it would be if, in these times of uncertainty and suffering, each of us who call ourselves Christian – followers of Jesus – were to open our hearts and homes to those in need; if we had the ingenuity, with an intelligent and creative mind, to give hope to those many persons who are challenged by life and by this deep financial crisis. If we don’t want to be Pharisees and liars, this becomes an essential obligation for us who call ourselves children of the God who is Love and followers of a Prophet who said: “Blessed are you who are poor... Blessed are you who hunger... Blessed are you who weep...because my disciples, with the strength of my Spirit, will help you.” (*Vincenzo BORDO, Director of Anna’s House*)

Latin America

HAITI**Archbishop Hubert Constant, OMI: 1931-2011**

On the morning of September 23, 2011, Archbishop-emeritus Hubert CONSTANT of Cap-Haïtien, Haiti, died at a hospital in Port-au-Prince. He had entered the hospital on September 10 to be treated for a heart condition and had been released on September 21.

Archbishop Constant was born in 1931 and pronounced his first vows as an Oblate in 1955. He was ordained a priest in 1958. Pope John Paul II called him to shepherd the newly formed diocese of Fort-Liberté in 1991 where he served until his appointment to the archdiocese of Cap-Haïtien in 2003. He retired in 2008.

Before becoming a bishop, he had a wealth of experience as pastor, teacher, administrator and religious leader. After his ordination to the priesthood, he served in parishes in the dioceses of Cap-Haïtien, Les Cayes and Port-au-Prince. He was teacher and later director of the Saint-Eugène de Mazenod minor seminary in Camp-Perrin and then director of the "College Saint-Jean" in Les Cayes (1979-1981). In 1981, he became the first Haitian-born Provincial of the then Vice-Province of Haiti, serving two three-year terms in that capacity. He was subsequently superior of the Oblate scholasticate for four years before his appointment as bishop of Fort-Liberté. From 1999 until 2005, he also served as president of the Haitian Bishops' Conference.

During the 2004 uprising against the regime of then President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Archbishop Constant was the spokesperson for the Catholic Bishops of Haiti in calling for calm and respect for human lives. At that time, he wrote: "It is not the place of the Church to say which actions should be undertaken." He added: "But something must urgently be done to stop the violence... The bloodshed has already begun."

The appeal also contained an exhortation to all Haitians: "to respect the life of each human being, the moral integrity of the people, everyone's right to liberty, true information, and the constitutional

right to express themselves and demonstrate in a respectful and peaceful manner."

In November of 2004, he addressed the General Assembly of the Conference of Bishops of France. He told them: "One painful thing that I would like to mention is the condition of so many children reduced to dehumanizing living conditions. Who are they? Street children, children who live as servants, girls and increasingly many younger girls who are used in prostitution circles, children used for the sale of drugs or as objects of shady transactions at the Dominican border. In the midst of this disorder, one wonders where the future of our families is. How will the children, the young people and the adults of today discover tomorrow a sense of duty and responsibility?"

"Our heart still bleeds to see these situations of insecurity, impunity, corruption, of excessive exploitation for money and power, and the masquerade of justice continue in our country"

BRAZIL**Gratitude of a newly professed**

Shortly after his perpetual vows, Brother Patrick OLIVEIRA URIAS wrote a letter to Father General and his Council. This is an excerpt from that correspondence:

Dear brother Oblates: Louis, Miguel, Warren, Emmanuel, Clement, Chicho, Gilberto, Cornelius and Paolo,

Very often we are accustomed to write letters of petition: petitions for vows, for renewal of vows, for perpetual oblation, for diaconate, etc. And they are a part of our process of missionary religious formation.

Today, however, I want to write a letter of gratitude, a letter of a newly professed in his first days of perpetual oblation in this land of the Holy Cross, Brazil.

I want to express my total Christian joy at belonging to this religious family that I learned to love

during this time of on-going formation. And lately, my happiness has grown even more as I could recognize, touch and live ever more strongly the universality of the charism that we embrace.

It was inspiring in Bolivia, during our retreat in preparation for perpetual vows, to breathe the Oblate air that was present among us; all of us sustained and animated by the same charism that animated and encouraged Eugene. All of us were eager to offer our lives at the service of the Kingdom as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, living out of an experience of God, community and mission.

This experience was so strong for me, yet I did not know the depth of Oblate life that I would experience some days afterward. I arrived in Spain full of expectations with our little community of young Brazilians, ready to participate for the first time in an Oblate World Youth Day and the encounter with Pope Benedict XVI.

There, I was able to touch with my own hands what I had only heard about before. Now I have seen, I have lived and I have experienced what my lips can proclaim: we are missionary Oblates in the world and for the whole world! We are a treasure of the Universal Church! In Málaga, I discovered more profoundly that I am part of a universal family, with a charism poured out over the world with much beauty, strength and delight, holding within it the power to fascinate those that come to know it.

In Málaga, a new, modern Pentecost took place among us. God is the only way to explain the communication among such different people, among youth so diverse and so similar to one another. The universal language of love, centered on Eugene de Mazenod, was amply manifest there. We were able to share and to experience more profoundly the charism of our Congregation, together with young people who joyfully desired to drink from the same fonts from which we ourselves drink.

It was there that my vocation to become part of this family was intensified and grew within me as well as my desire to respond with my “yes” as did Mary and the Oblate Martyrs, rooted and built

on Christ, strong in the faith. And what a feeling was born within us in the very place where the Oblate Martyrs lived!

It was fascinating to go from group to group, listening to them, smiling together with them and enjoying the experience of universal brotherhood in a profound understanding of being community, where every person is truly valued, respected, cared for and loved. It was surprising to see everyone as an equal, for that is what we truly are. Priests, Brothers, Oblates and Oblate Sisters in formation, General Councilors, the Superior General, youths...everyone so united, mingling into the great family that we formed. And that is where I met many of you. At certain times I didn't even know who was who. And this didn't matter! In this way we are Oblates: among us there should not be concerns about responsibilities, about positions; we are and we become equal to each other in every time and place and this is why I chose to you each by name at the beginning.

For us, young people at the beginning of a journey, filled with dreams and desires for the good, I affirm that it is necessary and very important for us to feel the welcome and the love of every one of you, Oblates who are more experienced, who are witnesses for our lives. It encourages us and inspires us to continue believing in the values of religious life. In his homily at our oblation, Father Louis Lougen welcomed us in the name of the whole Congregation and exhorted everyone to care for us, to be responsible for us and to love us, we who had just been received as new members of this family. They were profound words and not too common, and which sometimes are forgotten.

Throughout this year, however, I learned more about the necessity to love, to love one another and to feel loved in this family. This is why I want to encourage you, as men of God, placed by Him at the animation of our Congregation, to be living witnesses of love among us; living signs of the love with which Eugene himself loved each Oblate in his own time, a love like none other. You should take care of each other, encourage each other, and you will learn to love our family even more and show that same care for each Oblate as a

human being and as a Christian missionary to help us on the way to holiness.

Thank you for your presence in the Congregation. Thank you for your witness and desire to serve. Thank you for the simplicity of your hearts. Thank you for revealing Eugene to the world of today and for teaching us to be as he wanted us to be. Thank you very much, as a Congregation, for receiving me as your brother, as an important person in this Oblate family. (*Patrick Oliveira Urias, OMI*)

HAITI

Fighting an epidemic

In July 2011, Fr. John HENAULT wrote of the continued struggle with the cholera epidemic that has plagued Haiti for many months now. He is pastor of Notre-Dame de la Mer Parish on Île-à-Vache (Cow Island).

Upon my return from my visit to the USA last year, I was being “pressured” to finish my part in our water project. Things were moving along quite well until October when the cholera epidemic broke out in Haiti. We presumed that being out on a remote island, we were safe. The last week of November, our first case appeared: a boat captain from the mainland bringing supplies to the island.

At our government health center here, no one wanted to touch this guy. I had a hard time trying to convince a taxi boat (our local boat ambulance was grounded because of a defective motor) to transport him to the hospital in Les Cayes. It cost me \$600 Haitian. Two days after, our first islander came down with cholera: again another boat trip. The next day a third case: another trip. This is where I decided to do something here. The local Haitian nurses and aides at the health center refused to treat these patients. Via amateur radio contacts, a helicopter came in with two foreign doctors and supplies to train the nurses and help in the care of cholera patients. After 5 hours of hands-on training, our local medical staff was willing to treat the sick. In the meantime, through amateur radio and contacts, I was able to have shipped in a large military tent, a white UNICEF tent and cholera cots.

Tending to this emergency is where most of my time and funds were spent. At the peak of our outbreak here, we were treating daily 50-60 patients of all ages. Our two tents were filled and we had people outdoors. Re-hydration, is the only medication necessary, both IV and oral at the same time. I’m an expert on treating cholera now.

I was able to get a team of *Doctors without Borders* to come here and help set things up early in December. Of all the centers set up in the southern part of Haiti, ours has been the most highly praised and efficient. Before we had things in place, we had 23 deaths and, up to now, we have had 695 cases come to the center. I had to put in water and electricity and spent most of my days up there. In February, *Doctors without Borders* had to leave here. A 7 person team of 3 nurses, 3 hygienists and 1 statistician now maintains a 24 hours/7 days a week service. The Ministry of Health made them a contract for 3 months but sadly they have not been paid and no one knows where the money is. I’m trying through contacts, to uncover the fraud and grave injustice that seems to have taken place at the Ministry of Health. There are three other centers that had the same problem and are now closed and the staff has never been paid.

Although I haven’t had any new cases in a couple of weeks, I’m keeping our center open. I promised the team I would pay their salaries with the help of my family and friends. Thanks to God for all the contacts, help and support, which helped us save hundreds of lives and we are still on stand-by.

Amateur radio again played a very indispensable means to accomplish all that was done. I am greatly indebted to radio operators for the phone patches, calls, and contacts they made for me.

May Our Lady of the Sea, patron of my parish out here on Ile-a-Vache, refer all prayers and sharing in my behalf to her Son and may He repay all these benefactors in His way, for being my family, my friends, my co-missionaries. (*Gus’ News Notes, October 2011*)

Canada-United States

OMI LACOMBE**Peace Pole and Garden**

Arnprior, Ontario, commemorate “International World Day of Peace” with the dedication of both the Peace Pole and Peace Garden at the Oblates’ Galilee Centre on September 21.

The image of the peace pole came after the destruction of Nagasaki in 1945 by the atomic bomb. In 1955 Masahisa Goi made a statement for peace by using a vertical stone with a declaration of peace on it. Since that day, these memorials for peace have been planted around the world.

Over 50 people gathered at the newly planted garden by the main entrance of Galilee Centre. What was once a simple entrance has become an “oasis of peace” and color. The Peace Pole was made from Red Cedar by the father and son team of Noel and Joel Remy of Arnprior who also built the small roof garden next to the main door. The gardens were designed, built and cared for by the Arnprior team of Ann and Bill Lamb and Fr. Jack LAU.

As the service began, participants were in front of the building waiting patiently to cross the threshold, but before they could enter, four members of the community unveiled four plaques, each in a different language, saying: “May Peace Prevail on the Earth”. After the applause, they all crossed over the old stone threshold into the sacred space of the circular garden. Different members from the community read from a litany of prayers for peace from various world faith traditions. For many it may have been the first time to hear a prayer from the Baha’I faith or the Toa tradition. Each prayer came from the depth of the human spirit, where the Divine dwells; all yearn for peace.

Mayor David Reid of Arnprior and Deputy-Mayor Christine Blimkie of McNab/Braeside were both present and shared their thoughts about peace in our local community. The Deputy-Mayor said that the moment she crossed the threshold, she felt the spirit of peace.

This event was in collaboration with the Initiative of the Department of Peace Canada and the Missionary Oblates’ Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee. (www.galileecentre.com)

OMI LACOMBE**Remembering an Oblate anthropologist**

(This article is from The National Post and was written by Joe O’Connor. Used with permission.)

Strangers who met him for the first time, often described Father Guy MARY-ROUSSELIERE as being aloof, detached and a little bit lost in his own inner-self.

A gangly limbed Roman Catholic priest, with a lean and upright bearing, Father Mary’s quiet reserve, like the priest’s collar he wore, was partly a disguise. The outer costume of a devoutly religious, yet also profoundly progressive man, who was living elbow to elbow with an Inuit culture dynamically different from the Western one in which the good Father, from Le Mans, France, was raised..

Father Mary lived and worked in Pond Inlet, and parts thereabout in the Central and Eastern Canadian Arctic, from the 1940s until his death, at age 81, in 1994.

During that time he was an artist, an anthropologist, an archeologist, plus a preacher and a missionary. He was a complicated man and, above all, a witness — with a camera, tape recorder, sketchpad and a pen.

Largely unknown outside of his beloved North and beyond the office walls of the odd academic, Father Mary’s body of work — writings, recordings, drawings and the photographs seen here — are poignant snapshots depicting the Inuit people at a moment of transition.

“In his drawings and photographs you can see the proximity he had with the Inuit, the scenes he depicts, perhaps inside an igloo — these are quiet moments and they show how intimate

he was with them and he was appreciated by them because of the man he was,” says Frederic Laugrand, an anthropologist at Laval University.

“But also what he showed in his work was a time period where Inuit were starting to live in settlements, and starting a new life. And he showed the tension between this life and the more traditional camp life that was away from the settlements. His work is extremely important.”

Father Mary’s photos, for example, of an Inuit family sitting on a bed in a shack with newspaper wallpaper, convey a story. There are tin cups on the table beside the bed. But the family members wear handmade sealskin boots on their feet.

Here then was a culture with a foot in the past and a foot on the treadmill of what we, and what many of Father Mary’s contemporaries, called progress.

Father Mary understood exactly what was taking place, and while he spoke from the pulpit, and sought converts, he also spoke to the Inuit in their own language. Far from a colonizing priest, he went North in the 1940s and spent the next 50 years listening.

“I don’t see any contradiction between the study of God, in theology, and the study of man, created by God,” the priest said in 1952. “Moreover, I think that anything that helps me to better understand the culture of the people among whom I live is justified.”

Father Mary’s photographs and sketches, or “cartoons” as he deprecatingly described them, are currently being showcased in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut in an exhibition marking the 100th anniversary (in 2012) of the Catholic presence in the central and eastern Canadian Arctic.

Impressive as the photos are, of even greater importance were the voices that he documented. Father Mary would sit with Inuit elders for hours, traveling to their homes, their hunting camps, to listen to their stories. Oral tales, passed down from generation to generation,

about the initiation rituals of a young shaman (think: no water for five days, no food for 10).

Or the origins of “white people,” a race, according to Inuit legend, that were cast out to sea by the Sea Woman in the soft sole of a mukluk with the simplest instructions: “Fend for yourselves without getting wet.”

Father Mary wrote everything down. Without him, many of these stories would have been lost. And he took his photographs, some of which appeared in long ago issues of *National Geographic*. “Father Mary really took the Inuit culture seriously. He respected them, and in his day, that was not something that was easy to do,” Professor Laugrand says.

In the 1970s, he locked collars with Brigitte Bardot, the French movie siren who was campaigning against the seal hunt. The priest argued that hunting was integral to Inuit life, as was the Inuktitut language, an idiom that was under duress from government administrators during the 1950s and 1960s who believed the Inuit people would ultimately be assimilated into Western culture.

“In his own way, Father Mary was very conservative,” says Professor Laugrand. “For instance, he enjoyed doing the Mass in Latin and not adopting the [modernizing] ways of the Vatican II council.

“So there is a tension within the man. On the Inuit side he went very far, but on the other side he was very attached to traditional values. And I guess he applied those values to himself — but also to preserving Inuit traditional values. In many respects, he was a man ahead of his time.”

Father Mary died in a fire at the Catholic mission in Pond Inlet on April 23, 1994. He was an old man by then, a wise and somewhat eccentric elder of the Church. The deadly fire consumed countless artifacts, words and photographs of a complicated man with a sharp eye, a keen ear — and a largely forgotten legacy.

Africa-Madagascar

SENEGAL

Understanding our missionary vocation

“Missionary Month is a renewed commitment of all Christians of our two countries to witness the Gospel in the wake of the new evangelization. A commitment of our Churches to make known the Good News to all,” writes Fr. Bruno FAVERO, omi, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Senegal and Mauritania, in his message for the Missionary Month.

Recalling the teachings of Pope Paul VI (“The Church exists to evangelize.”) and of Blessed Pope John Paul II (“Faith is strengthened by giving.”), Fr. Bruno says that “the missionary dimension is not just about priests: it is a requirement included in our Baptism, and every baptized person is called to take up this task concretely -- to share with others the gift of the Gospel.”

“The Missionary Month of October,” continued the National Director of the PMS, “is therefore a privileged moment for understanding our missionary vocation, for providing time and resources so that the Gospel continues its journey into the hearts of our contemporaries; time for offering our suffering, dear sick people, so that the

Gospel might penetrate our society.” Missionary Month is also “a time to live in deep solidarity with the Church, giving the little we have because, in turn, the Church distributes the fruits of this solidarity to all the Churches of the world, especially those under construction like ours.”

As concrete ways to live Missionary Month, Fr. Bruno suggests prayers, offerings of material goods but also of suffering. Particularly recommended is praying the rosary “to discover with Mary the ways of the mission.”

“In our Senegal, with its contradictions and weaknesses, in the face of legitimate expectations for the upcoming elections, Christians are called to a greater commitment to be actors in the renewal of our country,” said Fr. Bruno.

“In this sense, linking the mission and the rosary is, for our Church, an opportunity to live this commitment to the country under the gaze of Mary, Our Lady of the Missions. Sharing the Gospel, communicating the Good News, becomes then the original contribution of Christians in Senegal and Mauritania to the construction of their countries, and the advent of the civilization of love.” (LM) (Agenzia Fides 01/10/2011)



Anniversaries for November 2011

70 Years of religious life

1941.11.01	07400	Fr. Pierre Rigaud	Lacombe
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65 Years of religious life

1946.11.01	08421	Fr. Yvon Filippini	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1946.11.21	08425	Fr. Bernard Crouvezier	France

60 Years of religious life

1951.11.01	09653	Fr. Philippe Alin	Cameroun
1951.11.01	09837	Bro. Noël Gaudet	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1951.11.01	09840	Bro. Andrea Palladino	Italy
1951.11.01	09838	Bro. Damien Proulx	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

50 Years of religious life

1961.11.01	11178	Fr. Hans Schöber	Central European
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25 Years of priesthood

1986.11.19	12711	Fr. Joseph Gomes	Colombo
1986.11.22	12647	Fr. Mariano Martínez	Peru

Prayers for our deceased

No. 70-80

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Bro. John Delaney	Anglo-Irish	13/07/1931	Dublin	13/09/2011
Fr. Gilles Bernier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	26/02/1920	Richelieu	14/09/2011
Fr. Gerard Clenaghan	Anglo-Irish	08/04/1922	Inchicore	20/09/2011
Fr. Emile Beguin	Belgium/Holland	26/09/1924	Namur	21/09/2011
Fr. Francis Kulas	Jaffna	12/09/1924	Jaffna	22/09/2011
Fr. John Dunlea	Australia	22/08/1932	Moe	26/09/2011
Fr. Timothy Riffel	OMI Lacombe	06/10/1915	Saskatoon	30/09/2011
Fr. William Carrier	OMI Lacombe	29/01/1939	Spruce Grove	01/10/2011
Fr. Joseph Motšei Moeketsi	Lesotho	08/05/1958	Maseru	02/10/2011
Fr. John Hubbart	Central Province, South Africa	25/10/1939	Kimberley	04/10/2011
Fr. Paul Frank	United States	06/05/1923	Wilton Manors	05/10/2011

“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)

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