



OMI INFORMATION OMI INFORMACION OMI INFORMAZIONE OMI NACHRICHTEN OMI WIADOMOŚCI OMI

OMI Information No. 524 (English)

July-August 2012

MEDITERRANEAN PROVINCE

A sign of surrender or of hope?

It was a very busy afternoon at the Oblate house in Vermicino (Rome) that saw the birth, on May 20, of the new Mediterranean Province, composed of the former provinces of Spain and Italy and their respective delegations and missions: Senegal, Venezuela, Uruguay, Romania and Sahara.

The first part was dedicated to showing the many members of the Oblate Family who were present the various areas of the Oblate mission in which the two former provinces have been engaged until now: evangelization and secularization; evangelization and youth; evangelization abroad; evangelization and the poor.

Then there was the celebration of the Eucharist in the languages spoken in the territories of the new province: Spanish, Romanian, French and Italian.

At the beginning of the celebration, the two ex-provincials of Italy (Fr. Nicola PARRETTA) and Spain (Fr. Otilio LARGO) addressed the assembly. The former affirmed that, during these years that led to the unification, he had the distinct sensation of being guided by the Spirit. The latter emphasized that it is certainly a moment of great joy with exciting possibilities, even though each one is being called to lose something of the past. He added: "Now it's up to us to live according to the expression of St. Ignatius of Loyola: *Pray as though everything depended on God and work as though everything depends on you.*" From their statements, it remained clear that, although the unification of the two provinces might have been the result of reduced numbers, the signs of hope abound.

Father Louis LOUGEN, Superior General, then read the Decree of Erection of the new province,

adding at the end a bit of humor: "I am not the creator of this marriage, but only the celebrant."

In his homily, commenting on the phrase from the Gospel of the Solemnity of the Ascension, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature," (Mark 28:19) Fr. Louis said, among other things: "As Oblates of Mary Immaculate, our missionary vocation has its origin in these words of Jesus. We hear this call and seek to respond to it with our entire being. Like our Founder, Saint Eugene de Mazenod, we have personally experienced the gracious and unconditional love of Jesus the Savior in our own lives. It is this experience that we have discovered is *Good News* and we are sent to share this experience with others. We want people to know Jesus [...] You, the Oblates of Italy and Spain, have Saint Eugene's spirit of bold daring in choosing life and seeking new ways to respond to the present reality. You have done this to remain faithful to the Oblate charism and for the good of the mission. I have no doubt that God has guided you in this choice."

The celebration was enriched by many symbolic gestures. A letter from one of the Spanish martyrs was carried to the altar at the beginning of the Mass. During the offertory, on the other hand, there was brought forward an arbutus (or strawberry) tree as a symbol of the union of the provinces of Spain and Italy. This Mediterranean plant is in fact the symbol of the city of Madrid and also, according to the Italian poet Giovanni Pascoli, symbol of the Italian flag because of its unusual characteristic of having at the same time green leaves, white flowers and red fruit. Into the earth around this plant presented during

the celebration was mixed earth coming from the first two Oblate communities in Spain and Italy: Diego de Leon and Santa Maria a Vico. Then there were presented bread and honey, symbols of the promised land.

Fr. General also gave the first obediences for the Mediterranean Province to Fathers Enzo MACCHIA and Lucian BOSOI and to Brother Valentin VRINCEANU. As a surprise, he also gave another obedience: to Fr. Saverio ZAMPA, currently from the Vercelli community, who will be the first superior of the new community at Aix-en-Provence.

The celebration concluded with a greeting and

words of thanks from Fr. Alberto GNEMMI, the new and first provincial of the Mediterranean Province: "The Eucharist just concluded summarizes the significance of this moment. It speaks to us of the unity of the body. God, who from two peoples makes one, appeals to us: to remember Jesus Christ, who is our treasure and whom the world desires, without even having met him, in the face of a Christianity that -- let's admit it -- has shortness of breath."

Working with Fr. Gnemmi will be his Provincial Council: Frs. Gennaro ROSATO, Ismael GARCÍA, Adriano TITONE, Eutimio GONZÁLEZ, Aldo D'OTTAVIO, Alberto RUIZ and Ciro ANDREZZI. (Nino BUCCA)

General Administration

HIGHER EDUCATION

5th meeting of Executive Group

Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, Philippines was the site of the 5th gathering of the executive group of the Association of Oblate Institutes of Higher Learning (AOIHL). Eduardo TANUDTANUD, president of Notre Dame University, served as the host for this 4-day meeting. The attendees this year also included members: Dr. Chantal Beauvais, Saint Paul University (Ottawa); Sylvester DAVID, St. Joseph Theological Institute (Cedara); Baudouin MUBESALA, St. Eugene Institute (Kinshasa); and Ron ROLHEISER, Oblate School of Theology (San Antonio). Also attending the meetings were: Dr. Scott Woodward, Academic Dean of OST (San Antonio); Francis Zabala, Superior of Our Lady of Assumption Scholasticate (Manila); and liaison members Fabio CIARDI, Director of Oblate Studies and Research; and Warren BROWN, AOIHL coordinator and General Councilor for Canada-USA.

The theme chosen for this year's meeting was "Oblate Identity" and each member was asked to give a presentation to the group showing how their institute strives to manifest Oblate identity, both externally in the use of specific Oblate words and symbols, and internally in the way that an Oblate ethos is created. These presentations

illustrated both the common Oblate charism present in each institute as well as the diversity of the charism's expressions. The participants expressed appreciation at the opportunity both to share of their experiences and to learn more about the other institutes and the Oblate charism as it is lived in the Congregation.

The AOIHL executive group also met during the week in one-on-one meetings among themselves to plan how they can better collaborate in common efforts for education in the Oblate Congregation. During the business meeting the group considered several invitations from around the Congregation for their participation in research projects focusing on Oblate life and history. Taking advantage of their presence in Cotabato City, the group also visited the government headquarters of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in a trip led by Jun MERCADO, where Jun and ARMM staff members explained the social and political situation of the region.

The Notre Dame University staff, including the Oblates who minister there, were gracious and welcoming hosts for the entire week. As Fabio Ciardi remarked at the concluding liturgy: in some ways, as we share in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and invite other groups who collaborate with us in our institutes to show forth their

identity, paradoxically we can gain a better understanding of ourselves as Oblates, for we are imitators of Christ, who teaches us to reach

out to others first and then in doing that we will find our own strength and Oblate self identity. (Warren Brown)

Asia-Oceania

VIETNAM

Ordinations and vows

The Oblate family in Vietnam has increased in numbers. On May 21, 2012, Solemnity of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, 11 novices professed their first vows. The Oblate Provincial from France, Fr. Yves CHALVET DE RÉCY, presided at the Mass of first profession.

On May 29, four young Oblate deacons were ordained to the priesthood in Bình Dương by Bishop Peter Trần Đình Tứ, of the diocese of Phú Cường. These four new priests are the first Oblates to be ordained in Vietnam.

Four other Vietnamese Oblate deacons will be ordained at a later date.

BANGLADESH

Tea Workers and a New Diocese

(Fr. Seamus P. FINN, Director of the United States Province's JPIC Office, tells of a recent visit to Bangladesh.)

Tea estates have a long history in Bangladesh and they continue to operate in various parts of the Sylhet region in northeastern Bangladesh. Many of them are located in the newly established diocese of Sylhet where Bejoy D'CRUZE was named bishop in 2011. I visited a few of these estates with my Oblate colleagues and others during a visit to Bangladesh in January of 2012. The workers and their families live on the estates isolated from many of the normal activities in society and cut off from many established transportation routes. This includes access to basic education and medical services.

The church has been one of the key actors in the effort to make these basic needs available in the small villages where many workers and their children live. This outreach and ministry has also been one of the priorities for Oblates

working in the region. During our visit to the villages in three different communities, I was impressed by the energy and joy displayed by the students at the various schools and how they communicated the beauty and strength of their culture. The bright colors of their traditional costumes added life to their dances and skits, as did the mixture of traditional and contemporary music that accompanied their performances. I also found myself hopeful that these gifts would continue to find room in the life of the newest diocese in Bangladesh.

Oblate JPIC staff work closely with Bangladeshi environmental activists, whether in the forested northeastern Sylhet region or in Dhaka, a city of over 16 million people. The issues are different, but the dynamics are similar: ordinary people are suffering from a rampant disregard for the integrity of creation. In Sylhet, illegal logging threatens the livelihoods and villages of the indigenous Khasi and Garo peoples. Oblates are working with the communities to help them gain title to their ancestral lands - essential to protecting the forests. In Dhaka, the Buriganga River Keeper works with other environmentalists and communities to clean up the badly polluted Buriganga River that is the lifeblood of the city. The Oblate JPIC Office coordinates with both efforts, linking them with international support. (JPIC Report [USA], Spring 2012)

INDONESIA

Irish missionary wins Islamic prize

In a nation where sectarian divisions are “in continual and strong growth,” a person like Fr. Charles BURROWS becomes “a good example” as to how “a foreign missionary can show his commitment to loving others, in spite of their Islamic identity.” For these reasons, Professor Syafi'i Maarif, scholar and founder of the Maarif Institute, has awarded the 2012 prize of the same name to Fr. Charles, a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate of Irish descent (born in

Dublin). Since 1973, he has lived in Cilacap in the province of Central Java, southwest Indonesia. He has dedicated himself in particular to missionary work with the poor inhabitants of Segara Anakan Delta, a coastal zone where the vast majority are Muslim, very poor and lacking basic resources.

Syafi'i Maarif is a prominent figure on the cultural landscape of Indonesia: Dean of the University of Islamic Studies in Yogyakarta and former president of the moderate Muslim *Muhammadiyah*, the second largest in the country. He has also decided to create the Maarif Institute for culture and humanity, committed to the work of integration, inter-religious dialogue and the promotion of national culture. Each year, the center bestows the *Maarif Award*, granted to individuals who are distinguished for their work in behalf of the development of Indonesia.

Among the reasons that led to the choice of Fr. Charles, there is his "total commitment" and passion for the welfare of the inhabitants of Segara Anakan, without distinction, exclusiveness or favoritism, in spite of the fact that they are overwhelmingly Muslim. The priest received the award in late May during a public event which was held in the capital, Jakarta. The Irish priest, promoter of the Social Bina Sejahtera Foundation, is the third Catholic personality to receive the award.

Fajar Riza Ul Haq, director of the Maarif Institute, praised the "commitment" of the priest to charitable work and to bettering society based on "pluralism," through which he "has been able to build bridges" between cultures. Fr. Charles has designed schools and community centers, and he never uses his position as a priest to attract people to himself. "He has infinite patience and a deep humility," concludes Mrs. Atiek Wibisono, a Catholic from Cilicap. (www.asianew.it)

JAFFNA

Ministry Among the Needy - A Mission Accomplished

It is three years since Oblates of Jaffna Province launched a Relief Mission in those camps in

Cheddikulam area where about 238,000 people from the Sri Lankan war fronts of Vanni settled in temporary shelters behind barbed-wires.

In early February 2009, people started to flee from the north-eastern war territory to come to army-controlled areas. Government forces brought them to Cheddikulam, a north-central region in the district of Vavuniya. Fr. Celestine MASCHRINGHE, who was the parish priest, acted promptly to cater to the people, for they were without anything except their very lives. The Oblates in the neighbourhood also appeared on the scene to join in the relief work. Eventually a massive relief operation was undertaken by the Oblates.

Cheddikulam by nature is a mission area in the far end of the Diocese of Mannar, sharing its border with the central District and the Diocese of Anurathapura. Being on the border, it has been affected severely by the three decade civil war. A good number of people here are either Tamil settlers from the South or re-settlers after the relative calm situation in the area. Now it has become a refuge for the fleeing masses from the North.

It is hard to be involved in any sort of relief work without the knowledge and permission of the military. It is still harder to be involved with the most deserving people from the war fronts of the North. But the Catholic Church did its best to help the people in need. Caritas, diocesan institutions and other religious humanitarian organizations extended their timely assistance by being close to these little ones of Jesus.

Fr. Celestine, as the pastor of the area, was there fulltime to coordinate and to be directly involved in the huge relief mission. Along with his spiritual and sacramental services, Fr. Celestine offered cooked meals, dry rations, medical and sanitary care, education facilities, clothes and baby-needs, family reunions etc. to these hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people (IDP) –who were both Hindus and Christians. The pastor did not leave his flock unattended. Another young Oblate, Fr. Sathiyaseelan PATHINATHAN joined Fr. Celestine in this noble mission to the

poor. Fr. Celestine built 15 churches, all of them permanent, except three inside the IDP camps.

Consequently weekly masses were organized in those churches, especially inside the camps, with the help of the neighbouring priests. Some 20,000 buns were distributed daily to the people in the camps. In organized vision clinics, more than 1500 were given spectacles. More than 1500 preschool kids were given fresh milk daily; former militants in detention camps were helped with clothes, toiletries etc. The most deserving people were helped financially for their daily living and 30 students were gifted with bicycles without

which their education would have remained in doubt.

It was, on the whole, a massive Oblate endeavour to respond to the needs of the time. What is observed here is not the monetary value of the assistance but much more than that, the closeness to and the solidarity with the needy. The personal care of the Oblates with these people stands out and is fresh, even after years of Oblate presence in the camps and in the areas. Now a similar mission is being undertaken by some Oblates in other areas where it is needed now – of course always close to the people. (*OMI Newsletter*, January - April 2012 <http://www.omijaffna.com>)

Africa-Madagascar

CENTRAL SOUTH AFRICA

A “Fathers’ Day” tribute for an Oblate

The greater Bochabela community recently paid tribute to Father Leo D’AES (82), missionary priest at the St. Rose Catholic Church in Boshabela, Bloemfontein, for his lifetime support of the parish schools and the community at large. Louwna Erasmus of “Get It community magazines” visited this Father of the Community to find out why community leaders call him the unsung hero of Bloemfontein.

Father Leo D’Aes, came to Bloemfontein over 40 years ago (in 1971) to see to the spiritual needs of the community in Botchabela Township, but also the material needs of a very poor community. “I thought the church looked pretty dull,” says D’Aes. “So I got on my knees and after cleaning the floor, I filled it up with wood filler, then we sanded and varnished it. The benches were a single seat and kneeler, so I joined the two as a new seat and added a steel frame with a back rest.”

As parish priest he was also appointed manager of the two schools attached to the parish, St. Mary’s and St. Bernard’s, which were later united. “I love schools,” says D’Aes. “My father died when I was five months old (chest trouble because of the gas used in World War I) so my mother was left with four kids and a big

bookshop.” She sent them all off to boarding schools. “I got my love for teaching from the Jesuit teachers at boarding school.”

During the struggle against apartheid, he made sure that his schools were functional and that matrics could write their year-end exams despite many threats he received. “When Cosas shouted ‘Liberation first’, I said no, education first!” One year the matrics (students in final year of high school) wrote their final exam secretly at CBC. “I told my students that one day, when Mandela would take over, he would need educated leaders,” says D’Aes.

Over the years, Father D’Aes earned the nickname Pheello which means Perseverance. He has had great success in finding funding for the two parish schools from many Oblate donors in Germany, Belgium (his home country) and Ireland. Besides many extra classrooms that were built on at St. Bernard’s and St. Mary’s, he also succeeded in founding a bursary scheme for tertiary students.

“We are greatly indebted to this man,” says Father Raphael MOTHE, also a priest and former school boy at St Bernard’s. “Many poor students from the township have benefitted from quality education at the schools. These schools are a great legacy and treasure for our children and future generations.”

“After 40 years, I am very happy to see that both schools and parish work together to uplift the nation and to inspire it with the Spirit of the Kingdom,” says Father D’Aes.

Bro. Rex HARRISON says about Father D’Aes: “Father D’Aes is an incredibly dynamic man with a prophetic biblical message and a sense of justice that has seen him and his community through the 40 years at St. Rose. He is in league with other great community fathers like Ntate Molemela and Father Frans CLAERHOUT, who also brought meaningful change in their times. Even these heroes have had to overcome the violence in the community they serve. Fr D’Aes, was hijacked on the eve of a special celebration to pay tribute to his 40 years’ service. But he has a persevering hope in a gradual dawning of the Kingdom of God.” (<http://bloem.getitononline.co.za/>)

KENYA

A Mission with a vision and a future

Immediately following the final vows of Brothers Dionisius ANANUA and Stephen MURUNGI, the Missionary Oblates of Kenya Mission met as a community to discern our future. It was an opportune time since our scholastics were back home and so able to attend. We also invited Cosmas Kubai our novice candidate to attend; David MACPHEE who is on regency with us was likewise present. It was important that these people be present because they are the future and they certainly should have a voice in the matter. Their input was invaluable. Unfortunately our novice was not able to attend nor could Fidele MUNKIELE who is studying in Canada.

Under the capable facilitation of Fr. Gil MASON, the OMI Lacombe Vicar Provincial, we undertook a process to decide what the next best steps are for the Mission.

This session was in effect a continuation of the Vancouver Convocation. It was an opportune time to prepare a Vision/futuring statement for the mission. What comes next? While on the Canadian scene, diminishment colours the conversation, here it is growth. The Mission is

growing. Two Kenya Oblates have completed their first formation and have returned to the Mission. Two others have just made their final vows and will be returning in 2013. There is the likelihood of other Oblates joining us from other provinces. It is a happy moment when we need to expand ministry of the Mission.

At the moment we have but one parish and two formation houses. What is next? Our conversations began about who are we, what each of us brings into the Mission. What are our aspirations, our hopes our dreams? Given the freedom to dream, there were many suggestions proposed.

At the end of the week, we arrived at what can be described as our Vision Statement. The first priority as we see it will be to take responsibility for another parish, preferably in the Nairobi area. We feel that we need this parish in order to have a place for our men in formation to have a place to go for ministry experiences.

Education was a strong theme that emerged and we are encouraged to look at opportunities in the near future. Of course education is a generic theme that could incorporate any number of ministries. For example, with working street children was discussed.

An underlying need that also must be addressed is the self-sufficiency of the Mission. As it stands, we are totally dependent on OMI Lacombe Province and the benevolence of our many benefactors in the Missionary Association. Simply stated, we have no income. It is a priority that we find the ways and means of generate income locally. This is essential if we hope to grow the Mission into being a delegation and a province. We are actively looking at some proposals to move in this direction.

Besides being a wonderful experience of community it was also very effective in that we met our goals. We are full of hope, full of dreams and aware that there is a lot of work that needs to be done. Indeed we are growing. (James FIORI in www.omilacombe.ca)

ZAMBIA

In pursuit of self sustainability

Zambia's Oblate formation community moved to its new location in Makeni only in October last year. After seeing the poultry and the big field of vegetables in the back yard garden, the impression a first time visitor would have of the place is that the occupants may have been settled there for a longer period. The community in Makeni grows vegetables, not only for consumption but also for sale to the people around the community and to the city at large. Produce from the garden is sold at wholesale price in one of the city's biggest market called Soweto, and in two other densely populated areas namely, Chawama and Kabwata. Efforts are also being made to sell the vegetables in one of the leading chain supermarkets.

The garden and poultry are under the care of Oblate Brother George MANDONA who is assisted by four employees.

Currently, the garden has cabbages, onions, Chinese cabbage and tomatoes on a large scale. Potatoes, green pepper and eggplants are solely for the community. Other crops grown are indigenous bondwe and impwa.

About 21,500 tomato plants have been planted. Upon maturity, Bro. George hopes to collect 120 boxes of tomatoes per week which will enable the community to raise an estimated 10 million Kwacha (US\$ 2,000) from the sales. His estimates are based on the calculations he made from the experimental plants which were planted earlier this year. Ten thousand heads of cabbages were planted. Like tomatoes they also proved to be profitable and thrived in the soil.

Simple chicken composite manure is added to the soil for the plants to grow healthy; fertilizer is also applied. Water supply is in abundance and the flow is continuous. In watering the crops, drip irrigation is used; the system was set up by Bro. George and the four helpers. So far the system seems to be working well though Bro. George thinks a 20,000 liter reserve tank would be ideal as opposed to the 1,000 liter tank they are currently using.

Another farm feature in Makeni is the poultry house. The community has been keeping chickens since November last year. The poultry has 350 layers from which 9-10 trays of eggs are collected every day. Broiler chickens are also reared. Plans to build a bigger poultry house for the broilers are underway as they have proved to be appreciated by the surrounding community. This is because of the healthy feed they are given.

Bro. George also hopes to plant an orchard, where he can plant fruits such as bananas, mangoes and citrus fruits.

For Bro. George, this is just the beginning of becoming self-sustainable. His dream is to enable the community to support itself using the funds raised from both the poultry and the garden. (By Musonda Chipili in *OMI Zambia*, March-April 2012)

NATAL

President Zuma honours Archbishop Hurley

South African President, Jacob Zuma visited Durban's Emmanuel Cathedral on 19 April to pay tribute to Archbishop Denis HURLEY'S contribution to South Africa's liberation struggle by laying a wreath on his tomb. This was part of a national programme of visits to various parts of South Africa to mark the centenary of the ANC's foundation. The brief ceremony at the Cathedral began with Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, OFM, and other religious leaders greeting the President and his party at the entrance to the Cathedral and then escorting them to the Archbishop's tomb in the Lady Chapel.

Amongst the leaders present were Bishop Rubin Phillip of the Anglican Church, Bishop Michael Vorster of the Methodist Church, Reverend Ian Booth of the United Congregational Church, Rev Thabani Masikane of the Uniting Presbyterian Church, Ms Nomabelu Mvambo- Dandala of the Diakonia Council of Churches and Mr AV Mahomed of the Juma Musjid Mosque. At the tomb, the national anthem was sung and the Cardinal read a message of welcome in which he said: "Denis Hurley, whom you have

come to honour today, was a prime example of humble Christian service. He put God, his Church and his Country first. My prayer and wish is that Archbishop Hurley will pray for our leaders of today that they may follow his example of selflessness.

“Mr. President, my prayer for you is that you too will put God, his People and our Country first in all that you do. ... Thank you for coming to Emmanuel Cathedral to honour our late Archbishop. God bless you.” In his response, the President paid tribute to Archbishop Hurley as “one of our heroes, well known not only in South Africa but around the world.” He said the Archbishop was a fine example of someone who had put words “into concrete action”. He said that Archbishop Hurley and many other church leaders should be acknowledged for their important role in the liberation struggle.

Auxiliary Bishop Barry WOOD read the Good Friday prayer for political leaders: “that God may guide their minds and hearts so that all may live in true peace and freedom.” A brief curriculum vitae

of the archbishop was then read and wreaths laid on the tomb by the President, Ms Baleka Mbete, National Chair of the ANC, Mr Willies Mchunu KZN MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, and Mikaela York, a niece of Archbishop Hurley. The ceremony concluded with the Cardinal showing President Zuma a model of the Cathedral and the new Denis Hurley Centre, which has been specially prepared for a forthcoming exhibition. As the religious leaders and the President’s party left the Cathedral, Ms Pinkie Mtshali, Music Director, led the singing of “Plea for Africa”. Immediately after the Cathedral ceremony, an ecumenical service honouring Archbishop Hurley was held at St Paul’s Anglican Church next to the central Post Office. This was organised by the Diakonia Council of Churches which was founded by the archbishop in 1976. In addition to thanksgiving prayers for the achievements of the liberation struggle and prayers of concern and commitment about the aspects of liberation still needing attention, slides of Archbishop Hurley were shown, highlighting his multi-faceted work to promote a just South Africa. (*Oblate Connections*, Anglo-Irish Province, May 2012)

Europe

ITALY

MGC Rome: encounter with the Superior General

A joyful climate and deep sharing: these are the words that characterize most clearly the Sunday that the Movimento Giovanile Costruire (*Youth Movement: to build*) of Rome spent with the Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Louis LOUGEN.

Eagerly awaited by one and all, the meeting began very simply with a short video recalling the time we spent together in Malaga last August for Oblate World Youth Day. After telling him a little about the national MGC and sharing our activities in the area of Rome, we were expecting to hear his ideas and shower him with questions. Instead, Fr. Lougen took a pen and paper and began to ask questions of us, especially about our lives as young Christians and about MGC. He took notes on each answer he heard from us.

Holiness, community, the poor, living the Gospel: Fr. Lougen allowed us to share our personal and communal experiences on these themes, helping us, through his questions, to develop a deep personal reflection on what it means in practice for us to be Christians and especially Christians who fully participate in the Oblate charism.

In the last part of the encounter, it was also possible to ask him some questions about his personal experience as a missionary and as Superior General.

The morning continued with the celebration of Mass, during which Fr. Lougen put into our hands the crucifix of St. Eugene so that we might be able to reflect on God’s mercy for us.

The time spent together concluded with an abundant lunch served outside, during which we shared what each had prepared. (*Angelica Ciccone in www.omi.it*)

INTERPROVINCIAL CONFERENCE OF EUROPE

The annual meeting of the ICE

Come together to exchange ideas and experiences, but also to pose questions about the future, plan projects, and share our life in a fraternal and prayerful climate. Is it possible to do that within the Interprovincial Conference of Europe? Why not?

From May 28 until June 2, we had our annual meeting of the ICE (Interprovincial Conference of Europe) in Rome, at the General House, with the participation of the provincials of France, Central Europe, Anglo-Irish, Poland, Belgium-Holland and the new Mediterranean Province. Present also were the superiors of the delegations and missions of Ukraine, Byelorussia, France-Benelux and Romania. Fr. Adriano TITONE helped us in the role of facilitator; Fr. Chicho ROIS, General Councillor for Europe, animated an entire day with both personal and group work on the themes of Community Life, Religious Life and Mission. Always the same things? Yes, because one can never stop digging into the fundamental questions of our life! So we began our meeting with a presentation of the challenges that our life and our Oblate mission face in Europe. Fr. Yves CHALVET, the president of ICE, presented us with a synthesis of these challenges about which Fr. Louis LOUGEN, Superior General, followed up with a much appreciated spiritual outlook on the same topic. Notable was the presence of some members of the General Administration who listened to us and participated in our discussions.

Our work on the proposed themes has produced some concrete proposals. The reflection on

and the project concerning interprovincial scholasticates in Europe moved forward. A new commitment to ongoing formation was clarified, with the opportunity to profit from the Aix experience, once the work there is finished and the new community is in place. There are also projects concerning the whole Region which is still committed to the pastoral challenges of Lourdes, while looking for new personnel and new ideas for the animation of the pilgrims and youth who come in great numbers on pilgrimage.

Our discussions also included projects which each Unit can act upon and which would then be shared with other Units.

In order to “function,” the ICE also needs other collaborators who meet regularly in different offices, commissions and committees. There were many new nominations and we thanked those who have rendered service in the previous years: Frs. Willie FITZPATRICK, Nicola PARRETTA, Otilio LARGO and Kazimierz JEDRZEJCZAK. We welcomed the new provincial of the Mediterranean Province, Fr. Albert GNEMMI and we wished him good luck in this new adventure.

We had two special evenings, one at the International Scholasticate, with a Eucharistic celebration, a meal and a fraternal get-together. The other was with the members of the General Administration.

The next ICE assembly will take place at Aix on June 3-8, 2013. Progress has been made, but other challenges await us. We do not lack energy and confidence: we need to keep going! (Fr. Angelo CAPUANO, Permanent Secretary of ICE)

Canada-United States

OMI LACOMBE Returning to Spirit

Fr. François PARADIS is very clear that his involvement in the Returning to Spirit is very much the work of an Oblate. His involvement flows from the forty years of ministry with First Nation Peoples in Western Canada. There is a

very natural connection between his ministry within First Nations communities and his training and education work within Returning to Spirit.

“This is my work to reach out to the marginalized and the poor.” Within in Canada, “the residential schools have made people very poor.” This was not the original intention in the establishment

of the schools but “the Gospel got twisted in the process. This ministry is repairing the damage that has been done even by very well intentioned people.

“As a priest I share the ministry of Jesus Christ. His ministry is all about reconciliation. I see my ministry as bringing faith to the healing process. It is to help people see the beauty of who they truly are. Returning to Spirit is a whole process that gets us into reconciliation. This is the healing that Jesus wants. Some of these people may return to Church but that is not the first purpose of Returning to Spirit. Its first purpose is healing and reconciliation. Through the process some people have rediscovered God.”

There is a framing of his explanation. “Some people have always gone to Church but they are full of hurt and anger. This process is very much in line with de Mazenod. This is to return them to their dignity. It is to help them live in the dignity in which they were created.”

François summed up the entire ministry and the process of Returning to Spirit. “It is returning to the spirit of who they actually are as a human being.”

François first became acquainted with Returning to Spirit when he made his first workshop in February of 2004. By January of 2006 he had received his training to be a trainer of others for this process. In July 2007 he joined the Return to Spirit team full time.

The process begins with a five day workshop that directly seeks to empower three parts of the participant’s life: empowering you to yourself, you to others and you to your own life. The first three days seek to identify what is in front of your spirit that prevents the person from being fully alive. What prevents this person from embracing their own life? What keeps them stuck into their own past? How do the negatives of the past keep showing up in the present?

The process of this five day workshop asks where have they given up their personal power? What keeps them from having personal power? How can they have personal power within their own life?

The entire week is very experiential. There are homework assignments for each evening that ask the participants to apply to their own personal situation what they have learnt during the day. The goal is to reach the point where they no longer have any stuff that remains in the space between their relationships. What are the angers, the resentments that block their relationships?

Each step of the process builds on the preceding step. It is all inter-linked with one piece building on the others pieces. The direction is to learn how to shift from enduring life and just reacting to situations to a strength where they are creating their own life. It means to move into an appreciation for their own identity and live with authentic self-expression. It from within the spirit of each person that the empowerment arises.

François is very clear that there have been wonderful changes in peoples’ lives. “There have been times of physical healing. Some people explain this as mere coincidence but this is definitely a gift from God. It is God who brings about the reconciliation that we talk about during the week. So many of these people reach a completion to their lives that was unthinkable before the process began.”

His work with Returning to Spirit comprises training with non-aboriginal peoples (priests, sisters, religious workers, lay people, social workers and educators). The other team within Returning to Spirit focuses on aboriginal peoples. Once the first workshop has been completed, the two groups (aboriginals and Church people) join together for a more intense five days of working towards reconciliation.

As he moves into the future François plans to be involved in this ministry “As long as Returning to Spirit lasts.” This was spoken with affirmation. *(By Nestor GREGOIRE in www.omilacombe.ca)*

UNITED STATES

An Oblate Strategy at Work

In the past, when the world was much less organized, outlooks, values and attitudes could be communicated only individually or face of

face in very small groups. Today, values are communicated more through the public system of universal education and the media. This challenges the traditional values of the local community; not incidentally Africa's best known novel is entitled: "Things Fall Apart," the center cannot hold. Obviously this calls for a whole new strategy of value communication.

For this, the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) founded by Fr. George MCLEAN, has developed a new strategy, which echoes that of the Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci. It is to work with thinkers at the key thought centers of the various cultures to explore their value horizons and how these can be enriched and adapted to the present lives of their people. Fifteen such conferences will be held in the next six months up the East coast of Africa and China, across India and Russia, to Moscow, Poland, Romania, etc. Each will be joined by a number of RVP scholars from other nations, as did Fr. James LOIACONO, last year in China.

In turn, as these centers set the horizons for the educational system of their entire country, what is developed in these conferences is diffused through every city and village by the schools of their public education and administration structures. Moreover, as the RVP publishes these deliberations (270 volumes thus far) in print and on the web, the many peoples and cultures enrich one another on a global scale (see www.crvp.org).

OMI LACOMBE

Honorary doctorate for Oblate missionary in Peru

The University of Waterloo in Ontario has approved the St. Jerome University's nomination of Dr. Maurice SCHROEDER, to receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree. The degree was conferred during the Faculty of Arts convocation on June 14, 2012. St. Jerome's is one of the founding universities of the University of Waterloo. Its president is Fr. David PERRIN, an Oblate

Dr. Schroeder is a priest and the Oblate superior of the Delegation of Peru. The degree is to honor

him for his work at the Centro de Salud Santa Clotilde, as explained in this announcement of the conferral:

The Centro de Salud Santa Clotilde is a mission hospital in the Amazon Basin of northeastern Peru. The hospital has 30 beds, an outpatient clinic, a pharmacy and public health programs. Since 1986, it has been run by two medical doctors who are also Roman Catholic priests. Father Maurice Schroeder is one of them. Under the active leadership of Maurice Schroeder, the hospital has served more than 20,000 indigenous people who have little or no access to healthcare. The hospital serves an area of 100 villages along the Napo River where the people are very poor. The hospital's annual operating budget is approximately \$180,000 US funded one-third by the Peruvian government, two-thirds from the church and private donors. In winter of 2008, Father Maurice Schroeder was asked to become Superior of the Peruvian delegation, to which he has brought his wealth of experience and talent.

Dr. Schroeder exemplifies the commitment to global citizenship of St. Jerome's University and the University's Centre for Responsible Citizenship (Beyond Borders). Quantifying Dr. Schroeder's connection (number of students affected, potential for continuing relationship) to the Beyond Borders program is difficult. As noted in the supporting letter from the Director of the Beyond Borders program which accompanied the original submission, Dr. Schroeder was instrumental in establishing partnerships in Peru, something that is expected to continue and, perhaps, be expanded. Even without the Beyond Borders connection, Dr. Schroeder's significant and long-standing humanitarian aid efforts make him an ideal candidate. His work in bringing in temporary doctors to provide medical care in very difficult circumstances, make him a wonderful role model and mentor not only to SJU and UW students, but to other Canadian doctors and to society in general. Dr. Schroeder is a shining example of good global citizenship and a model of leadership that we are proud to recognize. (www.omilacombe.ca)

Anniversaries for September 2012

75 Years of Religious Life

1937.09.04	06571	Fr. George Protopapas	United States
1937.09.08	07107	Bro. Louis Rioux	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

70 Years of Religious Life

1942.09.08	07401	Fr. Jean Colson	France
1942.09.08	07513	Fr. Floor de Grauw	Belgium/Holland
1942.09.08	07525	Fr. Henri Gillet	Belgium/Holland
1942.09.08	07585	Fr. Marc Guiziou	France
1942.09.08	07619	Fr. Martin Quere	Colombo
1942.09.08	07413	Fr. Léon Saison	France
1942.09.15	07535	Fr. Oliver Mohan	Lacombe
1942.09.29	07621	Fr. Denis Buliard	Lacombe
1942.09.29	07402	Fr. Noël Savina	France

65 Years of Religious Life

1947.09.08	08408	Fr. Félicien P. Labat	Lacombe
1947.09.08	08378	Fr. Hendrik Laenen	United States
1947.09.08	08385	Fr. Théophile Le Page	General Administration
1947.09.08	08359	Fr. Jean Lefèbvre	Belgium/Holland
1947.09.08	08368	Fr. Jean Louatron	France
1947.09.08	08371	Fr. François Sailer	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1947.09.08	08380	Fr. Joseph Schwab	United States
1947.09.08	08387	Fr. Paulin Van Eeghem	Belgium/Holland
1947.09.08	08372	Fr. Eugene Van Helden	Belgium/Holland
1947.09.08	08357	Fr. Jan Van Hoydonck	Belgium/Holland
1947.09.15	08396	Fr. Jean Col	France
1947.09.21	08391	Fr. Gérard Labossière	Lacombe
1947.09.29	08397	Fr. Heinrich Döing	Central European
1947.09.29	08403	Fr. Desmond O'Donnell	Anglo-Irish
1947.09.29	08404	Fr. José Sander	Paraguay

60 Years of Religious Life

1952.09.08	09372	Fr. Rudolf Basista	Poland
1952.09.08	09805	Fr. Charles Cathelin	France
1952.09.08	09361	Fr. Stanislaw Czyz	Poland
1952.09.08	09317	Fr. Ernst Drescher	Poland
1952.09.08	09806	Fr. Joseph Fenart	France
1952.09.08	09332	Fr. John Fitzgerald	Lacombe
1952.09.08	09338	Fr. Gerald Flater	United States
1952.09.08	09370	Fr. George Gruber	Lacombe
1952.09.08	09349	Fr. Donald Joyce	United States
1952.09.08	09347	Fr. Carl Kelly	Lacombe
1952.09.08	09350	Fr. George Kirwin	United States
1952.09.08	09358	Fr. Richard Kosian	Assumption
1952.09.08	09360	Fr. Leon Ledwon	Poland

1952.09.08	09938	Bro. James Lucas	United States
1952.09.08	09342	Fr. James Mac Gee	United States
1952.09.08	09325	Fr. Lorne Mackey	Lacombe
1952.09.08	09218	Fr. André Marion	France
1952.09.08	09352	Fr. Bernard McCosham	Lacombe
1952.09.08	10036	Bro. Elio Napoletano	Mediterranean
1952.09.08	09323	Fr. Joseph Rossiter	Lacombe
1952.09.08	09373	Fr. Alfons Strancich	Poland
1952.09.08	09322	Fr. Claude Tardif	Lacombe
1952.09.08	09346	Fr. Sherman Wall	United States
1952.09.08	09331	Fr. Jorge Wavreille	Bolivia
1952.09.08	09328	Fr. Edward Williams	Colombo
1952.09.08	09319	Fr. Walenty Zaplata	Poland
1952.09.29	09382	Fr. Paul Byrne	Anglo-Irish
1952.09.29	09593	Fr. Anthony Quinlan	Anglo-Irish

60 Years of Priesthood

1952.09.20	08176	Fr. Guy Boulanger	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1952.09.20	08177	Fr. Garcia Lussier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

50 Years of Religious Life

1962.09.08	11713	Fr. Stanislaw Adamski	Poland
1962.09.08	11321	Fr. Gaby Baekelandt	Belgium/Holland
1962.09.08	11324	Fr. Jozef Chlebek	Poland
1962.09.08	11326	Fr. Daniel Corijn	General Administration
1962.09.08	11325	Fr. Paul Decock	Natal
1962.09.08	11314	Fr. John Deely	Colombo
1962.09.08	11311	Fr. Jaime Gibbons	Brazil
1962.09.08	11322	Fr. Jozef Leszczynski	Poland
1962.09.08	11313	Fr. Walenty Miklaszewski	Poland
1962.09.08	11574	Fr. Achiël Peelman	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1962.09.08	11323	Fr. Geert Scholten	Belgium/Holland
1962.09.08	11306	Fr. John Szkodzinski	Assumption
1962.09.08	11320	Fr. Gerard Vandesompele	Central S. A.
1962.09.15	11270	Fr. Luc Athimon	France
1962.09.15	11515	Fr. Jacques de Portzamparc	France
1962.09.15	11336	Fr. Aldo D'Ottavio	Mediterranean
1962.09.15	12082	Bro. Joseph Gaudré	France
1962.09.15	11461	Fr. Norbert Holsen	France
1962.09.15	11340	Fr. Geraldo Levron	Brazil
1962.09.15	11460	Fr. Michel Samson	France
1962.09.15	11335	Fr. Dino Tessari	Mediterranean
1962.09.29	11470	Fr. Bernard Colgan	Anglo-Irish
1962.09.29	11345	Fr. Denis Cormican	Anglo-Irish
1962.09.29	11342	Fr. Michael Hughes	Anglo-Irish
1962.09.29	11347	Fr. Michael Morrissey	Central S. A.
1962.09.29	11343	Fr. Christopher O'Leary	Philippines
1962.09.29	11348	Fr. Francis Ryan	Anglo-Irish

25 Years of Religious Life

1987.09.08	13119	Fr. Marek Adamczuk	Central European
1987.09.08	13054	Fr. Javier Alvarez	Mediterranean
1987.09.08	13121	Fr. Grzegorz Janiak	Poland
1987.09.08	13096	Fr. Arlin Jean-Louis	Haiti
1987.09.08	13224	Fr. Gasner Joint	Haiti
1987.09.08	13114	Fr. Mariusz Kasperski	Poland
1987.09.08	13175	Bro. Leszek Kluczynski	Poland
1987.09.08	13120	Fr. Michal Lepich	Poland
1987.09.08	13298	Bro. Jaroslaw Lyskawka	Poland
1987.09.08	13115	Fr. Mariusz Namysl	Poland
1987.09.08	13116	Fr. Andrzej Noga	Poland
1987.09.08	13118	Fr. Marek Skiba	Poland
1987.09.08	13117	Fr. Robert Zukowski	Poland
1987.09.26	13202	Fr. Uwe Barzen	Central European
1987.09.26	13059	Bro. Robert Fromme	Central European

25 Years of Priesthood

1987.09.12	12717	Fr. John Cox	United States
1987.09.19	12584	Fr. Kopano Martin Mabathoana	Lesotho

Prayers for our deceased

No. 41-45

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Lode Nagels	Belgium/Holland	28/11/1925	Alost	25/05/2012
Bro. René Wilsam	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	25/03/1919	Richelieu	28/05/2012
Fr. Adolph Kaler	United States	07/01/1931	San Antonio	03/06/2012
Fr. Jean Troncy	France	28/10/1920	Lyon	09/06/2012
Fr. Benoît Bonduelle	France	05/02/1927	Marseille	13/06/2012

“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 & circulation: Théophile LePage