



Cardinal George remembers his Oblate roots

On the last Monday of May each year in the United States, people celebrate a holiday called Memorial Day. The holiday was originally meant to remember and honor those who died in service of their country. But it has become very similar to the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed celebrated by the Church on November 2. People go to cemeteries to decorate the graves of their loved ones with beautiful spring flowers. In his column in the weekly newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago, *The Catholic New World*, Cardinal Francis GEORGE, tells about the significance of this celebration to him in 2012 and he reminisces about his Oblate family.

This past Memorial Day, I celebrated the outdoor Mass at Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery on the South Side. It is right next to Mount Carmel Catholic Cemetery, where Archbishop James Quigley (1903-1915) built the crypt that holds the bodies of most of Chicago's archbishops.

After the Mass, celebrated for those who have died for our country and for all those whose bodies rest in Queen of Heaven's consecrated ground, I had a discussion with the director of the cemeteries about where I wanted to be buried. That's a good sign, it seems to me, that the horizon of death is closer than I might want to believe. It's also a question that drives one back into personal memories.

On Memorial Day we rightly remember all those who sacrificed their lives in defense of our country. We should also remember those who have survived combat and now live among us but who often suffer from traumas of all sorts, physical and emotional. The plight of some veterans who have difficulty taking up their lives, integrating into their families and finding productive and steady work should command our attention. We owe them a great debt, and

remembering them helps make their welfare a national concern.

But Memorial Day is also a time to remember those of our families who have preceded us in death. When I was small, Catholic families still visited cemeteries on a regular basis. This year, the Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Chicago mark 175 years of burying the dead with whom, in this life, we have shared our faith in Christ. My parents, grandparents and some of my great grandparents are buried in various cemeteries of the archdiocese, along with numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

In the spring, my mother would plant red geraniums on her mother's grave in All Saints Cemetery in Des Plaines; and in the fall, she would place over the grave a winter cover of evergreens. Rules for flowers in cemeteries have changed; but the prayers I say at my mother's grave, where her body lies next to her mother's and her husband's, are the same prayers she taught me to say as a little boy visiting the cemetery where we prayed together for my grandmother's eternal rest.

Visiting last resting places, as graves are sometimes called, invites reflection on where one has spent one's life, between cradle and grave. Most of us probably have memories of many families. A bishop always belongs to the church which he governed in Christ's name, for a bishop is married to his diocese. When a bishop is transferred, it's a painful separation, for part of his heart remains with the people he was first given to love.

Before becoming a bishop, I lived in a religious family, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I don't often speak publicly of that family's life, since I haven't lived in my religious

community for over 20 years. But what I learned about prayer and community and the mission of the church as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate has shaped my way of life as much as did growing up in my natural family here in Chicago or living as a bishop in the Diocese of Yakima, Wash., and the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon.

Regularly I receive a copy of the newsletter from the Oblate General House in Rome, reporting on the life of the Oblate congregation around the world. Like many Catholics in Chicago, I first turn to the obituary section to see whether someone I studied with or once lived with in various communities around the world has gone to the Lord. For each of those who have died, I celebrate a Mass, as I do for each of the deceased priests of the archdiocese. The last issue of the Oblate newsletter reported the death of a man I had met on several occasions. Father Alexandre Kayser, O.M.I. He was sickly as a seminarian, and so he was never sent outside of his native France. He died in Strasbourg, France, at the age of 108, in his 89th year of religious life and his 83rd as a priest. The story reported some of his last words: "I love the good God; I love the Virgin Mary; I love the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate."

News of other members of the Oblate family included the ordination of the first priest from the Pakistani Province of Baluchistan, an Oblate who was ordained by the vicar apostolic of Quetta, Bishop Victor Gnanapragasam, O.M.I., with whom I lived when he was a seminarian studying in Rome. Quetta is on the border between Pakistan and Iraq, and the ordination was celebrated in the shadow of the

assassination of a wellknown Christian man just days before.

From Thailand, there was news of an Oblate I once knew fairly well, who was now sharing the life of an indigenous tribe from Burma that had crossed the Thai border and had been held in a detention camp for over two years. The Oblate reported that his attempts to negotiate their status with the government were bearing fruit and that the tribe was going to be allowed to go free. Oblates in Guinea Bissau, Africa, reported on how they and their people had come through the recent coup d'etat. A young Oblate from Lesotho in southern Africa described the difficulties of adapting to life with the Inuit or Eskimos of northern Canada, to whom he had been sent. There was news from Chad, Peru, Paraguay, Guatemala, Senegal, the Philippines, Italy and Texas!

All of this serves to remind me not only of a religious family with whom I now have only intermittent contact but also of places I've visited and people who have been part of my life. It reminds me as well that even a great archdiocese like Chicago lives in dependence upon the network of universal Catholic communion, of which it is a quite small part. Our context of life and death, as Catholics, is the globe and, finally, the kingdom of God.

But, in the end, you have to be buried someplace, in a particular plot of ground. I hope I can answer the question about where that will be before I come to depend upon the Catholics of the archdiocese to visit my grave and remember me before the Lord. (The Catholic New World, June 3, 2012, www.catholicnewworld.com)

Asia-Oceania

INDONESIA

Faithfully preparing young Oblates for 30 years

Since 1971, the Oblates from the Australian Delegation who worked on Java Island saw good interest among Indonesian young men to be Missionary Oblates. In 1980, 8 Indonesian youth entered the Oblates. They stayed and learnt philosophy at the scholasticate of St. Paul, Kentungan, Yogyakarta. In 1981, the Australian Delegation agreed to build a house for the

Oblate candidates from Indonesia at Yogyakarta. Some preparations were then carried out to this purpose; one of them was that the Oblates bought 600 m2 land at the village of Dero, Condong Catur, Yogyakarta. In January 1982, the building of the formation house was started. The aim of the project was to prepare the main buildings with bedrooms, kitchen, and washing room.

On 29 July 1982, 8 Oblate candidates from the scholasticate of St. Paul moved to the newly

finished scholasticate; there were as well 4 new candidates from the minor seminary of Mertoyudan, Magelang. Fr. John Kevin CASEY came to Yogyakarta from St. Joseph Parish, East Purwokerto, Central Java. He was appointed as the first rector of the scholasticate. In 1983, some other buildings were finished. The formation house was named "Wisma de Mazenod" (or De Mazenod House). It was blessed on the feast of St. Lawrence the Martyr, on 10 August 1983, by Fr. Austin COOPER, the provincial of Oblates of Australia at that time.

Over time, the occupants of the scholasticate increased. In July 1983, 8 new candidates joined the Wisma. In July 1984, there were another 9 new candidates. Seeing the increasing number of the candidates from year to year, some other new facilities were added. At the end of 1984, a rectory was built.

From the birth of the scholasticate to date, Wisma de Mazenod has faithfully been preparing Oblate candidates to possess the same spirit as the Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod. These candidates go through a period of 7 years to complete their study of philosophy and theology and do some other formation programmes and activities prepared carefully by the formators in order for the candidates to be able to enter into a process of building their religious lives as an Oblate. The scholasticate has been witness to a large number of Indonesian young men who came into the formation house with holy intentions, trying to shape their lives, to consecrate themselves to God and to serve Him as His means of giving blessings to the Church.

Over the 30 year history of the scholasticate, there have been 31 Indonesian Oblates ordained. The first Oblate, Fr. Gregorius Basir KARIMANTO was ordained on 29 February 1987, whilst the 31st Indonesian Oblate, Fr. Aloysius Wahyu NUGROHO was recently ordained on 09 July 2012, at the parish of St. Mary Immaculate, Taraan, East Kalimantan.

The scholasticate's wheel of life is still spinning. For the academic year of 2012-2013, there are 10 scholastics and 1 Brother in the house. Surely it is the hope of all that there will always be the

seeds of vocations to Oblate life growing in the Catholic families in Indonesia and that the scholasticate will continue be the witness of an abundant harvest of Indonesian Oblates in the years to come. (Caraka Team)

PHILIPPINES

Oblates return to Timanan

In the Church's Mission in the Cotabato Archdiocese, the return of the OMI Missionaries to their former mission places is no longer simply a remote possibility.

Almost two years ago, the first return came about after the appeal from the local community and the diocese to take responsibility once again of the Mission School in Kulaman; otherwise, the school faced the sad possibility of closure. Fr. Mon BERNABE, then Provincial, heeded the appeal and accepted again the care for the school.

The school is considered poor and most abandoned, thus falling within the priority of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. There is also a special feature in the school that makes it a special ministry to the Oblates. The uniqueness of the school is the fact that it serves the Indigenous Peoples of the Daguma mountain ranges in Sultan Kudarat Province. It is for this reason that the Oblate Provincial could not refuse the appeal to take responsibility over the school again.

This year, a similar return of the Oblates occurred. Archbishop Orlando QUEVEDO asked the Oblates to take charge of the parish of Timanan, South Upi. The Marist Fathers, who had asked the bishop some years ago to be given the mountain parish to work among the Indigenous Peoples, were leaving the diocese for good and the bishop appealed to the Oblates to come back to their former mission station.

Fr. Lauro DE GUIA, the new Provincial, accepted the exchange on May 30, 2012, in a ceremony presided by Archbishop Quevedo, with Rev. Fr. Larry Sabud, SM, Delegation Superior of the Marist Fathers in the Philippines. There were five Marist Fathers and twelve Oblate priests and brothers present at the ceremony.

The Timanan of years gone by is different from today. First, the road from Cotabato City to the parish church in Timanan is fully paved. Second, there is electric power in the town with the possibilities of getting all of modern life amenities –electric fans, coolers, and cable TV. Third, there are communication sites that make possible the use of cell phones and internet. And to top it all, there is a new concrete convent and a kindergarten center in the church grounds.

Fr. Lauro, in accepting the parish once again, could not help but reminisce about his early missionary experiences years ago when as a postulant he lived in Timanan for three months. They were seven postulants who were there for a mission exposure and they stayed in a small room in 1986. The late Fr. Yves CAROFF was parish priest. He introduced the postulants to the tough mission in the mountains of South Upi.

Fr. Lauro shared, “It was there that I got the taste of what it was to be a missionary -- praying in community, cooking and eating together, drinking together and being sent to chapels by twos. It was here also that I experienced hiking for many hours, rode on horseback, or by motorcycle to reach the far-flung Christian communities in the mountains. But what was consoling was the hospitality and generosity of the simple folks who in their poverty openly welcomed us. They shared with us their homes to rest; and they offered us their best food at their tables.”

There are now three Oblate missionaries assigned to Timanan: Fr. Raul BIASBAS, pastor; Fr. Jurambel SACIL, associate pastor; and Bro. Matt BERTIS, who is there to experience the mission as he awaits his presbyteral ordination. (www.omiphil.org)

COLOMBO

Remembering Fr. Michael Rodrigo

The 85th anniversary of the birth of late Fr. Michael RODRIGO, who was gunned down by an assassin 25 years ago at his mission at Buttala, was celebrated on June 30 at St. Mary’s Church, Dehiwala, his parish of origin.

The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Fr. Rohan SILVA, Provincial of the Oblates’ Colombo

Province; several Oblates concelebrated. During the homily Fr. Claude PERERA, commented on the day’s readings. He said that the situation of Jerusalem immediately after the exile in some manner paralleled the situation of Sri Lanka in late 1980’s. Imitating Jesus Christ, the integral liberator, Fr. Rodrigo stood for the rights of the rural poor and oppressed, and gave his life for them. He further said that the best tribute to his martyrdom is to spur us on to prophetic speech and action in our own times.

At the gathering that followed, Prof. Anton Meemana spoke of the person and mission of Fr. Rodrigo and listed some of his heroic qualities and the values for which he stood. He said that Fr. Rodrigo was a man of humour, deeply human and universal as a person. His authentic and credible life is to his honour. He lived with a sense of helplessness, yet was never a passive drifter. Each day of his life he tried to do what he liked and not what he hated. He had a reverential intimacy with the eco-system which demanded a change of life style. Prof. Meemana reiterated also the need to forgive Fr. Rodrigo’s assassins. He concluded saying that the option for the poor does not exclude our duty to conscientize the rich.

The event was organized by the Oblate community at Suba Seth Gedara, Buttala, in collaboration with the parish priest of Dehiwala and the family of Fr. Rodrigo.

THAILAND

For 41 years, companion in the mission

Fr. Bruno ARENS, for 41 years a missionary in Thailand, died on July 24, 2012, in his native Belgium. His missionary companion during all those years, Brother Bernard WIRTH, retraces here the life of this true missionary.

Bruno’s great concern, from the beginning and all during his mission, was to become Thai with the Thais. He showed this concern in various ways. He did this first of all by immersing himself, body and soul, into the study of Thai, to the point that he acquired an exceptional knowledge of the written and spoken language.

At the same time, he chose to live in the slums of Huay Kwang with a small team for two years, to

share the life of the poorest and to discover basic Thai culture. It was in living very simply that he opted to not have a motorbike or car; he got around on foot or by bus like those around him. Walking enabled him to live by the rhythm of the country and meet many people. It was a way to develop his sense of hospitality and availability, strengths of Thai culture. Bruno could not say no when asked for a service; he wanted to be a friend to all.

It was also in this context that his interest in Buddhism was born. In a predominantly Buddhist country where Christianity represents only 0.5% of the population, he sought a deeper integration than in the small Christian minority. And he loved to say that Buddhism is not only a philosophy that can be learned in books, but a lifestyle that one can understand by practicing it. Bruno was close to several Buddhist monks; he attended two meditation centers and he was sort of a pioneer in interreligious dialogue.

Finally his desire for integration into Thai society also led him to become interested in the history of the country, especially its ancient history. The cabinets of documents and manuscripts he left behind testify to this. He participated in many conferences, sometimes serving as an interpreter because of his ability to juggle between Thai, English, German and French. What is surprising to some is that he leaves behind no work that is directly under his name, but this is so characteristic of Bruno. He helped with a lot of research and translations; he helped many students, teachers and researchers find unpublished manuscripts; he helped them write their theses, but for him, it was a free service. While Bruno was fascinated by history, he refused the prospect of acquiring any title or degree. He wanted to offer a free service, something totally against the grain of the new wave in Thailand today, where everyone asserts his titles and degrees and is only interested in making a profit.

Bruno shared his concern for insertion into Thai society with another concern, that of giving himself totally to the service of the Christian community in this country. Bruno used his responsibilities as pastor in very different places, first in the region of Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom, a small town without a priest for over a decade; then in Song Phi Nong, a large village with a

strong Christian community and a school. Later he was sent into the north-east of the country, to Tha Bom, a village half Christian, half Buddhist. His last position was in Bangkok itself, Saphan Mai. But his concern was the same everywhere, to deepen the faith of the people he was called to serve as closely as possible.

Besides his work of catechesis of adults and children in the parish, Bruno was involved in the formation center for religious women and the major seminary in Bangkok; he was also responsible for training future Thai Oblates.

Bruno closely followed the mission of the Oblates with the Hmong, an ethnic group of mountain people in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and China, a mission launched by Father Yves BERTRAIS in Laos and which continues today by daily radio programs, which are heard even in China; he was also involved in pastoral services in the north-east of the country.

Finally Bruno also agreed to work at the National Catholic Center for Social Development for ten years. I could continue the list of his responsibilities, especially as he was Superior of our Oblate group in Thailand and Laos to twice. To him they were services to be rendered, and as he could not refuse, he accepted them willingly.

These are some highlights of Bruno's life; I am aware that I have been very brief. I probably state very poorly how Bruno just wanted to follow Jesus and the huge void he leaves behind him

COLOMBO

125 years of love and service

"It is with great joy that I thank God for the 125 years of love and service of the OMI Fathers as chaplains in the General Hospital, Colombo. Their history in the hospital began at the same time as that of our Sisters, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM). It was in 1886 that the British Government in Colombo, through the mediation of Father Joseph BOISSEAU, the vicar General in Colombo. The collaboration between the OMI and the FMM which began at that time has continued since then, although our presence in the hospital has now been reduced to a minimum due to circumstance beyond

our control.” (Sr. Antoinette Gomez, FMM, Provincial Superior).

The FMM sisters and Oblates worked together from 1889 – 1964, when the first Archbishop of Colombo Archbishop Christopher BONJEAN wrote to the then Superior General of FMM, Mother Mary of Passion FMM, “*The hospital of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary is a mission within the mission.*” In 1964, the government did not renew the contract with the Sisters working in government hospitals, thereby terminating their services. This drastic decision was taken suddenly. When the Sisters left St. Peter’s House in 1964, the community numbered 81.

Since 1889 until the present day, seventy-three Oblates have been chaplains to the Government Hospitals in Colombo. The first was a French missionary, Fr. Marian Joseph Charles CONRARD in September 1889. The present Oblates chaplains are: Frs. Dileepa JAYAMAHA, Presanna RODRIGO and Jude Roshan JAYAMAHA. In these 125 years of the hospital’s history, the two most outstanding personalities who served the sick till the day the Lord called them were Fr. Claude Joseph Vincent LAWRENCE and Sr. Lina Gendron, FMM. Fr. Lawrence, a native of South Africa, served as hospital and prison chaplain from 1934 until his death in November 1995.

The 125th jubilee started with vespers presided over by Bishop Norbert ANDRADI, of Anuradhapura, on the 7th of July, in the presence of Bishop Maximus Silva, the Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo and Fr. Rohan SILVA, the Provincial of Oblates and Fr. Ivan Perera, the Episcopal Vicar of the Colombo Diocese. The St. Aloysius Minor Seminary Choir sang beautifully in making the day very prayerful and reflective.

On the following day, His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, presided over the Jubilee High Mass at the St. Peter’s Hospital Chapel, Colombo. He was gracefully welcomed at the main gate of the National Hospital by the hospital chaplains, the Director of the National Hospital, Dr. Anil Jasinghe, Fr. Rohan Silva and the priests, nuns,

doctors, nurses, Catholic volunteers, and many well-wishers. Then he was led in procession to the St. Peter’s Chapel. It was a unique and witnessing event in a majority Buddhist environment.

Afterwards, His Eminence celebrated the Jubilee Mass and in his sermon, he stressed the need to cater to the needs of the people before spending time on ideologies, discussions and impractical answers. He also insisted that the mission in the hospital is to show our love and to do charity to the sick and the infirm and that there are no ulterior motives in this apostolate. He clearly expressed that for 125 years, priests and nuns have worked tirelessly for the poor and the abandoned and he thanked the Oblates and Franciscan Missionaries of Mary for their dedicated service to humanity and congratulated the present chaplains for continuing this ‘healing ministry.’ (*Oblate News, Colombo*)

PHILIPPINES

Another bomb in Jolo

In many places, Oblates risk their lives each day as they serve their people. One particularly dangerous place is Jolo in the Sulu Archipelago of the Philippines. In 1997, Bishop Benjamin DE JESUS was murdered in front of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral. His successor, former General Councillor for Asia-Oceania, Bishop Angelito LAMPON, cannot travel in his vicariate without military protection. The same is true for many of the priests and religious who work in the area.

On August 2, 2012, someone bombed the Cathedral with a grenade. Security officials suspected the latest violence was at the hands of the Abu Sayyaf, one of several Islamist separatist groups in the Southern Philippines. No one was injured from the explosion that damaged the roof of the church.

On Christmas Day in 2010, a bomb was detonated in a chapel where two Oblates were celebrating Eucharist at a police compound in Jolo. Two persons were killed and nine were injured in that blast.

Europe

SPAIN**“Peter’s Community” has been born**

After taking part for several years in the Young Life Group Kyrianos, five young people in our parish in Aluche have taken a step in mature faith by making a promise to live community life. On June 29, Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul Apostles, Diego, Veronica, Nacho, Teresa and Jose Luis began a fascinating journey of community life under the protection of St. Peter, the name chosen for the new community. Thank you for your generous response and may God take care of you always!

The parish is a community of communities. The parish in Aluche has several communities of young people trying to live the charism of the early Christian communities, following the spirituality of St. Eugene and the Oblates. The groups that become communities sign a pledge to stay closely linked with the different groups and communities of the parish. The Oblates follow their development by accompanying these young people and offering them a “different” way of being Christians in the world today. (www.omi.it)

FRANCE**“Toit pour Toi” in Nice**

Fr. Grégoire SKICKI tells us of the origins of the project called the Association “Toit pour Toi” in Nice and how the project became a reality. *[Editor’s note: The English translation of “Toit pour Toi” is “A roof for you” but the wordplay is lost in the translation!]*

I lived for quite a while in the bush, in Cameroon. When I arrived in Nice, at first I was dazzled by the beauty of this city. But I was also very surprised. In Cameroon, a very poor country, there are no homeless. How could it be that in a city so rich and beautiful, there were so many street people?

“The beauty of a city,” said Abbé Pierre, “the beauty of a nation, is not in its gardens, its theaters, its museums, or even its cathedrals. It consists in having no slums; it consists in having no one who lives in destitution.”

With the “Toit pour toi” Association, therefore, we are working to beautify our city. We want to live something beautiful here.

This association originated in the fact that I wanted to be present to the destitute homeless. But I lived in an upscale, bourgeois neighborhood, a few dozen meters from the sea. And the Oblates’ house contained many unoccupied square meters. What could we do to be consistent with what we were? It was a simple reaction of solidarity. I was ashamed to tell my friends on the street that I lived in Rue de France!

The day care center run by Catholic Relief Services was full. They could only send the youngsters back to the street! And we lived in a largely unoccupied house. We had to do something.

So we decided, Jacques LANGLET and I, to create an association whose goal is to manage a temporary housing building. Jacques suggested that the association be called “Toit pour toi: we succeed together.” To be effective, more people were needed, competent people. Otherwise, it does more harm than good. Jacques, who works at the *SAMU Social* (emergency medical assistance service) handles the administrative and financial tasks.

The youth, whom we welcome for six months, must be sent to us by professionals: social workers, educators. It is a guarantee of success. If those whom we took in return after six months to their starting point, it would really be a failure. During these six months, something important happens in the lives of our youth. Six months should be enough for them to get moving, to stabilize their social position, find work and small but independent housing.

The Oblate community, which was scattered throughout the house, has regrouped, so as to free two floors. The first floor is common space, a place to live. This is where we meet: there is a lounge. This is where one can do laundry, cook, and eat together.

Five rooms have been set up on the second floor. Then another five on the third. Each room is painted with bright colors. It's simple, clean,

elegant. The project has been funded by the De Mazenod Foundation. We are grateful. And thanks also to the Oblate authorities of France who supported our project. (*Audacieux pour l'Évangile*, July 2012. See also an internet video in French: <http://goo.gl/JRUzd>)

SPAIN

Anniversary of martyrdom

July 24th marked 76 years since the martyrdom of seven Oblates and the father of a family, beatified last December. To commemorate such a significant date, various celebrations were organized in different places. Therefore, around July 24th, the town of Villaverde de Arcayos celebrated the blessed martyrs, Justo GONZÁLEZ and Pascual ALÁEZ; statues of the two were blessed and placed for the devotion of the people in their parish church. The Eucharist was presided by the Oblate Bishop Ramiro DÍAZ, a son of the same town. Joining him and other Oblates, some of whom were also born there, were numerous friends and family members of the two martyrs.

There was a Mass celebrated also in Santa Marina del Rey, this time presided by the diocesan bishop, recalling the martyr Juan Antonio PÉREZ. Although martyred in November, they also celebrated Blessed Gregorio ESCOBAR in Estella and in Prioro, Blessed Serviliano RIAÑO. In similar celebrations presided by their diocesan bishops or their parish pastors, the memory of other martyrs was celebrated. It is summertime in Spain and at this season, many go back to their hometown. For that reason, they chose these dates so that no one would miss the opportunity.

In our Oblate house in Pozuelo de Alarcón, a large group of the faithful and of Oblates also gathered to commemorate the martyrs. On the 24th, everyone wanted to be near the house of the martyrs to remember what happened there. The walls and rooms of the house still speak and give witness to the sacrifice of our martyrs: their oblation, their strong commitment to community, their Eucharist-centered prayer, their love and forgiveness of their enemies. Visiting these areas on pilgrimage has a major impact on all those who have the opportunity to do so. During the homily, mention was made of the testimony of Fr. Felipe DÍEZ, one of the

survivors. The militants went about grabbing all the members of the community, one by one, pointing their weapons at them, and locking them in a small room. In passing, one of the formators invited them to make the act of contrition so as to receive general absolution. Fr. Felipe said: "I wanted to pray the prayer, *Lord Jesus Christ*, but I couldn't get it out. Indeed, what came out were acts of love for God, of forgiveness for those who we thought were going to shoot us and offering my life for those who were killing us, for the Church and for Spain."

To end the celebration at Pozuelo, all participants went to the monument, located outside of the house, which symbolically brings together and commemorates the martyrdom of our blessed brothers. There we renewed our baptismal promises, and each person could pray, asking for some special grace, while offering a lighted candle that was left in front of the main part of the monument. This consists of four large slabs of granite in which is carved a cross, surrounded by the names of all the martyrs, with the image of the Virgin Mary enshrined at the foot. All renewed their commitment to being witnesses of the love and forgiveness of Jesus at this time in the life of the Church, symbolized by a beautiful historic bell familiar also to the martyrs, and which rang out a beautiful sound as each of us was invited to renew our baptismal promises. The Litany of the Blessed Martyrs and the praying of the *Salve* completed this prayer which ended at the same time as the setting sun flashed red in the sky over Madrid. Blessed Oblate Martyrs of Pozuelo, pray for us.

ITALY

Forming teenagers with TV series

In Florence, "Veronica Mars", "Pushing Daisies", "Friends," "Chuck," "Nip & Tuck", "Flashforward", "Glee," and "Gilmore Girls" are no longer simply TV series. As of this year, they are also and especially the themes of days held for the youngest members of the Oblate youth group, MGC (*Movimento Giovanile Costruire = "To Build" Youth Movement*). Thanks to the world of series, they are learning to walk as human beings and as Christians in the world, inspired by scenes and main themes treated in the most famous series of last year, the daily bread of our adolescents.

In fact, the MGC of Florence has undertaken this project with the teens and leaders of various “post-confirmation” groups from different parishes. In November, it went into full swing with a day that was inspired by the series “Veronica Mars.” The message focused on the ability to be consistent and be able to fight for one’s ideals, as does the main character.

During a pizza party in December, on the other hand, “Pushing Daisies” had them thinking about the possibility of being life-giving through simple gestures and with the people they meet in everyday life.

The three-day event organized during the Christmas holidays led to the discovery of “Friends,” a TV series which served as a springboard for talking about friendship. Who are the real friends? What are some inherent “risks” that can shoot down the friendly relationships between men, between men and women, and between women?

January brought to the fore the adventures of “Chuck.” This allowed them to deal with the relationship between the real and the virtual, rather hot topics among the new generations, and the ability to build authentic relationships.

After the February break, the project was continued with “Nip & Tuck.” This TV series helped the young people address the relationship with their own body, emphasizing the importance of not continually seeking perfection, but simply appreciating the beauty (interior and exterior) that God has given us.

In April, “Flashforward” helped them to speak about God’s plan for each one and the importance of being attentive in order to understand it and make it happen.

In May, they considered the escapades of “Glee:” their dreams, ambitions, and successes, but also one’s relationship with self, with one’s own talents and weaknesses.

The concluding session in June, based on “Gilmore Girls,” helped them to focus on the theme of their relationship with their parents. (Taken from an article by Daniela Paoletti in www.omi.it)

ITALY

An oasis for families

The *Cana Oasis Association* began in Palermo (Sicily) on November 11, 1984, at the initiative of Fr. Antonio SANTORO. It is an association of volunteers, of Christian inspiration, for the welcoming and training of individuals, couples and families.

Informal meetings at the beginning became, over the years, more and more organized training sessions as a service to the needs of the members of the group as well as of other couples. Thus, the Association, through the efforts of its enrolled members and people who share its aims and objectives, has designed and manages some ongoing service structures: family groups, programs for engaged couples, an Association Bulletin, a center for the integration and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and support to their families, a solidarity fund to support needy families, a Center for Studies and Research on Individuals, Couples and Families..

The Association is meant specifically to serve the couple and the family: couples to couple, family to family, individuals working to bolster the reality of marriage and family. In this sense, worth special mention is the “Cana” Family Counseling Center, which is a counseling center of Christian inspiration and is part of the Regional Federation and the Italian Confederation of Family Consultants of Christian Inspiration. What motivates and guides the efforts of the counselors and serves as a basis for its methodology of intervention is a vision of the integral good of the human person and of the great values of family, of life, and of sexuality, enlightened by the wisdom of the Gospel, by the deeper view given by the Church’s Magisterium and by the wisdom of research in the field of human sciences.

The Counseling Center is located in the city of Palermo and its outreach covers a vast territory. Although it performs a service useful to the public, it receives no funding of any kind: to cover the costs of management and training, it requires the help of benefactors and, within the limits of their own ability, the clients themselves.

All those who work at the Counseling Center render their services as volunteers. The professional personnel are licensed in accordance with current norms. In addition to team work, the Counseling Center organizes, for the benefit of those providing psychological services, periodic monitoring by outside professionals and continuing education seminars. Psychologists who are interns in psychotherapy are monitored and supervised by an instructor.

There are over 30 staff members, including: a Church counselor for spiritual and family issues and for Canon Law concerning marriage, secretaries, psychologists/psychotherapists, a social worker, a gynecologist/sexologist, teachers of natural methods, a consultant for the promotion of breastfeeding, a civil lawyer, a pediatrician, an ear, nose and throat

specialist, an orthopedic specialist, and a manager for administration.

The Cana Association has strong ties to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, not only because it was founded by Father Santoro, but because its basic commitment is to confront the many forms of poverty facing individuals, couples and families. The Association's members -- from the first steps of the former "Cana Group" -- have almost unconsciously breathed, and in a various ways, assimilated the fundamental characteristics of the charism of St. Eugene: a passionate love for Christ and the Church, concern for the poor with their many faces, especially the "poverty" of married couples and families, a missionary zeal originating with the family, social responsibility, a family climate in the apostolate and other services. (www.oasicana.it)

Latin America

HAITI

100 years with St. Anthony

A personal note from Missionary Oblate, Fr. Réal CORRIVEAU, which appeared in the June edition of News and Notes by Bro. Augustin COTÉ.

As you know, my parish, St. Anthony of Padua, celebrated its saint's feast on June 13. This year is also the centennial anniversary of the establishment of the first Catholic chapel there in 1912. The founding as a parish took place 5 years ago when Archbishop Miot named me pastor. He was killed during the earthquake. He appointed me for 6 years. It looks like my time is almost up, doesn't it? A younger Oblate priest will surely climb those mountains more easily.

On the feast day, we celebrated in great pomp. The church was beautifully decorated for its 100th anniversary and also for the 5th anniversary of the founding of the parish. Auxiliary Bishop Erik Glandas presided at the Mass and was accompanied by 10 priests: 7 Oblates, 1 Spiritan, and 2 diocesans from the parish. The Bishop gave a very vibrant and exciting sermon. As far as I know and could see, nobody fell asleep. The choir and the musicians performed an especially fine animation for all inside and outside of the church, and kept everyone singing.

After Mass, the Sisters of St Anthony presented us with a very decorated and delicious banquet at the rectory. We all really enjoyed this moment after the 3 hours of praying and singing. One might conclude that this was the continuation and living of our communion at Mass.

The people at Fonds d'Oies said that St. Anthony always provides rain on his feast day. It was extremely hot as we left Fonds d'Oies yesterday, but there were dark clouds coming over the mountains. I don't know if rain fell after I left, but rain did fall here in Port-au-Prince just before my arrival. I did pray for rain because their gardens were in great need. It seems true that St. Anthony is a miracle man.

PARAGUAY

Winding roads and ethnic conflicts

It is said that the name Paraguay means "water flowing to the sea." The term comes from the Guarani and indicates both sections of the land and the river flowing between them, dividing in two the smallest country in South America. Paraguay is as large as Germany and Switzerland combined, but has only 6.3 million inhabitants.

Bishop Lucio ALFERT arrived in Paraguay in 1972. A member of the Oblates of Mary

Immaculate, he was born in 1941 in Heek, Germany, near the Dutch border. Since 1986 he has been bishop of Pilcomayo, in the northeast of the country, an Apostolic Vicariate, which extends for about 650 kilometers and includes just six parishes. Half of the inhabitants of the area are Catholics, scattered in an huge land with no large cities and vast distances to be covered. There is only one paved road; the rest are all sandy lanes that become impassable quagmires on rainy days. There is public transportation but it travels only on the highways.

However, it is not the winding roads that preoccupy Bishop Alfert, but the ethnic and social conflicts in the region. Since 1927, German-speaking Mennonites began to move into the Gran Chaco from Canada and then from Russia, farming the land. For many decades, the Protestant community has determined the destiny of the region, devoid of any infrastructure, while maintaining a sizeable influence even today.

As in other areas of Paraguay, also in the Gran Chaco, the indigenous population, the Guaraní, was ousted and exiled. Since then, the legal status of Indians has improved, but social tensions have never been completely overcome. Now, the Mennonites are also much more open towards the Catholic Church.

“Indigenous people should be able to play an active role in society,” says Bishop Alfert, “and they want to contribute more than mere folklore.” Two of the four priests of the Vicariate of Pilcomayo are themselves indigenous, the first Guaraní priests of the country. There are six other priests belonging to various religious orders and eight seminarians, one of whom belongs to the ethnic Nivaclé. The Vicariate does not have its own seminary, and thus the formation of future priests is at the National Seminary that has two locations: the first level of studies takes place at Caacupé and the final years in Asuncion. The cost per student is about 200 Euros.

To help find funds for the training of priests, and a good variety of other pastoral projects, the Vicariate is totally dependent on outside help; in recent years ACS (*Aiuto alla Chiesa che soffre - Help for the Suffering Church*) has financed

different projects, including the construction of the parish of St. Eugene de Mazenod and the publication of 10 thousand Bibles for children, translated into Nivaclé.

Waiting approval is also a project that involves the construction of some buildings to use as spaces for ministry or to house the offices of the Vicariate of Pilcomayo. At this time, Bishop Alfert does not even have his own house, but lives in a room in one of the houses of his congregation. To get to his office - located in the middle of a military camp - he has a long drive every day. (www.acs-italia.org)

HAITI

Certificate of Honor and Merit

Two years ago, the announcement of the founding of the John Paul II Institute by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate arrived at just the right moment in Ouanaminthe. In a very short time, the Institute has earned its place among the schools of the northeast and especially, it has won the hearts of students, parents and, we can even say, the whole community of Ouanaminthe.

Last June 12, to our surprise, the Hubert Constant second year students insisted on honoring, in their own way, the administrative staff for their enthusiasm, their desire to encourage in young people a taste of truth, goodness, and beauty, and their willingness to foster an education in citizenship, self-confidence, solidarity, leadership and environmental protection.

To each member of the administration, there was issued a Certificate of Honor and Merit. This simple gesture reinforces in us our determination to support the youth in their search of a worthy goal, these youth who need to have confidence in themselves, to be creative, and to be productive creators of their own destiny. (Jean Luc BOURDEAU)

MEXICO

The OMI Martyrs in Cuajinicuilapa

Mexicans know about martyrs and martyrdom in their own homeland. But Catholics of "New Spain" know and believe that they are members

of a Church which is catholic (= universal) and therefore they do not limit themselves to their national martyrology. They have opened their hearts to the martyrs of "Old Spain". An example is the Oblate parish in Cuajinicuilapa, which has dedicated its brand new parish hall to the Oblate

Martyrs of Pozuelo. Brother Ernesto MAGÁN, wherever he goes, is noted for his enthusiasm and inventiveness... May the newly blessed of Madrid bring upon you God's abundant blessings so that this locale might be a focal point of evangelizing radiance. <http://martiresomimadrid.blogspot.com>

Canada-United States

UNITED STATES

Cardinal George's health

The Archdiocese of Chicago released the following news item on August 20:

As announced on Friday, August 17, Cardinal George learned from his doctors that test results from a procedure earlier in the week showed there were cancerous cells in his kidney and in a nodule that was removed from his liver.

The Cardinal rested at home this weekend and was actively engaged in a number of his administrative responsibilities. This week he will continue additional testing, participate in his annual retreat and maintain his previously scheduled public commitments.

After the Cardinal meets with his doctors

regarding a plan for a course of treatment, further information about his upcoming public schedule will be announced.

Until further information is available, Cardinal George has asked for continued prayers for all affected by cancer and the doctors and medical staff that work with patients and their families, as well as for himself.

Cardinal George had radical surgery for bladder cancer in 2006. He was able to recover well from that surgery and continued his busy schedule as leader of the second largest diocese in the United States and his various duties as a member of the College of Cardinals. Last January, when he submitted the resignation letter required of all Catholic bishops when they turn 75, he indicated that he expected that the Holy See would not replace him for a couple of years.

Africa-Madagascar

CONGO

The Superior General blesses the Siloam Center

Show me your faith without works and I will show you my faith by my works.

In an environment of poverty such as Kinshasa, where people are dying of hunger and lack of medical care, where access to studies still is restricted to only a few, where the number of malnourished children is growing every day, the testimony of one's faith must necessarily be translated into concrete actions of solidarity and the restoration of human dignity.

The presence of the Siloam Health Center in the Bumbu district on the outskirts of the capital, is trying to respond to this demand of justice, as well as of charity: we do not have much to share

but what we have, we make it available to those who are poorest.

Since 2002, the center, run by the COMI (Oblate Cooperators of Mary Immaculate), has treated thousands of sick and malnourished persons, has birthed thousands of children (the average is 700 per year), always in precarious conditions, in rented locations that do not entirely fit the needs of a health center: a center in poor health to serve the poor, but with a serious commitment, with professional experience and a witness of service that have honored the charism of St. Eugene and COMI.

But the condition of the locales where we have operated for years has led us to dare and then, in spite of the limited means available, with trust in divine providence and the help of the Institute and of benefactors, we launched the

venture of preparing a more comfortable and dignified center.

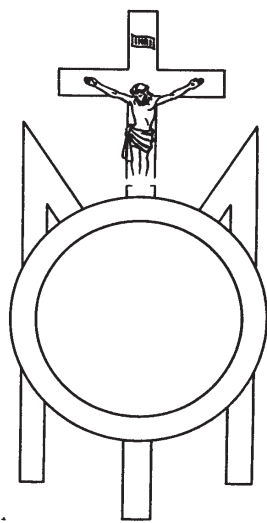
This year, we finally finished the construction of the new Siloam and on June 14, we had the joy of having it blessed by the Superior General of the OMI, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, on a visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo. It was a simple ceremony, in the presence of the COMI, some OMI from the province, Bishop Louis MBWOL, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Idiofa, the staff that coordinates health care in the diocese of Bdom, the nursing staff of the center, and some patients.

During the ceremony, a mother spontaneously

gave her testimony, to highlight how it was in the Siloam Center that she felt welcomed and respected throughout her pregnancy (characterized by regular, periodic consultations) and during childbirth.

The Superior General expressed his pleasure at this service rendered by the COMI in a neighborhood where the OMI are also present in the parish of Christ the Savior.

Then, on July 3, Fr. Lougen came back to the COMI community to learn more about the people who form this community and the Oblate spirit that animates them. (Antonietta Mongiò)



Anniversaries for October 2012

65 Years of religious life

1947.10.07	08945	Bro. Donato Cianciullo	Mediterranean
1947.10.07	08416	Fr. Angelo Dal Bello	Mediterranean

60 Years of religious life

1952.10.07	09397	Fr. Sante Bisignano	Mediterranean
1952.10.07	09396	Bishop Alessandro Staccioli	Mediterranean
1952.10.18	10040	Fr. Christian Duriez	France
1952.10.24	09399	Fr. John Archbold	Anglo-Irish

60 Years of priesthood

1952.10.19	08349	Fr. Dominique Kerbrat	Lacombe
1952.10.26	08348	Fr. Albert Lafrenière	Lacombe

50 Years of priesthood

1962.10.07	10768	Fr. Palmiro Delalio	Mediterranean
------------	-------	---------------------	---------------

25 Years of religious life

1987.10.07	13122	Fr. Marek Rostkowski	General Administration
------------	-------	----------------------	------------------------

25 Years of priesthood

1987.10.03	12762	Fr. Roberto Gallina	Mediterranean
------------	-------	---------------------	---------------

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

Prayers for our deceased

No. 46-65

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Stefan Kruk	Poland	20/02/1933	Gdansk	27/06/2012
Fr. Paul-Antoine Hudon	OMI Lacombe	03/03/1927	St. Albert	28/06/2012
Fr. André Morin	France	21/08/1920	Pontmain	04/07/2012
Fr. Robert Paradis	OMI Lacombe	31/08/1922	St. Albert	09/07/2012
Bro. Anthony Szklarski	United States	03/06/1935	St. Paul	11/07/2012
Fr. Charles Cathelin	France	13/08/1931	Gorze	12/07/2012
Sch. Jason Duck	Australia	24/09/1971	Moe	15/07/2012
Fr. Richard Avery	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	07/07/1940	Richelieu	17/07/2012
Fr. Jerome Dowling	OMI Lacombe	08/10/1950	Calgary	21/07/2012
Fr. Normal Pahl	United States	09/01/1933	St. Paul	23/07/2012
Fr. Bruno Arens	Philippines/Thailand	01/06/1943	Saint Vith	24/07/2012
Fr. Alfons Strancich	Poland	30/10/1933	Poznan	25/07/2012
Fr. Herve Gagnon	United States	19/07/1919	Tewksbury	27/07/2012
Fr. Gaetano Nanni	Australia	03/09/1919	Fremantle	30/07/2012
Fr. Luc Lombart	Belgium/Holland	16/11/1925	Lobbes	31/07/2012
Bro. Noël Gaudet	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	25/12/1920	Richelieu	05/08/2012
Fr. August Bös	Central European	26/03/1921	Fulda	09/08/2012
Fr. Joseph Vaillancourt	Haiti	30/08/1920	Lowell	10/08/2012
Fr. George Purves	Natal	29/01/1931	Durban	14/08/2012
Fr. Paul Lebbe	Belgium/Netherlands	10/12/1927	Roulers	18/08/2012

“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)