



Formation at the service of today's Life and Mission

By Cornelius NGOKA, Assistant General

The formation session held in Rome from August 6-23, 2012, was a good opportunity for the 24 scholasticate superiors, three other formators and two Oblates from Spain to have a good experience of community life, to listen, to learn and to share about the Oblate charism, the Founder, and the mission of the Oblates in regard to post-novitiate formation. There were 29 participants.

The first two days were spent listening and sharing experiences of formation ministry in the different scholasticates. In spite of the diversity of ecclesial and socio-cultural contexts, the joys and challenges expressed during the sharing were similar. On the third day, members of the Central Government helped us to reflect on the document of the last Chapter and the calls to conversion. The invitation to provide our young members with a formation deeply rooted in Christ, according to our charism and open to new calls, gave a focus to the day's sharing.

During the days that followed, Frank SANTUCCI and Fabio CIARDI focused our attention on the life and charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod and how to integrate this charism into Oblate formation today. For formation to be truly Oblate and missionary, it is essential to know the Founder, the history of the Congregation and the Oblate charism. The formators became aware of the need to develop a program of oblatology for the scholasticates. We are a missionary congregation and our missionary identity must accompany each stage of formation.

This reflection on the Oblate charism in post-novitiate formation was followed by an introduction to the new General Norms of

Oblate Formation. Paolo ARCHIATI gave a fine presentation and explanation of the document in its various parts. It was also an opportunity for the formators to reflect, individually and in small groups, on certain aspects of formation. An aspect that came up often was the need to train the formators and to work as a team.

On the next to the last day of the session, the Superior General held a moment of sharing with the formators. He especially insisted on the importance of the witness of the formators and the quality of their community life. The ministry of formation is a mission in itself. The formators are missionaries sent by the Congregation and the Church to form the young members. In his homily during the closing Mass, Fr. Louis LOUGEN challenged the formators to renew themselves in the Oblate charism so as to be sent once again by Christ. After having kissed the Founder's cross, each formator received from the Superior General a small Oblate cross as a sign of his being sent on mission. Under the mighty Roman heat, the formators had a very busy program. In spite of that, the Oblate spirit, openness to others, sharing and simplicity characterized the session.

This gathering of the superiors of post-novitiate houses of formation allows us, in the light of the Constitutions and Rules and the new General Norms of Formation, to bring ourselves up to date on the level of the organization of formation and in the development of programs for the different levels of formation. Among the many areas that held the attention of the participants, I would like to mention these few:

- Establish a program of oblatology for all stages of formation to promote the deepening and assimilation of the Oblate charism during initial formation.
- The revision of the formation directories on the level of Units or of Regions in the light of the new General Norms of Oblate Formation.
- Long term planning for vocation ministry, the training of formators, and the identifying and training of future formators.
- A greater collaboration and exchange on the level of the Regions with regard to formation houses, formation programs and the training of formators.
- A better preparation for and follow-up of a pastoral experience or regency.
- Greater emphasis on the preparation for and the celebration of perpetual oblation on the regional level, with the help of a preparation program that has recently been proposed.

The implementation of these proposals will depend very much on how much follow-up there is to this gathering in the different Units and Regions. As Constitution 49 reminds us: "Formation is vital to the life and mission of the Congregation...to be effective, formation requires the collaboration of all, individuals and communities."

Asia-Oceania

KOREA

The destitute are working in a factory

Park Gil is not only rich but also a wonderful person. One day, after I had spent a lovely evening with his amazing family, before leaving, he asked me: "What do you think is the greatest need of the street people?" My answer was immediate: "Work!"

"And what could you do to resolve that problem?"

"Nothing. I am only a poor priest and furthermore, I don't have the money to do anything."

"And if I helped you financially?"

"Nothing just the same, because I have no experience in that line."

And so I left this fine person who has a big heart and a special sensitivity for the poor and those who suffer.

A few days later, a well-dressed man came to the soup kitchen and asked me: "I want to speak with you. Do you have some time to spare?" We sat down in the office and he began: "I have a small factory that makes shopping bags. I know that here there are so many people without a job and who live on the streets. If you want to give a new outlook to these brethren, I can offer my expertise and some hard work."

After the conversation, my soul was full of mixed feelings. On the one hand, I was happy because I saw an opportunity to provide a living for my needy friends and on the other, I felt stymied and depressed because of the complexity of the project: rent a place to establish ourselves, buy machines for the work, look for a competent person to whom to entrust the realization of this project.

Despite these conflicts that bothered me, I called my staff together and we discussed this dream. At the end of the meeting, everyone was excited about being able to provide jobs for the poor. I still remained very bewildered, both because of the substantial cost of the operation and because of the enormous responsibility that we would have to face. I telephoned Park Gil and presented the idea. He, along with some friends, restated his willingness to help us financially. Putting 15 people to work also involves a great legal responsibility. Among the Catholics of the parish, I knew a man who is a labor consultant for the government. I called to get some clarification on this.

The days that followed were a tumultuous series of meetings with our collaborators to clearly define the project; with our benefactors to figure out the economic cost; with the homeless to assess their willingness to work. There were sleepless nights. Starting was not easy, but now,

for the past few months, our small factory is a reality that produces thousands of shopping bags and employs 15 homeless people who have a place to sleep at Anna House, hot meals and a job. It's nice to see these people who had been on the street begging a couple of coins to buy alcohol and now they are here from morning to night, hard at work and with a new dignity.

Our modest shop does not produce large amounts of capital to be divided among the various stakeholders (to tell the truth, it leaves us with a small monthly debit) but it produces hope, it creates work and it gives to our brothers on the streets the prospect of a new life, a new dignity and a better future. (*Fr. Vincenzo BORDO*)

AUSTRALIA

The apostle of Italian emigrants

On July 30, at the age of 92, Father Gaetano NANNI returned to the house of the Father. He was the dean of Italian Oblates, born on September 1, 1919. He made his first profession in 1937 and was ordained in 1943 at San Giorgio Canavese. After five years of ministry at Oné di Fonte, in 1948 he arrived in Australia to "accompany the life and faith" of many Italian immigrants. He celebrated the usual Mass for the Italians at Fremantle on Sunday, July 29; the next day, he suddenly fell ill and died.

I was lucky enough to stay with him for three months in 2007. I remember fondly his "inner youth." He was always happy and serene, capable of wonder at God's works and the life of Italian emigrants who attended night-time adoration: emigrants who came mostly from Southern Italy and the Veneto where he had been serving. He

always tried not to let his people lose their cultural roots, who along with their cardboard suitcases had especially brought along devotion to Our Lady under the titles of their different places of origin.

I was impressed by his "zeal for souls:" despite his advanced age, he continued going around in his car to visit the sick in their homes and in the hospital. He was also a peacemaker among Italian families when there is some bad blood among them. His lively regard and attention to the needs of the Italians was nourished by long prayer in the morning and the rosary in the evening. I often came upon him at prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the community chapel. In his last letter, he asked me to come again to Australia and take his place, because he said that his immigrants needed "an Italian pastor."

As a missionary, he had understood the importance of popular piety and the various devotions that the emigrants had brought into the new world and were passing on to their children. For years, Fr. Nanni carried on a sort of evangelization of popular piety: everything was a good occasion to do so and to explain it in the light of gospel values. He believed that this was a privileged way, not only so that the immigrants did not lose their faith and cultural roots, but also to continue the proclamation of the Gospel and to help them integrate into the socio-political context of the new world by trying to be leaders. The Mayor of Fremantle at that time was the son of Sicilian immigrants.

"Come, good and faithful servant." May the Lord give him the reward prepared for him. (*Fr. Sergio NATOLI*)

Europe

ITALY

Scholastics visit Rome with St. Eugene

Each year, the Oblates' European Formation Bureau sponsors a three-week "De Mazenod Experience" to help scholastics prepare for their final oblation. Usually held in Aix-en-Provence at the cradle of the Congregation, because of

remodeling going there, this year's program was held at the Provincial House of the Mediterranean Province in Frascati, just outside of Rome.

Eighteen scholastics from four continents and seven different scholasticates made it a truly international event. The scholasticates represented were Obra (Poland), San Antonio

(USA), the International Roman Scholasticate, Fulda (Germany), Lyon (France), Seoul (Korea), and Ottawa (Canada).

Fr. Frank SANTUCCI provided input on St. Eugene de Mazenod and the charism of the Congregation. Offering reflections on the vows was Fr. Jeevendra PAUL, Grant Director at the General Administration. There were also presentations by Assistants General, Frs. Cornelius NGOKA and Gilberto PIÑÓN, plus a day spent with the Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN.

St. Eugene de Mazenod kept detailed diaries of his own visits to Rome. Visiting places described by the Founder, such as the room of St. Ignatius Loyola, and the churches where he was ordained a bishop and where he waited for news of the approval of the Constitutions and Rules were sacred moments for the young Oblates. They were also able to tour the General House and meet some of the Oblates who live there.

The staff of the program was also international: Frs. Fabio BASTONI (Italy); Antoni BOCHM (Poland); Stefan OBERGFELL (Germany); Robert SKUP (Poland); and Richard WOLAK (Canada/General House).

ITALY

Workshop on Missionary Journalism

The Provincial House of the Mediterranean Province of the Oblates was the site of the first missionary journalism workshop, sponsored by the magazine *Missioni OMI* on September 1-4.

Some young laity and several Oblates participated in the initiative, which took place a little more than one month before the Year of Faith, set to begin on October 11, 2012. During this year, in fact, Benedict XVI intends to urge the Church to rediscover “the beauty and the centrality of faith” (*Porta Fidei*) from a missionary point of view. Based on this premise, the aim of the workshop was, therefore, to stimulate the growth of faith through a high-quality exercise in communication.

Through moments of exchange and comparing notes, as well as individual work, participants

were able to develop ideas and proposals that will be given flesh in the pages of the magazine and through other means of communication available to the Oblate province. The setting and friendly relationships, along with moments of prayer and Eucharistic celebrations, helped to create a constructive and fraternal atmosphere. (A.C. in www.omi.it)

HOLY SEE

75 Volumes of *Bibliographia Missionaria*

In August of 2012, Fr. Marek ROSTKOWSKI, Director of the Library at Rome’s Pontifical Urbaniana University, was elected vice-president of the Executive Council of the European Theological Libraries (or BETH for Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie).

He also has announced the publication of the 75th volume of *Bibliographia Missionaria*, an series founded and edited for 40 years by Fr. Johannes ROMMERSKIRCHEN.

It should be noted that this publication, one of its kind in the world, includes publications from all the largest Christian Churches. The books and articles shown in the *Bibliografia Missionaria* are cited in the original languages: English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Swedish, and Norwegian, and lately, also Chinese.

The *Bibliografia Missionaria*, in the seventy-seven years of its existence, has undergone a long evolution: from the first small volume of eighty pages to the last one of 638 pages.

A brief look at statistics shows that, in 75 volumes and in 20,024 pages, one can find 153,018 bibliographical citations and 3,783 abstracts and reviews of the books received in the Papal Missionary Library.

From the first volume to the most recent one, this work has always been carried out by the directors of the Pontifical Missionary Library and later also by the Library of the Pontifical Urbaniana University, all of them Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

ITALY**Missionary journey of youth to Guinea Bissau**

Mid-August saw the conclusion of a missionary journey to Guinea Bissau by 12 young people of the Movimento giovanile Costruire (*Youth Movement "To Build"*). They were accompanied by three co-workers, two Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Frs. Pasquale CASTRILLI and Antonio D'AMORE, and Elisabetta, a consecrated Oblate Cooperator of Mary Immaculate (COMI).

In the course of three weeks, from July 27 to August 18, the young people animated two summer gatherings for children and youth respectively, at St. Francis of Assisi parish in Antula, a suburb of the capital, Bissau, and in the mission of Farim in the north of the country. The first and last days of their sojourn were

spent in the Spirituality Center of N'Dame a few kilometers from Bissau.

At the beginning of the experience, the young people got to know the history of the Guinean Church through the words of the Bishop of Bissau, Bishop José Câmna na Bissign, as well as the history of almost ten years of presence of OMI missionaries in Guinea Bissau and the civil history of the country, where last April 12 there was a coup d'état. The last few days were reserved for an evaluation of the missionary experience and group sharing.

The young people, coming from different Italian regions, had prepared for their trip for a year through two face to face meetings and a Facebook group. There were numerous charitable initiatives throughout Italy to raise money for the trip and for some missionary projects (Pasquale Castrilli, OMI).

Africa-Madagascar

NAMIBIA**Young Oblates congress**

The Young Oblates (*under-6*) of the Africa-Madagascar sub-region held their biennial regional congress at Dobra, Namibia, on August 20 – 24, 2012. Oblate Units which were represented in the congress were Namibia (8), Lesotho (7), Zambia (6), Zimbabwe (3), Natal (3), Central Province of S.A. (2), Northern Province (2), and Kenya (1). The theme of the congress was *Young Oblates evangelizing in a new heart and a new spirit*.

In his welcome speech, Father Linus NGENOMESHO, Provincial of Namibia, expressed his expectation that the congress would help the participants to reflect on their shared experiences: joys and challenges of priesthood and religious life. He urged the young Oblates to find out new ways of evangelizing and contextualizing the Oblate charism.

Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Namibia, Father Werner Afunde, outlined some of the major challenges facing priesthood in the 21st century. Among them he pointed out the clerical scandals

that have wrecked havoc in the lives of many people. He also raised the issue of lack of new vocations to priesthood in various places around the world and its impact on the Christian communities.

It was good and refreshing to be in the company of our confreres from other Units and to dream together about the future of the Oblate mission. The next congress will be held in Northern Province, South Africa, in 2014. (*Br. Selbourne PITA in Maoblata September 2012*)

KENYA**First Kenyan Oblate priest**

On May 12, 2012, Fr. Gideon MBERIA became the first Kenyan Oblate to be ordained a priest: a significant moment in the life and history of the Oblate Kenya Mission.

Much preparation took place as we prepared the site for this awesome occasion. There are no buildings or halls capable of hosting such a large event. The field in front of the prayer house was transformed into a site worthy of a papal visit. The month of May is the rainy season so tents were put up in case of rain. An enclosure was

built to shelter the altar and to permit people to see. Some two thousand people were present to celebrate their son being ordained a priest.

At 10:00 a.m., with the beat of the drums and the joyous song of the choir, the dancers brought the procession to the altar. Bishop Salesius Magambi of Méru, accompanied by the Oblate Community and many Diocesan priests, presided.

Following the ordination, a community celebration unfolded that included cultural dances and a meal. Not unlike the banquet portrayed in Scripture, the fattened bull was slaughtered, as were a goat and many chickens. The entire community sat down to eat. You can only imagine the amount of work to prepare such a feast, all cooked on wood and charcoal fires.

The ordination was the culmination of a very long journey. Gideon was one of the first Kenyan men to knock at our door asking to join the Oblate community. He came when as a community we had not even considered recruiting. We had just arrived in Kenya at St. Stephen's Parish in Kionyo. Gideon spent a year under the tutelage of Fr. William STANG at Ingandene, one of the prayer houses in the parish. A more formal formation program was started in Méru, a community about 35 kms from Kionyo. Again under the tutelage of Fr. Bill Stang and Bro Harley MAPES, he spent two years at the pre-novitiate.

Eight Candidates left Méru for Novitiate, four in Johannesburg, South Africa, and four in Namibia. Gideon went to Namibia. From there he went to St Joseph's Scholasticate, Cedara, South Africa, where he completed both his philosophical and theological studies. On September 16, 2011 he was ordained a deacon at the Scholasticate. He returned to Kenya and has been ministering as a deacon in the parish.

Two other Oblates of this group will be ordained, probably in 2013. Bro. Joseph MAGAMBO has likewise completed his first formation and has been assigned to the formation community in Méru.

In so many ways this ordination marks the maturity of the Kenya Mission. We now

have a Kenyan Oblate priest, indeed our first born. We are ever so grateful to God for this incredible blessing.

On Sunday the May 13, Fr. Gideon presided at his first Eucharist in his home prayer house Njogune. The church was packed.

On a sadder note, a few days after his ordination his mother died. His first funeral as a priest was that of his mother. May she rest in peace. (James FIORI in www.omilacombe.ca)

CAMEROON

Baba Simon's cause makes progress

In March of 2011, *OMI Information* (No. 509) reported that the cause for beatification of Father Simon Mpeke, known as Baba Simon, was moving forward. The Episcopal Delegate for a second diocesan phase of the proceedings was an Oblate, Fr. Christophe ZIELEND, superior of the scholasticate in Yaoundé.

Servant of God, Baba Simon (1906-1975) was among the first eight Cameroonians to be ordained priests; he was ordained on December 8, 1935 for the Vicariate of Douala. He passed the first years of his priesthood ministering in the parishes of Ngovayang and New Bell - Douala. At age 55, Baba Simon went to Northern Cameroon, as a *Fidei Donum* priest from the Diocese of Douala. He was received by the Oblate Bishop, Yves PLUMEY. There, he worked with the Oblates, who had arrived in 1946, for the conversion of his brothers and sisters from Northern Cameroon.

The diocesan investigation into his life and works was concluded in May of 2012 and the files were sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. There, the validity of the findings will be studied and someone will be named to demonstrate the heroic nature of Baba Simon's virtues.

In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Africae munus*, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged the Church "to recognize among African servants of the Gospel those who could be canonized, not only to increase the number of African saints, but

also to obtain new intercessors so that they might intercede with God for the African continent.”

KENYA

Still at work!

On May 19, 2012, the president of Kenya, His Excellency Mwai Kibaki officially opened a hospital in Isiolo. In the absence of Cardinal John Njue, president of the Episcopal Conference, the vice-chair of the conference presided Eucharist and the official blessing. Other bishops attended also, including the Apostolic Vicar of Isiolo, the Bishop Anthony Ileri, as well many priests from the vicariate and more than a thousand Christians and supporters. Among the guests of honour were Dr. Robert Walley, director of Matercare International, his wife Susan Walley, Normand Peladeau and Sheila Sullivan.

This event is newsworthy for Oblates because of the presence of the two Oblate Associates, Normand and Sheila, who shared in the life of the OMI Kenya Mission from 2006 to 2009. Also, the hospital itself is a significant achievement, considering the needs of this community.

In November 2009, Normand and Sheila returned to Canada. The following year, Normand was back in Kenya because of a contract with Dr. Walley of Matercare International to oversee the construction of this hospital in Isiolo. By the middle of 2010, Sheila joined him in Isiolo. In the late summer, they both returned to Canada because the project was held up. In early spring 2012, they were back. This time Normand is determined to complete his involvement in this project. Although the new hospital has been officially opened some final touch ups are needed.

The construction of this hospital responds to a great need. Isiolo is a town on the edge of the desert about 30 kilometers north of Meru. The apostolic vicariate of Isiolo covers an area of 25505 square kilometres, with an altitude varying from 1,104 meters above sea level to 1,697. The region is semi-arid with sandy soil covering the biggest area because of perennial drought. The pastoralists keep on moving from one area to another in search of water and pastures for

the animals. The region suffers from extreme weather scenarios that hardly support crops; hence many depend on relief.

What services will this hospital provide? Maternity will be a priority. Kenya has one of the highest maternal mortality and morbidity rates in Africa. There are virtually no obstetricians. Inadequately trained nurses and midwives serve this vast central and northern region of Kenya where mortality rates are highest. The project is an attempt to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity. The base hospital in Isiolo has 8 obstetrical beds, 4 intensive care beds, 2 operating rooms, 4 delivery rooms, a small laboratory, a pharmacy, a kitchen and a laundry and 4 *manyattas* (traditional maternity waiting homes) close to the hospital with 2 beds. Other facilities will be added in a second phase of construction.

The Isiolo hospital is joint project sponsored by Matercare International and the Vicariate of Isiolo with the consent of the ministry of health of Kenya. Canada was acknowledged as a source of benefactors. Matercare International is an organization of health professionals dedicated to the care of mothers and babies. Its mission is to serve the culture of life where it is most at risk.

Those who know Normand are aware of his competence and commitment to construction. He has supervised this construction in all of its phases. Now he expects to offer a final month of service to complete the first phase of the hospital. He will return home to care for his body that has absorbed the wear and tear of working under stressful conditions. Sheila has been with him now truly as a wife, whereas she had her own assignments as a teacher when both of them were working with the Oblates. (Alfred Groleau in www.omilacombe.ca)



Latin America

URUGUAY

Youth encounter Christ!

Two days of sunshine, in the middle of a rainy winter, made possible a splendid youth gathering. On Saturday, September 1, about four thousand young people were present for the 34th National Youth Day under the theme: "Meet Christ, your life will change." An exciting gathering of youth from all over the country, to live an encounter with Christ living in our midst. Maldonado, the host diocese, together with the commission for youth ministry, made it possible for many young people to experience the living Gospel.

The Gospel passage that was with us during these two days was the story of the healing of blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10: 46-52), a man who could stand up strong to meet Jesus. From this encounter, his life changed and from the edge of the road, he turned to follow the Master.

After an opening celebration and a time to work in small groups (more than 250 of them), the young people had a powerful prayer experience in the Prayer Vigil, deepening their encounter with Christ through the possibility of reconciliation, thanks to the availability of the many priests who were present.

On Sunday morning, after waiting in line for breakfast, we had an awesome prayer session on the beach. Once again the surroundings fostered a prayerful atmosphere. On the shore, there was a boat with a net, and at the beginning of the song, "Lord, you have come to the seashore" [Pescador de hombres], a young man portraying Jesus approached and called the first four disciples. Everyone could make a leap of two thousand years, and visually experience this encounter. The group leaders stood on the seashore and as the youth approached them, they asked them: "What do you want me to do for you?: And at the answer "That I might see," they put water on their eyes, opening to them a new horizon.

On pilgrimage, accompanied by the Virgin Mary, we arrived on campus to celebrate the Eucharist.

How lovely to see so many young people on the street, praying, singing and expressing joy, affecting the people waving from the top of buildings. It looks, it feels, as though Jesus is present!

The celebration of the Eucharist was the focal point of this "encounter." The presiding bishop, Msgr. Wirz, repeatedly exhorted us with the words: "Follow Christ who gives everything and takes nothing." A cross was blessed for each young person to give to a friend as an invitation to share the same encounter. The celebration was a real fiesta. Present were almost all the bishops of Uruguay and many priests came from all corners of the country. The farewell was at three in the afternoon, but it was clear that nothing had finished there, for now a new life begins. The encounter has changed us; we are not afraid to share our treasure with others.

The tents having been taken down, each bus starts down the road, so that each one goes home again to continue living with this incredible joy, the same joy experienced during these two unforgettable days. (Antonio MESSERI)

BOLIVIA

"Doctor Honoris Causa"-- twice!

On September 11, Father Gregorio IRIARTE received a second "Doctor Honoris Causa", this time from the Catholic University of Bolivia "San Pablo" in Cochabamba (UCB); he received the first one the previous week from the University of San Simon.

It took place in a ceremony presided over by the Chancellor of the UCB, Edmundo Abastoflor; the national rector, Hans van den Berg; and the Vice Chancellor Edwin Claros Alfonso Via Reque Arispe, in his capacity as regional director.

Via Reque took the occasion to stress the unassuming personality that Fr. Iriarte exhibited in the 48 years he has lived in Bolivia; he never liked to wear a tie, or use a cell phone or a private car and -- according to the author Gonzalo Viscarra -- "he never liked being a star" and

always preferred anonymity and the struggle for the poor, the marginalized and the unloved.

In turn, Monsignor Jesús Abastoflor spoke of the meaning of the word “Doctor”, which comes from the Latin verb “docere” meaning “to teach”. He said that Dr. Iriarte has taught “all of us in the true sense of the word”, to forever be in the

service of others, always teaching and helping those who need it.

Dr. Hans van den Berg told of when he worked with Gregorio Iriarte in setting up the Theological Education Institute in Cochabamba (ISET), a time in which he learned of his great ability to teach and help. (P. Miguel CORDOVA)

Canada-United States

NOTRE DAME DU CAP The doctor of the "bateyes"

Our Haitian colleague, Father Joseph CHARLES, presented with clarity and conviction, his work of seven years of research to the jury of the Faculty of Theology of Laval University in Quebec, which awarded him a Doctorate in Practical Theology. The thesis reviewers appreciated, besides his methodology, his on-site involvement, sometimes at the risk of his life, in those areas where slavery is still practiced today and where workers in large sugar plantations (the “bateyes”) are often rejected and returned to Haiti where they face even worse conditions than when they left due to a double exclusion. A group of Jesuits has set up at the border an organization for welcoming them and assisting in their rehabilitation, “Frontalyé Solidarity” (Border Solidarity); this served as the focus of analysis in his thesis.

Surrounded by a few colleagues, friends and Oblates, in a place of honor were his mother, his brother and two sisters, who came from Ouanaminthe, a town on the border with the Dominican Republic. They burst with pride and joy when the President, Robert Mager announced that Charles had successfully defended his thesis.

During all these years, Charles has participated at the same time, in the animation of pilgrims at the Shrine of Cap-de-la-Madeline, and has attracted Haitians in diaspora in the country by the thousands each year. For the next three years, he will be part of the regular staff of the Shrine, bringing his passion for “the most abandoned.” (*Bernard MÉNARD dans OMI INFO, septembre 2012*)

UNITED STATES Rebuilding Lives In New Orleans

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused death and destruction in the city of New Orleans. On the seventh anniversary of Katrina, August 29, 2012, Hurricane Isaac hit the city with wind and rain. The Oblates at the Shrine of St. Jude/ Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, adjacent to the famous French Quarter of the city, opened a shelter for over 50 persons affected by Issac. Scholastic Jesse ESQUEDA, in New Orleans for his pastoral internship, took over kitchen duties, cooking for the homeless guests. Welcoming them was the pastor of the parish, Fr. Tony RIGOLI, assisted by a former missionary to Haiti, Fr. John MORIN. This article tells about Fr. Tony's ministry.

For nearly ten years Fr. Tony Rigoli has been working to improve the lives of the poor in New Orleans. He is pastor at the Shrine of St. Jude/ Our Lady of Guadalupe. The parish has two identities. It is a landmark in the French Quarter that attracts tourists from around the world. But it is also a lifeline to New Orleans' poor, people who struggle with poverty and other hardships.

“I can't fix it all. I can only do what I can, and maybe it will provide a little hope for some people,” said Fr. Tony. “This is truly Oblate work here because we are caring for the most abandoned.”

Father Tony has been a member of the Oblate family all his life. He grew up in the Oblates' Holy Angels Parish in Buffalo, New York and was ordained a priest in May, 1972. He worked in a variety of parishes throughout the East and Midwest as well as serving as Vocation Director

for five years. In 2002 he was assigned to the Shrine of St. Jude in New Orleans.

Father Tony likes the diversity of people who come by the Shrine. Some are tourists who want to visit the oldest church building in New Orleans, dating back to 1826. Occasionally there are celebrities like award-winning singer Aaron Neville who credits the Shrine, and the Oblates, for getting his life back in order.

But most often the people who visit Fr. Tony are those in need of help. They include the homeless man who needs a place to stay, the pregnant woman who needs to see a doctor or the elderly lady who just needs someone to talk to about her difficulties. To help the needy Fr. Tony oversees the St. Jude Community Center. The center includes a homeless shelter for women and serves about 5,000 hot meals a month to the poor. In addition, each week about 400 food baskets are distributed to the needy.

“Everywhere you look, there’s another story. Everywhere you look there is someone else in need,” said Fr. Tony. “I thank God for all of the support we’ve received and I know we will need His help as we continue.”

To learn more about the work of the Oblates at St. Jude Shrine, visit www.judeshrine.com (www.omiusa.org)

NOTRE DAME DU CAP Celebrating with the Inuit

From July 26 through August 6, Rankin Inlet, a village of 3,500 inhabitants, most of them Inuit, celebrated its centennial, as well as the 25th anniversary of episcopal ordination of Bishop Reynald ROULEAU, ordained in that same village in 1987.

The first foundation in Inuit territory, by Fr. Arsène TURQUETIL, the first bishop, took place in 1912, at Chesterfield Inlet, at the time when the Inuit were still semi-nomads. Chesterfield has 300 inhabitants and is 25 minutes by plane to the north of Rankin, the mother-mission of 14 other missions of the diocese; the little house built in 1812 is preserved there.

The gathering began in Rankin. Three plane trips were needed to carry the group of 75 delegates to Chesterfield, on Sunday, July 29, to celebrate these two anniversaries with the local community: solemn Mass and blessing of the lake behind the mission; then the return to Rankin to continue the festivities.

There were days of witnessing in response to the question “How was the faith passed on to you?”. Almost all of the respondents belonging to the second generation of Christians attributed the passing on of the faith to their parents. Each day ended with the Eucharist at 7 p.m., with many songs, as is customary among the Inuit. To mark the centennial, the diocese issued a 2012 calendar with photos. One community had composed a long prayer, put to song and chanted at every Eucharist: “We are one in Jesus.” We had a windy and cold day with Mass and blessing of the land of their ancestors. Sister Dorica, MMF, presented a new project of the diocese to support couples, “catechists,” and the aging, begun under Bishop Omer ROBIDOUX: the Mikilaq center (the Inuit name of the late Lionel DUCHARME), founder of the mission in Arviat (Eskimo Point), for training future religious “leaders.” (Robert LECHAT in INFO IMO, Sept. 1, 2012)

UNITED STATES

Honorary degree for Brazilian missionary

On May 11, the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, conferred an honorary Doctor of Pastoral Leadership degree on Fr. William REINHARD, who, for over 40 years, has been part of the Oblate missionary endeavor in Brazil.

Fr. Reinhard stated that the honor really belongs to all the Oblate priests and brothers working in Brazil rather than to him individually.

Also receiving an honorary doctoral degree was Mrs. Patti Raddle, a former member of the San Antonio City Council, and currently a member the San Antonio Public Schools Board.

Father Ron ROLHEISER, President of OST, noted that both honorees were chosen specifically because they personify the Missionary Oblates

of Mary Immaculate charism of serving the poor wherever they are in the world. He referred to England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. "If you go into the guts of any of the major cities there where the police are afraid to go, you'll find the Oblates there, on the streets where they should be."

Father Reinhard expressed gratitude for the honor, but said the Oblates of Brazil "are a team, and each one has done many wonderful things for the poor." He has served in Brazil since 1969. "I was never arrested or tortured, but our cars were followed, our house phones were tapped by the political police, and we were watched -- the Oblates and the Dominicans. The military considered us dangerous people as a group."

Father Reinhard worked closely with His Eminence Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns, the archbishop of Sao Paulo. "Don Paulo had no fear whatsoever to stand up to the generals," he recalled.

"The state and municipal governments have money, but it gets siphoned off in corruption and directed to many other things; real needs like education, health care and public transportation are some of the last things they tend to; they're not top priorities," he explained.

Father Reinhard said missionaries help the poor to organize and demand their rights instead of simply asking for favors as is their established custom. "They're losing their fear of authority and demanding their rights; the authorities are afraid of losing their votes in the next election." (OST News, Summer 2012)

UNITED STATES

Respecting creation

In the 1997 *Vade Mecum on Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation*, the General Council of the Congregation gave life to the important priority of the Integrity of Creation. This marked one of the first times that this priority was identified and offered to the Congregation and identified as an important evolving dimension of our commitment to Justice and Peace ministry. This prophetic development would later be formally

integrated into the Constitutions and Rules by the General Chapter of 2004.

This priority was given life in the US province through the establishment of the Oblate Ecological Initiative in 2001 at the Oblate novitiate in Godfrey IL. The project had a twofold purpose. It consisted of the Ecological Learning Center and the La Vista Community Supported Garden.

The Ecological Learning Center organizes workshops, programs, retreats and rituals that are intended to awaken our hearts and minds to the gift and beauty of creation and to broaden our vision so as to appreciate the inter-relatedness and interdependence that are at the center of our life journey with all of God's people and a with all of creation. Each of these programs is guided by a spirit of inquiry, study and contemplation and is shared with others through a website and newsletter.

The Community Supported Agriculture project is organized through a shareholder concept that includes more than a hundred families, local food pantries, shelters and educational institutions. This project is committed to organic production, access to healthy and tasty food, and building a sustainable community. The province contributes more than five acres of land to this project and is an active participant on the board that governs the project.

Many other local Oblate communities have embraced this vision as well. They are committed to the "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" mantra that is part of the environmental resolution adopted by the provincial council in 2001; they participate in local CSA projects and integrate the commitment into their ministries. Most recently the Oblate Community in Washington DC decided to embrace and participate in an urban gardening project that is the dream of a small group of young people in northeast Washington. The community agreed to donate the use of some of their land to this effort. (Seamus FINN)

Prayers for our deceased

No. 66-75

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Chinnaparaj Adaikkalasamy	India	03/07/1969	Valispet	13/08/2012
Fr. Anton Hommer	Central European	05/01/1919	Borken	27/08/2012
Fr. Thomas Meyer	United States	04/08/1938	Belleville	06/09/2012
Fr. Antonio Bocchi	Indonesia	01/01/1940	Novara	08/09/2012
Fr. Hubert Sarrazin	France	22/11/1924	Marseille	09/09/2012
Fr. Leon Ledwon	Poland	07/04/1932	Gdańsk	10/09/2012
Bro. William Kelly	Anglo-Irish	25/09/1927	Inchicore	15/09/2012
Fr. Bernard Brault	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	03/02/1927	Richelieu	21/09/2012
Fr. René Vermeire	Belgium/Holland	21/07/1921	Oostduinkerke	22/09/2012
Fr. Hermann-Josef Esser	Central European	03/08/1933	Oberesch	22/09/2012

“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)

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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
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