



A “new beginning” in Aix

On February 21, 2013, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, the Superior General, officially inaugurated the new apostolic community at the birthplace of the Congregation. He spoke to an assembly of Oblates and other members of the Mazenodian family.

It is a very special moment to be here with you at this time. I am here to install Father Saverio Zampa as the new Superior and to bless you as an apostolic community. It is a new beginning for this key community in the Congregation and we are filled with joy. This is the fruit of many years work and the reflection of many Oblates since the time of the previous General Administration. We have committed ourselves to preserve this house as a center of animation for the Oblate charism and as a center of missionary labor both within these walls of the Mission Chapel and outside in the city of Aix.

I am grateful to Father Yves Chalvet-de-Récy, Provincial of the Oblates of France, and his Council for the close cooperation with the General Administration in making this transition possible and smooth. I would like to remember with gratitude so many Oblates who have ministered here throughout its history, especially those in recent years when the transition began. I am deeply indebted to the Oblates who stayed here in the interim, especially Father Jean-Pierre Caloz, until the new community members arrived. Brother Benoit is to be especially recognized and thanked for the crucial role and heavy responsibilities he has had during this long transition period. I am grateful to the members of the Central Government, Fathers Paolo Archiati, Chicho Rois, Rufus Whitley and Marc Dessureault who generously gave themselves to bring this project to fruition along with Mr. Bertrand Morard and other professional people who assisted us.

A special word of thanks has to be said to each of you, the new members of this community. I am grateful to you, Father Saverio Zampa, Brother Benoit Dosquet, Father Joseph Bois and Father Joseph La Belle for your generous availability and daring spirits to come to Aix for this project. Each of you brings many fruitful years of Oblate life and mission to enrich this Oblate community of 60 cours Mirabeau as it begins a new chapter of its history. I also want to express my gratitude to your Provinces of origin for their support when I called you to come here.

I am grateful also to you, our close friends, the Mazenodian Family. Your interest, support and prayer express in a deep way our unity in the charism of Saint Eugene. He counted on lay men and women right from the beginning of his missionary involvement. This relationship has a long history and we hope that it continues to our mutual enrichment. Brother Benoit has told me how much work you have done during the remodeling of 60 cours Mirabeau. Thank you so much!

Indeed, this is an evening of gratitude! It is especially good to give thanks to God who has moved so many people to bring about this new beginning for the Oblate community of Aix. I would like to remember some words written by our former Superior General, Father Jetté: *“Eugene de Mazenod felt this need for community living right from the beginning of his little Society; he established life in common even before he required the religious life. He saw it as essential and that for two reasons: as a support and stimulus in our effort to be saints and as a means of stability and efficacy in our missionary activity. He did not intend to group together a number of freelancers: he wanted to establish a*

real corps – an elite body, - a community of priests and Brothers who are able to live together under the same program and to work together in the Lord's vineyard" (**O.M.I. The Apostolic Man**, by Fernand Jetté, O.M.I., 1992, pp. 53-54).

In light of Father Jetté's words, I would like this community to help each of you become saints and to serve as the base for an efficacious mission: animating the Oblate charism; ministering from the Mission Chapel; and discerning other future missionary activity. Your life in common must be characterized by a deep communion with Jesus Christ and likewise a deep communion among you. This communion is never a closed or inward-looking reality. Our communion of life is "*the means of stability and efficacy*" for mission, to reach out in service and to announce the Gospel to the poor and abandoned. I am convinced that if you live the mandate of charity given us by the Founder, you will be fired with missionary zeal. Let all your activities flow from a united community that seeks God's will today and discerns, reflects, discusses, plans, evaluates together. This will be a prophetic call to the Congregation and society.

I have a special relationship with you. I am called to be the successor of Saint Eugene at this time in our history and to establish this community under the General Administration. Just as Saint Eugene was so connected to the first group of Oblates here, I want to be close to you to support you, encourage you and love you. Perhaps the first community at Aix found such a connection with Eugene de Mazenod a bit overwhelming! But I think you know what I mean. I will pray every day for you and at Oraison I will be specially united to you.

We are preparing for the Bicentennial of our Congregation in 2016. It is an important time for us to continue to respond to the 2010 Chapter "Call to Conversion." The community of Aix and the Central Government, sparing no effort, must work close together so that all who seek to live the Oblate charism will hear and respond to the call that "*we are in need of a profound personal and community conversion to Jesus Christ.*"

I bless this community for the missionary

generosity with which each of you has come. I bless you for your love for the Congregation and the Oblate charism. I bless you for your desire to live De Mazenodian charity and zeal, to be nothing less than saints. I bless you and pray that the Founder's passion for Jesus Christ, for the Church and for the poor will burn in your hearts.

At the end of a talk we have a custom of remembering Our Lady. I dedicate this community to Mary Immaculate, "*Mother of our apostolic community,*" and pray that she may be among you as she was among the disciples gathered in the Cenacle at Pentecost. Her presence invites us to "*...personal intimacy with Jesus..., to care for one another as brothers and to love the people to whom we are sent to proclaim the Good News*" (Witnessing as Apostolic Community"# 45).

The Church is living two great ecclesial events at this time which I would like to remember as we begin this community in Aix because they are very connected to us as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: the Year of Faith and the New Evangelization. I recall the depth and beauty of our Constitutions and Rules which consider Mary as "*the model of the Church's faith and our own*" (C10). This short phrase links our journey of faith with Mary. This community, inspired by Mary, will assist Oblates and others to deepen their faith and develop their relationship with Jesus the Savior, the basis for the mission of evangelization.

The theme of New Evangelization evokes Pope Paul VI's precious reference to Mary: "May she be the Star of the evangelization ever renewed which the Church, docile to her Lord's command, must promote and accomplish, especially in these times which are difficult but full of hope!"(EN 82). Yes, we are graced to live in a challenging and fascinating period. We are filled with hope. Under Mary's tender protection, this community and its mission will nourish and renew the faith of all who come here and spark the passion for mission and evangelization in our challenging times.

Mary Immaculate, Mother of our Apostolic Community, pray for us!

Thank you for receiving me so warmly.

General Administration

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

Celebrating a new community

On Thursday evening, February 22, I gave the obediences to all the members of the new Oblate community in Aix en Provence in a simple and very beautiful ceremony prepared by Father Saverio ZAMPA. The Oblates who make up the community at Centre International de Mazenod are: Father Joseph BOIS (originally from the Province of France); Brother Benoît DOSQUET (also from the Province of France); Father Joseph LABELLE (from the U.S. Province); and Father Saverio Zampa (from the Mediterranean Province). At this same time I installed Saverio as the new superior of the community. I am very grateful to the Provincials of these Provinces who have generously worked together with me to free up these men for Aix.

The ceremony was in the Oblate chapel at 60 Cours Mirabeau. There were about fifty lay people present who are closely associated to the Oblates and known as the “Famille Mazenodienne.” This was a celebration of gratitude and joy for an historic moment, the beginning of this Oblate community under the General Administration. There are many people who have worked on this project from the previous administration right up to the present and I am very grateful to everyone who helped to make this happen.

During the celebration, the Oblates received their obediences and renewed their vows. Together with the lay people present, we consecrated our lives to Mary Immaculate. The evening concluded

with a reception in which I met many of the “Famille Mazenodienne” who are lay people close to the Oblates including some relatives of the Founder. They have been an immense help to us during this time of transition. Throughout the reception I was pleased to hear how happy the laity are now because the community is in place. Once again, there is a lively Oblate community presence in the house.

I had the opportunity to spend four days with the community. Three days were spent in a very rich time of reflection, sharing and prayer among the four Oblates and me. This new community is an important commitment for the General Administration and a special missionary outreach to the entire Congregation and to lay people associated with the charism. On the last day I was there, Friday the 22nd, I was given a tour of the house to see the work that has been done and is to yet be completed. It is expected that the renovations will be finished by mid to end of April. There is a beautiful simplicity to the renovations and the materials and colors chosen create a serene atmosphere.

After seeing the work done in the house, we went to Marseille for a visit to the tomb of Saint Eugene to dedicate this new beginning to his care. Gathered around his tomb we read his well-known homily for the First Sunday of Lent, 1813, had a time for prayer and sang the Salver Regina. We prayed for the future of this community and for the Congregation throughout the world. (Louis LOUGEN, Superior General)

Asia-Oceania

AUSTRALIA

Honoring a medical pioneer

Dr. Evelyn Billings, who died on February 16, was an Australian doctor and devout Catholic who grew up on a farm and was the mother of nine children, she was also famous, alongside her husband, Dr. John Billings, for teaching what they termed the “Billings Method” of natural fertility regulation and for founding

in 1978 the World Organization Ovulation Methods Billings (WOOMB).

Oblate Fr. Joseph HATTIE (OMI Lacombe Province) a close friend of Evelyn’s, or “Dr. Lyn” as she was known around the world, wrote the homily for her funeral Mass. In it he describes how Dr. Billings “was called to join her husband in a special apostolate to married couples and families” in which “she saw clearly the truth

of the good that would bring conjugal happiness and other benefits to married couples". For half a century the Billings travelled the world together, including Communist China, giving presentations and workshops about the Billings Ovulation Method, in order to help couples end their reliance on methods of artificial contraception, to trust in God to look after their family and to follow the laws of their own natural fertility. Dr. Lyn passionately believed that "This is the knowledge of her body that every woman should have."

Fr. Hattie related many stories of her zeal in following up opportunities to help women understand their bodies and how to space their families. Once she taught her method to an Israeli woman who was doing the security check on her baggage before she left Israel. She also taught the method to Blessed Mother Teresa's nuns for the benefit of poor couples in the slums of Calcutta, and also to the first 20 women obstetricians and gynecologists in China – a country with an appallingly harsh record when it comes to babies and family life. Joan Clements, director of WOOMB, has pointed out that in China, where the Billings trained thousands to teach their method, "A substantial drop in the abortion rate has been attributed to their work." (By Francis Phillips, originally printed in the *Catholic Herald*. www.catholicherald.co.uk)

INDIA

Reawakening of Faith in the 21st century

"To preach the Good News to the poor" is the motto of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In order to carry out the motto of our Congregation, St. Eugene Province of India came forward to take up a rural mission at Thataiyangarpet in the diocese of Kumbakonnam, separated from the mother parish of Musiri. The Thataiyangarpet mission consists of six substations.

Some 98% of the people of this mission are Dalits. Because they are Christians, they are denied the rights and facilities that the non-Christian Dalits enjoy from the government. The main occupation of the people is agriculture. Many of the people do not own any land.

Politically, they need to be conscientized to dare to take up leadership because they have been suppressed by the upper caste Hindus for many years. Education is the only way to lead them out of the shackles of oppression.

The people are very much devoted to Mother Mary. Every year the devotees go to Vellankanni (Shrine of Our Lady of Health) on foot. Due to the long distance, a lack of buses and a small Catholic population, the people did not have regular Masses but they themselves at times gather for prayer in their churches and recite the rosary and say some vocal prayers. As our Founder worked to reawaken the faith which was diminishing due to the French Revolution, so too the T.Pet mission is to be reawakened in their faith. We the Oblates have been given the right and apt mission to carry out the mission of our Founder St. Eugene in this 21st century.

Fr. Maria RAJAN and Bro. Bharat, a regent, are the pioneers in this mission. On 17 June 2012, the Oblates were introduced to the people after a grand Eucharistic celebration in Valaieduppu. Fr. Maria Rajan and the regent pitched their tent among the people in T.Pet. They go for house visits to know them and to make themselves known to the people. The parish consists of 99 families scattered through the various substations.

We have started an instruction center for the children in Valaieduppu. The children show much interest in coming in the morning as well as in the evening. The liturgical celebrations have been regularized to cater to the spiritual needs of the people.

On 13 January 2013, Bishop Antony Samy blessed the renovated Church of Our Lady of Good Health in the presence of Fr. Francis NALLAPPAN, Provincial. Several Oblates, diocesan priests and sisters from neighbouring parishes were present to witness the event. The tabernacle was blessed and the Blessed Sacrament was installed during the grand Eucharistic celebration. Once the paper work is completed, this place will be officially declared a parish. (*Born*, January 2013)

COLOMBO**An “old Roman” tells his story**

“All roads lead to Rome” is still true as it was in the time of the Caesars. One of the most cosmopolitan cities of the world, Rome also reflects the universality of the Church that embraces all cultures and peoples. As Fr. Shivantha WAAS discovered, the immense cultural mosaic of the Eternal City is an amazingly enriching and rewarding experience

It was during my AIT programme that I was told of the wish of the province to send me to Rome to continue my studies; and with fear and joy I accepted that offer. From the day I arrived in Rome on 29 June, 2008, I encountered many enriching experiences and challenges which I believe have prepared me for my future mission as an Oblate.

First of all, being at the heart of the Church and that of the Congregation, I learnt much about these two institutes and began to love them better, seeing their qualities which are both beautiful and less beautiful. The universality of the Church, gathering around her Head, the Pope, was an amazing experience, as was participating in glorious liturgies at the Vatican. The awareness of the vastness of our Congregation and its missionary zeal still ardently burning in different parts of the world was a discovery I made by encountering many Oblate missionaries and by closely associating with the General Administration and other services of the Congregation. My experiences of religious life and the community living were also enriched by the opportunities and challenges encountered in the International Roman Scholasticate. The community was truly international, with scholastics and formators coming from four continents and from different cultural backgrounds.

For me, coming out of the Island for the first time, this was a totally new experience. It also gave me the chance to know the diversity in our world. Besides knowing different people and having friends from all over the world, I could read the differences among peoples and

their characteristics, and also get an idea of how even the concept of “Oblate life/mission” and “formation” differ from one to the other. This was a real challenge for me, as it is for all of us, to come together with our own differences and to build a community. But with all these challenges, I could say, that we built one of the most beautiful communities I have ever lived.

The time spent in Europe has also given me the opportunity to have many other unique experiences. I was blessed to participate at the special programme for the preparation of final vows, in Aix-en-Provence, organized by the formation committee for Europe, visiting the important places in the life of our Founder and of the beginning of our Congregation. I also got the chance to work for two weeks at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes as a volunteer. I served at the 35th General Chapter; I participated in a youth mission with Oblate preachers of the Italian province; I took part at the World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid. I served at the beatification celebration of the Oblate Martyrs of Spain, and I served the Pope at Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes at St. Peter’s Basilica.

Studying at the Pontifical Gregorian University also gave me ample opportunities to meet the world, especially going deeper into the world’s sociopolitical reality, as I was also studying for the licentiate in sociology in the Social Sciences Faculty of the university. It was very enriching to be with people coming from different parts of the world and to discuss social issues in the small class groups organized in the faculty. On the other hand, being with the Sri Lankan migrant community, I was able to have a better look at the reality of the world of the migrants, which was the main subject matter of my final thesis of the licentiate. (*Convergence*, Colombo Province, January-March 2013)

JAFFNA**A heartbreaking video**

The old saying, “A picture is worth ten thousand words,” is especially true of a video produced by CRADA, the Centre for Rehabilitation of Alcoholics and Drug Addicts, in Mannar, Sri

Lanka. The director of the Centre is Fr. Vincent PATRICK, a member of the Oblate province's provincial council.

The short film is called "Viddil Poochi" and although there are a few words spoken in Tamil, the pictures themselves are capable move one to tears. The plot is totally clear simply from the filming and the editing. The brief video shows the devastation the abuse of alcohol can cause in one poor family. The mother and children suffer greatly because of the father's addiction to alcohol. Words are not needed to show their suffering and their sorrow. The film can be found on YouTube at <http://goo.gl/QD1L9>.

CRADA has two objectives – the prevention of alcoholism and drug addiction and the reformation of those who have fallen victim to these two vices. It helps people with a problem to recover

from the effects of addiction and remain sober by detoxification through medical and psychosocial care when they are experiencing withdrawal symptoms. It also supports the formation of "self-help groups" such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Al Anon, Al Teen, etc.

This ministry to alcoholics was initiated in 2006 as a separate diocesan ministry by Bishop Rayappu Joseph of Mannar, with Fr. Patrick as its director. The bishop named the institution THIRUPUMUNAI (Turning Point). The bishop entrusted the ministry to the Jaffna Province in 2009. Hundreds of addicts have resumed their normal lives through medical care or counseling or both. Programmes on the ill effects of substance abuse and alcoholism have brought about radical changes in society. There are especially programmes that target youth with a message of temperance.

Africa-Madagascar

ZAMBIA

Reaching out to another diocese

For the first time since its inception, the Oblate Youth Outreach (OYO), took place in the Livingstone Diocese from 8 to 12 December, 2012, at St. Joseph's Parish in Mukuni. As Oblates in the Zambia Delegation, we are now serving and ministering in Shangombo district under the leadership of Bishop Raymond Mpezele, in the diocese of Livingstone.

In the past years, the OYO was always conducted in the diocese of Mongu and at Mary Immaculate parish in the Archdiocese of Lusaka. At that time, the OYO programme focused on Oblate parishes until 2007 when we saw an opportunity for evangelization that extended to include other parishes in the diocese. From that time onwards, this has been the ideal for our Oblate Youth Outreach in our commitment to youth ministry and bringing young people to Christ.

The 2012 OYO was conducted by five Oblate scholastic brothers under the guidance of Fr. Chibwe TEMBO, who is the co-coordinator of youth ministry in the Zambia Delegation. The

gathering hosted over seventy-five participants from five different parishes within the diocese.

The theme for this year was: "Youth deepening your faith in Christ". The theme is in line with the year 2012-2013 Roman Catholic Church theme declared by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, as a year of faith.

The OYO theme was subdivided into different topics such as: "Planted and Rooted in Jesus Christ;" "Self-awareness, Christian Faith and Culture;" "the call of God goes beyond our Personalities;" and "Justice and Peace / Reconciliation." The OYO programme included prayers, talks, reflections entertainment and sports.

The Zambia Delegation Superior, Fr. Freeborn KIBOMBWE, celebrated Mass on the second last day of the OYO. Bishop Mpezele closed the 2012 OYO with the celebration of the Eucharist.

It was successful programme in the midst of challenges such as alcohol, poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS and early pregnancies which are prevalent among the youth. Other challenges we observed are high rates of domestic violence, broken

families and brutality in families. Above these challenges, we observed that there is need to create awareness of reconciliation.

On one of the days' programme, we invited different religious congregations to speak to the youth on the values of religious, married and single life. However, it was saddening to hear the negative aspect some of the youth had towards religious life. In one of the groups, I was shocked when one female youth questioned whether or not religious life offers hope at all. This may sound unreasonable to some of us, but I believe there are many young people who express similar sentiments. On the other hand, I believe this arises from the fact that we are confronted with many challenges and sufferings caused by

acts of selfishness. As Christians and as people of God, called to the mission of evangelization and vocation animation, we need to take into account the need for reconciliation so as to stand by the youth.

In order for the Church to be a sign of hope to these many challenges, the young people are facing, we need to emphasize the need for reconciliation and justice, especially for the poorest and the vulnerable. In my opinion, reconciliation should always remain a point of reference in evangelizing youth. I hope and believe as religious people, we will find an effective means to bring healing for many young people who are undergoing difficult times. (By Sch. Bro. Cornhill Nahonge MWALA)

Europe

GERMANY

Reaching out to newcomers

In an Upper Swabian town near the border of Bavaria, an extraordinary and innovative project of collaboration with developing countries is taking shape, thanks to a steering committee chaired by Oblate Fr. Alfred TOENNIS, under the auspices of the Piuspflege (*Pius Care*) Foundation.

The committee is busy turning a Piuspflege building complex in Oggelsbeuren into a future-oriented project. The committee's hope is to turn what were once an orphanage and then a rehabilitation center for addicts into a residence for refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers and individuals in similar circumstances.

The local citizens would be invited to volunteer their services as guides and mentors to these newcomers, helping them integrate into their new situation. This cooperative system would thus provide enrichment not only for the newcomers but also for the local population and its institutions.

Father Toennis is known for his talents in organizational development and the initiation of foundations as well as for new and creative concepts in spiritual guidance and counseling.

ROMANIA

A significant presence

In February, Fr. Alberto GNEMMI, provincial of the Mediterranean Province, visited the province's mission in Romania. In his letter to all the members of the province, he described the current situation of the mission.

The mission is composed of a single community of four Oblates (Frs. Sante RONCHI, superior of the mission; Elio FILARDO, Damian CIMPOEȘU and Lucian BOSOI). They live in Maracineni, a small town of about 5,000 inhabitants, 8 km from the big city of Pitesti (200,000 inhabitants, some 120 km from the capital, Bucharest) in southern Romania.

The religious community is a significant presence of the Church in the Deanery of Craiova (a pastoral region of the large Diocese of Bucharest), where Catholics are about 0.25% of the population. The charismatic identity and the missionary thrust of our men enrich the ecclesial reality and stimulate a new way of living the Christian life while identifying new avenues of ministry.

Community life is marked by a serene fraternal life, with regular moments of prayer and sharing in every aspect of domestic life. Morning Prayer,

the Eucharist and oraison are great moments of support for the spiritual life of the community, as well as the preparation of meals, housekeeping and the care of the property.

Pastoral activity is shared in a spirit of great corresponsibility. Among the activities, significant is the pastoral animation and sacramental ministry in the parish of Pitesti, especially through the celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and other days. Noteworthy is the ministry of our men in animating what is called “St. Anthony Tuesdays”: throughout the whole year on this day of the week, the Eucharist is celebrated after which are addressed to the saint certain devotions. Many of the faithful participate in the celebration, mostly Orthodox, devoted to the Portuguese preacher. It might appear to be a less important experience, but it shows how the faith of the people, the faith of the simple folks, is not an unimportant experience for realizing ecumenism among Christians.

As the only male religious community of the deanery of Craiova, the Fathers are invited to preach in parishes. Against the background of

their missionary activity, there is a spirit of true ecumenism. In this regard, it is surprising that the Oblates, especially during the summer, can do the animation of summer camps for children, adolescents and the very young, where the majority of the participants of the Orthodox faith.

Particular attention is paid to the poor who present themselves to the community. Until a few years ago, when a part of the population lived in poverty, this was more common: the community, thanks to a well-stocked clothing depository, has helped many poor people in the area who saw in the “Saint Eugene Monastery” a place of welcome and solidarity.

In describing Oblate missionary life, there is also a commitment to preserve and identify close relationships with the people they meet or who live in the neighboring areas of the community, especially with families and young people, either Catholic or Orthodox. The Oblates also offer useful assistance in the ministry of popular missions in Italy: recently, Fr. Bosoi participated in the mission in Saint-Vincent (Aosta) and Fr. Filardo, on the island of Ponza (Latina).

Canada-United States

UNITED STATES

Toward regional cooperation in formation

For many years, all of the formators and vocation directors of the United States Province have annually met in late winter to discuss common concerns and to lend support to one another in their ministry. The 2013 meeting was rather historic because for the first time, the Oblates responsible for the vocation apostolate in Canada joined their confreres in the USA.

On March 6-7, some 23 Oblates came together at the novitiate in Godfrey, Illinois, to begin discussions on how to expand regional cooperation in formation/vocation ministry in the Canada-United States Region. Besides the formators and vocation directors from the United States Province, there were also representatives from Notre-Dame-du-Cap, OMI Lacombe and Assumption provinces in Canada.

The discussions were filled with hope for future collaboration in formation and vocation ministry, including the eventual establishment of a regional formation committee, possibly after the model of what is already occurring in other regions of the Congregation. Further study and discussion with the regional conference (CROCUS) will be needed, but the Godfrey meeting was a good first step in a direction mandated by the Constitutions and Rules (R.123c) and encouraged by recent General Chapters, namely to consider ways for more regional cooperation in formation.

Currently, the United States Province operates four houses of formation: prenovitiates in Buffalo, New York, and Tijuana, Mexico (Mission of Baja California); the novitiate in Godfrey, Illinois (currently with novices from the United States, Zambia and OMI Lacombe); the scholasticate in San Antonio, Texas (with scholastics from Assumption, OMI Lacombe,

the United States, Zambia and Mexico). The recent meeting included a discussion of the possibility of eventually having a regional house of formation in Canada.

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP

Moving the body of Fr. Lelièvre

Fr. Lelièvre now rests in the Saint Charles cemetery of Quebec.

In a move that had its emotional moments, the body of Father Victor LELIÈVRE was taken to the St. Charles cemetery. Given the fact that the cause of Father Lelièvre has been introduced in Rome at the Congregation of Saints, it took various approvals, ecclesial and canonical, and a meticulous procedure was followed so that everything transpired in a manner consistent with the requirements of the law and respect for his memory.

Along the way, the cortege stopped at the church of Saint-Sauveur for a brief liturgy of the Word. This very symbolic moment was much appreciated and very significant since Father Lelièvre spent many years at this place, years of intense ministry and preaching that are now part of history. Throughout this process, we could count on the exceptional collaboration of all interested parties in the Archdiocese of Quebec. [See a video in French: <http://vimeo.com/59986463>] (INFO OMI, 14 March 2013)

OMI LACOMBE

What a geographical coincidence!

Francis Lopez was very surprised that he would end up as an Oblate associate. He originates from a small village very close to Aix en Provence, Southern France. He knows the town of our Oblate roots and attended school in this town as a boy. In 1963, he and his newly married wife immigrated to Canada, to a country that he hardly knew anything about.

His acquaintance with the Oblates was haphazard. When he was working as a welder in Norman Well, NWT, he heard that there was a priest working as a labourer on the crew. This was an unfamiliar situation for someone who grew

up in France. It turned out to be an Oblate, Fr. Felix LABAT. Now they both live in St. Albert, Alberta. "He told me a few stories about the Oblates and that their founder came from Aix en Provence." It was with pride that he told Fr. Labat, "I was born and raised in that region."

Francis appreciates his connection as an associate. He describes his time with the Oblate community as an oasis in the desert. "I do not have much to say but what others say helps me. It is big [for me]! This is something I do not find anywhere else. This just strengthens me. The oraison and the sharing in silence strengthen me. It is so powerful."

Francis came to share in the Oblate charism through his concern for his fellow human being. With his wife, he had established a small business, a deli, in one of the Edmonton malls. It was there that he learned of the difficulties of people having insufficient resources to care for themselves. After sharing his concerns with his parish priest, he was sent to the Marian Center. The next step was to attend a meeting of concerned persons. One step lead to another and he began to be very involved in the foundation and the operation of the Food Bank.

When Francis discovered that he was the youngest person working at the Food Bank he knew that he had to go out and bring in First Nations people and young adults. He successfully recruited a young twenty year old, Gerard Kennedy, who became the first director of the Food Bank. This young man brought many other young adults to become involved in the Food Bank.

Francis' concern for social justice was not limited to the city of Edmonton. On home visits to France, he promoted the idea of the food bank within that country. He also was very involved with trying to bring food relief after an earthquake in Mexico City some years ago. This food project which originated in Toronto caused many difficulties with local officials in Mexico because of the corruption.

Francis truly has a worldwide heart. He speaks of his involvement in trying to establish an

agricultural co-op in El Salvador after the horrendous mud slides in 2001. To establish such a cooperative with farmers, it was necessary to raise money and obtain the necessary resources. This was never to be a charitable handout but was meant to establish a sustaining project that would help these small farmers rebuild their own houses and farms. The final step was to move the farmers into growing coffee which would be a

cash crop in that country. It would be then that this cooperative would its goal of becoming a self-sustaining way of life.

Francis identifies with the charism of St. Eugene. It is with open hands that he too reaches out to serve the poor. "Working with the food bank is working with the poor!" (By Nestor GREGOIRE, in www.omilacombe.ca)

Anniversaries for May 2013

75 Years of religious life

1938.05.11	07254	Bro. Robert Raymond	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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70 Years of religious life

1943.05.17	07618	Fr. Rosaire Langelier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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70 Years of priesthood

1943.05.09	06797	Mgr. Georges-Hilaire Dupont	Cameroun
1943.05.09	06736	Fr. Joseph Firtion	France

65 Years of religious life

1948.05.06	08998	Bro. Urbain Mailhot	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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60 Years of religious life

1953.05.01	10094	Bro. Eugène Caillet	France
1953.05.11	09452b	Fr. Werner Rörig	Central European
1953.05.13	09629	Fr. Kevin Davine	Australia
1953.05.31	09454	Fr. Teodoro Pfeifer	Mexico
1953.05.31	09450	Fr. Cornelius Scanlan	United States
1953.05.31	09456	Fr. Harry Schuckenbrock	United States

60 Years of priesthood

1953.05.23	08451	Fr. Eric Boule	Natal
1953.05.26	08497	Fr. Joseph Menker	United States

50 Years of religious life

1963.05.01	11509	Fr. Josef Cramer	Central European
1963.05.01	11392	Fr. Johannes Krasenbrink	Central European
1963.05.01	11393	Fr. Klaus Söhnle	Central European
1963.05.31	11403	Fr. Herman P. Fernando	Colombo
1963.05.31	11523	Fr. Luis Sabarre	Argentina-Chile
1963.05.31	11405	Fr. Jacob Thiruchelvam	Colombo

50 Years of priesthood

1963.05.31	10203	Fr. James Flavin	United States
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25 Years of religious life

1988.05.21	13166	Fr. Navarro Jr. Matas	Philippines
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25 Years of priesthood

1988.05.06	12771	Fr. Christopher Richmond	Natal
1988.05.13	12775	Fr. Armando Gomes	Anglo-Irish
1988.05.21	12684	Fr. Luis Ignacio Rois	General Administration
1988.05.28	11601	Fr. Emilien Nadeau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1988.05.28	12722	Fr. Ronald Young	United States

Prayers for our deceased**No. 19-25**

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Lucien Vandemaele	Belgium/Holland	18/08/1930	Waregem	07/03/2013
Fr. Rogatien Papion	France	10/01/1921	Lyon	13/03/2013
Fr. Józef Leszczyński	Poland	03/08/1942	Inowrocław	17/03/2013
Fr. Piotr Czynry	Cameroun	27/04/1950	Garoua	17/03/2013
Fr. Stanisław Wódz	France/Benelux	09/01/1949	Noeux les Mines	17/03/2013
Fr. Nicola DeCicco	Mediterranean	21/11/1920	Maddaloni	18/03/2013
Fr. Winfried Deing	Namibia	30/11/1938	Windhoek	19/03/2013

“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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