



Father General visits Bangladesh

On the Feast of the Visitation, I was “blessed and sent” by the community of the General House for my fraternal visit to the Oblates of the Delegation of Bangladesh from June 1 - 9. The Delegation began in 1973 and presently has thirty-eight Oblates working in four dioceses. I met and spoke with each Oblate presently in the country and visited most of the missions and the two houses of formation. I participated in liturgies, meetings and meals with Oblates, co-workers, Sisters, lay people, priests, Brothers and bishops. I was happy that Fr. Rohan SILVA, Provincial of Colombo Province, joined me for several days.

The Church in Bangladesh is a very close and strong community of faith. Many of the religious men and women, diocesan priests, laity and bishops know one another and work together. I found a good spirit of collaboration and friendship among them. Wherever I went, these friends in ministry expressed their appreciation and admiration for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as real missionaries.

My very first impression is that our brother Oblates in Bangladesh are very close to the poor. Our missionary outreach takes into account important dimensions of the life of the poor: sacraments, catechesis, prayer, health, education, culture, housing and land, etc. We collaborate with several congregations of religious women in our missions and the concern for education and health is always a central part of our ministry. While interreligious dialogue in a formal way is a challenge yet to be achieved because of suspicions and fears about our motivation, life itself happens interreligiously all the time where we are a small minority and yet serve everyone without distinction.

Several Oblates are directors of schools and others are involved in teaching. Together with religious women and lay people, education is making a significant impact on the lives of the poor who formerly had only a weak education or no opportunity at all to study. In one school I had the privilege of invoking a holiday for the children because of the visit of Father General. Even though the OMI Headmaster announced this good news in Bengali, I knew what he said immediately as 500 children began jumping up and down, clapping hands and shouting with delight!

In one of the missions which began about four years ago, there was at first much suspicion, reluctance and hostility to our arrival and the establishment of a mission. The opinion was that the Oblates were coming just to convert others. Now, after four years, the local people have an excellent school, a health clinic under construction and other forms of assistance no matter what religion they profess. In fact, the people say the mission is doing more for them than the local civil and religious authorities. The Oblates have created a rapport and frequently meet with the people, most of whom are of another faith tradition, to tell them what is happening in the mission and to ask them about their needs. Trust and openness have greatly replaced fear and suspicion.

The capital city, Dhaka, suffered severe flooding in May and our scholastics' residence too was under a foot of water. The nearby Oblate church remained dry and safe and the Oblates opened it to the people of the neighborhood. Families were happy that everyone could find refuge there, a dry place to live and sleep, until the water subsided from their homes. They found in the Oblates,

who made no distinction about anyone's religion, a warm welcome. They were surprised that all were welcome into a church when their own places of worship do not allow this.

Tribal peoples, generally found living in remote and hilly areas, are often victims of the expansion of society encroaching on their land. The taking of their land by others signifies the death of their way of life and their livelihood. For many years Oblates of Mary Immaculate in our various pastoral centers are joining the tribal peoples in their struggle to defend the right to their land and their way of life. Lay leaders and Oblates have experienced threats and have been in danger because of their commitment to the tribal people.

Each day the Oblates live the reality of societal/religious tensions and wonder if the future will bring greater control and persecution. There are daily challenges to pastoral ministry and ordinary life such as the distances, roads, vehicles, electrical outages, climate, etc. The question

of financially sustaining the mission and the missionaries is always a concern. Yet, there they are, in the midst of the poor, living a simple life and sharing many of the same privations. The spirit of the Oblates is one of dedication and joy even in the midst of uncertainty and challenges.

We are blessed to have vocations and presently there are four scholastics in the country; five making their novitiate in Sri Lanka; thirty-five young men finishing different levels of high school and college in the Juniorate with about 23 more soon to enter. When I met the retired archbishop of Dhaka, he told me that in the early 1970's he had written to many religious congregations asking for missionaries. We were the only congregation who responded and soon nine Oblates were sent. His gratitude to the Oblates continues and he acknowledged our significant contribution to the Church.

I am very grateful to Father Dilip SARKAR, Superior, and all the Oblates of the Delegation, for making my visit such a good one.

Holy See

VATICAN

Oblate named Prefect Apostolic

On 24 June 2013, the Pope Francis named Fr. Mario LEÓN as Apostolic Prefect of Western Sahara. Until now, he has been serving as the Administrator of that same Apostolic Prefecture since the retirement of his predecessor, Fr. Acacio VALBUENA (†2011).

Born in 1974 in Spain, Fr. Mario became an Oblate of Mary Immaculate in 1996 and was ordained a priest in 2001.

The Apostolic Prefecture of Spanish Sahara and Ifni was erected in 1954 by Pope Pius XII. The name was changed to Western Sahara in 1976 during the mandate of its first Apostolic Prefect, Fr. Félix ERVITI (†2000).

The focus of the Oblate ministry there is primarily with a variable population of about 300 Catholics in Western Sahara. All of them are foreigners, many of them employees of the UN mission.

Based in L'Aayoune, there are two Oblates: the new Apostolic Prefect and Fr. Valère EKO, a Congolese. It is a mission of the Mediterranean Province. "We want to serve as a bridge to the people in their local cultures. We invest much time in this dialogue," said Fr. Mario. "We must learn from each other, even though we Christians are very few."

VATICAN

New Oblate bishop in Lesotho

On 19 June 2013, the Pope named as Bishop of the Diocese of Qacha's Nek (Lesotho) Father Joseph Mopeli SEPHAMOLA, O.M.I., Provincial Superior of the Oblates in Lesotho.

Father Joseph Mopeli Sephamola was born in 14 March 1960, in the parish of St. Francis Mission in Tsoelike Ha Atali, diocese of Qacha's Nek. In 1983, he was admitted to the novitiate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate; on 6 January 1984, he made his first religious profession and he final vows in 1989. After having completed his studies

of philosophy and theology (1984-1990), he was ordained a priest on 27 April 1991.

After his priestly ordination, he had the following assignments: 1991-2000: Missionary in Zambia; 2001-2003: scholasticate in Roma (Lesotho); 2004-2008: Master of Novices at Villa Maria, Quthing, Qacha's Nek; 2009-2011: studies in spirituality in South Africa. Since July 2011, he has been the provincial of the Oblates in Lesotho.

He succeeds Bishop Evaristus Thatho Bitsoane who died in 2011. With this appointment, all of the active bishops and one retired archbishop in Lesotho are Oblates. The country has three dioceses and one archdiocese.

The Diocese of Qacha's Nek was established in 1961. In 2010, of the 395,000 inhabitants, 49.5% of them were Roman Catholics.

VATICAN

The Pope launches "Missio", an "App" created by an Oblate

Fides News is available in eight languages, even on an "app" for smartphones, called "Missio",

which can be downloaded for free. The service was inaugurated by Pope Francis during the Audience with the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies and with the staff of Fides Agency, on May 17, at the Vatican. Pope Francis clicked on an iPad, launching the application, created by Fr. Andrew SMALL, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States.

The app "Missio" contains news posted on the site "news.va", photos, videos and the Pope's homilies, the news of the Church in the world. "Holy Father, we want to put the Gospel in the pocket of every young person in the world," said Fr. Small to the Pope, who touched a button on which "Evangelizantur," was written, which in Latin means "May they be evangelized." On the very first day, the App was downloaded by 1,140 people in 27 different countries. "Our goal is to help people see the world through the eyes of faith," said Fr. Small. The application can be downloaded for free on iTunes App Store and Google Play. It is available in eight languages: English, Spanish, Italian, German, French, Portuguese, Chinese and Arabic. (Fides News Agency, 20/05/2013)

General Administration

INTERNATIONALDE MAZENOD CENTER Resumption of activities

On 3 June 2013, the International Eugene de Mazenod Center welcomed its first guests.

After more than a year's work, the Center has resumed its activities. The Oblates leaders of Europe launched the new facilities. On June 3, after a celebration to open their session, together with the community, they proceeded to the inauguration of the Tempier Room.

This room served as a meeting place for the major superiors of Europe and the chairmen of the various committees who had chosen to assemble at the cradle of the Congregation for their annual meeting. For one week, they shared about Oblate Europe. And, accompanied by Fabio CIARDI, they walked in the footsteps of the Founder.

The Center is almost complete: about 30 rooms with bathrooms are ready to welcome you. During the academic year, some rooms are reserved for rental to students who share their life with the community.

GENERAL POSTULATION An Oblate Cause awakens

In 1994, during the mandate of the provincial, Fr. Jan BIELECKI, the Oblates of Poland had begun the process of the Cause of Fr. Ludwik WRODARCZYK, presumed a martyr. From Rome, the *Nihil Obstat* of the Holy See had been granted as of 16 May 2005.

But the Cause went dormant. Now it has been resumed in Ukraine. Fr. Pawel VYSZKOWSKI, Superior of the delegation, has reawakened it and is moving forward with enthusiasm. He has

presented a new candidate for Vice-Postulator in the person of Fr. Andrzej MACKOW, and Fr. Joaquín MARTÍNEZ VEGA, Postulator General, with the consent of P. General, has officially approved the appointment. We hope that all will move forward quickly and that the enthusiasm will not diminish.

To learn more about Fr. Wrodarczyk, one can see a sketch written by Fr. Agustyn MIODEK in the *Oblate Heritage* collection, No. 6. The Postulation can offer copies in French and English. In Italian, we have a brief account written by Monsignor Szyrokoradiuk, which can be sent via e-mail. (martinez@omigen.org)

Latin America

BRAZIL

A Patron for Oblate World Youth Days 2013

The special heavenly patron for Oblate World Youth Days (JOMI 2013) in Aparecida, Brazil, on July 18-22, will be Father Mauricio LEFÈBVRE (1922-1971). Father Mauricio was a faithful follower of Jesus, confronting the structures of death and oppression in his effort to build up the Kingdom, in the certainty of victory for the people in Latin America. He consistently lived the Church's option for the poor, impelled by the spirit of Vatican II.

Born in Montreal, Canada, in 1922, he made his first vows in 1942; he was ordained a priest in 1948. In 1953, he received an obedience to the Oblate mission in Bolivia where he became a pastor in Llallagua. He had left his homeland and adopted as his own people the Bolivian miners.

This Missionary Oblate quickly committed himself to the problems of the people and made them his own. He realized that to explain human behavior, it is necessary to analyze living conditions. In the miners' camps, he learned to live as they lived and he could see that hunger and suffering were permanent guests in each family. He understood the causes of their rebellion and their discontent, and he stood beside them as his brothers.

Having transferred to La Paz in 1958, he worked in the manufacturing zone of Acachicala. After an invitation by Fr. Riccardo Lombardi, S.J., founder of the "Movement for a Better World", he traveled to Rome and became a promoter of this movement. In Rome, he specialized in sociology. He returned to Bolivia in 1966 and developed various research and development projects in the Secretariat of Study and Social Action of the Church.

In 1968, he became a professor at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés. Within a short time after his arrival, he established himself as the leading academic proponent of the sociology department, a dependent of the Law School, which was entering its second year of operation, but which still had failed to define its role. Father Lefebvre was the founder of the School of Sociology which, in April 1970, became autonomous.

In 1971, in La Paz, Colonel Hugo Banzer Suarez staged a coup against the government of Juan José Torres. Bolivia was shaken by the countless victims; in many places, there were battles, leaving many dead and wounded. Faced with this harsh reality, Fr. Mauricio was filled with compassion. He let himself be transformed and he committed himself to defend the people of God, who had fallen among thieves who stripped them, repressed them, abused and exploited them.

He dedicated himself to recovering the wounded. Just like Jesus, he took his place at the side of the least in society; Fr. Mauricio broke the law of a State which was in the hands of dictators. He made himself a nuisance for the civil and religious authorities. He made his way from the mines on the outskirts to the city center along with the university students and the social movement. He denounced the structures of oppression and he became the prophet of the voiceless, like every follower of Jesus, all the way to the cross.

As a member of the Red Cross, he received a call: a young man had been wounded by the soldiers; he went to find him. Driving down the street, he was recognized by the soldiers who started shooting. More than 32 bullet holes were found in his car. The speechless and grieving

people witnessed his last breaths on that evening of 21 August, 1971; he had been hit by shrapnel from bullets. Held back by the soldiers, the people had to wait for nightfall to cut the electricity and remove the body.

At his funeral, the unexpected happened: thousands of young people, intellectuals, activists, religious men and women came together to celebrate the victory of life over death. They had killed Fr. Mauricio, but the ideal proposed by Jesus became reality, and his blood sprang into the hearts of thousands of Bolivians who, thirsting for peace and justice, fought to overthrow the empire of death represented by the military regime.

He was the faithful witness who gave himself for love to rescue a young man, not out of "victimism", but out of compassion for a wounded person and his suffering people. "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." (Jn 15, 12-13). He took upon himself discipleship and the cross, all the way to martyrdom. He shed his blood and gave his life, a martyr to the values of a freedom born of faith, and of the poor.

Father Mauricio Lefèbvre leaves for the Church a legacy of witness: to embrace the cross of Jesus Christ is to live the project of the Kingdom of peace and justice. With his faith, he reminds us that we must act in a manner consistent with the faith, living the deep dimension of God's passion for the poor, even risking everything. It is for this reason that we have chosen Fr. Mauricio as the Patron of Oblate World Youth Days, 2013.

BRAZIL

A Vocation Fair at the World Youth Day

Immediately after the Oblate World Youth Day in Aparecida (JOMI 2013 --18-22 July) there will be World Youth Day (WYD) in Rio de Janeiro on 23-28 July. Once again there will be an international encounter of youth with the Holy Father, this time our new Pope Francis.

Besides uniting millions of Youth, WYD represents the witness of a Living Church in constant renewal. The objective of World Youth

Day is to bring to the youth of the world the message of Christ and through them, to bring the image of a young Christ to the world.

During the Encounter there will be many activities in which the youth will be participating, such as: cultural events, the Way of the Cross, vigils, moments of sharing and community and special celebrations. The basic purpose of some of the activities is to encourage a visit to the **VOCATION FAIR**, so that the youth can come to know, appreciate and value to the multiplicity of charisms imparted by the Holy Spirit in our Church.

The Vocation Fair of WYD 2013 will take place on the same days as WYD in the neighborhood of Quinta da Boa Vista, Rio de Janeiro. We too are invited to present to the participants the charism and mission of the Oblates. For this reason we invite all the Oblate provinces and delegations around the world where the Oblates realize their mission to be present and to help organize the Vocational Fair.

Leaders from the provinces and delegations are asked to send the name and e-mail address of WYD participants from the Oblate Units who are willing to spend a day at the OMI vocational stand. (Send to: edi7omi@hotmail.com or patrickoliveiraurias@hotmail.com)

They should also bring at least 250 vocation pamphlets from the Unit, to be distributed during WYD OMI in Aparecida. Any other vocation material in various languages can be made available for free distribution.

Let us join in prayer so that many young persons might decide to follow Christ unconditionally, and especially, that some might, during these days of grace at WYD 2013, feel a desire to live and follow in the footsteps of St. Eugene de Mazenod. For further information: <http://www.jomibrasil.com/en>

BRAZIL

A visit to Jussara

The Brazil Mission was founded by a number of different Oblate provinces from various parts

of the world. In our last issue we featured the 50th anniversary of the Anglo-Irish Province's contribution to the Brazil Mission. Here we share the story of Roger BERGKAMP, and Jacklynne and Gerard Guimond who accompanied him on a return trip to Brazil. Fr. Roger had served in the Oblate missions in and around Recife for more than 20 years. The following is their account of one memorable day on that journey.

Jussaral (Jerusalem) is a quaint little town nestled in the hills about 65 kilometres from the Atlantic. Roger had two special people that he wanted us to meet. The first was Dona Rosa. We had to literally climb a hill to get to her house... and this was no paved footpath! It may actually have qualified as a legitimate stress test. Dona looked so happy to see us. She looks far older than her 75 years, but her agility would have matched a 50-year-old. She was bare-foot and had painted toenails; I found that so amazing. There was a woman of about 45 with her and a young man, perhaps in his late teens. Dona gave us each a plastic bag and then led us out into her yard where there was every kind of tree you could imagine. Dona and the younger woman used machetes to break open coconuts and pour each of us a drink. Although far from cold, it was refreshing in the heat of the day. We left with arms laden with gifts, a bottle of wine and some cans of cerveja for the padre... she knows that the padre likes cerveja (beer)! In the car, Roger shared a bit about this woman that he so admired. The younger woman with her apparently had been gang-raped several years ago and never spoke a word for five years. Dona took her into her home, where she remains; and while she didn't speak to us, she does indeed have her voice back. The young boy also has a connection to Dona. While Roger was working in Brazil 25 years ago, Dona had taken in a young man who was considered to be mentally challenged. Lalu was not dangerous but for whatever reason, had no place to live.

One day while the women of the village were washing clothes in the river, one young lady lost her wristwatch. She had laid it on a rock and it disappeared. She went to the police and accused Lalu of stealing it. The police went to get him but Roger found Lalu first and brought him to

his house, refusing the police entry to take him. (He would likely have been beaten to death and left in the sugarcane field.) Instead he told the police that he would bring Lalu to the station later himself. Lalu denied the accusations but was locked up anyway. Dona tried to intercede on his behalf to no avail. So she took it upon herself to search for the watch, and find it she did. It had slipped into the river. She brought it to the station, hoping to get Lalu released but was told he would have to wait until morning. She went home, cooked up a plate of rice, beans and chicken and brought it to Lalu in jail. And, she brought a second plate as well – for the guard. Lalu was released the next day. He eventually married and had four children. We don't know where he is now, but the young boy living with Dona is one of his sons. Roger said these were only two stories; she has raised two grandsons and many other kids who have needed a place to live. We were in awe of this generous lady.

We proceeded to another part of the village, where we met Colletta, the other woman Roger wanted to introduce us to. Colletta is in her 90s and had just had a stroke two weeks before we arrived. The doctor was there as well as other people attending to her. She needed help to get into her wheelchair. She looked like she might weigh 75 pounds soaking wet, but had a sweet smile when she saw Roger.

Colletta came from France as a young nun to serve as a nurse in Rio de Janeiro. She became aware that so many of the patients were people from the favelas in the north and she felt a need to minister to them to work at preventing so much illness. She approached her order to be transferred to the Recife area but was denied. So she left the order, recruited a couple of women to go with her and re-located in what is now Jussaral. Over the years she worked to build the schools and provided refuge to many girls and street children.

She encouraged and helped them to become teachers and nurses, and built a pottery house where people could make wares to sell. She also became very involved in women's justice issues. A very attractive nurse was trying to comfort Colletta at one point; she seemed a bit agitated. The nurse somehow made

me understand that because Colletta remembered Roger as Padre, she wanted Eucharist. For some reason, I took her face in my hands and said, in French: “Colletta, vous êtes Eucharist!” (You ARE Eucharist!) She smiled widely and gave me a kiss and a hug... what a God-moment. Meanwhile, the beautiful nurse had just shared with Roger that it was Colletta who saved her from a life on the streets

and convinced her to become a nurse. She is now Colletta’s nurse. More tears in another God moment. There is a little chapel behind Colletta’s house that Roger helped build. We went out for a few moments to sit, enjoy the view through the large windows, and reflect on the great opportunity it was to have met two living saints! (*Connections*, May 2013, courtesy of *Oblate Spirit*)

Canada-United States

OMI LACOMBE

Bishop Krotki ordained in Igloolik

The new bishop of the Churchill-Hudson Bay diocese, Bishop Anthony “Tony” KROTKI, was ordained in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, on 30 May 2013. Ordaining him was his predecessor, Bishop Reynald ROULEAU, assisted by Archbishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin-Le Pas, Manitoba, and Bishop Emeritus Gilles CAZEBON of Saint-Jérôme, Quebec, the former Vicar General of the Oblates.

Nunavut is the youngest Canadian territory, officially proclaimed on 1 April 1999. It includes most of the Canadian Arctic and is inhabited traditionally by Inuit. Its capital is Iqaluit on Baffin Island.

The Diocese of Churchill - Hudson Bay comprises most of the Nunavut territory. With the exception of its capital (Churchill in the Province of Manitoba) all other parishes of the diocese are located in Nunavut. The vast diocese covers 2,300,000 square kilometers. Of the approximately 29,000 inhabitants, about 29% of them are Catholics.

The new bishop was born on June 12, 1964, in Istebna, Poland. He joined the Oblates in 1984, made perpetual vows in 1988, and was ordained a priest on June 19, 1990. After ordination, he did parish ministry in Poznan, Poland, before coming to Canada on October 28, 1990, to assist the Oblates in Manitoba.

He served as pastor in Igloolik, 1991-1993; Gjoa Haven, 1993-2001, and then again in Igloolik since 2001. He speaks English and Polish fluently, and is able to communicate in Inuktitut. A video on Facebook demonstrates how the new

bishop has literally danced his way into the hearts of his people: <http://ow.ly/1AfLV>

UNITED STATES

Keeping an Oblate tradition alive

While St. Anthony’s Catholic High School in San Antonio, Texas, is no longer a minor seminary or juniorate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the “Oblate spirit” is still alive at the school. Founded in 1903 as a seminary for Oblate and diocesan priests, it became exclusively a minor seminary in 1927 when De Mazenod Scholasticate opened in another part of San Antonio. In the 1970’s and 80’s, most minor seminaries in the United States closed. The smaller number of candidates for priesthood and religious life in the United States were older men, often with a university education. By the early 1990’s, St. Anthony’s too was no longer a seminary but it continued to welcome Catholic boys from throughout San Antonio. The University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio purchased the school in 2003 and continues to operate it as a Catholic school for both boys and girls.

But the Oblate presence is still felt on the school’s campus and in the values the school passes on to its students. In the chapel, a big Oblate cross hangs behind the altar. And the school’s closest neighbors are the Oblate scholastics who live in what was originally a convent for the sisters who cooked for the seminarians.

Some of the scholastics become involved in life at St. Anthony by working with the school’s Director of Mission and Ministry, Mrs. Rosi Cortez. The scholastics lead some of the students’ morning prayer, teach some religion classes, and, especially, offer guidance to a group known as the “Young Oblate Associates.”

When he was an Oblate scholastic in San Antonio in 2003-04, a former St. Anthony student, Fr. Tony ORTIZ, founded the “Young Oblate Associates.” The tradition has continued to this day. Scholastic Bro. Jesse ESQUEDA, a full-time youth minister before joining the Oblates, further developed the group. During the 2012-13 school year, over 60 of the 400 students were members of the Young Oblates, under the guidance of Bro. Jason ROSSIGNOL.

All St. Anthony students are required to devote at least 25 hours per school year of community service. Most devote twice that amount. One of the most recent graduates, a Young Oblate Associate, had given over 1200 hours of service, over a four year period.

The Young Oblate Associates gather weekly for prayer and reflection on the Oblate charism. Part of their ministry is to work with homeless men and women. They offer meals once each month to the homeless, taking the time to pray, sing and offer spiritual support to those in need. The group also provides them with used clothing and toiletries. After a period of formation, they also receive the “Junior Oblate Cross.” Even some of the teachers have joined the group and proudly wear the cross.

Bro. Jason states: “One of the main objectives is to form the Young Oblates in the Oblate values of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with the poor and most abandoned. Our main responses have been to visit local children in foster care/protective custody and to work in collaboration with local church groups to feed the homeless each month.”

Some Oblate priests in San Antonio also provide liturgical service at the school. There is an all-school Mass each week and once a month, different grades sponsor a Sunday Eucharist for families, presided by an Oblate. Once they are ordained deacons, scholastics preside at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on Monday mornings.

Even though St. Anthony is no longer a formation program of the Oblates, it continues to be a source of vocations. Among more recent graduates,

besides Fr. Tony Ortiz, one scholastic (Bro. David URIBE), and two current pre-novices in the United States Province are former students of St. Anthony (Daniel Bourg and Phillip Cantu).

OMI LACOMBE Memories of Labrador

As Fr. Chris RUSHTON leaves Labrador after thirty-seven years and brings to a close the Oblate presence in Labrador (since 1847) we asked him to share some of his memories. His ministry, except for the six years when he served as Provincial for St. Peter’s Province, has been in Labrador. During these six years he always travelled back to Labrador to be present for Christmas and Holy Week.

Going to Labrador happened by mistake. After his scholastic studies he was sent to teacher’s college to prepare for a teaching career. Halfway through the year, the high school operated by the Oblates in Ottawa was closed. The Provincial, Fr. Clarence LAVIGNE, still wanted Chris to teach at any school within the Oblate Province where there was an Oblate community.

He sent out thirty-seven applications for a teaching position and heard back from only one school board, Goose Bay, Labrador. “I had to look in the map to discover where this town was.” On his way to the airport he had a flat tire which caused him to miss his flight. He went up to the airline counter and firmly informed them that “I want to go to Labrador!” He was routed through Labrador City with connections the next day to Goose Bay.

When he arrived in Labrador City to stay overnight with the French Oblates he asked “Where is the high school?” They pointed across the street. When Chris walked into the high school, “I knew that I needed to be here!” The principal was willing to hire him for the next day but he had to finish his teaching degree. Chris started in September and stayed with the school for seven years. In his enthusiastic way he continues, “I loved every minute. Others said it was an isolated post but I didn’t notice the isolation. We had a good teaching staff and

a strong Oblate community. We supported each other. This was one of the best experiences of Oblate Community I have lived. Perhaps the isolation was a contributing factor.”

Then the Oblate Provincial came along and asked if Chris would go to Sheshatshit, an Inuit community. He narrowed it down to one month and insisted that he see that the airplane ticket was only for a month! He arrived in a blizzard, with no one there to meet him at the airport. As he started to move towards the town he knocked on the first house. “Where is the priest’s house?” He was informed that it had burned down two days previously.

It was from that moment that “he knew he wanted to stay.” He informed his Provincial that he could throw away the key because he was staying! The school principal offered Chris a job with the clear indication that ‘I need you!’

Chris added his appreciation for how much the Inuu have taught him. They taught us how to survive. He recalls the night that he was caught in the blizzard, alone. From the Innu hunters he had been trained to tip the skidoo on its side, make a fire and how to bed down for the night in safety. “In the morning the people came by to pick him up.” They had been so generous to share their survival skills with him.

Thirty-one years later Chris affirms, “They have taught me so much! The students taught me the Inuit language.” Not too long ago one of the older people commented on the manner in which Chris speaks the language: “You talk just like a teenager!” There is a chuckle. That is who taught me to speak the language!

There is a sense of harmony with history. “I was following the tradition of the Oblates. We have had a presence in Labrador since 1847.” It is significant that it was the early Oblate missionaries who first wrote the dictionaries, translated the entire Old Testament and liturgical prayers into the Sheshatshit language. The experts in language studies recognize that the only place where the language will be kept alive in a vital way will be in the churches. All the liturgical

ceremonies are conducted in the Sheshatshit language. Chris adds that this is something “that we do not want to lose.”

As he leaves Labrador Chris is clear. “I love the people and they love me. I have learned more from them than I have ever given to them. They have been so supportive of me when I had personal family tragedies. I have had a brother who died and his ashes are buried in the Sheshatshit cemetery. The people have always been so welcoming and I will be buried here also. “I know that we have done good work. We have had our ups and downs like any family. Even if there are no Oblates here our presence will still be here.” Chris repeats himself, “They have given me more than I have given them!”

There have been some very painful years but relations between Church and people have turned the corner. This past Holy Week the church had standing room only for all the liturgies of Holy Week. When Chris asked the people what had happened because of this very significant response for Holy Week, he was told: “What’s happened is that we have forgiven each other!” This is a testament to how good the people actually are. They have been Catholic since the 1600’s hundreds and only had visiting missionaries for the first two hundred years. They kept their faith alive through the rosary and teaching their children the sacraments. “They have evangelized us in so many ways.” Those who are missionary will understand what this means to receive from the people.

“The Spirit was always among them. We had to recognize that fact and they have helped us to discover the Spirit within ourselves.” This has been a significant theological corrective to missionary and people alike. As he is leaving some very important words have been spoken. With tears in his eyes he relates that last night one of the elders who was lamenting his leaving affirmed him: “But you will always belong to the circle!” Chris took a deep breath. What a powerful image. “We all belong to the circle” meaning we all belong together. *(By Nestor GREGOIRE in www.omilacombe.ca)*

Africa-Madagascar

CENTRAL PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA A renowned Oblate artist

The following information is taken from the website of Father Wilfried JOYE, an Oblate artist of growing prominence. (<http://wilfriedjoye.com/>)

Wilfried Joye was born in the little village of Dadizele, Flanders, Belgium on the 4th of July 1939.

From an early age he displayed a clear ability for drawing and painting. As a young boy his interests in the arts led him to copy the paintings of the Flemish artist, Adriaan Brouwer (1605-1638), who is famous for his paintings of rural life. While doing his secondary studies he was privileged to receive art lessons from two talented artists: Boniver and Geukens.

After completing his secondary studies, he studied philosophy and theology for six years. He was ordained a priest in 1964 as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate.

During these years, he was involved in illustrating the campus magazine, which was printed three times a year and sent all over the world to the Flemish members of his congregation.

He has been working as a missionary in Potchefstroom, South Africa, since 1966.

In 1992 he followed a course in icon painting under the well-known icon painter Egon Sendler

and his team at Meudon, near Paris, France. He has frequently exhibited in South Africa and Belgium; his paintings often portray rural life and the human situation. His work is vibrant and appealing.

The paintings of Joye are often religious as he presents to the world a journey of deep faith: the sacredness of life and the joy of hope. In some of these paintings he uses the fish as his symbol. For him the fish reminds us of how we should live... with open eyes (the fish never closes its eyes); the mouth of the fish is also always readily open to absorb food -- this symbolizes the open attitude we should have to enrich ourselves with the abundance of life that the Father offers us.

His style is strongly influenced by Flemish expressionism (Servaes, Permeke, De Smet, Brusselmans) and his longstanding friend, the late Fr. Frans CLAERHOUT. His first works were done in oil pastels on paper but since the 1980's, he has worked chiefly in oils; occasionally he produces lively charcoal drawings. His first solo exhibition was held in 1968 at the church hall in Klerksdorp. He also exhibited with Fr. Claerhout.

Over the last few years he exhibited in Belgium with religious themes being the main object of his work. Most of his works have been purchased by institutions and are permanently exhibited. (See also his blog: <http://wilfriedjoye.blogspot.it/>)

Europe

FRANCE Fr. General, in the steps of St. Bernadette

For several months the first visit of Father General to Lourdes had been planned. Father Louis LOUGEN arrived as scheduled on Monday, 17 June, at the end of the day. Since Monday evening, they had talking a lot about the threat of flooding. The Oblate community remained confident. Despite concerns, we went to the Grotto of Massabielle where we could celebrate on Tuesday morning at 6:45 a.m. our Community Eucharist, presided by

Father General. It was a real grace because an hour later, the Shrine was forced to close access to the Grotto. In a short time, a large part of the shrine was invaded by water. Thus, we were able to experience the main pilgrimage site with Father General.

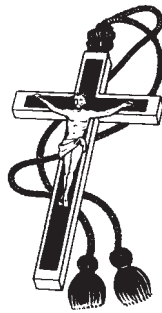
This natural disaster, that affects us for a second time in eight months, may be regarded as a sign of our mission. The greatest desire of St. Bernadette was to meet Jesus in the Eucharist. Mary comes to meet us to lead us to Christ. As Oblates we participate in the mission of the Blessed Virgin to be close to

the people, especially the poorest, and lead them to encounter Christ, the source of hope and love.

The presence of Father General has further opened our hearts to the needs of all our confreres around the world. Our mission goes beyond Lourdes. We bring to our prayer all our confreres throughout the Congregation. Through our ministry, all Oblates are present at the Grotto of Lourdes. We entrust to Mary, Mother of Mercy, the sufferings and joys of all Missionary Oblates. We ask Mary to turn us toward Christ and to accompany us on the road to conversion. We are grateful to Father General for giving us the new edition of the Constitutions and Rules: the program of our personal and communal conversion, the source of revitalization for our mission.

Our community is made up of nine Oblates of seven nationalities. It is the responsibility of the European Oblate Region. For many of our contemporaries, shrines are the only places where they attend church. Lourdes is a place where they come to find hope. People come to discover that the Lord loves and welcomes all people as they are. We try to respond to this thirst of our brothers and sisters. It is the challenge of evangelization: to get close to all the people one meets and to approach them with the Gospel message. We are all happy to live our mission in this pilgrimage because the message of Lourdes is a beautiful reflection of the Oblate charism.

To follow the news from Lourdes, do not hesitate to go to: www.lourdes-france.org. (Wojciech KOWALEWSKI)



Anniversaries for August 2013

75 Years of religious life

1938.08.15	06869	Fr. Olegario Domínguez	Paraguay
1938.08.15	06736	Fr. Joseph Firtion	France
1938.08.15	06898	Fr. Joseph-Etienne Hehn	France
1938.08.15	06780	Fr. John Louis	United States
1938.08.15	06915	Fr. Pierre Mercier	France

70 Years of religious life

1943.08.02	07678	Fr. Lucien Sawyer	United States
1943.08.10	07787	Fr. Henri Chaigneau	France
1943.08.10	07437	Fr. Robert Lechat	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1943.08.15	07691	Fr. Hugues Barbeau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1943.08.15	07686	Fr. Lionel Dumont	Lacombe
1943.08.15	07688	Fr. Maurice McMahan	Lacombe
1943.08.15	07650	Fr. Clarence Zachman	United States

70 Years of priesthood

1943.08.29	06898	Fr. Joseph-Etienne Hehn	France
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65 Years of religious life

1948.08.02	08523	Fr. Armand Carignan	Philippines
1948.08.02	08518	Fr. Jacques Drolet	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1948.08.15	08537	Fr. Robert Bernardin	Lacombe
1948.08.15	08616	Fr. Paolo D'Errico	Mediterranea
1948.08.15	08533	Fr. Norbert Dufault	Lacombe
1948.08.15	08493	Fr. Marcel Glintzboeckel	France
1948.08.15	08496b	Fr. Clemens Kubitzka	Central European
1948.08.15	08497	Fr. Joseph Menker	United States
1948.08.15	08504	Fr. Marino Merlo	Mediterranean
1948.08.15	08502	Fr. Charles Sellars	United States

60 Years of religious life

1953.08.02	09513	Fr. Gilmond Boucher	United States
1953.08.02	09512	Fr. Henri Delisle	United States
1953.08.02	09509	Fr. Albert Martineau	United States
1953.08.02	09510	Fr. Clarence Menard	United States
1953.08.15	09619	Fr. Mario Amadeo	Mediterranean
1953.08.15	10116	Bro. Peter Buchkremer	Central European
1953.08.15	09534	Fr. Omer Desjardins	Lacombe
1953.08.15	09798	Fr. Martino Ferraro	Mediterranean
1953.08.15	09489	Fr. Benito Framarin	Mediterranean
1953.08.15	09493	Fr. Sante Gazzola	Mediterranean
1953.08.15	09484	Fr. Charles Hurkes	United States
1953.08.15	09530	Fr. Pierre Hurtubise	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1953.08.15	09529	Fr. Jean-Paul Isabelle	Lacombe
1953.08.15	09532	Fr. Gilles Jalbert	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1953.08.15	09485	Fr. Thomas Killeen	United States

1953.08.15	09477	Fr. Raymond Kirtz	United States
1953.08.15	09487	Fr. George Kuryvial	United States
1953.08.15	09525	Fr. Eugène Lapointe	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1953.08.15	09531	Fr. Guy Levac	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1953.08.15	09472	Fr. Antonio Marton	Mediterranean
1953.08.15	09491	Fr. Umberto Nespolo	Mediterranean
1953.08.15	10113	Bro. Aloysius Phate	Lesotho
1953.08.15	09481	Fr. John Pilaczynski	United States
1953.08.15	09705	Fr. Marcel Plamondon	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1953.08.15	09523	Fr. Victor Simard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

60 Years of priesthood

1953.08.30	08537	Fr. Robert Bernardin	Lacombe
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50 Years of religious life

1963.08.02	11438	Bishop Pierre-Antoine Paulo	Haiti
1963.08.15	11754	Bro. Victor Capek	United States
1963.08.15	11425	Fr. Ronald Harrer	United States
1963.08.15	11755	Bro. Emile Lortie	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1963.08.15	11756	Bro. William Lundberg	United States
1963.08.15	11426	Fr. Dale Schlitt	United States
1963.08.15	11423	Fr. Philip Smith	Lacombe

50 Years of priesthood

1963.08.11	10270	Fr. Argimiro Alález	Argentine-Chile
1963.08.11	10401	Fr. Saturnino Lajo	United States

25 Years of religious life

1988.08.01	13205	Fr. Fredrik Emanuelson	Poland
1988.08.01	13144	Fr. Arthur A. Flores	United States
1988.08.01	13141	Fr. Gregory R. Gallagher	United States
1988.08.01	13143	Fr. Richard Hall	United States
1988.08.01	13058	Fr. Thomas Horan	United States
1988.08.01	13155	Fr. Joseph LaBelle	General Administration
1988.08.07	13338	Bro. Jean-Paul Libersat	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1988.08.07	13123	Fr. Ghislain Tremblay	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1988.08.15	13486	Fr. Anthony O'Dell	Lacombe
1988.08.25	13268	Bro. Clayton A. Hansen	Lacombe
1988.08.25	13339	Fr. André L. Vincelette	Lacombe

25 Years of priesthood

1988.08.06	12808	Fr. Joseph Cooray	Colombo
1988.08.06	12807	Fr. James Jayasinghe	Colombo
1988.08.06	12809	Fr. Christopher Madurawela	Colombo
1988.08.07	12626	Fr. Sing-A-Ntal Egide Eloses	Congo
1988.08.07	12627	Fr. Edy Thaddée Mabila	Congo
1988.08.07	12625	Fr. Baudouin La-Nza Mubesala	Congo
1988.08.07	12634	Fr. Ilobakwey Modeste Tembo	Congo
1988.08.27	12026	Fr. Gilbert Bertrand	Lacombe

Prayers for our deceased

No. 44-49

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Mieczyslaw Kuchcinski	France/Benelux (Poland)	10/10/1922	Vaudricourt	26/05/2013
Fr. Jan Heemrood	United States	24/05/1920	San Antonio	31/05/2013
Fr. Remigius Scheuber	Northern Province, South Africa	24/03/1927	Pretoria	17/06/2013
Fr. Rodney Boyd	Natal	25/07/1941	Durban	21/06/2013
Fr. Armand Mathew	United States	21/10/1922	Brownsville	22/06/2013
Fr. Léon Canelle	France	20/10/1925	Lyon	25/06/2013

“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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