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OFFER YOUR LIFE TO GOD

At the end of the Oblate World Youth Days in Aparecida, Brazil, each pilgrim received the gift of some sandals and a letter addressed personally to them by the Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN. For the interest of all, we publish it here.

Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate!

Dear young missionary,

Peace! These days in Aparecida have been full of sharing, celebration, Faith and commitment. We have grown much as an Oblate Family in charity and in zeal through Saint Eugene. We feel so grateful for this marvelous experience.

This letter and the sandals are a reminder that the missionary journey of life and Faith takes us even more deeply into the mystery of Christ Jesus. This journey calls for committed persons and we must pray that there be young adults--married, single, missionaries, sisters, brothers and priests-- committed to the mission of Jesus.

One fundamental dimension of the mission of Jesus was to take the initiative in calling others by name, personally, to follow him forever and

a lifetime. I make this call to each one of you: reflect on God's call in your own life! Can it be that Jesus is calling you to be a missionary--priest, brother, or sister--as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate? Think about this and pray over it in your own life. Don't be afraid! Don't hesitate! Or perhaps you know other young persons of firm Faith, generous and dedicated. Invite them personally, by name, to think about this possibility. Encourage them to discern a missionary vocation!

The Church needs you. The Oblates need you. The poor are waiting for you. Be brave and, in a prayerful attitude, reflect on the possibility that God is calling you. Saint Eugene tells us: "Leave nothing undared!" May God give us the grace to do what He asks of us! Courage! Let us pray together to the Lord of the harvest, so that there be many good and generous workers for the mission of Jesus. Thanks for these wonderful days here, growing in Faith and in the missionary vocation.

With much love and my prayers,

Father Louis Lougen, Superior General
22 July 2013

General Administration

GENERAL HOUSE

A new superior at 290 via Aurelia

Father General has appointed Fr. Thomas KLOSTERKAMP as the new superior of the General House; he succeeds Fr. Roberto SARTOR, who is also General Procurator to the Holy See.

The new superior has the distinction of having served as provincial of two different provinces. In 2003, he became superior of the German Province. In 2007, at the inauguration of the new Central European Province, he was appointed its first provincial; he served in that capacity until 2013. The new province was a merger of the Oblate communities in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic.

Born in Monheim, Germany, in 1965, Thomas professed his first vows as an Oblate in 1988. After philosophy and theology studies in Mainz and Rome respectively, he was ordained a priest in 1994 at Hünfeld. After ordination, he worked in secondary education and obtained a Doctorate in Church History from the Erfurt Institut of Higher Studies.

INTERNATIONAL DE MAZENOD CENTRE Installation of the new superior of the IEMC

Father Paolo ARCHIATI, Vicar General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, presided at the 30 June 2013 installation of Father Krzysztof ZIELENDĄ, new superior of the Oblate community at IEMC. At the same time, he gave Father Henricus ASODO a letter of obedience for the same community. On this date, the renewed community in Aix officially began...

Father Krzysztof Zielenda, the new superior of the IEMC community, is of Polish nationality. Up till now, he belonged to the Cameroon province where he was, for several years, the superior of the scholasticate and rector of the Philosophy Institute of Saint Joseph-Mukasa at Yaoundé. Father Assodo Istoy, of Indonesian nationality, was superior of the OMI scholasticate in Indonesia. The two new members of the community were welcomed by Fathers Jo BOIS from France; Joe LABELLE from the USA; and Brother Benoît DOSQUET who is Belgian. (www.centremazenod.org)

INTERNATIONAL DE MAZENOD CENTRE Soaking up the charism of de Mazenod

200 years after Saint Eugene and his association, the Carmelite cloister of Aix-en-Provence still resounds with joyful sounds of young people soaking up the charism of de Mazenod.

34 young adults from Italy, Spain, Poland, Ireland, Wales and France gathered on August 12-18 around the theme: "Passionate for Christ – Eugene, in his family and his youthful experiences and our own experiences today." In a virtual tour of Europe, they presented on the walls of the cloister their groups' missionary

commitment with the sick, with the poor in the world and with young people distanced from the Church in their area.

The menu of the week: in the morning, formation on the topic by Father Fabio BASTONI from Rome; organized pilgrimages to Aix, Meyreuil (a 16 km round trip) and Marseille with Father Joe LABELLE, who arrived in Aix from the USA this year; times for prayer, the Eucharist and liturgies around unity, the cross and baptism; on the Assumption of Mary and missionary commitment by Sister Inma PEREZ CASTILLO, an Oblata from Cadiz and Ileana CHINNICI, from Palermo and the COMI secular institute; meals and service thanks to Brother Benoît DOSQUET of the local community; time for personal meditation and discussion in small language groups. All this was under the watchful eye of Oblate Fathers Peter Clucas from Dublin and Vincent GRUBER from Strasbourg, the organizers of this meeting on behalf of the European Commission for Youth Ministry and Vocations.

With the good will of each and every one, the group established fraternal and international momentum toward a European network of young missionaries, buoyed by the charism of St. Eugene. Many of them were touched by the memories of this original Aix foundation and the mission embodied in this spot (the Chapel of the Mission, the welcome, the confessions). The next meeting: the 2016 Jubilee of the 200 years of the OMI Congregation and WYD in Krakow, Poland. (Vincent Gruber dans www.centremazenod.org)

INTERNATIONAL DE MAZENOD CENTRE Session for Oblate scholastics

A formation session for a group of Oblate scholastics preparing for perpetual vows took place at the IEMC on 09 to 27 July. They came from four Oblate formation houses to create, during the session, an international community of 10 nationalities, a tangible sign of the growing internationality of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Coming from the International Scholasticate in Rome; the scholasticate at Obra, Poland;

the scholasticate at Vermicino, Italy; and the one in San Antonio in the United States, they formed a community where 10 nationalities were represented: Canada, the United States, Mexico, Italy, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Zambia.

The session allowed participants to review the theology of the vows and to realize more deeply the scope of the oblation for which they are preparing. The presence in the motherhouse of the Congregation, as well as visits to places significant to its history, such as the Basilica of Notre-Dame de la Garde in Marseille, enabled the young men to discover the origins of their religious family, until now studied through courses in Oblate history.

Their meeting with Father Cornelius NGOKA, first assistant of Father General, in charge of the Congregation's formation portfolio, was an important part of the session. Others making presentations during the session were Fathers Frank SANTUCCI, Bernard DULLIER and Joe LABELLE from the IEMC community. In charge of the session was Father Genaro ROSATO, teamed with other formators: Antoni BOCHM, Piotr PIASECKI, Edouard DAGAVOUNANSOU and Raul SALAS. Translations in English, Italian and French were provided by Father Richard WOLAK.

The lessons alternated with times of personal and community prayer and moments of conviviality and relaxation.

The IEMC community wishes their young guests a beautiful celebration of their perpetual vows. (Krzysztof ZIELEND, <http://www.centremazenod.org>)

JPIC OMI

Retreat and meeting in Aix

Having been entrusted with the JPIC ministry, we, the JPIC General Committee, wished to renew ourselves in our lives and in our work, in preparation for the 200th anniversary of the Congregation in 2016. First of all, we began with a shared retreat led by Father Raymond

WARREN, to make us more aware of our Oblate JPIC spirituality, based on the passion of St. Eugene for Christ and for humanity.

We spent time reading the words of Bishop Bourget, who, upon De Mazenod's sending six Oblates to Canada in 1841, described St. Eugene as "a man whose heart is as big as the world." His love, his heart, are still with us, we said, because they cooperate with Christ in his Kingdom. With Brother Benedict DOSQUET and Father Krzysztof ZIELEND, we visited the birthplace of the Congregation and the major Oblate sites in Marseille. This helped us to see the most concrete dimensions of the spirituality of St. Eugene and how it colored his priestly ministry (by his visits to prisoners, his work with young people, his taking on parish missions...) and his ministry as Bishop of Marseilles (the creation of charitable institutions in his diocese).

During our three days, our group began a process of reviewing the *Vade Mecum* of the JPIC Committee of 1997. We were very grateful for the major revision of the language already undertaken by the Anglo-Irish Province which has added a more than necessary touch in support of creation, reminding us of the words of Pope John Paul II at the World Day of Peace in 1990 about "the grave obligation to take care of all creation" and telling us that "education in ecological responsibility is urgent and necessary... and requires a genuine conversion."

We then prepared four sessions for prayer and faith sharing on apostolic community, to be used for local, provincial and regional Oblate communities, as a contribution to apostolic community in the first year of the Oblate triennium. We will also propose a JPIC workshop to be offered in each of the five regions in the next three years. The whole retreat and meeting alternated between moments of prayer and personal sharing. We also had the opportunity to meet the young and dynamic "Oblatas", also on retreat at the International de Mazenod Centre, including Teresa from Peru and Lisa from Germany who renewed their vows. Still today, the Oblate charism inflames hearts. (Camille PICHÉ in www.centremazenod.org)

Africa-Madagascar

LESOTHO

A ministry with the deaf

Fr. Charles PHOOFOLO exercises a very specialized ministry in Lesotho: he carries the Good News to persons who are hearing impaired or deaf.

My involvement with sign language and the deaf community was made possible by the encouragement of the former provincial of Lesotho, who is now Bishop of Leribe, Augustinus Tumaole BANE. He obliged me to study sign language, despite my desire to study Braille during my year of regency. I had wished to go for Braille because I had a visually impaired friend from home, who had made me aware of needs and challenges faced by people with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairment. However, I eventually found myself in the midst of the deaf community to learn sign language at St. Paul School for the Deaf.

My first encounter with sign language and the signing community was also an occasion for me to marvel at the wonders of God. At first I thought that sign language was too difficult and I was even doubtful whether it was really a language in the strict sense of the word. It was only later that I noticed that the difference between a spoken language and a signed language is that the former is verbal-audible and the latter is visual-gestural. Whatever else constitutes a language is almost the same. I also discovered that there are almost as many sign languages as there are spoken languages. There is no single international sign language.

Towards the end of February 2006, I started my interaction with deaf children. This was also an occasion for me to learn their language. It was emotionally taxing at the beginning, because the students seemed to have had a lot to tell me, but I could not understand them, due to my sign language illiteracy. They would also become exasperated due to my failure to understand them. However, this situation pushed me to learn the

language faster. After eight months, I became involved with sign language interpretation, which was to continue even after my return to the Oblate Scholasticate (Roma). I interpreted in various settings and occasions, including Church services, funerals, marriages, workshops, meetings, health services, public gatherings, interviews, police hearings and many more.

There were very few sign language interpreters at that time. My sign language literacy took me into the S.L interpreting service, despite my low level of competence. In addition to that, my proximity to people with disabilities qualified me to participate in two important studies conducted in Lesotho in the field of disability. The first focused on the living conditions of people with disabilities in general, while the second was about people with disabilities and HIV or AIDS.

My work as a pastor and sign language interpreter at Mt. Royal High School began in February last year. I interpreted for two deaf students who were in their final year of Junior Certificate. This was the big challenge for me because I had had no experience with educational sign language. In spite of my distress, the final results came promising. One of my deaf students managed to get a good second class pass, while the other one did not make it. However, we hope the best for him this year.

Apart from that, in line with the resolutions of the 2009 Vatican International Conference on deaf people in the life of the Church, we have established a Deaf Apostolate Team. We wish to destroy that wall of silence which exists between the deaf community and the hearing community which Pope Benedict XVI talked about. St. Eugene would insist "...in their own language."

Catechetical instructions were given in sign language for a group of deaf students who received the sacraments of Christian initiation this year during Easter celebrations. Finally, from these humble beginnings, we hope for great endings, because nothing is impossible for God.

NATAL

“Ready to sacrifice goods, talents, ease, even their lives”

The Natal Province, on 26-27 June, convened for the Provincial's Assembly which saw all the Oblates of the province and those of the Mission of Zimbabwe come together to reflect on the province's missions, its challenges and its future. The province's need to return to its roots, the spirit, and the charism of the Congregation occupied the debates. The Assembly centered on the theme: “Ready to sacrifice goods, talents, ease even their lives”.

The Provincial, Fr. Vusi MAZUBIKO, in his opening remarks said that as Oblates, if we want a guideline, a quick one, on how to live an authentic life as religious, as Oblates of Mary Immaculate, we have the preface of our book of life. The Constitutions and Rules should be our reference point, because in those few lines there is the summary of the kind of person the Oblate is called to be: “Men filled with zeal, ready to sacrifice goods, talents, ease, self, even their life, for the love of Jesus Christ, the service of the Church and the sanctification of their brethren”.

Fr. Vuzi further stated that we cannot make any impact in our societies filled with crime, injustices, discrimination, diseases,...if we ourselves are not deeply rooted in Christ who is justice himself, who welcomes everyone, irrespective of his country of origin, sex, tribal affiliation, or social status; who himself fought against diseases, both spiritually and physically; who bridged the gap that was created by an unjust system of his epoch between the rich and the poor. This same Jesus, before he does anything, he goes into deep communion with his Father: his life, while on earth was totally synchronized with his Father. We must be men of virtues, deeply spiritual in order to understand and to respond adequately to the challenges of our societies. He went on to say that if all South Africans and the world were able to change and crush apartheid, it is also possible for us, as Oblates today, called from many places in the world, to change ourselves and the atrocities of our societies, the deplorable situations that both

the Church in South Africa and Zimbabwe are faced with.

The growing mission of Zimbabwe was also a cause to celebrate. The Mission Superior, Fr. Siphon KUNENE, helped the Oblates to a better understanding of the rapid growth the Mission is experiencing. He compared it to the growth of the Delegation of Zambia. Soon, the Mission will be 30 years of age, and according to the growth chart, the pace of its development is fast and encouraging.

The Assembly was blessed with the presence of the Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, whose simplicity and deep sense of listening throughout the event struck those present. They marveled at the depth of his reflection and his overview of the Oblate situation in the world. He touched many by the quality of his presence and his gestures: “He is indeed a father!” exclaimed some Oblates.

The Archbishop of Durban, Francis Cardinal Napier, graciously honored the Assembly with his presence; he didn't miss the opportunity to say his gratitude to and also to praise the Oblates of the Province for the wonderful collaboration he enjoys and for the quality of their spiritual life.

The closing Mass was included the conferral of a Honorary Oblate on one of the champions of the Oblates' causes in the Natal Province. A deeply spiritual and insightful man, a father of a family, a retired business man and a very dedicated and practicing Christian convert, Mr. Ken Klark, HOMI. (Emmanuel YOUNGTEN TEMSWANG, Executive Secretary, AMR)

WESTERN SAHARA

A quick immersion

Fr. David MUÑOZ, of the Mediterranean Province, writes in www.nosotrosomi.org: In the first half of the month of July, I had occasion to make a quick immersion into the Sahara Oblate Mission. Accompanied by a couple, Beatriz and Paco, (she, a PhD in anthropology and he, a doctorate in art history specializing in Islamic art) and hosted by the Oblates of the mission Mario LEÓN and Valerio EKO, I lived this

wonderful experience. One thing that touched me deeply was the experience lived by Beatriz and Paco. It was the first time lay persons close to the Oblates visited the mission. The experience was very rewarding for us, both the Oblates and them. In her blog, Beatriz writes:

When in July there suddenly came an invitation to visit the mission which Oblate religious have been caring for in the desert since 1954, we were unaware of the reality that awaited us.

The wind, the sand and the desert wilderness have molded a difficult situation since the Moroccan occupation of 1975 that left the Saharans and the missionaries in a difficult position.

After arriving at the airport with David (an Oblate missionary from the district of Aluche [Spain]) the first hours in the mission become an immersion into a new reality. A dinner hosted by the two Oblates who are there, Mario and Valerio, presented us with a good picture of what we would find from that moment on, since there were present several Saharan friends of the community: expatriate Spanish fishermen, members of MINURSO (International Mission of the United Nations for the Referendum in Western Sahara) and the Custodian of Assets of the House of Spain -- each with their opinion, their interpretation and their religion ... all together.

Mario and Valerio were eager for us to acquire, in the two weeks we were going to stay there, as complete a picture as possible of the situation in the Sahara since the occupation: families separated, the impossibility to travel freely abroad, repression, an overwhelming military presence, control of movement, constant surveillance of the church building, the dire situation in prisons and the presence, already a majority, of settlers from northern Morocco, so as to intervene with their vote in a possible referendum, which in reality is ever more remote.

But there were also the landscapes, the dunes, the warmth and hospitality of the Saharan people, their customs and traditions, their religion. During the days we were there, we were able to live Ramadan, assisting at the the breaking of

the fast with several families and participating as observers in the Friday prayers.

The Oblates currently take care of two churches in the former Spanish territory: one in Laayoune and one in the ancient city of Villa Cisneros, now Dakhla. Recently they recovered the chapel located in the port of Laayoune which took care of expatriate fishermen during the Spanish era.

The situation of the Church is complicated: they cannot preach, cannot channel humanitarian aid, cannot baptize... any activity can become grounds for expulsion. So what do they do, the only two Catholic missionaries permitted in the entire Western Sahara? Nothing less than being a Christian presence and witnesses to the suffering of a people, helping them and supporting them day by day, caring for anyone who comes to the door of the church, including the Moroccan population, celebrating Mass for MINURSO workers and all those Christians (evangelicals, Lutherans, Anglicans and Catholics) who are in the region for work purposes.

The church of Dakhla (a 6 hour drive from Laayoune) has a special situation since the person responsible for its custody and maintenance is Mohamed Fadel Semlali, better known as Bu, a Muslim Saharan who also chairs the Dakhla Association of the Disabled, with which the Church collaborates in the formation of the Saharan staff serving disabled children in the area, mostly Moroccans.

In short, it was a journey that taught us to pray as we heard the call to prayer of the muezzin, to share with those who are the most forgotten by the international community, to hear their silent cry, silenced for nearly 40 years, to pay attention to the rage that is growing in the younger generations and to see a church, committed and open, that has sealed an alliance with the Saharan people that has lasted 60 years.

SENEGAL AND GUINEA BISSAU

Youth ready to give their lives...

On Sunday, August 11, profession day in Senegal, four young Oblates gave their lives to the Lord

and to the Church through the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It is a growing family whose vitality is expressed by this gift of four young men to freely and consciously begin an adventure full of questions and surprises. Being missionaries today sounds like a challenge that much of society does not understand. But at the same time, it is a stimulating challenge that opens life to the gift of self and the encounter with others. Simon Pierre BADJI, Paul Sombel FAYE, Pascal FAYE and Paul Marie MANDIKA have said “yes”. After about 10 years of formation, here they are, ready for this final commitment in the Congregation of the Oblates of the Delegation of Senegal and Guinea Bissau. We posed some questions to our young men to have them express the meaning of the day.

What does this day of your perpetual profession mean to you?

Pascal: This is the culmination of a journey and a new phase that prepares us for moments that still require our complete availability in the diaconate and the priesthood. After about ten years of progress, we realized that we could take this step, knowingly and in good conscience. To make perpetual vows really means to make a wager with the Lord, to rely more on his fidelity than on our own, because He has chosen us for a very specific project and we agree to say to him: “Present, I am willing to follow you for life and put you at the center of my life, my projects and my desires.” We are aware of our typically human fragility, but we are confident of his love and kindness toward us.

But why “missionaries?”

Paul Marie: I met the Oblates in my village at the bottom of the Casamance, the famous region of South Senegal, which has been seeking peace for the past 30 years. I was struck by their work, by their way of encountering the people and responding to individual needs. I felt that this was going to be my way too. I think the missionary vocation remains an important, current reality, getting close to men and women today, especially young people, to share their lives and worries, simply to share the Gospel and its message of freedom and joy. I came to realize this during my year of regency in Mary Immaculate Parish in Parcelles Assainies, a vast suburb of Dakar. The people really need to be

listened to, to be welcomed; that is the great need of our time. In relation to a society that seems to rely on communication, the people are more alone; the most serious social problems and difficulties are increasing day by day. Being a missionary like Eugene so as to know how to be close to each person and be a witness of the power of the Gospel.

How did you prepare for such an important day?

Paul Sombel: Pascal reminded us just now that we have been preparing for 10 years and that’s true. The Foyer, the prenovitiate, novitiate, scholasticate, and pastoral regency were milestones over the years and now we are in the “final sprint”; perpetual profession will lead to Orders and the first obedience. Last month we followed a special formation course that enabled us consider our progress and review the major themes of our spirituality. In addition, we were able to review the entire history of our Congregation since its foundation, all of which helped us to discover that we are heirs to an extraordinary story that will soon be two hundred years old. Whoever speaks of heirs also speaks of continuers; in fact, today we feel that we are continuers of this story in the life of our Delegation and our Church, but also ready to go “to the ends of the world.” It was interesting to discover once more the spirituality of Eugene de Mazenod, our Founder, a man who encountered Christ and who never let go. Eugene was certainly not an easy man, with his character as impetuous as the “mistral”, but he put his life and creativity to the service of the Gospel and his Congregation, which he wanted to be mainly engaged in the proclamation of “who Christ is.”

A final word about this day?

Simon Pierre: I want to express my joy and the joy of the whole group. We have experienced intense moments of communion and sharing between us and our team of formators. And today, by our profession, we have made a final choice, a choice that needs to be renewed every day in the service of God and our brothers. We are now fully Oblates and are therefore engaged in the mission of Christ, an ever current and always necessary mission. Some elements of this celebration marked us, for example, when our

mothers gave us the lit candle in remembrance of our Baptism, to signify that religious profession is the fulfillment of Baptism. I think that all those present at the ceremony were able to understand that these young men who profess chastity, poverty and obedience are not making a mistake, but are fully aware of what they have given up because they have found a greater treasure.

CENTRAL PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA **A missionary center**

The Oblate House Community in Kimberley has gone through many changes in personnel in recent times, and it has evolved into a community where we can reach out and offer support and supply to different pastoral needs. For example there is an increasing demand for the hospital ministry and while it is not officially ours, we as a community have been providing compassionate support.

Prison Ministry is also being developed and an Oblate in this community is the prison chaplain. He and his pastoral team are responding creatively to the Gospel imperative to care for those in [rison. He also serves as chaplain to the Sodality of the Legion of Mary

Among our community, only one is a parish priest, serving a number of ecclesial communities around Kimberley and Richie. He and the community help out where there is a need, especially with Sunday Masses, funerals and marriages. (<http://omi-bfn.blogspot.com>)

ZAMBIA **Discerning another mission**

For the past two years, the Oblates of Zambia, a Delegation of the U.S. Province, have been discerning an call to establish a mission in a neighboring country, Malawi. The Delegation Superior, Fr. Freeborn KIBOMBWE, tells of a recent visit to Malawi.

The second week of February, 2013, saw the four of us, Frs. Godfrey SEKULA, Vincent SAKALA, Valentine KALUMBA and I leave for Malawi to visit with the Most Rev. Rémi Ste-Marie, the Archbishop of Lilongwe Archdiocese.

Two years ago while on vocation promotion in Malawi with Bro. George MANDONA and a prenovice from Malawi, the Archbishop invited the Oblates from Zambia to set up a mission in his Archdiocese. Since then there has been communication back and forth through emails and regular mail. At different sessions of our Delegation Council we have discussed this issue at length, as well as with the U.S. Province Administration. At different Delegation Assemblies, I have given reports on this possibility. In short, this proposition is still being studied at the Delegation and Province levels, as well as the General Administration level.

Our task of visiting Malawi was to find out exactly where the Archbishop intends to locate Oblates if this vision is realized. The mission church is just across the Mwami border between Zambia and Malawi (East of Zambia). The area is an outstation of the main parish of St. Guilleme. It has a number of schools for boys and girls with a number of activities. The outstation is called Kamangilira with about nine other churches that make up Kamangilira Zone. Kamangilira has a big church built by the people through self-sustainability and a parish hall with some offices. But most importantly, the people are jovial and full of life. We were well received by the Village Headman – Kamangilira, despite his not being Catholic. We were shown around the property and he even offered more land for farming activities.

Kamangilira Mission Zone alone has a total of 21, 000 Catholics. It's a rural population and most people are fulltime farmers; most of the food they grow is for both consumption and commercial use. It's good to note that the faith of the people is impressive and they are also warm hearted and very devoted to the Church.

The locals speak the Chichewa language which is spoken in Zambia too. The mission is about 16 km from the main road (Malawi to Zambia), about 30 km from the Mwami border and about 600 from Lusaka (our Center House). The roads are passable throughout the year and all the stations are reachable. Generally the Church is very active and dynamic in Malawi, very

inculturated with a strong sense of self-reliance. The bishop made mention of the fact that he does not sponsor any of the parishes in his diocese. We commit this discernment to the most Holy Trinity and Mary Immaculate, our Mother.

**SENEGAL AND GUINEA BISSAU
Preparation for perpetual vows**

The preparation for perpetual vows for the candidates of the francophone African sub-region took place this year in Dakar, Senegal, from 12 July until 10 August; of the expected candidates, only the four from the host country were there. But that did not impede proceeding as planned. The animators were Frs. Jean ROSSINA from the Madagascar delegation; Joseph NDONG from the Senegal-Guinea Bissau delegation; Charles EKO from the Cameroun province; and Bruno FAVERO, superior of the Senegal-Guinea Bissau delegation.

Each speaker was animator for a week; consequently, because of his schedule of activities in his Unit, Fr. Rossina took the first week and addressed the young men on the theme: "Conversion (according to the last General Chapter) and the Year of Faith." During this week dedicated to personal reflection, it was a question also of profoundly sharing about one's own Oblate essence.

Fr. Joseph animated the second week which took place at La Somone, in a house at the seashore. The theme focused on "The experience of Eugene de Mazenod." The goal was to look once more at the main events and directions of his life.

- His youth and his conversion experience. The discernment of his vocation.

- The seminary and his first years as a diocesan priest, with his choice of working with the most abandoned.
- The founding and development of the Congregation, from 1816 till 1826, and the Roman approbation.
- The development of the Congregation and its missions, from Aix and throughout France and also into the foreign missions.
- Eugene as Bishop of Marseille.

For the third week, the group returned to Dakar and was directed by Fr. Charles on the theme, "Oblate spirituality and charism." The focus of the theme was to help the young men come into contact with the constitutive elements of the Oblate spirituality and charism.

An excursion to the island of Ngro let them appreciate the wonders of nature and the joys of tourism.

Each week ended with an evaluation and especially taking turns reading the journal they were keeping.

During the fourth week, the young men were on retreat at the Benedictine monastery at Keur Moussa. It was animated by Fr. Bruno on the theme: "The experience of God that Eugene had in his vocation, as foundation of my oblation."

The highlight was on Sunday, 11 August, with the celebration of perpetual profession at the Mary Immaculate parish in Parcelles Assainies. (Charles EKO dans <http://www.omicameroun.com>)

Canada-United States

**NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP
A young African Oblate among the Innus**

After his ordination in 2012 in Cameroun, Father Gerard TSATSELAM arrived in Canada to continue the Oblate mission among the Innus of the Northern Coast. Here, he speaks of his first

year in a culture so totally different from his own.

This first year of my mission on the Northern Coast has been primarily an apprenticeship in the Innu language and culture. My Oblate confreres, Laurent DESAULNIERS, Gérard BOUDREAU and Robert CHÂTEAUNEUF, have greatly

facilitated my integration into the Mani-Utenam and Uashat communities. That made it possible for me to be invited by some families to experience hunting, meals and communal prayer in the woods. The forest is a place of great value. Many go there to spend the weekend. It's there that one can find good game, but also one finds the serenity and interior peace so necessary for congenial life in community.

Some folks have equipped me with handiworks such as mittens, socks and moccasins in the local style, just in order to make me familiar with their world. There are many other welcoming gestures that they continue to show in my regard. All this encourages me and reassures me that I am entirely a member of this Christian family.

From time to time, I accompany Fr. Laurent in visits to the sick in the hospital at Sept-Iles or in their homes. When there is a death, we remain close to the grieving families by our presence at prayer vigils which they organize in the funeral homes. We also celebrate the funeral in the church, usually followed by a time of sharing with all members of the family and the community.

On the last Sunday of each month, there are baptisms in the two communities. That's also an important time in our parish. The baptism of a newborn in a family is an occasion for getting together. Some members of the family undertake long journeys to honor the event by their presence.

As to my apprenticeship in the language, I can more or less celebrate Mass in Innu. At the beginning, I didn't think I could do this, because of the difference between this language and those that I have been able to learn up till now. But, thank God, I have just broken the ice and little by little, I manage to pick up some words as I listen to the people speaking. While the majority is francophone, the Innu language is most commonly used by all age groups; therefore, it's necessary to learn it and especially, to use it. Presently, a woman who teaches languages gives me lessons three times per week. With this course, I am acquiring a good foundation.

The challenge I face in this mission is to be close to people, sharing their life experiences where they are. And this is best done when you are able to speak the same language. This is what I am trying to do during this year: learn the culture and language, and finally, to find ways that will allow me to have real encounters and establish true communion. (*En Mission*, Vol. 2, No. 1)

UNITED STATES

An award for an Oblate's brainchild

For more than 50 years, Fr. George McLEAN has been traveling the world, helping people of different faiths and cultures better understand each other, and in the process building a more tolerant and respectful society based upon their religious values.

He is the founder and president of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) in Washington, D.C. The council is made up of prominent philosophers and social scientists from many countries who work to build cooperation among peoples by healing tensions and promoting peace and cooperation on a global scale.

"There is an urgent need of deep exploration of the relation of faith and reason, of religion and modern life," said Fr. McLean. "For this, there is a great need to share our common experiences and insights and to think through how a religious perspective can engage the secular mind and how faith can be lived in the modern context."

At the opening of the World Congress of Philosophy in Athens, Greece, on August 4, 2013 the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy received the Global Dialogue Prize 2013 for its work promoting the philosophical study of culture and values. This has included among others: 30 annual seminars, 150 international conferences, and 300 volumes in the RVP publication series "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change". The award honors all throughout the world who have participated in these works.

The Award citation concludes: "In awarding the GDP to the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, the committee acknowledges

the work of all who, as a community of scholars, have realized the academic and cultural achievements of this organization. The committee wishes to recognize and honor in particular the outstanding personal initiative and professional accomplishments of Professor George McLean who founded the Council, has been directing it since it was established, and has served as the general editor of the book series Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change. Prof. McLean has endowed the Council with irenic wisdom and a superior vision of global dialogue as a praxis and a spirit that has many human faces.” (*From “Oblate World,” February 2013 and an RVP brochure*)

ASSUMPTION

Retreat Centre celebrates jubilee

Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Toronto was privileged to host an open house on August 10, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of its service to the Archdiocese of Toronto, different Christian denominations and to the secular society.

The retreat house had a display of the different programs run by the Queen of Apostles Team. Some of the programs include Advent and Lenten retreats, Catholic Women’s League, Engaged Encounter, Marriage Encounter, Seniors’ Retreats, ACTS (Adoration, Community, Theology and Service) for Women and Men,, Deacons’ Retreats, RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), Students’ Retreats and Sisters’ Retreats. The open house was an opportunity for all to refresh their fond memories and to learn about the new developments in the centre over the last fifty years.

Refreshments and souvenirs were given to the 500 visitors throughout the day and the ACTS program provided musical entertainment.

During the festivities, both Fr. Marian GIL, Provincial of Assumption Province, and Fr. Chris PULCHNY, Director of Queen of Apostles, thanked the past and present staff for their dedicated service over the past 50 years and the great hospitality of the retreat house. (by Fr.

Tomy THOMAS in Assumption Province News and Views, July-August 2013)

OMI LACOMBE

Oblates leave the Whitehorse Diocese

A big part of the diocese of Whitehorse, Yukon, is about to depart. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are saying farewell after 120 plus years in the Yukon.

On June 22, there was an official farewell Mass and evening in honor of Fr. Jim BLEAKLEY, the last active Oblate in the Territory. Along with Fr. Jim, all of the Oblates who have served in the diocese were fondly and tearfully remembered.

Bishop Gary Gordon officiated at the liturgy, flanked by Fr. Jim and visiting Oblates Robert LAROCHE, Richard BEAUDETTE, Jack HERKLOTZ, as well as Fr. Claude Gosselin. Brother Tom CAVANAUGH was in the congregation. Fr. Jean Marie MOUCHET (96) had already travelled home to France for the summer, while Fr. Pierre RIGAUD (93) joined us in spirit from his room at the Oblate Center across the road from Maryhouse.

Symbols of the Oblates’ presence and work within the diocese were displayed before the altar: an original dog sled (minus dogs), a parka, snowshoes, skis, and an Oblate missionary cross and missal. Before the final blessing, Bishop Gary thanked Fr. Jim and the Oblates in a beautiful tribute to their heroic service to the people of the North.

Following an informal barbecue supper, we gathered for a couple hours of tributes to the Oblates, highlighted by a visual presentation of their life and work here. Long-time Yukoners and parishioners gave moving tributes to these wonderful men and servants of the Church.

The Oblates had come from France over 100 years ago to serve in this far North diocese. Given an axe and a saw (and not much more!) and bringing with them the sacred vessels for celebrating Mass, they were sent out to their assigned mission villages, one of the farthest

being the village of Old Crow, some 475 miles from Whitehorse. They learned to travel by dog team and sled, obtain much of their food by hunting, trapping and fishing, and to build their own rectory and a church. Most had little or no preparation for these arduous tasks.

The pioneer Oblates lived hard lonely lives and didn't see gratifying results from their work. One Oblate had been of the minor nobility in France before joining the Oblates, and loved music; another who had also previously known wealth was seen carrying his stove on his back out at his village.

To mention a couple of these heroic Oblates by name: Fr. Joe PLAINE always chose to live in strict poverty, even when later in life he could have had more comforts. Known for his intense prayer life, in his retirement he went out visiting people in Whitehorse, and was always available to them. Fr. Rigaud always followed 'the people' (the Indians of the village) wherever they travelled on their wintertime hunting sojourns. One midnight as he was following them, using his team of Huskies and sled, he became aware of a pack of vicious timber wolves running alongside of him. After two hours of goading his lead dog on without wavering, the wolves finally turned back, an exhausting and terrorizing experience for both man and dogs. If the lead dog had hesitated, it would have meant death for all. (*Excerpted from Restoration, September 2013 – by Maureen Denis*)

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP 150 years later...

Thanks to publications by Oblate authors, we can "relive" the epic of the pioneers who came to evangelize our region.

On August 24, on the site of the St. Claude Mission (on the Ontario side, opposite Fort Témiscamingue near Ville-Marie), we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the first Oblate residence by Father Jean-Marie PIAN. The Sisters of Charity of Ottawa came to join the Oblates three years later (1866). The commemoration included a look at the

facts and the people who founded the mission. Sister Madeleine Dumas, Chancellor of the Diocese, represented the Sisters of Charity, and I represented the Oblates, both in the garb of that era and arriving in canoe...

Several First Nations representatives were present. Presiding at the Eucharist were our two bishops: Bishop Serge Poitras of Timmins and Bishop Dorylas Moreau of Rouyn-Noranda. About 150 persons were gathered on the shore of Lake Témiscamingue to recall the even and to pay tribute.

The Canoe-Camping Association of Lake Témiscamingue, which bought the plot from the Oblates, wants to make it a memorial site. (Rene GAUTHIER in INFO OMI, September 15, 2013)

UNITED STATES

An Oblate Cross transferred

The parish of St. Eugene de Mazenod was canonically erected in the diocese of Brownsville, Texas, by decree of Bishop Raymundo J. Peña on September 21, 1996; it was the first parish in the USA to bear the name of the newly canonized founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The site was formerly known as Our Lady of Peace Mission, a dependent station of Christ the King Parish of Brownsville. The growth of the community prompted the creation of this independent parish and the Missionary Oblates responded to Bishop Peña's invitation to staff the new parish. In 1998, His Eminence Francis Cardinal GEORGE, Archbishop of Chicago, also an Oblate, celebrated an outdoor Mass at this location to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Oblates to what is now the Diocese of Brownsville.

Saint Eugene de Mazenod parish is finally going to have a new church rather than the temporary metal-sided building that has been the center of worship, catechism and fellowship activities since the parish began. With the help of a Catholic Extension Society gift and with the hard work of the parishioners and its pastor, Fr. Timothy PAULSEN, construction is underway.

Decorating the new church will be a large replica of the Oblate cross. Monsignor Bernard Gully and the parishioners of Holy Spirit Church in Big Spring, Texas, donated the cross which formerly hung in the now-closed Sacred Heart church, once an Oblate parish. Rancher Kyle Clement

brought the cross to Our Lady of Refuge parish in Roma, Texas, where Fr. James ERVING is pastor. He was joined there by Roma parishioners, Luis Angel Guillen and his two sons, Luis Angel III and Alejandro for the final delivery to its new location and a blessing by the pastor, Fr. Paulsen.

Asia-Oceania

COLOMBO

A postal stamp to honor Fr. Tissa

Fr. Ashok STEPHEN, the current director of the Centre for Society and Religion, founded by the late Fr. Tissa BALASURIYA (†2013), has announced that the Sri Lankan Ministry of Postal Services will issue a postal stamp to honor Fr. Tissa. The official ceremony for the issuing of the stamp took place at the CSR office in Maradana on 29 August, the 89th anniversary of Fr. Tissa's birth.

Fr. Tissa is the 4th Oblate in whose honor a stamp is issued by the State. Before him, there were stamps honoring the late Cardinal Thomas COORAY (†1988), Bishop Edmund PEIRIS (†1989) and Fr. Marcelline JAYEKODY (†1998).

In 1971, Fr. Tissa founded the Centre for Society & Religion, a truly unique institution committed to a living theology in action. With dynamic leadership, adopting a far-sighted and integral approach to the many burning issues of the country, he steered the CSR with other likeminded groups and individuals to work for Peace, Reconciliation and Human Rights without any sectarian slant.

As Director of CSR, his work was many sided. He promoted inter-religious, inter-generational and inter-gender understanding as well as environmental preservation. A prolific writer, he wrote many books and he contributed profusely to local and foreign journals. He was a founding member of the Citizens Committee for National Harmony and the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka and of the International organization, The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.

In his effort to liberate the marginalized and oppressed in Sri Lanka, he was often misunderstood, but he was never deterred. With his love for justice and for down trodden humanity, and with his good humour, he continued his work unabated.

VIETNAM

New priests and deacons

This year, 2013, the OMI Vietnam Mission has good reason to rejoice: three new priests were ordained in June. In addition, on August 30 the Bishop of Phu Cuong ordained six new deacons. These ordinations will enable the Mission to strengthen and develop little by little the scope of its apostolic activities in the country.

Anniversaries for November 2013

65 Years of religious life

1948.11.21	08596	Fr. Carlo Mattiussi	Mediterranean
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60 Years of religious life

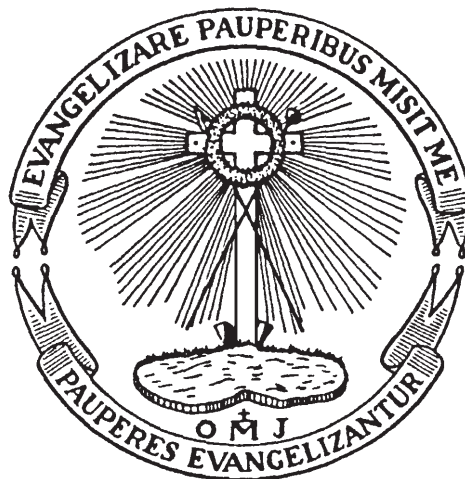
1953.11.01	10235	Bro. Gérard Tremblay	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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50 Years of religious life

1963.11.01	11609	Fr. Luc Côme	France
1963.11.01	11480	Fr. Josef Essl	Central Europe
1963.11.01	11481	Fr. Engelbert Ferihumer	Central Europe
1963.11.01	11482	Fr. Kurt Fleischmann	Central Europe
1963.11.01	11478	Fr. Gerhard Löffler	Central Europe
1963.11.01	11479	Fr. Karl Meindl	Central Europe
1963.11.01	11469	Fr. Francisco Rubeaux	Brazil

25 Years of religious life

1988.11.01	13163	Fr. Bonard Joseph	Haiti
1988.11.01	13162	Fr. Duronce Laroque	Haiti



Prayers for our deceased

No. 61-67

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. George Capen	United States	17/04/1932	Belleville	15/08/2013
Fr. Emil Głombica	Poland	18/07/1930	Katowice	16/08/2013
Bro. Edward Driggins	United States	25/08/1940	San Antonio	31/08/2013
Fr. Colm O'Flanagan	Del. Central Brazil	28/07/1940	Goiania	05/09/2013
Bro. Gunther Arndt	Central Province of South Africa	18/03/1933	Bloemfontein	06/09/2013
Fr. John Mulligan	OMI Lacombe	06/10/1916	St. Albert	08/09/2013
Fr. John Khutlang	Lesotho	15/02/1950	Maseru	16/09/2013

“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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