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## Formation program for Oblate Brothers

During the plenary session of 7 September – 8 October 2013, the Central Government spent a day and a half on the theme of Oblate Brothers.

The General Chapter of 2010 passed a resolution requiring that common standards in the first formation of Oblate Brothers in the Congregation be addressed. The project was to be carried out in dialogue with the Presidents of Regional Conferences, the General Formation Committee and the Standing Committee of Oblate Brothers.

The General Norms for Oblate Formation promulgated by the Superior General on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2011 have responded to a large extent to this Chapter resolution.

*“As members of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Brothers are united in the same charism and are full missionaries. Within this charism, they develop a special identity at the level of being and of mission, thereby calling for a formation that is both common and particular”.* (cf. General Norms for Oblate Formation, n° 395)

At its meeting in March 2012, the General Formation Committee, in the light of the General Norms, worked on a first draft of common standards for first formation of Brothers which was then sent to the Standing Committee of Oblate Brothers for their meeting in November 2012 in Rome. The Standing Committee of Oblate Brothers proposed some changes. The text was again studied during the meeting of the General Formation Committee in February 2013 in Godfrey, IL, USA. Following some further minor revisions, this text was finally approved by the Superior General in council in October 2013 in Rome. One can find this formation program

on the Congregation’s web site: <http://goo.gl/fyYvu8>.

To help the Central Government reflect on the role of the Oblate Brother, Bro. Benoît DOSQUET (France), who served for several years as chairman of the Permanent Committee of Oblate Brothers, wrote a reflection on the vocation of the Brother in our Congregation. Here is an excerpt from his reflection:

*To live as brothers, among ourselves, with those around us and more broadly, with every human being, created like us in the image of God, is the goal of those who follow Christ.*

*Following Christ in religious life is not in “addition” to the baptismal life and it is not a ministry (that is to say, in function of animating the community of believers...); it is pure witness, given freely for all and is being “something else amongst others.”*

*The identity of religious life lies in what we are in our journey of following Christ. No matter if we are many or if we are weak, the essential dimension of religious life is this communion with Christ who is the Force of life. The religious is a man marked by the currents and critical issues facing society but who allows the Christ who is in him to shine through.*

*Reflection on the vocation and the place of the Brothers concerns all Oblate communities, Fathers and Brothers, because it touches upon the very identity of our Institute.* (Normand PROVENCHER, Documentation OMI, May 2004)

*Year after year, the Committee of Brothers discovered how important it is have as a starting*

*point the religious life of the Oblate Priest and the Oblate Brother. In the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, some are called to enter as Brothers; others feel a call to priestly ministry. However, all Oblates, priests and Brothers, have complementary responsibilities in the work of evangelization. (CC & RR No. 7)*

*“Faced with an overwhelming task, Eugene de Mazenod gathered a few priests around him,*

*men who shared his impassioned zeal for the most abandoned. ‘Live together as brothers,’ he urged them... At his persuading, they committed themselves permanently to the preaching of missions, binding themselves by religious vows. Soon afterwards, he decided to receive Brothers as true sons of the family. Thus began the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary. (Foreword CC & RR)*

## HOLY SEE

### VATICAN

#### Oblate speaks at Vatican conference

Fr. Bryan SILVA, currently a member of the faculty at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, was a part of a team from St. Luke Institute near Washington, D.C., offering expertise at the Anglophone Conference, Youth Protection Going Global, at the Vatican last May 29-June 5. Presentations were made by various international experts. The Conference was held at the Holy Father’s residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Fr. Silva spoke on assessing the risk of recidivism in those clergy who have been accused or have been proven to have offended in the past. Several geographic regions reported on their efforts to

broaden efforts at child protection to include work place issues, the impact of sexual tourism and of poverty on children in their locales. Others spoke about the impact of internet pornography, the construction of safety plans for offending clergy, the efforts of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and the Vatican’s handling of laicization cases in these cases.

The conference, hosted by the Vatican each year for English-speaking dioceses, draws bishops, laity and professionals in psychology, social work and child protection from various parts of the globe. Dioceses from England, Ireland, Scotland, Sri Lanka, India, Chile, Australia, Singapore, Zambia, Sierra Leone, and other parts of Africa attended this year. (*OMI USA*, November 2013)

## General Administration

### INTERNATIONAL DE MAZENOD CENTRE I want young people to know Jesus Christ

“Saint Eugène de Mazenod renewed the Christian life in Aix by starting the Youth mission,” said Cecile. Today, the city has about 10 thousand students in secondary schools and a total number of forty thousand students. It’s a quite a huge number!

“These youths rarely come to Sunday Masses, because often they find Masses boring, sad and difficult to follow,” said Katia, who since her years as a student has participated in almost all the World Youth Days (WYD). During these World Youth Days, she was touched by the active

participation of the youths, the way they prayed. “Music is the language of the youths. They love to sing, dance, and move their body... So, why not help them with praise and worship songs and the joy that comes with these to meet God. This is a proposal that is particularly suitable to them at this stage of their life,” she thinks.

On the evening of October 4, despite the storm that struck Provence, about 50 young people between the age of 15 and 18 came to the Chapel of the Oblates. The prayer began with a long sequence of songs of praise. Then Fr. Henry gave a talk, a catechism based on the key ideas of Pope’s message to the Youth at Rio de Janeiro. After this, the assembly proceeded to

the adoration of Blessed Sacrament. As this was going on, many youth received the sacrament of reconciliation.

The next vigil is already announced; it will take place on November 30 in the Church of Notre Dame de l'Arc. The New Evangelization in Aix is being realized through the youth and as Pope Francis rightly put it, this has to be done with our knees on the ground and in prayer before and with Christ Jesus! (Krzysztof ZIELENDIA in <http://www.centremazenod.org/>)

### **GENERAL POSTULATION Inauguration of the Charlebois Museum**

*Diane Kelly, the archivist of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, Canada, whose first bishop was Bishop Ovid CHARLEBOIS (†1933), has sent us some good news that shows that the memory of this Servant of God is still alive in his own land. His Cause for canonization began in the diocese in 1978 and was officially introduced in Rome in 1986. We are waiting for the College of Consultors to study the heroicity of his virtues so as to declare him Venerable, and for a miracle so that he might be beatified. This is a good step that revives his memory and boosts his reputation of holiness.*

Tuesday 13 August 2013 was an important date for the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas and for those interested in the life of Bishop Ovid Charlebois. On that day, the Museum of the Servant of God Ovid Charlebois was inaugurated. A small chapel built by Bishop Charlebois in 1897 has been transformed into a museum.

We spent the morning and afternoon preparing the chapel to welcome the visitors and finalize the arrangements. The guests began arriving at four in the afternoon. Once seated in the cozy chapel, Diane Kelly, archivist, welcomed them and told about the restoration project. She thanked the people and the organizations for their help and support and she briefly outlined the history of Bishop Charlebois and the building.

Next, we gave the floor to three guests. Mrs. Evelyn Jebb spoke of her marriage celebrated by Bishop Charlebois 63 years earlier. Vaughn Wadelius, son of Oliva Wadelius, who was also present, told Oliva's story regarding Bishop Charlebois who would lodge with her family when she was young.

Diane read the touching letters she had received from several relatives of Bishop Ovid Charlebois and from present and former bishops who could not attend.

Then the Charlebois Museum was blessed by Father Jack HERKLOTZ, the present rector of the cathedral. He recalled that the little chapel had been previously blessed by Bishop Albert PASCAL (†1920) on 7 August 1897 and had been dedicated to Saint Francis de Sales.

Finally Vaughn Wadelius led everyone to the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart to explain each of the windows. Diane Kelly invited all who were interested to go into the crypt to see the tomb of Bishop Ovid Charlebois and Bishop Paul DUMOUCHEL (†2000).

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## **Africa-Madagascar**

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### **LESOTHO Qacha has a new bishop**

The former Provincial of the Oblate Province of Lesotho, Fr. Joseph Mopeli SEPHAMOLA, was ordained Bishop of Qacha's Nek on 21 September 2013. He had received his episcopal appointment from Pope Francis on June 19.

The ordination took place at Hermitage Cathedral, Qaacha's Nek. The ordaining

bishop was the Archbishop of Maseru, Gerard Tlali LEROTHOLI, the Metropolitan of Lesotho. Assisting his was Archbishop Mario Cassari, the Apostolic Nuncio to Lesotho and eleven other bishops.

There were about 10,000 persons at the celebration. They included a good number of distinguished guests: His Majesty King Letsie III (David Mohato Bereng Seiso, the King of Lesotho); the Deputy Prime Minister, the

Honorable Mothejoa Metsing, who is also the minister of local government and chieftainship; the Minister of Health and her deputy; the Minister of Social Welfare; the Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation; and the Minister of the Military and Police. Because of these important guests, there was unprecedented security at the celebration.

## **WESTERN SAHARA**

### **A solemn celebration, a beginning**

On Sunday, 29 September 2013, Monsignor Mario LEON DORADO took canonical possession of the Apostolic See of Sahara/Marocco during a solemn celebration presided by him in the cathedral of Laayoune, surrounded by representatives of the United Nations and some of the faithful who had come for the event. On 24 June 2013, Pope Francis had named him Apostolic Prefect of Western Sahara.

In his homily, he briefly explained the role and mission of the Apostolic Prefect: "To govern, teach, sanctify and to guard the patrimony of the Church." Since he had already pronounced the profession of faith and oath of fidelity before the Apostolic Nuncio on September 11, 2013, in his private chapel in Rabat, it was a question, here in Laayoune, of completing the rite with the reading of the decree of appointment (the Latin text was read by Father Valerio EKO, superior of the mission) and the signing of the formal certification by some witnesses present at the ceremony: Mr. Ambassador Nicolas Amouzou (Africa), Mr. Jose Maria S. Medalla (Asia), Mr. Carlos Bengoechea (Europe) and Katia Gonzalez Carbonell (America), to point out that the five continents were well represented at the event.

Thus, Mons. Mario has become the third Apostolic Prefect of Sahara, after Mons. Félix ERVITI (1954-1995) and Mons. Acacio VALBUENA (1995-2009).

Born on 17 March 1974 in Madrid, Mons. Mario grew up in the Oblate parish in Aluche where he also found his missionary and religious vocation. He made his first vows on 15 September 1996.

Ordained on June 2, 2001, his desire to exercise his pastoral ministry in the Arab-Muslim world was fulfilled when, after three years of service in the parish of Jaen (Spain), he received his obedience to go to the Sahara Mission in 2004. He immediately began learning Arabic, English and French for a thorough integration into the reality of his new mission. Fascinated by Islam and Arab culture, Mario is a self-starter who continually and personally updates himself.

The Apostolic Prefecture of the Sahara is in Africa, in southern Morocco, covering the whole of the former Western Sahara, a vast area of 266,000 km<sup>2</sup>, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and by Mauritania to the south and east. Currently the Apostolic Prefecture of the Sahara consists of only two churches, one in Laayoune and another in Dakhla, the former Villa Cisneros, and a chapel in Laayoune Port (Laayoune Marsa).

The Apostolic Prefecture has only two religious priests for a vast territory larger than Great Britain. There is an Apostolic Prefect and a superior of the mission, a special situation for this mission, unique in its statutes and its character. One has to live it to understand it better. There are no indigenous Christians in this country which is 100% Muslim; the few faithful who attend our churches are all foreigners and people passing through. The UN staff operating in this part of the country (MINURSO) seems to be the most stable. (Valerio EKO)

## **CENTRAL PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

### **A Papal Award**

On October 3, Fr. Marius BESSEMANS was the recipient of the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* Cross. Five bishops were on hand for the presentation, from the dioceses of Bethlehem, Kroonstad, Bloemfontein, Kimberley and Keimoes Upington.

Fr Bessemans, age 89, has served the Church in the Kimberley Diocese since 1952. For many of those years, he served as Judicial Vicar of the Marriage Tribunal of the Bloemfontein Metropolitan Province.

Bishop Abel Gabuza, Bishop of Kimberley, paid tribute to Fr Bessemans in his homily for his years of commitment and service in the diocese.

In a local newspaper interview, Fr. Bessemans recounted how the difficult years of the war prepared him for mission and ministry in the Church. He joined the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and this is how he came to be sent to South Africa. In later years, while still keeping a full quota of pastoral ministry he started focusing on the sacrament of marriage by preparing couples for marriage and through his work in the Marriage Tribunal. Fr. Bessemans lamented the increasing divorce rate which he ascribes to insufficient preparation before marriage and forced marriages as a result of pregnancies and social pressure. (<http://omi-bfn.blogspot.com>)

## CONGO

### A first perpetual profession

On Sunday, 4 August 2013, in the parish church of Saint Eloi, the provincial of Congo, Fr. Abel

NSOLO, presided at the Eucharist during which Josephine Kikata, the first African COMI, made her perpetual profession.

The Cooperator Oblate Missionaries of the Immaculate have been in the Democratic Republic of Congo for several years. They dedicate themselves to the service of the poor, essentially in the area of health care in the town of Bumbu, one of the disadvantaged and poor neighborhoods of Kinshasa. They are also involved in parish ministry at Saint Eloi, with catechesis, the missionary childhood and they also frequently organize vacation camps for the children.

Besides Josephine, two other Congolese women have joined the Institute, José Manwana and Liliane Munoko. There is a group of aspirants who are taking a look, accompanied by Antonietta Mongio and Giovanna Clemente. These young women are seeking to understand the will of God for them in the charism of this holy Institute. (Chronique OMI-Congo, August, 2013)

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## Asia-Oceania

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### SOUTH KOREA

#### An Oblate in the “existential suburbs”

There is a Missionary of the Oblate of Mary Immaculate who works tirelessly “in the real and existential suburbs of a rich city such as Suwon”: we are talking about the Italian Fr. Vincenzo BORDO, who 21 years ago founded the “Casa di Anna”, a center for the “new poverty”. The Centre assists the elderly living alone, abandoned children, the homeless, street children, the unemployed.

Fr. Bordo tells Fides about “the challenge of the mission in a secular society, in a rich world and in a church where there are plenty of priests”. The point is that this society “did not see the new poor. People said: in Korea there are tramps. The ecclesial community did not understand and did not know what to do”. Hence the need to revitalize the social pastoral in a big city, starting from the suburbs.

In over 20 years, the Centre, built on the land of the diocese, has grown into a non-profit

organization, recognized by Caritas and the Korean government, with a complex project. “Every day 500 homeless people take advantage of the dinner and shower. Then we have a dormitory. We offer social, psychological and medical assistance. We have created a training laboratory, where handmade bags are made”.

In the suburbs, he continues, “we meet street children, who have fled from their families. So we have created three specific structures for them. In the first they are welcomed for about 9 months, in which we try to understand their problems. In this period we contact the parents in order to understand their family reality. At that point, there are three paths for the children: either they return to their family, or go into a foster home to study; or they move to another foster home to enter the world of work”.

Fr. Bordo explains: “Ours is a testimony of faith and love, it is a work of evangelization which is based mainly on the laity. We have 25 lay

employees and other volunteers. La Casa di Anna costs 1,300 euro per day and has been active for 20 years thanks to charity”, concludes Fr. Bordo. (*Fides Agency*, 03 October 2013)

## AUSTRALIA

### St. Mary's Seminary: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

For the past 50 years, the formation communities of the Province of Australia have found their home at St. Mary's Seminary in Mulgrave, Victoria. It serves both the scholasticate and the novitiate programs.

Recently, Oblates, former students, family and friends of the seminary gathered at the St. John Vianney's parish to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of

the opening of the seminary. The celebration then moved to St. Mary's for a period of reminiscing and sharing, looking through old photos and publications before a meal and formalities.

There was an official welcome by Fr. Christian FINI, current Superior of the community, followed by speeches from Fr. Leo MIFSUD, the Australian Provincial; Fr. Austin COOPER, founding Rector; and Jos Hensing, a former student.

The formal speeches held in the main chapel at St. Mary's were followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, as a way to give thanks for the last 50 years and pray for the next 50 years of formation in our Province.

## Europe

### ANGLO-IRISH PROVINCE

#### Oblate Youth Service helps at Lourdes Pilgrimage

The Anglo-Irish Province's pilgrimage to Lourdes has been a reality since 1883. For the past 26 years, the Oblate Youth Service (OYS) from that Oblate province has traveled to Lourdes to help those who make the pilgrimage to Lourdes in hopes of getting better. Many of the pilgrims cannot walk or they need assistance, and the OYS members, whose ages range from 17 to 30's, are there to help take care of them.

The OYS started with humble beginnings. In 1980, Fr. Peter CLUCAS was invited to travel with the 'overland group' which consisted of young adults traveling from Spain to Lourdes. During the Anglo-Irish Province's pilgrimage, the OYS contributes by working with the pilgrims and making their experience as pleasant as possible. They spend long hours in the hospital working with doctors and nurses, but most importantly getting to know those patients. Like the patients, many of the volunteers come back every year and have formed friendships from the pilgrimage. The goal of their Lourdes Pilgrimage is to work with the sick, while developing a personal level of spirituality. ([www.omiusa.org](http://www.omiusa.org))

### ITALY

#### A teacher in prison

*Anna Maria Gentili, a member of COMI, the Oblate Cooperators of Mary Immaculate, the Secular Institute founded in Italy by Fr. Gaetano LIUZZO, tells us about her new adventure in prison.*

School begins again in September. For some time I've been talking about my desire to teach in prison, so I asked to do it on a provisional basis during this school year. With a little courage, with the tenacity to go through the cumbersome bureaucratic red tape, and above all, with confidence in the will of God, I managed to get this job.

My deep love of children is well known. I also think I do my work as a teacher well, but the difficult time of illness of my parents and the numerous reminders of Pope Francis to go to the "outskirts" of the world pushed me hard not to settle into a comfortable life situation, but to find what is necessary in the essentials, even in the professional life.

So already 15 days ago, I made the first entry in my "new" school for this scholastic year: the District Prison "The Dogaia" in Prato!

I've been assigned three groups: a group of students in the High Security section (they are mostly held for mafia crimes and with very long sentences, some of them for several life sentences); a group from the Medium Security section (drug dealers, robbers, but also for killing during an altercation...); and a group called Sex Offenders (rapists and pedophiles). The students are either of Italian nationality, especially persons from southern Italy, joined to organized crime from an early age and who have never attended school, or of foreign nationality (North Africans, Chinese, Albanians, Romanians...), who need to become literate.

Within a single group, there are very different levels: there are those who are completely illiterate (both Italian and foreign) and those who already have some linguistic tools. In general, it's not easy to manage...

For the moment, I feel mostly at ease: I am not interested in the past of these persons but in whoever is in front of me at the present moment. It's certainly a "parallel" world, a very deep "wound." For this, I ask for your support in prayer.

## ITALY

### Rare parchment found in OMI library

Recently there officially began the cataloging of some 20,000 volumes collected at the "St. Eugene de Mazenod Oblate Library" at Santa Maria a Vico. The library contains texts from the 1400's to the present day, works that have been taken care of for years by the Missionary Oblates who, through their efforts, have prevented this heritage from being lost.

It is actually the largest library in the Valley of Suessola and in the Diocese of Acerra; it bears the name of the Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Eugene de Mazenod, a French nobleman who escaped revolutionary France in 1789, taking refuge in Italy.

The collection of texts has been enriched over time by almost 20,000 volumes of books and pamphlets, among which are many rare texts such as the *Calepino* or *Encyclopedia Treccani*,

dating from the 30's, whose volume entitled "*Fascism*" was dictated directly by Il Duce, Benito Mussolini.

There are many texts devoted to preaching; texts by Greek and Latin authors; texts about religion; lives of the saints; theology; history; literature, to name the principal themes. The first item "deciphered," after the recent beginning of the cataloging, is a manuscript fragment of 8 pages on lambskin parchment, from a liturgical book which was later bound to a text from the 1500's, coming from the Observant Franciscan convent of Jesus and Mary in Foggia; this fragment, in fair condition, contains a musical text and notes not written on a staff (something which began after the thirteenth century), but on two lines, one red to indicate *Fa* and another yellow to indicate *Do*.

Pasquale Onorati, director of the Oblate Library, is particularly enthusiastic: "The digital cataloging has finally begun and is going well; this fragment is one of the most important ever found, but we also discovered other special pieces such as some manuscripts of St. Eugene and of St. Alphonsus from the 1700's. After having cataloged at least 4,000-5,000 volumes, we would like to organize an exhibition in the coming months to show off the most important works." But when will facility be open to the public? "Most likely next year, after the completion of cataloging."

Not to be forgotten is the fact that doctoral candidates in cultural heritage from the Second University of Naples will very soon have the opportunity to finish their formation at the Oblate Library: "We are also open to new agreements with the University," adds Onorati. "We have given the name of the Founder of the Missionary Oblates to this building, but in reality the library was already dedicated to St. Eugene, as proven by the discovery of volumes used at the time of its foundation: unwittingly," concludes Onorati, "we are also following, with this name, a tradition already mentioned by Eugene de Mazenod." It will be the Civilization Association of Santa Maria a Vico that will manage the opening of the library, thus allowing future visitors to admire the rooms that house the volumes, thanks to an

agreement signed last September between the Association and the Oblates.

To follow all the news and events regarding the cataloging of the volumes found in the Oblate Library of Santa Maria a Vico, one can find its Facebook page at this link: <http://www.facebook.com/bibliotecaoblata.smav>. (From <http://interno18.it>)

## GERMANY

### Second oldest Oblate celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

Confreres and friends from different times in his life came together on 21 October 2013 to celebrate the 100 years of life of Fr. Engelbert MACHINIA, in Gelsenkirchen, the community to which he has belonged for the past 26 years.

Born in 1913 in Silesia, the first third of his life was marked by the vicissitudes of this region: it was German, very Catholic and Oblate as well. Engelbert made his first vows as an Oblate in 1934 and was ordained a priest on the eve of World War II. But with the Russian occupation, Silesia became part of Poland, and the Germans had to flee the region. The young Fr. Machinia was arrested, but released from the detention camp in southern Germany by the intervention of a priest.

Having returned to the Oblate Province of Germany, he received his great commission: to create a Catholic parish among the refugees in a distinctly Protestant area in Northern Germany. For 35 years, Fr Engelbert set himself to form, not only one parish, but a pastoral consortium of 3 parishes -- something new from the fresh winds of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council. And he also formed a whole generation of young Oblates, whom he introduced to pastoral ministry, with a broad, open, critical vision, and with fatherly wisdom and much humor.

In addition, he discovered his artistic talent: with great care he devoted himself to the art of enameling. One of his works adorns the Oblate chapel in which he celebrated daily Mass with "his community" in recent years.

Among the concelebrants on the festive day, there were Oblates from 50 to 80 years of age, who had at some time enjoyed community life with him. They recalled that he used to say to those who were much younger: "You cannot talk that way these days!" At the Mass (it was a Monday), there were more people than on Sunday; even the parish choir honored him.

The honoree enjoyed the party afterwards. In good form, he "endured" the endless compliments and returned happy to his current residence for aged Oblates. (Miguel FRITZ)

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## Latin America

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## HAITI

### Congress of Latin American Brothers

On 3 to 6 August 2013, there was a congress of Oblate Brothers of the Region of Latin America in Camp Perrin, Haiti. At the invitation of all the superiors of the Region, 11 of the 24 Brothers attended, coming from four provinces. The Provincial of Haiti, Fr. Loudeger MAZILE, welcomed them and accompanied them during their meeting.

After "getting to know" one another, they elected their representative, since Bro. Phaniel NEPTUNE (Haiti) had completed his three years. Elected was Bro. Ivar RUÍZ from Bolivia. Besides being a link among all the Brothers,

he represents them at the assembly of the superiors of the Region (CIAL), where they participate with voice and vote. As such, he was presented to the Superior General in Council who named him representative of the Region in the Permanent Committee of Brothers for the whole Congregation.

Another moment in the congress was the sharing of what they see as the challenges and needs of the Brothers in Latin America. What stood out was the need for a better formation program, first and on-going.

It bears mentioning in this regard that the Central Government had the theme of the Brothers in the Congregation as their principal theme during the



last plenary session, during which they approved the program for the formation of Brothers.

Thanks go to the province that hosted this meeting, the home of 1/3 of the Brothers! (Miguel FRITZ)

## MEXICO

### EDUSEC: serving the marginalized

Twenty-five years ago, Fr. Pat THOMPSON, along with a young laywoman, Belia Molina, laid the foundation of an organization that continues to thrive today. In September, the provincial of the United States, Fr. Bill ANTONE and Fr. Pat paid a visit to that group.

EDUSEC is an acronym for Education and Community Services. For many years, EDUSEC received financial support from the former Western U.S. province and the United States province, and now is able to sustain itself. EDUSEC provides services for the marginalized communities in Mexicali, in the state of Baja California, Mexico, focusing especially on the needs of adolescents, youth and working women.

Many of the families in these communities live from week to week on the low wages they earn from working at numerous assembly plants or *maquiladoras* (*Assembly plants in Mexico, especially along the border between the United States and Mexico, to which foreign materials and parts are shipped and from which the finished product is returned to the original market.*) Women are especially overworked as they try to raise families and bring in a necessary income at the same time. Young people come home from school to homes without a parent, so EDUSEC provides afterschool tutoring, counseling and training, among other services.

EDUSEC has been able to build an excellent facility as their center. From there, it has been able to reach out to numerous neighborhoods. The Oblates ministered in Mexicali for over 30 years. Fr. Thompson led that ministry for most of those years. (*OMI USA*, November 2013)

## PARAGUAY

### A shrine for Pa'i Puku

"Pa'i Puku" ("Tall Father") is the affectionate nickname in Guarani for Bishop Peter SHAW, who died in 1984 in the Paraguayan Chaco, where he worked as a missionary and finally as bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Pilcomayo.

Soon, the people began to venerate him as a saint. Beginning in 2008, the Oblates of the Province of Paraguay began to promote research and the steps to open the Cause of beatification, approved in 2010 by the Superior General.

The following year, two books were published about his life, besides the exhaustive research. There also premiered a song in Guarani, sung by a singer, accompanied by a harpist, both of whom are well known in the country.

Another publication highlights eight places in Paraguay which bear his name: streets, a stadium, a school, a radio station, and some commercial enterprises. To that list, there is now added a chapel, standing as a future shrine at the place of his fatal accident, with the blessing of the bishop of the diocese where he died, who is also in charge of the official Cause. There is a sign which displays the project, and draws attention to the many drivers who pass through this only route across the Chaco and which leads to neighboring Bolivia.

The people, who happily tell of their experiences and memories with Pa'i Puku, including the favors received at his intercession, eagerly hope that the virtues of the future Blessed might be quickly recognized, and they can continue venerating him in that shrine. (Miguel FRITZ)

## BOLIVIA

### A book about Pope Francis

At the International Book Fair in La Paz, on October 19, there was a book presentation by an Oblate. *Nuestro Papa Francisco* (*Our Pope Francis*) was written by Fr. Guillermo SILES PAZ, former provincial of the Oblates of Bolivia and currently the manager of Catholic Television

and a member of the Communication Commission of the Archdiocese of La Paz. The book tries to present the image of the new pope, but in the current context and with new elements from his own thoughts and from how he became Pope.

Father Siles says that the book of 156 pages was born of the need and desire to get to the very heart of the people. It is filled with a new message of hope for organizations, both the Church and society. But it also offers edifying content at this

historical moment. When we read the messages of the Pope, we see that they are about inclusion, about building up and above all, about hope.

In the book, which may be purchased in Pauline book stores, the author gathers and links statements and facts that place the reader firmly into this historic moment. The resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and the arrival of a new Pope, with a renewed charisma, seem to respond to current needs.

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## Canada-United States

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### UNITED STATES

#### **PhD in Spirituality offered at Oblate School of Theology**

Oblate School of Theology (OST) in San Antonio, Texas, is now offering Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Ministry programs in Spirituality. “This is unprecedented; there are no other Catholic PhD programs of any kind in the southern part of the USA and only two other Christian universities in the country that offer the PhD in Spirituality,” said Fr. John Markey, OP, the PhD program director. Five students are currently enrolled at OST as either PhD or Doctor of Ministry candidates in Spirituality, and the expectation is eventually to have a full cohort of eight to 10 students in the program in any given academic year.

The PhD and MDiv in Spirituality are only the latest additions to a broad, multi-faceted OST Spirituality program. It includes the Master of Arts (Spirituality) program, which has both onsite and online students; the growing Continuing Education program, which offers a rich variety of spiritual learning events; the ACTS Spiritual Companion Formation Program; and all the retreats conducted at the Oblate Renewal Center.

“What’s really remarkable is the whole spirituality program itself,” Father Markey noted, pointing out that OST has invested a great deal of its financial, physical, academic and research resources to support the Spirituality program, even incorporating the 40,000 volumes from the Lebh Shomea Retreat House of Prayer in Sarita,

Texas, into OST’s Donald E. O’Shaughnessy Library inventory.

“The Spirituality program is already very successful. The Master of Arts curriculum includes an online international program with internationally renowned scholars. We have a professor in Ireland teaching students in Africa, India and the Philippines. We’ve brought Peter Tyler over here from the United Kingdom to teach online. We’ve got the very best people in the field,” Father Markey explained.

“We also have a very successful DMin program. We see the PhD moving us to a new level, bringing an academic research dimension,” he said, adding: “Even though we’re fundamentally a seminary and a school of ministry, we’re also one of the few academic programs in Catholic theology in the whole South; and there are only one or two other doctoral programs in the United States that focus directly or exclusively on Christian Spirituality.”

Part of the goal of an academic institution is to train and develop scholars to carry on the work and to be primary resources – to go other places and help build up other programs. “Our goal is not to be the exclusive program in contemporary spirituality but to be a fundamental resource for the development of other programs in contemporary spirituality in all kinds of ecclesial settings – not just in the Catholic Church and not just in the United States. We want to help all the churches develop resources for spirituality all over the place,” Father Markey said. (from *OST News*, Fall 2013)

**NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP  
Research Chair for Religious History of Canada**

The Research Chair for the Religious History of Canada was established by Saint Paul University in April 2013. Like the Centre of the same name to which it succeeds, its main objective is the promotion of first quality research in the field of Canadian religious history, on the one hand, by supplying researchers working in the said field with adequate research tools; on the other, by organizing meetings enabling them to put together the results of their research or plan new research projects.

The Research Centre for Religious History of Canada has closed its doors, but the Chair will

ensure that work in this field continues. The Archives and Documentation Centre, which was part of the research centre, is now part of the Jean-Léon ALLIE O.M.I Library and Archives.

Fr. Pierre HURTUBISE, professor emeritus, is the first holder of the Chair. The University in this way wishes to recognize his many contributions as an experienced researcher and director of the Research Centre for Religious History of Canada. Pierre Hurtubise will continue his research on the Rome Project and on the history of Oblate missions with First Nations peoples. A Symposium marking the establishment of the Research Chair was held on October 31-November 1, 2013.

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**Anniversaries for December 2013**


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**65 Years of religious life**

1948.12.08	09182	Bro. Gilles Lemire	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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**60 Years of religious life**

1953.12.08	10402	Bro. André Plantamp	France
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**60 Years of priesthood**

1953.12.08	08391	Fr. Gérald Labossière	Lacombe
1953.12.19	08855	Fr. Jean Fortin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1953.12.19	08403	Fr. Desmond O'Donnell	Anglo-Irish
1953.12.20	08584	Fr. Bernhard Gabele	Central European

**50 Years of religious life**

1963.12.08	11803	Bro. Jean-Paul Picard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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**50 Years of priesthood**

1963.12.21	10710	Fr. Albert Bouffard	Lacombe
1963.12.21	10307	Fr. Robert Châteauneuf	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1963.12.21	10889	Fr. Marcelo Gauthier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1963.12.21	10518	Card. Francis George	United States
1963.12.21	10540	Fr. Juan-René Pelletier	Bolivia
1963.12.21	10715	Fr. Camille Piché	Lacombe
1963.12.21	10323	Fr. Vaughan Quinn	Lacombe
1963.12.22	10525	Fr. Isaïe Blanchette	Lacombe
1963.12.22	10187	Fr. Denis Paquin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1963.12.26	10677	Fr. Donaat Bohe	Central S. Africa
1963.12.26	10548	Fr. Jef Hollanders	Central S. Africa
1963.12.26	10560	Fr. Alfons Van Loenhout	Belgium/Holland

**25 Years of religious life**

1988.12.08	13262	Fr. Newman Muthuthamby	Colombo
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**25 Years of priesthood**

1988.12.03	13451	Fr. Vitalis Marole	Northern S. Africa
1988.12.10	12598	Fr. Roberto Layson	Philippines

## Prayers for our deceased

No. 68-76

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Denis Cormican	Anglo-Irish	13/07/1942	Dublin	24/09/2013
Fr. John Sherlock	Philippines	02/03/1919	Quezon City	30/09/2013
Sch. Michael Atoro	Central Province, South Africa	31/03/1973	Odendaalsrus	03/10/2013
Fr. Joseph Baril	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	21/03/1921	Richelieu	04/10/2013
Fr. Hendrik Laenen	United States	07/06/1926	San Antonio	05/10/2013
Fr. Bernard Quintus	Colombo	02/02/1936	Kohuwela	09/10/2013
Fr. Sean McDermott	Anglo-Irish	14/02/1928	Dublin	19/10/2013
Fr. Thomas Magusin	OMI Lacombe	28/10/1927	Dawson Creek	20/10/2013
Bro. Gaston Cousineau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	04/10/1923	Richelieu	22/10/2013

*“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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