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The new Superior General speaks to young Oblates

Interviewer: Fr. General, you have spoken a great deal about the importance of the young people in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. If you were asked to direct words to the young Oblates, as their new Superior General, what would those words be?

Fr. Louis Lougen, O.M.I.: Well, I am honoured that you asked me that. To all the young Oblates in formation: scholastics, novices or pre-novices, I would like to thank you for hearing the Lord's call! Thank you for saying yes! You are generous men filled with the ideal of bringing Christ's Gospel to the world. The world needs the Good News and the Church needs you! The Oblates want you to journey with us.

You bring us so many gifts, beginning with the simplest gift of life, vitality. You bring us joy. Maybe you stretch us at times; you question us; you help us to grow and you're very counter cultural. You have great courage to choose a life that vows chastity, obedience, poverty and perseverance in a society that doesn't value that at all. You've got strength of character and that is so important for us. A group without new men entering will die. The fact that we have new men among us, joining us, is a tremendous sign of hope and a blessing for us.

I pray every day for the men in formation and for the formators, so that you can spark us with your life, renew us, call us to conversion, and call us to live what we are supposed to live. You say to us: "You have all these documents; will you live what you are committed to?" You have to keep saying that to us; don't be discouraged, the spirit is alive!

Everywhere I've gone as a provincial, around the US Province, northern Mexico, Zambia and once, to the Philippines, everywhere I have seen the love of the people, the poor, for the Oblates and the love of the Oblates for the people. It's so beautiful!

We do have a lot to thank God for and we have to be worthy I think, of receiving you who are coming with ideals. So thank you for your generosity! I pray for you and I say I love you. I don't know all of you yet, but there is a special affection in my heart for the young men discerning their vocation, for pre-novices, novices and scholastics. I am with you and I want to have a close relationship with you all. I don't know technology very well. They are telling me that right now there are all kinds of messages going on Facebook. I've never done that, but I will see if I can get familiar with that and have contact with all of you. I hope that eventually I will get to know you by going around the Oblate world and visiting you.

In our journey we are following Jesus. I always like to remember Mary. Our Constitutions and Rules say: "Mary accompanies us in the joys and sorrows of our missionary life." So may you always look at Mary with special tenderness, love her and pray to her to keep your vocation strong and to have it deepen. I pray for you and may Saint Eugene really fill you with fire, the fire of charity for one another as Oblates and the fire of zeal for the salvation, for the evangelization of the most poor. Thank you so much. (Interviewer: Marcin SERWIN, International Scholasticate, Rome)

General Administration

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

A letter from the Superior General

November 4th 2010

Dear Brother Oblates,

This is to inform you that the *Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life* has given its response to our request to approve the Constitutions modified at the recent Chapter. Three constitutions had been modified. C. 38, 98, and 141. The Congregation approved C. 38 and 98. It did not approve C.141 which deals with the election of the General Council and the time of transition between councils. This means that the new government, made up of Frs. Lougen, Archiati, Ngoka, Piñón, Rois, Brown, Fritz, Waidyasekara, and Chinyemba, is the only real governmental authority at the general level in the Congregation, and has been so since their election under the unmodified provisions of C. 141.

Since the Chapter, we have been acting on the assumption that the transition in authority would occur at the time of installation, which was the change indicated in C.141. The members of the new government left Rome on the understanding that they would not be in office until January 6th 2011, the date decided for installation. It was also assumed that during the interim period, until

January 6th 2011, the former government would be in authority.

Even as things are now, the service of Government continues uninterrupted. Those members of the new government, who will be in Rome, until the beginning of the plenary session on January 10th 2011, will handle the normal business of the Congregation. The members of the new government who are studying languages, or providing for transitions in their home unit, will continue the programmes they established before leaving Rome. The new Vicar General with the Procurator General will clarify with the Vatican *Congregation* any issues which may arise from decisions taken since the time of elections during the Chapter.

Work continues on the final editing and translating of the Chapter letter and *the Calls to Conversion* which will be forwarded to all Oblates as soon as possible. The complete Acta of the Chapter will follow in due course.

May the Holy Spirit fill all our hearts with a deeper grace of conversion and a renewed zeal for evangelization of the poor.

In Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate,

*Louis Lougen. O.M.I.
Superior General*

Europe

FRANCE

Remembering St. Eugene

The Archdioceses of Aix-Arles and Marseille, the Province of France and the community of Aix en Provence are collaborating in the organization of three events during 2011 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Eugene de Mazenod.

5-6 March 2011: A symposium on the theme of the transmission of faith according to St.

Eugene de Mazenod. Since 2011 marks the 150th anniversary of the death of Eugene, the symposium aims to explore the context of his time and to show how preaching and the transmission of the faith are related to the founding vision of the Missionaries of Provence. It will explore how, in his ministry as Bishop, St. Eugene promoted the accessibility of the experience of God and the transmission of the faith to the people of his time. The symposium will take place from Saturday the 5th at 9.30 am to Sunday at 16.00 at Aix en Provence. There will then be a conference open

to the general public on Saturday the 5th at 1700.

21 May 2011: A day of pilgrimage in Marseille with a Solemn Mass at the Cathedral.

May and Summer 2011: An oratorio on the life of Saint Eugene and the Oblate charism today. It is a performance that can be held in the cloister during the summer or in different churches.

During this anniversary year the centre will be very happy to welcome you to Aix should you wish to come to visit the places of foundation, or organize a pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. Eugene; or pray at his tomb or in the places connected with the beginning of our Congregation. Please let us know at cimaix@yahoo.fr and we will do our best to help you to plan your visit and to assure its success. (International de Mazonod Centre)

FRANCE

25 years in Lourdes

It has been 25 years since an international community of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate came to Lourdes to work along with other chaplains of the world-famous shrine. To commemorate this event, special celebrations took place on October 19 and 20.

It was 25 years ago that the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, Henri Donze, entrusted to the Oblates the care of young pilgrims to Lourdes, as well as an international ministry at the shrine. The first Oblates arrived in Lourdes on September 19, 1985. They were Frs. Angelo CAPUANO (Italy), Noël LECA (France) and Mark KEMSEKE (Belgium). Fr. Mark is still ministering at Lourdes. Currently, there are twelve Oblates coming from eight countries.

The connection of the Oblates with the Lourdes shrine dates back much earlier. Three years after the apparitions of Mary to the young girl, Bernadette Soubirous (February 11 to July 16, 1858), the then Bishop of Tarbes invited an Oblate, Fr. Ferdinand GONDRAND, to give a retreat to the diocesan clergy. The Oblate also met privately with visionary and at his request, St. Bernadette wrote down the first apparition.

Since then, the Oblates have been part of the shrine's history. It was the Oblate Archbishop of Paris, Joseph Cardinal GUIBERT, who, as delegate of Blessed Pope Pius IX, consecrated the upper basilica at Lourdes on July 2, 1876. The record books of the Lourdes shrine record many pilgrimages led by Oblates, beginning in 1870.

St. Bernadette stated that Mary told her: "Go tell the priests to come here in procession and build a chapel here." In Bernadette's dialect, "procession" meant a "pilgrimage." It was the Oblates that organized the first diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes: the diocese of Marseille in 1872 and a year later, the diocese of Aix-en-Provence. In 1883, the first national pilgrimage to Lourdes was organized by the Oblates of England, Scotland and Ireland. That Anglo-Irish pilgrimage continues to this day.

Oblates of Mary Immaculate from around the world continue to lead pilgrimages to Lourdes, a place where Mary revealed her name to a young country girl: "Que soy era immaculada councepciou" – "I am the Immaculate Conception." It is a name especially dear to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. (<http://www.oblaci.pl>)

FRANCE

Fr. Albert Schneider: 1914-2010

Fr. Albert SCHNEIDER, former General Councillor for Europe, entered the house of the Father on Tuesday, September 28, 2010.

Albert was born on December 21, 1914, at Jouy aux Arches, Moselle. He entered the novitiate of St. Ulrich in September of 1932 and pronounced his first vows there on August 15, 1933. His final vows were on October 11, 1938, at Burthécourt.

In the meantime, he did his military service from October 1935 until October 1937. He was mobilized again on August 24, 1939 and was discharged on August 1, 1940.

He resumed his studies and was ordained a priest on July 6, 1941. He then taught at the minor

seminary of Ajaccio (Corsica) and later, at the major seminary.

In August 1954, he was named Vicar General of the diocese of Ajaccio. He also served as Director of Religious Education. At the same time, he was superior and treasurer of the major seminary until his appointment as provincial of France-Midi in 1967.

In 1973, he became General Councillor for Europe, a ministry that included much travel in Europe and in the entire world.

On January 1, 1981, he received his obedience for the province of France-Midi. Upon his return from Rome, he devoted himself to the preaching of retreats, something which took up almost his

entire time. He continued this activity until his final years, in spite of his age. The last retreat he preached was to the Oblates at Pontmain in 2009.

On Monday, September 27, Albert presided at the 11 a.m. liturgy. On Tuesday, the 28th, Rogation PAPION brought Albert in his chair to Morning Prayer in our chapel. After the singing of the Benedictus, Albert spoke the first intercession and at the last intercession, Albert's breviary fell and he began to gasp. He did not regain consciousness and at 8:45 a.m., his earthly life was over.

He asked that after the funeral Mass, his body would be cremated and that the urn with his ashes would be placed in the Oblate crypt at the Ste Foy les Lyon cemetery.

Latin America

PERU

Challenge for a new Oblate

(Fr. Roberto CARRASCO tells of the challenges he faces in his ministry in Santa Clotilde, Peru.)

The density and the distances of the Peruvian Amazon are immense, as is the challenge of being of service to a wide range of cultures and native ethnic groups.

In 2008, the Oblates of Peru assumed the Santa Clotilde mission. This was a moment of grace for me, fulfilling all I had been prepared for in the last years of formation. I was working in Radio Amistad, the radio transmission the Oblates run in Aucayacu. To leave this work was an important decision for me.

As a seminarian, I had heard of Santa Clotilde, but had never been there. So when I accepted the position, it was a new beginning for me ...new experience, new community, new responsibilities, new everything.

I made my final vows and was given the obedience to Santa Clotilde. On August 6, 2008, I started my new life as a missionary. On Sept 22, I was ordained deacon in Lima and one day later set out for Santa Clotilde.

The sight of rivers, trees, lush vegetation and beautiful open skies augured well for me. It was all a challenge but on entering the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, I knew I was joining a religious family experienced in distant and difficult missions.

I was anxious not to miss the opportunity God was giving me. My first wonderment was at the peace and tranquility one feels in this place. Nature herself embraces you. It is a time of grace that I am still enjoying.

Before long, our bishop proposed that I assume charge of the indigenous ministry for the Vicariate. In our zone, the population is native, and there is a big 'time bomb' brewing: the presence of the petroleum companies. Add to that illegal deforestation, the gold panners in the rivers and the coca cultivation for the cocaine trade. All this is radically altering the lives of the people. It is a dilemma for the more than 100 native communities in the parish.

The indigenous ministry is a large undertaking, coupled with the social and ecological dimensions. The harvest is great but the laborers few. There are only nine priests in the whole Vicariate.

Our objective is to see the Indigenous Face of

Christ. We integrate ‘Indian Theology’ into intercultural and interfaith dialogue. It is a tall order, but it fits our missionary challenge: to faithfully live our Oblate community and the charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod in the midst of the Amazon. (*Oblate Spirit, September 2010 – OMI Lacombe*)

HAITI

The Church strives to rebuild

The phrase “wounded healers” certainly applies to the Catholic Church in Haiti. It is struggling to meet the humanitarian needs of its people — both physical and spiritual — while working out of damaged or destroyed parishes, schools and clinics.

So far, most of the money collected by Catholic churches around the world for Haiti relief — about 304 million US\$— has been put to use to provide food, water, shelter, jobs and medical care to the hundreds of thousands of Haitians who were injured and displaced by the January 12 earthquake.

While that work will continue, Haiti’s Church soon will get some aid of its own, as some of that donated money will begin to be spent on rebuilding the facilities of the Church itself. To do so in an efficient and transparent way, Haiti’s bishops held their plenary session in Miami, Florida USA, September 22- 26 with bishops from the United States, Canada, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Guadeloupe, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France and Germany, as well as representatives of the Holy See, Catholic relief organizations and the Inter-American Development Bank. During this historic meeting, the bishops agreed to put in place a structure that will oversee how the work of reconstruction is carried out.

Known by the acronym PROCHE — meaning ‘close’ — it will consist of a joint steering committee chaired by the president of the Haitian bishops’ conference and composed of representatives of the Holy See, the Haitian bishops, religious orders working in Haiti and donor dioceses and agencies. Under them will be a reconstruction unit, staffed by competent

lay people with experience in engineering and architecture. The office will be responsible for drafting and approving reconstruction plans, and ensuring that all Church buildings adhere to safety and structural codes. A companion document entitled “Partners in Mission” was approved by the Haitian bishops and offers a set of guidelines for those wishing to partner or “twin” with parishes or other church groups in Haiti.

The bishops are asking that all building work be channeled through PROCHE. This structure will allow Haiti’s bishops, in partnership with donors from around the world, to make sure that the reconstruction work is done in a most efficient but also in a most transparent way.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are the single largest religious congregation in Haiti, as well as enjoying the largest percentage of religious bishops among the country’s hierarchy. Having so many Haitian Oblates brings with it a 4,000-strong solidarity corps of fellow Oblates from around the world. (Fr. Andrew SMALL in *OMI USA*, November 2010)

PERU

Evangelizing in the jungle

Father Joseph DEVLIN is pastor of the parish of ‘Jesus Salvador’ in the Peruvian jungle, approximately 630 kilometres and a 13-hour bus ride northeast of Lima. Aucayacu is the capital of the District of José Crespo y Castillo. The District is home to about 35,000 people, 20,000 of whom live in Aucayacu with the rest spread out among 110 rural villages. Here, he speaks of some of his challenges.

After establishing parishes in Chincha and Comas, the Oblates opened a new one in the jungle in 1967. Andres GODIN and other Oblates who followed him contributed much to the development of the area. The land could produce almost anything, and the farmers organized co-operatives. All was going well until the government started importing rice from Ecuador, and the local farmers could not compete.

Then the farmers turned to the production of

coca, and the drug trade began. The Shining Path terrorist group moved in and began to control the area. Between 1980 and 2000, more than 69,000 people were killed in Peru. The District of José Crespo and Castillo was affected the most. Apart from the hundreds or thousands killed and dumped into the river, 748 people disappeared. Despite the violence, the Oblates and the Dominican Sisters remained in the area.

I arrived in Aucayacu as pastor in 1999. Having had a good experience forming 82 small Christian communities in Chincha between 1990 and 1998, I hoped to do the same in Aucayacu. It took a year to prepare the facilities – a parish hall and lodgings for people from distant villages.

In September 2000 we had our first retreat and a couple of communities were born. There were pastoral activities and groups in the parish. One of them is Family Catechesis. This is a First Communion program involving the parents who prepare their own children for the sacrament. The parents meet weekly in groups of 10 couples to prepare the teaching that they pass on to

their children. On Saturday or Sunday, young catechists meet with the children to celebrate what they have learned. We also have the Holy Childhood program that prepares children to share their faith with other children.

In 2005, I was on the move again. I became bursar of the Oblate delegation and moved to the Centre House in Lima. In 2007, I was assigned to Chincha and I was living there when the devastating 7.9 earthquake struck on Aug. 15. A year later, I returned to Aucayacu as pastor. Two Oblate scholastics, Leonard AGUIRRE and José ZUMAETA, four Dominican Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, and two permanent deacons and I form the central team of the parish. The coordinators of the different parish groups are members of the Parish Council.

We also have a radio station that enables us to maintain contact with all the rural villages, offering programs of evangelization, human rights, and education. Thanks to a group of volunteers, the radio is on the air daily from 5 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (*Oblate Spirit, September 2010 – OMI Lacombe*)

Asia-Oceania

COLOMBO

Thomas Cardinal Cooray, OMI, Servant of God

Fr. Clement WAIDYASEKARA, General Councillor for Asia-Oceania, has announced some good news for Sri Lanka and for the Congregation at large.

On October 29, 2010, the Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal-elect Malcolm Ranjith, proclaimed Thomas Benjamin Cardinal COORAY, a Servant of God, thus officially opening the canonization process for the late Oblate Cardinal. Many priests, religious and laity took part in the Eucharistic celebration in the Basilica of Our Lady of Lanka, a church built by Cardinal Cooray. The Oblates expressed their profound gratitude to Archbishop Malcolm for taking this initiative on his own.

Cardinal Cooray was born on December 28, 1901 in at Periyamulla, Negombo, in the

Archdiocese of Colombo. He professed his first vows as an Oblate in 1925 and, after studying philosophy at St. Bernard's Seminary in Colombo, he went to the International Scholasticate in Rome for his theological studies at the Angelicum where he obtained Ph.D. and a D.D. degrees. He was ordained a priest in 1929.

In 1947 he was appointed archbishop of the Archdiocese of Colombo. "To serve, not to be served" was his motto: In 1950 he founded the minor seminary, focusing his commitment on the missionary formation of young seminarians. In addition, under his leadership the Church in Sri Lanka found ways and means to bring religious education to schools.

Thomas Cooray was appointed cardinal by Pope Paul VI in 1965, a "first" for Sri Lanka. President of the Bishops Conference in Sri Lanka for 30 years, he retired from office in 1976. The

Cardinal passed away in 1988, and his remains are buried in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, in the basilica built by him. He is the first Sinhalese for whom the cause for beatification and canonization has been opened.

PHILIPPINES

Founder's Day in Tabawan

August 17th is a yearly fete for the people of Tabawan Island (South Ubian, Tawi-Tawi). It is the birth date of Fr. Leopold GREGOIRE, OMI – a legend in the island. It is now known as the Founder's Day, referring, of course, not to the foundation of the island but to the foundation of Notre Dame of Tabawan (NDT).

Since School Year 1963-64, NDT has offered the young people of Tabawan and the neighboring islands quality secondary education. NDT has produced Moro professionals who now serve in government and the private sector. This fact is recognized as the unique contribution of NDT to the province of Tawi-Tawi.

Fr. Gregoire was not only known as the Founder of NDT, he is also known as a man passionately in love for the people of Tabawan. He was their 'Bapah', their 'Medicine Man', and the 'Conjurer of the Lutaos' (spirits). And he understood them by joining in their yearly ancestor's ritual (*the umboh*).

The ancestor's ritual, in many ways, is the continuing living tradition that ties the people to the island. Wherever the people of Tabawan go (*here or abroad*), they feel the urge to come back to the island and perform the rituals. This has characterized the lives of the people uninterruptedly from as far back as they can remember.

Tabawan is also 'notoriously' etched in the mind of people, especially Oblates, as the locus of Fr. Rey RODA'S martyrdom. On January 15th, 2008, Fr. Rey shed his blood as a 'ransom' for the people of Tabawan. He was brutally murdered by a band of criminals associated with Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

Both Fr. Gregoire and Fr. Rey had become a sort of 'umboh' to the people of Tabawan. Their lives

and their deaths were spent for the people and the island.

The people of Tabawan belongs to the Sama group who are the majority inhabitants of the Province of Tawi-Tawi. The Sama are peace-loving people. The islands, including Tabawan, are generally tranquil. The men are simple fisher folks and their women are mat weavers. The Sama people are known for their simplicity and openness compared to the more aggressive groups in Southern Philippines.

Yet there are also crimes and killings in the province. But people consider these crimes to be caused by the 'outsiders'. Usually these 'outsiders' terrorize the helpless Sama who are known to be meek and submissive people of the South.

After the martyrdom of Fr. Rey, Fr. Rito DAQUIPIL, who then was the Pastor of Bongao, volunteered to take Tabawan Mission, notwithstanding his fear. His missionary generosity and abiding trust in Lord's protection have allowed him to embrace this fearsome and lonesome island as his new mission.

The 2010 celebration, as usual, was an island-wide community celebration. But, this time, Fr. Jun MERCADO come all the way from Cotabato, riding on a fast speed boat (*courtesy of the Provincial Governor*) to witness the annual fete. He was joined by Fr. Jun DE LA CRUZ and Mr. and Mrs. Lorenz Reyes of Bongao. (*OMI Philippines, October 2010*)

CHINA

Partners in Mission in Beijing

In early September 2010, a third group of participants in Australia's Partners in Mission Program arrived in Beijing. They are working with China Little Flower, taking care of handicapped children as well as teaching English in the local primary school. They want to share with us why they are in Beijing and why they want to make a difference, no matter how small, to another person's life.

Frances Ryan is a widow and the mother of

three children, grandmother of eleven. She comes from Ulladulla in New South Wales. She was a teacher for many years and is using that experience now with children in China: "I was interested in learning more about the Mission. I telephoned the Oblates in Melbourne and put my name down, however I heard no more until late 2009. I now had a direction in my life that I had been searching for since my husband Peter's passing. My family and friends have been very supportive and happy for me. They in turn are constantly in my thoughts and prayers."

Wendy Williams and her husband are the parents of four children. Her home is in Sydney where she has been a nurse for over 40 years: "I hope to be of some help in the orphanage and give the hard workers a little break. I also want to help the students to learn English. In turn, I would like to have a better understanding of the Chinese culture and through my actions spread the word of God and my Faith."

Luisa Amati is the youngest of three daughters born to Italian parents who migrated from Italy in 1968 to settle in the area of Melbourne: "After experiencing a personally challenging year in 2009, I could not help but feel a little lost and despondent about life. What was my purpose in life and how do I set about finding the answer? The question sat with me for a long while as I continued to live and work through life. The answer came to me through Father Christian FINI, OMI, during a Sunday

morning mass. Father Fini had just returned from Beijing, China, where he had spent some time with the China Little Flower orphanage. He spoke of his wonderful experience, of his gratitude and more importantly, of the great need to assist the orphaned children of China. I knew for the first time in a long while what my calling was to be."

Luisa continues: "After a week of living in China, Wendy, Fran and I headed over to the China Little Flower orphanage. I was filled with trepidation. How was I going to feel, what was I going to see and what could I offer these abandoned little children?"

"As we entered the orphanage the one thing I noticed was the calmness of the place. I was expecting to see nurses and children running around, disorganized chaos and noise. I soon became a part of a wonderful environment of calmness and love.

"All of the children have a little story of how they came to be orphaned but unfortunately, these stories will never be told. The children have no past, no name, no date of birth and no understanding of exactly what disability or illness they have or how they came to be. They will never know their parents or siblings, their background or heritage. I salute all the staff at the orphanage; they are doing an excellent job and have a strong spirit and faith." (<http://www.oblateschina.com>)

Canada-United States

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP

Ottawa: a celebration at Deschâtelets

Last October 23 in Ottawa, the Missionary Oblates highlighted the 125th anniversary of the founding of St. Joseph Scholasticate. A 50 page illustrated album recalls the different phases of this slice of Oblate life in Canada.

The opening of this house of formation took place in 1885. It was a modest beginning: the number of chairs was not sufficient for the needs; they traveled from the refectory to the chapel or from the chapel to the study hall or the

recreation room! There was no electricity for the first 13 years: those were the times! There was no telephone until 1899.

This did not keep the pioneers from doing the work of formation and from making progress, with the support of the Oblate Brothers, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and the Little Sisters of the Holy Family.

An observation: 1,500 priests, 20 or so bishops, two cardinals and three Superiors General for the Congregation. (*INFO OMI*, November 1, 2010)

OMI LACOMBE

Brother Jean-Paul Cormier: 1940-2010

Brother Jean-Paul CORMIER was born in La Salle, Manitoba, just south of Winnipeg in 1940. He made his first vows in 1961. Though never a missionary in the classic sense (serving long years in far-away lands), his whole career was marked by an openness to serve and to be sent, wherever the Spirit – and his Oblate superiors – would see fit to send him.

He began his career, like Jesus, as a carpenter, working on such projects as the construction of the Villa Maria Retreat House. With a team of other Brothers, he would spend the summer on a different reserve in Manitoba or Northwest Ontario, each year constructing a new church. But before long, it was recognized that his talents were diverse and many. He was called to work as administrator in various Oblate residences and even served a term as a pastoral assistant at la Paroisse du Sacré-Coeur in Winnipeg.

However, he was most valued as a “jack-of-all-trades”, in which capacity he served at Casa Bonita, Villa Maria and in Rome (1997 to 2002). There he chauffeured visitors and saw to the smooth running of the OMI General House, even through the summer when others found many good reasons to escape the sweltering Roman heat! He was called back to Rome in 2004 to help coordinate logistics for the General Chapter.

Jean-Paul served as administrator of Casa Bonita from 2002 to 2005, a very difficult period, during which the district community was discerning the future of the Casa, finally deciding to move the Oblate retirement community into Residence Despins. Overseeing this transition, Jean-Paul fastidiously hung every cross, every photo and every painting in the rooms of just about every one of the more than 100 sisters, priests and brothers who moved into the new residence.

In 2008 he received a desperate call from Ottawa: would he come to help with the administration of la Résidence Deschatelêts? A huge void had been left by the sudden death of Brother Albert POIRIER, who had for years managed

so many of the logistical details of the huge house. Without hesitating, Jean-Paul accepted, once again leaving behind his home community and his natural family, with whom he had never ceased to be exceedingly close.

Just months into this final obedience, Jean-Paul began experiencing a mysterious shortness of breath. The more obvious diagnoses were systematically ruled out. Yet he continued to weaken. In the spring of this year, his doctors in Ottawa finally made a diagnosis. It was Amyloidosis: the overabundance of an enzyme that gradually and inexorably hardens the organs of the body. In the case of Jean-Paul, the organ primarily affected was his heart. He asked to end his days living among Oblates at Foyer Lacombe. On his way from Ottawa to Edmonton he stopped in Winnipeg to visit his family and his Oblate brothers of the Taché district. This journey proved to be his last. He passed away barely two weeks after his arrival in Winnipeg, at the Saint Boniface Hospital.

During one of his first years as an Oblate, Jean-Paul and Brother Denis BOULET were repairing the roof of the novitiate (then in Saint Norbert, Manitoba) when they slipped and fell three stories. They landed in a bed of flowers – flowers that broke their fall and saved both of them from serious injury. As he passes from this life to the next, we trust that he will fall this time, not on a flowerbed, but into the arms of God. We expect that God has already sent him out to look after some heavenly logistical problems that have been eternally awaiting Jean-Paul’s urgent attention. (By Henri BISSON, Adélar GÉRAIS, Arthur MASSÉ and Thomas NOVAK in www.omilacombe.ca)

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP

Traveling to Nunavik

Joseph BARIL, 89 years young, tells of his missionary adventures among the Inuit.

My sister, Suzanne, 92 years old, worries about my absences. *Why are you going up North?* I found a response that calmed her fears. *I am going to celebrate Mass in the villages of Hudson Bay.*

In fact, that is a task that no other traveler can do. I am the only Catholic priest who travels to these places. I come to celebrate the sacred mysteries in the coastal villages of western Quebec. When I look at the map of my journey, I get the feeling that I have climbed the steps of huge staircase, starting from the Great Whale, the landing, all the way to Salluit, on the Hudson Strait, and have stopped to rest on each step. Here it is then.

KUUIJUARAPIK: the landing; a week here is not too much in order to get ready to go up the steps. The stay is pleasing because of the services of a permanent mission and the companionship of participants at regular liturgies.

UMIUJAQ: the first step, a young village, 30 years old, whose school teachers are joyful and welcoming; it's always nice to stay here. The village is being renovated: 26 new homes, expansion of the school, a new hotel, improvements at the arena, etc. A hundred or so builders at work in a village of 350 people do not go unnoticed.

INOUCJOUAC is the following step. Here the arts and trades school is well organized. They take care of lodging and feeding me. We celebrate Mass with those who are interested.

PUVIRNITUK is a very important step: it's the site of the regional health center so there are more people originally from the South working there. It's Sunday and I stay with Fernand and Alice. At the celebration of Mass, all the seats are filled. Can you find a church in Quebec where all the seats are filled? This village remembers the presence of former missionaries: André Steinmann, Pauline Charest, Marie Martineau, Richard Drouin, Adèle Bolduc.

AKULIVIK: on Monday, morning, it takes a bit of effort to go up this step. Some good Christians are waiting for me to celebrate Holy Mass. The stay is shortened to 24 hours in order to get to the next step and take advantage of the good weather.

IVUJIVIK: a fifty minute flight in a Dash-8 brings us here for a 24 hour stay. The weather

keeps us here for one day more, to the satisfaction of some of the people who are very glad to be able to assist at Mass.

SALLUIT: this is the highest step...high up in the clouds too...the fog, the snow, all conspired to keep several people from leaving the village for a few days. Here too, I come to celebrate Holy Mass.

After two weeks going up, now the elevator goes down. From 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., the regular flights of Air Inuit take me back to the landing at Kuujjuarapik. I am so glad to have taken the Eucharistic presence of Jesus to about fifty people. (*INFO OMI*, November 1, 2010)

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP

St. Paul University honors former rector

Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Canada, has been entrusted to the care of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate since 1848.

It has recently named its student residence "Dale M. Schlitt, O.M.I., Hall" in recognition of Fr. Schlitt's 15 years of dedicated service to the university community as Rector of the University.

The student residence was constructed in 2005, during the rectorship of Fr. Schlitt. It is a modern, seven-story building of 90 suites, each containing two private bedrooms with shared kitchenette and full bath. Students have access to a variety of study and lounge areas, a fitness room, several full kitchens, and laundry facilities.

Each year the residence welcomes students from Saint Paul University, as well as from the nearby University of Ottawa and Carleton University.

For several years now the residence has been fully occupied during the school year, and this fall there was a considerable waiting list. Student residents recognize that the residence offers a supportive community environment and an ideal place for study, individually or in groups. (*OMI USA*, November 2010)

Africa-Madagascar

CAMEROUN

A new Oblate mission in the Archdiocese of Douala

The date of August 13, 2010, will long be remembered, since history will say that it was on that day that Fathers Charles EKO and Peter OSEKWUTE began the first Oblate mission in the Archdiocese of Douala.

After having been asked for a long time by Cardinal Christian Tumi and then by his successor, Archbishop Samuel Kleda, the Oblates have taken over a parish in an area on the outskirts of the city of Douala.

The parish of Christ the Savior in Banguè, which had been an outpost of the parish of Saint Monica in Makèpè, counted, upon the arrival of the Oblates, about 250 faithful. Today, that number has greatly increased and there are more than 675 faithful after three months of Oblate presence. It was necessary to schedule a second Mass.

We are living in an unfinished rectory. We do not have water, so like the other residents of the neighborhood, we go to the nearest well; the electrical installation is the gift of a parishioner who wanted to give us a bit of comfort. The church is a large building made of makeshift materials; we hope to be able to build a church and especially a parish hall. For the time being, we teach catechism in the church, outside and in the pastor's office.

We have registered 205 catechumens, youth and adults. We are happy with this experience, especially because the area is yet to be evangelized. There is a strong presence of Protestants and revivalist churches. This is the challenge that faces us and which we want to meet. Moreover, we have already begun to show who we are by making known our religious family, since no one here had the slightest idea about the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. To get to know our faithful, we have begun family visits and we are present at meetings of the "Living Ecclesial Communities."

Before he left for the General Chapter in Rome, Fr. Cornelius NGOKA, the provincial, paid us a visit in order to see how these young pioneers are doing in this new foundation. He went away satisfied, especially after meeting with the members of the parish pastoral council and the finance committee.

On October 19-20, 2010, we had a visit from Cardinal Christian Tumi, who had come to get a first hand view of this project which he had desired so greatly. (P. Charles Eko, OMI)

MADAGASCAR

A 30 year endeavor

The Oblates are celebrating 30 years of missionary activity in Madagascar. There will be a festive observation of the anniversary on December 5 in Tamatave, presided by the local ordinary, Archbishop Désiré Tsarahazana.

Upon their arrival in 1980, the Oblates were entrusted mission territories in the eastern part of the Diocese of Tavatave, a zone with a tropical climate and temperatures hover around 45° C, especially in the summer months (November-April). Summers also bring the cyclone season in the Indian Ocean. The dozen or so cyclones each year include strong winds of up to 250 km/h and heavy monsoon rains that destroy nature, villages and cities, roads, bridges and crops. Chapels and churches located far out in the bush are often destroyed. The mosquitoes that thrive in the moisture carry malaria which kills thousands each year. Every one of the missionaries has repeatedly suffered from the disease.

Two typical missions are Marolambo and Mahanoro. The first is located in the mountains and encompasses a huge area of 5000 km², including rivers to be crossed and tropical forests. There are five Polish and Malagasy Oblates taking care of the Marolambo mission. They take care of 190 chapels, most of which must be reached on foot because of the poor condition of the existing roads.

Mahanoro mission encompasses 4000 km². Located near the ocean, the mission has 116 churches and chapels under the care of five missionaries. This beautiful area is crisscrossed by numerous canals, lakes, rivers and swamps. The mission in Mahanoro itself began 50 years ago and includes a house for the missionaries, a church and a Catholic school. Today, the missionaries set off on foot from their home base on missionary journeys lasting up to several weeks. During what the missionaries call their "tour," they cover about 200 km by foot.

The task of the missionaries goes beyond preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments. They help the Malagasy learn to read and write and develop their skills in schools. Currently, 65% of the island's 19 million inhabitants are children and adolescents. Yet 40% of the population is illiterate. This is often because, although there is a law about sending children to school, many parents do not observe

it because the level of teaching in the public schools is inferior.

The schools are better in the larger towns and cities. In addition to state schools, there are private Christian schools, including Roman Catholic. The Mahanoro mission has a primary and a secondary school for 1,200 students from various social and ethnic groups: Catholics, other Christians and Muslims and some who do not even know God. While parents pay to send their children to the school, the benefactors of the Oblates in Poland help students who are too poor to pay.

On Sunday, October 17, for the first time there were two young Malagasy from the missions of Mahanoro and Marolambo ordained for the Diocese of Tamatave. The ceremony was attended by more than 5,000 Christians from the area and many other missions and parishes. (from www.oblaci.pl, by Fr. Marian LIS)

Anniversaries for December 2010

65 Years of religious life

1945.12.08	08098	Fr. Henri Reignat	France
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60 Years of religious life

1950.12.08	09622	Bro. Stanislaw Makowski	Poland
1950.12.25	09852	Bro. Jozef Cole	Belgium/Holland

60 Years of priesthood

1950.12.08	08113	Fr. John Ngubane	Natal
1950.12.24	08431	Fr. Ottorino Casarotto	Italy
1950.12.24	08416	Fr. Angelo Dal Bello	Italy

50 Years of priesthood

1960.12.11	09661	Fr. Christian Phetla	Central S. A.
1960.12.17	10130	Fr. François Dupont	Belgium/Holland
1960.12.17	09724	Fr. Teótimio González	Spain
1960.12.17	12239	Fr. Henri Leconte	Brazil

25 Years of priesthood

1985.12.05	12487	Fr. Romeo Saniel	Philippines
1985.12.07	12640	Fr. Antonio Borges Mesquita	Brazil
1985.12.12	12523	Fr. Raoul Carag	Philippines
1985.12.21	11863	Fr. Hugh James MacDonald	Lacombe

Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 75-80

NAME	PROV./Del.	BORN	DIED AT	DATE
Fr. Peter Letsatsi	Lesotho	26/06/1960	Maseru	13/10/2010
Fr. Carmelo Iuculano	Italy	27/05/1929	Maddaloni	15/10/2010
Fr. Patrick Phatšoane	Lesotho	10/04/1929	Maseru	18/10/2010
Fr. Edward Cunningham	United States	09/05/1933	San Antonio	28/10/2010
Fr. Walter Verzeletti	Italy	13/06/1932	Brescia	31/10/2010
Fr. Martin Roberge	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	20/09/1928	Richelieu	08/11/2010

“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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