



To which community do I belong?

Fr. Paolo Archiati, OMI, Vicar General

As I mentioned, I would like to say a word in this issue of *OMI Information* about what we might call the pitfalls, challenges and perhaps even the “temptations” that lurk beneath the media about which we have already pointed out several positive aspects in the previous issue. This list is likely to be longer than the first. But I will not give in to the temptation of unnecessarily lengthening it. I will limit myself therefore to emphasizing two or three challenges that the media can represent in relation to community life. These are simple reflections which I share without pretensions.

The first point I wish to make is the time factor. Among the many things that the media have changed, or are changing, it is our relationship to time and the use of the time that is given us. I refer in particular to three types of devices: television, the computer and the cell phone. Experts, in their analyses, discuss real dependencies that can be created in using these devices. The fact of being consecrated religious, of having made made vows, not only does not make us immune to these new “diseases,” nor does it exempt us from a serious examination of the state of our health and of our use of the time that is given us. If we put together the time we spend in one day in front of a monitor, a television, and in front of the small screen of the cell phone, we realize that it totals several hours in most cases. Certainly many of those hours are for work, for the service of the mission, for ministry, but a critical evaluation is mandatory, if not necessary.

Once, one of my confreres told me that he was edified by being in a community of Oblates where there was no television. He had found a

model community, able to make a radical choice, since he personally considered television a real waste of time. I did not know whether to leave him in his state of edification or point out that there was no television in common because everyone had one in his room! Of course, this had solved at least one problem: deciding together what program to watch. But this is also a good community exercise, an opportunity to practice various virtues at the same time, without excluding the possibility of coming to blows over the choice of a channel -- something that has happened, even in an Oblate house!

When I speak of the computer, of course I am referring to its many functions, including especially the internet, e-mail, Skype and many other communications programs that are now increasingly accessible also with a tablet or a cell phone. In this case, in addition to the time factor, one should consider “what” is taking up this time: paperwork, writing letters or messages, chatting with friends, making new friends, looking at a movie, playing online games, and the list could go on. Time for the mission? Time taken from what other activities? A good evaluation of this aspect can help us to find a new balance in our “use of time.” With regard to the community life, I think it is important that the time given to the use of communication tools be balanced by what we give to prayer, the apostolate, reading or studying, working or resting, meeting with our brothers or the simple and cost-free being together.

Together with this theme of time, we should consider the different screens that catch our eyes, whether the computer screen or a television or a tablet or a cell phone. The fact that the computer

is “personal” has made it become, over time, “individual”. This is a concept which is linked to just demands of privacy, which means: here I am and no one can come in. And since no one can come in, I can see and do whatever I want ... perhaps the language of teenagers but common for people of all ages. I know this is a sensitive issue, because it touches upon a person’s conscience, but what I want to emphasize is the importance of a regular and serious consideration of this subject, made in the light of our religious consecration and the values that are essential to it.

The other aspect that I would like to ask you to reflect upon refers to that special community that is located in the contact list of our phone or our tablet

or our laptop. Here are the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the persons who constitute a community in some way “different” from the one we have been given and entrusted to us by the last obedience that we have received. How are these two communities related? Am I happier in the company of the brothers of my Oblate community in which a specific obedience has placed me, or in the company of this “new” community that I have created and to which I can add and subtract members every day at my leisure? If I need help, of whom do I ask it more spontaneously, of one of my brothers or of one of the names that fill my personal contact list? These are questions that I personally ask myself. Asking them in this bulletin is an opportunity to share them.

Holy See

VATICAN RADIO

Bishop Bouchard, Synod Father, a Canadian OMI in Chad

Among the many Synod Fathers from afar, there is Bishop Jean-Claude BOUCHARD, Bishop of Pala in Chad for thirty-seven years. Originally from Canada, he has lived in Chad for 46 years, so he knows the problems of the West, but also those of Africa, since he still retains many ties with his country of origin and with Europe. Bishop Bouchard was present at the first Synod on the Family in 1980; after 34 years, he returns to the microphone of Xavier Sartre, speaking of the changes experienced by this assembly of bishops, and the lively debates among the Synod Fathers during the first week of the 2014 Synod.

We get the sense that the subjects have greatly developed since 1980. Things have become more urgent and problems have increased for many reasons: socio-economic, political, religious, etc. It is true that there are far fewer religious practices than before. There are also far fewer priests. The Church has greatly evolved as a society. The problem of the family, of marriage: that is something that affects everyone, not just people in the Church. It is universal. This applies to all countries in the world and is now evident in the Synod. So for 34 years, since the Synod of 1980, I would say that things have become much more critical, much more urgent. People

are also waiting for something and it’s better prepared. There was a working instrument that was published and many people responded, even the laity. The Pope gave us complete freedom of speech, so that the Synod is much more hectic, edgy and much less formal than that of 1980.

And in your opinion, is that a good thing?

It’s a very good thing. I’ve always been for openness. Besides, if you look at Jesus in the Gospel, what is striking about him is his freedom and openness. And I think one feels that, and we must also recognize the influence of Pope Francis. He is very close to the people and he constantly insists on being close to people, to meet people’s needs. One of the difficulties we now feel in the Synod is that there are people who are very committed to doctrine and others who are more committed to the pastoral approach to people. So how do we put together the doctrinal and the pastoral? This is a problem. I manage to solve this problem by looking at Jesus in the Gospel. You cannot accuse Jesus of not having correct doctrine but he gave priority to people and that is fundamental. So I think we find in Jesus this link between loyalty to his mission and at the same time, openness to people. It’s beautiful. It can help us to come together, to form some consensus, because now we have to compose a document that should have the consent of a large part of the assembly in order to prepare the Synod

next year. On the other hand, during past Synods, things were proposed to the Pope and he himself wrote a document.

The mid-synod report which was presented Monday by Cardinal Erdö sparked quite a commotion. It was felt that there was indeed tension between those who are more committed to doctrine and those who may be more attached to ministry. You, as a Bishop who has dual cultures, since you are Canadian and therefore western, but having spent most of your life in Africa, can you also understand the tension between these two approaches?

I see it very well. It's true that I am still American or Canadian or European. I have great relationships with everyone but I am in charge of a Church in Africa and it is the problems of Africa that concern me first. I simply draw attention to a paragraph that talked about Christian marriage and spoke of cohabitation. So I asked, "And a marriage of custom? A traditional African marriage? Where is it found there?" It is reduced to cohabitation or it no longer exists. Then we will lament that there is a dichotomy between traditional marriage and Christian marriage, the sacrament of marriage. But if marriage of custom is removed, it truly removes the dichotomy but it also removes the traditional marriage that people enter into. And furthermore, traditional marriage is required in order to enter into a Church marriage. So my heart reacts immediately on the side of Africa. It is true that I am a bishop in Africa; I am not African, but that does not matter.

In the mid-synod report, it has been felt

that the topics discussed and those that have grabbed the most attention are very Europe-centered themes. Yes they are common all around the world but they are particularly felt in Europe and North America. Do you think that from this point of view then, the text is a bit out of step with expectations and problems in other parts of the world?

That is almost inevitable in the sense that documents that come from the Church are often Western-inspired. That's true! We already have the good fortune of having a Pope who is not European, who is South American. And the Church in Latin America is quite different. That is an image of the Church. Sometimes I find that African bishops do not dare to say some things. But we have seen this morning that several spoke up on the same subject that I just mentioned. They said "No, traditional marriage is not reduced to cohabitation. If there is a traditional marriage, we must accompany this marriage. What value will we give it?" This is a question that must be asked and there is also this problem: "Can we give the sacraments, recognizing traditional marriages properly done as already valid marriages, even if not sacramental?" It is a problem because in canon law, it says that for a Christian, there is no other marriage than the sacrament. Does it have to stop there? For the people, theirs is a real marriage. It should be recognized as legitimate and therefore able to provide access to the sacrament. But I still say that people are expecting something. We should arrive at the end of this Synod with some openness that will show the people of God that the Church cares about them, that we see the problems and we will try together to find solutions.

General Administration

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

A new document on the Oblate Mission

The document "*Discerning and Sustaining Oblate Mission*" is in conformity with the 2010 General Chapter mandate: "*That in the framework of a renewed Immense Hope Project, Oblates cooperate with the new Central Government, who will develop a fresh animation for mission and for discerning new missionary strategies and*

major missionary challenges, in relationship with the local church, in dialogue with other religious, Oblate Associates, and all people of good will." On Conversion in our Oblate Mission, N° 1, pp. 24-25. With this Document, the Superior General in Council has revised the criteria and policies related to establishing new Oblate Missions in the light of the 2012 edition of the Constitutions and Rules and recent General Chapters, especially the 2010 Chapter.

The Central Government is grateful for the cooperation it received from members of previous General Administrations who reviewed the work done and offered valuable suggestions during the process. It was very helpful that past General Administrations treated this topic between October 1989 and May 2002 and took decisions concerning the procedures related to founding new Oblate mission.

Its content is intended to help all those in the administrative and leadership service of the Congregation. This document also establishes the policy to both change the status and amend the statutes of a Unit. Because of its nature, it could also be used to discern and evaluate the missionary presence of any Oblate community.

The Superior General in Council was guided by the very nature of our identity, expressed in our CRR:

- “We are a missionary Congregation. Our principal service in the Church is to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned.” (C 5)
- “A Mission is established by the Superior General in Council in response to the call of a local Church addressing a perceived missionary need”(C 117).
- “The acceptance of a new Mission and the approval of general contracts between a province and a local ordinary pertain to the Superior General in Council” (R 7e).

The establishing of a new Mission requires a process of discernment in order to make the right decisions in being faithful to our mission in the world today. In the spirit of the Founder, this new document ensures “that the Congregation remains faithful to its mission and to the demands of religious life.” (C 124) “Discerning and Sustaining Oblate Mission” is in line and complementary with the other Central Government administrative documents.

We hope that this document will also help not only Major Superiors but every Oblate and community to discern and evaluate our

ministries at the light of the Oblate Criteria contained in this document. The 2010 Chapter invites Oblates to “periodically submit their ministries to the discernment of their local community for evaluation and review.” cfr. Chapter 2010, On Conversion in our Oblate Mission, N° 3, p. 25.

This document will help us:

- to be faithful in our missionary call to be prophets and inspiring leaders at the service of our communities;
- to listen to the Spirit in obedience to the will of God and for the love of our Oblate mission;
- to use appropriately the authority given to us, especially in timely intervention to address difficult situations of our Oblate Units. (cfr. Chapter 2010, On Conversion in our Service of Leadership and Authority, N° 1, p. 28.)
- to be faithful to the spirit of government according to our CC and RR, guiding those in authority to “make sure that the structures are flexible enough to evolve with our lived experience” (C. 72) and to restructure at the proper time.
- To restructure our Oblate Units in response to the Chapter Call to “continue to evaluate and review our mission, particularly at the level of the whole Congregation, so as to establish priorities to guide us in the effective use of personnel and material resources. (cfr. Chapter 2010, On Conversion in our Service of Leadership and Authority, N° 3, p. 28.)

As we approach our 200th Anniversary of Foundation in 2016, this document of “*Discerning and Sustaining Oblate Mission*” will help us to open new missions and ministries; to accompany and support Units in their situation of growing or decreasing.

This Central Government document is available already in digital version in the three languages of the Congregation. (The Internal Mission Committee of the Central Government, 7 October 2014)

INTERNATIONALEUGENEDEMAZENOD CENTER

A new member for the community

The 6th member of our community arrived on the 20th of August: Fr. Bonga MAJOLA, a young Oblate from South Africa. We can say that 2014 has actually been the starting year of the EMIC. Since 2012 the year in which this new community was founded, we have been living in a temporary situation with the renovations of the property that were not fully completed and a lot of uncertainties about the members of the community: Having to change the Superior because of family problems; the arrival and departure, after 40 days, of Fr. ASODO having to reapply for the right visa, etc. We hope that the arrival of Bonga will put an end to this instability of the foundation of our community.

In spite of these initial difficulties, already a number of activities have been initiated. At the end of January we had a very powerful and special time in Rome, with the members of the General Administration, during which we shared our joys and concerns. We also spent time preparing the essentials for the bicentennial of the foundation of the Congregation.

Most of the renovation of the house was completed in February shortly before the beginning of the session on the Oblate Charism in view of the bicentenary preparation for the Congregation (25 January 1816). And this session became a totally new beginning, marked

with a week's pilgrimage on the footsteps of St. Eugene, by an Oblate group from Belgium and Netherlands. Shortly after this was a two month "Mazenod Experience" in Spanish, which was followed by a pilgrimage of the Oblates and lay people of the Anglo-Irish Province. In July, the Provincial Council of Poland came for a retreat and pilgrimage. This was immediately followed by a three week session for those who work in the Oblate pre-novitiates. In August we had a three week session for the European Scholastics in preparation for Perpetual Oblation. Currently there is another Mazenod Experience in English and a number of other meetings are already on our programme.

The "Mazenod Experience" session is being animated by Richard SUDLIK from the United States Province, Joseph LABELLE from the Aix community, and John O'DOHERTY from the Australian Province. The participants come from 8 Oblate Units: Wolfgang BOEMER from the Province of Central Europe, Tshidiso MOLEKO from the Central Province of South Africa, Adam FILAS from the Assumption Province in Canada, John MALAZDREWICH, Douglas JEFFREY and Daniel SZWARC from the Lacombe Province in Canada, Tony RIGOLI and Paul NOURIE from the United States Province, Marius NIMAL and Ruwan PRASANNA from the Colombo Province of Sri Lanka, Dango SOMOR from the Bangladesh Delegation, Eko SAKTIO and Andri ATMAKA from the Indonesian Province and Bonga MAJOLA from the Aix community. (<http://www.centremazenod.org>)

Africa-Madagascar

CAMEROON

The dark clouds of terror

Northern Cameroon near Nigeria is also a victim of the abuses of the Islamist Boko Haram. Our brother Ferdinand OWONO Ndih, head of the Yves Tabar pre-novitiate in Mokolo, wrote this letter on September 26. We join in thought and prayer with our brothers at sisters.

I had to quickly get to Mokolo where the situation is not at all happy because of the Islamic Boko

Haram sect. It is spreading terror, and life is becoming unbearable. Tomorrow we will bury a catechist who was beheaded on Sunday as he walked home after presiding over prayer in his community in the absence of a priest. That same Sunday, the chapel at Ldoubam (a few kilometers from the border near Mokolo) was burned and a village destroyed by a hundred individuals armed "to the teeth". They opened fire on a population that was taking its Sunday walk in peace. In the disturbance, a policeman and a young teacher fresh out of Normal School in Maroua were

beheaded. It's horrible what we are experiencing in this part of the national triangle.

Thank God, we have an army (BIR: Rapid Intervention Battalion) that gives the best of itself and achieves significant victories, but given the extent of the border, it cannot be everywhere. In short, the situation is sad and the cost of living is undergoing a significant surge.

Here at the pre-novitiate, we will have 16 young men; 10 are already here, but 6 from Nigeria are not here yet because Cameroon has closed its border in the north because of the BH sect and in the south because of the Ebola disease. What's to be done, I do not know. Currently we have started a program with those who are here until things become clearer. (*OMI France*, October 2014)

Asia-Oceania

PHILIPPINES

Zeal and martyrdom: 75 years in Mindanao

The seemingly endless odds facing its missions and the gory tales of martyrdom of its four members never dampened the zeal of the Oblate Congregation to keep on working for the needy southern Moro, Christian and Lumad communities.

The Oblates celebrated on September 25th through the 27th their 75 years of presence in the country's south, a mission pioneered by seven foreign missionaries led by Gerard MONGEAU, a French-Canadian priest from Quebec.

Thousands of volunteer lay workers and representatives of the Catholic communities from different barrios in Mindanao converged on Midsayap town in North Cotabato to commemorate the historic arrival in the country of Mongeau's group on Sept. 25, 1939.

The rosy 75-year history of the presence in the country of the Oblates is one written in the blood, sweat and tears of its Filipino and foreign missionaries, some of them jailed by the Japanese during World War II on suspicions they were spies of American forces.

Many Oblate priests were also persecuted by the military in the 1970s for maintaining close contact with leaders of Moro rebel groups—mostly students of schools their Congregation established—who dropped out to join the secessionist uprising.

Mongeau and his companions arrived in Manila by boat, the *Empress of Japan*, which departed

from a port in the United States of America on August 15, 1939. The seven Oblates then took over the missions of the Jesuits, in what were known in those days as the Empire Province of Cotabato and in the Sulu archipelago. After setting foot in Mindanao, Mongeau and his six companions, Egide BEAUDOIN, Cuthbert BILLMAN, Francis MCSORLEY, Joseph BOYD, Emile BOLDUC and George DION, immediately started organizing communities of mixed Muslim, Christian and Lumad communities in far-flung areas, some reachable only on horseback and carts drawn by water buffaloes.

The seven priests opened Catholic schools, admitting non-Christians and Lumads. Today, the schools are part of the influential Notre Dame Educational Association, which groups more than 100 academic institutions scattered in Central Mindanao and the island provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Oblate Missionary Eliseo MERCADO Jr., director of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance, said their missionary works in southern Philippines is one fraught with never-ending challenges, which fan what is for him "flames of devotion" in their hearts. Mercado, who had served in Moro enclaves in Maguindanao, is presently engaged in various peace-building activities in Mindanao, assisted by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung of Germany.

"I feel so proud being an Oblate. There is closeness with people in areas where we serve. Our media (ministry) is known for bringing the Muslims and Christians close to each other," said Orlando Cardinal QUEVEDO, Cotabato's Catholic archbishop.

Four members of the OMI have been killed in one attack after another, while performing missionary works in Mindanao. The killings never dampened the congregation's zeal to serve the area's poor and needy sectors.

The first Oblate martyred in the Philippines was Nelson JAVELLANA, who was killed in an ambush on Nov. 3, 1971 somewhere at the borders of what are now chartered provinces of Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat.

Bishop Benjamin DE JESUS, head of the Jolo vicariate, was gunned down near the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in downtown Jolo, capital of Sulu, on Feb. 4, 1997.

The murder of De Jesus preceded the brutal killing of another Oblate priest, Benjamin INOCENCIO, also in a busy spot in Jolo on December 28, 2000. He was shot dead by a gunman armed with a .45 caliber pistol.

Oblate priest Rey RODA, who was born and raised in Cotabato City, was gunned down by Abu Sayyaf bandits in a bungled attempt to snatch him while inside a campus of a Notre Dame school in the island town of Tabawan in Tawi-Tawi on Jan. 15, 2008.

Two foreign Oblate priests, American Clarence BERTELSMAN and Frenchman Yves CAROFF, were kidnapped in separate incidents in Jolo and in South Upi town in Maguindanao, respectively, during the 1990s. Bertelsman and Caroff both never left the country after having been rescued from their captors and went on with their missionary works until they died of old age. (By John Unson in philstar.com)

KOREA

New ways of being "close to people"

Fr Maurizio GIORGIANNI is an Italian Oblate who has worked as a missionary in South Korea for 21 year. The ministry of the Oblate missionaries in Korea is not only connected with traditional parish life but is also centered on the homeless, the street people and immigrants from other countries. Below are some excerpts from

an interview he did with ucanews.it prior to the August visit of Pope Francis to Korea.

When I arrived here, I immediately studied the language for a couple of years. Then I began to follow the footsteps of Father Giovanni ZEVOLA, another Italian missionary who worked here for many years and is now working in China. He worked mostly with immigrants since 1995, meaning all those workers in small factories that do business for the big companies like Samsung and Hyundai.

The majority are Filipinos, but there are also some from Bangladesh and China. The bulk reached South Korea after the financial crisis of 1997, and that's when the problems exploded. Father Giovanni went to the bus terminal where all those immigrants gathered in the evening. He talked to them; he showed interested in their problems. Often they did not receive a just wage, or the contracts were not fulfilled.

Especially in the small factories, the exploitation ran very high. On top of that, almost all of these foreigners had problems communicating. They did not know the language. I now continue the work that Father Giovanni had started. The situation today has changed slightly. In some ways it has even improved. The workers certainly have more rights today than twenty years ago. But there are other problems.

I also work in another field, that of mixed marriages: Filipina, Vietnamese, Cambodian women that marry Korean men. There are agencies that 'scout' for wives. But in fact, it is an actual purchase.

There are many Korean middle-aged men who fail to find a Korean wife, for various reasons. It may be a matter of social status, which in Korea is still very important; or maybe this person has mental or physical problems, or he comes from a previous marriage that ended in failure – a factor that still weighs on the image of a man in Korea.

And a Korean woman is more demanding than a Filipina. At that point, the best solution is offered by these agencies. They look for women in

developing countries who often may come from remote villages, may be almost illiterate, and so to speak, don't have high expectations. But there are incentives involved.

First of all, there is a lot of money at stake. These are mostly women who come from very poor families. For them, marrying a Korean means getting out of a troubled economic and social situation. The marriage represents an economic benefit for the whole family of the woman. And this is also the reason why these types of marriages, which are not based on solid foundations, don't last long.

There is a culture and language difference between the couple. But often the reason for the failure is the motive that led to the formation of the union in the first place. A man that goes to these agencies to look for a wife often does it for reasons of loneliness or because maybe he needs someone to keep the house clean, or just to cook for him. And then there is the money. Finding a wife with this system can cost from 10 to 20 million *won*, or US\$20,000.

Imagine what happens if the wife tries to rebel against the husband if she is treated badly. The typical reaction of the man is: with all that you cost me, how do you dare to contradict me? Of course there are happy couples too, but these are the most common problems.

When a girl comes to me, it means that she has already run away from the husband. And this can be a big problem. If the union did not last at least for two years, the husband can go to the immigration office and report her. Then, the girl, though still officially his wife, becomes illegal, an illegal in all respects, and when traced and caught, these women are sent to detention centers which are just like prisons.

For me, what matters is to be close to these people. It is not so much about solving the problems for the foreign workers, but it is essential that these people feel the presence of someone who is on their side. If I look at the results, I can honestly say that I do not have many, but I am satisfied if I know that they feel that they have been loved.

These people need two things most of all: love and companionship.

COLOMBO

A new house for Piumi and her family

Fr. Dilan PERERA works with the organization, Dream Team & Combined Charities, in helping to build decent houses for the poor. He says: "We continue our quest to help those in need from different walks of life as well as those whose wants are found in a variety of ways. Luke's Gospel (chapter 10) tells the story of a brigand who set upon a man and, after beating him up, relieved him of his possessions, leaving him to die. After many passersby ignored him, a Good Samaritan befriended this battered stranger and ensured his wellbeing. The benefactors who support the Dream Team & Combined Charities can be likened to the Good Samaritan, when we consider the amount of caring and compassion that flows out to help a stranger in need. This willingness to donate has been forthcoming without question or preconditions and has been frequently seized upon as an opportunity to assist someone in need."

In this regard, Fr. Perera and friends of the Dream Team, Combined Charities recently celebrated a joyous event. With the support of benefactors of the Dream Team & C. C., they were able to fully fund the building of a home for a young girl named Piumi Chaturika and her family. This family is now part of a lucky group of 44 families (recipients of "Houses for the Poor") who now live in structures that they can truly call home.

Piumi's mother earns 400 LKR per day (approximately US\$ 3.08) working as a cleaner. She receives her salary at the end of the month and has no other means of support. The father does odd jobs and has very little income. What they earn, they spend on food. The children struggle to find financial support for their education.

RUSSIAN SIBERIA

Love is stronger than death

It was one of the tenderest moments he had ever witnessed. Archbishop Roger SCHWIETZ, of the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska, was

celebrating the 20th anniversary of a small parish in rural Siberia. During a special service he presented a cross to a man named André. André took the cross, cupped it in his hands, and kissed the image of the Crucified Jesus. It was a powerful moment for the archbishop, because André knows all too well about suffering. He is one of the last survivors of the Siberian labor camps from the days of the former Soviet Union.

Archbishop Schwietz met André at one of the most unusual parishes in the world. The Church of the Nativity of Jesus is located in the town of Magadan, in the easternmost region of Russia. At one time Magadan was Russia's Auschwitz. It was the administrative center of Stalin's death camps where an estimated two million people perished from exposure, starvation and execution. Many were imprisoned for their religious beliefs or ethnicity. The parish is a mission of the Archdiocese of Anchorage, making Archbishop Schwietz one of only a handful of Catholic bishops whose diocese is in two countries on two continents.

"My trip there was not only an eventful one, it was also long," said Archbishop Schwietz. "Having to travel east from Anchorage, through Moscow because of airline schedules, I experienced parts of Russia I had never seen before. Everywhere we went, the people were very interested in hearing about the life of the Church in the United States and especially in Alaska. They were grateful for the positive relationship we have in Alaska with our Russian Orthodox brothers and sisters."

Archbishop Schwietz said the most memorable moment of his visit to Magadan was when he gathered with some of the few remaining survivors of the gulags. He was amazed at how much these people had suffered, and how they had been able to recover their lives because of the strong faith.

Archbishop Schwietz met a woman named Olga, who was beaten and tortured during her 11-year ordeal in the labor camps. Her "crime" was that she was suspected of having contact with nationalists, which she never did. Olga was only 18 years old when she was sent to Magadan.

"They employed the most frightening tortures and beatings," said Olga. "When I was returned (to my cell), I would be half-dead, black, beaten up like a piece of meat."

Archbishop Schwietz also met Anastasia, who was arrested by the KGB on June 1, 1947, in Ukraine while attending Mass. Dozens of people, including most of Anastasia's family, were arrested that day as the KGB cracked down on religious expression. Anastasia spent the next seven years working in the camps.

"What helped me to survive those seven years in prison?" Anastasia said. "Probably, like for all, it was God's will, His strength and the Holy Spirit. Whatever I did, and wherever I went, I constantly prayed." Andre, Olga and Anastasia each received a cross from Archbishop Schwietz to represent their suffering and triumph. Many of the survivors cried when they received their crosses. (By Michael Viola, originally published in Oblate World Magazine)

INDIA

Becoming an "Indian" Province

Tamil missionaries from Jaffna worked for a long time only in Tamil Nadu with Tamil vocations for various reasons. This meant that the Oblates in India were often seen as a "Tamil Congregation". St Eugene Oblate Province of India now seeks to become a truly Indian Oblate foundation and not a Tamil or South Indian Province.

Over the years we have had a few vocations from Andhra Pradesh and a few from the Oravan tribe of Central India. Our Province seeks to extend its missionary charism to various cultural and linguistic terrains rather than to one or two groups. We need to grow with a good cultural and linguistic mix and thus not become parochial. It is advantageous from the Oblate vocation point of view. And by spreading into many dioceses, we can have a positive influence on the Indian Church.

This is the dream of the Province and not of a few individuals: "Mission in the Northeast". This proposal came up already in the last congress in 2007. The Northeast is on the border of China

and Bangladesh. Northeast India is the eastern-most region of India connected to East India via a narrow corridor squeezed between Nepal and Bangladesh. Northeast India's population (all 8 states combined) is approximately 40 million (2011 census), which represents 3.1% of the total Indian population (1,210 million).

Our mission in Northeast India has been in progress for several years now. Between 2010 and 2012, we have established our presence in several states and dioceses.

Starting new missions in a given Unit is a clear sign of growth and vibrancy of the missionary charism. In keeping with the missionary vision of the province emerging from the Congress 2009 and the mission-vision of the Province in August 2011, the Provincial Council has been proactive in accepting new missions. The linguistic and cultural diversity in these new areas will add to the possibilities for new vocations and a truly Indian identity for the St. Eugene Province. (from BORN Newsletter, October 2014)

Canada-United States

ASSUMPTION PROVINCE

Youth experience missionary life in Madagascar

This summer, we had the opportunity to travel to Madagascar with a group of 11 young adults from the Toronto area Oblates of Mary Immaculate Parishes. We were accompanied by Fr. Marcin SERWIN and Fr. Piotr NOWAK. The purpose of our trip was to experience missionary life and the life of the people in Madagascar. For three weeks we worked with the members of various missions, teaching the basics of the English language, math, health and geography. We attended Masses in the Malagasy language and learned many of the local traditions. Fr. Marcin kept us busy, making sure we weren't sleeping more than 4 hours a day. The days were long and hard, physically, emotionally and spiritually, but the joy we saw in the people we crossed paths with gave us the extra push we needed. How could people who have so little be so much happier than those of us who have everything we could possibly want?

Our journey began the moment each of us signed up with Fr. Marcin for the experience. For three months prior to our departure, we spent our weekends fundraising and raising awareness for our experience. In the evenings, after days spent at our jobs, we would each work on our assigned projects. Every program we presented and taught in the villages of Madagascar was created by members of our team. We worked hard on learning the Malagasy language in the hope that we would be better able to communicate

with the local people. By learning the "Our Father" we would often surprise parishioners when we started praying with them. For them, hearing a "guest" speak their language was a new experience for them. They would help us with pronunciation when we had troubles and we would give them lessons in English and teach them something new. They opened their homes to us and welcomed us with songs and dances. The children played with us, gave us smiles and hugs from which we could feel their love pouring out. And still we asked how they could be so happy.

The answer came to us during the final days of our experience. Along with the parishioners of the St. John Paul II Parish in Morondava, we built a fence around a new chapel that had been built in an outlying village in the bush. There was only one Catholic family in that village, but they were sure the faith would grow. That was our greatest eye-opener: the growing faith gave these people something to believe in; the knowledge that God still cared for them and looked out for them. One evening during adoration by candle-light, we looked around us and saw how deeply the people were praying. Every word, every moment, they had faith that their prayers would be heard. During our final drive back to the capital from where we would travel back home, we saw an accident happen. A van transporting people from village to village turned over. Without waiting or questioning their own safety, anyone who could was helping the passengers to safety. It was the sense of community that finally gave us our answer. The people of Madagascar are so happy with so little because they have more than we do.

They have a strong belief in faith and an amazing sense of community that unites them into a great family. Those are the things that matter to them and make them see true joy in life, the fact that they live not for themselves, but for others, to share their love.

Even though Fr. Marcin told us how enriching this experience would be, we left for Madagascar thinking that we would teach the people we would meet more than they could ever learn on their own. When we think back now, the very opposite happened. The people of Madagascar

taught us more than we could have ever learned on our own. They showed us what life is truly about and that we don't need everything and anything to be happy. Our faith and community will always be there for us and that is enough. Each of us changed during this experience. It might not have been a big change, but it opened our eyes and made us see clearly for the first time in our young lives. We would like to thank the Missionary Oblates in Madagascar for making this experience possible for us. They became a part in making us who we are. (The Young Oblate Missionaries from Canada)

Europe

ANGLO-IRISH PROVINCE

Award of the 'Good Samaritan Medal'

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate have been organizing pilgrimages from Britain and Ireland to Lourdes since 1888. For the last 28 years, Fr. Vincent MULLIGAN has led the group. Each year in September, the Oblates journey with 120 sick pilgrims to the famous Marian Shrine.

The care of the sick has been at the core of Fr. Vincent's ministry. He is highly regarded for his dedication to caring for those who are often forgotten and rejected by modern day society. This year, to mark his distinguished service and on the occasion of his golden jubilee as a priest, he was awarded the "Good Samaritan Medal" by the Pontifical Council for Health Care workers. Bishop Ray Field, Auxiliary of Dublin, presented the medal. Fr. Vincent is the first person in Ireland to receive this award.

In awarding the medal, Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski wrote: "As President of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, I feel honoured to grant the award of the Good Samaritan medal to a distinguished priest of the Anglo-Irish Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Vincent Mulligan, OMI, for being a neighbour, for being the Christ for the many brothers and sisters he has helped flee to mother Mary, during their times of pain and trial, knowing that she would listen to her suffering children and bring them close to the heart of her Son and their brother Christ. Thank you for

being an instrument of God's love and compassion. Thank you for inspiring and encouraging them to trust in God always. Thank you for being a good Samaritan. Thank you for being somebody they can lean on in their pilgrimage." (Lorcan O'REILLY)

UKRAINE

25th Anniversary of the Delegation

On 22 – 25 September, the Oblates in the Ukraine Delegation held their annual study days at Obukhiv and completed celebrations of the 25th anniversary of their ministry in that country. Present for the celebration were two Oblate bishops and former delegation superiors, Bishop Jacek PYL, the Auxiliary Bishop of Odessa-Simferopol, and Bishop Radosław ZMITROWICZ, Auxiliary Bishop of Kamyanets-Podilskyi. Also present were the Vicar Provincial of the Polish Province, Fr. Marcin SZAFORS and the Vice-Director of the Polish Province's Mission office, Fr. Mariusz BOSEK. The Ukraine Delegation is attached to the Polish Province.

At one point, the Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, was able to join the celebration via Skype. Also joining via Skype were Frs. Peter BIELEWICZ and Andzej MADEJ who were in Belorussia at the time, as well as Fr. Krzysztof BUZIKOWSKI in Eupatoria, occupied Crimea.

The time together in Obukhiv was filled with reflection on the history of the Delegation, but

also with thoughtful reflection on the future. Many of the Oblates shared their experience of working in Ukraine: there were interesting and sometimes unusual stories, often colorful and amusing, illustrated with photos and videos. Much time was given to communal prayer, especially before the Blessed Sacrament. Prayer was offered for the intentions of the Delegation, for vocations and for the continued precarious situation in Ukraine.

At the close of the gathering, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, Archbishop Thomas Edward Gullickson, presided at Eucharist, concelebrated with Bishop Pyl and the Oblates. Before the Mass, there was the dedication of a statue of St. Eugene located on the façade of the church. The Nuncio received a warm welcome from the Delegation Superior, Fr. Pavlo WYSZKOWSKI.

A few days later, on 27 September, the parish in Tyvriv celebrated the Oblate anniversary. Mons. Bronislaw Biernacki, Bishop of Odessa-Simferopol, presided at the Eucharist. This bishop had been very helpful to the Oblates in the early days of the mission in Ukraine. His Auxiliary, Bishop Pyl concelebrated, as did Fr. Marian GIL, the Provincial of Assumption Province in Canada.

CRIMEA

Living with uncertainty

The Oblate mission in Crimea continues. As a community, we would like to thank the entire Oblate family for their prayers and support. We have often felt the strength of this community that St. Eugene so frequently emphasized.

With its seaside setting, our house was always a place of summer retreat and repose for children and families. This summer, unfortunately, we were unable to offer this service. The house was empty because no group was interested in coming.

During this period, we have been living with uncertainty about whether we would be able to carry out our normal pastoral work in Crimea. In September, we began our pastoral year, with all the activities that we did in the past. Our

mission territory is the city of Eupatoria and several nearby towns. On a regular basis, we get to all of the places where the faithful gather. The faithful also experience this feeling of uncertainty. But for them, they insist that the presence of the Oblates is a “source of hope.” The lay people are deeply involved in our Oblate mission.

Like all parishes in Crimea, we are facing the issue of re-registering. Another serious business is the residency permit of the Oblates with the Office of Immigration. No one among the Oblate Delegation has a passport of the Russian Federation. Therefore, in order for us to continue our ministry, we must obtain the appropriate permits to stay in Crimea.

As Oblates of the Immaculate, we have begun a month of pilgrimage with the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. This is our response to the spiritual needs of the region as we pray to God for the Oblate ministry in this place. Those who are interested may visit our website: <http://www.evpatoria.omi.org.ua/>

POLAND

European Oblate editors meet in Poznan

The history of the Oblate reviews and magazines goes back to the year 1862 when Fr. Joseph FABRE, the second Superior General, initiated the review called ‘Missions’. It provided a common platform for the Oblates to share their joys and sorrows in missions with one another. Since then many Oblates around the world have become enthusiastic users of printed and electronic media for evangelization. Such an enthusiastic group of editors of Oblates magazines, reviews and newsletters in Europe gathered together at the Polish Provincial House in Poznan from October 15 to 17.

The main organizers of the event were Frs. Pasquale CASTRILLI, the editor of *Missioni OMI* in Italy and Marcin WRZOS, the editor of *Misyjne Drogi* in Poland. At his introductory talk Fr. Pasquale revealed that it was 18 years ago that such a meeting was last organized, when the European editors met in Mainz, Germany in 1996. The idea of another such encounter was

first born when a group of young Oblates from across Europe gathered together in Spain two years ago. Therefore this was a much anticipated occasion for the participants.

Fr. Fabio CIARDI set the perfect tone to the whole discussion when he did an excellent presentation on 'Media and Evangelization'. After that Fr. Pasquale read out the message from the Superior General where he pointed out the importance of collaboration among Oblates to live our charism in today's context. Much of the first and second days were dedicated to hearing from the participants about their own work in the fields of printed and electronic media in their respective countries. Then there were several rounds of discussion on the preparation for the Oblate Triennium, the better collaboration among Oblate magazines and the future of our publications. Several key practical decisions were made including the agreement to create common internet platforms to share photos and news articles.

There were 18 participants altogether including Pasquale and Marcin: Frs. Alfons KUPKA, Wojciech KLUJ, Blazei MIELCAREK (Poland); Christoph HEINEMANN (Germany); Elio FILARDO (Rumania); Fabio CIARDI, Shanil JAYAWARDENA (General Administration); Zbigniew OPYD (France-Benelux); Cyprian CZOP (Ukraine); Bro. Bertrand EVELIN (France); Scholastics Maciej DRZEWICZAK, Pawel PILARCZYK (Poland) and Gianluca RIZZARO (Italy); and lay collaborators Kinga Baszczuk, Katarzyna Zielony (Poland) and Sebastian Veits (Germany).

The gathering ended on a very positive note when the participants unanimously proposed and seconded to gather again after two years to evaluate progress. Big thanks to the Polish Provincial House community who warmly welcomed the visitors and provided all the necessary facilities to make the event a success. (Shanil Jayawardena)

Anniversaries for December 2014

65 Years of religious life

1949.12.08	09410	Fr. Robert Filion	Lacombe
1949.12.08	08790	Fr. Camillo Prosdocimo	Mediterranean

60 Years of religious life

1954.12.08	10415	Bro. Hervé Givelet	Cameroun
1954.12.08	09851	Fr. René Lapointe	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

60 Years of priesthood

1954.12.18	08580	Fr. Ciaran Dillon	United States
1954.12.18	09110	Fr. John King	United States
1954.12.18	08583	Fr. Colm O'Riain	Anglo-Irish

50 Years of religious life

1964.12.08	11897	Bro. Karl-Heinz Lillig	Central European
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50 Years of priesthood

1964.12.16	10529	Fr. David Kalert	United States
1964.12.16	10410	Fr. Antony Lisema Matsoso	Lesotho
1964.12.16	10282	Fr. Dudley J. Perera	Colombo
1964.12.16	10556	Fr. Harry Winter	United States
1964.12.19	10712	Fr. Roger Bergkamp	United States
1964.12.19	10315	Fr. Claudio Brisson	Argentina-Chile
1964.12.19	10689	Fr. Jean-Marie Côté	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1964.12.19	10559	Fr. Ronald Dechant	Lacombe

1964.12.19	10658	Fr. Alfredo Fernández	Mediterranean
1964.12.19	10717	Fr. Terence Figel	United States
1964.12.19	10890	Fr. Thomas Hayes	United States
1964.12.19	10812	Fr. Martin Mader	Central European
1964.12.19	10709	Fr. Elmar Mauer	United States
1964.12.19	10742	Fr. Edmond Paradis	Lacombe
1964.12.19	10673	Fr. Normand Provencher	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1964.12.19	10623	Fr. Etienne Van Doosselaere	Belgium/Holland
1964.12.20	10707	Fr. George Brown	United States
1964.12.20	10580	Fr. Joseph Daly	Anglo-Irish
1964.12.20	10577	Fr. Brian De Burca	Anglo-Irish
1964.12.20	10585	Fr. Patrick Dwyer	Australia
1964.12.20	10584	Fr. Ignatius Fidgeon	Northern S. A.
1964.12.20	10726	Fr. Alfred Groleau	Lacombe
1964.12.20	10798	Fr. Lewy Keelty	Australia
1964.12.20	10795	Fr. Patrick Moroney	Australia
1964.12.21	10479	Fr. Eugene Cañas	United States
1964.12.21	10470	Fr. Emmanuel Fernando	Colombo
1964.12.21	10475	Fr. Isidore Garcia	United States
1964.12.21	10284	Fr. Theogenes Joseph	Jaffna
1964.12.21	10476	Msgr. Michael Pfeifer	United States
1964.12.21	10599	Fr. Emmanuel Jesuthasan Philip	Jaffna
1964.12.21	10283	Fr. Philip Singarayar	United States
1964.12.21	10466	Fr. Don George Warnakulasuriya	Colombo
1964.12.23	10567	Fr. Albert Lalonde	Lacombe
1964.12.26	10695	Fr. Leo Rocheleau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1964.12.27	10332	Fr. Gérard-François Cloutier	Haiti
1964.12.27	10691	Fr. François Gendron	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
1964.12.27	10752	Fr. Wilfried Joye	Central S. A.
1964.12.27	10762	Fr. Guus Koolen	Belgium/Holland
1964.12.27	10736	Fr. Daniël Loobuyck	Belgium/Holland
1964.12.27	10749	Fr. Pieter Peeraer	Central S. A.
1964.12.27	10897	Fr. Marc van Tente	Belgium/Holland

25 Years of religious life

1989.12.25	13335	Fr. Tarsisius Riswanta	Indonesia
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25 Years of priesthood

1989.12.07	12895	Fr. Ellince Martyr	Haiti
1989.12.16	12915	Fr. Gennaro Rosato	Mediterranean
1989.12.17	12831	Fr. Simon Tholoana Tholoana	Lesotho
1989.12.29	12851	Fr. Rafael Tianero	Philippines

Prayers for our deceased

No. 80-87

Name	Prov./Del.	Born	Died at	Date
Fr. Josef Sander	Paraguay	02/10/1927	Hünfeld	26/09/2014
Fr. Augustyn Matysek	Poland	17/09/1931	Poznan	29/09/2014
Fr. Floor de Grauw	Belgium/Holland	11/05/1919	Utrecht	04/10/2014
Fr. Daniel O'Leary	United States	17/04/1923	Weymouth	08/10/2014
Fr. Roger Bulamba Kambambi	Paraguay	20/01/1963	Asuncion	10/10/2014
Bro. Elio Napoletano	Mediterranean	25/06/1935	San Felice a Canello	18/10/2014
Fr. Berthold Lendeckel	Central European	07/07/1934	Fulda	20/10/2014
Fr. Guy Lavallée	OMI Lacombe	15/11/1939	Winnipeg	25/10/2014

“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)

OMI INFORMATION is an unofficial publication
of the General Administration of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
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Printing & circulation: Shanil Jayawardena