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Celebrating 200 years of missionary service in the Church 1816-2016

Oblate Mission with Migrants and Refugees

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Migrant and Refugee Situation: the Oblates have not been indifferent!

Pope St. John Paul II, in his letter of 25 June 1982 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, described the plight of refugees as “*a shameful wound (scourge) of our times*”. He was the first pontiff to speak openly of the refugee problem as “*a symptom of global infirmity and of a festering wound.*” He dared to pinpoint the refugee problem: “*Of all the human tragedies of our day, perhaps the greatest is that of refugees.*”

It describes an alarming human crisis of today. More than any other people, the refugees of today embody human suffering and despair: persecution, torture, rape, murder, genocide, ambition of nations, racism, political conflicts, religious persecutions, war, and violations of human rights force them to flee from their own country or to become ‘*internally displaced people*’ within their own country. They have been cut off from their own people, their history and their culture. This suffering must be a concern for the Church and the Oblates.

As Oblates, our response to the cry of the refugees has been a consoling one. From the very inception of our Congregation, St. Eugene de Mazenod, as a priest, committed himself to the uprooted people in Marseilles, especially to the Italian economic refugees. As a political refugee in Italy,

he understood what it means to be a refugee. After he became a bishop, he entrusted this work to Frs. ALBINI, SEMERIA, ROLLERI, ZIRIO and Gallo, who were of Italian origin (cf. G. COSENTINO, *Storia della Provincia d’Italia: Ossia la Nostra Congregazione in Italia dai suoi inizi al 1950*, Santa Maria a Vico, 1950, p. 21).

The Oblates in all five regions: Canada-USA, Latin America, Africa-Madagascar, Europe and Asia-Oceania, are involved in different capacities in the pastoral care of refugees and migrants. This is an encouraging and enriching dimension of our Oblate life. Care of refugees and migrants is implied in our Constitution 5: “*We are a missionary Congregation. Our principal service in the Church is to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned. [...] Wherever we work, our mission is especially to those people whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring. These are the poor with their many faces; we give them our preference.*”

According to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by mid-2015, the refugee flow had increased an estimated 15.1 million, its highest level in 20 years. (Ref: UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2015, p.4). The High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Gutierrez, said: “*This forced displacement is now profoundly affecting our times. It touches*

the lives of millions of our fellow human beings. Never has there been a greater need for tolerance, compassion and solidarity with people who have lost everything."

Catholic Magisterium

The refugee problem involves moral and ethical principles related to the dignity and fundamental rights of a person. These principles are rooted in the Gospel. The Church document, "*Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity*" (1992), concludes with these words: "*The tragedy of groups and even of entire peoples forced to go into exile is felt today as a constant attack on essential human rights.*"

The Church's commitment in addressing the root causes of refugees and welcoming them with open arms was shaped in particular from the papacy of Leo XIII up to the present day.

There was no clear teaching on refugees at the beginning of 18th century. The refugee issue was mingled with that of migrants, especially of the European migrants to America. Pius XII organized and restructured the pastoral care for *people on the move* and published *Exsul familia*, the Magna Carta of migrants, in 1952.

Following Pius XII, Pope St. John XXIII addressed the refugee issue and stressed the right of every family to migrate when they were not able to meet their basic needs in their homeland. The Second Vatican Council discussed the issue in several documents. The post-Conciliar Popes contributed much to help refugees. Blessed Pope Paul VI called on all people to help refugees regain their dignity and liberty, and Pope St. John Paul II challenged the conscience of the world to stand in human solidarity with them.

Pope Benedict XVI called for the International community to reach out for the protection of refugees. Now, Pope Francis appeals to the world to wipe away the tears of the refugees and give them protection and shelter. He even set an example, by hosting a refugee family in the Vatican.

The central core of the Church's Magisterium is the dignity of the human person created in

the image of God. From this dignity spring the universal and irrevocable rights: 'the right to dwell freely in one's own country', 'to have a homeland', 'to move within it and to emigrate abroad', 'to settle in a new place for legitimate reasons', 'to live with one's own family anywhere', 'to have at one's disposal the goods necessary for life', 'to preserve and develop one's own ethnic, cultural and linguistic patrimony', 'to profess one's own religion publicly', 'to be recognized and treated in accordance with one's dignity as a person under all circumstances', and 'to be the focus of fraternal solidarity and preferential option' (PCPCMT, *Chiesa e mobilità umana* (1985), p. 366, n. 17; English trans. in *CLD*, 9 (1978-1981), pp. 133-134).

The Catholic Church embraces the efforts to protect and assist refugees, whether baptized or non-baptized, because of the mandate it has received from its Founder, Christ himself (Mt. 25:35, 40; 28: 19-20; Lk. 10:33-35). Furthermore, the flight of the Holy Family of Nazareth into Egypt morally compels us to embrace the refugees in our compassionate pastoral care. This disposition of the Church is implicit in its universal legislation: "[...] *the salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law in the Church, is to be kept before one's eyes*" (c. 1752).

The Instruction, *De pastorali migratorum cura* (1969), lists the rights of people on the move, the right of a homeland; to migrate with the family; to keep one's native tongue and spiritual heritage, and to be ministered to by priests who have a correct knowledge of their condition.

The Document, *Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity*, presents the Church's Magisterium on refugees. It advocates a very broad definition of a refugee: all those who flee from life-threatening situations. The Instruction, *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* (2004), is the latest update in the Church's pastoral response to the '*people on the move*'. It recognizes the importance of culture in forced migration. It identifies the various pastoral agents involved and brings out the juridical-pastoral norms at the service of the special care of refugees.

Our Oblate Response

Nobody will deny that refugees are the most abandoned people in the world today. The service to refugees is our challenge today, if we are true to our charism and mission. Our Constitutions and Rules continue challenge us forcefully that it is our fundamental obligation to help to create a society based on the dignity of the human person which, in truth and reality, is denied to refugees. We are challenged by Rule 9a: *“Action on behalf of Justice is an integral part of evangelisation. Responding to the call of the Spirit, some Oblates*

identify themselves with the poor, sharing their life and commitment to justice; others are present where decisions affecting the future of the poor are being made”

Thus, as Oblates, let us continue to let our lives be enriched by the poor – the refugees and migrants, who are at the fringe of society (cf. Rule 8). May we find a great consolation and strength in recognising the hidden face of Jesus, the Crucified Saviour, in the torn face of refugees and migrants, our beloved brothers and sisters!

Africa-Madagascar

CONGO

Oblate Bicentenary Week

On Pentecost Sunday, May 15, about 40 men and women made either their first commitment or renewed their commitment as members of the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate; the ceremony took place in the “Our Father” chapel of the Higher Institute of Applied Technology at Kinshasa, within the Saint Eloi Parish in Kinshasa-Barumbu. The MAMI is composed of lay associates of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. They come from parishes served by the Oblates in Kinshasa, namely Saint Philippe, Saint Eloi, Saint Justin and Christ Savior. They prayed for the strength of the Holy Spirit so as to live, in the midst of the world, the charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, the French priest who founded the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1816, some 200 years ago.

The assistant chaplain of the association, Father Gilbert KIKALULU, presided at the Eucharist and received the commitment of the laity in the name of the provincial superior of the Oblates, Father Abel NSOLO. Before the president of the association, Désiré Baere, the members promised their dedication to the group and to the Church.

The commitment of the laity was the beginning of an entire week which the Missionary Oblates called the “Bicentenary Week.” It closed on Sunday, May 22, with a Mass presided by the Archbishop of Kinshasa, Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, in Saint Eloi parish church in Kinshasa-Barumbu. During the week, conferences were organized in different parishes on the life of Saint Eugene de Mazenod and on the presence of the Missionary Oblates in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Angola. On Friday and Saturday, there was a missionary exposition in the courtyard of the church of Saint Eloi. (JBMK/RV)

Asia-Oceania

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Oblate in charge of Social Communications

The Catholic Bishops Conference in Sri Lanka has appointed Fr. Lal PUSHPADEWA as the National Director Social Communications. He is the youngest and the first religious priest to be appointed to this position.

Fr. Lal’s interest in the arts was already instilled in him long before his seminary days and after

joining the Oblates, he received the much needed freedom and encouragement to follow his passion. When Pope Francis made a historic visit to Sri Lanka in January 2015, Fr. Lal was given a major task in the area of media coverage of the event. The way he organized it was very much appreciated by all quarters. During the Year of Consecrated Life Fr. Lal also produced a documentary film called “Immortal Souls” which speaks about the life and ministry of men and women religious congregations in the country.

As a part of his new responsibility Fr. Lal will act as the President of SIGNIS – Sri Lanka as well. *Oblate Communications* wishes him all the very best for his new ministry. (Shanil JAYAWARDENA)

PHILIPPINES

Evangelizing by radio

Early each morning, before the sun rises over the mountains in central Mindanao, Father Jonathan DOMINGO enters a nondescript building in Cotabato City's Sinsuat Avenue and begins the day's broadcasts by DXMS, a commercial radio station run by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate congregation.

The priest says radio is one of the best ways to preach the Gospel to the poor “without being preachy or churchy.” He says preaching the word of God doesn't mean reading the Bible or the Gospel on the air.

In the Philippines, radio has the biggest audience among all the mass media. It is a thriving industry with about 1,000 radio stations broadcasting. It's estimated that nine out of 10 households owns a radio set.

“Preaching to the poor means giving them relevant information that affects their lives,” says Father Domingo, who runs the oldest Catholic radio station in the Philippines, which has been broadcasting since the 1930's.

DXMS and the seven other radio stations operated by Oblate missionaries “follow the teachings of the Church” and promote nonviolent solutions to social and political conflicts especially in the southern part of the country, the priest says.

“Most media companies are accountable first to their shareholders and to advertisers,” says Father Domingo. “We are accountable only to God and the people.”

In the aftermath of a violent dispersal of protesting farmers and tribal people in Kidapawan City on April 1, the Philippine media was full of contradicting reports of who was to blame for

the death of at least three protesters and the wounding of several others. The protesters had blockaded a major highway in Cotabato province to demand government assistance to alleviate the effects of an ongoing drought in the region. Instead of joining in the “blame game,” Father Domingo and his reporters at DXMS looked for answers in the outskirts of the city. The priest went to a village in nearby Arakan town where most of the protesters came from.

“More than a journalist, I am a priest,” he says. “We have to look behind the headlines, we examine the causes of poverty, hunger, and landlessness. We are missionaries,” he says, adding that the two-hour drive to Arakan reminded him of the challenge he accepted when he entered the priesthood.

In 2009, months after 58 people, 34 of whom were journalists, were massacred in Maguindanao province, Father Domingo joined a group of media people visiting the site for a follow-up story. “When I saw the place, I forgot about the story and just said my prayers,” says the priest. He said he took out his stole and led an interfaith prayer with a Muslim imam and a Protestant pastor.

“My being a journalist does not hinder me and my mission as a priest,” he says. “The media should be guided by an apostolic vision and a missionary way of life to become a voice of the poor.”

Father Domingo started his media work in 2002 when his congregation assigned him to manage the Oblates' radio stations in the southernmost provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi where only 3 percent of the population is Christian.

“The difference in religion is never a hindrance,” says Babylyn Kano Omar, a Muslim woman who runs DXGD, another Oblates AM station in the town of Bongao in Tawi-Tawi. “Father Jonathan believes that regardless of faith, gender or race, a person with a heart for news and compassion for the poor can be a part of DXGD,” she says.

During six years in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, Father Domingo brought together Muslims and

Christians to work for a single goal: to present stories of people to the public irrespective of religion and culture.

The priest says he wants to continue the legacy of the congregation in the media ministry. Even before Vatican II came out with the Decree on Special Communications in the mid-1960's, the Oblates in the Philippines were already involved in the mass media ministry when it took over the publication of the Philippine Commonwealth, a national Catholic weekly, after the Second World War. In 1948, the

missionaries started *The Mindanao Cross*, a Catholic newspaper for Cotabato province. With its expansion and the acquisition of modern machines and the introduction of high-quality printing services, the newspaper has become one of the region's major publications. In 1985, the Oblates acquired DXMS from the Cotabato Archdiocese and placed the station under the umbrella of their Notre Dame Broadcasting Corporation where it has helped build the network's competitive strength: regional networking. (<http://www.uacanews.com/>)

Canada-United States

NOTRE-DAME-DU-CAP, CANADA 175 years ago: towards the first Oblate community in America

The Oblate Historical Dictionary, Vol. 2, tells of the establishment of the first Oblate community in America, 175 years ago, at Saint-Hilaire, Quebec, Canada.

The first Oblate community settled in Saint-Hilaire, province of Quebec, in 1841. There had been a meeting in Marseilles on Sunday, **June 20, 1841**, between Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal and Bishop Eugene DE MAZENOD, Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the outcome of that meeting was that six Oblates were sent to Canada. Father Jean-Baptiste HONORAT was chosen as superior of this first Oblate community in Canada. His companions were: Fathers Adrien TELMON, Jean BAUDRAND, Lucien LAGIER and the Brothers Basile FASTRAY and Louis ROUX. Having sailed from Le Havre, they arrived in New York, aboard the ship Utica, on November 25, 1841 and they knocked on the door of the bishop's house in Montreal on Thursday, December 2. They were welcomed by the young priest, Father Damase DANDURAND, secretary to the bishop. This young priest was to become the first Canadian Oblate the following year.

Bishop Bourget assigned the Oblates to Saint-Hilaire. The records of this mission opened in 1799. The parish was erected canonically on February 24,

1827 and the first pastor, Father Jacques Odelin was appointed in 1831. He died in office on June 9, 1841. On December 7, 1841 the Oblates arrived in the parish, which is about thirty-five kilometres east of Montreal, at the foot of a hill, which bears the same name. It is on the eastern shore of the River Richelieu. As well as the parish, Bishop Bourget put the Oblates in charge of the pilgrimage shrine of Mount Saint-Hilaire. A huge cross, about thirty metres in height, had been erected on the summit of the hill. It was blessed on October 6, 1841. On that occasion, Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson, who was visiting the Americas at that time, preached to a crowd of about 15.000.

The first mission preached by the Oblates in Saint-Hilaire was held from December 12 to 25, just a few days after their arrival. They went to Saint Vincent de Paul for the second mission from December 23 to January 6. Another mission was given in Beloeil from December 2 to January 26. Afterwards the Oblates preached in Boucherville, in the eastern area and in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu. From March 14 to April 5, 1842, Fathers Honorat, Lagier, Baudrand and the novice, Dandurand, gave a mission in Longueuil.

The first novitiate in Canada was established in Saint-Hilaire and the first novice was the young Father Damase Dandurand. Louis Riel began his novitiate on June 3, 1842 as a coadjutor Brother. He left shortly afterwards. On January 21, 1844 he married Julie Lagemodière. Their son, Louis, born on October 22, 1844, became the famous

defender of the rights of Métis in Western Canada. Apart from these two, there were no other novices in Saint-Hilaire.

The Oblates left Saint-Hilaire for Longueuil in

August 1842. Father Lucien Lagier continued his ministry in the parish until May 1843. The altar on which the Oblates celebrated Mass is still preserved in the sacristy of the parish church. (Normand MARTEL)

Europe

UKRAINE

First priest from Turkmenistan ordained

On May 7, 2016, in St. Nickolas church in Kiev, the first Oblate and first priest ever from Turkmenistan was ordained – Fr. Anton LITVINOV. The new priest received the Sacrament of Holy Orders from his Oblate brother, Bishop Radosław ZMITROWICZ, Auxiliary of Kamyanets-Podilskyi.

Turkmenistan is a vast country, 80% of which is a desert. Since the first Oblate came there 19 years ago, after a century of atheist propaganda, there are around 300 Catholics. At the beginning of the 20th century, in Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenistan, there was a Catholic sanctuary, which was taken away from the faithful and completely destroyed by communists after it had suffered major damage from an earthquake. It seemed that it would be extremely difficult to re-plant the seed of faith in the desert, but a request for a priest for Turkmenistan came from Krasnovodsk – the place where Fr. Anton Litvinov was born. To respond to this request of the Church, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were sent there. Despite extremely difficult circumstances, they continue their service there, and their mission has resulted in this priestly vocation.

Standing joyfully at the altar next to the Bishop was a Polish Oblate, Fr. Andrzej MADEJ, who has served for these past 19 years in Turkmenistan. With the Bishop, Fr. Andrzej was one of the first Oblates who came to Fr. Anton's village.

Acknowledging the historic character of this ordination, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, the Oblate Superior General, wrote to the newly ordained: "I rejoice with you and all the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate of Ukraine and

Turkmenistan for the grace of your ordination and on this day of your First Mass! I am filled with gratitude to God for your vocation which is a wonderful fruit of the Holy Spirit working through the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Turkmenistan. You are the first Turkman Oblate and we hope that many young men from your country will follow your example and become great missionaries for the Church. I give thanks to God that you have said 'Yes!' to his call and have persevered in following Jesus. I thank your family for the good values and the faith which they have given you."

The event was attended by Oblates from all over Ukraine and from Crimea. Fr. Anton's mother came from Turkmenistan; his relatives and friends arrived from other countries. The longest trip was made from Canada by Fr. Tomasz KOŚCINIŃSKI. The Oblates' Polish Province was represented by the Vicar Provincial Vicar, Fr. Marian PUCHAŁA. St. Nickolas church in Kiev was filled with laity and religious women, rejoicing with Fr. Anton who had served there during his time as a deacon. (Fr. Pavlo VYSHKOVSKYI)

ITALY

Piazza Archbishop Marcello Zago

Villorba, the birthplace of the 11th Superior General of the Oblates, has renamed a plaza in the city after its famous son: Piazza Arcivescovo Marcello Zago. The ceremony of renaming the plaza took place on March 1, 2016, the 15th anniversary of the death of Archbishop Zago. At the time of his death, he was serving as Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Among the several speeches given during the dedication, his niece, Manuela Zago, spoke of her beloved uncle:

I would like to remember Father Marcello on the 15th anniversary of his death and share with you, if only in synthesis and incompletely, that which animated his religious life. As many of you already know, Fr. Marcello was born just a few steps away from this piazza.

His life was entirely dedicated to the missionary Church. He himself revealed the secret of his whole personality and fruitful activity in his spiritual testament. He wrote: *For me, there are three important things: Jesus Christ, the Church and the mission.*

A man, a religious at the service of the Church, esteemed by Pope John Paul II, but also a teacher of humanity, communicated in many ways.

He paid attention to every person he met, believer or non-believer, or of a different religion; the welcome he had for everyone was personal and sincere.

In spite of his many and important responsibilities, he always maintained the humility and the simplicity of the bygone families of this place. He had been a missionary in Laos for several years; there he nurtured a passion for the study of oriental languages and for the study of Buddhism. He founded there a center of study and research that allowed him to establish wonderful relationships with the civil and religious authorities.

In 1973, for the first time he accompanied a delegation of the principal Buddhist authorities of the East to meet Pope Paul VI.

We can find a synthesis of his entire missionary zeal and his experience in Laos in an interview he gave in 2000, on the occasion of the Jubilee Year, not long before his death. Here are his words:

“I would say that I experienced my greatest joy in the evening, after having met so many persons, simple people, intellectuals, Buddhist monks. I realized that in some way, I had shared the same love of God for them, and then, I perceived that they too were seeking this supreme reality, not only as an indefinable reality, as they say in Buddhism,

but one who also has a heart for real persons.

I believe that at these very moments, more than in others, I saw my vocation fully realized.”

Fr. Marcello, with the witness of his life, has left us a precious inheritance, a good that we will guard with care.

POLAND

24th NINIWA youth meeting

The 24th NINIWA convention took place in early May at Kokotek. The convention is a gathering of youth from every Oblate community in Poland – altogether more than 200 people. It takes place twice a year, once in the NINIWA Formation Center in Kokotek and once in an Oblate parish. The first convention was held in 2004.

The convention lasted 4 days (April 30 –May 3). The youth arrived in the evening of the first day. After the evening meal and a prayer session, the principal theme of the convention was introduced: ***Mission ~~is~~ Possible***. Local families offered the attendees lodging for the nights.

On the second day, after a prayer session, the Provincial of Poland, Fr. Antoni BOCHM, presided at Eucharist; then there was a conference and time for worship and confession. In the afternoon, the Catholic band, *Full Power of the Spirit*, entertained.

After Mass on the third day, everyone took part in *Mission Possible* – games with an apostolic theme. The participants were divided into groups of 12, each with its own leader and a list of tasks to accomplish. They went into the forest, each group in a different direction. All of the tasks were based on the Holy Bible; the purpose was to teach the participants how to be apostles. The tasks required them to leave their warm and safe everyday lives to cooperate with each other and to trust their leader. Everyone enjoyed the game and found it uplifting. It lasted for eight hours! At the end of the day, there was a bonfire.

The local bishop presided at the closing Mass and the youth were invited to look forward to the next gathering in November.

SPAIN**Ecumenism in the parish of the “Pilgrim Virgin”**

A popular saying states: “For feasts, there is no table without snacks and no Mass without preparations”.

Preparations for our patronal feast, the “Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima” included the person of Archbishop Nicolaos Matti, Patriarchal Vicar of the Syriac Orthodox Church in Spain. He preached each day of the Octave which was animated by the parish choir. His simple reflections on Jesus, based on the day’s gospel, and linked to the miracles of Mary in her visits to our land, led us daily, hand in hand with the Son and the Mother, to the fervent celebration of her feast day on May 13.

We had a pause in Nicolaos’ Octave on Sunday, May 8. Our Archbishop Carlos Osoro took the presider’s chair, preaching and celebrating the Eucharist. We had an emotional moment at the Greeting of Peace when both bishops came together in an ecumenical embrace, demonstrating the longed for unity of Christians.

On the 13th, the doors of our parish were open from 7:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. It was the “Day of Open Doors,” with a continual coming and going of the people whose eyes were fixed on the beautiful image of Our Lady of Fatima. With the simplicity of the shepherds, they asked for her blessing, her help and her strength.

At 10:00 p.m., we celebrated the Eucharist. Our church, very nicely filled with God’s people, was a wonderful witness as to how a Mother calls her children to come close to her son. The circle of Oblates gathered in the sanctuary was a silent witness to a unique celebration in honor of their Mother. Adding a special touch was the presence of our vicar provincial, Fr. Ismael GARCIA, and Archbishop Nicolaos, whose vestments contrasted with the sameness of our own.

The Mass was solemnized by the “Saint Thomas Choir” from the Complutense University of Madrid and who delighted us with some songs in Latin.

At the end of Mass, the pastor thanked all for their presence and their participation in both the Octave and the Eucharist on the 13th. Then we went to share some wine and hors d’oeuvres. As we were walking to the dining room, we received many congratulations and an unexpected comment by one of the women who has been coming for many years: “Never have we had such a beautiful celebration in our parish.” (<http://nosotrosomi.blogspot.it/>)

UKRAINE**Fr. Ludwik Wrodarczyk: Diocesan phase of beatification process**

In the July 2013 issue of *OMI Information*, Fr. Joaquín MARTÍNEZ VEGA, the General Postulator of that time, announced that the cause for the beatification of the presumed martyr, Polish Oblate Fr. Ludwik WRODARCZYK, had been resumed with the Superior General’s approval of a new Vice-Postulator, Fr. Andrzej MACKOW.

On May 11, 2016, the official “diocesan phase” of the cause was opened at the Cathedral of Lutsk, Ukraine, by the Ordinary of that diocese, Bishop Vitaliy Skomarovskyi. Gathered in the Cathedral were most of the Oblates ministering in Ukraine and Russia, as well as the Vicar Provincial of the Province of Poland, Fr. Marian Puchała and the Delegation Superior, Fr. Pavlo VYSHKOVSKYI.

In his greeting to those in attendance, Fr. Pavlo stated: “We Missionary Oblates are mostly about the same age as Ludwik (36 years); most of the Oblates came from Poland where he came from. He too worked in a small parish that had to be built virtually from scratch. So it is for us. His is an example of faithfulness to the end. He too suffered during a war. He became a martyr of reconciliation. He went out to everyone, regardless of nationality.”

Ludwik Wrodarczyk was born in 1907 in Silesia into the family of a miner. In 1927, he pronounced his first vows as an Oblate at Markowice and then moved on to the scholasticate in Obra. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1933 and served as

a parish priest in Kodon until 1939 when he was sent to a newly created parish in Okopy on the border of Ukraine, then occupied by the USSR. He devoted himself to all in need and would make missionary journeys into territories beyond the former Polish border where he risked his life serving even the medical needs of the people. He knew full well the danger of falling into the hands of Ukrainian nationalists. On December 6, 1943, he was kidnapped from the church at Okopy. After several days of harassment, he was tortured to death in the woods.

POLAND

Theatre: a unique way of evangelization

In April and May of this year, the Oblate scholasticate in Obra staged a play, “Dreams of Power,” that perfectly corresponded to the atmosphere of the Year of Mercy. Since it was open to the general public, it also offered a unique opportunity for evangelization. “Dreams of power” is a musical based on the biblical story of Joseph “The Dreamer”, contained in the Book of Genesis (chapters 37-50). Adaptation of the original musical and its direction was undertaken by Fr Sebastian WISNIEWSKII, the professor of homiletics at Obra. The actors were chosen among the Oblate scholastics and youth members of the “Niniwa” Oblate youth movement from Obra and neighboring villages, including girls who in the “Sursum Corda Band” and the altar boys of the local parish. Preparations for the play began in January. The scholasticate’s major aula became a true theatrical venue, with marvelous decorations portraying localities of ancient Egypt and the Holy Land.

Staging theatrical plays at the scholasticate at Obra is a long tradition and is done on yearly

basis. However, this year’s initiative was unique because of the number of actors involved and the live performance of music, singing and dancing, as well as multimedia effects. The over two hours spent in Obra’s “theatre” seemed to pass quickly – the action was intense, the singing was beautiful and the actors gave all their heart to represent faithfully the Patriarchs, Egyptians and their families.

The performance was staged from April 15 to May 3 (a total of 22 times), always in front of a full house. It is no exaggeration to say that the musical was presented in front of a total number of some 6,000 people coming from Obra, the neighboring villages and cities as far away from Obra as Poznań. In some parishes, the pastors rented buses in order to visit our Oblate theatre with a larger group of parishioners.

The spectacle’s main focus on the immensity of God’s love. The story of Joseph made it clear that there is no evil from which God could not redeem a person. Each sinner can experience God’s love and turn away from what is causing him pain towards better life, full of forgiveness, love and service. The viewers were encouraged to find in their own lives the situations similar to those which were faced by biblical Joseph “The Dreamer”. Every situation can be an opportunity to seek and experience Divine Mercy.

A very special group of viewers came to Obra on April 30. Some 80 parents and close relatives of our scholastics from all over the country came to the scholasticate to celebrate in a family way the 200th anniversary of the Oblate Congregation. They were happy to see the scholastics perform really well and enjoyed the fraternal atmosphere of the scholasticate.

Latin America

GUATEMALA

Waiting for justice for Padre Lorenzo

For most of his life as an Oblate priest, Father Lorenzo ROSEBAUGH was a living and radical witness to non-violence and concern for the poor. On May 18, 2009, he was shot and killed by

two men attempting to steal the van in which he and 4 other Oblates were traveling. The bullets that killed Lorenzo passed through his body and wounded another Oblate in the van, Father Jean Claude NGOMA NDEWES (originally from Congo) who was hospitalized but not in a life-threatening condition. The would-be robbers

escaped without taking the vehicle. (*OMI Information*, June 2009)

Seven years later, Father José SANTIAGO writes:

As of May 18, it has been 7 years since his (P. Lorenzo) murder: a death that has gone unpunished and ignored. As Oblates, we are fighting for justice. They had in hand the evidence needed for judgment: they had the fatal bullet, the rifle and the owner of the rifle... The police captured three men, two adults and a youth. They could prove that one of them was "the owner of the rifle; what could not be proven was whether the owner had fired the rifle." That was the conclusion of the judges. And since they could prove nothing, the men were set free.

Padre Lorenzo is another victim of the violence plaguing Guatemala. Lorenzo worked 6 years in Ixcán as a missionary, and after a few years in the city, had decided, in agreement with the now Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, that he would return to the U.S.; he had already experienced a lot of violence. He wanted to celebrate his birthday in Ixcán and say goodbye to the people, some friends, before leaving the country. He could not do that; his death came first. Maybe God wanted him to stay with the poor and suffering people of Guatemala. His remains rest in the Hermano Pedro cemetery in Mixco. Thanks Lorenzo for your witness of life and prayer.

On May 18, Masses were offered in Playa Grande and at Santa Cecilia parish. (from *Ser un Misionero Hoy*)

Anniversaries for July 2016

70 Years of religious life

16.07.19467	08166	Fr. André Houle	United States
16.07.1946	08163	Fr. Jean Morin	United States
25.07.1946	08168	Fr. Ernesto del Blanco	Mediterranean
25.07.1946	08305	Fr. Germán Fernández	Argentina-Chile

70 Years of priesthood

14.07.1946	07613	Fr. Jean Maboge	Belgique et Pays Bas
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65 Years of religious life

02.07.1951	09025	Fr. Prospero Gacis	Philippines
26.07.1951	09283	Fr. Serge Allard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
26.07.1951	09039	Fr. Amador de Lucas	Mediterranean
26.07.1951	09036	Fr. Fermin del Blanco	Mediterranean
26.07.1951	09035	Fr. Léo Laberge	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
26.07.1951	09040	Fr. Otilio Largo	Mediterranean

65 Years of priesthood

01.07.1951	08396	Fr. Jean Col	France
08.07.1951	08204	Fr. Joseph Balthazard	Belgium/Holland
15.07.1951	08048	Fr. Brendan O'Sullivan	Anglo-Irish
29.07.1951	08163	Fr. Jean Morin	United States

60 Years of religious life

25.07.1956	10110	Fr. Santiago Rebordinos	Argentina-Chile
26.07.1956	10154	Fr. Andre Dubois	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
26.07.1956	10150	Fr. Fernand Dufour	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
26.07.1956	10151	Fr. Laval Tremblay	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

60 Years of priesthood

01.07.1956	09158	Fr. Louis-Marie Chrétien	France
01.07.1956	09212	Fr. Marcel Rouyer	France
08.07.1956	08890	Fr. Thomas Bilodeau	Lacombe
08.07.1956	08827	Fr. Normand Harvey	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
08.07.1956	08841	Fr. William Woestman	United States
22.07.1956	09130	Fr. Jerry Talarski	Assumption

50 Years of priesthood

02.07.1966	10829	Fr. Joseph Money	Natal
03.07.1966	11030	Fr. Marcel Annequin	France
10.07.1966	10831	Fr. Anthony Bailey	S. Africa Northern.
17.07.1966	10718	Fr. Joseph Goutier	Lacombe
24.07.1966	11036	Fr. Friedhelm Jansohn	Central European
24.07.1966	10846	Fr. Winfried Krupke	Central European

25 Years of priesthood

24.07.1991	13074	Fr. Ignatius Yulianto	Indonesia
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Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 34-39

Name	Prov./Del.	Born	Died at	Date
Fr. Jean Remy	France	19/11/1929	Pontmain	08/05/2016
Fr. Jean Michal	France	30/07/1923	Lyon	10/05/2016
Fr. Marek Czyzycki	Assumption	30/05/1931	Toronto	13/05/2016
Fr. Tomás Domínguez	Mediterranean	27/03/1923	Madrid	14/05/2016
Fr. André Didon	Colombo	01/11/1925	Colombo	16/05/2016
Fr. Marino Merlo	Mediterranean	21/12/1928	Vermicino	23/05/2016

“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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