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A Shrine in Honor of Archbishop Denis Hurley, OMI

(The Southern Cross, South Africa) On the weekend of March 19, crowds gathered at Durban's Emmanuel Cathedral to pray at the newly opened shrine to Archbishop Denis HURLEY, who was ordained bishop of Durban 70 years ago this week.

Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, Archbishop Hurley's successor as archbishop of Durban, has given permission for a shrine and has encouraged acts of public devotion. The cardinal recently said that such devotions are the evidence that the archdiocese needs to open a cause for the canonisation of Archbishop Hurley.

Following the Catholic custom, after he died on February 13, 2004, the archbishop was buried in his own cathedral, in a grave just in front of the Lady Chapel which he loved. The shrine marks this out as a special place of prayer with a prie-dieu (or kneeler), a candle that will remain lit perpetually, and a special prayer invoking Archbishop Hurley's example.

The date for the launch of the shrine was chosen because it was 70 years ago, on March 19, 1947 that the 31-year old Fr Denis Hurley was consecrated bishop—at the time the youngest bishop in the whole Catholic world.

When the vicariate of Durban was elevated to the status of archdiocese in 1951, he also became the world's youngest archbishop.

Archbishop Hurley retired in 1992 and then served as the parish priest of Emmanuel cathedral parish.

Masses were celebrated over the weekend by Mgr. Paul Nadal, who served as Archbishop Hurley's last vicar-general, and by a number of

Hurley's fellow Oblates, including Bishop Barry WOOD, Natal provincial Fr Vusi MAZIBUKO, and Fr Chris RICHMOND, superior of Sabon House, the archbishop's last community.

“Durban City Council has recognised Hurley's importance with a street and now a museum dedicated to him; the Church is now formally encouraging us to pray for his intercession by the creation of this shrine. It is clear that he is an inspiration to Catholics and to all citizens,” said Hurley biographer Paddy Kearney.

Raymond Perrier, director of the Denis Hurley Centre, noted that “Pope Francis keeps reminding us that we are the ‘Church of the Poor’. Hurley's example drives the work for the poor that continues in his name. With our prayers, and the work of the Spirit, perhaps in time he will be St. Denis of Durban, patron of the poor.”

The prayer:

Loving Father, we thank you for the life, vocation and ministry of your servant Denis Hurley, our bishop, brother and friend in Christ. We pray that his work for justice and peace; his loving care for the poor and marginalised; and his vision for a reformed and renewed Church, may continue to inspire us with increased vigour. Grant that the gift of the Spirit may enable us to act in harmony to establish your kingdom in our lives, our work and our world as we strive to follow Denis Hurley's motto: “Where the Spirit is, there is freedom!” Listen kindly to the intercession of your servant Denis on our behalf, and grant us the favour of his patronage in your kingdom. We pray that in Christ your Son, all may be sanctified, all may be one. Amen.

Africa-Madagascar

MADAGASCAR

Meeting of Africa-Madagascar Region's Major Superiors

On March 5-11, the Major Superiors from the 16 Oblate Units of the Africa-Madagascar Region (AMR) gathered in Antananarivo, Madagascar, to study ways for more credible and new ways of doing mission. The theme of the meeting was "Strategic Integration Plans for OMI Missions in the Africa-Madagascar Region: Holistic Approach 2017-2022". Their purpose was to put into the AMR context the Acts of the 2016 General Chapter.

The participants divided into four working groups: Mission and Interculturality; Formation and Interculturality; Finance for Mission; and Youth Ministry.

The Superior of the Madagascar Delegation, Fr. Mariusz KASPERSKY, welcomed the participants and invited them to enjoy the hospitality so characteristic of the Malagasy. The President of the Region, Fr. Edouard DAGAVOUNANSOU said that since this Conference was about the survival of the Missions of the Oblates in AMR as such, we must be audacious to leave our comfort zones and unite so that together, we will not perish. The General Councillor for AMR, Fr. Guillaume MUTHUNDA, gave a comprehensive report on the activities of the General Administration. He spoke passionately about the need to intensify our Mission with the Laity. He called this conference "timely" because the moment has come when we need to convert to our Charism, convert from our old practices of doing Mission and embrace the contemporary challenges which the world throws at us.

Member Units shared their respective experiences regarding these issues: Youth, Refugees, Migrants, Displaced Persons, Lay Associates, Islam, Sects etc. There was much sharing on how the Conference as such might respond to these challenges. There was also sharing on some aspects of Formation in the Region and concrete ways of collaboration were defined and adopted.

On the subject of Finance, the Conference was

heard a presentation on self-sustainability by the Mission Superior of Angola, Fr. Adrien GESSE MOSANDA (former Director of Grants of the Province of Congo). His presentation was followed by recommendations which will lead the Region to adopt daring new ways (investments) towards self-sustainability.

The AMR representative on the General Committee for Lay Associates, Mr. Mahamat Dehoua, also made a presentation suggesting concrete ways to deepen collaboration with other Oblate Lay Groups. It was decided that will be a meeting of all chaplains and chairpersons of the Lay Associates on the sub-regional level. A data base was immediately created to maintain communication with the different Units.

The Brother representing AMR on the General Standing Committee for Brothers, Bro. Jean-Marie DIAKANOU, was also invited. He suggested to the Conference ways to promote Oblate Brothers Vocations. The Conference decided to convoke a Regional Assembly for Brothers to be held in Cameroon.

Fr. Mokone Joseph RATHOKOA, Provincial of the Central Province of South Africa, updated the Conference on the progress for restructuring of the three South African provinces to become one province.

Fr. Valerio EKO, Superior of Western Sahara Mission, took the Conference on a PowerPoint tour through the dunes of the Sahara Mission which presently has three members. (Fr. Emmanuel YOUNGTEN TEMSWANG, AMR Executive Secretary)

MADAGASCAR

As if the end had come!

Fr. Emmanuel YOUNGTEN, the Executive Secretary of the Africa-Madagascar Region tells about a frightening moment during a meeting of the Regional Conference.

The Major Superiors of the Africa-Madagascar Region and other invited guests to the Regional

Conference were basking in the joy of their gathering when some news of possible danger began to circulate.

We were getting into the second day of our Conference Meeting when we heard that two cyclones, one from the Indian Ocean and another one from the direction of the island of Mauritius, were just two days away from Antananarivo.

The atmosphere at the Conference after the announcement changed tone and many new questions arose.

Fr. Andries KIMANE, delegate of the Provincial of the Northern Province of South Africa, upon hearing this news said, “I knew I came here to either go back home a saint (having enjoyed the company of people who dialogue daily with the Holy Spirit before taking decisions) or I die a martyr (because by faith, I accepted to represent my Provincial)!” He also stated that people thought he was out of his mind when he told them he was traveling to Madagascar: walking to his “end”!

We were instructed not to go out: the whole of Antananarivo was advised to stay indoors the whole day of the 7th of March in order to avoid casualties. On that day, we were supposed have a visit from Archbishop Odon Razanakolona of Antananarivo, who was slated to celebrate Mass with us and join us for lunch. When he called to say he would not make it due to the directives of the government to stay indoors, we knew that it was serious. All telephone and internet service providers shut down, the lights went off. There was only the sound of the wind.

Thanks be to God, the cyclone came and continued on its way to the South of Madagascar. Although we were unharmed, other parts of the city suffered floods, downed trees and buildings destroyed. As of the 15th of March, 78 persons were confirmed as dead and the cyclones affected at least 400,000 persons.

MADAGASCAR

A very much alive “small” mission!

Fr. Stanislaw OLLER writes about his “small mission” ...

Volobe is a small mission located 55 km from Tamatave, toward the southwest. The name of this village in the local language means “Big Bamboo.” In the area of Volobe, we have 55 Christian communities spread over four municipalities, with about 4,000 faithful. The farthest community is about 90 km away. To visit these 55 Christian communities, one must walk over the mountains because there are no roads. The trek can last between three and four weeks to go to the farthest village, all the while visiting the communities along the way.

Since the month of December 2016, Father Elysé RATOLOJANAHARY has been working with me, a young Malagasy Oblate who finished his study of theology in Cameroon. It is a blessing for me and for my Christians to have him with us at Volobe.

In a word, I would like to say that I love Volobe and the mission I have been given to carry out, in spite of the fact that last year, I had to put up with some unpleasant surprises, such as the theft of the bells from our church. Unfortunately, that affair ended up in court.

But we had to recover our morale quickly, because, in the mission itself, we were busy with the preparations for the big regional gathering of youth, a small World Youth Day, before Palm Sunday. During that gathering, more than 2,000 youth came, in spite of the nasty weather conditions. This bad weather only strengthened and toughened the spirit of the youth who were there.

Fr. Gilbert RASAMIMANANA, who is in charge of formation at our scholasticate in Finarantsoa, came to preach a retreat of three days for us. Regardless of the rain, the youth listened closely to his teaching and prayed with fervor.

Another special event last year was the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the church in Horifatra. When I write “church,” I mean the Christian community. When the Malagasy say “church,” they always think first of all of the Christian community; then they think of the other meaning, the church as a house of prayer. There are many things which the people here see differently

than the people of Europe. Here is an example: Europeans will ask, "Do you believe in God." The Malagasy ask: "Do you pray?" And that is something very concrete because, "What is faith without prayer?"

I will also mention the assembly of the Eucharistic Crusade for children. There were about 600 children and their parents. For the children who arrive from the far off savanna, it is always an excellent sojourn and the possibility to see another world.

This year (2017), we will celebrate the feast of "Corpus Christi" with our archbishop. In our mission, this feast of "Corpus Christi" is always tied to the feast of the harvest or gathering, because it is at this time that they finish gathering the rice. This feast will last for three days.

Friday – the day of Divine Mercy, with the Mass of the Divine Mercy, the Way of the Cross on

the grounds of the plantations and the fields, confessions and an all-night vigil.

Saturday – the day of Our Lady. The "mothers of the rosary" will lead a whole day of prayer. There will be catechism and Bible contests for different age groups, followed by the Mass of the Immaculate Conception.

Sunday – Corpus Christi. Solemn Mass and procession with the Blessed Sacrament through the fields and villages. A ceremony for bestowing contest prizes and the sale of agricultural products, the traditional way of making offerings.

I have written a lot of the details about this feast because in many dioceses of Madagascar, it is somewhat forgotten. It is a manifestation of the faith in the streets of the cities and on the country roads. So there you have some news about our mission in Volobe.

Asia-Oceania

AUSTRALIA

Asia-Oceania Formation Conference meets

From 5th March to 10th March, 13 formators from the Asia-Oceania Region gathered in Melbourne, Australia, to pray, support each other and reflect on formation. We met at the Mary Mackillop Heritage Centre in East Melbourne. The place was established by the first Australian saint, St Mary of the Cross Mackillop. In the charism of the Sisters of St Joseph, founded by St Mary, it was a home for the community and some of the poor to whom they were ministering. In this place, where for more than a hundred years, the charism of Mother Mary has been preserved, cultivated and offered to the wider community, the Oblate formators from Australia, Pakistan, India, Jaffna, Colombo, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Rome, created an Oblate community for a week.

On Sunday night, we began our conference at Mazonod College, where we were given a presentation by Mrs Susan Maclean, on the safety of the internet. Susan introduced us to the

blessings and challenges of the internet, which young people face today.

On Monday morning, Fr Austin COOPER spoke of the necessity of human formation. His presentation, drawn from the theological message of the architecture of the local Cathedral, offered us a fresh light. In the evening, Fr Christian FINI continued the topic of the previous day, as he reflected on Cybertheology. Realising the challenges of the digital era, he explored the opportunities for connectedness which the internet offers, and situated them in a theological background.

The Oblate input into discussions at the conference was continued the following day by Bishop Mark EDWARDS, Auxiliary of Melbourne, who shared his experience of being an Oblate and a bishop. He explained that bishops may not always fully understand the charism of a particular religious order, but they will expect that the religious will care for their people and that they will offer the best formation possible to the formandi in their own institute.

The afternoon sessions were run by Bro. Mark O'Connor, FMS. Bro. Mark is a highly recognised evangeliser in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and beyond. He explored the concept of evangelisation in the light of Pope Francis' teachings. His observations regarding the role of fraternity and compassion resonated in the participants of the conference as they reminded us of the tradition of our own Oblate institute. His summary of Pope Francis, as an evangeliser who is close to the people, couldn't better describe the ideal of an Oblate evangeliser. Enlightened by these conferences, the participants moved to the formation reports from various units. The picture of formation in Asia-Oceania, which emerged from those reports, was summarised by Fr Cornelius NGOKA, Assistant General, who noticed the commitment of the Region to formation of formators, and a growing sense of interculturality of the formation houses in the region.

We were also introduced to the Catholic Theological College, which is an affiliated college of the University of Divinity. The University of Divinity is a unique, ecumenical, educational institution in Melbourne made of 12 affiliated colleges from various Christian denominations. Catholic Theological College (CTC), whose founding Master (Rector) was Fr Austin Cooper OMI, has been offering philosophical and theological formation to seminarians and laity in Victoria for many years. It has always been the academic institution for our Oblate scholastics in Australia.

The Leadership Team of the College joined us for evening prayer and a meal on Wednesday. The passionate discussions, which were triggered by those exposures to CTC, gave us an insight into the dynamic, professional, and pastoral academic training provided by CTC.

The final day was celebrated with the local Oblate community at the Provincial House in Camberwell, Melbourne. As we were concluding the conference, we took great solace from the wise words of Bro. Mark O'Connor, that there is both Good News and Better News. The Good News is that there is a Messiah; the better news is that it isn't us! (Fr Daniel SZEWC & Bro. Joshua NASH)

BANGLADESH]

New scholasticate dedicated

The 19th of March 2017 was a day of great joy for the Oblate Delegation of Bangladesh. On that day, the newly built scholasticate, dedicated to St. Eugene De Mazenod, was inaugurated by Fr. Stefan OBERGFELL, the Provincial of the Central European Province, and Fr. Aloys TERLIESENER, the Mission Procurator. The new building is a great gift to the Oblates of Bangladesh from the that Province. Surely they have made a big sacrifice for our young Oblates. Our Superior General, Fr. Louis LOUGEN, had laid the foundation stone on 2nd June 2013, when he visited Bangladesh.

It was a dream of our pioneer Oblates to have a good scholasticate where there would be suitable facilities for the formation community. Today the dream became a reality through the prayers and support of many donors. We are also grateful to Fr. Thomas KLOSTERKAMP, former Provincial of the Central European Province and his administration who took the first initiative to help build the scholasticate. The Delegation Superior, Fr. Dilip SARKAR and his councilors put their hearts and souls into building this formation house.

The dedication day included the celebration of the Holy Eucharistic, thanking God for his blessings upon us. A large number of the faithful were in attendance.

INDIA

St. Eugene Tailoring Centre

Two years ago, the Oblates working in Andhra Pradesh had a day-long session on "The Empowerment of Women." While we shared our opinions on different ways of helping the women of our parishes, Sister Manju, a Carmelite nun, and the animator, shared this idea: "Empowerment of women is not possible without empowering them economically." That stirred the minds of the participants. St. Eugene Tailoring Centre in Buttayagudem is a product of that insight!

Aim : To show women the means of economic independence.

Objective: Economic empowerment

Target People: Women and drop-out girls of Buttayagudem Mandal

Venue: Buttayagudem (near the Government Hostel for College Boys).

Duration: Three months

Number or size of the batch: 20 per batch

We started the tailoring center on December 7, 2016, with 16 students and two skilled teachers, Mrs. Ganga Rathna Kumari and Mrs. Rani. The training is given for a period of three months per batch. They are given training in stitching skirts, blouses, chudidhars and embroidering, lining and all that a woman could do in her household. The women and the drop-out girls of our locality come at 10 a.m., after finishing their work at home, and learn tailoring till 1 p.m.. They are mostly from three villages of the Mandal, namely, Kamsalakunta, Reddy Ganapavaram and Buttayagudem. They are regular in attendance and active in learning. They show a lot of interest in mastering this skill. This batch finished their training on March 7, 2017 with the celebration of International Women's Day!

The outcome of this Tailoring Programme:

1. Recognition :

They feel that they are 'somebody' in the society! They have an occupation! Thus, they are dignified!

2. Independency:

That they can stitch their own and their children's clothes by themselves. They can make a living – thus, economic independency

3. Confidence: That they can stand on their own legs.

“If you see someone hungry, do not give him a fish. Rather, teach him to fish!” says a Chinese proverb. The Oblate community in Buttayagudem has marked a milestone in the history of the parish, walking an extra mile with the poor women and drop-outs of the locality. We owe a great deal of gratitude to the Oblate Australian Province, to Fr. Chinnappan SANDHAPPAN, our Provincial and to his administration for their guidance and support.

Happy to begin this fulfilling and satisfying ministry for the poor, we began the second batch on March 7, 2017. (Fr. John Thomas DAVID, Parish Priest, Buttayagudem, and Bro. Paul RAJ, in BORN: Bharath Oblate Regional News, March 2017)

CHINA

Opening of the Oblate centre “Angel's Love”

According to the China Labour Bulletin, there are an estimated 277,000,000 rural migrant workers in China. These are people who have had to leave their homes in the countryside and go to the more prosperous large cities, in search of work. Guangzhou in mainland China, located about two hours by train from Hong Kong, is one such city. It has attracted millions of poor workers from surrounding areas who come in search of work. Currently there are estimated to be approximately 5,000,000 such migrant workers in this city of 14,000,000. Some of these are single; others come with their families and live in poor areas of the city. Those who come with their children often have a problem. Because they are from the countryside, they are not registered as legal residents in the city. Though education in China is tuition-free for local residents, others must pay for tuition.

The Oblates serving in Guangzhou have over the years become familiar with a small weekday program sponsored by a group of religious sisters to care for pre-school migrant children while their parents are at work. The Oblates have provided spiritual and moral support for this initiative over the years. We have now been requested to begin a program for elementary and middle-school students, on weekends, to provide them a place to study and complete their homework.

Young people from our Oblate Youth China group have already been coming for several months to volunteer their services. To this end, the mission in Guangzhou has recently rented a small storefront to serve as a study and activity centre for the children of the migrant families. The centre, called “Angel's Love” was officially opened last Christmas Day with a party for the migrants and local children. Twenty-seven

participated and enjoyed the Christmas drama, games and refreshments that the 25 young adults provided for the occasion. (*Cosmic*, March 2017)

AUSTRALIA

The Baptism of Eugene Kim

Oblate Bishop Mark EDWARDS, auxiliary of Melbourne tells of a unique way to spread devotion to the Founder of the Oblates, St. Eugene de Mazenod.

One of my desires is for the Universal Church to be able to celebrate the optional memorial of St. Eugene de Mazenod. One of the prerequisites to adding his name the universal calendar is that the devotion to St. Eugene, that is his cult, has to be strong and widespread.

Only half-jokingly, I suggest the names Eugene or Eugenie to friends expecting a child, and where possible mention St. Eugene to confirmation candidates. I have confirmed five Eugene de Mazenods. Four of these were Year 6 students at St. Leonard's Parish in Glen Waverley or Good Shepherd Parish in Mulgrave. They had older brothers at Mazenod College who proposed the name of St. Eugene to them.

To my surprise and delight, one was in North Balwyn and chose the name because of his (Hong Kong Chinese origin) family's trust in him. The mother had entrusted the family to the protection of St Eugene's intercession many years before.

On Sunday 26 March, I was privileged to baptise Eugene Dong Ho Kim. His mother and father had been looking for a name and she awoke one morning with the name Eugene in her head. Both she and her husband liked the sound of the name. She shared this possibility with her sister who affirmed this name by telling her of St. Eugene's life and of his role in their family. Little Eugene's cousin is our Oblate pre-novice Stephen Cheon! (*Cosmic* 2017)

JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

The Oblate Grand Mission continues

The Oblate Historical Dictionary, Volume 2, under the rubric "Jaffna," tells of the origin of an

evangelization event that continues to this day:

"With the beginning of the year 1859 the mission of Jaffna was born again by a great renewal. The mission band, which was comprised of great and energetic missionaries Bishop Étienne SEMERIA, Fr. Christophe BONJEAN and Fr. Constant CHOUNAVEL, o.m.i., inaugurated the great Parish Mission on 26 December 1858. ... Fr. Christophe Bonjean explained his own experience in the mission of Jaffna as 'what was not then our surprise – what was not our joy to see the people participating with a most remarkable enthusiasm in all the exercises of the Mission! This enthusiasm was all the more edifying for us and the more meritorious for our Catholics because very heavy showers of rain, such as could be seen only in the tropics, fell almost without any interruption during the last days but they did not by any means succeed in cooling down the zeal of the people. From all sides the faithful were seen hastening under a beating rain and then remaining in the church in spite of their wet clothes. One day it rained so heavily after the morning exercises that it was absolutely impossible for the people to leave the church; they wished to have another sermon but, as the Fathers had already retired to their cells, they spent the time in an excellent manner in making the Way of the Cross. We had ordinarily more than 1,000 and at times 1,500 people very remarkable figure if only we were to bear in mind that many persons were able to come for the Mission only alternatively as someone was needed to stay at home to guard the house. Moreover the majority of our Catholics are poor fishermen, depending on their daily work for their bread; a day without a catch of fish meant for them a day of complete fast.' ... The Mission was successfully completed on 27 February 1859."

The website of the Jaffna province, <http://www.omijaffna.com/>, reports that the tradition continues.

The Oblate Grand Mission has a very long history (159 years) in the Province of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The very first Grand Mission was inaugurated by great and energetic missionaries, viz. Bishop

Semeria, OMI, Fr. Bonjean, OMI, and Fr. Constant Chounavel, OMI, on 26 December 1858

Six Oblates from the Oblate preaching community conducted a Grand Mission at St. Sebastian's Cathedral, Mannar, for 36 days, i.e., from the 22nd of January to the 26th of February, 2017 with the support of few Oblates from other communities.

The Grand Mission included mainly family visiting (2100 families); zonal masses; seminars on different themes on weekends; Eucharistic celebrations for the students at the schools as well as in the zones; AGAPE at the zonal level; rectification of marriages and administering the sacrament of initiation for the converts from other religions and the children from the Catholic families who have not received these sacraments at the proper time.

The faithful were very enthusiastic and participated in the mission activities in a very active manner. The priests of the diocese, particularly the parish priest, and other religious working in the parish were very appreciative of the Grand Mission. The Grand Mission came to an end with a Eucharistic celebration which was presided over by the Vicar General of the Diocese, followed by a cultural programme in the evening.

PHILIPPINES

Opening of the Office for Indigenous Peoples Ministry

Last January 15, 2017, on the occasion of the Feast of Santo Niño, the Indigenous Peoples Ministry (IPM) Office was blessed after the Eucharistic celebration at Our Lady of Salvation Parish, Timanan, Romongaob, South Upi, Maguindanao. The IPM office is a visible sign of the continuing commitment of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Archdiocese of Cotabato and the whole Church for the Indigenous People here in South Upi, Maguindanao.

During the blessing, Fr. Jurambelle SACIL said that "the feast of the Santo Niño is a timely reminder for all regarding the divine simplicity of children. The simplicity of the Holy Child is seen

in the simplicity and littleness of the Indigenous Peoples. The blessing of the office during this feast day reminds me and our IP staff, Parish and those involved in this apostolate, that in God's love, no one is so little so as not to be included and loved. The office has a native accent ("amakan" walls [ed. woven bamboo]) and color telling us that we are embracing the wonderful and earth-friendly products of the Indigenous Peoples."

The blessing started with an opening prayer ritual by a Teduray "kèmamal kaadatan" (community prayer leader) with the "Dulang" (Teduray-Lambangian term, similar to a Christian altar). It signifies that the IPM office respects and recognizes the beauty of their faith traditions. An image of the Santo Niño from Cebu is enthroned in the office as a consecration to God of all our little efforts for and with the Tedurays.

The establishment of an IPM office is also in line with the 2-year road map plans of last November 7-11, 2016, at the National Convention in Roxas City, Capiz by the different Archdiocesan/Dioceses IP Apostolates.

The event was also witnessed by Fr. Boyet PALOMO, parish priest of Our Lady of Salvation Parish of South Upi, parish Pastoral Council officers, local government representatives and regular church goers. (By Fr. Jurambelle John C. Sacil, OMI/Archdiocesan IP Apostolate Director in *OMI Philippines*, April 2017)

PHILIPPINES

AORC meeting held Quezon City

The Treasurers, Provincial and Delegation Superiors of Asia-Oceania converged at the Oblate Missionary Center, Quezon City, for a 6-day meeting to deliberate on the Oblate mission in their respective units and plan their collective response to the call of the 36th Oblate General Chapter that was held last 14 September to 6 October, 2016 in Rome.

The first day, 13 March, 2017, was opened with a Liturgy led by the O.M.I. Scholastics. Seven candles were lit by AORC representatives to symbolize the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Marc

DESSUREAULT, Treasurer General, presented “Mission and Finance: The Reflection of the 36th Chapter” emanating from the Word of God, OMI Constitution and Rules, and Oblate Values.

He illustrated the challenges in this regard: living the Oblate vow of poverty and holding all things in common, transparency in the realm of finance, managing finances especially for first formation which often accounts for 80 to 90% of the budget, and contracts in the dioceses. The Oblates are therefore called to change their mindsets to be able to say among themselves, “Your community is my community; your mission is my mission.” It would mean “changing the individual mindset regarding responsibility for finances and property to a community mindset; changing our community mindset to the unit mindset; changing the unit mindset to the regional mindset; and changing the regional mindset to the mindset of the Congregation.” In so doing, it would help the Oblates to embrace a spirit of sharing and recognize the call for each unit to generate funds locally in order to improve a relative financial sustainability.

Among the strategies mentioned by Fr. Marc were: having an effective financial committee, not just as a thought, but as something which has to be done; employment of professionals; the need for an Oblate personnel to take responsibility; the serious living out of the vow of poverty that must start in first formation and also, having the sense of belonging on the part of the *formandi* towards finances.

The Report of the General Councilor for AORC, Fr. Peter STOLL, covered The Chapter Acts, appointments and calendar items. After the General Chapter, the January- February Plenary Session Meeting was spent carefully studying how the next six years will be dedicated to follow up on the various Chapter directions and recommendations.

Provincial and Delegation Superiors and Treasurers of Colombo and Jaffna (Sri Lanka), India, Bangladesh, Hong Kong-China, Korea, Japan, Turkmenistan, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia and the Philippines actively engaged in the AORC discussions

and resolutions. Due to visa delays, Fr. Simon VADAKOOT, Bursar of the Indian Province, Fr. Derrick WARNAKULASURIYA and Fr. Exupear BASHARAT, Superior and Bursar of the Pakistan Delegation, respectively, were not able to attend the meeting. Bro. Noel GARCIA, the representative of Asia-Oceania Brothers, together with Fr. Francis ZABALA, served as moderators while Fr. Rodel LOPEZ provided computer technology support. Scholastic Peter Anthony SOTOMIL competently worked in the secretariat. Our two Vietnamese scholastics provided the translation for their Superior and Bursar. The AORC representatives thank Fr. Richard WEIXELMAN, OMI, the OMC Director and the staff for the hospitable stay at the Oblate Missionary Center. (Fr. Lauro DE GUIA in *OMI Philippines*, April 2017)

INDONESIA

A new mission plan for the province

The 36th General Chapter challenged all the Oblates to renew their lives for the sake of an even more effective evangelization of the world. In response to this challenge, and as the fruit of the Oblate Triennium, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the Province of Indonesia have taken much time to reflect and discern about their personnel and their mission. They concluded by starting a new mission for the Province; they call it “Oblate Vocation and Formation.” This new mission was born of the main concern that “the harvest is rich but the laborers are few.” (Matt 9:37) Every Oblate in the Province realizes that the number of laborers is not equal to the harvest in the mission fields (based on the slow increase of the number of the personnel each year).

The new mission of the Province is also a response to the cry of the Church. The Church needs laborers. The Church needs priests for sacramental services. The Church needs people who consecrate their lives for the service of their brothers and sisters. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to collaborate with everybody, especially with Catholic families, to promote vocations and to take part in the formation process in various ways. It is felt that it is

necessary to work hand in hand with the laity to prepare the laborers for the harvest.

The Vision Statement of the Province:

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Province of Indonesia is a religious missionary society which faithfully follows Jesus Christ to proclaim the message of salvation to the poor with their many faces by renewing themselves constantly according to the Charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod, under the patronage Mary Immaculate, living the values of Pancasila*, together with all people of goodwill.

(* Pancasila is the official philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state.)

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Province of Indonesia commit to:

1. Improving oneself for the sake of the mission.
2. Making every Oblate community a means of self-renewal.
3. Increasing vocations and maintaining the call.
4. Increasing the involvement of laity in spirituality and mission.
5. Strengthening the role and service to youth.
6. Building an awareness of diversity and unity as one nation, Indonesia.

(Written by Caraka Team)

Canada-United States

ASSUMPTION PROVINCE

Meeting of Young Oblates of the Region

On February 14, 2017 the first official meeting of the *Young Oblates of CA-US Region Committee* was held in the Provincial House of Assumption Province in Toronto, Canada. CROCUS representatives Frs. Marian GIL and Luc TARDIF facilitated this event. Young Oblates from the following Provinces were present: Fr. Remi LEPAGE – Notre-Dame-du-Cap; Fr. Daniel JANULEWICZ – Assumption; Fr. Vijay DEIVANAYAGAM – OMI Lacombe, and Fr. Juan GASPAS – US. They selected Fr. Lepage as chairman and Fr. Gaspar as secretary of this newly established committee whose role is to move forward efforts for “Discerning the future of missionary presence of the Oblates in the CA-US Region”.

There was discussion about current ministries and Oblate formation, as well as faith sharing about one’s personal Oblate vocation. A reawakening zeal to contribute to future missionary efforts colored the meeting. The recent 36th General Chapter document and its six directives became the basis for ongoing conversation about the future of Oblate mission and missionary presence.

This permanent committee (whose membership will have a 3-year term) will embark on a

yearlong process to organize a Congress for Young Oblates of CA-US Region to be held in Canada in late spring of 2018. The process to be employed at the gathering will be the SEE-JUDGE-ACT methodology. Five representatives from each province will be invited to take part in this event. Each province will host a meeting in order to allow participants to learn more about our ministries. The undercurrent feeling of this meeting was one of hopefulness and enthusiasm from all members present. (By Marian Gil, OMI - Provincial Assumption Province)

OMI LACOMBE

CROCUS at Yellowknife

The Oblate Conference of the Canada-United States Region (CROCUS) met from March 6 till 12 at Yellowknife, NWT, at the invitation of the Lacombe Province. The Major Superiors (provincials and vicars) took part. Besides questions of usual coordination, the Conference focused on some common projects with the youth of the Region, as well as joint efforts in the area of Vocations and First Formation. A program of ongoing formation for superiors is beginning to take shape.

The Chapter of 2016 had asked that a Brother be included in the regional meetings. Jason ROSSIGNOL, from the U.S. Province, was able to be present for part of the gathering.

His presence was visible corroboration for the leadership of the Region of the importance of the Brothers in the life and mission of the Congregation.

Mother Nature, cold and beautiful, contrasted with the warmth of heart and the immense energy of the bishop and his humble pastoral team (including the 3 Oblates among his 7 priests). The people and their pastors are proud of the work to which the Oblates have been dedicating themselves since the 1850's. It was a beautiful experience. (INFO OMI, 15 March 2017)

ASSUMPTION PROVINCE 200th Anniversary closing celebrations

On January 22, 2017, the Missionary Oblates of Assumption Province and their guests gathered at St. Eugene de Mazenod parish in Brampton to celebrate a Eucharist for the closing of the Oblate Triennium and Bicentenary Jubilee. The Bicentenary Jubilee marked the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Oblate religious family by St. Eugene de Mazenod. The Oblate Triennium was a three-year period of preparation for the bicentenary, with a special focus on the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Mass in Brampton officially closed the Jubilee celebrations for the Oblates of Assumption Province.

Presiding the Jubilee Mass was Cardinal Orlando QUEVEDO, OMI, Archbishop of Cotabato, Philippines. He was joined by Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, Bishop Douglas CROSBY of Hamilton, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and several other bishops.

Numerous priests, both religious and diocesan, concelebrated the Mass. The church was filled with people: consecrated men and women, as well as representatives of groups and organizations, families, and parishioners from Oblate churches.

In his homily, Cardinal Quevedo stated that he undertook the 9000 mile journey to Canada to pay a debt of gratitude, since a Quebec Oblate – Fr. Gerard MONGEAU – who later became the first Archbishop of Cotabato, was one of

the “Magnificent Seven”, a group of great missionaries in the south of the Philippines. Cardinal Quevedo urged the Oblates to keep alive the “sacred fire” that “is a fire of love of God and our Immaculate Mother...a fire of missionary daring for those in need of God’s grace”.

During the offertory, gifts representing the five continents, along with bread and wine, were brought to the altar: a yellow candle and rice for Asia; a green candle and fruit for Africa; a red candle and grains of corn for the Americas; a blue candle and flowers for Oceania; and a white candle as well as a Bible for Europe. After Holy Communion, the Ulman and Kasprzak families received the Crystal Oblate Madonna Award from Father Marian GIL, Provincial, in recognition of exceptional dedication in promoting the Oblate charism, and participation in the mission of Assumption Province.

Before the final blessing, members of the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate, and young people who attended the World Youth Day 2016, were commissioned as “faithful witnesses” of the Good News and “friends of the poor” by Cardinal Thomas Collins. The joyful celebration continued with a well-attended reception at Millennium Gardens Banquet Hall.

While the Oblate Triennium and Bicentenary Jubilee have ended, the work of the Missionary Oblates of Assumption Province and their collaborators continues with a great amount of zeal as well as enthusiasm. (Fr. Pawel RATAJCZAK in *News and Views*, January-February 2017)



Europe

ITALY**Three generations make a family**

For over 60 years, the Oblates have served the people of the Parish of Maria Ss. Immacolata in Aosta. The local Ordinary, Bishop Franco Lovignana describes how he sees the Oblate presence in his diocese:

I consider the presence of the Missionary Oblates to be a very great gift which the Lord has given to our Diocese...I would say that I see the Missionary Oblates in the Diocese of Aosta as having a presence of "communion". They bring the yeast of community, and even at times a spur for community, through the contribution to the presbyteral and pastoral organisms of the Diocese and the city of Aosta. The Oblate community has always been well integrated into the local Church and the presbyterate. It is no small thing to have the witness of fraternal life offered by a community of priests, also for the lay faithful. Besides the care they show, both from the point of view of charity, and from the point of view of pastoral care of the poor, which is a characteristic of the parish ministry of the Church of the Immacolata, since the beginning of the Parish, I would like to underline certain initiatives which have grown and taken on special importance: youth ministry, the pastoral of the family, welcoming penitents to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and for spiritual guidance, and accompanying people hurt by the breakdown of marriage. Besides all these considerations, I would like to personally say that the Missionary Oblates have succeeded in showing forth their charism in this our city.

Fr. Grzegorz GLABAS, a young associate pastor of the parish, gives us some details about this sixty-year presence:

The story of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Valle d'Aosta begins more than a century ago, in the years 1902-1921, when they settled at the Priory of Saint-Pierre, where they had transferred their novitiate. This was

especially a result of the suppression of the religious orders in the French Republic at the beginning of the twentieth century. And it was there that the future Bishop of the city of Aosta, Mons. Maturino BLANCHET (†1974), entered the Oblates as a novice.

In the year 1939, Bishop Francesco Imberti entrusted Holy Cross Church in the city of Aosta to the Oblates. On August 22, 1949, Bishop Blanchet issued the decree of erection of a new parish, under the title Maria Ss. Immacolata. On December 8, 1954, Bishop Blanchet blessed the first stone of the new church that would be consecrated in 1956.

Since then, many Oblates have ministered there. What's more, it is now the third generation of inhabitants of that district who, like their predecessors, continue to form a parish community. They themselves say that their community is characterized by something special -- the "Oblate Spirit".

Among the many activities of the parish, there is a special commitment to missions in other countries, particularly Senegal and Laos. Many of the parishioners have had the opportunity to meet the missionaries, including Blessed Mario BORZAGA. Some of the parishioners have also participated in volunteer missionary work in Africa. So, in the parish, there has always been "the spirit of the Founder of the Oblates -- St. Eugene de Mazenod".

The second phase of parish life, when the protagonists were by now the second generation of parishioners, was marked by two important events. In the years 1984 and 1999, two Missions were conducted, in collaboration with the neighbouring parish of Saint-Martin de Corléans. The two initiatives were made possible largely due to the efforts of two Oblates: Frs. Walter VERZELETTI and Fernando GARGANTINI, and the collaboration of the members of the two parishes. These two important events have left their mark on the lives of families in this part of

the city, and beyond. Today, the young people of that time are now mature and actively involved in parish life. As they say themselves, the Oblates brought with them the charism of being missionaries -- of preaching the Gospel -- and building new realities. They feel most strongly the spirit of community, both what they live out in the parish and what they see witnessed in the Oblate community.

Now, into this active parish life, enter their children, the third generation. The basics are the same as those of their parents and grandparents: summer language camp, the oratorio, catechesis. But the face of this area of the Valley is no longer the same as it was 60 years ago. The Oblates and the parish community are called to face new forms of poverty as well as socio-cultural and religious change. Against this background, the question arises almost spontaneously: do the Oblates, who bring with them the spirit of mission and community life, still have something to offer? The answer is given by young people. In the past few months, some of them, from Aosta and the surrounding area, participated in two events: the Oblates World Youth Day in Wroclaw, Poland, and a pilgrimage to the mother house of the Oblates in Aix-en-Provence, France. In their words, it was for them an experience "to be repeated a thousand times". Among many things that they mention, one stands out -- the community spirit which they have experienced.

The present Superior of the community, Fr. Palmiro DELALIO, sees the future of the community in this way: *There is no ministry which is foreign for us, as long as it is chosen for this main purpose: "To teach who Christ is". It seems to us that our presence here in the Valle d'Aosta responds fully to the demands of our vocation: it allows us to live an intense community life. Also there is no lack of poor people to evangelize; material poverty which is always growing; and a poverty of values, especially in the area of the family and of society. Thus we have before ourselves a sphere of activity which fully corresponds to the ideal of our charism.*

POLAND

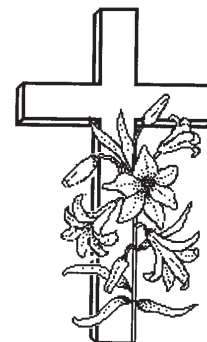
OMI Novitiate on list of historic monuments

On March 15 at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw, there was a ceremony naming 10 places as historic monuments in Poland. Among them was Swiety Krzyz (Holy Cross), a former Benedictine monastery and for many years now, the novitiate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Inclusion on the list of historic monuments is a way Poland protects objects and buildings which have special historical, scientific, or artistic value and are of importance to the Polish cultural heritage.

Until the mid-seventeenth century, Holy Cross was the largest Polish shrine. That honor is now held by the Jasna Góra Monastery in Częstochowa, shrine of the "Black Madonna." Historical documents show that the Holy Cross Shrine was already popular in the fourteenth century. King Wladyslaw Jagiello made it a special place of pilgrimage. Since the late Middle Ages, the monastery was one of the important intellectual and cultural centers of Poland and had an important library.

Relics of the Holy Cross are still venerated at the shrine. The original Benedictine Abbey was founded there by Boleslaw Chrobry in 1006. According to the Oblate Personnel, Holy Cross was formally established as a house of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate on January 1, 1936. Since then, hundreds of young Oblates began their first formation there and then went on to become missionaries throughout the world. (<http://www.oblaci.pl/aktualnosci/943>)



Anniversaries for May 2017

70 years of priesthood

31.05.1947	07315	Fr. Roger Gauthier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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65 years of religious life

31.05.1952	09239	Fr. Edward Vrazel	United States
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60 years of religious life

01.05.1957	10842	Bro. Yvon Boulianne	Lacombe
01.05.1957	10260	Fr. Herbert Krumscheid	Namibia
01.05.1957	10257	Fr. Franz-Josef Michels	Namibia
01.05.1957	10843	Fr. Martin O'Keeffe	Anglo-Irish
21.05.1957	10995	Bro. Erich Brähler	Central European
31.05.1957	10264	Cardinal Orlando Quevedo	Philippines

60 years of priesthood

30.05.1957	09262	Fr. James Lantsberger	United States
30.05.1957	09346	Fr. Sherman Wall	United States

50 years of religious life

31.05.1967	12029	Bishop Wilhelm Steckling	Paraguay
31.05.1967	11837	Fr. Dennis Iddamalgoda	Colombo
31.05.1967	11834	Fr. Alban Rajasingham	Jaffna
31.05.1967	11836	Fr. Clement Waidyasekara	General Administration

50 years of priesthood

31.05.1967	10958	Fr. George Knab	United States
31.05.1967	10953	Fr. Roberto Mayer	Brazil

25 years of religious life

06.05.1992	13364	Fr. José Ayala	Bolivia
07.05.1992	13419	Fr. Varghese Cheruparamban	India
07.05.1992	13420	Fr. Tomy Thomas Kalloor	India
07.05.1992	13421	Fr. Chinnappan Sandhappan	India

25 years of priesthood

24.05.1992	13054	Fr. Javier Alvarez Lodeiro	Mediterranean
30.05.1992	12982	Fr. Günther H. Ecklbauer	Central European

Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 23-28

Name	Prov./Del.	Born	Died at	Date
Fr. Lionel Dumont	OMI Lacombe	20/06/1922	Winnipeg	19/03/2017
Fr. Lionel Goulet	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	28/10/1920	Richelieu	28/03/2017
Fr. Alphonse Roy	OMI Lacombe	24/04/1935	St. Albert	01/04/2017
Fr. Mario Ceruti	Natal	08/10/1933	Durban	01/04/2017
Fr. Ernest Malok	Poland	20/02/1935	Lubliniec	02/04/2017
Bro. Robert Bergeron	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	12/07/1924	Richelieu	10/04/2017

“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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