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Interculturality Workshop

The Acts of the 2016 General Chapter #62 reads, “We perceive the Holy Spirit calling us to conversion in the area of interculturality: to live more deeply the creative tension between strong unity and rich diversity, being able to learn something new like a child, to develop the ability to learn, to unlearn and to rebound, to choose interculturality as a lifestyle, as a way of being in mission.” A number of verbs appear in this short quotation, to perceive, to call, to convert, to live, to learn, to develop, to choose. Perhaps one of the most important at this stage of our life as a Congregation is to choose.

The 36th General Chapter made a clear decision, chose to make intercultural sensitivity, conversion and living a priority for the Congregation. Intercultural living among us as Oblates is meant to be a prophetic witness to a world which has a greater mix of people and cultures than ever before.

As part of its commitment to promote and foster genuine intercultural living, the General administration sent 7 delegates to an “International Interculturality Workshop” organized by the Society of the Divine Word missionaries (SVD). The workshop was held at the famous Centro Ad Gentes outside the city of Rome, in a small town called Nemi from the 23rd to 31st of January 2018.

The workshop was attended by a total of 53 participants from different male and female communities, many of whom have responsibilities of leadership in their congregations, orders, societies. The Oblate delegates, all involved in formation ministry were: Fr Callistus

KHATHALI – Rome; Fr Ross KAPUNAN – Philippines; Fr Józef WCISŁO – Poland; Fr Christopher CHUKWU – Cameroun; Fr Jean-Pierre FETSHI – Democratic Republic of Congo; Fr Francis KABIKA – Mexico; Bro. Nhlanhla John MHLANGA – South Africa.

Some of the topics covered include, Interculturality in religious life today; Culture, Context and Interculturality; Mapping, Bridging and Integrating: how to build Intercultural Communities; Cultural differences; Psychological and Cultural Responses to intercultural living; Intercultural Religious life; Theology of Inculturation and prophetic dialogue; Intercultural Initial formation: Exit learning; Intercultural Leadership; Gender and Interculturality; Spirituality of Interculturality, among others.

One of the most important exercises in the workshop was the telling of personal stories. Participants had a number of occasions where they had to share their life experiences at various stages of their lives, to explore their intercultural experiences sincerely and openly. This promoted honest introspection and undoubtedly sowed the seeds for intercultural conversion in many. The Oblate participants in our evaluation agreed that the ability to share one’s life story, experiences, and intercultural journey should be encouraged in Oblate communities; indeed, space should be created for such sharing. Embracing genuine intercultural living will depend a lot on the ability of each one to critically look at their cultural and intercultural experiences. It is right to hope that as a Congregation we continue to commit to this reality of intercultural living, and commit to crossing boundaries, challenging

stereotypes, breaking barriers, bridging the divide and building genuine intercultural communities.

In the words of Anthony Gittins who was one

of the presenters of the workshop, “If we can commit to intercultural living, and move beyond living together separately, then we are at the dawn of a revolution in religious life.”

Asia-Oceania

JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

Remembering our first missionary

It is exactly 150 years ago that the founding father of the Oblate Mission in Sri Lanka was called to eternal rest. Fr. Jean-Étienne SÉMERIA was chosen by St. Eugene, our beloved founder, to lead the four member missionary band to Sri Lanka in 1847.

On fire for the conversion of souls, Fr. Sémeria ardently but prudently designed and carved the Oblate mission field in Sri Lanka. By his life, he set an example for his fellow Oblate missionaries not to lose their zeal for souls.

In 1857, he succeeded Bishop Orazio Bettachini as the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna. During his eleven years of episcopacy, spiritual fruitfulness was assured in the Vicariate. At that time, the Vicariate of Jaffna included the present Dioceses of Jaffna, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Chilaw and Kurunagala.

He travelled miles and miles to meet his flock and founded a good number of schools and colleges for the education of Catholics as well as non-Catholics. While he was in France to take part in the General Chapter of our Congregation, he contracted pleurisy and was called to eternal rest on the 23rd of January 1868. He was laid to rest at the Oblate tomb in Aix-en-Provence. (www.omijaffna.com)

TURKMENISTAN

“Ecumenism is our daily life”

“The ecumenical dimension of our Catholic presence is a constant that accompanies us every day. For example, throughout the year we live the experience of interfaith hospitality: in our chapel in Ashgabat, the Protestant evangelical community called the Word of Life gathers almost

every Sunday”, Fr. Andrzej MADEJ, Polish priest of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and Superior of the *Missio sui iuris* of Turkmenistan told *Agenzia Fides* at the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for the Unity of Christians.

“This is a mutual exchange. Sometimes we Catholic missionaries are called to be preachers during the weekly prayer meetings of the Protestant community. In the same way, a few days ago during the Eucharistic celebration, a boy of evangelical faith gave witness to how Jesus Christ freed his life from drugs and alcoholism”, continues Fr. Madej in the interview with *Fides*.

Furthermore, the Oblate explains how this spirit of communion is also at the basis of evangelization: “Sometimes I go together with the Protestant Pastor into the various regions of Turkmenistan: we pray and preach together in the homes of the families that welcome us”.

“Good relations also exist between Catholics and the Orthodox Church: I occasionally participate in their moments of prayer and almost always at Easter or Christmas, with the awareness that we are all part of God’s people”, says Fr. Andrzej, expressing the hope of a future of full communion. “We pray so that sooner or later we will be able to celebrate together the Eucharist, as Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras wished in the 1960s. Their dream is our dream”, concludes the priest. (LF) (*Agenzia Fides*, 26/1/2018)

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

25 years of healing ministry

As it celebrates its 25 years of psychotherapeutic healing (1993—2018), Sahana Medura is the first and only institute of the Catholic Church devoted to the healing of the mentally ill in Sri Lanka. Through counselling, psychotherapy and

medication, Sahana Medura has offered healing and hope to numerous patients.

St. Eugene de Mazenod directed his sons, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, to devote their lives to the poorest of the poor. Among the countless poor that the Oblates have served for over 200 years, there are many destitute and homeless persons who have come to Sahana Medura.

The current director of the institute is Oblate Fr. Fracced Anthony FERNANDO.

LAOS

50 years after the tragic death of Bishop Lionello Berti, OMI

Luang Prabang (*Agenzia Fides*) - The small Laotian Church participates spiritually, with great affection and gratitude, at the memorial of Mgr. Lionello BERTI, missionary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) who died in Laos on 24 February, 50 years ago. To *Fides*, Fr. Angelo PELIS missionary for many years in the small Southeast Asian country recalls, "half a century after the tragic death of Mgr. Berti, the first Bishop of North Laos, we will participate with deep feeling at the Eucharist commemorating him in Reggello (Florence), on February 24, with other witnesses of the drama still engraved in the soul". Reggello is located in the diocese of Fiesole, Mgr. Berti's birthplace.

As a priest, after joining the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1957, Berti accepted his assignment in northern Laos. Laos, a former French colony, independent since 1955, then had just over three million inhabitants, belonging to a mosaic of ethnic groups very distant from each other: language, customs and traditions.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate were present in the north of the country, in an area with an animist and Buddhist population, since 1935, and the arrival of the six young Italian priests gave new impetus to the missionary work. In 1963 the Vicariate of Luang-Prabang was created, of which Mgr. Berti would be the first Bishop. The conditions of life for the population, in this poor

country which lacks means of communication, were complicated by guerrilla actions that the opposing factions, among them the Pathet-Lao communists, engaged in to obtain independence.

In this context it was easy to identify the Catholic religion as "the religion of the colonialists" and the missionaries paid the price. In fact, in a total of 17 priests and catechists, who in those years sacrificed their lives and engaged in pastoral service, were beatified on December 11, 2016, in Vientiane. Moreover, the first missionaries had arrived together with the French colonizers who had seen in the propagation of the Christian faith a possible vehicle for extending their political influence on the population.

In 1962, at the age of only 37, Fr. Lionello Berti was consecrated bishop and appointed vicar of Luang-Prabang. When the Luang-Prabang area was entrusted to Mgr. Berti, it had 80 Catholics and in 1968, a year of his death, there were a thousand: in his five years of pastoral ministry, despite the poverty of funds and personnel, the mission extended to the borders of Thailand, Burma and China. Berti began construction work on the cathedral, the seminary and the schools. He entrusted the care of the sick and partly the formation of the catechists to the Sisters of Charity. He founded the congregation of the "Auxiliaries of Mary Mother of the Church" for the human and Christian formation of women, a secular order that continues its work even today.

On February 24, 1968, a small group of Hmong families prepared to leave for the area of Sayaboury, where they sought refuge from the guerrillas that raged in the mountains. Mgr. Berti decided, with paternal devotion, to accompany them.

Inexplicably, just a few minutes from destination, the plane on which they traveled crashed in the Mekong. The remains of the bodies of 13 people (out of the total 35) were torn apart by the animals in the river. Eleven days after the disaster, the body of the young Bishop emerged from the river, miraculously intact.

During the 1975 revolution, foreign missionaries were expelled, their properties seized and used

for civilian use, the chapel was transformed into a warehouse and there were no traces of Mgr. Berti's tomb for thirty years. Subsequently, thanks to a

patient work of mediation with the Laotian local authorities, the tomb was traced and repaired with dignity. (PA) (*Agenzia Fides*, 23/2/2018)

Canada-United States

OMI LACOMBE, CANADA

A Kenyan's Canadian Christmas

Scholastic Brother Cosmas KITHINJI, currently at the Oblate scholasticate in San Antonio, Texas USA, spent the Christmas holidays getting to know some of the Oblates in the province to which the Mission of Kenya is attached. Here a excerpts from his reflections.

I had an inspiring, insightful and amazing Canadian winter experience this last Christmas in British Columbia. Between the 9th of December and 8th of January I had a providential opportunity to visit several of our Oblate communities and missions in Vancouver, Prince George, Fort St James and Fraser Lake. I also had a chance to visit friends in Burns Lake.

The inspiration and insights came from the stories I heard from the Oblates I encountered, the hospitality they gave me, the ministries I saw them doing and the community life I saw them living. Some of the stories were about the courageous ministries done by some of the Oblates who had been missionaries in countries with civil and political strife, and even hostile to the Church. The other stories were about ministry in the Northern Territories and some Canadian First Nations reserves. I was particularly inspired by hearing one of the Oblates sing some of the native songs and do some native drumming. I was also able to witness the missionary work of Fr Andrew in Vancouver, Fr Tap in North Vancouver, Fr Gilbert in Prince George, Fr Frank in Fort St. James and Fr Vince in Fraser Lake. I was moved by their closeness and devotion to the people they serve, especially during visits with the Oblates when I accompanied them. I was also struck by the collaborative ministry the Oblates are doing, particularly with other consecrated men and women, and other members of their parishes.

The striking thing about the Oblate community life that I experienced at the Crescent community,

Pandosy community and Prince George Oblate District was the intentionality to create community, and care for each other. In the two retirement communities I saw the Oblates help each other to go for doctor appointments, pray for those who went for appointments and procedures. They helped each other look for misplaced things, and patiently waited for each other. In Prince George District I was moved by the regular phone calls the Oblates make to check up on each other and the occasional visits and accommodation they gave each other. I thought that these Oblates are an antidote of the Genesis Cain; unlike him they are their brothers' keepers. Lastly, I was inspired by the missionary zeal and outlook of two Oblates from Poland and Sri-Lanka who are doing ministry in BC. All this brought to life and illustrated for me the Oblate values of hospitality, community, charity, collaboration, internationality, and closeness to people that I have been learning in my Oblate formation since I joined the Oblates in March 2006.

During the trip I was also moved by the faith of the people. In the South of the globe, we are fed with the story that churches are dying in the North of the globe. I came with this misinformed mindset just to unexpectedly see active churches. It was good to see grade school students at St Augustine's Catholic school in Vancouver have an evening of Advent prayer, marked by a presentation of Advent songs from every class. ... Besides this I also met several people who shared with me the missionary work they had done either oversees or in their communities and the causes that they support both abroad and in their communities.

For instance, I met people who had done mission trips and missionary work in places like Kenya and other third world countries. I met a couple that had lived as missionaries with their entire young family in a Northern Territory for a year. I met a lady who belongs to a group that among

other charitable works makes rosaries and sends them to mission countries, I met a family that through MAMI helps to build houses for people in Peru every year. Knowing the difference these kinds of actions make from my experience as a Kenyan, I was filled with gratitude for these generous people and thanked them on behalf of all those that they help. ...

Having been born and grown in Kenya, near the equator where we do not have extreme cold temperatures, it was amazing for me to have my first experience of winter! I was exhilarated when I went up the Cypress Mountain in Vancouver and saw all the snow and the people who were skiing. ...

All this has enhanced my formation and broadened my missionary outlook as I get closer to my final vows as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate, and ordained ministry.

UNITED STATES

Annual De Mazenod Conference

The Missionary Oblate Partnership held its 7th Annual De Mazenod Conference over the weekend of February 9-11, 2018 on the campus of Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas.

This year's conference brought the Partnership together with the U.S. Province's Administrative Team to reflect and comment on three major areas of concern for the Province as it moves forward: "Sustainability," "Ministry," and "Vocations."

Officially, the Partnership was formed in June 2006 in order to provide a new way for Oblates to engage with individuals and institutions who support the Oblate charism of evangelizing the world's poor. The Partnership seeks to nurture a collaborative relationship between its members and the Oblates themselves.

Partnership President, Arthur Pingolt, states: "I think the Partnership has been kind of pushing an institutionally-reflective agenda, and it is obvious in our membership. We have a number of partners who are involved in Church leadership, whether it's in the U.S. Bishop's Conference, in the foundation world, or among our non-Oblate

clergy partners. We also have theologians, writers, innovators...even a Muslim and a Jewish member... it's a body that is growth-centered and question-asking, and I think the Oblates saw a variety of talent that they could draw on in an advisory capacity."

The discussions began with keynote addresses featuring: Brad Myers, formerly Senior Program Officer at the Conrad Hilton Foundation, now a private consultant in the field of philanthropy; and U.S. Oblate Provincial, Fr. Louis STUDER. There were also presentations on specific conference topics by: Province Treasurer, Fr. James CHAMBERS (Sustainability); Vicar-Provincial--Office of Mission & Ministry, Fr. James BROBST (Ministry); and Vocations Director, Fr. Richard HALL (Vocations).

After two days of presentations and group discussions, the result was the formation of a working group that will narrow down the themes and specific suggestions from the meeting, which will then be matched with the Oblates, their resources, and convictions.

Looking back on the Partnership and its evolution over the years, Pingolt said, "Members started out being sort of a group of well-meaning and well-to-do individuals who really liked the Oblates and wanted to support them. I think we're a much more diverse group than that now. Nevertheless, we'll be continuing to deploy our resources in ways that advances the Province and the Charism. For example: this year we've launched the Partnership Mission Fund that responds to requests from Foreign Oblates. In this first year, that new fund has made grants to Oblate ministries in Chad, Mexico, India, Paraguay, Peru, Haiti and here in the U.S."

"I also think we'll continue to be an approachable resource when needed. For example: when the Province wanted to build the School of Theology in Zambia, the Partnership funded nearly three-quarters of it. The Partnership also provided nearly 60% of the funds for the new residences at the Oblate Scholasticate in San Antonio."

Information about the Missionary Oblate Partnership as well as the latest news on their activities is always available on: www.oblatepartnership.org. (Willard Shaw on www.omiusa.org)

OMI LACOMBE, CANADA **Coming full circle**

Fr. Maurice SCHROEDER, an Oblate and a Medical Doctor, recently returned to his homeland after many years as a missionary in Peru. Here he muses on that homecoming experience.

TRITE (adj.) - According to Webster's Dictionary, it means: "Used until so common as to have lost novelty and interest, without the freshness that evokes attention or interest."

We live surrounded by the trite in life. But once in a while a trite reality pushes itself forward in our consciousness to surprise us with new significance.

I recently had such a trite moment. I'd left Saskatchewan in 1954 at age 17 after graduation from Grade 12 at St. Thomas College in North Battleford. In August 2017, I was "re-patriated" to Saskatchewan, specifically to Battleford, in time for my 80th birthday, after many years in our mission in Peru.

It was the closing of a full circle. In Peru I was always different from the people with whom I lived. I looked different. I spoke differently. My skin color was different. My physical size was different. My mind-set was different.

Being different had long become common and lost its novelty and interest. In my own mind I was accustomed to being an extranjero, a foreigner. My official document of identification for the last 40 years has been a Peruvian "carnet de extranjería" ("immigration card"). Then one morning I was walking out of the North Battleford Hospital. Suddenly I realized that I'd just been moving among and interacting with people who were my size and age and color. They spoke just like me. They looked just like me. A good few of them even walked just like me. None of them looked at me as if I were any different from them.

Crossing to the parking lot, my "trite moment" crashed in and made me stop to take it in. Right out loud, I said into the wind, "I'm not an extranjero anymore!"

Trite? No. Significant (for me)? Yes! In my imagination there was a woman behind me on that sidewalk where I'd stopped. She'd pushed by me, muttering, "So who cares, Mac? Out of my way!" (Oblate Spirit, February 2018)

ASSUMPTION PROVINCE, CANADA **Festival of Religious Song**

For the 28th year, the Catholic Family Radio organized the Festival of Religious Song, under the theme of "Peace be with You" (Jn 20:19) in the John Paul II Cultural Centre in Mississauga. In today's society there is so little peace on earth, so little peace in our hearts, yet the participants all sang of the desire to search for the peace that Jesus Christ gives to all of humanity. All of the participants shared this universal message of Christ: those from Peru, those from Canada, and those from Kazakhstan, as the Festival had a particularly broad missionary feel to it this year. A reminder of the great gift of peace came from St. John Paul II, who, at the beginning of the Festival, was seen on the big screen through archival footage of his apostolic journeys and a song titled "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you."

The guest of honour of the evening was Fr. Elio Dennis LOPEZ PAREDES and his band from Peru. Fr. Elio studied in Rome, writing songs that he stored in his desk until the moment when he went to his first mission in Orcotunie, Peru. It was there that he formed his band with local youth, "Banda 7".

Fr. Elio, speaking during the Festival, said "We sing only to evangelize and encourage people to be open to God's Love. We are not professional, trained musicians. We do not try to gain anything through our work -- maybe only a place in Heaven."

Banda 7 showed a new dimension of evangelization, through songs that they write

themselves. All of the members come from different parts of Peru, meeting once every few months to carry God's message to others.

They wore regional, colourful, traditional costumes from different parts of Peru. In the beautiful testimonies given by Fr. Elio, translated from Spanish by Fr. Marcin SERWIN, he spoke of his vocation and the faith he grew up with, especially touching on hope and love, which he learned from his mom. Members of the band spoke of their lives, their faith and evangelization of their communities.

Mr. Andrzej, who kindly drove the band for the few days they were in Toronto and the area, said: "I've never met such polite and undemanding young people, who were not ashamed to begin their meals at restaurants with the sign of the Cross, and who were so grateful for every little thing." Maybe, therefore, it is worth organizing events like the Festival of Religious Song, to learn from people all over the world how we can change our view of evangelization and broaden the horizons of our faith. (by Kinga Fasciszewska, director of Catholic Family Radio in News and views, November-December 2017).

Europe

POLAND

A calendar of three religions

The calendar of three religions, the first in the history of Poznan, is one element of interreligious dialogue between representatives of the three monotheistic religions whose roots go back to the Old Testament patriarch Abraham.

The Christian-Jewish dialogue and Christian-Muslim dialogue have been going on in Poznan for several years. Jewish-Muslim dialogue began recently. These meetings, often in a cozy atmosphere, are conducted not only in the shadow of the synagogue, the mosque or the churches, but sometimes take place in surprising places like restaurants.

The first calendar of the three largest religions was established in Katowice and is the result of interreligious dialogue and ecumenical meetings conducted in that city. This idea found fertile ground in Poznan, where Christians, Muslims and Jews live side by side -- usually in peace and respect. It is the result of a series of meetings of Imam Youssef Chadid, the deputy Szymon Zadumiński and the Oblate priest Marcin WRZOS. They co-created this calendar with the help of city authorities and their superiors (Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Mufti Nidal Abu Tabaq) and their religious communities.

Its goal is to get to know people of different

religions and cultures a little bit more. It is meant to lead to a dialogue of life, an expression of respect and for offering best wishes on the occasion of holiday celebrations, which are also described in the calendar. The dialogue of life consists in harmonious, peaceful living next to each other, despite the differences arising from religion. It is to this spirit of mutual respect and love that Abrahamic religions call their believers.

In 2018, Catholics are celebrating the 1050th anniversary of the diocese of Poznan. It was the first seat of ecclesiastical structures in Poland, founded only two years after the baptism of Prince Mieszko I. The first bishop, Jordan, had his home most probably at Ostrów Tumski.

But there were believers of other religions in Poznan as well. They undoubtedly enrich our city with their spirituality, culture, intelligence, work, and openness. The origins of the Jewish community in Poznan date back to the second half of the 13th century. Muslims are the newest religious community in Poznan. It is difficult to say when the first Muslims came to the city. Perhaps they were Polish Tatars serving in the Polish army. In the 1980's, students from Arab countries arrived. Some of them settled here permanently and founded families.

The Poznan calendar of three religions is special. It includes the history of the development of religion in Poznan. It contains the Julian calendar, but also the Muslim and Jewish

calendars, based on different time calculations, dating back to the origin of the world (Jews) or the pilgrimage of the prophet Muhammed from Mecca to Medina (Muslims). It contains the most important feasts of the three religions; it gives details about their days of prayer (the Lord's day, the Sabbath, the day of the congregation); it names the individual months.

The calendar includes, above all, photographs related to Poznan, as well as explanations regarding particular celebrations and holidays of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The calendar has been financed by the City of Poznan and is available for free. The idea of the calendar is a response to a call of the last General Chapter, which called for interreligious dialogue.

Latin America

BRAZIL

Formation communities begin a new year

(Editor's note: During this Year of Oblate Vocations, from time to time, we hope to publish news from the formation communities in the Oblate world. As of January 2018, there were 576 professed Oblates in First Formation throughout the world, not counting the juniors, prenovices, and novices. We would like to receive brief articles about them and their communities.)

On February 15, the Oblate prenovitiate in Sumaré-SP officially began its formation year with a Eucharist presided by the provincial, Fr. Francisco RUBEAUX. He was joined at the altar by Frs. Lindomar FELIX, superior of the prenovitiate, and his associate, Fr. Antonio PEREIRA.

This year, the formation community has seven candidates: one in the third year of philosophy; one in the second year; and five in the first year. They attend the Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas.

In his homily, the provincial highlighted the important pillars in the formation for Oblate missionary life: study, spirituality, prayer and community life.

On the next day, February 16, the post-novitiate or scholasticate of Santo Eugênio officially began its activities for the new school year. Again, the Eucharist was led by the provincial, Fr. Rubeaux, and concelebrated by the superior of the scholasticate, Fr. Cardoso PEREIRA, Fr. Rubens Pedro CABRAL, and Fr. Genivaldo CORDEIRO.

The scholasticate counts the presence of eleven young Oblates, Brazilian and from other countries. They make their theological studies at the Instituto São Paulo de Estudos Superiores.

Taking part in the celebration were the prenovitiate community, along with members of the José Cebula Group of Oblate Associates who live and spread the Oblate charism in the city of São Paulo. It was also an occasion to celebrate 192nd anniversary of the February 17th pontifical approbation of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules by Pope Leo XII in 1826.

As part of the commemoration of that event, the Province of Brazil launched a new website: www.omi.org.br. (Fr. Sérgio DE SANTANA)

BAJA CALIFORNIA MISSION

Discussing the future with the archbishop

On February 3, the United States Oblate leadership team, together with our Tijuana Mission pastor and superiors (Frs. Julio NARVAEZ and Jesse ESQUEDA, respectively) met with Archbishop Francisco Barron-Moreno concerning the future of our Oblate mission in Tijuana.

Since the mission was established in 1996, the local population has greatly increased. It is estimated that there are over 200,000 people living within the San Eugenio parish boundaries. This reality requires us to consider how best to address the pastoral needs of so many people. It is evident that the current parish organizational structures cannot continue to meet these needs.

Our discussion with the Archbishop was about creating two parishes out of the existing parish.

As Missionary Oblates, we will turn over leadership of the more developed portion to the diocese. We will continue to move into the poorer portions of the parish boundaries. We will also continue to expand into less-developed areas where the New Faces of the Poor are living outside the current parish boundaries.

Union Antorchista, Fuentes and La Ladrillera are some of the areas where we are developing new faith communities. The new migrants tend to build along railroad tracks, squatting on federal land. These neighborhoods lack basic infrastructure such as paved roads, potable water, sanitation and electricity. The archbishop is very grateful for the development of this parish and of our continued commitment to work with the poorest populations of the City of Tijuana. Those who began, developed and continue this mission can rightly be proud! (Frs. James BROBST and Jesse ESQUEDA in www.omiusa.org)

BRAZIL

A new mission in the Diocese of Caicó-RN

On the night February 6, 2018, the Oblate Province of Brazil rejoiced with the official start of the work of its newest missionary front. We are talking about the two parishes that we took in the Diocese of Caicó, Rio Grande do Norte.

Fr. Antônio L. RENDON was entrusted with the pastoral care of the parish of St. Francis of Assisi, where he was appointed parish administrator. Fr. Macário F. DE SOUSA was entrusted with the pastoral care of the Santa Cruz Parish, where he too was appointed parish administrator.

The Holy Mass was presided over by the diocesan Bishop of Caicó-RN, Dom Antônio, MSC, and was attended by the provincial of the Oblate Province of Brazil, Fr. Francisco RUBEAX, the new administrators, and a portion of the people of God, who from now on are being evangelized by the Mazenodian charism.

Both parishes are located in a peripheral region of Caicó, greatly lacking in religious and social assistance. It is noteworthy that the territory of this particular Church is quite vast: in total it covers an area of more than 9,000 square kilometers, with a population of over 300,000 people.

The diocesan Bishop, Antônio Carlos Cruz Santos, MSC, has been in charge of the pastoral government of this diocese since 2014. Ever since the first contacts between the Oblates and him were made, he has always been very open and welcoming, and thrilled with the possibility of having a Congregation caring for outlying parishes.

For the present, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate will be the only religious Congregation responsible for the pastoral care of a parish in the Church of Caicó. The other parishes are under the care of priests of the secular clergy. Let us accompany, with the help of our prayers, this new Oblate mission in Caicó, so that through the intercession of St. Eugene and Mary Immaculate, the people will be very well evangelized by the Oblates, and the Oblates will feel happy and fulfilled in this new missionary front God has sent us. (Fr. Sérgio DE SANTANA)

Anniversaries -- April 2018

65 years of religious life

25/04/1953	09433	Fr. Josef Ostendorf	Central European
25/04/1953	09435	Fr. Gerhard Scheuermann	Central European
25/04/1953	09438	Fr. Heribert Stumpf	Central European

50 years of religious life

25/04/1968	12033	Fr. Werner Pieper	Central European
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50 years of priesthood

04/04/1968	11128	Fr. Jerome Novotny	Japan - Colombo
07/04/1968	11336	Fr. Aldo D'Ottavio	Mediterranean
19/04/1968	10854	Fr. Celestine Soosaithasan Croos	Jaffna
19/04/1968	11051	Fr. John Camillus Fernando	Colombo
19/04/1968	11048	Fr. Michael Silva	Colombo
21/04/1968	11591	Fr. René Colin	France

25 years of religious life

03/04/1993	13599	Fr. Christoph Heinemann	Central European
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25 years of priesthood

17/04/1993	13203	Fr. Guillermo Siles	Bolivia
24/04/1993	12971	Fr. Gerry Gamaliel De Los Reyes	Philippines
24/04/1993	12972	Fr. Jonathan Domingo	Philippines
24/04/1993	13032	Fr. Charlie Inzon	Philippines
24/04/1993	12970	Fr. Franklin Mirasol	Philippines
24/04/1993	13033	Fr. Rogelio Tabuada	Philippines
24/04/1993	13164	Fr. Francis Efren Zabala	Philippines

Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 8-17

Name	Prov./Del.	Age	Died at	Date
Fr. Henri Leconte	Brazil	84	Belém (Brazil).	31/01/2018
Fr. Luciano Lachance	Bolivia	85	Cochabamba (Bolivia)	02/02/2018
Fr. Giangiacomo Coati	Mediterranean	91	Lentini (Italy)	05/02/2018
Fr. Ronald Walker	United States/ Zambia	83	San Antonio (USA)	09/02/2018
Bro. Thomas J. Cruise	United States	89	Lowell (USA)	16/02/2018
Fr. Benito Framarin	Mediterranean	84	Aosta (Italy)	25/02/2018
Fr. Norberto Schlechter	Cruz del Sur	84	Colonia Independencia (Paraguay)	26/02/2018
Fr. Walter Lange	Central European	86	Hünfeld (Germany)	27/02/2018
Fr. Marc Guiziou	France	95	Pontmain (France)	28/02/2018
Fr. Josef Ostendorf	Central European	88	Fulda (Germany)	03/03/2018

□ *“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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