



21 May 1861 – 21 May 2018 The final hours of Saint Eugene de Mazenod

By Fr. Fabio Ciardi, OMI, Director of the General Service for Oblate Studies

On 20 May 1861, when Father Tempier told Bishop de Mazenod that it was now time for him to prepare himself for death, the Founder's reaction was immediate: "I want only one thing: that God's Will be done. Pray for me the prayers of the dying. But first, give me my missionary cross and my rosary: they are my arms and I don't want to be without them ever again." Then he asked for the scapular of the Madonna and the blessing of the Pope.

Later on, he renewed his religious vows and expressed his joy at having founded the Congregation. "Tell them (the Oblates) that I die happy... That I die happy because the good God deigned to choose me to found the Congregation of the Oblates in the Church." He blessed the Oblates, present and in the far-off missions, giving what we have always considered his spiritual testament: "Truly practice among yourselves charity, charity, charity ... and outside, zeal for the salvation of souls."

Then he blessed the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux: "Tell them that I have much loved them, that I do love them, that I am their Father. Tell them that I want the two families to always be united, that they form a single family. They will be happy and strong in this fraternal union."

The next day, early in the morning, he said to a confrere who was going out to celebrate Holy Mass: "Oh! Ask (the good God) that His Will be done. I want it with my whole heart."

At various times during the day, he repeated to

those who were around him: "If I fall asleep or get worse, wake me, I beg of you. I want to die knowing I am dying!" He said the same to the doctor: "Oh! How I would like to be aware of my own dying so as to better accept the Will of God!"

In the evening, wrote Father Fabre, "We prayed the Salve Regina which our dearly beloved Father understood and followed internally. At the words 'after this exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus,' he opened his eyes a bit. At each invocation, 'O clement, O loving,' he moved a bit; at the third, 'O sweet Virgin Mary,' he breathed his last."

Saint Eugene de Mazenod died offering his life as the perfect fulfillment of the Will of God. No one took it from him; he gave it freely, as a gift of love, to that God who had given it to him.

He died happy. He died as he had lived, fulfilling the Will of God, together with the loves of his life: his Oblate cross in his hand; his prayer to Mary; the Pope's blessing; carrying in his heart and blessing the Oblates and the Oblate family, represented by the Sisters of the Holy Family. He died surrounded by sons and daughters, like a father.

Today the company of sons and daughters of St. Eugene is as numerous as ever, scattered throughout the whole earth. To live fully our own great vocation -- the will of God! -- this group of sons and daughters is called to gather again around the father, to make his "loves" their own, to fulfil the testament he has left. It is the very

testament of Jesus; he could not have given us a different one: "Love one another as I have loved you ... As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 13, 34-35; 20, 20).

It is a mandate given to the whole Oblate family: at that time to the Oblates and the Sisters of the Holy Family present around his bed; today to all the Oblates scattered

throughout the world, to lay people who share the charism, to institutes of consecrated life born of the Oblate charism and who with the Oblates share the mission.

A large family, once again united around their father, Saint Eugene de Mazenod. A family united by the same charity and by the same passion for the proclamation of the Gospel.

General Administration

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT Celebrating the gift of vocation

On April 22, Good Shepherd Sunday, World Day of Prayer for Vocations, seven members of the Central Government of the Congregation went to various ministry sites of the Italian Sector of the Mediterranean Province to celebrate with joy and gratitude the gift of vocation. Fathers Louis LOUGEN, Cornelius NGOKA, Peter STOLL, Warren BROWN, Alberto HUAMÁN, Guillaume MUTHUNDA and Antoni BOCHM went to preach the Good News in Pescara, Pozzilli and Santa Maria a Vico. We must remember also the generous services of Brother Ryszard LOIN, a member of the General House, who guided the three Oblates who went to Pescara.

Welcomed warmly by our brother Oblates and the People of God, we presided at the Eucharist and preached in various forms of the Italian language. The warm welcome of the good people made up for any lack in our ability to communicate in Italian! Our message was inspired by the readings of Good Shepherd Sunday: the vocation to lay down one's life for others. The recent Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis also served to speak about the vocation of all the baptized: the universal call to holiness.

At each celebration we also shared our own vocational stories and these were very much appreciated by those gathered at the celebrations. In the Cathedral of Isernia we concluded on Sunday night with a prayer vigil for vocations attended by diocesan clergy, religious priests, Brothers and Sisters, married couples and young people. It was a beautiful vigil to conclude this

day of prayer for vocations. The bishop of Isernia concluded highlighting the importance of the vocation of marriage and praying for holy couples to raise children of faith.

We were all impressed by the many ministries of the Oblates, their close relationship with the people, the involvement of lay people and the lively Eucharistic celebrations. We give thanks for this opportunity to celebrate and animate the Year of Oblate Vocations!

EUGENE DE MAZENOD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

In the footsteps of the Founder in Palermo

Last March, the community of Aix, invited by a group of lay people from Misilmeri, made a pilgrimage to discover in Palermo the places where Saint Eugene de Mazenod lived. He arrived there on January 6, 1799, and spent his last four years of exile in Italy.

The palaces of Branciforte, Ventimiglia, Butera, the Tanners' quarter, the Kalsa quarter, the Church of Saint Ignatius in Olivella, the cathedral and so many other places made up the stops on a two-day journey. With the texts of Saint Eugene on hand, the Oblates of Aix, guided by Ileana Chinnici and Vincenzo David, discovered these magnificent places and the events of their Founder's life. Without a doubt, St. Eugene's stay in Palermo inspired many of his future choices.

The pilgrimage to Palermo was also marked by the fraternal welcome and friendly encounters around Sicilian meals with the lay group of Misilmeri. This group of people enthusiastic

for Saint Eugene welcomed with joy those who wanted to walk in the footsteps of the Oblate Founder in Palermo.

During the stay in Palermo, the Oblates of Aix were able to participate in the Mass celebrated on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the independence of Mauritius. The pastoral care of migrants is part of the mission of the Oblates of this city. (Krzysztof ZIELENDĄ)

GENERAL SERVICE FOR OBLATE STUDIES OMI studies – an exciting beginning

The bicentenary of our founding ended on a very positive note on 25 January 2017 in Rome with the establishment of the Kusenberger Chair of Oblate Studies, based at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. It launched the opportunity for interested students throughout the world to study for a Master of Arts degree in Spirituality or a Certificate in Oblate Studies or simply for enrichment in knowledge of the Oblate charism without an academic qualification.

Six months later, in August 2017, the first online course was offered: “Eugene de Mazenod, History, Spirituality and Mission.” Eighteen Oblate and Oblate Associate students enrolled in the course from their respective Oblate Units in Canada, France, Italy, Sahara, the United Kingdom and the United States. This online course is offered every two weeks in English.

In January 2018, a second course began: “Founders, charisms and their expression in Constitutions and Rules.” This is a weekly online course which is also open to members of other religious congregations and their associates. Of the ten students registered for this course, there are two Oblates, one Oblate Associate and seven from other institutes.

Preparations are happening now for a new academic year, beginning in August 2018, in which two courses will be offered. The first is a repeat of the one-year Eugene de Mazenod course (every two weeks from August 2018 until April 2019.) The second is a new course: “Mazenodian Spirituality.” It will be offered online weekly from August to November 2018.

Fr. Frank SANTUCCI, the Kusenberger Professor of Oblate Studies, states: “At this stage, the teaching is done in English but I dream of Spanish and French in the future, once suitably qualified teachers are identified and trained. There are some scholarships available for Oblates from around the world. For me, personally, this is a dream come true, thanks to the generosity of Bob and Ruth Kusenberger – a dream that comprises the longing to see a large team of charism animators being trained throughout our Mazenodian world.”

For more details see <https://ost.edu/oblate-studies/>

Africa-Madagascar

MADAGASCAR

A lack of security in Befasy

The new mission of the Delegation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Madagascar, “Befasy”, is located in the Diocese of Morondava, 50 km from the capital of the Southwest Region of the island. At the mission, we have a church under the patronage of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus but we also have three chapels in the bush. At the beginning of our mission (November 27, 2016), there were only about forty practicing Catholics in Befasy but today, there are up to two hundred on Sunday. It should be noted that in this part of

the island, the use of *gris-gris* (a “magic” amulet) is still commonly used for cures, etc....

Most people in this region of Menabe are, in general, Sakalavas. But we can also encounter tribes such as the Antandroy, Vezo, Betsileo, Merina, Mahafaly ... Because of this, there are many customs and traditions in Befasy. But here we will only mention one, the breeding of zebu cattle. These are important in the traditions of this region because they are a mark of wealth, of strength, and are commonly used for feasts. For some tribes, stealing cattle is part of the culture. A man has to steal cattle before he gets married

to show maturity and strength, to show everyone that he is able to protect his future family. In fact, being a “dahalo” (zebu thief) is not a crime for them because there is no resorting to violence against human life. Previously, the villagers distinguished between a “zebu thief” (dahalo) and “bandits”, that is to say those who kill people.

Since we moved into this village, we have noticed that the security situation has completely deteriorated. According to the villagers, before, Befasy was never attacked by bandits; there was peace because it was their village. But that changed little by little. Now the bandits have begun to enter the village, stealing at least forty zebu, using rifles, whistles, screams, and gris-gris. Sometimes they announce that they will come on a certain day and at what time they will attack the village. The worst thing is that they kill people, carry out revenge and even do kidnappings for as much as 500,000 MGA (156 USD). That’s what happened in January in a village called Antevamena.

The last time (on March 7, 2018), they caught a bandit whom they had sought for a week. The reason is that he burgled a family and stole 300,000 MGA (94 USD), a 50kg bag of rice and 8 jars; then he hit the mother of the family on the head and killed a child with an axe.

The rural commune of Befasy has a police station containing a dozen policemen but one could say that they are all corrupt and sometimes do not even participate in the arrest of bandits along with the people. Indeed, the people no longer have confidence in them. During the month of December and January (considered a very dangerous period), the police station requested reinforcements. Hence, instead of there being a dozen, there were twenty on the spot but that did not change anything.

This lack of responsibility on the part of the police has led the people to establish their own defense and their own law. If they caught bandits, they immediately executed them without asking the permission of the police or the civil authorities. They killed the bandits either with rifles or with their own hands (cutting off their

heads or crushing them with axes). This was done to every one of them and without mercy.

Since our arrival, we have counted up to six executions but we will tell of only one. This was a young man arrested for robbery. The people wanted to kill him, but his father intervened. He managed to save his son from the peoples’ anger by making a deal. Unfortunately, the young man again began to steal several times so that finally the father was tired of saving him. The father himself executed his own son with an axe.

The other self-defense managed by the people is the creation of several groups who patrol each night. They take turns at guard duty to ensure safety. They are called “columns”. Despite the initiatives taken by the population, our town asked for military aid anyway and we received three new policemen under a one-year contract. These are paid 400,000 MGA (125 USD) per month through the contribution of each family. These policemen patrol with the “columns” and this gives us a bit of stability. On the other hand, each family has purchased at least one rifle for their defense at home, despite the fact that it is prohibited by law.

Regarding our mission, thanks be to God, so far, the bandits are afraid of the Church and the religious. There has been no attack on our house or on our church. People even fled to our church to be safe. This shows us that God alone is our protection and our help in the face of insecurity. To conclude my sharing, I ask you to always pray for our mission, for its safety and for safety throughout Madagascar. Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate. (Fr. Marek OCHLAK, pastor at Befasy in *OMI Bulletin*, March 2018)

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Paul Decock Auditorium at Cedara

An auditorium at St. Joseph’s Theological Institute in Cedara has been named after long-time professor, Fr. Paul DECOCK, at a ceremony on March 19, 2018. The unveiling of the plaque at the auditorium was preceded by Mass presided by the superior of the Oblate Scholasticate, Fr Joseph PHIRI, who delivered a truly “Oblate” homily on compassion.

Fr. Decock, who specializes in biblical studies, was instrumental in the foundation of SJTI, renowned for its training of Catholic priests and religious.

“The Oblates have always been responsive to the needs of the time. We have always been involved in university education,” said Fr. Decock. He said the Oblates have been instrumental in setting up universities in different parts of the world including Canada and Lesotho.

Fr Paul said that while in the past St Joseph’s was purely for Oblates, the inclusion of other religious congregations has brought communities together with one goal.

The 75 year old Decock said the Institute had reached an agreement with the University of Kwa Zulu Natal. This agreement will enable postgraduate studies in Catholic courses through that university.

The Institute is also looking at offering a degree in Development studies and internet courses as a way of attracting lay people.

He also mentioned the improvement of the Institute’s facilities to accommodate students with handicaps. (Br Itumeleng MAFISA)

CAMEROON

Regional meeting of Oblate Brothers

Oblate Brothers Daniel KLOCH and Christian RAMISY, of the Madagascar Delegation, tell of their experience at the First Regional Meeting of Oblate Brothers, held in Cameroon during the month of February 2018.

Leaving Madagascar on February 9, we arrived the next day at the Yaoundé airport. There, two Brothers from Cameroon, Mirabeau and Christian, were waiting for us and they accompanied us to the formation house of the OMI scholastics. On Saturday and Sunday, the Brothers of the 7 other provinces landed successively in Yaoundé.

They came from: Namibia, Senegal, Lesotho,

South Africa, Congo, Zimbabwe and Zambia. As for the Cameroonian Brothers, they came directly to Garoua. On Sunday, February 11, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Mass was celebrated with the Oblate scholastics. And on Monday afternoon, all Brothers coming from outside left for N’Gaoundéré by train. The night trip was a really interesting adventure. Having arrived Tuesday morning in N’Gaoundéré, we changed means of transport. This time a quite comfortable bus took us to the novitiate, which was in town. The novices with their Master welcomed us with joy and Oblate fraternity. And then, on to Garoua and to the OMI Procure.

Our meeting started on the morning of February 13 with a word of welcome from the superior of the house, Brother Jean Marie DIAKANOU.

On the first day, there was a presentation by each participant: his background and the position he currently holds. To get to know each other better, we spent the day with comments, conversations and various questions. Father Guillaume MUTHUNDA, General Councilor for Africa and Madagascar, who came for this meeting, emphasized Father General's concern for the vocation and the life of the Oblate Brothers in the Congregation all over the world.

The second day, Ash Wednesday, was marked by the beginning of Lent. We reflected on the vocation of the Brother. From this perspective, we continued to share on the identity of an Oblate Brother today. The day was busy and there were many suggestions made about basic spiritual and theological formation and the professional formation of Brothers from the beginning of their religious life.

After this great fraternal sharing, on the third day, we took to the road toward the extreme north of Cameroon. First, we stopped at Figuil to pay a visit to the Oblates who work in this area and pray a moment at the Marian Sanctuary built by Polish Brother Grégoire ROSA. Then we had a good time in Mokolo with the OMI novices and at the end of the day we arrived at Maroua at the Visitor Center. Oblates and lay associates received us very well. We felt the family relationship between the Oblates and the laity.

On February 17, early in the morning, we headed back to Garoua to celebrate the Oblate feast together with the Provincial of Cameroon. In the afternoon, we concluded our meeting, always in English and French, and we entrusted to three Brothers the writing of a report for Fr. General and the OMI Congregation.

It was the first meeting of the Oblate Brothers of the Region of Africa and Madagascar; we hope that it will not be the last. Our thanks to the organizers and all those who ensured the smooth running of this meeting of the Oblate Brothers. (*OMI Bulletin of Madagascar*, March 2018)

SAHARA

A Mass in El Marsa

How many years has it been since Mass was celebrated in El Marsa, the Port of El Aaiún? Perhaps since 1975. A dream of several generations of the Missionary Oblates of the Sahara was to celebrate there again. A family had occupied the house and this made any celebration impossible. With the patience that characterizes life in the desert, about five years ago we managed to recover the house and the chapel in which some basic repairs were made, among other things a cross and an Oblate symbol on the floor. But we still had not been able to start holding the liturgy there.

At last we were able to fulfill our dream on Saturday, April 7, in the afternoon, celebrating

the Divine Mercy in our chapel at El Marsa. One of our parishioners, a Senegalese immigrant who found housing and work in the port, was the instrument that God has used. With him and with a retired French couple traveling in their motorhome, we began again the adventure of making present the Risen and Eucharistic Christ in this corner of the Sahara. And from now on, we would like to celebrate faithfully every Saturday, hoping to gather little by little a small Christian community around the chapel.

How the Word of God resounded in the heart of each of the participants! Yes, the risen Lord wants to show his mercy and pour out his Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, here too in El Marsa. Like Thomas, we were invited to touch Jesus, to believe in him and to be his witnesses. Even in this Church of the Sahara, poor and often silent, the strength of the Risen One is opening a way. And it opens up for us new paths hitherto unsuspected. Now we have to continue working and creating friendly relations, not only with the Christians we meet, but also with our local Muslim brothers. At the opportune moment we will hold a blessing ceremony for the chapel so as to have greater visibility and the necessary structural and decorative projects will be undertaken. With the joy of the Risen One and of having witnessed this new step in our little history of the pilgrim Church in the Sahara, let us walk with hope on the path of new life. (Chicho ROIS ALONSO)

Asia-Oceania

BANGLADESH

De Mazenod Girja: Inaugurated and Blessed

April 20, 2018, was a grace-filled and joyous day for the Church of Bangladesh, especially for the faithful of De Mazenod Girja (*Church*) in Baridhara and for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate as His Eminence Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario, CSC, blessed and inaugurated the Church.

Almost about 2000 faithful from surrounding blocks of the locality gathered for the celebration. His Excellency Most Rev. Archbishop George Kocherry, the Apostolic Nuncio to Bangladesh;

Most Rev. Bejoy D'CRUZE, Bishop of Sylhet; Emeritus Bishop Most Rev. Theotonius Gomes, CSC; Rev. Fr. Irwin MORAIS, the Provincial of Colombo Province, Sri Lanka; Rev Fr. Aloys TERLIESNER, , the Mission Procurator from Germany; about 35 Priests; His Excellency, the Ambassador of Norway; many dignitaries, nuns, seminarians and Brothers participated in the inauguration and blessing ceremony.

The ceremony began with the handing over of the structural designs and the keys of the Girja to the Delegation Superior Rev. Fr. Ajit Victor COSTA, by the construction company's engineer

Mr. Amal Dhar, the cutting of the ribbon by the dignitary guests and the opening of the main entrance of the Girja by His Eminence, the Cardinal. In his homily His Eminence invited the people to become the Holy People of God. It is God who made us holy through His Son Jesus Christ who gave his life for us and sanctified us. Our identity as a holy, kingly and priestly nation derives from our Baptism in Jesus Christ. He reminded the participants that Jesus chasing the sellers and money changers from the temple urges us to constantly aspire to holiness by chasing away evils from our hearts.

After the Eucharist, many of the distinguished guests shared their thoughts on the occasion. Citing Psalm 127:1, Archbishop Kocherry said, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." The De Mazenod Girja at Baridhara is the manifestation of God's love and generous gift to the faithful of Baridhara. He continued, "I personally witness the good works that have been carried out by the Oblate Fathers, scholastics, nuns and faithful of Baridhara." He thanked them all for their great works and services. He said that the Holy Father Pope Francis is happy to contribute the tabernacle for this Church.

The other speakers expressed their gratitude to God for carrying out marvelous services through many people and institutions even today. De Mazenod Girja is one of such manifestations of God's wonderful works. Fr. Costa, OMI thanked all who in any way participated in and contributed to making a long awaited dream a reality after 37 years of pilgrimage, struggle and uncertainty. God's work is immensely marvelous! (Fr Pius POHDUENG)

JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

Inauguration of Aquinas Branch School

The Oblates of Jaffna Province chalked another mile stone in their committed service to the enhancement of education when they inaugurated the Aquinas affiliated branch School at the Oblate Institute for Religious Studies (OIRS) in Mannar. OIRS, known as Gnanodhayam (Dawn of Wisdom) was founded in Mannar

in 2002 on land procured by the late Polish missionary, Fr. Andreas CIERPKA (†1982). Rev. Fr. Josef MATHUNI (†2010) contributed generously, using his good office to put up the initial establishment.

For the past sixteen years it has been serving as a center for formation of candidates to religious life, education of children and youth, animation of various groups and a much sought after resource center for various training programmes in Mannar. In July 2017, the Provincial Superior of Jaffna signed an agreement with the Archbishop of Colombo, His Eminence Malcom Cardinal Ranjith who is the Chancellor of Aquinas University College, in order to affiliate OIRS to Aquinas University College to conduct, as a first step, diploma classes in English.

The official inauguration of this affiliation was celebrated on a grand scale at Gnanaodhyam on the 17th of March, 2018. Gracing this occasion as the chief guest, His Excellency, Emmanuel Fernando, the Bishop of Mannar, hailed the contribution of the Oblates to education in Sri Lanka and extended his fullest support for the future expansion of OIRS as a full-fledged higher education center.

Fr. Susith Silva, the Rector and the Vice Chancellor of Aquinas University College expressed the willingness of His Eminence, the Archbishop of Colombo, and the readiness of the Aquinas University College to extend their service further to the North. The Mannar Zonal Director of Education, Mrs. Suganthy Sebastian, with accurate statistics proved why this inauguration was appropriate and necessary. The students who are enrolled to follow these diploma courses coloured the event with their soothing performances. Fr. Jude CAROWF, the liaison-person for Aquinas Branch School in Mannar, with the help of the prenovitiate community and the Oblates in charge of other feeding centers, organized this successful event.

JAPAN-KOREA

Launching the Year of Oblate Vocations

After Christmas each year, Oblates in Japan usually gather in Kochi City for their Christmas

party. However, there was a little change for the 2017 post-Christmas gathering. Instead of having it in Kochi City, it was held in Fukuoka City, a place more accessible especially to our brother Oblates from Korea. Instead of limiting the gathering to Oblates and honorary Oblates, some of the youth and parishioners were invited. Instead of the usual 3-4 hour gathering, it was a 6-hour gathering.

The change was in response to the Superior General's call to make the "Year of Oblate Vocations" meaningful and fruitful. It was a change so that the Oblates in Japan-Korea could formally launch the "Year of Oblate Vocations" with a Eucharistic celebration together with some invited young men, MAMI supporters and mission partners.

More than expected, 14 young men responded to the invitation of the Oblates. Most of the mission areas where the Oblates are working were well represented. Korean seminarians and candidates together with the Mission Superior, Fr. Maurizio GIORGIANNI, also graced the affair. It was indeed a multi-cultural gathering. Through the generosity of some parishioners and Oblates who provided the necessary simultaneous translations, the discussions and sharing among the participants went smoothly.

After a "getting to know each other session" led by Fr. Steven SAVARIMUTHU, Bro. Nobuhiko YAGI gave an insightful talk about why the Oblates had invited the young men. With the use

of some videos, Fr. Bernard ONDAP introduced the young men to who the Oblates are, their charism, and the present Oblate missionaries in the Japan-Korea delegation.

To formally launch the "Year of Oblate Vocations" a Eucharistic celebration was held at Koga Catholic Church. It was a trilingual mass. The liturgy of the word, hymns and prayers of the faithful were done in Korean, English and Japanese. During the offering, the young men, representatives of the Oblates and of the parishioners placed candles in front of the baby Jesus and the Oblate cross as a sign of their commitment to be a missionary in their own little ways.

A simple and very international buffet lunch was served at the kindergarten hall: Filipino menudo, Sri Lankan curry, Indian chicken masala, Japanese sashimi and sushi were some of the offerings. The meal was followed by musical presentations and BINGO games.

For the final session, the young men and a few Oblates gathered to hear Fr. Steven and scholastic Bro. Simeon KIM OK KI share their vocation stories. The delegation superior, Fr. Bradly ROZAIRO, gave the closing remarks. As a token of appreciation for responding to the invitation of the Oblates, Fr. Bradly gave to each young man an Oblate crucifix as a souvenir. These young men came and had a glimpse of our life as Oblates. We do hope that they will come and participate again in our planned gatherings during the year. (Fr. Bernard ONDAP)

Europe

POLAND

Young Oblates meet in Obra

As part of ongoing formation, the Congress of Young Oblates of the European Region (up to 5 years after their first obedience) is organized as an initiative of the European Committee for the Mission and the European Formation Office. This year it took place at the scholasticate in Obra, Poland, from April 3-7. Attending the meeting from the General Administration in Rome were Fr. Louis LOUGEN, Superior General, and Fr.

Antoni BOCHM, General Councillor for Europe.

The program of the congress included common prayer, workshops, group work and a conference by the Superior General.

On the first day of the meeting, through conversations, conferences and workshops, we were made more aware of the community character of our Congregation. This is a key word in understanding the charism of the followers of St. Eugene. There was not only the joy of

meeting our brothers during the seminar, but also an opportunity to listen to the each one's stories, this interesting group of 40 Oblates from Poland, Italy, Germany and the Czech Republic and get to know each other better. Joining Fr. General and Fr. Bochm was also the provincial of the Polish Province, Fr. Paweł ZAJĄC.

On the next day of the congress, the participants heard about the resolutions and calls of the 2016 General Chapter, presented by Fr Antoni Bochm. Then there were six small discussion groups on selected topics: youth, the poor, interculturality, formation, finances and social media. The members of individual groups shared the experiences of their communities and countries.

Friday's program began on a strong note: a meeting with the Superior General of the Congregation, Father Louis Lougen. He answered questions prepared previously by the participants of the meeting. He spoke about the realities of Oblate life in various parts of the globe, poverty, and the hope of evangelizing Europe and the world in the spirit of Saint Eugene. He also recalled the joys and sorrows of his ministry.

An afternoon of sports strengthened the bonds, and the day culminated with the Eucharist and an evening celebration.

On Saturday morning, after Mass, the participants left for their homes. Some of those from abroad stayed to visit our beautiful country, but most of them returned to their communities. (Fr. Dominik OCHLAK in <http://oblaci.pl/>)

POLAND

Oblate Brothers celebrate the Year of Vocations

“New Wine in New Wineskins” is the motto which gathered nearly 30 Oblate Brothers from the Polish Province and guests, from March 20 to 22, at the Oblate Youth Centre in Kokotek, Poland. The meeting took place during the celebration of St. Joseph Day, the patron of the Brothers.

To mark the Year of Oblate Vocations, older and younger Brothers decided to meet and celebrate the Brother's vocation. The Brothers shared the story

of their vocation and their ministry in the province.

Representing the administration at the meeting was the provincial, Fr. Paweł ZAJĄC. There was also a guest from the General House in Rome in the person of Bro. Zygmunt WOLNIAK, and from Ukraine, Brothers Jan MATUSZYK and Sebastian JANKOWSKI.

The Polish province has the largest number of Brothers in the congregation, and today there are five future Brothers in the postulancy, the novitiate and the juniorate. (Bro. Rafał DĄBKOWSKI)

UKRAINE

Missionaries on pilgrimage

During the second week of Easter, more than 30 Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate from the delegation in Ukraine, headed by the superior Father Pavlo VYSHKOVSKYI, went on pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Relics of the Tree of the Holy Cross in Poland, as part of the “Holy Cross Year” in the Polish Province.

Holy Cross is the oldest Polish shrine. It was King Boleslav Chrobry who in 1066 established the Benedictines there. The protection and the care of the Shrine is now in the hands of the Oblates.

Fathers and Brothers, as well as the deacon and seminarians, came to the shrine to celebrate and to honor the relics of the Holy Cross, to renew their oblation and to reawaken their zeal and their devotion for proclaiming the Gospel. For many of them, it was a return to the beginnings of their religious Oblate life. Years ago, they had lived at the shrine where the Oblate novitiate is located.

“This special pilgrimage of confreres was an opportunity to be together, to share about their work and ministry, to exchange experiences and to discuss the urgent needs and issues of the institutions entrusted to the Oblates,” said Father Dariusz MALAJKA.

Father Waldemar MEYKA served as the spiritual guide for the pilgrims from Ukraine. A member of the Holy Cross community, he served for many years in Ukraine. He gave conferences and

homilies during the celebrations of Eucharist.

Father Paweł ZAJAC, Provincial of the Polish Province, also joined the pilgrims, presiding and preaching a homily at one of the Masses. Father Marian PUCHAŁA, Vicar Provincial for missions and delegations, also met with his confreres from Ukraine.

The presence of Polish Oblates in Ukraine dates back to the 1930s. At that time Fr. Ludwik WRODARCZYK was the first Oblate missionary in the Kiev and Zhytomyr area. He died a martyr's death in Volynia in 1943.

After Ukraine regained its independence in 1991, the Oblate house in Hnivan was officially registered. At that time, new perspectives and

possibilities emerged. The Oblates started to arrive in Ukraine and to set up new parishes and religious houses in Kiev, Chernihiv, Obuchiv, Poltava, Slavutyich, Eupatoria, Kryvyj Rig, Tyvriv, Lviv, and even Russia (Pyatigorsk).

The work performed by the Oblates in Ukraine has resulted in the strengthening of the faith of hundreds of Catholics and regaining their religious identity. Two Oblates serve as bishop there: Bishop Jacek PYL Bishop Radosław ZMITROWICZ.

Thanks to the pastoral work of Oblates from Poland, there are now some Ukrainian Oblate priests and Brothers. These new vocations are a sign of God's blessing and a hope for the further development of the Church.

Anniversaries -- June 2018

70 Years of priesthood

05/06/1948	07650	Fr. Clarence Zachman	United States
29/06/1948	07535	Fr. Oliver Mohan	Lacombe

65 Years of religious life

24/06/1953	10104	Bro. Lucien Allaire	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
24/06/1953	10105	Fr. Robert Godin	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
24/06/1953	10106	Bro. Fernando Thibodeau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

65 Years of priesthood

04/06/1953	08247	Fr. Francis Kavanagh	Lacombe
11/06/1953	08192	Fr. Anthony Schmidt	Lacombe
12/06/1953	08679	Fr. Joao Bernardo Duhamel	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
12/06/1953	08334	Fr. Germain Ranger	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
21/06/1953	08533	Fr. Norbert Dufault	Lacombe
24/06/1953	08523	Fr. Armand Carignan	Philippines

60 Years of priesthood

01/06/1958	09239	Fr. Edward Vrazel	United States
05/06/1958	09851	Fr. René Lapointe	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
11/06/1958	09289	Fr. Gaston Rioux	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
14/06/1958	09283	Fr. Serge Allard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
14/06/1958	09523	Fr. Victor Simard	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
15/06/1958	09352	Fr. Bernard McCosham	Lacombe
22/06/1958	09372	Fr. Rudolf Basista	Poland
22/06/1958	09570	Fr. Jan Chmist	Poland
22/06/1958	09361	Fr. Stanislaw Czyz	Poland
22/06/1958	09401	Fr. Wacław Gospodarczyk	Poland
24/06/1958	09512	Fr. Henri Delisle	United States
29/06/1958	09295	Fr. Réal Mathieu	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

50 Years of religious life

13/06/1968	11956	Fr. José Torres	United States
15/06/1968	11938	Fr. Joel Canonizado	Philippines

50 Years of priesthood

09/06/1968	11357	Fr. Bernard Halpin	Anglo-Irish
09/06/1968	11141	Fr. Miguel Pipolo	Brazil
23/06/1968	11324	Fr. Jozef Chlebek	Poland
23/06/1968	11313	Fr. Walenty Miklaszewski	Poland

25 Years of religious life

01/06/1993	13483	Fr. Lawrence Mariasoosai	United States
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25 Years of priesthood

12/06/1993	13143	Fr. Richard Hall	United States
12/06/1993	13066	Fr. Mirosław Olszewski	Assumption
21/06/1993	13119	Fr. Marek Adamczuk	Poland
21/06/1993	13121	Fr. Grzegorz Janiak	Poland
21/06/1993	13067	Fr. Marek Jazgier	General Administration
21/06/1993	13114	Fr. Mariusz Kasperski	Poland
21/06/1993	13112	Fr. Andrzej Lachowski	Poland
21/06/1993	13120	Fr. Michał Lepich	Poland
21/06/1993	13115	Fr. Mariusz Namysł	Poland
21/06/1993	13116	Fr. Andrzej Noga	Poland
21/06/1993	13122	Fr. Marek Rostkowski	Poland
21/06/1993	13117	Fr. Robert Zukowski	Poland
24/06/1993	13224	Fr. Gasner Joint	Haiti
25/06/1993	13210	Fr. Robi Robert Rozario	Colombo

Suffrages for our Deceased

No. 24-32

Name	Prov./Del.	Age	Died at	Date
Fr. Natale Lessio	Mediterranean	88	Bologna (Italy)	06/04/2018
Fr. Michel Lenzen	Philippines	77	Brussels (Belgium)	07/04/2018
Fr. Dieusait Charles	Haiti	48	Rouyn-Noranda (Canada)	10/04/2018
Fr. Félicien P. Labat	OMI Lacombe	89	Saint-Albert (Canada)	12/04/2018
Fr. Klemens Klein-Hessling	Central European	82	Hünfeld (Germany)	12/04/2018
Fr. Francis Theodore Pfeifer	United States	85	San Antonio (USA)	19/04/2018
Fr. Hermann Klein-Hitpass	Namibia	79	Windhoek (Namibia)	24/04/2018
Fr. Joachim Lizon	Poland	89	Poznan (Poland)	25/04/2018
Fr. Maurice Gauthier	Haiti	79	Port-au-Prince (Haiti)	30/04/2018

“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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