



The Interchapter: an excellent opportunity for family sharing

Fr. Paolo Archiati, OMI

Obra, Poland, July 1-13, 2019: A two-week long meeting, “the Interchapter meeting,” brought together some 60 Oblates from all the Provinces and Delegations of the Congregation, and the two Missions of the Region of Europe. This meeting occurs every six years, mid-way between two General Chapters, and has three main goals, well described in Rule 128e in its last section concerning the General Chapter: “Between Chapters, the Superior General in Council in plenary session will call at least one meeting of the Provincials with the Central Government. After consulting the Provincials, he will determine details of the convocation and the agenda of the meeting. The principal purpose of such a meeting is to evaluate the extent to which decisions taken in Chapter have been carried out, to encourage further implementation of such decisions, and to provide for the remote preparation of the next Chapter.”

The details (such as the place and the date) and the agenda of the Interchapter meeting were prepared in advance by the Superior General with the help of an internal committee of the Central Government. The agenda for the three weeks was drawn up in light of the three goals of the meeting.

During the first week, our work was focused on evaluating the extent to which decisions taken in the last Chapter have been carried out. This was done through different reports from the five Regions of the Congregation and from the Central Government. It was a good opportunity to become aware of what is being achieved throughout the Oblate world in order to respond to the six calls of our last General Chapter.

The various reports were heard in light of three guiding questions that also motivated discussions in the group meetings that followed: 1) As you listen, what sets your heart afire? What encourages you? 2) How might we overcome any resistance to the calls of the 36th General Chapter that were expressed in the reports? 3) What was hardly mentioned, but captured your attention? Was there anything you did not hear that you would consider to be important? Each of these questions helped us walk the Emmaus journey, the Biblical theme that inspired the entire Interchapter.

The last day of the first week was dedicated to studying and deepening our understanding about the issue of the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults. Ms. Suzanne Phelan, a resource person for our brother Oblates of the Anglo-Irish Province, helped us address this very sensitive and crucial issue. Her intervention raised the awareness of all the participants about the importance of this issue at this point in the Church’s history, and our responsibility to ensure that all our ministry sites and communities are safe environments for minors and vulnerable adults, as oriented by the Church, especially in light of the two latest *motu proprio*s of Pope Francis. It is essential that we be well-prepared with processes in place and resources to help us address these situations. We are responsible to accompany pastorally and to support those who have been abused, as well as provide pastoral care and management for those who have committed abuse.

During the second week, we looked closely at what still needs to be done concerning the six calls from the 2016 General Chapter. This was an opportunity for sharing commitments, “dreams”, and projects, all aimed at giving a better quality to our mission in the Church, wherever we live and work. We began with two days of recollection that introduced us into this time of sharing. A young Oblate from the Czech Republic offered us an intense experience and a good opportunity to deepen our spiritual life through his challenging meditations. The days provided time for prayer and the sacrament of reconciliation, and a walk with a brother Oblate modeled on the experience of the two disciples of Emmaus. These days helped this special community of the Interchapter focus on Oblate values and identity.

After the retreat days, we worked on identifying, especially in Regions, how to respond more fully to the calls of the 2016 Chapter. Each Unit and each Region came up with several commitments and areas of work for the coming three years and beyond. Many issues were shared at this point, according to the situations and the priorities set by the different Regions: youth and vocation ministry, formation, restructuring of Units, interculturality, consolidation of formation houses, leadership, formation of formators, etc. More issues were raised and highlighted in the open forum that took place in the plenary. An issue that was raised and left to the Central Government for further reflection and study was the possibility of a new way to organize initial formation in the Congregation: Should the Superior General take greater initiative to distribute more evenly around the globe our post-novices in formation houses, with intercultural formation teams? This could help promote interculturality as well as a style of formation oriented for consecrated life and for mission. No decision was made, as there was not sufficient time to deepen the issue or to study its implications and consequences. But, the conversation took place with some passion and it was left in the hands of the Superior General and his Council for further consideration.

The steering committee, which helped the meeting from its beginning, identified four major areas where Units and Regions are called to work in the coming years, four “Regional Priorities” as they have been called. These are Restructuring, Formation, Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults, and Interculturality. While these are not the only areas to be worked on, it became evident throughout the meeting that these are areas for further reflection and action, in line with the whole “message” of our last General Chapter.

The third objective of the Interchapter meeting was “to provide for the remote preparation of the next Chapter”. Most of the last two days of the meeting were spent looking toward the General Chapter of 2022. We were led through several topics, such as the General Chapter in our Constitutions and Rules, the site chosen for the next Chapter, some new elements in the 37th General Chapter. The final important point of this process was to help the Superior General discern a theme to be proposed to the members of the 37th General Chapter. The Interchapter members gave their attention to this issue and worked for three sessions, including work in small groups and a plenary session, around the topics that received the greatest consensus during the ad hoc session. The result of the sharing and discussion was finally left in the hands of the Superior General who will continue the discernment in dialogue with his Council.

The last day was also a good opportunity for considering some issues that were not directly related to the Interchapter: the International De Mazenod Center in Aix-en-Provence, the 2021 global (via internet) gathering for all those connected to the Oblate charism, the extraordinary Mission Month of October 2019, and the proposal to celebrate an Oblate Marian Year in 2022.

The Interchapter meeting ended with an open dialogue between the five Oblate Regions and the Central Government. The sharing was about expectations from both sides and areas of collaboration in the three coming years. Then, a word from the Superior General closed the meeting.

A solemn closing celebration of the Eucharist followed, with two symbolic gestures: the washing of feet and mission-sending. A large group of lay friends and associates from the area around Obra participated in this moving celebration.

The Interchapter was an excellent opportunity for family sharing, in many different ways. A good number of "side meetings" offered participants an opportunity to discuss issues of common interest. There were three evenings organized around themes that are relevant for our life and mission: Oblate mission and social media, and Oblate mission with youth. One evening we had the opportunity to listening to the experience of a young man and a young woman from the Niniwa group, a very creative approach to mission with youth, developed in the Province of Poland.

Last but not least, our prayer life during the Interchapter was a precious opportunity to celebrate our faith and our Oblate identity. Each session began with Morning Prayer together and, in the afternoon, we were able to pray with Oblates in formation and Lay Associates around the globe through pre-recorded prayer on videos. Our celebration of the Eucharist varied each day, at times by Regions, other times by language groups, and every other day, all together. Each evening we gathered in front of the Blessed Sacrament in silent oraison, the privileged "place" where Eugene found so much delight in meeting all his Oblates, especially those committed to far-away missions. This spirit was present among us and made us grow as a family, the most united family on earth!

General Administration

GENERAL FORMATION COMMITTEE

The formation of local superiors: mission (im)possible?

Thanks to the long path of renewal inaugurated by the Vatican Council II, today in the Church there is undoubtedly an increased awareness of the real importance of ongoing formation at all levels. Also, and above all, formation for those who are entrusted with the service of authority, which entails, moreover, the responsibility of promoting the ongoing formation of the brothers entrusted to them (cf. C 70). Although they are recipients of a "grace of state" by virtue of their ecclesial mandate, are not superiors the first candidates for this formation, precisely because of their delicate and crucial task in service to the internal communion and the mission of individual communities? R 83c reminds us of this: "The Superior's role is so important that suitable ongoing formation is necessary".

The need for ongoing formation of superiors and of those in leadership in the Church is an explicit invitation from the Spirit who has certainly not forgotten to knock repeatedly also at our door. It is certainly no coincidence that in the

last Chapter of 2016, "Evangelizare pauperibus misit me, pauperes evangelizantur", the need for the formation of superiors is recalled: "Each Unit will ensure the formation of superiors and leaders to animate community life." (n. 51.2). This brief sentence, made up of a few words, seems to summarize the repeated invitation of the Spirit addressed to us several times through the last General Chapters.

For example, the final document of the 2010 Chapter, "Conversion", states that "conversion in government and authority requires that we adequately train and constantly animate present and future leaders in the various spheres of government and authority in the Congregation". In n. 8 of the Document of the 2004 Chapter, "Witnesses of Hope," it is stated that the important and delicate ministry entrusted to local superiors, understood as the "ministry of hope," must be "assured of necessary formation." And also, in the 1998 Chapter's, "Evangelizing the Poor at the Dawn of the Third Millennium," n. 32, it states: "The quality of a community depends very much on the quality of its members, especially the superiors who are called to animate it. For this reason, the Chapter considers their formation as

a priority and asks the Provinces and the whole Congregation to equip themselves with adequate means so that this may be effective.

The General Chapter of 1998, in fact, does no more than reiterate what was "strongly affirmed" by the Chapter of 1992 in "Witnesses in the Apostolic Community". In the final document (n. 23 § 6), we read: "The Chapter strongly reaffirms the importance of the local superior. He is the pastor of his brothers. He brings the community together so that it can evaluate its experience, to give itself objectives for its common life and mission, and he ensures the implementation of the same. The quality of the local superiors is a determining factor for the Congregation's life. For this reason, the Chapter considers the formation of the local superiors to be a priority and asks the Provinces and the entire Congregation to develop appropriate means to render such formation effective."

I would like to conclude by quoting a text by Fr. Jettè, which seems to me to be prophetic, if we look at what the ecclesial Magisterium does not fail to repeat today on this subject: "An apostolic body is worth what its men are worth. If the superior does not take care of the men, if he does not care about their health, their spiritual and human growth, their happiness, if he does not support them in their work, the dynamism of these men will fade away and the apostolic team will eventually disintegrate" (F. Jettè, *Le Missionnaire O.M.I.*, p. 266).

This passage not only reminds us of the various dimensions of the "care" that local superiors are called to exercise towards their brothers, but also that ongoing formation (that of each Oblate and primarily that of superiors) is "a global process that involves the whole person in its human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions and opens the Oblate to new creativity; its effects will be felt not only in his person but also in the community" (NGFO no. 270).

For us, building solid communities in affective and effective communion, which are fruitful from a missionary point of view, is of fundamental importance. More than twenty-five years ago,

the Chapter document "Witnesses in Apostolic Community" reminded us of this: "Community life is not limited to the creation of a group that functions well together; it tends to establish a mutual interdependence, a profound communion". Further, it specifies the reason for this: "Our common life does not exist in the first place for itself; it is 'flesh' for the life of the world. The community we form around Christ is the table to which we invite humanity." That is why the service of the local superiors is most precious and their ongoing formation requires constant attention on the part of the major superiors.

Mission (im)possible? This is certainly a demanding task, given the complexity of the internal and external situations that we are called to face today that often make us feel really unprepared. But perhaps for this very reason, it is important to be aware that we need help and that ongoing formation is a real necessity from which - today more than ever - we cannot escape, especially if we are also "pastors of our brothers". We are encouraged by the awareness that the Spirit continues to precede and accompany, not only our missionary commitment, but also that of formation. We have the task of responding generously to His heartfelt invitation, appreciating both the internal resources of the Congregation and of our Units, as well as the richness of many ecclesial initiatives.

*Fr. Giuseppe Mauro Rubino, OMI
General Formation Committee*

COMMITTEE FOR MISSION WITH YOUTH Committee at the service of Oblate Mission with Youth

The Oblate Committee for Mission with Youth met from May 28 to June 5, at the General House in Rome. Representing each Region were: Fr. Christian FINI (Coordinator), Fr. Claudio CARLEO (Africa-Madagascar), Fr. Antonio D'AMORE (Europe), Fr. Marcin SERWIN (United States-Canada), Fr. Patrick OLIVEIRA (Latin America), P. Irvin MORASTIL (Asia Oceania) and P. Alberto HUAMÁN (General Administration).

During the meeting, we finalized the editing of the document, “Vision of Oblate Mission with Youth”, which will be published in several languages. We are planning to launch this Vision document at the Intercapitular Meeting, together with a website with corresponding resources.

The major part of the time of our meeting was dedicated to developing the “Guidebook for Oblate Mission with Youth”. We discussed on three of our objectives; the theme for the first objective was completed, and progress was made with the themes of the second and third objectives. Work on the Guidebook will continue by virtual sessions and is expected to be completed for the next meeting in 2020. A part about the “care of minors and vulnerable persons” in our work with youth is also being included.

In addition, we prepared some initial proposals for the sharing of our Charism, at the Oblate Youth Encounter which will precede the World Youth Day of 2022 in Lisbon, Portugal.

The Commission also visited the Youth Center in Marino, where we met the aspirants and the pre-novices of the Mediterranean Province. In addition, we spent a brief time with the *Movimento Giovanile Costruire*, the Oblate movement of the Mediterranean Province that works with youth. It was a time of listening, sharing and reaffirming the fact that the Oblate Congregation’s Mission with Youth has the same Spirit that moved Saint Eugene to work with the young. We also celebrated the Eucharist at the International Scholasticate in Rome and took part in events at the General House, praying for Oblate vocations.

Holy See

GENERAL SERVICE OF PROCURATION TO THE HOLY SEE

Thank you Fr. David! – Welcome Fr. Constant!

On June 6, 2019 Fr. David Kumar ANTHONY, the outgoing Procurator General to the Holy See, bade farewell to the Oblate General House community after serving the Congregation in that capacity for 3 years. It was during the April-May Plenary Session in 2016 that the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, appointed him as Procurator General of our Congregation.

Originally from the Province of India, Fr. David was ordained a priest on May 6, 2000. Before coming to Rome, he served as a formator at the Oblate Philosophate and Theologate (2001-2005), Vocation Director and Director of MAMI (2002-2004), Director of the OMI Institute of Philosophy (2010-2015), and Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Chingleput, Tamil Nadu, India. His active participation during the 36th General Chapter was very much appreciated by the capitulars. As a member of the Permanent Committee for the Constitutions and Rules he contributed his expertise, and helped the

Committee to renew the value and importance of our Book of Life in the Congregation, as we celebrated the bicentenary of the Constitutions and Rules. Fr. David was recently chosen the first Councillor of the Province of India, and we wish him well in his new mission.

Our new Procurator General to the Holy See is Fr. Constant KIENGE KIENGE, from the Democratic Republic of Congo. His academic qualifications and experience in the field of Canon Law make him a worthy choice for this revered position. After completing a Licentiate in Canon Law at the Catholic University of Congo in 2008, he served as a Professor of Canon Law at St. Cyprian’s inter-diocesan Theologate in Bunia, Congo, until 2012. From 2012 to 2014 he was the Vicar Provincial of the Province of Congo. In 2014 Fr. Constant followed a special course in Integral Human Formation, Montreal, Canada, before arriving in Rome to do doctoral studies in Canon Law, the following year. In 2018, he received his doctorate from the Pontifical Lateran University, Rome.

We wish Fr. Constant all the very best as he begins his work in the General Service of Procuration to the Holy See.

**APPOINTMENT OF AUXILIARY BISHOP
Fr. Sylvester David, O.M.I. appointed
auxiliary bishop of Cape Town, South Africa**

The Holy Father has appointed as auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of Cape Town, South Africa, the Rev. Fr. Sylvester David, O.M.I., currently vicar general of the archdiocese of Durban, assigning him the titular see of Gunugo.

Rev. Fr. Sylvester David, O.M.I., was born in 1953 in Durban. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in counselling psychology from the University of

South Africa and a licentiate in biblical theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. In 1984 he entered the Congregation of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He gave his perpetual vows on 15 February 1988, and was ordained a priest in 1991.

Since ordination he has held a number of pastoral roles, including parish vicar, parish priest, formator at the Cebula House of Formation, and lecturer at and subsequently president of the Saint Joseph's Theological Institute.

Africa Madagascar

KENYA

The heart of the Kenya mission has a powerful beat

Bro. Harley Mapes, the treasurer of OMI Lacombe Canada, reminisces of the unforgettable experience he has had when he visited the Oblate mission in Kenya early this year, with his Provincial Fr. Ken FORSTER.

"I'm the luckiest person in the world to be an Oblate and in this place!" runs through my mind. I am kneeling on sacks of maize in the back of a half-ton, bouncing and jolting across the Kenyan savanna, scanning the plains dotted with acacia trees that stretch on to the distant, purple hills, winding our way to one of the Maasai missions. We stepped out of cold, damp Ottawa into the warm embrace of the Kenyan Oblates.

Kionyo parish is the heartland of Oblate presence in Kenya; there, more than 20 years ago, the first Canadian Oblates began. The progenitors of the mission – Ken FORSTER, Bill STANG and Harold KAUFMAN – are remembered with near reverence. Walking the Kionyo market with Ken is as close as I will ever get to being a rock star paparazzi. Working his way forward, to vigorously shake Ken's hand, one man declaimed, *"I know you! I wasn't here when you were, but everyone knows you. Today,*

people don't talk about the Mount Kenya Water Project, they just call it 'Father Ken water'. All the people remember how you helped the community."

In reminiscent scenes, albeit with different Oblates in different locales, Fr. Gideon RIMBERIA along with Bro. Joseph MAGAMBO and Fr. Praveen MAHESHAN are showing the same close connection with the people.

In a country often riven by tribal animosities simmering just below the surface, Fr. Gideon is a Bantu speaker from the Méru tribe working amongst Maasai, who speak a Nilotic language. Language and culture, however, are barriers crossed over by the intentions of the heart.

We spent hours in Jamii Boara with the prayer house council members as they shared their struggle at being forced off the land where their church was located, and subsequent pride at how the faith community came together and quickly erected a corrugated iron structure sitting on a well-finished concrete slab.

Lenchani is about the most abandoned spot one could imagine for an educational facility. It's a Catholic-sponsored school and thus, while the Kenyan government provides some funds for basic items, they still turn to the parish for assistance.

Coming from a western, secularized country, where professing one's beliefs and attending church services are seen by many as a quaint, mildly embarrassing practice, Kenya is a startling change. Faith – and expressing that faith – is a normal part of life.

The dichotomy between faith and good works doesn't exist in Kenya. Repeatedly, I was surprised at people, evidently living in impoverished conditions, who asked for help not with things I would have found obvious such as housing, schools, and water, but rather "Can you, somehow, help us finish our church? So many people are coming but it discourages them when they have to sit outside in the hot sun or the rain because we can't all fit inside."

Given the manner in which faith permeates people's lives, it's not surprising that there are

many young men seeking to serve as priests and brothers. While our main financial concern in Canada is finding the money to pay for the care of elderly priests and brothers, Kenya's financial issues stem from having more young men wanting to be priests and brothers than we can afford.

Now, slogging through slush of Ottawa, dodging snow ploughs and returning again and again to the car wash to rinse away the thick coat of road salt, Kenya seems like a dream. The beauty of the country; the faith of the people; the generosity of young men wanting to give their lives in service of God and the poor, are inspiring. A natural response is to want to help. In the face of such need, the Oblates of OMI Lacombe Canada continue to seek ways to enable people to improve their lives and express the faith of a young, enthusiastic church.

Asia-Oceania

INDIA

AOIHL goes to India

The Association of Oblate Institutes of Higher Learning (AOIHL) executive held its 12th annual meeting the week of June 3-7 at the Provincialate of the Province of India in Chennai. This was the first meeting to be held in India and it was a great opportunity to meet Oblates from the Indian province and share with them about their ministry of education.

The meeting was well attended by almost all the members, including the directors of two new members of the executive from the De Mazenod Institute of Philosophy in India and the Oblate Institute of Higher Learning in Sri Lanka. During the week the Kusenberger Chair of Oblate Studies Lecture was also held at a retreat centre nearby, the keynote speaker being Orlando Cardinal Quevedo, OMI from the Philippines.

The Kusenberger lecture was well attended by many Oblate priests and brothers, lay collaborators,

formandi and other men and women religious including from the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and the Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

The AOIHL members also visited the De Mazenod Institute of Philosophy, the Oblates' Aanmodaya Ahram and St. Paul Scholasticate. The AOIHL executive members are very appreciative of the kind hospitality and warm welcome extended by their brother Indian Oblates.

BANGLADESH

The Story of the Hut-Church

Fr. Ajit Victor COSTA, the Delegation Superior of Bangladesh, recently paid a visit to a rural village called Satchala, where the Oblates have served for the last ten years. Here he shares his rich experience among the poor.

After 40 minutes of ride by Van (Tricycle-powered by Battery) from St. Paul's Church, in Rajshahi Diocese, Frs. Ranjit COSTA, (Parish Priest) Rocky COSTA (Asst. Pastor), 2 Salesian

Nuns, several children from hostel and I arrived in Satshala. On our arrival at the village, children, adolescents, young, elderly men and women were overjoyed!

Oblates began the “Evangelizing Mission” in this parish on January 25, 2009, at the invitation of Late Rt. Rev. Paulinus Costa. At the beginning there were only seven Catholic villages altogether and they belonged to Santal and Uroan indigenous groups. After discernment and being faithful to the Oblate Charism, Oblates chose this challenging and promising area of evangelization. Traditionally, these indigenous people are religious-minded by their very nature and are quite open to receive the Christian Faith. Over the years, due to committed and systematic evangelization by us, now, the total number of Catholic villages have reached to 31. Thanks to God, almost every year, 40 to 50 people receive the “Sacrament of Baptism” after a year-long preparation and Catechism classes.

On the Passion Sunday this year, Frs. Ranjit Costa and Rocky Costa, administered the Sacrament of Baptism to 44 people (children and adults) at Satshala. May 26, 2019, was a day of celebration and joy for them. St. Peter’s Catholic Church, (the “Hut-Church” as we call it) was blessed and inaugurated by me, assisted by Frs. Ranjit and Rocky, in the presence of the faithful. A friend of mine was happy and kind enough to generously share a part from his earnings for this project. The church was built completely with the help of the voluntary labour by all the villagers, including the children.

As a student of Theology and whilst pursuing my licentiate at Gregorian University in Rome, numerous times and occasions, I visited St. Peter’s Basilica. My heart would always be thrilled in seeing the magnificent Basilica and the artistic eye-catching beauty. After blessing and inauguration of St. Peter’s Church (Hut-Church) in Satshala, whilst offering the first Mass with the people, my heart was engulfed in sensing the simple and deep faith of these people. During homily, I let them share their experience. All, especially the children, enthusiastically exclaimed, “We also helped our elders by

giving our small hands.” St. Peter’s Church in Satshala has been touched by the angelic fingers of children though it does not claim to have the same grandeur of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

AUSTRALIA

Fremantle Parish to be centre of combined anniversaries

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate founded by the celebrated Frenchman, Saint Eugene De Mazenod, in 1816 – is this year celebrating 125 years of service in Australia on 18 August 2019.

The Mass will be held in St Patrick’s Basilica, and people from across Perth are invited to participate in this historic occasion for both the church and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. St Patrick’s Basilica and the Missionary Oblates have a long history of association, with the original church built by Perth’s Catholic settlers providing accommodation for the first Brothers of the order who arrived in the colony in 1894. The parish is one of nine parishes in Australia operated by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

The word “Oblate” comes from the Latin word “*Oblatus*”, meaning, “a full offering of oneself, dedicated to, set aside for” – making the Oblates of Mary Immaculate a religious congregation “set aside” for the missionary work of the Catholic Church.

While the name Mazenod is best known as denoting a number of Catholic schools and other educational facilities run by the order across Australia, St Eugene and his Missionary Oblates actually first worked among the poor and vulnerable in Aix-en-Provence, responding to the humanitarian and ideological crisis that was a direct result of the French Revolution.

Similarly, the Order’s first endeavors here in Australia were working with the poor and vulnerable of Perth, most notably the men of the Fremantle Fishing Fleet, as well as providing pastoral care for some 250 Catholics living in WA in 1894 – a humanitarian and ideological crisis brought about by the profound isolation of the colonization process.

The first request for an Oblates mission in Australia was from the Bishop of Perth in 1845, yet due to the worldwide demand for the Order's missionary services, it was some 50 years later, in 1894, that the call could be answered and the first Oblate missionaries came to Fremantle WA.

Then-Bishop of Perth Matthew Gibney requested the Oblates presence in Western Australia specifically to serve the seaport parish of Fremantle, to direct an industrial school at Glendalough and to preach missions throughout the diocese: Frs. Roger HENNESSY and Daniel O'RYAN arrived and took to the mission immediately.

Other missionaries from the order arrived in Australia in 1929 and over the next 10 years, some 200 missions and 300 retreats were preached by the Oblates, from the north of Queensland to the south of Tasmania.

From the 1940s, the Oblates began to accept more parishes, the majority of these being in

working-class areas with high populations of European migrants and on 13 February 1967, the Oblate missions in Australia were made into their own province.

In response to the Church's need, the Oblates founded three boys' schools between 1957 and 1968: Mazenod College in Victoria, Mazenod College in Western Australia, and Iona College in Queensland.

Currently, there are 42 Oblates serving in Australia who administer nine parishes across the country, direct three boys' colleges and provide chaplaincy to hospitals, prisons, youth ministries, homeless ministries along with a variety of other services.

Called the "specialists in difficult missions" by Pope Pius XI in 1938, the Oblates continue to dedicate their lives to serving the poor in many countries of the world.

Today, the Oblates number some 3667 men in 67 countries across the globe.

Canada-United States

UNITED STATES

Car ride leads to lifetime of service in canon law for Fr. Morrisey

It was a providential car ride from Ottawa to Montreal that put Fr. Francis G. Morrisey, OMI, on the road to a long and illustrious career in canon law.

In March 1965, Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger of Montreal — in anticipation of the final sessions of the Second Vatican Council — called all canon lawyers in Canada for a study day and invited canon law students in the country to come along. Fr. Morrisey, then a student at the University of Ottawa, drove three of his professors to the gathering. During the ride and at the study day, conversation turned to the idea of establishing the Canadian Canon Law Society. Fr. Morrisey ended up on a four-man steering committee charged with setting up the organization,

eventually becoming its first secretary-treasurer. "I didn't even have my degree yet!" he said. "I had no idea what I was getting into."

That car ride also turned out to be opportune for Catholic health care. Fr. Morrisey, now 83, became an expert in how church law affected hospital finances. Through the years he has offered legal guidance on the emergence of non-traditional business models and lent his considerable expertise to religious communities who sought to preserve their sponsored works through transfer to a public juridic person.

In recognition of his generous use of that expertise on behalf of health care professionals in the U.S., Canada and the world, Fr. Morrisey is the recipient of CHA's 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented June 10 at the Catholic Health Assembly in Dallas.

In addition to his work as a canon law professor (now emeritus) at St. Paul's University in Ottawa, a Vatican consultant and an international lecturer, Fr. Morrissey has served as the general editor of a series of columns on canon law in the CHA's journal, *Health Progress*. He has taught the canon law component of the CHA Sponsor Formation Program that helps prepare leaders for sponsorship roles.

The main message Fr. Morrissey said, he tries to communicate in the classroom is that canon lawyers should "use the law to free people, not to put a burden on their shoulders." "I often say, 'If someone asks can we do something, and the law says no, try to find another way, give them some positive insights,'" he added. "That has been my mantra."

In nominating Fr. Morrissey for the Lifetime Achievement Award, Sr. Jomary Trstensky, OSF, chairperson of Hospital Sisters Ministries in Springfield, Ill., wrote that Fr. Morrissey's work has been foundational to changes in sponsorship models and business structures within Catholic health care. Although his focus is on canon law, he regularly made parallels between church law and social justice and the call to advance the dignity of the human person.

Fr. Morrissey said his goal was to demonstrate to students how canonical principles apply in everyday life situations. "Some canonists refer to canon law as a tool box; the tools have to be applied to a situation for it to be addressed," he said.

Fr. Morrissey thinks the biggest challenge facing Catholic health care today is how to preserve and defend Catholic identity at a time when "there is such public pressure against certain positions that the church is taking," such as its opposition to assisted suicide and abortion.

"We can't withdraw into a fortress," he said. "The Catholic Church is the largest provider of health care in the world, by far, and we don't want to give up that heritage, which is based on Christ's actions of healing the sick."

He has played a role in many of the changes in canon law over the years, helping to prepare the 1983 Code of Canon Law and, more recently, serving on a Vatican commission charged with revising the sections of canon law related to procedures for the annulment of marriages.

Born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and raised in Ottawa, he knew as a child that he wanted to become a priest, but he joined the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate almost by happenstance. His mother wanted him to learn more French, but the nearby LaSalle Academy high school deemed his French not good enough to admit him. Instead he attended an Oblate school a couple of blocks away, learning about the religious order and eventually being ordained an Oblate priest in 1961.

Sr. Trstensky describes the Canadian canon lawyer as "a pathfinder" in Catholic health care. "His role was to look at the arrangements we were proposing (for mergers or collaborative partnerships) and to help us see how they could be done in a way that aligned with church law." And as a teacher, she added, "now he's prepared many others who can assist us."

OMI LACOMBE, CANADA

Oblate pioneers laid to rest in new graves in St. Albert

The remains of three pioneers of the Church in Western Canada have been laid to rest in new graves at St. Albert, the historic heart of Catholicism in Alberta.

Bishop Vital Justin Grandin, Father Albert Lacombe, and Father Hippolyte Leduc were members of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, a French order of priests who came west to serve the First Nations and Metis people and the European settlers who followed. The original mission at St. Albert was founded in 1861 by Father Lacombe, and the Oblate Fathers have served the parish ever since.

Grandin was the first Bishop of the St. Albert Diocese, precursor to the Archdiocese of Edmonton, and the two priests were central

figures in the development of parishes, hospitals and schools in the diocese.

For more than 100 years, the remains of Grandin (1906), Lacombe (1916), and Leduc (1918) had been interred in the crypt beneath St. Albert Church, site of the original St. Albert Cathedral on historic Mission Hill. Although burial crypts are common in European churches, they are relatively rare in Western Canada.

The crypt was part of popular tours every summer, along with the Father Lacombe Chapel, which was constructed in 1861 by Fr. Lacombe with local Métis residents and is recognized as the oldest building in Alberta. Every Catholic child who grew up in the area likely visited at least once.

But it was only accessible only from the outside and had deteriorated due to moisture seepage and lack of air circulation. Repairs would be costly – and involve moving the caskets. So the Oblates wanted to transfer them to the nearby St. Albert Cemetery, which has a section reserved for their priests and brothers.

Funeral director Aimee Anderson was tasked with coordinating the transfer of the remains. “Professionally, as a funeral director, I couldn’t imagine being involved in anything of this scope and magnitude,” Anderson said. “But that’s little. For me spiritually, it was unbelievable.”

The remains of the two priests were quietly buried in new graves on May 8. With that done, work began on Bishop Grandin’s tomb, which was constructed from large river rocks and mortar and topped with a thick slab of marble.

“There were so many protocols in terms of how his remains were to be moved ... and I took this very, very seriously,” Anderson said.

“It was a very prayerful process, and I felt that all the people who came to work with me in this process were so unbelievably respectful and reverent, people who are not necessarily Catholic

but were so mindful of what they were doing and what piece they played in this part of history. That was a real gift for me to see.”

“I prayed a lot that nobody would be injured, that nobody would be disturbed by what they would see, that we’d get through this safely.”

Some artifacts that had been on top of the casket, along with a few Grandin artifacts the Oblates had discovered in 1938, were placed in a custom-built miniature casket that would be buried in the new grave.

On May 27, Bishop Grandin was buried next to the two priests after a service attended by representatives of the Oblates, the Archdiocese, Connelly-McKinley, and the Alberta Francophone Historical Society.

For Anderson, who has worked as a funeral director for 11 years, the project was nothing less than transformative. Her eyes filled with tears as she recalled the cemetery service; finally, she felt affirmed in her role in the whole process.

“I felt that peace just rain down as they were being laid to rest. I don’t know how that can’t change your life. It changed my life.”

That section of the St. Albert Cemetery is now home to the graves of two Oblates who have been recognized by the Church for their ‘heroic virtues,’ meaning that their lives demonstrated consistent efforts to grow in holiness. Bishop Grandin was declared venerable in 1966 and Brother Anthony Kowalczyk in 2013. A venerable person is required to have two miracles attributed to their intercession before the Church recognizes them as a saint.

Brother Anthony, sometimes referred to as ‘God’s Blacksmith,’ served much of his life as a beloved gardener and handyman at Edmonton’s College St-Jean, which is now the French faculty of the University of Alberta.

Europe

UKRAINE**A joint celebration in memory of St. Eugene**

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate from our Kiev and Obukhov communities decided to celebrate the feast of the holy Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, in a special way in accord with his charism - to evangelize the poor.

Brother Sebastian JANKOWSKI, who has been taking care of the poor and the homeless on the streets of Kiev for more than 6 years, also gave an exceptional gift to those he cares for - he organized two buses so that more than 80 people could take part in the day of recollection in the main house of the Missionaries of Mary Immaculate in Obukhov.

This unusual meeting was supported by his brothers. Father Sergiy PANCHENKO who takes care of the prenovitiate and the Obukhov house of mercy, conducted a prayer service, after which the poor enjoyed delicious festive dishes from the monastery kitchen.

Later, Father Pavlo VYSHKOVSKYI, the Delegation Superior, spoke about St. Eugene de Mazenod and presented a film about the Saint, who, even though he had come from an aristocratic family, considered serving the poor to be his life and mission.

The celebration ended with the blessing of Fr. Pavlo; and those who arrived from Kiev, returned home with joy and happiness.

Anniversaries for August 2019

75th Anniversaries of Vows

02/08/1944	07852	Fr. Roy, Louis-Philippe	Lacombe
02/08/1944	07854	Fr. Taché, Alexandre	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
15/08/1944	07825	Fr. Boisseau, Joseph	France
15/08/1944	08095	Fr. Paglione, Fiore	Mediterranean
26/08/1944	07831	Fr. Svobodny, Aloysius	United States

70th Anniversaries of Vows

02/08/1949	08684	Fr. Cyr, Myles	United States
02/08/1949	08690	Fr. Demers, Francis	United States
15/08/1949	08702	Fr. Comeau, Gilles	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
15/08/1949	08667	Fr. Jodoin, André	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
15/08/1949	08660	Fr. Pillar, James	United States

65th Anniversaries of Vows

02/08/1954	09694	Fr. Breault, Charles	United States
02/08/1954	09701	Fr. Cyr, Roger	United States
02/08/1954	09696	Fr. Lacasse, Roberto	Bolivia
15/08/1954	09748	Msgr. Cazabon, Gilles	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
15/08/1954	09746	Fr. Dummer, Leo	United States
15/08/1954	09757	Fr. Kabat, Carl	United States
15/08/1954	09749	Fr. Provencher, Maurice	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
15/08/1954	09743	Fr. Tremblay, Juan-María	Notre-Dame-du-Cap

60th Anniversaries of Vows

02/08/1959	10694	Fr. Arsenault, Paul	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
02/08/1959	10707	Fr. Brown, George	United States
02/08/1959	10689	Fr. Côté, Jean-Marie	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
02/08/1959	10705	Fr. Dumont, André	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
02/08/1959	10889	Fr. Gauthier, Marcelo	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
02/08/1959	10691	Fr. Gendron, François	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
02/08/1959	10699	Fr. Morin, Jean-Guy	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
15/08/1959	10719	Fr. Allen, James	United States
15/08/1959	10712	Fr. Bergkamp, Roger	United States
15/08/1959	10711	Fr. Bernard, Donald	United States
15/08/1959	10710	Fr. Bouffard, Albert	Lacombe
15/08/1959	12204	Deac. Cooray, Kingsley D.	Colombo
15/08/1959	10854	Fr. Croos, Celestine Soosaithasan	Jaffna
15/08/1959	10714	Fr. Dummer, Donald	United States
15/08/1959	10717	Fr. Figel, Terence	United States
15/08/1959	11238	Bro. Fonseka, Thomas	Colombo
15/08/1959	10726	Fr. Groleau, Alfred	Lacombe
15/08/1959	10890	Fr. Hayes, Thomas	United States
15/08/1959	11422	Fr. Maes, Allen	United States
15/08/1959	10716	Fr. Maher, William	Colombo
15/08/1959	10709	Fr. Mauer, Elmar	United States
15/08/1959	10857	Fr. Philips, Stanislaus	Jaffna
15/08/1959	10715	Fr. Piché, Camille	Lacombe
15/08/1959	10656	Fr. Ratnasekera, Leopold	Colombo
15/08/1959	10858	Fr. Selvaratnam, Saminather Mariathas	Jaffna

60th Anniversaries of Ordinations

15/08/1959	09701	Fr. Cyr, Roger	United States
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50th Anniversaries of Vows

17/08/1969	12047	Fr. O'Hara, Michael	United States
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50th Anniversaries of Ordinations

03/08/1969	11117	Fr. Gilbert, Jean-Claude	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
30/08/1969	10921	Msgr. Bouchard, Jean-Claude	Cameroun

25th Anniversaries of Vows

01/08/1994	13540	Fr. Blom, Mark	Lacombe
01/08/1994	13560	Fr. Nava, Rufino	United States
14/08/1994	13756	Fr. Damianus, Yohanes	Indonesia
14/08/1994	13757	Fr. Rukmono, Bernardus	Indonesia

25th Anniversaries of Ordinations

06/08/1994	13082	Fr. Shopane, Francis Shopane	Lesotho
13/08/1994	13058	Fr. Horan, Thomas	United States
15/08/1994	13204	Fr. Pérez, Manuel	Cruz del Sur
20/08/1994	13205	Fr. Emanuelson, Fredrik	Poland
27/08/1994	13259	Fr. Dalpatadu, Eymard	Colombo
27/08/1994	13262	Fr. Muthuthamby, Newman	Colombo

Suffrages for our Deceased

June-July 2019

No. 37-51

Name	Unit	Born	Died at	Date
Fr. Georges Thill	Belgium & Netherlands	30/11/1935	Rhode-St.-Genève	15/06/2019
Fr. Colm O'Riain	Anglo-Irish	28/03/1930	Colwyn Bay	18/06/2019
Fr. Benedict Tseko Makara	Lesotho	23/06/1963	Mazenod	21/06/2019
Fr. Peter King	China	25/01/1926	Hong Kong	22/06/2019
Fr. Angelo Bonadio	Mediterranean	29/08/1925	San Giorgio Canavese	26/06/2019
Fr. Hugues Barbeau	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	01/08/1923	Richelieu	02/07/2019
Fr. Lucien Le Calvé	France	26/12/1926	Josselin	07/07/2019
Fr. Alejandro Roque	United States	11/08/1952	Boston	10/07/2019
Bro. Olivier Charpentier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	19/06/1927	Richelieu	12/07/2019
Fr. Dominic Houlihan	Anglo-Irish	29/07/1952	Dublin	16/07/2019
Fr. Roberto Peña	United States	03/09/1923	San Antonio	24/07/2019
Fr. Joris Baers	Belgium & Netherlands	26/06/1923	Herent	25/07/2019
Fr. Gerard van Kempen	Belgium & Netherlands	06/11/1935	Nijmegen	27/07/2019
Fr. Jean Morin	United States	08/07/1925	Tewksbury	28/07/2019
Fr. Maheu, Noël	Notre-Dame-du-Cap	25/12/1937	Richelieu	30/07/2019

“They are before God, bearing the sign, the kind of character proper to our Institute, the vows common to all its members, the firm habit of the same virtues. We are linked to them by the bonds of a special charity. They are still our brothers and we are theirs. They now live in our mother-house, our main residence. The prayers and the love they retain for us will one day draw us to them and we shall live in our place of rest together with them.”

(Letter of Founder to Fr. Courtès, 22 July 1828)

OMI INFORMATION is an unofficial publication
of the General Administration of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
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