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**LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL
FOR THE FEAST OF ST. EUGENE DE MAZENOD
May 21, 2022**

L.J.C. et M.I.

Dear Brother Oblates, and all our Sisters, Brothers, and Young People who live the Oblate charism,

The life and charism of St. Eugene continue to inspire many thousands of men, women, and young people to seek holiness and to live as missionaries throughout the world. In celebrating the Solemnity of St. Eugene, let us give thanks for the grace of the Oblate charism, a genuine expression of the Gospel. On our feast day, Oblates in difficult circumstances are very present in our hearts and on our minds. We remember in prayer the Oblates and people of Ukraine who are suffering so much from the war provoked by Russia. I want to thank all who have given very generously to help Ukraine, and also for the relief work being done directly and constantly by the Oblates of Poland.

In this letter for our Founder's feast day, I would like to call your attention to four important upcoming events of the Congregation. The first of these events to take place is the "Week of Prayer for Oblate Vocations," from the Founder's feast day, May 21st, to the feast of Blessed Joseph Gerard, May 29th. Resources for this week of prayer have been prepared by the Internal Formation Committee of the Central Government. They are available in three languages and can be downloaded from the OMI website.

This Week of Prayer for Oblate Vocations is an expression of our faith in Jesus' mandate to pray for laborers for the harvest. We will be praying for all the various vocations in the wide Oblate Family. This Week of Prayer also

reminds us that, together with prayer, we have to get involved by assuming the responsibility to invite others to consider a vocation in the Oblate family as an Oblate Priest, Brother, Lay Associate or committed Young Person.

I am grateful to the Major Superiors who foster a culture of vocations in their Units, and who have appointed full-time Oblates with a passion for this ministry to animate and coordinate the efforts of their Units, calling everyone to participate actively in vocational animation. Essential to a vibrant vocational ministry is a team of Oblates and lay people who pray together, and who creatively craft a vision and process to invite and to accompany those who are attracted to the charism. Every Oblate and Lay Associate is responsible for this ministry.

My gratitude goes out to each Oblate who has been missioned by his Major Superior for this most difficult mission. May you be filled with the audacity of St. Eugene! The Major Superiors and their Councilors need to give full support to those designated to coordinate vocational animation in the Units. It is useless to appoint Oblates and teams to animate vocation ministry and then abandon them to work, by themselves, without the constant support and interest of leadership.

I would like to call your attention to a second event, the 2nd Oblate Lay Associations Congress (2OLAC). Recommended by the 2016 General Chapter, it is now nearly 3 years since 2OLAC was officially launched at the 2019 Interchapter in Odra, Poland.

Even with the COVID situation that forced a postponement, the great enthusiasm, interest, solidarity and joy around this global Oblate gathering have been kept alive.

We are now a short time away from 2OLAC, which will take place on May 27th, 28th and 29th. The Congress can be viewed via internet in 3 languages: Spanish, French, and English. The preparation has been a synodal process, involving hundreds of Oblate lay people around the world, participating in workshops and sharing sessions, generating all kinds of ideas, possibilities, and dreams about living the Oblate charism. The Congress will bring to light many wonderful stories of witnessing to our charism in a variety of different ways. Don't miss it! You can already go to <https://omioikia.org/> to find all the latest information about 2OLAC. You will find links in your language of preference so that you can be a part of this Congress.

The 200th anniversary of the Oblate Madonna is the third event for which the Congregation has been preparing. On August 15, 1822, our Founder had an extraordinary experience of Mary's presence, which he described in a letter to Fr. Tempier the very same day: "Would that I could share with you all that I experienced in the way of consolation on this beautiful day devoted to Mary our Queen!" This special experience assured him that his small group of missionaries held the promise of "very great virtues" and could "achieve infinite good." Mary continues to smile upon us and to bless us in our missionary challenges today. During this year, let us promote pilgrimages to marian shrines. A pilgrimage is a special way to connect with lay people and young people, to get to know them better and for them to get to know us and our charism more deeply.

August 15, 2022 will fall on a Monday. On Sunday, August 14, or on Monday at some convenient time, Oblate communities could organize festive gatherings of the Oblate family. There can be a time for prayer, (Eucharist or Rosary), with faith-sharing around the experience of living the Oblate charism, our hopes for the future, ways of inviting others to know the Oblate charism, the theme of the General Chapter, the significance of Mary in our lives, etc. A simple pot-luck supper or picnic could create a joyful atmosphere and

deepen our communion. Special attention to include the poor, shut-ins, the elderly, etc. is an Oblate characteristic. Sharing a meal together is a beautiful sign of the Reign of God that Mary celebrated in her Magnificat.

The fourth congregational event to which I call your attention is the 37th General Chapter (Sept. 14 – Oct. 14), and its theme, "Pilgrims of Hope in Communion." Please be aware that, each month, very stimulating meditations on the Chapter theme have been made available on the OMI website for personal and community reflection. I am grateful to all who have contributed to these reflections.

I hope that the Chapter has been, and will continue to be, in your prayers. The Chapter is a sacred event for the life of the Congregation and fills us with expectation. We hope for a charismatic outburst of the Holy Spirit, shaking us up and calling us to more authentic religious life and mission. During the General Chapter, the Capitulars are reading the signs of the times in the light of the Constitutions and Rules, insuring that we live in creative fidelity to the charism in our present context.

After the Chapter, the important work of putting into effect the calls that the Chapter presents to us begins. We will welcome the new Superior General and Council, and we will commit ourselves to collaborate with them in carrying out the Chapter's recommendations. There are cynical or negative voices about the work of the General Chapter, and even a lack of faith that the Spirit works in and through us. Lord, help our disbelief!

We are pilgrims, journeying with vibrant hope and seeking to nurture a deep communion in all the circles of relationships in our lives. We are being drawn by God to complete fulfillment in the heart of the Trinity. The Virgin Mary stands, smiling upon us, as a great sign of hope on our pilgrimage, prefiguring God's final victory over all evil and the fullness of abundant life in the Reign of God.

Happy feast day of St. Eugene!

Father Louis Lougen, O.M.I.
Superior General

Rome, May 21, 2022

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

37th OMI GENERAL CHAPTER**The capitulars**

Our Constitution 127 states that the Superior General convokes a General Chapter every six years and presides at it.

It has been six years since the 36th Chapter and now we embark on the final preparations for the 37th from September 14 to October 14, 2022, in Nemi, Italy.

A General Chapter strengthens the bond of our unity and allows the members to participate in the life and mission of the Congregation. “The Chapter is a privileged moment of community reflection and conversion, discerning God’s will in the urgent needs of our times and to thank the Lord for the work of salvation which he accomplishes through us.” (C125)

In the composition of a General Chapter, the number of members elected by the Congregation must constitute the majority of its members. Furthermore, the Conference of an Oblate Region submits for the approval of the Superior General in Council, procedures for the election of its delegates.

Having reviewed the names of the delegates and alternates from the Oblate World, the

Superior General has presented the names to the Pre-capitular Commissioner. The Pre-capitular Commission, certifying the names and the eligibility of those presented, is ready to publish the names of the elected delegates.

There are thirty-three ex-officio members (General Administration, Superiors of Units with more than sixty members) plus forty-three elected capitulars. Additionally, the Superior General may invite two capitulars which brings the total to seventy-eight.

There are also thirty-five Oblates invited to serve the Chapter as auxiliary personnel.

We will have the list of capitulars with their photos published on our OMIWORLD page dedicated to the 37th General Chapter in April.

Rome, Solemnity of the of the Annunciation, March 25, 2022

*Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI
Superior General
President, Pre-capitular Commission*

*Fr. Tom Ovalle, OMI
Commissioner, Pre-capitular Commission*

37th OMI GENERAL CHAPTER**To grow and walk in faith, hope and charity**

*Fr. Chicho Rois, OMI
OMI Mission of the Sahara*

Allahu Akbar (رَبِّكَ أَكْبَرُ). Many times, these are the first words I hear when I wake up, or when I am in the chapel praying, and even sometimes at the very moment of the Eucharistic consecration. It’s shocking when this happens! God is bigger! Yes, God is always much more than what I can conceive or even imagine. I am a pilgrim who goes forward, little by little embracing that Mystery in itself unfathomable. And I’m not alone; all of humanity is on that pilgrimage journey, perhaps along different paths, but towards the same goal.

Always open to the Mystery, the pilgrim must leave behind so many things that get in his way. He evidently abandons what prevents him from walking. He also leaves behind what has accumulated so much dust along the way that it is no longer useful. Sometimes he discovers that he also must leave some things that are very dear to him, good things in themselves, but that today prevent or slow down his progress. Pilgrimage is an act of faith, of full trust; some speak of jumping into the void. Pilgrimage is accepting the challenge of tentatively reaching out toward the footsteps of the One who is at the origin and draws us towards the goal. We believe that in Jesus, God has become a pilgrim, traveling to meet us. And this forces us to a permanent and active contemplation of what is happening and who is walking by our side. For

this reason, in any circumstance and at any age, we must be open to God's surprises and take risks, venture down those new paths that the Spirit places before us.

Servants of hope. This is the title of the document that serves as the "road map" of the Churches of North Africa. In territories where the population is overwhelmingly Muslim, Christians, sometimes in extreme situations, see themselves as servants who sow hope. Being servants is a call that the pilgrim must accept if he wants to understand what the Spirit asks of us individually, as a Congregation or as a Church. We can only go on pilgrimage if we place ourselves at the service of the poorest. Putting oneself at service is already, in itself, a reason for hope, not only for the poor, but above all for ourselves. To know who we are and where we are going, we must put ourselves at service, as did the One who told us to do so in memory of him (John 13:1-15).

To put ourselves at the service of the other, we need to be humble: it is not our mission, but the mission of God, One and Triune. We are not the protagonists; only Jesus and the poor can be that. They are not our programs or our strategies: we are the servants-coworkers, not the saviors... Perhaps we are simply called to "unleash processes whose fruits will be gathered by others, with hope placed in the secret forces of the good that is sown" (*Evangelii Gaudium* 196). What is "ours" is to put ourselves always at the service of the most abandoned (OMI Constitution 5) and in this we risk our lives (C. 2). That is our oblation.

The dream of communion. It seems that this pandemic we are suffering has drowned, like a tsunami, all our dreams. In addition to the direct victims who have suffered, there is talk of the long-term consequences. Cases of mental illness and suicide have increased, especially in the younger population. To escape so much suffering and anguish, some have immersed themselves in the virtual world that, without adequate discernment, alienates us and dries us up spiritually. What a paradox that for the majority, their only dream for the future is to return to what there was before! Go back to pre-

pandemic normalcy after everything we're going through? The truth is that perhaps we do not dare to dream otherwise. They have robbed us of our ability to dream! Who dares today to speak of a new heaven and a new earth where justice dwells (2Peter 3,13)? Who defends Jesus' dream "that all may be one like You Father in me and I in You" (Jn 17:21)? Who dreams with Saint Eugene that in our communities and homes, we are to be of one heart and one soul? Our communities are called to be like a sacrament, an effective sign of the "dreams of God" in each particular context, since "the characteristic of a local community is to be a prophetic sign that gives the world reasons to hope in the search for integrity and harmony" (C.91).

Let's dream of brotherhood, but let's not do it alone. "How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together'. Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all" (*Fratelli Tutti* 8). Let us dream together with Jesus Christ and with the poor; let us dream together with the sisters and brothers of our Oblate family; let us dream together with other pilgrims who travel paths different from ours. Let us dream of the future of our humanity, the future of our Church, the future of our Congregation. Let us dream walking, believing, serving, loving.

In two places in our CC and RR, the triad "faith, hope and charity" appears. Opening the section on apostolic religious life, C. 11 tells us, "Growing in faith, hope and love, we commit ourselves to be leaven of the Beatitudes in the heart of the world". What a beautiful synthesis of what is and should always be our mission! Opening the chapter "Living in faith", C. 31 says that "as pilgrims, (the Oblates) walk with Jesus in faith, hope and love". Two verbs that denote dynamism: to grow and to walk. Here is our program for this time of grace, this preparation for the General Chapter. To grow and walk in faith, hope and charity is also to be pilgrims (faith) of hope in communion (charity).

Questionnaire to animate our personal reflection and community sharing:

1.- As a pilgrim of faith, what are the inspirations of the Spirit that I feel in order to be able to better embrace the Mystery of God and the mystery of my Oblate vocation? What do I have to give up? What new path should I take? What is my dream (our dream) so that the whole Oblate family can make a pilgrimage growing in faith?

2.- As a pilgrim of hope, what do I have to do to be a servant of hope in my current context? What processes are we called to begin

**37th OMI GENERAL CHAPTER
“Come with us as we journey, Santa María del camino!”**

Hipólito Olea Tinoco, OMI

I contemplate Mary, our Good Mother, in these strange times, in this changing era. She journeys with us and walks with us in Scriptures, in Tradition, in our Constitutions and Rules and in our mission pathways. She also journeys with us in the animation and preparation for our next General Chapter.

Mary the pilgrim, that young Nazaren woman who sets out from her Jewish tradition to journey with God. Open to the Spirit (C. 10) when, upon the Angel's greeting, upon being surprised by God, responds from the depths of her being. She is the one filled with grace, she is the one with ears, eyes and arms wide open, and she generously also opens her heart: yes, I do accept, let it be done to me... fiat!

Mary sets out on the road. The Lord's servant, filled with the Spirit, leaves Nazareth and crosses the country from north to south, to meet her cousin Elizabeth (Lk 1:39). She who has been filled with life and hope goes in quest for the one who was called barren. Mary is on the move, pilgrim on straight and twisted roads, on paths and trails, through valleys and mountains. Surely she has faced the hardships of the journey, as many missionaries, overcoming obstacles, fording rivers and streams.

Mary, full of grace, is a pilgrim woman, a woman setting out, a woman on a journey. This young lady, who will soon become a mother, brings joy

personally, as a Congregation, as an Oblate family? What is my dream (our dream) as to how the Oblate family should respond to being servants of the most abandoned?

3.- As a pilgrim of communion, how do I feel that God is asking me to collaborate in the dream of Jesus Christ of realizing humankind as reconciled, fraternal and in communion? What is my dream for humanity, for the Church, for the Congregation and the Oblate family? What steps can we take to make the Oblate family a sacrament of these dreams?

with her greeting; the to be born prophet's leap also expresses joy and communion. How does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? May Mary's missionary joy and Elizabeth's joyful surprise by such wondrous encounter be ours, too, so that we may set ourselves on the road (Lk 1: 43).

As a thanksgiving for God's regard to this servant's lowliness, Mary sings, exults, magnifies and glorifies, opening a new page for humanity (Lk 1: 46-55). What wondrous works the Lord does for the lowly, for those who have eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to feel and love and welcome!

Mary is also the young mother who sows communion: hosts, keeps and treasures in her heart (Lk 2, 19). Mary is vigilant, attentive, always contemplative, to the point that she takes action and gives precise indications as to whom to follow at that wedding in Cana of Galilee. Mary setting out... missionary woman... she goes sowing communion as a pilgrim of hope.

Mary also sets out as a pilgrim in sorrow: she who journeys with her son to the point of delivering him on a Friday at the foot of the cross, where she receives as children all of the believers (Jn 19: 26-27). Mary, she who awaits on a Saturday in silent hope. Mary, she who surely would have had the experience of encounter and communion with her resurrected Son on the first day of the week.

So many paths and roads on our missionary outings: by foot, on the back of a mule or a horse, on a motorbike or in an off-road vehicle. Some have done this by sailing down the Río Napo by boat, or going to the outstations on canoe along

the Río Chixoy... and so many other journeys to reach the communities that joyfully wait for us.

As I think of Mary of Nazareth, I also think of so many women, students and workers, younger and older, single women, mothers and widows, who make up our missionary communities. It is they, more than anyone, who have an attentive and willing heart to listen to God, and a generous heart to respond in ecclesial participation. They are also pilgrims, women of hope, women in communion with their Lord and in the communion of the local church. I think about the implications of our vocation for them, especially as described by our name: Missionary... Oblates... Mary Immaculate. I recall the famous words from the Preface of our Constitutions and Rules: "How vast the field that lies before them! How worthy and holy the undertaking!" And as I have done so many times before, I feel called to reread the Preface in a prayerful ambiance, and perhaps rewrite it from our current circumstances in a Marian key.

When Mary of Guadalupe interrupted Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin along the path of worries, she encouraged him to take up again the path of mission that had been entrusted to him. These are the words of consolation that Juan Diego received from Mary on the hill of Tepeyac:

«Listen. Put it into your heart, my youngest and dearest son, that the thing that frightened you, the thing that afflicted you is nothing: do not let it disturb you: do not fear this sickness nor any other sickness, nor any sharp and hurtful thing. Am i not here, i, who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am i not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need something more?» May these words encourage us today as missionary disciples.

In preparation to the General Chapter, we could meditate, pray and chant:

*Come with us Mary along the way,
Come with us Mary come!*

EUROPE

- WAR IN UKRAINE -

“We will remain with them and will never leave them alone”

Editor's Note: Montse Alvarado of Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), during the programme EWTN NEWS IN DEPTH, interviewed Fr. Pavlo Vyshkovskiy, OMI, on the current situation of Ukraine, on March 04, 2022. Fr. Pavlo is the former Superior of the Delegation and the Director of EWTN Ukraine. At present he serves as the pastor of the Oblate parish of St. Nicholas in Ukraine's capital Kyiv.

Alvarado: Father, our entire EWTN audience is praying for you and your parishioners. We're praying that you're safe. Tell us, what is the situation like right now for you, for them and for the city residents around you?

Fr. Vyshkovskiy: Thank you for the prayers, and we need so many of them because the war has never stopped here in Ukraine. It is there night and day, so the situation is very difficult. We

are already tired. At night we do not sleep well because there is the sound of sirens. We need to go underground, to spend half of the night, or may be all night, in there. Russian planes are bombing our cities. I cannot imagine that this is happening to us in 2022; that it is possible in today's world, in Europe, in Ukraine... the war...! So, for us it is a shock. Now we try to do everything possible to help the people and to be close to them.

Alvarado: I can't imagine what that's like Father Vyshkovskiy. The idea of sirens waking you up in the night so that you could hide. But we understand that you have personal experience with this and with Soviet persecution. Are you able to share a little bit of that with us?

Fr. Vyshkovskiy: Yes. Ukraine was, for 75 years, under Soviet persecution. When we speak about the Church, 30,000 churches were destroyed by communism. When I was a 11-year-old boy, it was forbidden to go to the church... Yet during the past 30 years we were happy to have freedom,

finally, after 75 years of persecution. But now we suffer another invasion. Can you imagine that, till now, 30 children have died and 840 have been injured because of war within only 9 days?

This situation has united us so much. Much more! A lot of volunteers are doing everything possible to bring water, because some cities have no water, no heating. They also collect bread and other things to help the needy.

Every war (in history) has ended and only God is eternal. We believe in Him, and we are ready to resist every suffering.

Alvarado: And so, you know exactly what's at stake. Tell us about the pastoral care you and your colleagues are now giving to the faithful for them to get through this very challenging moment.

Fr. Vyshkovskiy: We try to stay connected with our parishioners in every possible way. They know that, even if they have no internet connection or cellular phones, they can still approach us, as we are always in the church from morning till evening, all day. Many men among our parishioners help in territorial defense of Ukraine. So we help women and children to go out of Kiev to a safer place. Men remain here

and, sometimes only for a few moments, these men come to church to receive communion, to confess, to pray. We have adoration all day for the end of the war, for peace.

We are also in touch with our people through our priests, and also through volunteers to visit elderly people who cannot move from their flats, those who have no strength to go out of the city. We visit them. We bring them food, especially bread. Sometimes we need to go outside of the city and stay two or three hours in a queue to buy bread.

With other parishioners, we are in touch through WhatsApp and Viber messages because, for many of them, it is impossible to come to our parish. They are living on the other side of the city and, since the city is closed, it is not easy to go there.

And so, me and my confreres - Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate - remain with our people till the end, and we will never leave them alone.

Alvarado: Well, we thank you for those efforts and we'll be praying for your safety and asking the Blessed Mother for protection for you and everyone in Ukraine. Thank you so much, Father.

Fr. Vyshkovskiy: Thank you too.

UKRAINE

Letter to the Congregation from the Delegation Superior

L. J. Ch. et M.I.

Dear Brothers,

we cordially greet the whole Oblate world from Ukraine!

Regardless of the presence of war in Ukraine, the Oblate spirit is still zealous. As Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, we stand by the people who gather in our churches. Some of our churches and monasteries have become refugee shelters, food, and drug warehouse, and others serve as bomb shelters. In the present situation, we continue to serve people through the administration of the sacraments, the celebration of worship, and moral and spiritual support.

In each parish entrusted to us, we conduct parish ministry, which also includes people who have not been practicing before.

We collect humanitarian aid from various parts of Europe in Poland and then deliver it to our parishes, where it is distributed to the needy.

We express our sincere and deep gratitude to each of you for your support in our ministry and for the support of those who had to abandon everything to save their lives and their loved ones.

Respectfully and with prayers!

Father Vitaliy Podolan, O.M.I.

Superior of the Delegation in Ukraine

UKRAINE**Ukrainian Oblates give shelter to the people in their houses.**

As is known, on February 24, the army of the Russian Federation began its invasion of Ukraine. In this country there are about 30 Oblates in 9 houses, in addition to the community in Crimea and another in the Russian Caucasus.

One of the places most affected by the war has been, precisely, the city of Chernihiv, where we have an Oblate house. Located on the border with Russia and Belarus, the city of Chernihiv has been overrun by enemy forces since the beginning of the invasion of the Russian Federation. On March 1, it began to be shelled with "Grad" rockets and it seems that Russian troops were joined by Belarusian troops. Father Piotr Wróblewski OMI noted that the first shelling ended around noon: "So far, everything is going well. We have everything, even Internet and coffee. Tonight was quiet, everyone slept well. We hope that the day will also be quiet", wrote the missionary this morning.

In the basements of the Oblate house, daily life goes on, despite the danger heard overhead.

Since the beginning of the invasion, the crypt of the church serves as a bomb shelter, where about 40 people, sometimes more, come to spend the night. In addition, another 20-30 people live permanently in the basement of the Oblates' house, to shelter from the constant shelling. They are mostly young mothers with children, who are looking for

a safe place for their children and to be able to help each other, as there are now problems with the supply of food and other basic necessities, so there are long queues.

The superior of the community, Father Piotr Wróblewski, has shared this video showing the situation. Here is the transcript of the video:

"Praise the Lord, greetings to everyone!
[Father Piotr then explains to the children that he is recording a video].

We are in the basement of the [Oblate] house. Here we live, here we eat, here we cook upstairs, here we pray, here we had mass yesterday [Sunday, February 28]....

We greet everyone heartily, we promise our prayers and we also ask you above all to pray for us...

We also have some men who have taken charge of the situation so that everything is under control. As you see, we are holding on well, we pray a lot and, again, we greet you and ask for your prayers."

Other Oblate communities in Ukraine are also taking in refugees who have lost their homes or are heading for the border, for example, the Tyvriv community.

On February 28, the Superior of the Ukrainian Delegation sent a letter to Oblates around the world thanking them for all the support received so far and informing them that the Oblates and our dependents are doing well.

UKRAINE**Oblates, always with the people**

Fr. Pavlo Vyshkovskiy, OMI is the former Delegation Superior of the Ukraine. At present he is the pastor of the Oblate parish of St. Nicholas in Ukraine's capital Kyiv. Here are some extracts of the posts he shared on his personal Facebook page, encouraging his parishioners, on February 26, 2022.

"When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away... But not

a hair of your head will perish. Stand firm, and you will win life." (Lk 21,9. 18-19)

Beloved brothers and sisters,

In such difficult moments of life, the support for us is the Word of God and prayer! We know from history that when all diplomatic and negotiating means fail, only prayer can save the world from destruction! Only prayer can save Ukraine! Our soldiers need our prayer to protect our land, our government needs prayer for God to give it wisdom, our enemies need prayer to come to their senses, and we need

prayer so that fear does not overwhelm us and our hearts are filled with peace.

Therefore, from today we all need to intensify prayer. Missionary Oblates of Immaculate working in the parish of St. Nicholas will be in prayer throughout the day. We are waiting with Jesus for everyone who experiences fear, loneliness, danger or needs support, help and comfort.

Remember, only with God is it always safe!

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4: 7).

The whole world is praying for Ukraine. During the day, many people called us, assuring us that they were grieving, crying and praying with us.

UKRAINE

“The role of the Church is to be with people, pray and point to God” – Bishop Radosław Zmitrowicz OMI

Interview with the auxiliary bishop of the Kamieniec-Podolia diocese in Ukraine.

Bishop Radosław Zmitrowicz OMI is an auxiliary bishop of Kamieniec-Podolski in Ukraine. In an interview with Fr. Marcin Wrzos, OMI (editor of the Polish Oblate magazine “misyjne drogi”) he comments on the situation in the country.

Marcin Wrzos OMI: What is the role of the Church in Ukraine in the current political and military situation?

Bishop Radosław Zmitrowicz, OMI: A large-scale war has just started. I think that, above all, the role of the Church is to be with people, pray and point to God. I will tell you about one example of this being with people. The day before yesterday, one Polish priest, a priest who was planning to leave for Poland, consulted whether or not to postpone the departure. We don't know what will happen these days, he thought. And if it is not there, people may be concerned, they may feel less safe and abandoned. He would like to stay with people,

Calls came from Italy, France, Poland, Spain, America, and the Vatican.

"If God is for us, then who is against us? He who did not spare His Son, but betrayed Him for all of us, will He not give us everything together with Him? Who will accuse God's elect? God is the One who justifies! " (Romans 8, 31-32).

During this day, the greatest thing we pastors do and can do is contemplate Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist. We do it for Ukraine, for our people, for our parish, for each of you... Whatever happens - whether there is a connection or not - we are there all day for you! There is always an opportunity to give you the Holy Sacrament, which may be the best thing to receive in such a difficult time.

and on the other hand, he had important matters in Poland. And he decided to stay. He stated: “I can't leave them and look at it from Warsaw.” It turned out that he was right because this morning Russian troops began the invasion. John Paul II “called” him, because he was a student at the Polytechnic University in the delegation that met the Pope during his pilgrimage. And the Pope spoke to him about his vocation. This is how he began to think about the priesthood. Now he is serving in Ukraine.

Today, the address of the Ukrainian Bishops' Conference to the faithful was published, which also calls for the recitation of the act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as requested by Mary at Fatima. There are also words about the consecration of beloved Russia to Mary. This is the role of the Church to lead the people of God to entrustment, to God, so that each of us would know how to behave in a human way, in a Christian way. The worst and noblest things come out of a man in war.

And material assistance? Eating, sleeping, because someone will run away from somewhere... The Church will not organize this?

We will do whatever we can. This morning the father of one family wrote to me asking if he could send his relatives to Kamieniec Podolski.

And the Ursuline sisters agreed to take in his family. I know that others are already coming towards us because it seems to be a relatively safe place. We prayed this morning in the Kamieniec cathedral that we would know how to behave as we should. There was the Gospel about giving a cup of water because that someone belongs to Jesus. Certainly, the Lord Jesus identifies himself with those who are now seeking refuge. There were also words about cutting off an arm, a leg, an eye, if they were worse. We understood that it also meant cutting off what was selfish in us, which only wanted to think about ourselves and create our comfort zone and not see poverty and suffering. The Church's financial resources are very limited, they cover only basic expenses, but the Church is the faithful, and certainly many of them will help their friends and relatives, and sometimes also strangers, and the needy. There are also retreat houses and, as it was in 2014 or 2015, they provided shelter as much as possible. Yesterday, when we had our conversation, I said there was no panic. Today, it probably does not exist either, although the goods are already being bought, long queues to ATMs and gas stations.

I would like to refer to the Sunday Gospel. It was about the fact that a Christian is someone who has to love friends – although this is already very difficult – and enemies. How in such situations, not only the war that has come, to love your enemies?

Here we touch a broader context. Often times, war and violence are between people, not only at the interstate level, but at home, at work, and at university. Violence or extreme aggression is related to, for example, killing unborn children. Mother Teresa said that the cause of the Third World War was precisely this aggression, this rape. There is also violence in families. This aggressor or foe is not only far to the east and getting closer – but he can be very close. In the same apartment, office.

Now let's go back to the gospel of love, what does it teach? We are all trying to go towards love. We suffer primarily because we have these bad feelings, sins – anger, hatred, aggression. Nobody wants it, but they appear because we

experience injustice, someone is hurting us and we cannot answer otherwise than with anger, aggression, hatred. There is also an insatiability in a man who wants more and more power, success, material things, most often at the expense of others, achieving goals “over the dead”. I will belong to the empire – I already have a lot, but I want more and more. It is this void that forces a man to be selfish and to this cursed life. The only liberation is given to us by the Lord. I would love to love because that's the only truth. I am trying to help others, open myself to this One Love that gives life.

We live in different worlds, bubbles, we are informed unilaterally, which makes it difficult for us to love.

We live in different worlds, or as sociologists now call it, in different bubbles. Russians think differently, we think differently. There is the Tower of Babel. The mission of the Church is to create unity. There is no Ukrainian, Russian or Pole, there is no Jew, there are Christians and Catholics in the Church community. In small Catholic communities where there is faith, this is what it is like. Christ pierces these bubbles, builds bridges of peace and unity. Of course, there are also difficulties, because emotions sometimes win. I have to see that I am really not better, I am a sinner, that “Putin is in me”, that he can reveal himself at any moment. Only by adhering to faith in the Lord can they overcome “Putin in himself”.

The war on a large scale has started, it has already been, and even more so, it will also be an information war. It is very important for us to look at what is happening with the eyes of faith. See also a specific person. My father, who survived Siberia as a child, and his father was in the Soviet camps, always said: the system is terrible, but the people are good. The most important story that unfolds is the story of salvation. Evil can win individual battles, but it has already lost. God entered everything we live through the Incarnation and is Present as the Risen Lord.

(extracts taken from the original interview published on misyjne.pl)

UKRAINE**Letter of the Provincial of Poland**

Dear brothers! Let me share with you few words about the situation of the Oblates in Ukraine. Last week the country was attacked by the Russian army, the full scale war broke out, with many innocent victims.

The Oblates remain with the people. They open their houses and churches and shelter those who seek refuge. They stay connected with one another and organize regular meetings online. During the last meeting on Saturday, the community in Kiev had to withdraw to the shelter, because sirens started to announce the attack. Some equipment from the media-center in Kiev was transferred to another place, because of the bombing in the neighborhood. The Oblates keep good spirit, they continue their ministry. I am very grateful for their witness and courage. May they be safe and free from any harm!

Thousands of refugees from Ukraine have fled to Poland. We make available our houses to shelter the people in case of necessity. It is the same with many Church and other institutions. So far I have heard about three oblate communities where such help was required. We also collect money to support the suffering people in Ukraine.

We pray for peace, a daily rosary was scheduled in every community and in every parish. The superior of the Delegation, Fr Witalij Podolan will send more update soon.

Thank you for your prayer and solidarity with Ukraine and the Oblates who work there. May God give us peace, may the Ukraine succeed in defending its freedom!

In Christ and Mary Immaculate!

Paweł Zajac OMI
Provincial

AFRICA-MADAGASCAR**OMI SOUTHERN AFRICA****Bishop Neil Frank: "I am coming in humility and obedience to God who called me"**

"There is a need to restore the confidence of the faithful in the integrity and honour of the priesthood," said Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, OMI of Johannesburg in the homily at the ordination of Bishop Neil Frank, OMI as the Coadjutor Bishop of Mariannhill Diocese. The ordination took place on the 26 February 2022 at the sport grounds next to the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Mariannhill.

The newly ordained Bishop Neil Frank in his thanksgiving speech at the end of Mass thanked the faithful for their deep faith and he said he's thanking God for all the good gifts have gave to the faithful. He said the fruits of the deep faith of the faithful of Mariannhill show through many vocations to priesthood and religious life and the Lord has really blessed them.

"I am coming in humility and obedience to God who called me," added the Bishop. He

continued, "There is still a lot we still need to do together in cooperation, but we are not going to rush things. This celebration is yours, let us together thank the Lord for good things he has done for us."

Earlier, talking about his experience of growing up in the rural area from where they often had rabbits crossing in front of their car with a shocked look in its face because of the headlights, the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Peter Bryan Wells said that is the same face you get when a man is told that he has been appointed a bishop. "I am so please that the bishop now does no longer have that look, he looks more at ease," said the Nuncio.

To the newly ordained bishop, the Nuncio said the most important characteristic of bishop is that he must be a man of prayer. "I know you are a man of prayer and you must continue to be. If our priests are men of prayer, we know it," said the Nuncio. He went on to say there's a big difference between being a pastor and ad administrator, a difference big difference

between be a teacher of Christ and a bureaucrat, a big difference between a man who wears nice clothes and a big hat, politicians do the same, and bishops are not politicians, they are pastors. Referring to the Holy Father he said Pope Francis recently reminded us beautifully saying a good shepherd is the one who knows how to walk in front, sometimes with the people and sometimes behind the people. He said the same is true in the bishop's life of prayer, to lead the prayer of the people of God, to pray with the people of God, to be lead in prayer by the people of God.

Fr. Lizwelinjani Mlotshwa, OMI, the acting Provincial of the OMI SA Province, wished the new bishop all the blessing from God. He

congratulated the diocese for having a new bishop and thanked all the people who welcomed their brother warmly. He said he believes Bishop Frank comes a son of the Church to work in cooperation with other sons and daughters of the Church to grow and strengthen the Body of Christ.

Bishop Dlungwane, the Bishop of Mariannhill said, "today we commit ourselves to work with you, to show all love and support in your episcopal ministry for the salvation of souls."

(Extracts from an article published on the website of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference www.sacbc.org.za)

ANNIVERSARIES - MAY 2022

75th Anniversaries of Ordinations

31/05/1947	07315	Fr. Roger Gauthier	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
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70th Anniversaries of Vows

31/05/1952	09239	Fr. Edward Vrazel	United States
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65th Anniversaries of Vows

01/05/1957	10260	Fr. Herbert Krumscheid	Namibia
01/05/1957	10257	Fr. Franz-Josef Michels	Namibia
01/05/1957	10843	Fr. Martin O'Keeffe	Anglo-Irish
31/05/1957	10264	Card. Orlando Quevedo	Philippines

65th Anniversaries of Ordinations

30/05/1957	09346	Fr. Sherman Wall	United States
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60th Anniversaries of Vows

01/05/1962	11206	Fr. Otto Dichtler	Central European Province
01/05/1962	11208	Fr. Heinz Steegmann	Central European Province
31/05/1962	11219	Fr. Ruben Gomez	Philippines
31/05/1962	11223	Fr. Anthony F. Jayamanne	Colombo
31/05/1962	11225	Fr. Emilianus Moraes	Colombo
31/05/1962	11222	Fr. Joseph Bosco Perera	Colombo

60th Anniversaries of Ordinations

31/05/1962	10536	Fr. Joao Drexel	Brazil
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50th Anniversaries of Ordinations

20/05/1972	11782	Fr. Anthony Rigoli	United States
20/05/1972	11780	Fr. Richard Sudlik	United States
25/05/1972	11787	Fr. Zdzislaw Popowicz	Pologne

25th Anniversaries of Vows

21/05/1997	13748	Fr. Renante Aban	Philippines
21/05/1997	13895	Fr. Elmer Boston	Philippines
21/05/1997	13878	Fr. John Jeneval Palomar	Philippines

25th Anniversaries of Ordinations

07/05/1997	13443	Fr. Sebastian Anthony muthu Croos	Jaffna
10/05/1997	13448	Fr. Andreas Hohn	Central European Province
10/05/1997	13449	Fr. Raymond Jahae	Belgique et Pays Bas
10/05/1997	13373	Fr. Timothy Paulsen	United States
31/05/1997	13444	Fr. Velichor Abaranam Jerome	Administration Generale
31/05/1997	13445	Fr. Alrin Soosaipillai	Jaffna

ANNIVERSARIES - JUNE 2022

70th Anniversaries of Ordinations

15/06/1952	08341	Fr. Laurent Alarie	Lacombe
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65th Anniversaries of Ordinations

01/06/1957	09018	Fr. William Davis	United States
01/06/1957	09009	Fr. James Miller	United States

60th Anniversaries of Ordinations

16/06/1962	10035	Fr. Mauricio Schroeder	Lacombe
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50th Anniversaries of Vows

04/06/1972	12149	Msgr. Claude Champagne	Notre-Dame-du-Cap
09/06/1972	12249	Fr. Richard Guerra	United States
24/06/1972	12147	Fr. Wenceslao Laguidao	Colombo
24/06/1972	12146	Fr. Emmanuel Sison	Philippines
24/06/1972	12145	Fr. Gil Votacion	Philippines
29/06/1972	12218	Fr. Clement Ntlou	Lesotho

50th Anniversaries of Ordinations

03/06/1972	11959	Fr. Edward McSheffrey	Lacombe
24/06/1972	11692	Fr. Pasquale Saurio	Mediterranea
29/06/1972	11790	Fr. Luigi Da Ros	Mediterranea
29/06/1972 1	1896b	Fr. Karl Zaiser	Central European Province

25th Anniversaries of Ordinations

23/06/1997	13407	Fr. Tomasz Koscinski	Assumption
23/06/1997	13406	Fr. Romuald Opielka	Pologne
23/06/1997	13410	Fr. Wieslaw Safian	Pologne
23/06/1997	13409	Fr. Marek Swat	Pologne
23/06/1997	13411	Fr. Józef Wcislo	Pologne
27/06/1997	13425	Fr. Ramón Ayala	Mexico
29/06/1997	13414	Fr. Tarcisius Eko Saktio	Indonesia
29/06/1997	13418	Fr. Jean Amadou Sy	France

Suffrages for our Deceased (May-June 2022)

No. 34-48

NAME	PROV/DEL	DATE	DIED AT	BORN
Fr. Carrillo, Francisco	Cruz del Sur	08/05/2022	Montevideo	28/06/1951
Fr. Rollheiser, Otto	Lacombe	09/05/2022	Vancouver	21/03/1938
Fr. Mauer, Elmar	United States	10/05/2022	Belleville	13/07/1934
Fr. Díez-Fontecha, Santiago	Mediterranean	11/05/2022	Madrid	08/07/1930
Fr. Alexander, Dennis W.	Lacombe	15/05/2022	Vancouver	13/10/1948
Bro. Daly, Paul	United States	18/05/2022	Tewksbury	29/01/1934
Fr. Skup, Robert	Poland	20/05/2022	Lubliniec	21/07/1974
Fr. Saison, Léon	France	21/05/2022	Pontmain	25/12/1920
Fr. Carolan, Edward	Anglo-Irish	29/05/2022	Dublin	06/01/1932
Fr. Moteaphala, Emile	Southern Africa	05/06/2022	Virginia	08/12/1954
Fr. Domanski, Jan	Poland	07/06/2022	Biala Podlaska	26/07/1958
Fr. Delabie, Daniel	Belg. & Neth.	07/06/2022	De Panne	07/08/1933
Fr. Couture, Roger	United States	10/06/2022	Tewksbury	26/09/1929
Fr. García Pintado, Francisco	Mediterranean	13/06/2022	Madrid	22/11/1939
Fr. Rouyer, Marcel	France	19/06/2022	Fougères	29/03/1930

“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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