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MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD MISSION DAY 2023

Dear brothers and sisters!

For this year's World Mission Sunday, I have chosen a theme inspired by the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, in the Gospel of Luke (cf. 24:13-35): "Hearts on fire, feet on the move". Those two disciples were confused and dismayed, but their encounter with Christ in the word and in the breaking of the bread sparked in them the enthusiastic desire to set out again towards Jerusalem and proclaim that the Lord had truly risen.

In the Gospel account, we perceive this change in the disciples through a few revealing images: their hearts burned within them as they heard the Scriptures explained by Jesus, their eyes were opened as they recognized him and, ultimately, their feet set out on the way. By meditating on these three images, which reflect the journey of all missionary disciples, we can renew our zeal for evangelization in today's world.

1. Our hearts burned within us "when he explained the Scriptures to us". In missionary activity, the word of God illumines and transforms hearts.

On the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the hearts of the two disciples were downcast, as shown by their dejected faces, because of the death of Jesus, in whom they had believed (cf. v. 17). Faced with the failure of the crucified Master, their hopes that he was the Messiah collapsed (cf. v. 21).

Then, "as they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them" (v. 15). As when he first called the disciples, so now, amid their bewilderment, the Lord takes the initiative; he approaches them and walks alongside them. So too, in his great mercy, he never tires of being with us, despite all our failings, doubts, weaknesses, and the dismay and pessimism that make us become "foolish and slow of heart" (v. 25), men and women of little faith.

Today, as then, the Risen Lord remains close to his missionary disciples and walks beside them, particularly when they feel disoriented, discouraged, fearful of the mystery of iniquity that surrounds them and seeks to overwhelm them. So, "let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!" (Evangeli Gaudium, 86). The Lord is greater than all our problems, above all if we encounter them in our mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the world. For in the end, this mission is his and we are nothing more than his humble co-workers, "useless servants" (cf. Lk 17:10).

I desire to express my closeness in Christ to all the men and women missionaries in the world, especially to those enduring any kind of hardship. Dear friends, the Risen Lord is always with you. He sees your generosity and the sacrifices you are making for the mission of evangelization in distant lands. Not every day of our lives is serene and unclouded, but let us never forget the words of the Lord Jesus to his friends before his Passion: "In the world you will have tribulations, but be courageous: I have conquered the world!" (Jn 16:33).

After listening to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the risen Jesus, “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Lk 24:27). The hearts of the disciples thrilled, as they later confided to each other: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” (v. 32). Jesus is himself the living Word, who alone can make our hearts burn within us, as he enlightens and transforms them.

In this way, we can better understand Saint Jerome’s dictum that “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (Commentary on Isaiah, Prologue). “Without the Lord to introduce us, it is impossible to understand sacred Scripture in depth; yet the opposite is equally true: without sacred Scripture, the events of Jesus’ mission and of his Church in the world remain indecipherable” (Aperuit Illis, 1). It follows that knowledge of Scripture is important for the Christian life, and even more so for the preaching of Christ and his Gospel. Otherwise, what are you passing on to others if not your own ideas and projects? A cold heart can never make other hearts burn!

So let us always be willing to let ourselves be accompanied by the Risen Lord as he explains to us the meaning of the Scriptures. May he make our hearts burn within us; may he enlighten and transform us, so that we can proclaim his mystery of salvation to the world with the power and wisdom that come from his Spirit.

2. Our eyes were “opened and recognized him” in the breaking of the bread. Jesus in the Eucharist is the source and summit of the mission.

The fact that their hearts burned for the word of God prompted the disciples of Emmaus to ask the mysterious Wayfarer to stay with them as evening drew near. When they gathered around the table, their eyes were opened and they recognized him when he broke the bread. The decisive element that opened the eyes of the disciples was the sequence of actions performed by Jesus: he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them.

Those were the usual gestures of the head of a Jewish household, but, performed by Jesus Christ with the grace of the Holy Spirit, they renewed for his two table companions the sign of the multiplication of the loaves and above all that of the Eucharist, the sacrament of the sacrifice of the cross. Yet at the very moment when they recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, “he vanished from their sight” (Lk 24:31). Here we can recognize an essential reality of our faith: Christ, who breaks the bread, now becomes the bread broken, shared with the disciples and consumed by them.

He is seen no longer, for now he has entered the hearts of the disciples, to make them burn all the more, and this prompts them to set out immediately to share with everyone their unique experience of meeting the Risen Lord. The risen Christ, then, is both the one who breaks the bread and, at the same time, the bread itself, broken for us. It follows that every missionary disciple is called to become, like Jesus and in him, through the working of the Holy Spirit, one who breaks the bread and one who is broken bread for the world.

Here it should be remembered that breaking our material bread with the hungry in the name of Christ is already a work of Christian mission. How much more so is the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, which is Christ himself, a work of mission par excellence, since the Eucharist is the source and summit of the life and mission of the Church.

As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out: “We cannot keep to ourselves the love we celebrate in the Sacrament [of the Eucharist]. By its very nature, it asks to be communicated to everyone. What the world needs is the love of God, to encounter Christ and believe in him. For this reason the Eucharist is not only the source and summit of the life of the Church; it is also the source and summit of her mission: ‘An authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church’” (Sacramentum Caritatis, 84).

In order to bear fruit we must remain united to Jesus (cf. Jn 15:4-9). This union is achieved through daily prayer, particularly in Eucharistic adoration, as we remain in silence in the presence of the Lord, who remains with us in the Blessed Sacrament. By lovingly cultivating this communion with Christ, the missionary disciple can become a mystic in action. May our hearts always yearn for the company of Jesus, echoing the ardent plea of the two disciples of Emmaus, especially in the evening hours: “Stay with us, Lord!” (cf. Lk 24:29).

3. Our feet set out on the way, with the joy of telling others about the Risen Christ. The eternal youth of a Church that is always going forth.

After their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus “in the breaking of the bread”, the disciples “set out without delay and returned to Jerusalem” (cf. Lk 24:33). This setting out in haste, to share with others the joy of meeting the Lord, demonstrates that “the joy of the Gospel fills the heart and the whole life of those who meet Jesus. Those who allow themselves to be saved by him are freed from sin, from sadness, from inner emptiness, from isolation. With Jesus Christ, joy is always born and reborn” (Evangelii Gaudium, 1). One cannot truly encounter the risen Jesus without being set on fire with enthusiasm to tell everyone about him. Therefore, the primary and principal resource of the mission are those persons who have come to know the risen Christ in the Scriptures and in the Eucharist, who carry his fire in their heart and his light in their gaze. They can bear witness to the life that never dies, even in the most difficult of situations and in the darkest of moments.

The image of “feet setting out” reminds us once more of the perennial validity of the *missio ad gentes*, the mission entrusted to the Church by the risen Lord to evangelize all individuals and peoples, even to the ends of the earth. Today more than ever, our human family, wounded by so many situations of injustice, so many divisions and wars, is in need of the Good News of peace and salvation in Christ. I take this opportunity to reiterate that “everyone has the

right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to announce it without excluding anyone, not as one who imposes a new obligation, but as one who shares a joy, signals a beautiful horizon, offers a desirable banquet” (Evangelii Gaudium, 14). Missionary conversion remains the principal goal that we must set for ourselves as individuals and as a community, because “missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity”.

As the Apostle Paul confirms, the love of Christ captivates and impels us (cf. 2 Cor 5:14). This love is two-fold: the love of Christ for us, which calls forth, inspires and arouses our love for him. A love that makes the Church, in constantly setting out anew, ever young. For all her members are entrusted with the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, in the conviction that “he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again” (v. 15). All of us can contribute to this missionary movement: with our prayers and activities, with material offerings and the offering of our sufferings, and with our personal witness. The Pontifical Mission Societies are the privileged means of fostering this missionary cooperation on both the spiritual and material levels. For this reason, the collection taken on World Mission Sunday is devoted to the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The urgency of the Church’s missionary activity naturally calls for an ever closer missionary cooperation on the part of all her members and at every level. This is an essential goal of the synodal journey that the Church has undertaken, guided by the key words: communion, participation, mission. This journey is certainly not a turning of the Church in upon herself; nor is it a referendum about what we ought to believe and practice, nor a matter of human preferences. Rather, it is a process of setting out on the way and, like the disciples of Emmaus, listening to the risen Lord. For he always comes among us to explain the meaning of the Scriptures and to break bread for us, so that we can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, carry out his mission in the world.

Just as the two disciples of Emmaus told the others what had taken place along the way (cf. Lk 24:35), so too our proclamation will be a joyful telling of Christ the Lord, his life, his passion, his death and resurrection, and the wonders that his love has accomplished in our lives.

So let us set out once more, illumined by our encounter with the risen Lord and prompted by his Spirit. Let us set out again with burning hearts, with our eyes open and our feet in motion.

Let us set out to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist, and to invite everyone to walk together on the path of peace and salvation that God, in Christ, has bestowed upon all humanity.

Our Lady of the Way, Mother of Christ's missionary disciples and Queen of Missions, pray for us!

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 6 January 2023,
Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.*

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Laudate Deum : A call to act now!

Yesterday, October 4th, 2023, we received and welcomed Pope Francis' new apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum* (Praise God), released on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy's patron saint.

Laudate Deum is a follow-up to Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The message is crystal clear: In recent years, we have done little to respond to global warming. Attempts to deny or downplay this reality have only made things worse by discouraging those courageous enough to protect our Common Home. Pope Francis emphasizes that "despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident." (cf. LD 5).

Pope Francis points out, "No one can ignore the fact that in recent years, we have witnessed extreme weather phenomena, frequent periods of unusual heat, drought, and other cries of protest on the part of the earth that are only a few palpable expressions of a silent disease that affects everyone." (cf. LD 5.10.13.17). Pope Francis reiterates and reaffirms the call of *Laudato Si'* in which the Church embraced the principles of integral ecology, sustainability, and call-to-action. In *Laudate Deum*, he urges everyone to wake up, take responsibility, and address the climate crisis facing our world while there is still time. (cf. LD 58)

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Laudate Deum is a call to act now! Pope Francis warns us that "to seek only a technical remedy to each environmental problem which comes up is to separate what is in reality interconnected and to mask the true and deepest problems of the global system." (cf. LD.57). If we stay idle and do nothing, *Laudate Deum* reminds us of the grim consequences of our actions (cf. LD, 6).

Dear Oblates, with the whole Church, let us act now!

Jean-Hérick Jasmin, OMI-JPIC Director

Exploring New Horizons: A Modern Commentary on Our Constitutions and Rules

To commemorate the bicentenary of Pontifical recognition of our Charism and the approbation of our Constitutions and Rules, our Superior General and council have expressed their wish that a steering committee may be formed with the task of working on a newly revised Commentary of the Constitutions and Rules.

In the thirty years since Fr. Fernand JETTÉ published a commentary on the Oblate Constitutions and Rules titled OMI: The Apostolic Man, the world and the Church have changed dramatically. Fr. Jetté was the architect of the 1982 CC&RR and the Superior General responsible for its introduction and implementation in the Congregation. As Oblates, we have used these guides to respond to the changing needs of the most abandoned whom we serve.

The canonization of Eugene de Mazenod ignited a new interest in the study of the Oblate Charism, and a consciousness of belonging to a worldwide Mazenodian Family of religious and lay missionaries emerged.

Pope at opening Mass for Synod: “Let us walk with the Holy Spirit”

Pope Francis presides at the Holy Mass in St Peter’s Square for the Opening of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, and invites the faithful to walk with the Holy Spirit, “in trust and with joy”.

The Solemn Mass for the Opening of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops began with a modern version of the traditional *Laudes Regiae* hymn, invoking God’s protection and blessing on the Church, on Pope Francis and the Bishops and the flock entrusted to him, and on civil leaders and all women and men.

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The members of the steering committee representing each regional missionary reality of the Congregation are: Arun ROZARIO, Bonga THAMI, Cleber LOPES, Frank SANTUCCI, Gregory AROKIASAMY, Paolo ARCHIATI, Pat MCGEE, Sandy PRATHER, Stefano DOMINICI, and Thomas KLOSTERKAMP.

The committee met for the first time on September 25. Their mission is to shape the organization and content of this Commentary, define its purpose and intended audience, select authors who will authentically represent the diverse expressions of our charism in the Mazenodian Family, and oversee translations and publication.

Frank, Bonga, Pat, Arun, Sandy, Gregory, Stefano, Cleber, Thomas and Paolo. We embark on this journey with enthusiasm and devotion to enrich the future while honoring our rich past.

*Frank SANTUCCI, OMI
(Kusenberger Chair of Oblate Studies)*

In his homily, Pope Francis recalled a “pastoral desolation” in Jesus’ earthly ministry, recounted in the day’s Gospel. “In the moment of desolation,” the Pope said, “Jesus has a gaze capable of seeing beyond: He praises the wisdom of the Father and is able to discern the good that grows unseen, the seed of the Word welcomed by the simple, the light of the Kingdom of God that shows the way even in the night.”

At the beginning of the General Assembly, the Pope said, “we do not need purely natural vision, made up of human strategies, political calculations, or ideological battles.” Instead, he said, “We are here to walk together with the gaze of Jesus, Who blesses the Father and welcomes those who are weary and oppressed.”

Fr. Charles Haddon RENSBURG, OMI, appointed Treasurer General

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are pleased to announce that the Superior General in Council has appointed Fr. Charles Haddon RENSBURG as the new Treasurer General. This appointment will be effective on October 27, 2023.

This appointment reflects our commitment to responsible stewardship, financial transparency, and good governance in fulfilling our mission. Fr. Charles Rensburg, from South Africa born in Zimbabwe, brings a wealth of experience and a profound understanding of our Congregation's values and mission to his new role. With a Master's Degree in Business Administration, he possesses expertise in financial planning and analysis.

Having devoted 23 years of faithful service as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Charles has undertaken various ministries, including significant contributions in financial administration. His commitment to our spiritual and financial well-being is undeniable.

Since 2015, Charles has been a member of the OIP board and served as the Provincial Treasurer for the OMI Southern Africa Province since 2018.

As Treasurer General, Charles will oversee the financial interests of the Congregation, including budgeting, investments, and resource allocation. His leadership will ensure the optimal utilization of resources to advance our mission while aligning financial planning with the evolving needs of the Congregation.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Fr. Marc DESSUREAULT, our former General Treasurer since 2010, for his outstanding leadership and dedication. May God bless him in all his future endeavors. Inspired by our founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have a longstanding tradition of selfless service.

The role of the new Treasurer General is paramount in realizing our mission by guaranteeing fiscal stability while remaining faithful to our vow of poverty.

OMIWORLD

Brother Noel GARCIA, OMI, appointed new Secretary General

We are thrilled and proud to announce that the Superior General in Council has appointed Brother Noel GARCIA as the new Secretary General. This is a historic moment, as he becomes the first Brother Oblate to hold this position in the history of our Congregation.

This appointment highlights our commitment to promoting diversity and internationality, while affirming the value of each of our members.

Brother Noel GARCIA is a highly skilled and recognized Brother Oblate, known for his dedication, service, and enthusiasm. Originally from the Philippines, he joined the Oblates in 1994 after his practice as a Medical doctor. With over 27 years of experience, he has served in various capacities within the Congregation, including education, mission work, formation, counseling, and caring for the sick and elderly.

In his new role as Secretary General, Brother Noel will undertake important administrative tasks, providing essential support for the entire Congregation.

These tasks include overseeing communication, coordinating ministries, and supporting the mission of spreading the message of Saint Eugene de Mazenod. His role is crucial to the daily ins and outs of the Congregation on a global scale.

With this historic appointment, we reaffirm our commitment to unity, diversity, and inclusion within our Congregation. This milestone marks an exciting new chapter that reaffirms our identity as a religious community of Brothers and Priests, Pilgrims of Hope in Communion. We sincerely thank Father Marek JAZGIER, who has served as Secretary General since 2010, and wish him success in his future ministry.

OMIWORLD

Decade of Dedication: Marek and Marc, THANK YOU!

During this time of transition, the Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, OMI, and his Council, expresses the Congregation's profound gratitude to Fr. Marek JAZGIER, our outgoing Secretary General, and Fr. Marc DESSUREAULT, our outgoing Treasurer General.

For over a decade, these brother Oblates have sacrificed a part of their lives as religious to serve the needs of the Congregation, leaving an indelible mark on our Mazenodian charismatic family. With selfless generosity of their time and talents, Fr. Marek and Fr. Marc have shown their love for the charism, mission, and especially their brother Oblates. They have been instrumental in supporting the Congregation in shaping our path and guiding us through significant milestones.

The Superior General visits Quebec

The Superior General of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, OMI, will be visiting the Oblate Province of Notre-Dame-du-Cap in Quebec and Ottawa, Canada, from October 17 to November 1, 2023.

This visit will be an opportunity to meet his confrères and their communities. To welcome the Superior General, the Provincial Council of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and Saint Paul University are organizing two days filled with meetings and activities to strengthen the relationship between the Oblates and the University community.

The Superior General will be at Saint Paul University on Monday, October 30, and Tuesday, October 31. On Monday, the day will be dedicated to meetings with the deans, groups, and centers of the University.

As Secretary General, Fr. Marek's deep spirituality, coupled with a wealth of experience and wisdom, promoted communication, unity, and understanding within our community. His presence made a significant impact and greatly contributed to the advancement of our Mission.

As Treasurer General, Fr. Marc displayed a relentless dedication to our financial stability and responsible stewardship. Through diligent oversight, he has ensured that our resources are effectively directed toward our mission of serving the poor and the most abandoned.

With their departure, we say goodbye to an era but welcome a new chapter for the Congregation and the entire Mazenodian charismatic family. They leave a legacy of service, compassion, and dedication, for which we are deeply grateful. May God continue to bless them in their future missions. Thank you!

*Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, OMI
Superior General*

On Tuesday, he will attend the Symposium "175 Years of Higher Education."

This Symposium will showcase the Oblates of Mary Immaculate's commitment to Higher Education, notably Saint Paul University and the Catholic intellectual tradition. It will provide a space for reflection and respectful dialogue with First Nations in Canada, in addition to commemorating the 175th anniversary of Saint Paul University by presenting past accomplishments, reflecting on the present, and exploring future prospects.

Our prayers accompany the Superior General, and we express gratitude to the Province of Notre-Dame-du-Cap for their diligent preparations for this visit.

OMIWORLD

AFRICA-MADAGASCAR

From humble beginnings: First Oblate mission in Ghana

Embracing the wisdom of the adage “You’ve got to crawl before you walk,” the Oblate Mission of Ghana has taken flight. Declared an official Oblate Mission on May 13, 2021, by the Superior General in Council, the First Oblates arrived in the village of Agbenoxoè, Ho, Ghana, on March 21, 2022.

In this humble village of farmers and fishermen, where opportunities are scarce and development is limited, the Oblates diligently work with the local people to bring hope to the region. The presence of vibrant young residents needs to be improved in Agbenoxoè, as most young adults attend boarding schools in Kpando and Ho. Thus, the Oblate mission truly embodies the theme of the 37th General Chapter: “Pilgrims of Hope in Communion.”

The Oblates form an intercultural apostolic community with four members from different countries. Together, they strive to make a difference. The members are Br. Rafal DABKOWSKI, the bursar and assistant rector of the shrine, (he is currently back home in Poland for a while); Fr. Hycaninth NWANERI, the superior and parish priest; Fr. Daniel MANE, the rector of the shrine; and Fr. Jean Baptiste, assistant parish priest and director of Youth Ministry.

The Agbenoxoè mission station, comprising an open church building, a missionary house, and a Marian shrine, is a bustling hub of activity. The Oblate mission centres around the vibrant Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes. With its towering eight-meter statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, this sacred place draws children and adults from the village and beyond. This oasis is nestled among nature and protected by a mountain. The shrine is a place of tranquility, with a stream of water that feeds Lake Wolta, adding to the prayerful atmosphere.

The Oblates aim to build upon the spiritual foundation of the shrine, transforming it into a beacon of faith, hope, and love for the region.

But the Oblate mission goes beyond the shrine. They also serve in the parish and support the outstations. These Oblates are dedicated to evangelizing the poor! They have learned the local Ewe language and improved their English to nourish their relationship with the local community. As the Mission of Ghana begins its journey, it answers the divine call to “preach the gospel to all creation (Mk 16:5).” This sacred endeavor breathes life into the shrine, offering, for example, the sacrament of reconciliation as a means to experience God’s mercy and forgiveness.

The Oblate Mission of Ghana is poised to make a lasting impact, spreading hope and transforming lives in Christ. The Oblates in Agbenoxoè are here to impact the lives of the poor, foster peace, and strengthen our relationship with the Creator. With the guidance of Mary, we can overcome social challenges and transform lives. As Oblates, spreading the gospel through Marian shrines has always been a part of our Charism.

In the spirit of Mission Month, observed in October, it is worth noting that the Central Government of the Congregation hopes the mission in Ghana could pave the way for future missionary endeavors. This highlights Mary’s role as the Mother of the Mission.

Let us support this new Oblate mission on the periphery and embrace hope together. Mary, Mother of the Missions, pray for us!

Fr. Kapena SHIMBOME, OMI, is a General Councillor for Africa-Madagascar Region, he is currently visiting the Oblate Mission in Ghana.

Kapena SHIMBOME, OMI

OMISA: Oblate Youth experience the beauty of praying the Rosary

The Mission with Youth is thriving and revitalizing OMI Southern Africa (OMISA) Province especially during this month of October, the month of the Rosary and of the missions.

The mission rallies the young people from Oblate parishes and immerses them in the spirit of St. Eugene, helping them “discover who they are in the eyes of God.”

Picture this: On the 25th of September, Oblate Youth from the various parishes in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg came together to celebrate Heritage Day. This event was more than just a gathering; it was a platform for OMI youth to share their individual identities and diverse heritages. The Oblate Mission with Youth (OMY) stands at the forefront of this endeavor, seamlessly weaving together the threads of who they are with the richness of the Oblate Charism. What is the ultimate goal? To foster unity in diversity. This journey is an odyssey of self-discovery.

During the month of October, the Oblate Youth gathers each Thursday night, for an hour to meditate on each mystery of the Holy Rosary. Each Oblate Youth becomes a pilgrim. They experience the beauty of praying the Rosary, contemplating the mysteries of Christ with Mary and invoking her intercession for the needs of the Church and of the world.

Mother Mary takes each of these young pilgrims by the hand and guides them into deep reflection and meditation so that they can see themselves through the eyes of God.

So, what sets them apart? The OMISA Oblate Mission with Youth does not scratch the surface, they dive into each mystery. As pilgrims, they explore together the four significant moments of the life of Jesus Christ: his birth, mission, death, and resurrection. Mary witnessed these monumental moments of her son and invites us to experience them with her in each decade of the Rosary. Just as our Blessed Mother devoted herself entirely as the humble handmaid of the Lord, the OMY embraces their unique call to “receive Christ and share Him with all” those they encounter.

Just as Jesus entrusted Mary to the beloved disciple, St. Eugene entrusts the Oblate family to the loving arms of Mary. Mary is the compass that guides each Pilgrim of Hope in Communion and inspires them to live charity among themselves and zeal for the salvation of souls beyond the boundaries of the Congregation. “Come and Discover who you are in the eyes of God” (St. Eugene de Mazenod)

Sicelo LIBANJE, OMI

ASIA-OCEANIA

Oblate Missions in Bangladesh: A Visit from the Vicar General

Fr. Antoni BOCHM, OMI, the Vicar General, embarked on a visit to the Oblate missions in Bangladesh. This visit is particularly special as the Oblate Delegation of Bangladesh recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. While in Bangladesh, Fr. Antoni took the opportunity to preach an inspiring retreat for the Oblates.

The retreat, held at the Delegation House in Dhaka from October 17-20, focused on the importance of living out the charism as outlined in the Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation. Fr. Antoni also addressed the theme of the last General Chapter, “Pilgrims of Hope in Communion.”

Fr. Antoni also took the time to meet the seminarians who are currently studying at the Oblate minor seminary.

With encouragement and guidance, he inspired these young individuals to nurture their faith on a daily basis and to embrace the Oblate missionary vocation.

Undoubtedly, the most memorable aspect of his visit was the time spent with the poorest of the poor and the Oblate facilities that strive to serve them. Fr. Antoni visited various communities, including Khadim, Borelekha, Lokhipur, and Lokhonpur. The Oblate missionaries primarily serve in rural areas among those who are socially marginalized and impoverished.

To help support the younger generation, the Oblates and other religious communities have undertaken the responsibility of operating schools in numerous locations.

To commemorate his visit, the Vicar General brought the relics of St. Eugene de Mazenod to Bangladesh. These relics will find a home in four religious houses within the Oblate Delegation, as a constant reminder of the Charism that unites the Mazenodian Family.

OMIWORLD

CANADA-US

An Oblate Life: Fr. Clarence turns 103

In just a few weeks, on November 2, our brother Oblate Fr. Clarence ZACHMAN will be celebrating his 103rd birthday. This year also marks his 75th anniversary of his ordination as an Oblate priest.

For those of you who know Fr. Clarence, personally, you know that his favorite saying was “Jesus loves you and so do I.” Father Clarence says, “It’s such a simple but vitally important message to be reminded of.” That’s what made Fr. Clarence special.

For those of you who don’t know Fr. Clarence, following his ordination, he taught at Our Lady of the Ozarks minor seminary until 1961, where he also served as treasurer, and chief maintenance officer, gaining skills as a plumber, electrician, groundskeeper and general handyman.

Later, he joined the United States Air Force as a chaplain until 1981 and then worked at parishes in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Missouri, before coming to minister at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois.

He currently lives at the Benedictine Living Community on the Shrine grounds. Like his brother Missionary Oblates around the world, Fr. Clarence prays for you and all our co-missionaries daily.

Recently, Fr. Clarence became the oldest Missionary Oblate in the world. We’d like to make this birthday even more special.

Please continue to keep Fr. Clarence and all the elder Missionary Oblates in your prayers!

David URIBE, OMI

Pilgrimage of Hope: Father General honors his Canadian Predecessors

The Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, is currently on a canonical visit to Canada. This visit holds great significance as it coincides with the 175th anniversary celebrations of the University of Saint Paul in Ottawa.

Additionally, Fr. Chicho takes this opportunity to install the Provincial of the Oblate Province of ND du Cap and pay tribute to two of his predecessors, Léo DESCHÂTELETS (1947-1972) and Fernand JÉTTÉ (1974-1986).

Upon his arrival, Fr. Chicho held a productive meeting with the new provincial and his council, where he shared the province's expectations. The following day, he took the morning to visit the Cemetery where, among others, Fathers Léo DESCHÂTELETS and Fernand JÉTTÉ, two of the three Canadians who served as Superior Generals, are buried.

According to Fr. Chicho, it was a moment of pilgrimage in communion with our brave missionaries who have already returned to our heavenly Father.

Pilgrimage of Hope: The Missions of the far north

The Superior General, Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, began his visit at the Oblate residence in Richelieu before embarking on the footsteps of the first missionaries to the First Nations.

Shortly after his arrival, Father Chicho installed the new provincial and council of the OMI Province of NDC in Quebec, then crossed the St. Lawrence River in search of brother Oblates serving on the North Coast.

In the afternoon, he visited the OMI Richelieu community, one of the largest Oblate communities in North America. During this fraternal gathering, Fr. Chicho delivered a heartfelt message to these older missionaries, reminding them that every Oblate is also a Superior General, and he was among them as a pilgrim not to speak but to listen. His eloquence inspired a renewed passion in these older brothers, encouraging them to continue bearing fruit as they age.

Before continuing his pilgrimage from Côte-Nord du Québec, Fr. Chicho challenged the congregation through his Oblate brothers in Quebec. He urged them to foster dialogue, in a spirit of synodality, between the older Oblates and those who are still young.

And so, the account of a missionary along the northern path of our religious family begins. Follow along on this pilgrimage of hope in communion with the entire Oblate family!

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

On Friday afternoon, Father Chicho was accompanied by the provincial of NDC-Quebec, Father Jacques LALIBERTÉ, to the Innu community of Pessamit, which has a population of over 2,450 inhabitants. This was the home of Fathers Charles ARNAUD (1826-1914) and Louis BABEL (1826-1912) for much of their missionary lives.

During this visit, Father Chicho had the opportunity to hear the Innus speak about the missionaries who traveled along the entire North Coast of the St. Lawrence River, crossing Labrador to Greenland. According to Father Arnaud, this territory is three times larger than France.

“We had a wide field to deploy our zeal, as our boundaries extended from the shores of the Saguenay to the entire coast of Labrador and were lost on the shores of Greenland, an area three or four times larger than France.” (Carriere 1958, 35).

Upon arriving in Pessamit, Fr. Chicho was taken by Father Gérard BOUDREAULT to meet this Innu Community that has welcomed the Oblate Missionaries since 1850. Fr. Chicho was taken around to see important places in the community, such as the school, the clinic, and the office of the Innu Nation Council of Pessamit.

Pilgrimage of Hope: Experiencing the Innu of the Moisie and Sainte-Marguerite Rivers

On October 21, 2023, the Superior General, Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, embarked on a visit to the ancestral lands of the Innu people residing along the Moisie and Sainte-Marguerite Rivers.

On his second day on the northern coast of Quebec, Father General was granted a unique opportunity to experience a historic and significant place for our Mazonodian family. Moreover, he had the possibility to engage with the Innu, known as the Laughing People, and experience their legendary hospitality.

Ever since the Oblate Missionaries arrived in North America, the Innu along the Moisie and Sainte-Marguerite Rivers have held immense importance for them. In fact, Daniel Vachon recounts, “From their first contacts with Sept-Îles, the desire to build a first chapel on the North Coast was born among the Oblates.” This project, funded by the Propagation of the Faith and designed in 1846 at Father Honorât’s sawmill in Laterrière, shaped the relationship of the Oblates with the Innu of Sept-Îles.

This encounter was a historic moment for Father Chicho, as he had the opportunity to delve into the history of this Innu community that has welcomed the Oblates for almost two centuries.

Moreover, they commemorated the 35th anniversary of the ordination of Father Gérard BOUDREAULT, which served as an excellent occasion to celebrate the bond of friendship and faith that exists between that community and its missionaries.

As a listening pilgrim, Fr. Chicho enjoyed hearing what the community wanted to communicate to him before speaking. During the evening Mass, he thanked the Innus for their hospitality and collaboration with the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate who serve in their communities.

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

As soon as he arrived, he visited the Shaputuan Museum with Fathers Jacques LALIBERTÉ, Hermann TIMTIM, and Alfred RAVELOMANPISANDRAIBE. This museum is a vehicle for the Innu to share their spirit of resilience and their journey across the lands, through time, and the tapestry of life.

After visiting the museum, they returned to Maliotenam, where Father Chicho would bask in the true essence of Innu hospitality. They began with a mass in the community, and once the Eucharistic celebration was over, the night turned into a grand community feast.

The pastoral team and their collaborators offered Father General a celebration worthy of a sincere pilgrim seeking to connect with his Innu brothers and sisters. Gathered around Father Alfred, their parish priest, the night was spent with sharing stories of the past and present while envisioning a future where Oblate missionaries and the Innu people walk together through the welcoming land of the Laughing People.

At the end of the night, Father Chicho was gifted some traditional items that the first missionaries of this Innu land would have likely received: a Naskapi hat and a pair of Innu moccasins.

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

Pilgrimage of Hope: The North Shore and Oblate Mission Today

The Superior General continues his pilgrimage to the Oblate Province of Notre-Dame-du-Cap in Canada. One of Father General's observations was the immensity of his brothers' mission. He reminded them not to forget the place of community life in their mission.

To truly appreciate the significance of the Oblate mission's centenary, coined "D'Une Mer à l'Autre (From one ocean to another)" by French journalist Bernard Vaulx, one must experience the mission firsthand. This adaptation of Canada's slogan "A Mari Usque Ad Mare (From Sea to Sea)" describes perfectly the essence of the Oblate mission on the northern shore of the St. Lawrence River, a place of immense importance in the Baie-Comeau diocese. There, six young Oblates serve the communities of Pessamit, Sept-Îles, Maliotenam, and from Minganie to Pakua-Shipu.

The first stop was Pessamit, one of the oldest Oblate missions on the North Shore, holding deep historical significance because it was founded during the Founder's time. That's why it was fitting for Father General to begin his pilgrimage there. Additionally, it is the community where Gérard BOUDREAULT, the most experienced missionary among the Innu people, is serving. From there, Father Chicho would proceed to Sept-Îles to visit with Father Rejean VIGNEAULT, a native of the North Shore, and his community.

During his stay in Pessamit, he visited the Innu community and the neighboring village of Ragneau before heading down to the Sept-Iles region. During his stay in the Sept-Iles region, he also visited the Innu communities where Fathers Alfred RAVELOMAMPISANDRAIBE from Madagascar and Hermann TIMTIM from Cameroon work. After a brief stay in the Sept-Iles region, Father General and the provincial went on to meet the Oblates serving in the Minganie region: Krzysztof SZABLOWSKI from Poland and Gérard Tsatselam from Cameroon.

Father Chicho met with the mission team and Oblate Associates during this visit at the Marie Immaculée parish. This gathering created a fraternal space where Father Chicho could share news about the congregation while attentively listening to the personal experiences of each individual, whether professed Oblates or associates.

Father General encouraged them and reminded them of the importance of preserving community life for the sake of the mission despite the mission's size. This gathering as a Mazenodian family with the Superior General also strengthened the Associates in their vocation.

The North Shore is big, but the hearts of its inhabitants are even bigger. This is evident in the warm welcome that Father Chicho received in each community he visited. On his first night in Pessamit, as well as in Sept-Îles, Maliotenam, Havre-Saint Pierre, and Nutashkuan, he was welcomed with open arms by the communities of the North Shore.

The communities made every effort to allow him to meet all the community members, as was the case in Nutashkuan, where a community event was specially planned for his visit. Likewise, the celebrations in Havre-Saint Pierre, Maliotenam, and Sept-Îles were unforgettable.

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

Pilgrimage of Hope: The Historic Bytown Mission

The Superior General, Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, OMI, has been visiting Canada since October 17, 2023. He has traveled thousands of kilometers following the majestic St. Lawrence River.

After exploring parts of Quebec, Fr. Chicho is now in Ottawa, but not before visiting the historic Saguenay Mission, now known as the Oblate Mission of the North Shore of Quebec. Here, he met with the communities served by the youngest missionaries of the Notre-Dame-du-Cap Province.

After journeying along the Whale Route, Fr. Chicho is now in the town of Colonel By, better known as Ottawa. This town, which comes from the Algonquin word *adawe* meaning “to trade,” is even older than the Saguenay Mission. In fact, the Oblates have been serving the Bytown Mission since 1842, before the city was founded in 1850.

Bishop Bourget of the Diocese of Montreal sought the assistance of Bishop de Mazenod in caring for the French and Irish workers in this vast territory stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Superior, spanning nearly four hundred thousand square kilometers and more than three thousand kilometers in search of valuable timber and game.

Since he arrived in Ottawa on October 28, Fr. Chicho has met several collaborators of the Oblates. On Sunday, he met with members of our two parishes at the University of Ottawa. In the morning, after Mass at St. Joseph’s Parish, he spoke with the associates present and then visited the charitable works carried out to help the poor in the city.

Then, before celebrating Mass with the Youth at Sacred Heart Parish, he met with the Oblates of the Notre-Dame-Du-Cap Province. It was a true moment of fraternity that prepared the atmosphere for the Mass with the young people. When it was time for Mass, the church and the adjacent hall were quickly filled with young students, creating the image of an intercultural community and the Church of the future.

After Mass, a group of young people approached Father General to learn more about the mission of the Oblates with the Youth. It was a pleasant moment of exchange. At the end of the meeting, a young student approached Fr. Chicho and asked who the Oblates were. This simple yet profound question allowed Fr. Chicho to recall the modest beginnings of the Oblate mission in the Canadian capital.

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

EUROPE

Mission Month: Meet the Mario Borzaga Community in Fulda

Welcome to the Mario Borzaga community in Fulda! This vibrant community is a testament to the missionary orientation of the Central European Province, with four young oblates dedicated to creating a space where the youth can thrive.

At first glance, you may not think it resembles a traditional monastery, and you’re not alone. Many visitors are surprised when they encounter this not-so-typical “youth monastery.” Established in December 2016, this unique community breaks stereotypes with its modern design and welcoming spirit.

Think more like a cool flat or a shared living space. Here, the four young Oblates each

have their own room while sharing the bathroom, kitchen, and common room. They've got the whole roommate routine down – taking turns shopping, cleaning, cooking, and even ironing.

But wait, it's not just any shared flat – it's an Oblate Community. In addition to all the things you expect from your average flat, there's also a Chapel. Prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist are integral to the daily life of these Oblate missionaries.

And guess what? Their mission goes beyond the confines of their “monastery” walls and the local parish where they minister. These Oblates are thinking literally outside the box! Part of their mission involves reaching out and welcoming young people to experience the “youth monastery” in Fulda.

Whether it's coming together for prayer, a friendly chat, a drink, or an evening of games (maybe even a fierce game of table football), everyone is welcome! This vibrant community is a testament to the missionary orientation of the Province, with four young oblates dedicated to creating a space where the youth can thrive.

Belgium-Netherlands: A Special Visit

The Province of Belgium-Netherlands was host to a recent visit by the First Assistant General, Fr. Raymond MWANGALA, and the Provincial of France, Fr. Renaud SALIBA.

The visit which took place from 16 October 2023 to 25 October 2023 was part of the ongoing discernment process of the future of the province.

Fr. Daniel CORYN, Provincial of Belgium-Netherlands, hosted the 2 visitors and facilitated visits to all the members of the province living in Belgium and the Netherlands. The province has 40 members, 3 are in Surinam and 1 each in Peru, France, and Canada.

This is an aging province (average age 79.1 years). During the visit, we took time to introduce ourselves to each other and to share stories of our Oblate vocation.

Get to know the community: Father Bartek, the community's superior and vocation director for the province, provides guidance and leadership. Father André coordinates the Mission with Youth and is also responsible for youth ministry in the diocese of Fulda.

Father Patrick looks after the pre-novitiate and is in charge of youth ministry in the local parish while also serving as an ecclesiastical lawyer in the diocese. Last but not least, Father Piotr, the youngest member of the community, is actively engaged in the life of the parish, such as pastoral care of students and religious formation of confirmation candidates, all while perfecting his German.

The Mario Borzaga community is not just a pilot project – it's a fearless expedition filled with hope and a burning missionary spirit. “We fulfill our mission in and through the community to which we belong. Our communities, therefore, are apostolic in character.” CRR.37

Bartłomiej CYTRYCKI, OMI

Many of the Oblates of the province have served as missionaries in Congo DR, Chad, South Africa and several countries in Latin America. They cherish fond memories of their time in the missions.

We also took some time to visit the burial places of some deceased members of the province. On the final day of our visit, we participated in the Provincial Council meeting, sharing our impressions of the province and listening in to discussions on the future of the province. As per Oblate tradition, we concluded the visit with a festive meal. Altogether, we were 14 Oblates at the table; almost enough to have a province assembly!

Many thanks to Br. Leo VANDENEDE for the many hours of chauffeuring, and to all the members of the province for the hospitality and fraternity! This visit will soon bear fruit!

*Raymond MWANGALA
First Assistant General*

On Mission in our Italy

Mission month: The Oblate Missionaries of the Mediterranean Province share with us the fruits of their reflection and assessment of the situation of two ministries in which they are engaged together with the Lay members of the Oblate Family.

Two conferences promoted by the Mediterranean Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in September gathered ideas and projects for the present and the future around two vital themes of Oblate pastoral care: the parish and the itinerant mission.

The conferences were held in Pescara, at the parish of Sant'Andrea Apostolo, and in Marino Laziale (Rome) at the headquarters of the Youth Center and Novitiate. They were both prepared by the Mission Commission of the OMI Mediterranean Province.

The Pescara conference

On the shores of the Adriatic, the parish of Sant'Andrea Apostolo hosted the first of two conferences from 4 to 7 September. The Mission Commission had received a request, originated at various levels, to organize a meeting on parish ministry. Already on May 11, 2022, a meeting was held on the ZOOM platform with the theme of the "missionary parish" at its center. On that occasion, 29 Oblates from around fifteen communities were present.

In Pescara, there were two key interventions. Monsignor Angelo Spina, Archbishop of Ancona-Osimo, spoke about evangelization today. Drawing from his long experience as a priest and bishop, he stated that evangelization is at the same time "joy, necessity, right and duty". Father Carlo Mattei, Oblate parish priest at Sant'Andrea, proposed some ideas on the theme of "parish and Oblate charism" starting from *Evangelii Gaudium* 28: "The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.

While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters". He then suggested the way for a missionary parish according to the charism and Oblate style with this title: "From the center to the periphery, from the church to the world, from the ecclesial to the social, from the clerical to the lay".

Several OMI missionaries involved in parish ministry participated in the conference. Father Saverio Fabiano from the Sant'Elia district of Cagliari; Father Nicola Parretta from the parish-shrine of the Assumption of Santa Maria in Vico (Ce); Fr. Adriano Titone from the central parish of San Nicolò da Tolentino in Palermo; Fr. Tito Mulongi of the parish of the Immacolata of Cisternino (Br); Father Maurizio Vella, assistant parish priest in Messina in the parish of Maria Regina degli Apostoli. Numerous lay people from Pescara were present at various moments of the Conference. Meaningful was the presence of Mons. Tommaso Valentinetti, Archbishop of Pescara-Penne who celebrated the final mass.

A hope expressed at the end of the Conference was the drafting of a *Vademecum* which illustrates and regulates the parishes entrusted to the pastoral care of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and which highlights the missionary character of the parish. The parishes served by OMI missionaries have some shared characteristics: openness (also towards the mission *ad gentes*), hospitality, attention to economic and existential poverty, availability for the sacrament of reconciliation.

Some Oblates and lay people from Italy and Spain worked on the preparation of this Conference, focusing on the objectives, drawing up the program and organizing the logistics. Father Mattei and the brothers of the Oblate community of Pescara welcomed the participants with great joy. In the provincial document *Chosen to evangelize* (1 March 2021) we read these reflections on the theme of the "missionary parish":

“Our parish territories should be the first recipients of a permanent missionary action that involves not only the community and the local Oblate family but also external resources. It is desirable, therefore, that they be increasingly considered as spaces where forces can converge and guide for missionary actions, brief or prolonged, aimed at keeping alive, consolidating or supporting youth and vocational pastoral care, family pastoral care or some activity aimed at specific situations of necessity. Among the various contributions, the popular mission should also be considered”.

The Oblates in the parishes entrusted to them carry out excellent and demanding work. The understanding of the present time marked by social and international tensions and the development of the dimension of synodality to which Pope Francis invites were directives equally present in the work of those days.

The Marino Conference

From 21 to 24 September, the conference on the itinerant mission was held in Marino, where the OMI have been present for more than fifty years. A School of the mission, that is, a laboratory for sharing field experiences, reflection, formation and pastoral creativity. Oblates and persons from the Oblate Family worked for its realization. The proclamation of the Gospel is a task of the whole church and, as Pope Francis reminds us, all Christians are “missionary disciples” that is, they follow Jesus Christ whom they wish to proclaim with their lives and words. The aim of this conference was to reflect on how to proclaim the good news today in Italy by means of the itinerant mission.

A Conference that is part of a history of evangelization that has seen OMI missionaries as protagonists on Italian territory since 1903. Since that date, missions have been held every year from the North to the South of the Peninsula, including the islands: unique in the Oblate congregation!

In the history of the Italian OMI there have been Oblates who have fully dedicated themselves to this ministry and who have set a precedent. Let’s think of the Ferri fathers, Conti Guglia, Torriani, Andrich, without forgetting many others. In the past there were also communities expressly dedicated to the itinerant mission: Maddaloni (Ce), Atessa (Ch), Pescara, Nesso (Co), Verona, Passirano (Bs), Catanzaro and Messina. Today we work in a network of itinerant missionaries distributed in various religious communities on the Peninsula. We also remember books and articles written by the Oblates on the theme of the itinerant mission.

The Marino school conference was in continuity with the conference held in Florence from 7 to 9 October 2022 which saw 45 participants. On that occasion there was a much-appreciated speech by Msgr. Michele Autuoro, Auxiliary Bishop of Naples.

The Marino 2023 Conference had a diverse participation both from a geographical point of view (Lombardy, Veneto, Tuscany, Lazio, Abruzzo, Puglia, Calabria) and from a demographic point of view. The states of life of the participants were also diverse, from the OMI missionaries to the consecrated women of the COMI and the OMMI, from the lay people of the AMMI to numerous young people.

Saturday, 23 September was very intense. In the morning, Dr. Antonella Fornaro, a psychotherapist from Rome, presented a reflection and a workshop on the topic of interpersonal relationships for evangelization. In the afternoon of the same day, the conference participants had a field experience of street proclamation in Lanuvio (Rome). “The presence of God that we are called to bring is already effective even in the people we go to meet,” said Michela, reflecting on this evangelizing activity.

In the final phase, many of the participants hoped that this conference could become an annual event. The proclamation of the Gospel is an authentic service to today's world which is looking for certainties and hopes. For decades, OMI consecrated persons have shared this commitment with lay people and young people who live the charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod.

To conclude

The two 2023 conferences were a concretization of the proposals expressed in the document of the Mediterranean Oblate Province Chosen to evangelize: "In the context of evangelization we need to be wise enough to understand how we can carry out significant action; we need to challenge ourselves and reflect, to focus on premises, paths, resources, strategies..."

Hence the usefulness of organizing seminars, conferences, formation workshops on the theme of evangelization, on the instrument of popular and youth missions, and on how, with the help of all the resources available, to make our parishes increasingly missionary".

"CELA" Online Meeting: Strengthening Collaboration and Enhancing Lay Networks

On October 7th, the European Commission for the Animation of the Lay Oblate Associates (CELA) held a virtual meeting together with representatives of the coordinating groups for the oblate laity at the Unit level of the Europe Region.

This meeting was attended by Stefano Dominici, Coordinator of Lay Associates and Associations, who was invited to provide his insights. CELA, consisting of representatives from lay and consecrated individuals in the European region, was formed to maintain and foster relationships developed during the 2nd OLAC (Oblate Lay Associations Congress) preparation. The commission has set forth the following important goals and objectives:

OMI missionaries: "wayfarers in this world" "You have chosen to be pilgrims, to rediscover and live your condition as wayfarers in this world, beside the men and women, the poor and the least of the earth, to whom the Lord sends you to announce his Kingdom.

Your founder too was a wayfarer, at the origins of your religious family, when he would go walking with his first companions in the villages of his native Provence, preaching the popular missions and restoring to the faith the poor who had turned away from it, and that even the ministers of the Church had abandoned. It is a tragedy when the ministers of the Church abandon the poor." (Pope Francis to participants in the 37th OMI General Chapter, 3 October 2022)

Both conferences were attended by Father Gennaro Rosato, provincial superior and Father Giuseppe Rubino, provincial vicar.

Pasquale CASTRILLI, OMI

Consolidate and coordinate the regional network established for 20LAC22. Implement recommendations from the previous General Chapter. Provide support to lay coordination groups in the European units.

OBJECTIVES:

Facilitate the sharing of experiences and initiatives within each regional unit. Encourage contemplation on the identity and vocation of the Oblate Laity in Europe. Foster cooperation and support within the European Oblate Region. Promote collaborative projects on Formation-Communion-Mission at the European level.

The online meeting commenced with a prayer and interactive workshops where participants shared objects symbolizing their connection to the Oblate charisma. Stefano then updated the attendees on his recent appointment as Coordinator and his presentation to the General Administration.

His presentation sparked a fruitful and engaging conversation between Stefano and all members of CELA. The next in-person meeting for CELA and coordination groups for the oblate laity at the Europe Region Unit level is scheduled for March 2024 in Aix-en-Provence, France, will also see Stefano in attendance.

Stefano acknowledged the importance of maintaining and strengthening lay networks in the region. As Coordinator, he will focus on listening and engaging in meaningful dialogue with lay individuals in the various areas and units. This approach aligns perfectly with the initial steps of his program presented to the General Council.

Initiatives like this gathering are a valuable resource in promoting mutual understanding and collaboration among laypeople. Let us continue to meet and work together, embracing a spirit of deepening synodality.

Stefano Dominici.

ANNIVERSARIES FOR NOVEMBER 2023

65th Anniversaries of Vows

01/11/1958	10591	Fr. Jürgen Jagelki	Central European Province
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65th Anniversaries of Ordinations

16/11/1958	08940	Fr. Mario Andreotti	Mediterranea
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60th Anniversaries of Vows

01/11/1963	11480	Fr. Josef Essl	Central European Province
01/11/1963	11481	Fr. Engelbert Ferihumer	Central European Province
01/11/1963	11482	Fr. Kurt Fleischmann	Central European Province
01/11/1963	11478	Fr. Gerhard Löffler	Central European Province
01/11/1963	11479	Fr. Karl Meindl	Central European Province

25th Anniversaries of Ordinations

21/11/1998	13471	Fr. Luca Mancini	Mediterranea
28/11/1998	13515	Fr. Buenaventura González	Mediterranea

Suffrages for our Deceased - October 2023

NAME	DATE	DIED AT	BORN	No. 56-58 PROV/DEL
Fr. Francis Xavier ANTHONYSAMY	06/10/2023	Chennai	12/02/1961	India
Bro. Walter DE MONG	20/10/2023	Saskatoon	19/05/1932	Lacombe
Fr. James MILLER	29/10/2023	San Antonio	14/08/1929	U.S. Province



“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 the Founder to Fr. Courtès, 22 July 1828)

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