

***"Do not think of the past, here I am making something new,
are you not aware?"***

Yes, things are keeping change at all time... and there is no use on waiting for "going back to normal"; being different now is the normal!

Some news then from Beijing: the capital or the boundary? it depends on your point of observation, from us Oblates living here, it is the place we try to consider "our home".

In the several months too many things have changed and still keep changing; there are those things which are "not pleasant" like the always new bureaucratic updates for our "Mazenod cultural company" (done mostly thanks by Sunny and accountant) and yet there many others positive things taking place.

As a community (Johnny and myself) are living a very regular life (with morning prayer and mass in the morning) then each one goes to his responsibilities (Center for migrants at the village, company and OLC community); lunch together at all times that goes for quite some time (where sharing and talks keep lasting), closing of the day with oraison and evening prayer.

Due to circumstances there are fewer foreigners around (business and school, and no tourists all since 3 months now), also "missionaries" ...practically you can count them by using just one hand...

And yet life here has never been so interesting, rightly because of the continuous change; myself I find so much energies in the past months that as consequences I set my alarm at 4:45 am and after the espresso cup (by Constitutions and Rules of...being Italian) I am out on bike for a daily run of 25 km, just before the morning community activity. Well on Thursday and weekend then I go for the 100 km mostly around the north lakes and Great Wall area. It does well to the stomach shape(and I try to balance the exercise by having then a daily evening beer). Biking does well to my head and thinking, never been so "clear" about reading situations (Delegation and local community goals).



As a company what we were doing previously is not possible, so we have resorted to on line and other innovative form like the "seminars" done by Zoom.

By next week we will have done already the 4th one (Oblates and Migration in Asia); the 1th was on Mission, then followed by Intercultural formation, a third one on creating a space for fr. Miceli (an Oblates who spent 50years between Laos and Thailand) going back to Italy. It was an occasion to have most of the Italian Oblates present in Asia to gather and share experiences and express our farewell to fr. Paolo.

The experience of choosing a topic and then contacting Oblates mainly in the far East (Japan, Korea, Thailand, Philippines, Australia and of course Hong Kong and Beijing, the personal contacts, the sharing of personal life, being connected ...all of these creates a sense of belonging and supporting that goes well behind the "structural" and necessary ways that regulate our Congregation.



众和智达文化发展(北京)有限责任公司
De Mazenod Inter-Cultural Exchange Company

***"Remember that you were once
foreigners in Egypt";
Oblate ministry to migrants in Asia***

Tuesday, August 4th, 2020 15:00 pm (Beijing time)

PROGRAM

Reflection by fr. Jude Peirisulle omi
Migrant ministry (Toyohashi city, Japan)

Sharing Experiences

- fr. Domenico Rodighiero (Thailand)
- fr. Mark Serna (Hong-Kong)
- fr. Sebastian Shitol (Korea)
- fr. Johnny Rakotoarisoa (Beijing)
- fr. Giancarlo Iollo (Melbourne)

Giovanni omi: Moderator (Beijing)

China, Hong-Kong (15:00pm) ; Thailand (14:00pm);
Japan (16:00pm); Melbourne (17:00pm);

- Engagements with other local charitable organizations (like Love@ Hope), recently we did have an "western cuisine experience" by teaching students (teenagers coming mostly from the countryside and with challenging family situations at their background), we (with sisters and other volunteers) did teach how to make sandwiches, cookies and spaghetti sauces from scratch. This might develop by next month in a regular course for the new semester...



- the pope mobile in Beijing ?!

One family who has been here in China for several years (Marc from Germany and Carmen from Italy) has left behind as usual a lot of material useful to distribute through our "5loaves@2fish" (shoes, clothes, toys, etc) and this time... a pope mobile (see pictures)



a little electric car, which proves useful for "old people" (in fact it is mainly for carrying material and helping elders to move around), so why not to make good use of my white beard, which makes me known in the area as the "foreign grandfather"?! By the way you can charge at home, able to cover a 80km distance with a peed of about 50km per hour, no parking fee problems. it might be very useful as well in going back and forth to the migrant village while raining or cold weather, or carrying material.

At the moment I am using in an experimental "food bank" project; I made an agreement with Jenny Wang (the owner of a very well known shop for rich Chinese people and foreigners), any time I do need bread I can contact them and get my boxes of bread and cookies to distribute

around to some charitable local organizations. we will see how to get in touch with other shops in the near future...



Ps. If you have noticed the Hello Kitty sticker on the car, well.... when the pope comes to visit, we are considering to remove the sticker in order not to get upset some of the "conservative" among us.... hihhi

- the OLC (Our Lady of China community) is doing extremely well under the present circumstances; many people are still out of the country and yet the catechetical classes are going on (4 different groups) thanks to the dedication and commitment of the lay involved. Since Easter Sunday we do have regular masses at the Canadian Embassy (firs only by Zoom) and since few weeks now also with people attending. This has been providential for us as community as a continual source of regular income, and at the same time as a means for supporting other organizations as well (through volunteers and donations accordingly).

One regular activity is the "Rosary Ladies gathering", once a week since many years now they pray together for the well being of the OLC community. At the moment is done by zoom and it is amazing to see them gathering literally form the 4 corners of the world (China, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Usa, Ireland...) some little sharing , mutual support and prayer.



Some of the lay people have organized visit to Matteo Ricci tomb, Verbiest Observatory, gathering of families for barbecue and opportunity for children to swim within some of the embassies campus. Well, for sure we cannot say that we are missing opportunities around us.

-the contact with the local Church are keeping regular and very soon we might restart having masses at the cathedrals downtown (at the moment only few churches have reopened only with Chinese masses).

As some of you might know OLC has 3 different venues, one being in the northern part of the city and until now we have been using cultural centers and hotels... very soon our seminomadic way of gathering will come to an end, with a more stable situation. In dialogue with the local diocese we are planning to use the Church, thins are slowly taking shape.

I guess it's time that we reconsider the way in which we try to be present, "hiding behind the curtains" has had its time.... time to move on, because situations change and we should try accordingly. Personally I am getting tired andsick of those narratives (with removal of crosses and whatever prohibitions) that we hear around, at times people are talking because they "heard", and there are plenty of rumors going around, we do live in and our experience is rather different.

- you might be surprised but we do have this year also a "summer camp" for our migrant children through our center (Johnny might tell you more soon) and the teacher (one of our volunteer) is teaching from ...Russia!! (hopefully this we will not create another Russiagate); as it has been for few months now (weekends) the summer camp will last until the very end of August. As part of the program they have been out for swimming at the Swedish embassy along with parents and volunteers.



- one of my hobbies (in order to distract myself) is cooking and try new dishes (mostly breads, cakes and ...limoncello); what to do with those products? well some we are eating and you could see the result of that (and actually makes a good excuse for my daily rides on bike and Johnny walks in the evening), then the rest are distributed around to friends and also within the compound in order to get connections; it is interesting to see that Chinese neighbor at first are surprised to receive a cake or a piece of bread, and then they reciprocate with their own home made dishes. Do you call this cultural exchange or what? along with the food I do hand to them our brochure "5loaves@2fish" (well at least there is a food connection...) along with a magnet. My goal is to

create connections, interest and eventually support....they will be the ones supporting our activities, it is too much of a dream? we will see!

last month we did have a "neighbor party" in our place by inviting children of the compound (not even one christian) along with parents and grandparents, tasting home made cakes and cookies, limoncello and...bingo with children in one side while parents had to stay among themselves and informing them about our activities through company and center at the village.

ps. One of the result has been that I had to buy a new electric oven, since the old one broke down... too much work!



I guess better I stop here; why so much news you might ask?

Because at times we might find ourselves in recalling the past in a nostalgic way when we had "plenty of onions and meat" like the Israel people, we keep moving on... that is why!

Giovanni omi and community