

A History of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Toward a synthesis

DONAT LEVASSEUR, o.m.i.

1898-1985

2

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Missionary Oblates
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A sincere thanks to Father Henri Goudreault, Provincial, who greatly assisted the composition of this book and authorized its publication; to Father Fernand Jetté, Superior General, for the priceless and constant encouragement he gave me. My gratitude also extends to Fathers Aurèle Châlifoux, Herménégilde Charbonneau and Jean-Paul Demers who reviewed the text, as well as to all those who gave me their fraternal collaboration.

DONAT LEVASSEUR, O.M.I.

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ROME
GENERAL HOUSE
1989

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PART FOUR

Trials and Growth

1898 - 1947

CHAPTER 1

The General Government – 1898-1946

I. Administration: – The General Government's functioning – The Superiors General – Orientations given by the General Chapters – Revision of the Constitutions and Rules – Separation of the ecclesiastical from the religious authority in the missions – The "Statutum" – An unfortunate event. **II. Works and special activities:** – Origin of the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate – Origin of the Apostolic Sisters of Mary Immaculate – The beatification causes – Scholasticates – General Services.

I – Administration

The General Government's functioning

The Congregation's general government is exercised by the General Chapters and by the Superior General and his Council. This level of government took on increased importance during the course of the period extending from 1898 to 1947, due to the growth of the Institute, whose personnel rose from 1427 to 5549 and whose number of Provinces and Vicariates increased from 19 to 40. Furthermore, the laws governing religious and the spirit of that time provided for a strong centralization of administrative powers.

As the highest authority within the Congregation, the General Chapter brings together every six years representatives of the Provinces and the Mission Vicariates and the members of the General Administration. Its duty is to elect the Superior General, if this is to be done, and to determine the Congregation's general direction. It is the occasion for a complete reporting on the state of the Institute. From 1898 to 1947, the period we are studying, nine General Chapters were held.

The General Administration is carried out by the Superior General and his Council. It looks after the current business of

the Institute, decides important matters that cannot wait until a General Chapter is in session, and acts like the executive of the orientations and directions given by General Chapters. It maintains close relationships with the Provinces and the Mission Vicariates, is particularly concerned with appointing their major superiors and with regularly visiting them. These visits are usually made by an Assistant General and conclude with an act of visitation addressed to the Oblates who have been visited.

The Superior General carries out an animation role by corresponding with those in charge in every segment of the Congregation and on occasion makes special visits. Each of his Assistants is appointed to follow closely the life of certain Provinces and Mission Vicariates. Finally, it is the General Administration's task to provide, with the help of various officials, a number of general services to the Institute according to need.

The history of this general governing of the Congregation by General Chapters and the General Administration will be detailed in the course of the chapters that follow. In the present chapter, only certain general elements and particular points will be considered.

The Superiors General

Four Superiors General, each aided by a Council composed of four Assistants and a General Treasurer, succeeded each other from 1898 to 1947, the period we are studying. To begin with, here is a short presentation of each of these Superiors General.

Father Cassien Augier,¹ elected Superior General on May 19, 1898, was a man of faith and piety and deeply devoted to

¹ Cassien Augier, born on October 13, 1845, at Collongues in the Maritime Alps, in the Diocese of Nice, became an Oblate on September 8, 1864 and was ordained priest on May 21, 1869. He was successively professor at the major seminary of Ajaccio (1869-1877), preacher of missions attached to the

the Congregation. Till the end of his life he was an exemplary humble man with a fine sense of fraternal charity. As we shall see, his term as Superior General was darkened by the civil dissolution of the Congregation in France and by an acute crisis within the General Council occasioned by grave financial difficulties. The latter resulted in his resignation as Superior General.



Cassien Augier (1845-1927)
Superior General 1898-1906



August Lavillardière (1844-1908)
Superior General 1906-1908

houses of Aix-en-Provence and Montmartre (1877-1881), the Congregation's Procurator to the Holy See and at the same time the first Superior of the scholasticate in Rome (1881-1890), and 4th Assistant General of the Congregation from 1890 onwards. After resigning from the office of Superior General in 1906, he retired to Santa Maria a Vico and, soon afterwards, to Naples where he was chaplain to the Sisters of Our Lady of Hope (Holy Family of Bordeaux). He died in Naples on November 2, 1927. The Province of Italy sees him as one of its eminent benefactors. Cf. *Petites Annales de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, 8 (1898), pp. 181-183; 37 (1927), p. 354; *Missions*, 53 (1919), pp. 46-48; G. COSENTINO, O.M.I., *Storia della provincia d'Italia*, pp. 84-85, 102-103.

Father August Lavillardière² was appointed Superior General on September 23, 1906, with a nearly unanimous vote. He was a man of action, endowed with great energy and very distinguished. He was soon reduced to inactivity: from the outset of his term as Superior General he was struck by the malady which, eighteen months later, led to his death at Lyons, on January 28, 1908.



*Archbishop Augustin Dontenwill
(1857-1931)
Superior General (1908-1931)*



*Théodore Labouré (1883-1944)
Superior General (1932-1944)*

Bishop Augustin Dontenwill,³ O.M.I., of New Westminster, recently promoted to Archbishop of Vancouver, was on

² Auguste Lavillardiere was born at Void, Department of the Meuse, in the Diocese of Verdun, on November 4, 1844. He became an Oblate on August 29, 1866, and was ordained priest on June 3, 1871. After a brief ministry with the Youth Work in Marseilles, he was for 38 years a mission preacher attached successively to the houses of Notre-Dame de l'Osier, Montmartre, Aix and Lyons. He was the founder and first superior of this latter house and Provincial of the France South Province from 1897 to 1900. Cf. *Missions*, 44 (1906), pp. 321-330; 46 (1908), pp. 177-186.

³ Augustin Dontenwill was a native of Bischwiller (Lower Rhine) in the diocese of Strasbourg. At 14 years of age, he emigrated to New York. He

September 20, 1908, elected by the Capitulars. He was a serene man whose authority was readily recognized. He governed the Congregation methodically, prudently and firmly, both during the difficult days of the 1914-1918 war and during the era of prosperity that followed. He died in Rome on November 30, 1931.

Father Théodore Labouré⁴ became Superior General on September 8, 1932. One of his closest collaborators, Father Anthime Desnoyers, Assistant General, has described him as a man of "invincible fidelity to the duties of state" and of total dedication to the Congregation.⁵ When his health was gravely impaired, he on August 1, 1942, ceded all his powers to Father Hilaire Balmès, whom he appointed vicar general of the Congregation. He died in Paris on February 28, 1944.

Because of the situation caused by the current world war, Father Hilaire Balmès, Vicar General of the Congregation, was authorized by an indult from the Holy See, dated April 27, 1944, to delay until a more suitable time the calling of the

studied at the University of Ottawa and in 1878 entered the novitiate of Lachine near Montreal. After his ordination to the priesthood at Ottawa on May 30, 1885, he was a professor at the University of Ottawa (1885-1889). Thereafter he left for British Columbia where he was director of the St. Louis of New Westminster College and of the Nazareth minor seminary in the same city (1889-1897). On April 3, 1897, he was appointed coadjutor bishop to Bishop Paul Durieu, O.M.I., to whom he succeeded on June 1, 1899 as Bishop of New Westminster. On September 15, 1908, 5 days before he was elected Superior General, he was promoted to Archbishop of Vancouver. The diocese of New Westminster had been raised to the rank of archdiocese and the episcopal see had been transferred to Vancouver. Cf. *Missions*, 46 (1908), pp. 421-429.

⁴ Théodore Labouré was born at Monsurs, Mayenne, in the Diocese of Laval, on May 19, 1883. He became an Oblate in 1901 and was sent to the international scholasticate in Rome where he was ordained priest on April 14, 1906. He was assigned to the Second United States Province in 1908, was professor and then superior of the scholasticate in San Antonio, parish priest, from 1916 to 1926, and then Provincial. Cf. A. DESNOYERS, O.M.I., "Le T.R.P. Théodore Labouré, o.m.i.", in *Études Oblates*, 3 (1944), pp. 69-73.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 3 (1944), p. 69.

General Chapter that would elect a new Superior General.⁶ This Chapter was held in May 1947.

Orientations given by the General Chapters

The nine General Chapters held from 1898 to 1947, taking into account the needs of the times, adopted or recommended certain general orientations for the Congregation, both for the Congregation's internal and apostolic life. Here is a summary description of them.

The Chapter of 1898⁷ declared that instructing youth in schools not only is not opposed to the ends of the Institute — as the Chapter of 1867 had stated — but is “entirely in conformity” to them.⁸ It also directed the Congregation's attention to two particular ministries that are to be especially promoted, “lest we remain behind in regard to our times”: these ministries were youth works and evangelizing people who were far from the Church.⁹

The 1904 Chapter,¹⁰ because of the exceptional importance due especially to industrial development, declared that “even

⁶ Father Anthime Desnoyers, Assistant General, by rescript of the Congregation of Religious, dated April 10, 1943, became Vicar General of the Congregation for the Provinces and Vicariates of America, Africa and Ceylon which were then unable to communicate with the General Administration that had taken refuge in France. Established in Montreal, assisted by Fathers Joseph Rousseau, Procurator to the Holy See, Joseph Scannell, Provincial of St. Peter's Province, and Georges Verreault, pro-Treasurer General, as Counsellors, he filled this post until April 15, 1946. Cf. A. DESNOYERS, O.M.I. *Aux Pères et aux Frères d'Amérique, d'Afrique et de Ceylan*, circular letter of May 6, 1943, p. 6; “Le père Hilaire Balmès (1890-1948)” in *Missions*, 76 (1949), pp. 384-461.

⁷ Held at Paris, May 16-28. There were 42 Capitulars. Its first act was to elect Father Cassien Augier as the new Superior General.

⁸ C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular letter 70, March 19, 1898, p. 27.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 27-28. Cf. *Chapitres généraux 1893-1898*, Rome, pp. 145-146.

¹⁰ Held at Liège in Belgium from May 16th to the 28th. There were 55 Capitulars.

though missions were the first and principal end of the Institute, the apostolate to the workers, in all its approved forms, . . . is not only in conformity with the Institute's purpose, but is also to be strongly encouraged at the present time."¹¹ Concerned lest the Congregation become marginalized from the current intellectual culture and wanting to upgrade the ministry, the Chapter recommended that Provincials send men who are capable to take higher studies to reputable universities. The Chapter insisted that the greatest care be taken in selecting personnel for formation houses, that the competence and stability of such personnel be assured.¹²

The 1906 Chapter¹³ saw fit to restrict to the foreign missions only the work of education which the 1898 Chapter had declared to be entirely in conformity with the ends of the Institute.¹⁴ It stated its firm opposition to the sensational teachings of Alfred Loisy and strictly forbade them to be taught in our seminaries and scholasticates.¹⁵

The 1908 and 1926 Chapters¹⁶ were both mainly concerned with elaborating an important revision of the Constitutions and Rules, as will be explained below.

¹¹ Declaration no. 1, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, p. 93. Cf. *Chapitres généraux 1904-1932*, Rome, pp. 36-37.

¹² Concern no. 2 in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 88-89.

¹³ Held in Rome from September 20th to October 10th. It had 50 Capitulars and elected Father Auguste Lavillardière to the post of Superior General.

¹⁴ Cf. A. LAVILLARDIÈRE, O.M.I., Circular lettre 92, April 21, 1907, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 179-181.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 189-191. It would seem that the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*, which condemned the doctrinal current that flowed from Loisy's ideas, had been composed with the collaboration of Father Joseph Lemius, O.M.I. Cf. Jean RIVIÈRE, "Qui a rédigé l'encyclique 'Pascendi'?", in *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique de Toulouse*, nos. 2 and 3, 1946; François MARCOTTE, O.M.I., "Un article du Chanoine Rivière" in *Études Oblates*, 6 (1947), pp. 144-147; A. PERBAL, O.M.I., "À propos de l'article de M. Rivière", *ibidem*, pp. 147-148.

¹⁶ The 1908 Chapter was held in Rome from September 19th to October 24th and counted 46 Capitulars. It elected Archbishop Augustin Dontenwill, O.M.I., to the post of Superior General. The 1926 Chapter was also held in Rome from September 20th to October 18th and counted 64 Capitulars.

In order to take into consideration national unities that made up the personnel of certain Provinces, the 1920 Chapter¹⁷ introduced a modification into the practice that had been customary up to then according to which definite territories were exclusively assigned to each Province. The Chapter now authorized the creation of Provinces according to national groups, if the need arose. It revised the statement of the 1906 Chapter, which had restricted works of education to mission territories only, and now admitted these works elsewhere by way of exception, as the Founder himself had already done.¹⁸ Finally, the Chapter saw fit to make more concrete the Oblates' Marian piety which had been a living trait since their beginnings: this took the form of a public consecration officially made at the conclusion of the Chapter's sessions. This consecration to Mary Immaculate was to be renewed annually throughout the whole Institute on February 17th and on December 8th.¹⁹

The 1932 General Chapter's task²⁰ was to elect a Superior General and to deal with the financial problems at a time when there was a world-wide recession. It also wanted to promote the Marian character of the Institute by recommending that "all the Fathers of the Congregation teach and preach more often and with greater insistence to juniorists, novices and scholastics as well as to all the faithful the cult and devotion to Mary's Immaculate Conception."²¹

The 1938 Chapter²² focused its attention on the religious and intellectual formation of the Oblates and on their imme-

¹⁷ Held in Rome from October 1st to the 22nd. There were 55 Capitulars. The General Chapter that had been called for 1914 had to be cancelled because of the world war that broke out in that same year. The last Chapter that had been held was, therefore, in 1908.

¹⁸ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter 128, April 13, 1921, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 380-381, 411.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, Circular letter 126, November 9, 1920, vol. 3, pp. 349-350.

²⁰ Held in Rome, September 8 - 24, and counted 60 Capitulars.

²¹ Cf. Th. LABOURÉ, O.M.I., Circular letter 154, February 1, 1933, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 4, p. 259.

²² Held in Rome, September 8-27. There were 72 Capitulars. It adjourned abruptly due to the threat of an imminent declaration of war in Europe.

diate preparation for the ministry in Christian countries as well as in the foreign missions. It recognized the evangelization of the Blacks in the United States as a work that was in perfect conformity with the ends of the Institute. In support of the Catholic Action movement, so strongly recommended by the Supreme Pontiff, it passed measures for promoting the study, teaching and practice of Catholic Action in Oblate formation enterprises.²³



Hilaire Balmès, (1890-1948)
Vicar General 1944-1947

Finally, the 1947 Chapter²⁴ forcefully recommended that preaching be adapted to the needs of the times, to have recourse to laity, especially to Catholic Action, in our apostolic works, and that we undertake a healthy innovation in

²³ Cf. Th. LABOURÉ, O.M.I., Circular letter 164, March 19, 1939, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 4, pp. 354-355; 365-366; 368-370.

²⁴ Held in Rome, May 1 - 22. There were 71 Capitulars. This Chapter elected Father Leo Deschâtelets to the post of Superior General.

apostolic means and methods in view of reaching the masses who were falling away from the Church.²⁵ It accepted and recommended that a system of "pairing" be established within the Congregation by which a mission territory is linked to one or several Provinces. This "pairing" did not introduce an administrative link between the two parties concerned, but rather involved aid in the areas of personnel, resources and propaganda, elements that the Provinces assured to the missions to which they were "paired".²⁶

Revision of the Constitutions and Rules

The 1908 and 1926 General Chapters each accomplished an over all revision of the Congregation's Constitutions and Rules. That of 1908, responding to the request of the Holy See made on June 24th of that same year, revised the entire text in order to harmonize it with the *Normae*, that is, the Church's legislation on religious institutes. This revision was almost exclusively limited to administrative and disciplinary matters. Moreover, in view of the important work of foreign missions in the Institute, Superior General Archbishop Dontenwill in Council²⁷ decided to insert, into the text of the Constitutions and Rules in article form the *Instruction on the Foreign Missions* which the Founder had already drawn up and added as an appendix in 1853. A new solemn approval of the Congregation's Constitutions and Rules was granted by Pius X in his brief *Decessorum nostrorum* of September 7, 1910. On the following December 8th, the Superior General promulgated the fourth edition of the Constitutions and Rules.²⁸

²⁵ Cf. L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., Circular letter 181, November 1, 1947. *ibidem*, vol. 5, pp. 174-175.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, Circular letter 177, September 8, 1947, vol. 5, p. 34.

²⁷ In the General Council held on February 3, 1909, it was noted that about three quarters of the Fathers and Brothers were deployed in the foreign missions and that the Constitutions as such contained nothing regarding these missions. Cf. *Registre du conseil général*, vol. 7, p. 365.

²⁸ Cf. A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter 108, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 249-252; G. COSENTINO, O.M.I., "La 4^e édition des Règles et ses préparations", in *Études Oblates*, 11 (1952), pp. 225-238.

The 1926 Chapter carried out a revision of greater depth, though it, too, touched almost exclusively elements that belong to the administrative and disciplinary domains. In response to the directive of the Congregation of Religious, dated January 26, 1918, it was a matter of bringing the Constitutions and Rules into conformity with the provisions of the Code of Canon Law that had been promulgated on May 27, 1817.

The work begun by the 1920 Chapter was continued by a post-Chapter commission and completed in the lengthy sessions of the 1926 Chapter. The Capitulars made changes not only to conform the Constitutions and Rules to the word and spirit of the new Code of Canon Law, but also in response to the needs of the times that the Congregation was facing. While maintaining a great respect for the Founder's work, this Chapter made the most important revision of the Constitutions and Rules to date. By his brief *Mirabili plane modo* of May 21, 1928, Pius XI granted to the Institute and to its Constitutions and Rules the most solemn approbation, i.e. *in forma specifica*. A fifth edition of the Constitutions and Rules was published in 1928.²⁹

Separation of the ecclesiastical from the religious authority in the missions

The Congregation's development and certain directives of the Holy See gradually led to measures designed to improve administrative relationships in mission territories between the religious and the ecclesiastical authority.

A first such measure, already deemed necessary but seen as rather delicate by the 1898 General Chapter,³⁰ was adopted by the General Chapter of 1906. This measure consisted in conferring, where the Congregation's interests required it, the

²⁹ Cf. A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter 140, July 16, 1928, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 4, pp. 107-147; G. COSENTINO, O.M.I., "La cinquième édition des Règles (1928)" in *Études Oblates*, 12 (1953), pp. 166-182.

³⁰ Cf. *Chapitres généraux 1893-1898*, Oblate General Archives, Rome, Rome. p. 149.

religious authority and the ecclesiastical authority upon two different persons. Following up on this measure, Superior General Father Lavillardière, in 1906, merged the religious Vicariates of St. Albert and Saskatchewan in Western Canada into one sole religious Vicariate and appointed Father Henri Grandin to be in charge of it as Vicar of Missions.³¹ In 1907, a similar decision united the religious Vicariates of the Orange Free State and of Transvaal in South Africa into one sole Vicariate, over which Father Frédéric Porte was placed as Vicar of Missions.³² That same year, the two religious Vicariates in Ceylon, Jaffna and Colombo, were likewise united and placed under the direction of a single Vicar of Missions, Father Jules Collin.³³ Until these changes — with the exception of Colombo from 1897 onward — all these religious Vicariates had had as their religious superior the Apostolic Vicar himself.

The move to separate the two authorities was thus launched and continued thereafter. At the time of the 1947 General Chapter, there were still eight religious Vicariates under the direction of Apostolic Vicars.³⁴

The "Statutum"

A second measure taken in order to regulate the administrative relationships between the Congregation and the Vicariates and Prefectures Apostolic was the drawing up of a directive called the *Statutum pro missionibus*. It defined the areas

³¹ This merger was decided in General Council on October 12, 1906, and was promulgated in two circular letters (undated) of the Superior General, one addressed to the religious of the Vicariate of St. Albert, the other to those of the Vicariate of Saskatchewan.

³² Cf. A. LAVILLARDIÈRE, O.M.I., Circular letter 95, June 24, 1907, to the Oblates of the Orange Free State and of Transvaal, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 211-213.

³³ Cf. A. LAVILLARDIÈRE, O.M.I., Circular letter 96, September 8, 1907, to the Oblates of Jaffna and Colombo, *ibidem*, vol. 3, pp. 214-216.

³⁴ These religious Vicariates were: Grouard, Mackenzie, Whitehorse, Keewatin, Hudson Bay, Pilcomayo, Laos and Windhoek.

of jurisdiction of the religious authority and of the ecclesiastical authority in mission territories. This directive had been studied by the General Council and discussed at great length by the 1908 Chapter and had thus been already substantially formulated when an intervention by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide hastened its final phases.³⁵ It was then submitted to and approved by this Roman Congregation for a term of seven years on June 1, 1912, and thereafter indefinitely on June 30, 1919.

When a papal document was published on December 8, 1929,³⁶ which defined the rights and duties of the ecclesiastical authority and the nature of missionary institutes' cooperation in mission territories, a new edition of the *Statutum pro missionibus* had to be drawn up.³⁷ This new *Statutum* was approved on January 20, 1934 by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide and was promulgated within the Institute by letter of the Superior General on September 8th of the same year.³⁸

An unfortunate event

The ordinary revenues of the General Treasury could hardly suffice to meet the ever growing common needs within

³⁵ This intervention was occasioned by a jurisdictional conflict between the religious and ecclesiastical authorities in the Vicariates of Kimberley and of Transvaal. This conflict particularly concerned the changing or withdrawing of religious missionaries who had been posted in the Apostolic Vicariate. It had been submitted to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

³⁶ *Instruction aux vicaires et préfets apostoliques ainsi qu'aux supérieurs d'Instituts religieux à qui le Saint-Siège a confié des missions*, was signed by Cardinal Van Rossum, Prefect of the S.C. of Propaganda Fide. Cf. A. PERBAL, O.M.I., "Chronique du mouvement missionnaire", in *Missions*, 64 (1930), pp. 626-640.

³⁷ We do not know the author of this *Statutum*. cf. G. COSENTINO, O.M.I., "Le Statutum pro Missionibus de notre Congrégation", in *Études Oblates*, 19 (1960), pp. 315-327.

³⁸ The *Statutum*, together with the decree of promulgation of Superior General Father Labouré plus the decree of approval of the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide are published in *Missions*, 82 (1955), pp. 347-452 (Latin text), 456-473 (French text), 477-493 (English text).

the Congregation. "Consequently, we were searching for greater revenues and, with this in mind, we reaped a regrettable experience: we embarked upon vast speculations which were — so we thought — to lead on to wealth, but resulted only in ruin.³⁹

Besides certain minor investments, during the years from 1902 to 1905, stocks at the cost of about two million francs were acquired in Paramatta Copper Mines in Australia and in the Gold Run Mines of Klondike in Canada. Furthermore, the Superior of the scholasticate in Rome, Father Philippe Sautel, invested about half a million francs in establishing an electricity plant at Avezzano in Italy.⁴⁰ The latter enterprise registered a certain amount of success, but the speculation based on the mines plus additional expenditures resulting from complications and related court cases brought only considerable losses. The fact that the sums lost were in great part money that had been borrowed or deposited with the General Administration aggravated the issue.⁴¹

In regard to the mines, the financial transactions were very complex. With the Superior General's consent, they were

³⁹ A. LAVILLARDIÈRE, O.M.I., Circular letter 92, April 21, 1907, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, p. 205. The secretary of the 1904 Chapter had noted: "The Reverend Father Treasurer concluded (his report) by expressing the desire and hope that his treasury *would put on weight* for the benefit of the scholasticates and also to allow us to buy back our houses which had been confiscated, especially that of Aix and Le Calvaire, the Congregation's first. In this purpose he has the approval and support of the Most Reverend Father General who took this occasion to point out that never since the beginning of the Congregation did a General Treasurer have to cope with so many great difficulties." *Chapitres généraux 1904-1932*, Rome, p. 6.

⁴⁰ In 1902, Father Sautel had set up a company under the name of *Ing. Liberi et Cie*, which in 1903 he changed into an anonymous company called *Roveto-electrical*. He gradually became its director from 1904 onwards. The plant remained in operation until 1915 when it was destroyed by an earthquake.

⁴¹ The Congregations of the Holy Family of Amiens and of the Holy Family of Bordeaux were chiefly affected by these losses. These Congregations showed both generosity and patience in regard to being reimbursed what was owing to them. Cf. *Chapitres généraux 1904-1932*, Rome, pp. 75, 103, 173.

being managed by the Treasurer General, Father Pierre Longeon, who was thus engaged in difficult monetary speculations for which he did not have the necessary competence.⁴²

The situation worsened after the 1904 General Chapter. Alerted by the complaints of an industrialist of Avezzano who opposed Father Sautel's enterprise there, the Holy See, during the summer of 1905, asked the General Council to submit a report on this matter. This request was the occasion for a study on the ill-advised financial transactions in the mining ventures.

Only gradually and with difficulty did full light on the financial situation dawn within the General Council itself. The proven losses provoked vivid emotion among the Assistants General who had not before then perceived the gravity of the situation. The reports that the first Assistant General, Father Eugene Baffie, presented to the 1906 General Chapter are vehement against the Superior General and the General Treasurer and, at the same time, attempt to exonerate the Assistants General. The discussions and measures of the Assistants General regarding this matter focus not so much as to the direct means for getting out of this difficult position, but rather on removing Fathers Augier and Longeon from their posts of Superior General and Treasurer General respectively.⁴³ The Superior General was keenly affected by this state of affairs and, towards the end of 1905, was in a physical and moral depression.

To begin with, Father Sautel was in September 1905 removed from his post as Superior of the scholasticate in Rome, and, the following year, had to be expelled from the Congregation. Compromised in these issues and pressured by

⁴² Father Pierre Longeon had been named Treasurer General on April 2, 1902, by the General Council. He thus succeeded to Father Jean-Marie Fayard who had died on December 28, 1901.

⁴³ Cf. the notes of Father Edmond Dubois, *Malaise, inquiétude des Chapitres de 1904, à Liège (et aussi à Rome, en 1906)*, Oblate General Archives, Dossier Edmond Dubois, O.M.I.

the members of the General Council, the Superior General and the Treasurer General each submitted their resignation from their posts. These resignations were accepted by a rescript of the Holy See, dated January 24, 1906.⁴⁴ The Assistants General elected Father Baffie to be Vicar General of the Congregation.

The General Chapter, held in September-October 1906, elected a new Superior General and a new General Treasurer and easily solved the financial debt. Whereas the General Administration's debt on June 10, 1906, stood at 3,485,505 francs,⁴⁵ the general value of the Congregation's movable and immovable goods and debts (including those of the General Administration) amounted to a net asset of 15,462,692 francs.⁴⁶ The Congregation was thus quite solvent. The General Chapter had no difficulty to obtain voluntary contributions from the Provinces and Vicariates which, in the years ahead, balanced the General Administration's budget.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Cf. the printed report addressed to the 1906 Capitulars and marked *Sub secreto*, drawn up by Father Baffie, p. 39. The author gives a detailed and at times emotional account of this sad administrative episode. In his opening address to the 1906 Chapter, as recorded in the Chapter Minutes, he dwelt at length on this matter. The memoir relating to the problems of the General Administration that Father Longeon had prepared for the 1906 Chapter was not studied by the General Chapter. Father Longeon obtained a dispensation from his vows in 1908 and was incardinated into the Diocese of Saint-Flour.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Rome, 10 juin 1906, État de la Caisse générale de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Oblate General Archives.

⁴⁶ Cf. *État général des biens Meubles et Immeubles et des dettes de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée tel que dressé par le Chapitre général de 1906 et fourni à la S.C. des Religieux (Ev. et Rég.) pour montrer que si la C[aisse] G[énérale] se trouvait dans une situation très grave, la Congrégation restait viable et solvable*, Oblate General Archives, Dossier Chapitre général 1906.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Chapitres généraux 1904-1932*, Rome, p. 111.

II – Works and Special Activities

Origin of the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

In the General Chapters of 1850 and 1856, the project of a kind of association of faithful with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was accepted in principle. The form of a Third Order was then envisaged. This matter was raised again in the Chapter of 1879, which left it up to the General Administration to implement if it deemed the time to be opportune. The 1893 Chapter urged this implementation and this resulted in the creation of a simple association. In 1920, this Association had its own single designation in the Congregation, namely, *Association of Mary Immaculate*; in 1926, this was changed to *Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate*. Its original purpose had been aiding the work of vocations; helping missionaries in the field of their apostolate was now added to it.

In the meantime — and even prior to this — associations of the faithful were founded by Oblates in four different countries, all of them independently of each other. Towards 1880, the France South Province transformed its Work for the Juniorates established at Notre-Dame de Lumières into an association. In 1884, Father Matthew Gaughren in England founded the *Apostolic Circle* to assist the work for vocations; and, in 1888, Father William Ring founded the confraternity *Association of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate*. In 1894, Father Léon Legrand and the scholastic Maximilian Kassiepe, at the juniorate of Fauquemont (Valkenburg) for Germans, began the *Marianisches Missionsverein*. In Canada, at the same period, the works of the *Bannière de Marie Immaculée* and of the *Denier du Sacré-Coeur* were founded; both were attached to the Juniorate of the Sacred Heart in Ottawa.

The 1920 General Chapter proposed that all these associations existing in the various Provinces be united to the Association of Mary Immaculate. The Chapter allowed provincial centres of the Association to be set up, which centres would be attached to the main centre at the General House. The 1926 further developed the Association's structures and in that same

year Archbishop Dontenwill named Father Joannes Pietsch to the post of Director General of the Association.⁴⁸

Origin of the Apostolic Sisters of Mary Immaculate

On the initiative of Miss Marie-Louise Bayle, who was already engaged in the Association of Mary Immaculate, several persons in January 1919 came together at 39 Quai Gailleton, Lyons, in order to open a work-place and missions agency as an aid to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This work came into being with the support of Father Charles Brun, the Foundress's uncle, and was encouraged by the local Oblate authorities. Taking the name of *Apostoliques de Marie Immaculée*, these persons wanted to dedicate themselves completely to apostolic work. They established themselves as an Association with their own constitutions, which the Foundress had drawn up in 1926. The Oblate General Chapter of 1926 had encouraged this more perfect form of the Association of Mary Immaculate and the 1932 Chapter gave it a definitive approval.

Through their life of prayer and their agency in Lyons, these Apostolic Sisters generously collaborated with the Oblates' missionary apostolate. At the request of the Provincial of France South, they in January 1921 founded the *Revue Apostolique de Marie Immaculée* (which in 1947 was renamed *Pôles et Tropiques*) and edited it until 1933. From 1927 onwards, they also began to carry out a direct apostolate among the poor in the city of Lyons.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Cf. *Acta Capituli Generalis 1879*, vota VI; circular letter 57, March 26, 1894, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 2, p. 178; circular letter 70, March 19, 1899, pp. 10-11, *ibidem*, vol. 2; circular letter 128, April 13, 1921, *ibidem*, vol. 3, pp. 396-397; circular letter 141, June 7, 1929, *ibidem*, vol. 4, pp. 149-167; circular letter 182, January 25, 1948, *ibidem*, vol. 5, pp. 204-218; J. PIETSCH, O.M.I., "Quelques notes sur l'histoire de l'Association de Marie Immaculée", in *Études Oblates*, 8 (1949), p. 371-384.

⁴⁹ Cf. L. BALBEUR, O.M.I., "L'institut Religieux-Apostolique de Marie Immaculée" in *Études Oblates*, 39 (1980), pp. 189-195. Until April 1962, this apostolic Work was dependent only upon the Oblates. In that year, the Archbishop of Lyons gave it the status of a *pious union* and in 1966 he became

The beatification causes

Under Archbishop Dontenwill, the General Administration launched several beatification causes of Oblates. To begin with, it presented to the Holy See the cause of Father Dominique Albini, whose diocesan process concerning his reputation for holiness had been concluded in 1898. Father Albini was the apostle and miracle-worker for Corsica: he was greatly venerated on this island and devotion to him had spread elsewhere. On April 13, 1915, his cause was introduced in Rome.

Among the Oblates there was a great desire that the cause of the Founder of their Congregation, Bishop Eugene de Mazenod, be introduced. At the Superior General's request, it was begun in Marseilles in 1926. Its official introduction in Rome took place in 1936 and the first judgment on the Servant of God's heroic virtues was given on March 11, 1947.

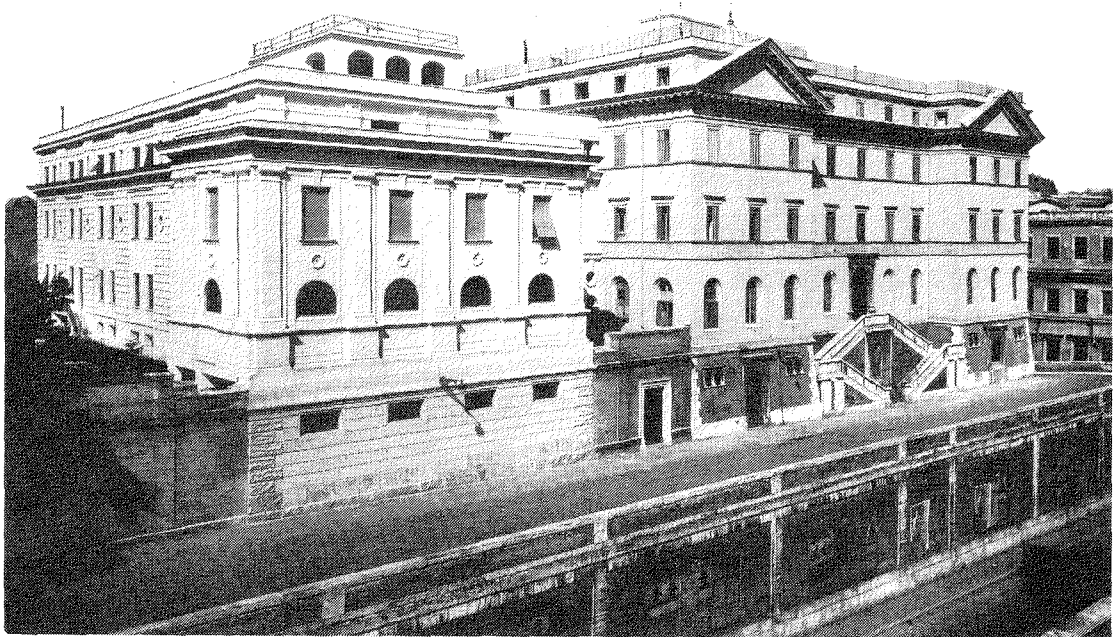
Finally, the causes of Bishop Vital Grandin, O.M.I., a missionary of great charity and holiness in Western Canada, and of Father Joseph Gérard, held in great veneration, especially by the Basotho, were begun: the former in 1929, the latter in 1939, when Father Labouré was Superior General.

The scholasticates

After a lengthy in-depth deliberation by the 1906 General Chapter, the General Administration — which from the beginning of the Institute was fully responsible for all of the Congregation's scholasticates — ceded this responsibility to the Provinces. However, it reserved for itself a special duty of vigilance over these houses of Oblate formation as well as the faculty of giving the first obedience to Fathers completing their formation.

directly responsible for it. In 1968, its Constitutions were approved *ad experimentum* by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. This became a definitive approval in 1978 and they now bear the name: *Institut religieux-apostolique de Marie Immaculée*. Also cf. *Missions*, 68 (1934), pp. 3-12; 77 (1950), pp. 405-408.

As a result of this decision, the scholasticates of Ottawa in Canada, Huenfeld in Germany, and San Antonio in the United States were in 1906 entrusted to their respective Provinces. The scholasticate of Liège in Belgium in 1909 became the responsibility of the Province of France North, whereas the scholasticate of Rome remained under the immediate jurisdiction of the General Administration. The latter scholasticate was reduced to but a few scholastics during the 1939-1945 war; it regained its stature immediately afterwards: in May 1948, it had 37 scholastics.



General House (1905-1950) and Scholasticate (1883-1961), Rome, Via Vittorino da Feltre. The building on the left housed the General Administration from 1932 to 1950 and the Studium Generale Superius from 1950 to 1961.

General services

The General Administration organized three important services for the common good of the Congregation. The first, a reception centre and general mission agency, was established in Paris at the turn of the century and in 1923 reorganized and located at 75, rue de l'Assomption. The second, a *Bureau*

de Presse (Press Office), was responsible for bringing out different publications of the General Administration, particularly the *Missions* and the *Agence Romaine des Oblats de Marie Immaculée* (AROMI). The third was a mission secretariate whose task was to be the Congregation's representative to the pontifical works of the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood, and others, as well as to promote missionary propaganda. These two last services were established in the General House in Rome and were officially announced by Archbishop Dontenwill in his circular letter of May 17, 1930.⁵⁰

It should also be pointed out that a number of Oblates of the General House have singularly contributed to the Church's life. Father Albert Perbal, a missiologist of international repute, author of many works on missiology and professor at the Institute of Missionary Science of Propaganda Fide, spent some 52 years in Rome as a member of a number of commissions, councils and secretariates. Two General Procurators to the Holy See were especially competent, wielded considerable influence in the Roman Congregations, and were even entrusted with difficult missions by the Holy See; they were: Father Joseph Lemius, Procurator from 1894 to 1923, and Joseph Rousseau, Procurator from 1935 to 1960.⁵¹

⁵⁰ The General Administration maintained the chaplaincy service to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, at Bordeaux itself where the Pro-Director of the Holy Family Sisters resided. From 1869 to 1903, it also looked after the large community of Sisters at Royaumont and from 1920 to 1936 it was responsible for the community of Madrid in Spain.

⁵¹ The members of the General Administration from 1898 to 1947 are as follows: Assistants general: Joseph-Eugène Antoine (1887-1900); Charles Tatin (1894-1904); Édouard Gandar (1898-1904); William Miller (1898-1904); Achille Rey (1900-1904); Eugène Baffie (1904-1920); Servule Dozois (1904-1931); Simon Scharsch (1904-1920); Isidore Belle (1906-1926); Euloge Blanc (1920-1941); Maximilien Kassiepe (1920-1926); Johannes Pietsch (1926-1946); Auguste Estève (1931-1932); Joseph Danaher (1932); Anthime Desnoyers (1932-1953); Edmond Dubois (1932); Henry Lennon (1932-1947); Hilaire Balmès (1941-1948); Robert Becker (1946-1966).

General Treasurers: Jean Fayard (1898-1901); Pierre Longeon (1902-1906); Servule Dozois (1906, par interim); Frédéric Favier (1906-1917); Edmond Dubois (1917-1947).

Procurators to the Holy See: Joseph Lemius (1894-1923); Auguste Estève (1923-1932); Emmanuel Teunissen (1932-1935); Joseph Rousseau (1935-1960).

Postulators: Joseph Lemius (1894-1923); Théophile Ortolan (1923-1926); Auguste Estève (1926-1932); Ferdinand Thiry (1932-1945); François-Xavier Cianiulli (1945-1953).

Cf. "Liste des membres de l'Administration générale depuis la fondation" in *Études Oblates*, 2 (1943), pp. 138-144; "Liste des postulateurs et faits saillants de leur activité" in AROMI, 1963, p. 9.

At the request of Superior General Archbishop Dontenwill, Pope Benedict XV gave the Oblate Congregation a Cardinal Protector, a position provided for in the Code of Canon Law. In response to the Superior General's wish, the Supreme Pontiff appointed to this office Cardinal William Van Rossum, C.Ss.R., Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. This first Cardinal Protector died on August 30, 1933 and was never replaced. Cf. Circular letter 125, June 11, 1920, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 348-349; *Missions*, 54 (1920), pp. 305-306.

CHAPTER 2

Provinces: France South, France North 1898-1947

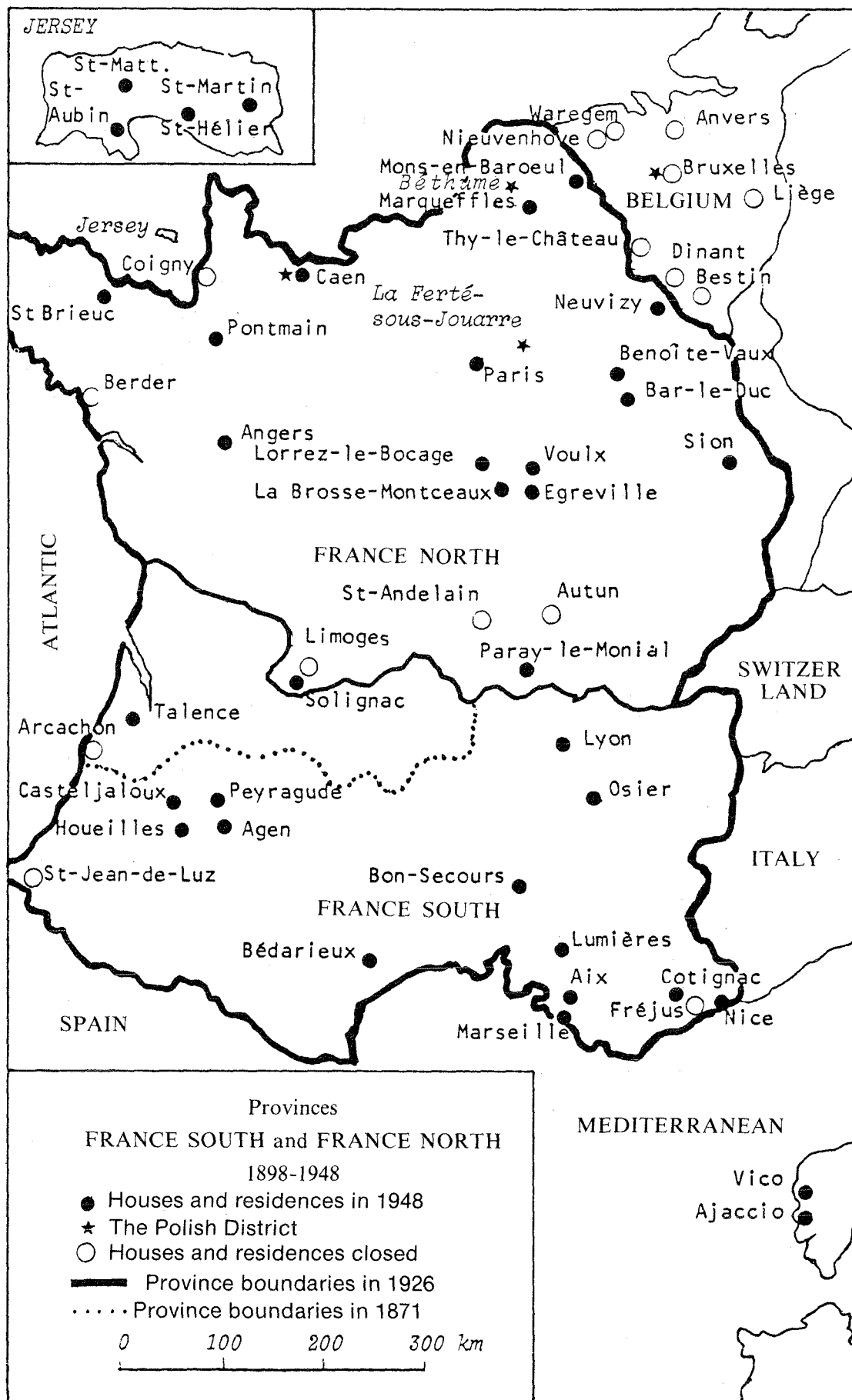
I. Civil dissolution of the Congregation: - The law concerning associations - Request for authorization denied - Expelled by force - The Oblates in France. **II. The Province of France South:** - The expulsions - Toward Italy - The groups in France - Reoccupying houses - Works and missions - The 1939-1945 war - Works of ministry - Post-war ministries - The Province in 1947. **III. The Province of France North:** - The dispersal in 1903 - On the isle of Jersey and in Belgium - Groups and works in France - Reconstituting communities - Works and houses - The trials of the 1939-1945 war - In de-Christianized milieus - The foreign missions - The Province in 1947.

I - Civil Dissolution of the Congregation

The law concerning associations

Due to the influence of anti-clerical elements, the Governments of France since the 18th Century, even those which were most favorable toward the Church, have always strongly distrusted religious Congregations, especially those of men. Under the Restoration regime, the Founder in 1816-1817 was not able to obtain legal approval for his Society. A first direct attack against religious institutes came in 1880 by means of a law ordering the dispersal of non-authorized communities. But a second, more detrimental one came under the Government of Waldeck-Rousseau which voted the *Law concerning Associations* on July 1, 1901. This law had been "a long time part of the trend, hope and efforts of sectarian elements".¹ It stipulated that non-authorized religious Congregations had to

¹ C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular letter 84, July 2, 1905, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, p. 60.



be recognized by law and that they had three months to submit a petition for the same; that these same Congregations could be dissolved by ministerial decree and all their members were forbidden to teach in schools.

After some hesitating in regard to "the painful alternative of either dissolving themselves or of submitting a request for authorization",² the Oblates, in September 1901, submitted a request.³ In taking this decision, the General Council envisaged the worst, for that same September it outlined the conduct Superiors were to abide by in case of dispersal.⁴

Request for authorization denied

In the 1902 elections for the Government, the anti-clericals achieved a decisive victory and Émile Combes became President of the Council of Ministers. The situation of religious worsened. Instead of being the basis for individual legislative acts, the petitions for authorization presented by male religious were grouped into four categories: those coming from teaching Congregations (25 in all), those that preach (28 in all), those that trade (1 only), and those that worked in hospitals, were missionaries or contemplatives (6 in all). On March 24, 1903, the petitions of the first three categories were all denied in wholesale fashion and these Congregations were given two weeks to disperse. The State then proceeded to dispose of the properties of these religious institutes.

In some of his remarks made in the House on preaching Congregations, President Émile Combes at least indirectly admitted that they were apostolically successful. In fact, after he had accused them of forming assemblies that were "too

² C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular 84, July 2, 1905, *ibidem*, vol. 3, pp. 60-61.

³ General Council of September 24, 1901. 64 Congregations of men and 551 of women submitted requests for authorization; 84 Congregations of men and about 150 of women refused to do so. Cf. Guy LAPERRIÈRE, "Persécution et exil: la venue au Québec des congrégations françaises, 1900-1914", in *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 36 (1982), p. 394.

⁴ General Council of September 17, 1901.

democratic in character" and of even trying to create major movements through opening basilicas and shrines, he added: "To serve these shrines, etc., some new religious orders have even been established . . . the success of which has in less than forty years reached a proportion that confounds all reason. We limit ourselves to mentioning only the Fathers of Garaison who particularly care for the Grotto at Lourdes and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate referred to as "of the St-Petersbourg street"; these latter look after no less than eight pilgrimage shrines."⁵ The President then named these shrines, and included that of the Sacred Heart at Montmartre.

The official notification of the Chamber of Deputies' decision was given to the Congregations concerned in April. As Superior General Father Augier exclaimed, "We were not judged but simply executed."⁶

Expelled by force

As other religious institutes did, the Oblates opted not to disperse on their own. The General Council had issued the directive "not to disperse on our own accord", to cede only to force, to put in a safe place everything that we can take out of our houses, and to claim possession of our properties. In his address to the Capitulars of 1904, Superior General Father Augier explained the practical stance taken in this issue: "After the denial of justice that we have suffered, our duty was clearly manifest: to resist, but to resist legally and to yield only to force. That is what we have done. We went from tribunal to tribunal right up to the supreme court. We obliged our adversaries to expel us from our houses *manu militari*."⁷

From March 27, 1903, the day on which we handed back to the Archbishop of Paris the Work of Montmartre, to June

⁵ *Missions*, 72 (1938), pp. 326-327.

⁶ C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular letter 84, July 2, 1905, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, p. 62.

⁷ *Ibidem*, vol. 3, p. 63.

1, 1904, when the General House Oblates were expelled from Paris, some twenty-one Oblate communities were brutally dispersed by the gendarmes and the houses which belonged to the Oblates were confiscated.⁸ The General Administration withdrew to a house near the scholasticate at Liège, in Belgium, prior to establishing itself definitively in Rome, in November 1905.⁹ As a community, the Oblates of France lost their right to be citizens in their own native land.

The Oblates in France

Some 292 Oblates¹⁰ living on French territory were the victims of these persecutory laws. The majority of them, civilly secularized, living in isolation or banding together in very small groups, but always remaining united by the bonds of their religious life, remained in France and as much as possible continued their apostolic work. To maintain the religious spirit and community life among the dispersed Oblates, the 1904 Chapter decreed the creation of districts which regrouped them under the direction of a superior who was assisted by two assessors; the Chapter also required the holding of monthly Oblate meetings in each district, as prudence allowed.¹¹ The General Administration gave directives for recuperating immediately or later properties already disposed of or which were about to be. To this end, civil societies endowed with the right to acquire property were established and, according to circumstances, the Oblates approached former proprietors or their

⁸ For a detailed account of some of the expulsions, cf. *Missions*, 41 (1903), pp. 67-120; 252-354; 42 (1904), pp. 188-192; 45 (1907), pp. 19-42.

⁹ The Oblates never recuperated the General House located on the rue St-Petersbourg, Paris, nor the adjacent lovely chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes. A detailed description of this chapel — gothic in style and furnished with Marian statues and Oblate memorabilia — was printed in *Missions*, 38 (1900), pp. 357-365. Regarding the General House at Liège, cf. the notes of M. BERNAD, *Le Casino Liège*, MS of 9 pp., Oblate General Archives, Rome, Dossier France-Nord.

¹⁰ According to *État général de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, no. 5, April 1899.

¹¹ Decree 2, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 82-83.

heirs who, according to the law, had prior rights to buy back the confiscated properties.¹²

Three communities that had been expelled were dependent upon the General Administration: the General House community itself, in Paris; the chaplaincies of the Holy Family Sisters at Bordeaux and at Royaumont. Only the chaplaincy of Bordeaux will be re-established later. An agency in Paris remained operative, however.

II – The Province of France South

The expulsions

The 20th Century history of the Province of France South thus begins with its civil dissolution. The expulsions affected the communities of Aix, Le Calvaire at Marseilles, Notre-Dame de l'Osier where the novitiate was established, Vico, Notre-Dame de Lumières to which the juniorate was attached, Notre-Dame de Bon Secours, Notre-Dame de la Garde at Marseilles, Lyons and Nice. In all these places the expulsions provoked clear signs of support and sympathy from the clergy and the local population.¹³

Toward Italy

In anticipation of these expulsions, the Province of France South turned towards Italy. In 1902, it had already transferred

¹² Together with the Provinces of France, the General Council repeatedly concerned itself with the recuperation of these properties, especially during 1904 and 1907.

¹³ Documents and memorabilia from the beginnings of the Congregation were sent off to the scholasticate in Rome; among these were items that had belonged to the Founder, the statue of the Virgin "of the miracle" and the altar of the first vows.

The direction of the major seminary of Fréjus, entrusted to the Oblates in 1851, had been taken from them in 1901 shortly before the expulsions. President Waldeck-Rousseau had intervened with the local bishop to apply the laws of 1880 against non-authorized religious Congregations, even though these laws had been ignored for so long. Cf. *Missions*, 45 (1907), pp. 413-435; 46(1908), p. 13.

the novitiate of Notre-Dame de l'Osier to St. Peter's of Aosta. The following year it opened at Diano Marina a house to receive the aged and sick Oblates, principally those from the house of Notre-Dame de Lumières. This house at Diano Marina also received missionaries who ministered to the people in the house's public chapel, in chaplaincies and in preaching retreats. Between 1903 and 1908, a few of them were assigned to serve the shrine of Our Lady de la Rovere which was located about two kilometers from Diano Marina. An Oblate house was even located there.¹⁴ Finally, the Province opened its own scholasticate in Italy, first in the city of Turin in 1910, then transferring it in 1913 to San Giorgio Canavese.

Particularly Italian works were developed. The juniorate for Italians, established in Rome since 1887, was in 1903 transferred to Santa Maria a Vico and fully entrusted to the direction of Italian Oblates. The ministry of preaching and giving missions was definitively launched by opening the missionary houses of Maddaloni in 1905 and of Naples in 1910. The Oblates moved into Venetian territory when in 1920 they became responsible for a church at Onè di Fonte.

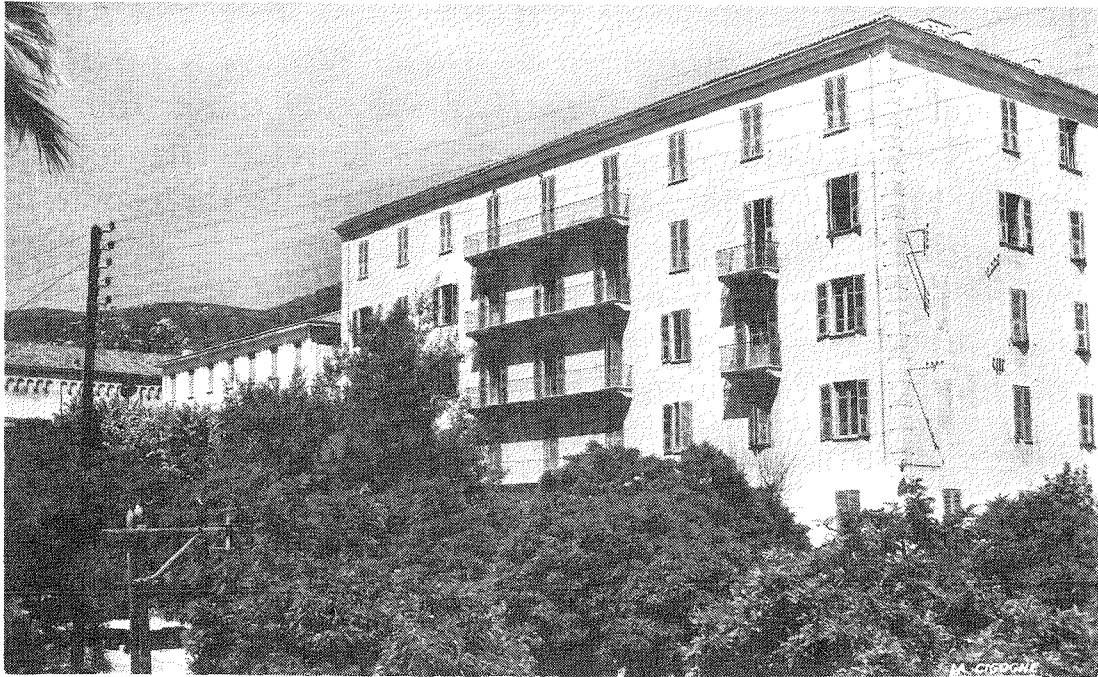
Through the developing of its works in Italy, the Province of France South occasioned the birth in 1920 of a Vice-Province in Italy. To the latter the Province of France South ceded its works wherein the Italian language was used and a personnel of 34 Oblates, that is, 20 Fathers, 10 scholastics and 4 Brothers.¹⁵

The groups in France

The Oblates in France, secularized as far as the State was concerned, experienced a period of groping and insecurity, after which they were organized into six districts or groups, each under a superior: Aix, Marseilles, Osier, Ajaccio, Bon-Secours and Nice. In spite of the inconveniences of their new

¹⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 48 (1910), pp. 251-271; *Notre-Dame de la Rovere, ibidem*, 41 (1903), pp. 355-360.

¹⁵ Cf. G. COSENTINO, O.M.I., *Storia della provincia d'Italia*, p. 97.



The major seminary of Ajaccio directed by the Oblates from 1835 to 1952

situation, they devoted themselves to the works of the ministry and continued their missionary apostolate in the best way possible. Their numbers varied somewhat: from fifty or so when the expulsions began, they went up to 73 in 1914, then decreased to 66 in 1921.¹⁶ To the first six groups, two others based at Lyons were added. In 1917 a small juniorate was even opened at Sainte-Foy-lès-Lyon.¹⁷

Reoccupying houses

In France, after the 1914-1918 war, an attitude of sympathy for religious set in, for the latter had loyally defended their native land.¹⁸ Moreover, there was a rapprochement

¹⁶ Cf. *France-Nord-Midi, Personnel 1907-1933*, 152 p. mimeographed. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

¹⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ For their part, the Oblates furnished France with about 200 mobilized men during the 1914-1918 war: 21 were killed, 31 wounded, 20 were prisoners of war. Cf. J. LE FALHER, O.M.I., *Au service de la France 1914-1918, les Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Vannes, 1920, p. 287.

between the Government of Paris and the Holy See: diplomatic relationships had been broken when the law of the separation of Church and State was voted in Paris in 1905. An agreement was worked out between the two sides according to which Paris, while maintaining its legislation, "would overlook the reinstallation of religious men and women of different institutes, the reopening of many schools directed by members of a religious congregation"; and, on the other hand, the Pope would grant Paris a consultative right in regard to the appointing of bishops in France.¹⁹

As soon as this tolerance by the State was a fact, the various communities began to regain possession of their houses, some of which had already been bought back. The Oblate community of Aix, established at 30, rue Cardinal in Aix, came back to the old Carmel in 1921.²⁰ The church of the Mission adjoining this former Carmel monastery, sealed shut since 1880,²¹ was reopened for divine services on July 11, 1922, in a solemn ceremony presided over by the Archbishop of Aix. The community of Notre-Dame de l'Osier re-established itself in its own house in 1921; that of Notre-Dame de Lumières in 1922, and that of Notre-Dame de Bon-Secours in 1923. The houses of Ajaccio, Vico, Nice and Lyons also resumed their regular life. The Oblates at Diano Marina in Italy returned to France in 1922; the novitiate, located at San Giorgio in Italy since 1921,²² was transferred to Notre-Dame de Bon-Secours in 1926; and the scholasticate at San Giorgio, closed in 1921 for lack of candidates, was re-established at Notre-Dame de Lumières in 1928. It should be mentioned that the juniorate, that had been set up in this latter place and that was closed in

¹⁹ Cf. DANIEL-ROPS, *Un combat pour Dieu*, Fayard, Paris, 1963, pp. 279, 397-398. Pius XI did not sign a concordat with France.

²⁰ Cf. *Codex historicus d'Aix 1917-1924*, Oblate General Archives, Rome.

²¹ P. MOUNIER, O.M.I., "Rapport au Chapitre général de 1926" in *Missions*, 61 (1927), p. 32. The main door of the church of the mission had been sealed since 1880. The church and the house of Aix were restored in 1922-1923.

²² The novitiate established in 1902 at St. Peter's, Aosta, in Italy, was transferred to San Giorgio Canavese in 1921.

1903, was reopened in 1922 and merged with the one at Sainte-Foy-lès-Lyon in 1928.

Amid this happy movement of restoration of their houses and works after the trial of the dispersal, the Oblates of the Province did have to deplore the definitive loss at Marseilles of the large old house of Le Calvaire, which they had built in 1823, and of the house and chaplaincy of the shrine of Notre-Dame de la Garde.

At the 1926 General Chapter, the Provincial could state: "Community life has pretty well everywhere been resumed."²³

Works and missions

The largely predominant work in the new-born Province, one that had been maintained to the degree possible during the expulsion period, remained the preaching of missions and retreats. More than half of the active Fathers, that is, some thirty in all, devoted themselves exclusively thereto and that "in the same spirit and with the same method that was used by our venerated Founder and his first disciples."²⁴ Thus — to mention but one outstanding mission — fifteen of them distributed equally in each of the city of Aix's five parishes, in 1926 preached a major mission lasting four full weeks and obtained an unexpected success. As the Provincial put it in his report to the 1926 General Chapter, this "Centenary mission" — it was 100 years since the Oblates of Mary Immaculate had been approved by the Pope — "revealed both the Oblates' existence and value in the city where they had seen the light of day."²⁵

²³ *Ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 30.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 31. A change in the territorial boundaries between the first and second Provinces in France, promulgated on December 3, 1926, enlarged the territory of the first Province by adding the following Departments to it: Gironde, Lot-et-Garonne, Dordogne, Charente, Charente-Inférieure, Corrèze, Cantal et Puy-de-Dôme. Cf. *Missions*, 61 (1927), pp. 200-201.

Certain changes in other works of the Province should be underlined. Owing to the great lack of temporal resources, the Province in 1920 had to yield the juniorate of Urnieta, in Spain, to the Province of Texas in the United States. In 1925, it accepted — for a brief time only — the minor seminary in Ajaccio. The next year it received from the Province of France North the missionary house of Bordeaux-Talence. Finally, in 1930, it gave back to the General Administration the chaplaincy of the Holy Family Sisters of Bordeaux in Madrid, which it had served since 1893.

The 1939-1945 war

The hostilities of 1939-1945 were a rude trial for the Province which had barely managed to re-establish itself. In September 1939, it was the war which required the mobilization of some 40 Oblates; in June 1940, it was demobilization: 28 were prisoners and 3 had been killed.²⁶ Then came the occupation by the enemy, at first of a part of France and then, in 1943, of the whole country with the system of “forced labor”.

During this war period, the Province generously opened the doors of its houses to many Oblates who were fleeing before the enemy's advance. In October 1939, 46 Polish scholastics arrived; in the following November, 48 Oblates from France East, and then 13 from France North. Finally, groups of novices arrived: 15 from Poland, 21 from the Province of France East, 27 from that of France North.²⁷ Generous hospitality was given, though this often occasioned serious worries to the superiors and treasurers who had to assure subsistence to some 120 scholastics and 63 novices. This was a particularly acute problem during the years 1941-1942 which were the worst in terms of available food.²⁸

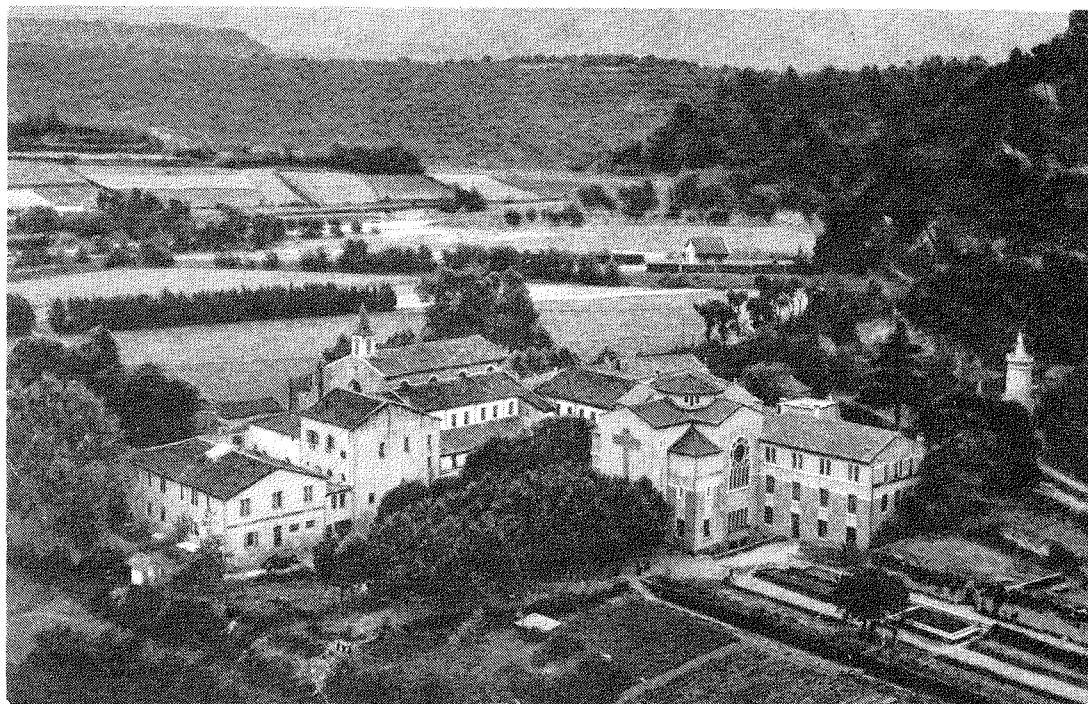
²⁶ Cf. C. MASSONNAT, O.M.I., “Rapport présenté au Chapitre général de 1947”, *Ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 30.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 31.

²⁸ The General Administration also found refuge on the territory of the Province of France South from 1940 to 1944. After a brief stay at Talence, in May 1940 it established itself in the “La Mazenode” building on the outskirts

Works of ministry

During these difficult years, the novitiate, situated in an out-of-the-way place, had an annual average of twelve novices; and the scholasticate at Notre-Dame de Lumières, spared by the occupation troops, offered the Congregation a total of 92 priests.²⁹ This precious priestly manpower was not excessive, for the lack of priests was acute in the dioceses.



Notre-Dame de Lumières formerly a juniorate, then a scholasticate from 1928 to 1951, and since a house for retreats and Christian hospitality

If we abstract from the period of October 1939 until July 1940, during which time apostolic activities had almost completely ceased, the missionaries were able to give about one hundred missions each year, as well as do a number of other important preaching works. As soon as they were ordained,

of Marseilles. In the Fall of 1944, it moved to Paris and in December 1945 it returned to Rome. Cf. H. BALMÈS, O.M.I., "Rapport au Chapitre général de 1947", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 4.

²⁹ 30 from the Province of Poland, 33 from the Province of France East, 26 from the Province of France South and 3 from the Province of France North, cf. C. MASSONNAT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 33.

the Polish scholastics joined their confreres who were already assigned to the religious service of their compatriots in France. They worked especially in the areas of d'Alès, Savoy, in the Southwest and the Centre. On September 4, 1946, the Polish Oblates were detached from the Province of France South and now formed a district in France which was under the jurisdiction of the Provincial of Poland.

Postwar ministries

The postwar missionary work had to adapt itself to the religious needs of the day. The traditional work of the missions was resumed, but in several areas was carried out according to a new formula which proved successful: it was referred to as "Retour en chrétienté" (Return to Christendom). The method employed here attempted, not to shake the masses as the missions did in days gone by, but to bring the people back to the faith and to establish a nucleus of very fervent Christians based on the model of the early Christian communities. The missionaries emphasized the doctrine of the Mystical Body and the liturgical and sacramental life.³⁰

To respond to an urgent evangelization need, the Province during the war had accepted responsibility for a large number of parishes which had become nearly pagan. These it served often by means of an itinerant ministry, going from one to the other. In 1947 it was evangelizing 46 of such parishes.³¹

Besides the three famous Marian shrines it was already serving in 1939, namely, Notre-Dame de Lumières, Notre-

³⁰ The Editions du Châlet, founded at Lyons in 1945, published liturgical manuals for the missions based on "Retour en chrétienté"; they also published missionary works and other items. The booklet *Retour en chrétienté*, published by Father Jean Servel, was exceptionally popular. Hundreds of thousands of copies were printed and it was used by missionaries from several congregations: by Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, Redemptorists, diocesan missionaries. In its own unique way, it expresses the major themes and central idea of a Christian renewal. cf. J. POUTS, O.M.I., "Rapport de la 1^{re} province de France (Midi) au Chapitre général de 1953", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), p. 615.

³¹ Cf. C. MASSONNAT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 38-39; H. BALMÈS, O.M.I., "Oeuvres de défrichement", in *Études Oblates*, 7 (1948), p. 6.

Dame de Bon-Secours, and Notre-Dame de l'Osier, the Province accepted four others: Notre-Dame de Talence,³² Notre-Dame de la Seds at Aix, Notre-Dame de Peyragude in the diocese of Agen, and Notre-Dame de Cotignac in the diocese of Fréjus. It also opened a new house of closed retreats at Notre-Dame de l'Osier. Notre-Dame de Lumière, already long in Oblate hands, was also showing signs of new life.

The Province in 1947

At the time of the 1947 General Chapter, the Province had 143 Fathers, 64 scholastics and 20 Brothers, making a total of 227 Oblates. These were divided among 15 houses, 3 residences and 1 district.³³

III – The Province of France North

The dispersal of 1903

By virtue of the law regarding associations enforced in 1903, the nine houses of the France North Province which were located on French territory suffered the expulsion of their members and those which were Oblate properties were confiscated. They were: Notre-Dame de Sion, a juniorate and pilgrimage place; Limoges; Talence; Autun; Angers, the novitiate; Arcachon; Pontmain, a pilgrimage place and juniorate; Saint-Andelain; and Montmartre, the basilica of the national vow to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This meant that these communities

³² When the Oblates again accepted to serve the shrine of Notre Dame de Talence on July 2, 1939, they returned to a Marian shrine they had already served from 1851 to 1903.

³³ The Provincials of the Province were: August Lavillardière, appointed in 1897, Prosper Monnet, appointed in 1900, Alphonse Durif, appointed in 1906, Euloge Blanc, appointed in 1912, Hippolyte Juge, appointed in 1913, Antonin Guinet, appointed in 1920, Pierre Monnier, appointed in 1925, François Masson, appointed in 1932, Victor Gaben, appointed in 1937, and Christin Massonnat, appointed in 1945. There was a periodical published by the Province, *La Revue Apostolique*, founded in 1920; and, since 1947, *Pôle et Tropiques*.

were dismembered and apostolic works were partially paralyzed, particularly that of preaching missions: nearly all of these communities were involved in that ministry.

On the isle of Jersey and in Belgium

Fortunately, the Province owned houses and carried on works outside of France and in these places some Oblates took refuge and did apostolic work. On the island of Jersey, it attended to the parishes of Saint-Thomas, Saint-Matthieu and Saint-Martin. In Belgium there were several establishments which could receive Oblates: a novitiate had been opened at Le Bestin in 1896 and a juniorate at Waregem in 1901; they served an orphanage at Le Bestin and a church at Nieuwenhove; at Anvers a house of ministry had been established in 1900. Moreover, to offset the application of the July 1901 law, a house of missionaries had been founded at Dinant in 1902.

To these works in Belgium was added another of the highest importance, namely, serving a national shrine of devotion dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a replica of the national votive shrine in Paris. A house was opened in Brussels for the chaplains of this work. Taking into consideration the national character of this work, the Superior General in 1905 saw fit to erect a Belgian Province which would take charge of this work, while developing also other ministries. The France North Province ceded four of its houses to this new Province³⁴ and 65 of its Oblates; in Belgium it retained only the houses of Dinant and Le Bestin.

Houses of formation for French candidates were likewise established outside the territory of France. In 1902 and 1903, the Belgian juniorate at Waregem received the juniorists of Sion; the house of Dinant likewise received some from Sion and Pontmain, but this work was discontinued in 1908. At Saint-Hélier on the island of Jersey, Father Léon Legrand in 1912 opened a juniorate which flourished. In 1933, this juniorate was united to that of Pontmain which had been reopened

³⁴ Cf. Chapter 3 below.

in 1923. The novitiate of Angers was at first united to the Belgian novitiate at Le Bestin, and then transferred to Thy-le-Château in 1912.

Groups and works in France

In France itself, there were about eighty Oblates, civilly secularized, who belonged to districts or groups directed by superiors, who according to possibilities carried on apostolic works, especially that of preaching.³⁵ The first groups or districts were formed at Angers, Paris, Autun, Talence and Verdun. Thereafter, a second one was formed at Paris, and others at Sion, Laval and Caen. Their total personnel remained more or less the same until 1921.³⁶

Reconstituting communities

An effort to regroup these communities in 1909 aroused the fears of the masonic lodges and this resulted in investigations, court appearances, prosecutions and legal trials. For more than two years the Oblates had to disperse and go into hiding.³⁷ The 1914-1918 war summoned the Oblates to other concerns, some to the army, others to parish ministry, and this brought a five-year-long lull to these vexations.

The Government's tolerance towards religious communities after the war, especially from 1922 onwards,³⁸ made a regular resumption of works and the gradual re-establishment of communities possible. Of the nine houses closed because of the expulsions, four were bought back and reopened: Notre-Dame

³⁵ Y. GUEGUEN, O.M.I., *Province du Nord (2^e de France)*, Liège, January 31, 1933, MS. p. 2. Archives of the house of Richelieu, Canada. Cf. also *Les Petites Annales*, Paris, 1921, pp. 196-197.

³⁶ *France-Nord-Midi, Personnel 1907-1933*, 152 p. mineographed. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

³⁷ Cf. A. GRENIER, O.M.I., *Rapport sur la Province du Nord*, October 1929, p. 4. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

³⁸ "It is especially from 1922 onwards that the houses could be re-established. Several already existed in a more or less hidden fashion, made up of Fathers who were indeed dispersed but subject to the same superior." Cf. Y. GUEGUEN, O.M.I., *loc. cit.*, MS. p. 2.

de Sion, Autun, Angers and Pontmain (though this latter was now without the pilgrimage place). The rest, that is, Limoges, Saint-Andelain, Talence, Arcachon and Montmartre were definitively lost. Three new houses were opened at the time of the expulsions: Bar-le-Duc, which in the beginning had 3 Oblates assigned to the Bishop of Verdun for his ecclesiastical college referred to as École Fénélon; Caen, established in 1908 by a group of missionaries; and Mons-en-Baroeul. These last two were in 1921 erected as regular houses.



*The house of Solignac
Scholasticate from 1946-1971
Today a house of welcome, retreats and study sessions*

The works of formation were reorganized in France. In 1923 the juniorate at Pontmain was reopened. The novitiate of Thy-le-Château was repatriated at Coigny in 1924, then successively transferred to Berder in 1929, to Sion in 1937, to Pontmain in 1940, and finally to La Brosse-Montceaux, in 1946. The international scholasticate at Liège in Belgium in 1909 became the scholasticate of France North; in 1933, it was

transferred to French territory, to La Brosse-Montceaux in 1933, and then to Solignac in 1946.³⁹

This dispersal, however, did leave scars on the Province's life. The Provincial, Father Marcel Bernad, noted in 1920: "We have suffered greatly and still do from this dispersal. Instead of community life, we have had to live in isolation or in pairs located in fly-by-night establishments."⁴⁰ As late as 1929 the Provincial, Father Amand Grenier, after mentioning the missionary spirit that animated all his men, added: "It is also worthwhile mentioning the endemic disease that we have not fully shaken since 1903 . . . The expulsions and dispersal still continue as a hindrance even though, thanks be to God, we have pretty well dared to come together everywhere: for at Autun, where we have one of our best groups of missionaries, we still do not have a common lodging, any more than we do in Paris."⁴¹

Works and houses

The Province's main ministry during the period of the expulsions, in Belgium as in France, was the preaching of missions. Some fifty Fathers were occupied in this work in 1920. Father Bernad, the Provincial, stated: "People like our kind of preaching which is geared to the people and really apostolic; they like our style of family life which maintains an easy relationship with the secular clergy; they like our ability to adapt ourselves to the customs and character of the people we evangelize."⁴²

In 1933, the missionaries began — quite successfully — to preach missions in the Breton dialect in the dioceses of Quimper and Saint-Brieuc. The Breton mission had its particular traits: it was addressed to a very Catholic population,

³⁹ Cf. "De La Brosse à Solignac" in *Missions*, 74 (1947), pp. 683 -702.

⁴⁰ M. BERNAD, O.M.I., "Province du Nord (Deuxième de France)", *ibidem*, 55 (1921), p. 5.

⁴¹ A. GRENIER, O.M.I., *loc. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

⁴² M. BERNAD, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 2.

aimed at renewing its fervor, and required more instructions and more time in the confessional than the other missions did. The Breton mission was faithfully attended by all: it was very exacting on the missionary but also brought him plenty of consolation.⁴³



Father Hervé Pennec (1904-1967)

New foundations were made. A house of missionaries was officially established at Mons-en-Baroeul in 1921 in the diocese of Lille. This was a region of faith where the Oblates were as yet little known. Another house of missionaries was established in Brittany, at Saint-Brieuc, in 1927. This was another deeply Christian area, rich in vocations, where the Oblates had for a long time hoped to establish themselves. At the urgent request of the Bishop of Rheims, the Province in 1928 accepted to take charge of the Marian shrine of Neuvizy. In 1937 it opened a residence at Benoîte-Vaux to serve another Marian

⁴³ Cf. H. PENNEC, O.M.I., *Les missions bretonnes, ibidem*, 72 (1938), pp. 479-487.

shrine. Finally, in 1939, a second juniorate was opened at Margueffles in the diocese of Arras, and the provincial house was established at 75, rue de l'Assomption, Paris, where a propaganda centre and the offices of *Les Petites Annales* and of the *Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate* were already located.

The trials of the 1939-1945 war

The world war that broke out in 1939 mobilized the great majority of the Province's Oblates. After the defeat of France in 1940, there followed the demobilization along with the long and hard occupation by the enemy as well as the destruction caused by the military campaigns. The house at Caen was completely destroyed, that at Angers badly damaged, and those at La Brosse-Montceaux and Dinant were pillaged. There were so many privations, so many moments of painful insecurity, some even of horror. It suffices to mention the dreadful drama wherein five Oblates were shot in the presence of the community at La Brosse-Montceaux in July 1944.⁴⁴

In de-Christianized milieus

Due to the unusual circumstances, missions, retreats and preaching were not entirely halted but were considerably curtailed during the period of the war. Some 40 missionaries were active in 1946. Besides missions preached in the customary style, there were others in a new manner which aimed at reaching people whose faith had almost died out.

Thus, in the diocese of Limoges, part of which was very much dechristianized, the missionaries initiated a form of evangelization referred to as the *Mission itinérante Notre-Dame* (The travelling mission of our Lady). They moved from place to place in an automobile van in which they had arranged a small chapel and a study area. Informative slide lectures, friendly conferences, informal exchanges were the

⁴⁴ Cf. "Le drame du 24 juillet 1944", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 694-695.

means of this apostolate.⁴⁵ The first vehicle of this itinerant mission was blessed in 1946. The group of four missionaries assigned to this apostolate visited some 400 villages of the Creuse Department in 1947-1948.⁴⁶

In the diocese of Meaux in the Department of Seine-et-Marne, seven Oblates undertook a truly missionary enterprise by taking charge of 17 heavily dechristianized parishes. The Province set up a house there in Lorrez-le-Bocage and two residences at Voulx and Égreville.

Several Oblates collaborated in the great preaching crusade called the "Grand Retour" (the Great Return) which had been placed under the patronage of Our Lady of Boulogne. The triumphal pilgrimage of the statue of Our Lady of Boulogne moved from town to town and its arrival was prepared for in each locality by an intense missionary preaching designed to effect the return of minds and hearts to God. In 1946, the Oblates were engaged for 47 weeks in thus accompanying our Lady's pilgrimage.⁴⁷

The foreign missions

Many young people who had entered the novitiate were attracted to the foreign missions entrusted to the Oblates. In addition to the missionary enthusiasm which swept through the Church during the days of Pius XI, visits and conferences of missionaries in colleges and seminaries, the books of Father Pierre Duchaussois⁴⁸ had a lot of good influence upon young people. Missionary fervor was most alive in the scholasticate. Out of 70 priests who finished their scholasticate between

⁴⁵ Cf. AROMI, 1946, pp. 115-116.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, 1949, p. 35.

⁴⁷ Cf. J. LARVOR, O.M.I., "Rapport présenté au Chapitre général de 1947 sur l'état de la 2^e Province de France (Nord)", in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 49.

⁴⁸ His most successful books were: *Aux glaces polaires*, *Apôtres inconnus*, *Sous les feux de Ceylan*, *Femmes héroïques*, *les Soeurs Grises dans l'Extrême-Nord*, all published between 1920 and 1929.

1920 and 1932, 40 were assigned to the foreign missions.⁴⁹ This trend continued. After the war, it was the Provinces of France North and France South that furnished the greater majority of the apostles of Cameroon, a mission that was accepted in 1946.⁵⁰

The Province in 1947

According to the Provincial's report to the 1947 General Chapter, the Province then numbered 332 Oblates, that is, 145 priests, 131 scholastics and 56 Brothers; there were 15 houses and 6 residences.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Y. GUEGUEN, O.M.I., *loc. cit.*, *Province du Nord (2^e de France)*, MS. p. 3.

⁵⁰ 31 Fathers and 2 Brothers left for the foreign missions in 1946. Cf. J. LARVOR, *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 45.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 45, 46. The Provincials of the Province were: Frédéric Favier (1893-1899), Charles Brulé (1899-1905), Jean-Baptiste Lemius (1905-1911), Marcel Bernad (1911-1920), Adolphe Munier (1920-1923), Léon Legrand (1923-1926), Amand Grenier (1926-1932), Paul Péron (1932-1939), Hervé Pennec (1939-1942), Henri Verkin (1942-1945), Jean Larvor (1945-1948). Publications of the Province were: *Petites Annales de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée* which existed since 1891; it merged with *Pôle et Tropiques* in 1950.

CHAPTER 3

Provinces: England-Ireland, Germany, Belgium-Holland – 1898-1947

I. The Anglo-Irish Province: – Progress of apostolic works – Decline of “reform schools” – Missions to the Welsh – Australia, Vicariate of Missions 1900-1926 – Missionaries in Eastern Australia – The Province in 1947. **II. The Province of Germany:** – Growth – At the origin of Provinces – Expansion – An expert missionary, Father Kassiepe – Apostolate of the press – Foreign missions – Propaganda efforts – The 1939-1945 war – The Province in 1947. **III. The Belgium-Holland Province:** – A Belgian Province – The Sacred Heart in Brussels, 1905-1919 – Ministries and works – For recruits of different languages – The Province in 1947 – A Dutch branch – The Province of Holland – First developments.

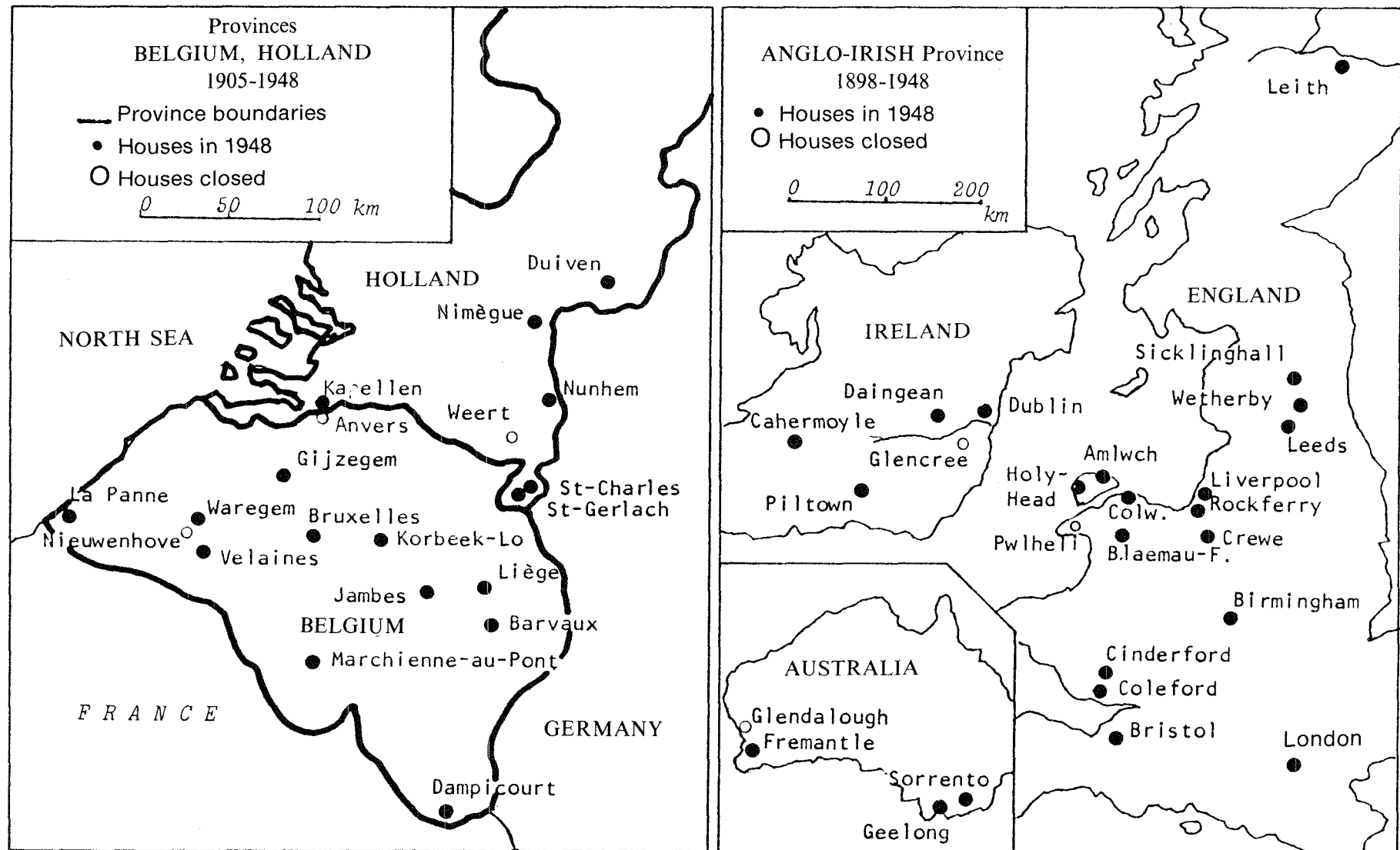
I – The Anglo-Irish Province

Progress of apostolic works

The Anglo-Irish Province¹ was enlarging its field of operations. From 1933 to 1939 it accepted seven new parishes in England, all of them located in worker areas that were often very poor.² Furthermore, it realized a long-cherished ambition of establishing a house of missionaries in England: it opened this house at Crewe in 1943. In Wales, it accepted the direction

¹ The Province of England took the name of Anglo-Irish Province in 1921 when Ireland achieved its independence.

² In 1933, it accepted the parishes of the Blessed Sacrament in Leeds (which had been detached from the Oblate parish in Leeds and from two other parishes) and of St. Therese of the Child Jesus in Liverpool; in 1937, the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes at Kingswood, a suburb of Bristol; in 1938, the parish of Saint Anne in Birmingham; in 1939, the parishes of Our Lady of Victories at Cinderford and of St. Margaret at Coleford; and, finally, the parish of Saint-Aubin on the island of Jersey which the Province of France North ceded to it in 1946.



of a college at Colwyn Bay for young Catholics of the locality and environs. This work was in addition to the local parish which the Province had been looking after since 1898.

In Ireland, the Province gradually increased the ranks of its missionaries in order to respond to the growing number of requests for missions. In Dublin, the Province was evangelizing, as in a permanent mission, the faithful who were coming to the church in great numbers and to the magnificent grotto of Lourdes. This grotto was built and solemnly inaugurated in 1930 and has become the "Irish Lourdes". The annual pilgrimage to Lourdes was suspended in 1914, but resumed in 1927; again suspended after 1939, it was continued after the second world war.³

Decline of "reform schools"

In the meantime, the work of "reform schools" that had been so important, declined in the 1930s. Magistrates were no longer sentencing young offenders to houses of correction but were trying other methods.⁴ Thus the Province had to close the school of Glencree. The only school that was left to it was at Daingean with only 80 young people: at one time the two schools had an enrollment as high as 500.⁵

Missions to the Welsh

The Province was already working among the English-speaking Catholics in Wales since 1896.⁶ Now, at the request

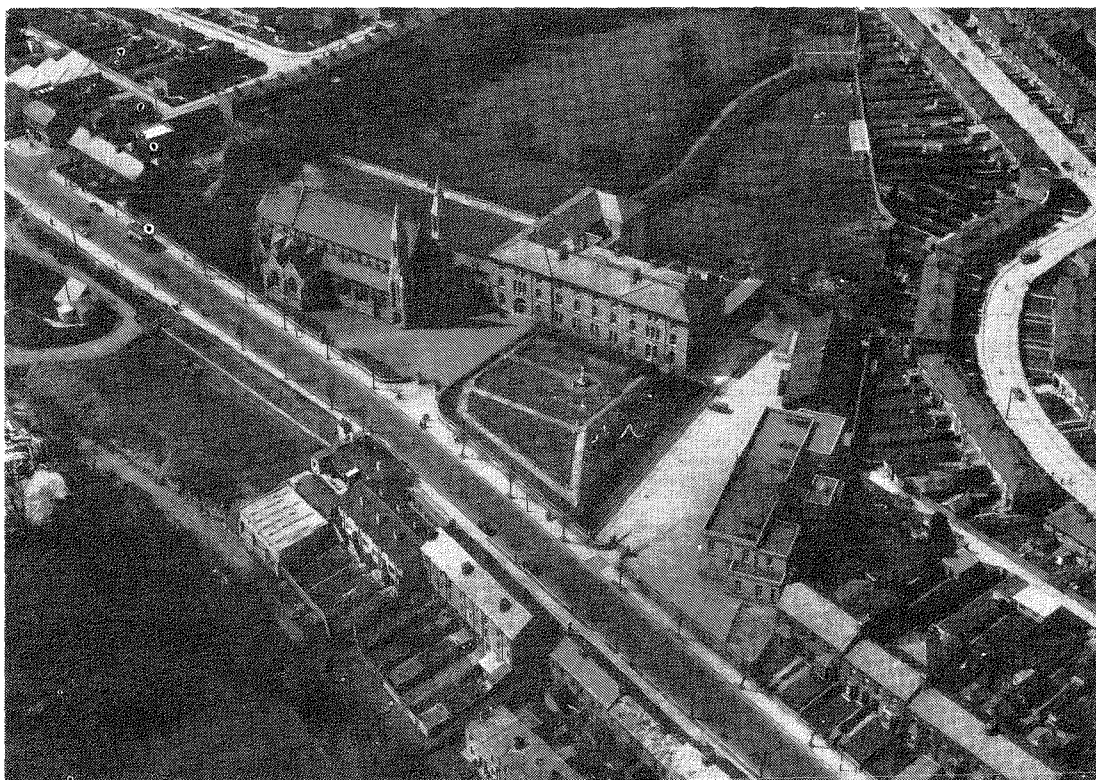
³ Cf. *Missions*, 64 (1930), pp. 219-220; *A Glance at Pilgrimage with the Oblates 1882-1883/1982-1983*, Liverpool, pp. 9-10.

⁴ Cf. J. DANAHER, O.M.I., "Province Anglo-Irlandaise", in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation des O.M.I. présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 33.

⁵ The house at Glencree successively became: a juniorate for late vocations (1929-1934), a residence for the "reform school" of Daingean (1934-1940), a second juniorate (1940-1942). In 1942 the house was ceded to the Government. Cf. *Missions*, 68 (1934), p. 341; J. O'SHEA, O.M.I., "Report of the Anglo-Irish Province to the General Chapter O.M.I., 1947", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 68.

⁶ In 1896 they accepted to serve the parish at Holyhead and in 1898 that of Colwyn Bay.

of the Vicar Apostolic of Wales, Bishop Francis Mostyn, the Province accepted to work among the Welsh people themselves, in their language, in view of bringing them back to the faith of their Fathers.⁷ In 1900, Fathers Goulven-Marie Trébaol and Pierre Mérour, two priests native to Brittany, of Celtic blood and speaking a sister-language to that of the Welsh, were assigned to this mission. After arriving at Holyhead, they set to work assiduously to study Gaelic.⁸



*The property at Inchicore (Dublin)
The church and the Oblate house in 1950*

Father Trébaol founded the first Welsh mission at Llanrwst on December 1, 1901. The people of the small city of some 3000 to 4000 inhabitants received the missionary with fierce hostility but their attitude became more peaceful as time

⁷ In an audience on January 8, 1896, the Superior General, Father Louis Soullier was explicitly encouraged by the Pope to found this mission. Cf. *ibidem*, 34 (1896), p. 106; 44 (1906), pp. 143-144; 59 (1925), p. 76.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 38 (1900), p. 487.

went on. The missionary used all the means that his zeal inspired in order to bring people to return to the Catholic faith. In 1910, he even founded a monthly newspaper, the *Cennad Catholig Cymru* (*The Little Catholic Messenger*).⁹

The second mission was opened on October 7, 1902, by Father Mérour, at Blaenau-Ffestiniog, a city located some 25 kilometers from Llanwrst, with a population of 20,000 and a stronghold of Protestantism. The missionary's arrival provoked an explosion of bad will.¹⁰ One year later, Father Mérour transferred his mission to Pwllheli.¹¹

These difficult and less than consoling missions were, despite the devotedness and tenacious zeal of their apostles, closed at the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war, for the two missionaries were required as French-speaking military chaplains in England.¹² The Province again established missions in Wales in 1944 by opening a house at Amlwch and, the following year, another at Blaenau-Ffestiniog. The missionaries' zeal still encountered many difficulties in the area, difficulties rooted in a passionate antagonism between the Calvinist and Catholic Churches.¹³

Australia, Vicariate of Missions 1900-1926

The Superior General, Father Cassien Augier, considering the distance that removed the establishments in Australia and in view of their development, in 1900 detached them from the Anglo-Irish Province and raised them to the status of a Vicariate of Missions. As Vicar of Missions he gave them Father Charles Cox.¹⁴

⁹ *Ibidem*, 40 (1902), p. 37. "Un mission bretonne au pays de Galles", *ibidem*, 51 (1913), pp. 56-60.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ibidem*, 40 (1902), p. 485.

¹¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 44 (1906), p. 144.

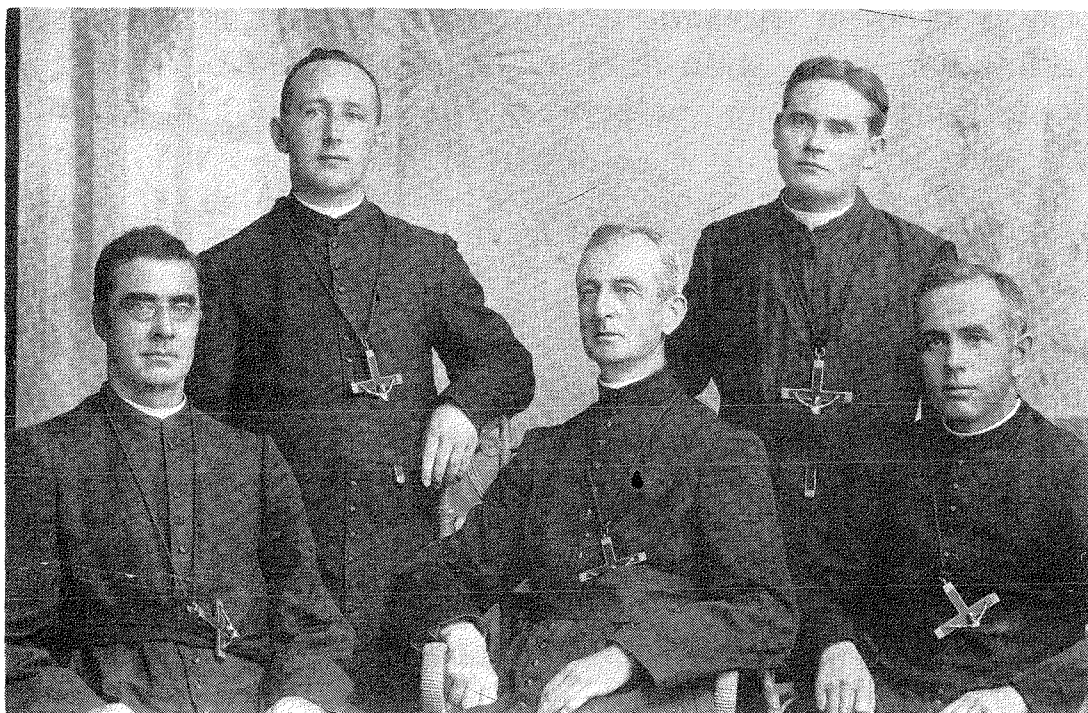
¹² On December 25, 1918, Father Trébaol received his obedience for the General House and Father Mérour for the Vicariate of Missions of South Africa. *Ibidem*, 54 (1920), p. 396, 403.

¹³ Cf. J. O'SHEA, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 67-68.

¹⁴ C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular letter 77, February 17, 1900, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 27-29.

In the years that followed, the Oblates' position in Australia stabilized but did not develop much. Their one and only parish at first took in the city of Fremantle with its three suburbs: North Fremantle, East Fremantle and Beaconfield. This parish, reduced to the city limits, was granted to them in perpetuity. The scope of their ministry broadened. The local bishop allowed them to preach missions and retreats in the diocese, a ministry that had been exclusively reserved to the Redemptorists. On the other hand, the correction school at Glendalough had to close its doors in 1921, since the Government was no longer sending young offenders there.¹⁵

In response to the desire of the Vicariate's Oblates and with the consent of the Provincial Council of England-Ireland, Superior General Archbishop Dontenwill, O.M.I., on May 13, 1926, again attached the mission of Australia to the Anglo-Irish Province.¹⁶



Oblates in Australia at the turn of the Century.
 From l. to r.: Stewart Whelan, John Smyth, Charles Cox
 (Vicar of Missions), William McCallion and John Flynn.

¹⁵ Th. HAUGH, O.M.I., "The Oblates in Australia" in *Études Oblates*, 3 (1944), p. 76.

¹⁶ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter of May 13, 1926, in *Missions*,

Missionaries in Eastern Australia

The mission in Australia significantly developed when in 1926 Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne called the Oblates to the East of the country. As a foothold for a team of missionaries called to preach in his diocese, he entrusted the small and very poor parish of Sorrento to their service. Father Thomas Hayes was named pastor of Sorrento. He had to live at first in a makeshift shelter before building the rectory and, in 1929, he was able to receive the group of missionaries requested by the Archbishop. From 1930 to 1940, the Oblates preached throughout Eastern Australia, from the State of Queensland in the north to the island of Tasmania way to the south. In so doing, they gave more than 200 missions and 300 retreats.¹⁷

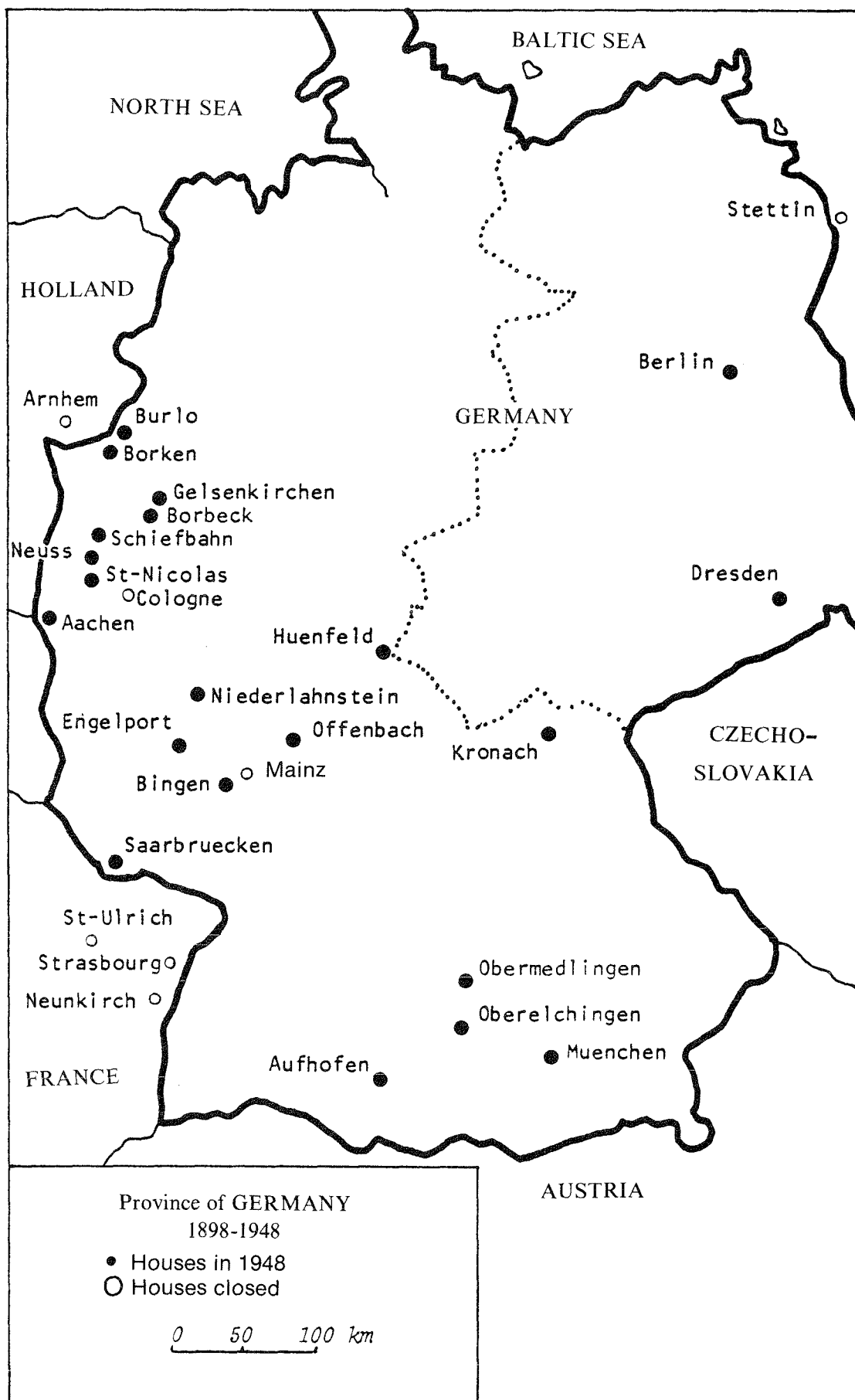
The Province in 1947

The Province's Oblate formation houses were grouped together in Ireland: the juniorate was at Belcamp Hall since 1893, the novitiate at Cahermoyle since 1921, the scholasticates at Piltown and Belmont House since 1940. They developed markedly, especially from the 1930s onwards. Thus the number of scholastics rose from 35 in 1930 to 118 in 1939. In 1934, a novitiate was established at Geelong in Australia, but the novices there were quite few.¹⁸

60 (1926), pp. 254-255. Vicars of Missions in Australia were: Charles Cox (1900-1912) and Eugene Callan (1912-1926).

¹⁷ Cf. Th. HAUGH, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Études Oblates*, 3 (1944) p. 80; *Missions*, 71 (1937), pp. 205-209; 72 (1938), pp. 28-31.

¹⁸ Cf. J. DANAHER, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation des O.M.I. présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 34. Regarding the juniorate: the first was opened at Belcamp Hall in 1893; a second was opened at Glenree in 1929, transferred to Belmont House in 1934, then back to Glenree in 1940, and closed in 1942. Regarding the novitiate: it was at Belmont House in 1863 and transferred to Cahermoyle in 1921. Regarding the scholasticate: it was at Belmont House in 1907, transferred to Daingean in 1934, then to Piltown in 1940. Complementary scholasticates were located at: Jersey (theologians) from 1931 to 1934; Belmont House (philosophy) in 1940. James Carroll was the first novice in the Australian novitiate. Cf. *Missions*, 73 (1939), p. 152.



Including the Oblates in Australia, the Province's personnel in 1947 consisted of 184 Fathers, 86 scholastics and 54 Brothers, for a total of 324 Oblates. The Province had 29 houses and residences.¹⁹

II – *The Province of Germany*

Growth

During the years of 1898 to 1947, the Province of Germany, born as late as 1895, solidly took root in a country that was but one third Catholic and still under the influence of the "Kultur-kampf".²⁰ The growth in personnel, number of houses and works was rapid indeed.

Ten houses were founded from 1900-1914.²¹ Worthy of special mention are: the house of Engelpport, established in 1903, a house of missionaries plus a shrine to the Blessed Virgin;²² the important house of missionaries at St. Nikolaus, founded in 1905; the house of Brussels opened in 1908 to serve a colony of some 16,000 German Catholics; the house of studies

¹⁹ Statistics presented to the 1947 General Chapter. J. O'SHEA, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1974), p. 58. The Provincials were: Charles Cox (1898-1900), Daniel McIntyre (1900-1903), Joseph McSherry (1903-1910), James O'Reilly (1910-1915), Thomas Leahy (1915-1921), Joseph Scannell (1921-1930), Joseph Danaher (1930-1939), Michael O'Ryan (1939-1945), James O'Shea (1945-1947). The Province's publication, *Missionary Record of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, begun in 1891, was discontinued from 1904 to 1912, and, in 1931, was renamed *The Lourdes Messenger*.

²⁰ *Kulturkampf*: the violent struggle led by Bismark, the Iron Chancellor of the German Emperor, against the Catholic Church from 1873 to 1878. Because of its firm resistance, the Catholic Church emerged victorious from this conflict. On the founding of the Province of Germany, cf. above, vol. I, pp. 209-210.; J. KRASENBRINK, O.M.I., "Les chemins difficile de la fondation d'une province" in *Missions*, 97 (1970), pp. 603-611.

²¹ Arnhem, 1900; Maria Engelpport, 1903; St. Nikolaus, 1905; Brussels, 1908; Strasbourg, 1908; Mainz, 1911; Warnsdorf, 1911; Frischau, 1912; Neuss, 1912; Neunkirch, 1913.

²² The novitiate for scholastics and Brothers was set up at Saint-Gerlach in Holland at the very beginning of the Province; it was transferred to Maria Engelpport in 1919. Other novitiates for Brothers were opened at Huenfeld and Burlo.

in Strasbourg, also opened in 1908, which became a juniorate in 1912; and lastly, the house at Neunkirch, opened in 1913, a place of Marian pilgrimage.

Besides considerably diminishing the regular work of the missions, the 1914-1918 war slowed down recruitment efforts, caused cruel losses and left the Province impoverished. On the other hand, it directed the Oblates' zeal to urgent ministries among German and foreign soldiers, both at the front and in hospitals.²³ In 1917, the Province founded a new and important house of missionaries at Essen-Borbeck.

The postwar period brought considerable changes to the Province. As the German state left a great deal of freedom to religious institutes, the Province did not hesitate to multiply houses. In opened ten houses during the years 1919, 1920, 1921 alone,²⁴ most of which were houses for missionaries.

At the origin of Provinces

Differences between nationalities became more acute in the postwar period and, because of the territorial modifications made in the country, certain avenues of communications were now more difficult. This had an important effect upon the Province. It brought about the closing of the work at Brussels in 1918 and it occasioned the founding of three Provinces. In December 1918, the three houses situated in Alsace-Lorraine, Saint Ulrich, Strasbourg, and Neunkirch, comprising 32 Oblates,²⁵ became the Vicariate of Alsace-Lorraine. In June 1920, the house of Krotoszyn, a Polish community of 5 Fathers and 3 Brothers,²⁶ became the first cell of the future

²³ 104 Fathers ministered to soldiers; 81 Fathers, 65 scholastics and 15 Brothers worked in hospitals. The house of Huenfeld became mostly a hospital (100 beds) and that of Strasbourg a convalescent home (70 beds). Cf. L. LEYEN-DECKER, O.M.I., "Rapport du Révérend Père Provincial d'Allemagne" (1920) in *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 12.

²⁴ Aufhofen, 1919; Cologne, 1919; Niederlahnstein, 1919; Bingen, 1920; Burlo, 1921; Geselenkirchen, 1920; Kronach, 1920; Dresden, 1921; Obereltingen, N.D., 1921; Borbeck, (house of closed retreats), 1921.

²⁵ There were 22 Fathers and 10 scholastics.

²⁶ L. LEYENDECKER, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 55 (1921), p. 9.

Province of Poland. And in March 1924, the houses of Warnsdorf and Frischau, located in the republic of Czechoslovakia, together with their personnel of 17 Oblates,²⁷ became the Vice-Province of Czechoslovakia.

Expansion

Despite these postwar changes, the Province's progress continued in a remarkable fashion. It opened ten more houses²⁸ from 1923 to 1939, and its personnel of 309 Oblates in 1921 rose to 521 in 1939.²⁹ It multiplied juniorates, for the greater majority of its novices came from them. Besides the juniorate of St. Charles in Holland, one of the most flourishing in the whole Congregation, it founded new ones: it had five of them from 1930 onwards.³⁰

During this same period, the Province in 1924 accepted the Apostolic Vicariate of Kimberley in South Africa, and, the next year, the Apostolic Prefecture of Pilcomayo among the natives of the Chaco in Bolivia.³¹ In addition, it furnished reinforcements to the nascent Provinces of St. Henry of Belleville in the United States (in 1924) and of St. Mary's of Regina in Canada (in 1926).

An expert missionary, Father Kassiepe

The Oblates' main activity in Germany was preaching missions and retreats. A good half of the Fathers were dedicated

²⁷ There were 13 Fathers and 4 Brothers.

²⁸ The juniorate at Obermedlingen, 1923; Stettin, 1923; Breslau, 1927; Offenbach, 1925 (transfer of the house of Mainz); Saarbruecken, 1926; Striegau, 1929; Borken, 1929; Aachen, 1932; Langendorf, 1932; Muenchen, 1933.

²⁹ In 1921, there were 309 Oblates: 125 Fathers, 81 scholastics and 103 Brothers; in 1939, there were 521 Oblates: 188 Fathers, 139 scholastics and 194 Brothers.

³⁰ The juniorates were: St. Charles in Holland, which closed during the 1939-1945 war; Burlo; Obermedlingen for Bavaria and the southern provinces; Striegau for Silesia; Borken and Schiefbahn. The last one named was opened in 1945.

³¹ The territory of the Apostolic Prefecture of Pilcomayo in 1935 passed from Bolivia to Paraguay at the end of a long war between these two countries. Cf. below, chapter 8.

to this ministry and they were quite successful in it. In the 1930s, however, increasing difficulties occurred, due to “radicalist views of the left and the right”³² which were then infiltrating the Catholic population.



Father Maximilian Kassiepe (1867-1948)

The work of the missions had been launched and guided by a most qualified expert, the very active and powerful Father Maximilian Kassiepe. In addition to a remarkable talent for preaching, he was endowed with equal talents for organization and writing as well. In 1912, at the request of the Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne, he founded the *Missionskonferenz* (Conference on the missions) which brought together representatives of the mission-preaching institutes of Germany in view of exchanging on the methods of their apostolate and

³² M. KASSIEPE, O.M.I., “Province d’Allemagne” in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 45-46.

to reach an agreement on a common approach and activity.³³ Father Kassiepe was the revered president of this organization for 25 years. Among his written works should be mentioned his homiletic handbook in four volumes which was a “classic for all German-speaking missionaries”.³⁴

Thanks to this master and to the zeal of his confreres, “the Oblates have, by their apostolic spirit and their kind of preaching, conquered a seat of honor among the other Congregations in Germany. When the work of the missions is spoken about, the Oblates are always mentioned first.”³⁵

Apostolate of the press

In addition to missions and retreats, the Province's Oblates carried on their apostolate by serving public chapels and churches attached to their houses, in certain chaplaincies, and in the work of the Catholic press. In this latter domain, besides the activity of Father Kassiepe that has been already been underlined, the initiatives and works of other Oblates must be mentioned. In 1916, Father Robert Streit began the rather massive and scientific work of the *Bibliotheca Missionum*, continued thereafter by his confreres, first of all by his collaborator from the outset, Father Johannes Dindinger. Father Johannes Wallenborn published numerous brochures about the Oblate fields of apostolate. In 1907, Father Paul Humpert started the work of the Christian social theatre, the dramas of which were greatly appreciated by the public and were translated into several languages.³⁶ Finally, Father Felix Hardt, a specialist in matters of the press and journalism, published a magazine, *Presskunde*, a religious weekly publication,

³³ In 1926, the Conference brought together “the 89 members and 59 religious provinces engaged in giving missions”. J. PIETSCH, O.M.I., “Rapport du R. Père Provincial d'Allemagne” (1926), in *Missions*, 61 (1927), p. 56. Cf. “La Missionskonferenz (M.K.)”, in *Missions*, 71 (1937), pp. 315-323.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 56. *Homiletisches Handbuch*, 4 volumes.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

³⁶ In 1926, Father Humpert had composed some 20 plays of which more than 100,000 copies were distributed. *Ibidem*, p. 57. Cf. also “Le R.P. Humpert et son theatre”, *ibidem*, 55 (1921), pp. 214-223.

Katholisches Leben, and organized study sessions on the Catholic press.³⁷

Foreign missions

The Province worked generously in favor of the foreign missions. It sent more than half of those who finished their scholasticate to the mission territories entrusted to it — to Southwest Africe, Kimberley, Pilcomayo — or to other missions of the Congregation. Father Kassiepe and other Province Oblates played an important role in an organism which in Germany brought together the superiors of Congregations involved in the foreign missions, the *Superiorenvereinigung*. In 1929, the Province opened an agency for the missions, a vast work centre and business office for the missions, an organism assisting missionaries who were leaving or on furlough in their native country. Finally, Father Paul Schulte founded *MIVA*,³⁸ a society which assisted the missions in regard to locomotion and transport.

Propaganda efforts

Two organisms deeply associated the laity with the works of the Province, especially in regard to vocation recruitment and to the missions: the review *Maria Immaculata*, founded in 1893, renamed *Monatsblaetter der Oblaten* in 1919, and finally *Der Weinberg* in 1953; and the *Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate*, founded in 1894. The latter counted a membership of over 100,000 in 1939 and even in 1947 still had some 84,000. Both of these works originated at the juniorate

³⁷ Cf. list of literary works done by the Oblates of the Province, *ibidem*, 46 (1908), pp. 344-353; AROMI, 1938, pp. 18-19.

³⁸ Father Paul Schulte conceived the *MIVA* project (Missionalium Vehiculorum Associatio) on the occasion of the death, in 1925, of one of his confreres, Father Otto Fuhrmann. The latter died because there were no adequate means at hand to get him to a hospital on time. *MIVA* was founded in Germany and was active before 1930; it quickly spread to Holland, Switzerland, Austria and the United States. Cf. P. SCHULTE, O.M.I., *The Flying Missionary*, pp. 40-43; *Missions*, 66 (1932), pp. 491-498; 69 (1935), pp. 90-91.

of St. Charles and are also mainly due to the initiative of Father Kassiepe.³⁹

The 1939-1945 war

The 1939-1945 war, preceded by the antireligious harrassment from the Nazi State, cruelly affected the Province which



Oblates at Huenfeld in 1906-1907

From l. to r.: (seated) Johannes Pietsch, Leonard Leyendecker, Alfons Loos, Johannes Wallenborn; (standing) Adolf Chwala, Nikolaus Stehle, Philippus Scharsch, Josef Jansen, Robert Streit

was then at the height of its prosperity. 327 Oblates were mobilized. In 1947, the negative balance of these stood as follows: 50 had lost their life in the course of operations, 30 were still prisoners of war, and 26 were missing without a trace of

³⁹ The Provincials of the Province were: Simon Scharsch (1895-1904), Ignaz Watterott (1904-1910), Maximilian Kassiepe (1910-1913 and 1926-1932), Joseph Huss (1913-1920), Leonard Leyendecker (1920-1926), Johannes Pietsch (1926), Petrus Jansen (1932-1933), Georg Fromm (1933-1939), Robert Becker (1939-1946), Johannes Dahl (1946-1952).

their fate.⁴⁰ One after the other the juniorates were closed and confiscated; the novitiate was the only house that was spared and it remained without novices. In February 1941, the scholasticate of Huenfeld was confiscated. All the houses, however, though considerably damaged, were given back to the Oblates after hostilities were over; the sole exceptions are those located in East Germany: Breslau, Langendorf, Striegau and Stettin.

The Province in 1947

In spite of the considerable losses and spent forces due to this terrible war, the Oblates began courageously to rebuild the Province. Without delay they reopened the juniorates⁴¹ and restored the framework of Oblate formation; they resumed preaching missions and undertook a ministry that was particularly urgent after the war, namely, the spiritual care of refugees and displaced persons.

In January 1947, the Province had a personnel of 384 Oblates: 208 Fathers, 51 scholastics and 125 Brothers. These statistics include 61 prisoners of war or missing personnel.⁴² In terms of numbers of personnel, it was still the second largest Province in the Congregation.

III – *The Belgium-Holland Province*

A Belgian Province

When established on February 17, 1905,⁴³ the Province of Belgium — it had been detached from the Province of France North — had four houses: Anvers, Waregem, Nieuwenhove, and the Sacred Heart in Brussels. The latter house was the

⁴⁰ J. DAHL, O.M.I., "Rapport sur la province d'Allemagne" (1947), in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 457. Also cf. AROMI, 1948, p. 60.

⁴¹ In 1947, there were 45 juniors (in the lower classes) at Burlo; 30 at Obermedlingen; 30 at Borken; 30 at the new juniorate at Schiefbahn.

⁴² *Personnel O.M.I.*, January 1947, p. 28.

⁴³ C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular letter 83, February 17, 1905, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 45-47.

main reason for the Province.⁴⁴ At the outset, the Province had 65 Oblates: 22 Belgians, 10 Dutchmen, 2 Germans, and 31 Frenchmen. Its origins lay in accepting the chaplaincy of the work of Belgium's national vow to the Sacred Heart. In the letter establishing the Province, Father Augier, the Superior General, wrote: "This work is both too important and too conspicuous to be dependent upon a provincial authority which is not implanted and solidly rooted in Belgium."⁴⁵ Father Cyprien Delouche, who had been very active in the preliminary stages of the Province's founding, was its first Provincial; he is looked upon as the founder of the Belgian Province.⁴⁶

The Sacred Heart in Brussels

The Province's first developments are linked to the Work of the Sacred Heart, situated on the plateau of Koekelberg in Brussels, which the Oblates served until 1919. This Work was a decision of King Leopold II, and its chaplaincy was given to the Oblates in 1902 at the suggestion of the Apostolic Nuncio in Belgium, Archbishop Granito Pignatelli di Belmonte. Father Charles De Vriendt was at first put in charge of a parish, established in 1903, as the starting point for the Work of the

⁴⁴ The house at Dinant and the novitiate at Le Bestin remained under the jurisdiction of the Province of France North. When it was established, the Province's name was *Province of Belgium*. After it acquired the house of Saint-Gerlach in Holland on October 25, 1932, it received a new name: *Province of Belgium and Holland*. When the Province of Holland was created, it reverted to its original name.

⁴⁵ C. AUGIER, O.M.I., *loc. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 46.

⁴⁶ The Province's existence was called into question shortly after its creation. Father Eugène Baffie, Vicar General of the Congregation from September 23, 1907, to January 28, 1908, during Father Lavillardière's illness, in the January 25, 1908 session of the General Council made the proposal that the Province of Belgium be reunited to that of France North: such a reunion would bring together forces that were then dispersed and thus give new vigor to the whole. The Council members asked for additional study of this proposal. Father Frédéric Favier, appointed Vicar General three days later when Father Lavillardière had died, suspended every decision on this question until the next General Chapter. This proposal came to nought. Cf. F. LEPAGE, O.M.I., *Les Oblats en Belgique, les débuts de la Province*, pp. 164-170.

Sacred Heart. In 1905, the Oblates were installed as chaplains and began their work in a temporary chapel which had been opened on April 11.

The Oblates immediately began to organize pilgrimages and to attract the people. In 1905, they established the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart — which became an Archconfraternity in 1912 — as a pious union of reparation and a national union of prayer and adoration. The building of the church, however, left in the hands of committees, progressed rather slowly. Even though the cornerstone had been blessed in 1905, the foundations of the choir section had scarcely been laid when the 1914 war broke out and halted the construction.

When King Leopold II died in 1909, the bishops and the clergy, who had encouraged this Work until then only out of deference to the King's will, began to manifest their opposition to this project, an opposition they had concealed up to that time.⁴⁷ A provisional Basilica Committee proposed to Cardinal Desire Joseph Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, that the purpose of the Work be changed: it should be raised as a memorial to the glory of the war's soldiers, whether dead or still alive. The State would then assume the costs of this monument but it would require the departure of the religious in charge of this Work. These circumstances led Cardinal Mercier to suggest to the Superior General of the Oblates that he himself request to withdraw the Oblates from this Work.⁴⁸ The Superior General consented to this step.⁴⁹

On June 30, 1919, the day after an impressive feast that had brought more than 250,000 pilgrims to the plateau of Koekelberg, the Oblates concluded their service as chaplains of the National Basilica of the Sacred Heart, "a work which, as it

⁴⁷ Sixteen years later, Assistant General Father Eugène Baffie wrote: "Did we not make a mistake in treating as negligible the passivity that bishops, priests, religious men and, under their influence, religious women and faithful pitted against us?" Quoted in F. LEPAGE, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁴⁸ Cardinal Mercier to Father Joseph Lemius, O.M.I., July 21, 1917.

⁴⁹ Archbishop A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., to Cardinal Mercier, September 20, 1917. Cf. F. LEPAGE, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, pp. 153-154.

passed into other hands, was changing its aim and purpose.”⁵⁰ A great apostolate had been accomplished on this Belgian Montmartre by the Oblates, in spite of various difficulties.⁵¹ As some form of compensation, Cardinal Mercier hastened to offer to the Oblates another post in his diocese, to found a parish in Anderlecht, one of the future suburbs of Brussels. An Oblate house was opened there in 1919.

Ministries and works

The Oblates were zealously active in other apostolates in Belgium. The Province always held to assigning some of its Fathers to preaching missions. Their number gradually increased. In 1947, 17 were exclusively committed to this ministry and 22 others helped them on occasion. To begin with, the Oblates preached in the territory where French was spoken. In 1937, they began to preach in Holland where they had opened a house of missionaries at Nijmegen. Finally, they were also preaching in the Flemish areas of Belgium where, in 1943, they opened a house for missionaries at Kapellen-lez-Anvers.⁵²

Being in charge of parishes, public churches and chapels attached to most of the Province's houses, works of Catholic

⁵⁰ A. GUINET, O.M.I., “Rapport du R.P. Provincial de Belgique” (1920) in *Missions*, 54 (1920), p. 264. At the great celebration of June 29, 1919, in the presence of the King, the royal family and a great crowd, Cardinal Mercier renewed the promise of constructing this church in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus out of gratitude for the armed victory of 1918 and in memory of the heroes who gave their lives for their country. The church, built according to a new architectural plan, was finished only after the 1939-1945 war. It was solemnly blessed on October 14, 1951.

⁵¹ “All in all,” Father Fernand Lepage writes, “abandoning this work was an advantage for the Belgian Province, for it was only afterwards that it really began to develop.” *Op. cit.*, p. 155. The Oblate chaplains of the Sacred Heart in Brussels were: Charles de Vriendt (1903-1905; 1906-1909); Cyprien Delouche (1905-1906); Lucien Pescheur (1909-1911); Eugène Pierlot (1911-1919).

⁵² The first Flemish mission was preached by seven missionaries. Father D. Albers, the Provincial, wrote: “All at once we were known in Flanders as preachers of missions.” Cf. “Rapport sur la Province de Belgique de 1938 à 1947”, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 416.

Action, especially the Young Catholic Workers, were ministries that also challenged the zeal of several Fathers.

Finally, the appeal of the foreign missions led several Belgian Oblates at the end of their scholasticate, and others too, to South Africa, Ceylon, and, after 1931, to the Belgian Congo (Zaire today), where the Province had acquired a field of missionary apostolate.

For recruits of different languages

The Province developed its houses and works of Oblate formation in a way so as to meet the needs of recruits of different nationalities or languages who presented themselves: Walloons, Flemings, Dutchmen. Thus the Province opened four juniorates: the first one in 1905 at Waregem, the second for the advanced classes at Jambes-Namur (from 1923 to 1940), the third at Dampicourt in 1929 for Walloons, a fourth one at Saint-Gerlach in 1931 for the Dutch. The novitiate, established at Nieuwenhove in 1905, was transferred to Korbeek-Lo in 1937: there was always but one novitiate for all these different groups. The scholasticate located at Liège was transferred to Velaines in 1931,⁵³ and was a common one for all until 1940. Because of the war, the Dutch scholastics had to return to their own country. The Flemings were installed at Waregem, then transferred to Gijzegem in 1946.

The Province had to invest a great deal in these institutions in terms of personnel and material resources, but it thus assured regular recruitment from each of the different national elements. It thereby prepared the foundation of the Province of Holland and, later, that of Belgium North.⁵⁴

⁵³ Prior to this, in 1919, a scholasticate for philosophers had been opened in Jambes. When the French scholastics left Liège in 1934, the house there became part of the Belgian Province.

⁵⁴ Reviews of the Province were: in Dutch: *Maria Galm* (1908-1921), *Maria Bode* (1922-1951), *Voorposten* (1952-1963), *Oblaten* (1963). Published in Holland: *Missiekoningin* (1934-1951); in French: *Le Messager de Marie Immaculée*, 1920, which merged in 1951 with *Pôle et Tropiques*.

The Province in 1947

The Province experienced a decline in personnel after the 1914-1918 war.⁵⁵ This was due to the closing of the juniorate during the period of hostilities and by the departure of a number of Oblates who returned to their own countries when the communities were able to re-establish themselves there in regular fashion. The Province, which had always had over 60 members since it was founded, had no more than 47 in 1924. A rapid growth in personnel occurred owing to the efforts put into recruiting. Thus the number of scholastics rose from 8 to 42 in four years (1924-1928) and the number of Province members increased from 47 to 130 in six (1924-1930). In 1931 the Province accepted a mission territory in the Belgian Congo (Zaire). By 1947, it had sent 41 missionaries to this mission.

At the time of the 1947 General Chapter, the Province consisted of 164 Fathers, 100 scholastics and 33 Brothers.⁵⁶

A Dutch Branch

From the beginning of the 1939-1945 war, the Dutch Oblates, Fathers, scholastics and Brothers, about 50 in all, had to regroup in their own country and live practically without any relationships with Belgium. This was due to the difficult and even interrupted communications between the two countries. A Dutch novitiate had already been opened at Saint-Gerlach and a house of missionaries at Nijmegen as well. To receive the Dutch scholastics who were obliged to leave Belgium, a scholasticate was provisionally opened at St. Charles

⁵⁵ After the 1914-1918 war, the Provincial wrote: "The Province of Belgium suffered from the war more than did all the other Provinces of the Congregation: on the morrow of the armistice, it was but a heap of ruins." A. GUINET O.M.I., "Rapport du R.P. Provincial de Belgique", in *Missions*, 54 (1920), p. 267.

⁵⁶ The Provincials of the Province were: Cyprien Delouche (1905-1914), Antoine Guinet (1914-1920), Lucien Pescheur (1920-1928), Paul Praet (1929-1932), Léon Calozet (1932-1934), Emmanuel Teunissen (1934-1940), Lucien Pescheur, Vice Provincial, (1940-1943), Daniel Albers, Vice Provincial (1943-1945), Provincial (1945-1947).

in Valkenburg, a property belonging to the Province of Germany. In 1941, this scholasticate was transferred to Weert, and in 1944 definitively established at Duiven. A second house of missionaries was opened at Nijmegen, also in 1944.

The Province of Holland

Father Emmanuel Teunissen, Provincial of Belgium and of Dutch origin, had to return to Holland at the beginning of the war in 1940 and leave a Vice Provincial in charge of the Belgian branch of the Province. He was established at Weert in 1941 and was assisted by a complete Provincial Council. On December 4, 1945, Father Hilaire Balmès, Vicar General of the Congregation, erected the houses and works of Holland into a Province. The house of St. Charles was not included in this arrangement. Father Teunissen was the first Provincial of this new Province.

First developments

The new Province, practically established since 1940, at its first beginnings knew the ordeal of the 1939-1945 war. The communities experienced dispersal; a number of Oblates suffered privations of every sort, some were interned in concentration camps or imprisoned, and all were exposed to the bombings and other numerous dangers of the war. The Province did not have to grieve over the loss of any lives, however.

In its missionary aspirations, the young Province wanted to promote the work of preaching missions. It lacked teams of experienced preachers, however, and it was difficult to make one's way in a country that had already been covered by many preachers from other Institutes. Hence the list of its apostolic activities included some missions, various other preaching works, generous service of parishes, in Catholic Action and other concerns.

Propaganda for Oblate recruitment was done by missionaries assigned to this task, by the magazine *De Missiekoningin* which had already been founded in 1934, and by the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate. The juniorat, established

at first at Saint-Gerlach, together with the novitiate, was in 1946 transferred to the house of St. Charles, named *Collegium Carolinum*, which the Province of Germany had in part loaned to Holland.⁵⁷

In 1947, the Province had 47 Fathers, 11 Brothers, and 22 scholastics, divided among 5 houses.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Regarding the history of the house of St. Charles: A. RIENTJES, O.M.I., "The Collegium Carolinum's seventy-fifth Jubilee" in *Missions*, 88 (1961), pp. 299-309. Also cf. "Le Jubilé d'or du Juniorat de Saint-Charles", *ibidem*, 69 (1935), pp. 525 ff.

⁵⁸ The juniorate of St. Charles, the novitiate of Saint-Gerlach, the scholasticate at Duiven, and the missionary houses at Nijmegen and Nunhem. The Province's magazine, *De Missiekoningin*, founded at Saint-Gerlach in 1934, became *De Groeinde Kerk* in 1962.

CHAPTER 4

New Provinces in Europe – 1918-1947

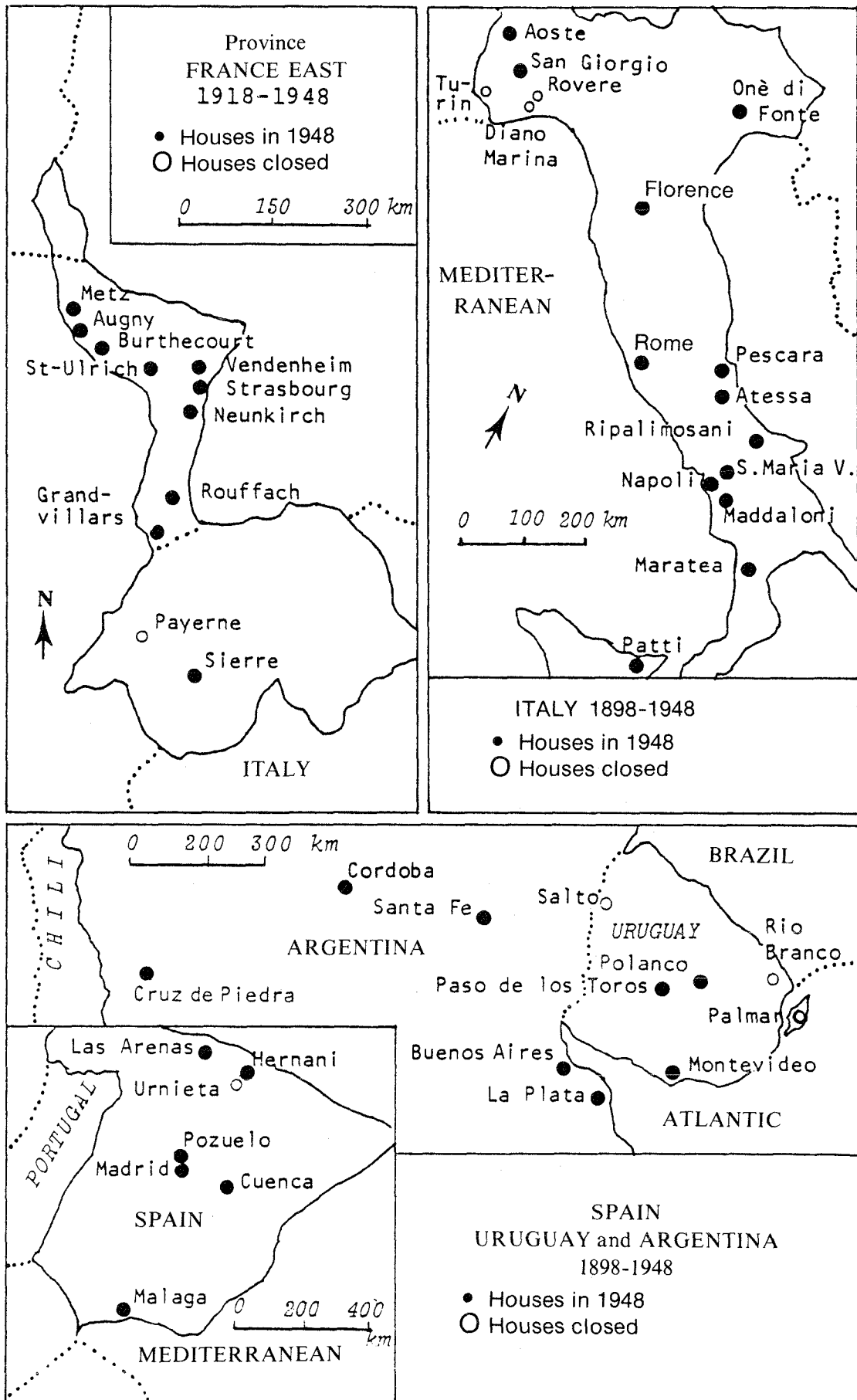
I. The Province of France East: – Province in Alsace-Lorraine – Houses and works – The 1939-1945 war and its aftermath. **II. The Province of Italy:** – The Province's origins – Foundations, missions, works – New thrust of the missions. **III. The Province of Poland:** – The Polish Oblates form a Province – Inside and outside of Poland – Heavy losses of 1939-1945 and recovery – A Polish district in France. **IV. The Province of Czechoslovakia:** – First ministries – A Province is formed – New foundations and works – The Province is displaced. **V. The Province of Austria:** – Oblates of Czechoslovakia – A Province. **VI. The Vice-Province of Spain:** – Entering Spain – Under the Province of Texas – A Vice-Province – In Uruguay and Argentina – Ravages of the 1936-1937 civil war – Restoration; works in Spain.

Seven new Provinces saw the light of day in the years from 1918 to 1948. The Congregation's development in Italy and Spain resulted naturally, as it were, in the formation of Provinces in these countries. Changes in political regimes and the strong accentuation of national identities after the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 world wars hastened and at times directly motivated the formation of new Oblate unities which in time became Provinces. It is thus that the Provinces of France East, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Holland came into being.

I – The Province of France East

A Province in Alsace-Lorraine

In 1918, the houses of Saint-Ulrich, Strasbourg and Neunkirch of the German Province suddenly found themselves in a totally new and changed situation: their territory, occupied by the Germans since 1871, was returned to France. These houses



were cut off from communicating with their provincial authority for several months; later, the rupture in national ties detached these houses from the same authority. From another point of view, it then seemed probable that the administrative jurisdiction under France would come about only little by little.¹

In these circumstances, Archbishop Dontenwill, the Superior General, by his circular letter of December 8, 1918, detached these houses from the Province of Germany and provisionally placed them under a Visitor, Father Marcel Bernad, the Provincial of France North. On April 9 following, he erected a Vicariate in Alsace-Lorraine for one year; on June 4, 1920, this became a Vice Province and a Province on December 1, 1920. Father Alphonse Loos, first Vicar, then Vice-provincial, was appointed Provincial.² In 1929, the new Province was authorized to expand freely into the Duchy of Luxembourg and in Switzerland.³

Houses and works

Giving special attention to its works of recruiting and formation, the Province reopened the juniorate of Strasbourg in 1919 and, in 1933, added a complementary one to it at Augny for students in the higher classes. It established its novitiate at Rouffach, transferring it to Saint-Ulrich in 1930. These works required a good portion of the Province's personnel, but they proved to be a prosperous rich terrain for

¹ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., "La Famille, de 1908 à 1920" in *Missions*, 54 (1920), p. 244.

² A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter to the Oblate religious of the Vice-Province of Alsace-Lorraine, December 1, 1920, *ibidem*, 54 (1920), pp. 309-310.

³ In 1939, the *Province of Alsace-Lorraine* took the name of the *Third Province of France*, or, by analogy to the other two Provinces in France, that of *Province of France East*. Cf. General Council of January 13, 1939. The district of Luxembourg, established by the Province of Belgium, became part of the Province of France East in 1950.

religious apostolic vocations in Alsace-Lorraine. Thus the Province's personnel passed from 49 in 1921,⁴ to 137 in 1939.⁵

Most of the Fathers in the Province preached missions and retreats, in French or in German according to the language spoken by the people they were evangelizing. They especially covered the dioceses of Metz and Strasbourg, and also went into the Duchy of Luxembourg and into Switzerland. In this latter country, they opened a house of missionaries at Payerne in 1937. To this main work they added the ministry in Saint-Ulrich and Notre-Dame de Neunkirch which were pilgrimage places.

The 1939-1945 war and its aftermath

The 1939-1945 war dispersed the communities: only that of Strasbourg more or less survived. More than 50 Fathers were dispersed. The two juniorates were closed, the novices and scholastics took refuge at the novitiate and scholasticate of the France South Province. During the war and afterwards too, the Fathers devoted themselves to serving many parishes without priests in the dioceses of Metz and Strasbourg⁶ and ministered to refugees in the west and south of France.⁷

Immediately after the hostilities, the Province, whose personnel had dropped to 107,⁸ reconstituted its communities and restored the pillaged houses. While the house at Augny was being repaired, the juniorate was reopened at Burthecourt.

⁴ There were 27 Fathers, 11 scholastics and 11 Brothers. Cf. *Personnel O.M.I.*, 1921, p. 32.

⁵ There were 58 Fathers, 48 Scholastics and 31 Brothers. Cf. *Ibidem*, 1939, p. 36.

⁶ The Oblates were called to serve many parishes in the dioceses of Metz and Strasbourg to fill the void left by the expulsion of many priests, about 400 in the former and 60 in the latter diocese. Father Ignace Schueck, the Provincial, made available to the diocese the majority of the Fathers who had not been expelled. N. SCHAFF, O.M.I., "Rapport sur la 3^e Province de France (Est) présenté au Chapitre général de 1947", in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 57.

⁷ AROMI, 1940, p. 19, 74.

⁸ There were 76 Fathers, 9 scholastics, 22 Brothers. *Personnel O.M.I.*, 1947, p. 14.

The novices returned to the house at Saint-Ulrich and the scholastics remained at the scholasticate of the France South Province. As early as 1945, a new house of missionaries opened up at Grandvillars, in the territory of Belfort.

In January 1947, the Province had 9 houses and residences,⁹ and a personnel of 76 Fathers, 9 scholastics and 22 Brothers.¹⁰

II – *The Province of Italy*

The Province's origins

The juniorate of the France South Province had been moved to Diano Marina in 1883 and immediately accepted young Italians as juniorists. When the house was demolished by an earthquake in 1887, the French juniorists returned to France whereas the Italian juniorists were sent to Rome where they could continue their juniorate. In 1903, this juniorate in Rome was transferred to Santa Maria a Vico. This institution is seen as “the cradle of the Italian Province”.¹¹ From the turn of the century onwards, the France South Province also developed other works in Italy.¹²

Archbishop Dontenwill, the Superior General, having come to the conclusion that the time was ripe for this, on

⁹ Strasbourg, St. Ulrich (novitiate), Burthecourt (juniorate), Augny, Neunkirch, Metz, Rouffach, Vendenheim and Grandvillars. There was also Sierre, a post in Switzerland. The residence of Payerne in Switzerland was abandoned in the 1939-1945 war.

¹⁰ The Provincials were: Alphonse Loos (1920-1926), Jean-Nicolas Metzinger (1926-1933), Xavier Mosthoff (1933-1937), Ignace Schueck (1937-1945), Nicolas Schaff (1945-1947). The Province published a magazine, *Immaculata*, founded in 1921; in 1939, it had a monthly subscription of 37,000. It was suspended during the war and resumed in 1946.

¹¹ G. DRAGO, O.M.I., “Les premiers vingt-cinq ans de la Province d’Italie”, in *Études Oblates*, 9 (1950), p. 130.

¹² Cf. above, pp. 28-29. The Founder himself had tried, but without success, to establish the Congregation in the Italian peninsula: in Nice, Savoy, even in Rome. He did have the joy of calling to perpetual vows some forty Oblates coming from different points in northern Italy. Cf. G. DRAGO, O.M.I., *loc. cit.*, in *Études Oblates*, 9 (1950), p. 129.

February 17, 1920, erected the establishments of France South located in Italy into a Vice-Province. This included Santa Maria a Vico, Maddaloni, Naples and Onè di Fonte. Five years later, February 17, 1925, he raised this Vice-Province to the rank of Province.¹³ The new Province at its outset counted a personnel of 30 Fathers, 12 scholastics and 10 Brothers.

Foundations, missions, works

One year after its establishment, the new Province opened its novitiate at Ripalimosani and its scholasticate at San Gior-



At Santa Maria a Vico, ca. 1920.

From l. to r.: (seated) Giacomo Nanni, Giuseppe Drago, Euloge Blanc, Bishop Agostino Migliore, the founder of the college which became Santa Maria a Vico, August Esteve, Aristide Ferri, Salvatore Ioppolo; (standing, centre row) Rosario Gentile, Stefano Alessiani, Emidio Del Re, Giovanni Battista Lingueglia, Giuseppe Ferrechia, Gaetano Drago, Raffaelo Ferri; (standing, back row) V. De Luca, Giovanni Battista Basile, Vincenzo Anzalone, Ferdinando Anzalone, Francesco Celeste, Giuseppe Ioppolo.

¹³ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter to the Oblates of Italy, February 17, 1925, in *Missions*, 39 (1925), pp. 228-229.

gio Canavese.¹⁴ In 1927, it opened the house of St. Nicholas in Rome (via dei Prefetti), where they served an adjoining church. In 1928, the Province accepted an Italian parish in Palisades Park in the United States, which was a most useful financial resource to it. Finally, in 1936, it opened a house of missionaries in Atessa.

The Province's apostolate was mainly centered on the preaching of missions, a work launched since 1905 by the community established at Maddaloni and then by that of Naples founded in 1910. The 1914-1918 war slowed down this ministry which resumed its full pace afterwards. Father Drago writes: "The period of 1920 to 1930 was especially dedicated to the missions . . . and in some way recalls the beginnings of our Congregation when the Founder and his companions covered the parishes of Provence, constantly preaching missions."¹⁵

Besides this ministry of the missions, there was the generally quite intense ministry of serving public chapels and some parishes attached to the houses of the Province. Worthy of special mention is the service of the little church of the Rosary at Pescara, which was accepted in 1940. This church was destroyed during the war. To replace it, the Oblates in 1946 began to build a large shrine dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

New thrust of the missions

The 1939-1945 war brought painful moments to the Province, especially from October 1943 to August 1945 when hostilities progressed from the south to the north of Italy. In virtue of the Concordat between the State of Italy and the Holy See, religious men were not subject to military service and thus the Oblates could continue their work.

¹⁴ The Italian scholastics were separated from those of France South in 1921. After provisionary stays at Roviano, in Rome, at Santa Maria a Vico and at Onè di Fonte, they were definitively established at San Giorgio Canavese in 1926. Cf. AROMI, 1948, p. 76.

¹⁵ G. DRAGO, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Études Oblates*, 9 (1950), p. 132.

After the war, mission preaching took on fresh momentum. With courage and daring, the missionaries addressed all the social milieus, often speaking to people who had been strongly influenced by the Communists. Sicily too opened up to their zeal; in 1946, a house of missionaries was founded in Patti.

The Provincial, Father Luigi Rossetti, told the Capitulars in 1947: "The preaching of missions flourishes more than ever in our Province which, in this regard, can flatter itself to possess the true Oblate spirit as Bishop de Mazenod conceived and achieved it."¹⁶ The Province then had a team of 40 missionaries who were very active across Italy, even in the north where the Oblates were less known.¹⁷

In 1947, the Oblates of the Province numbered 165: 104 Fathers, 34 scholastics, 27 Brothers. There were 17 houses and residences.¹⁸

III – *The Province of Poland*

Polish Oblates form a Province

Polish men came to the Congregation through the juniorate of St. Charles, a house of the German Province. The first two Fathers¹⁹ were sent to Western Canada in order to care for their compatriots, Slav and German immigrants. A little later,

¹⁶ L. ROSSETTI, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province d'Italie au Chapitre général de 1947", in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 322.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 322.

¹⁸ *Personnel O.M.I.*, 1947, p. 35. Vice Provincials were: Euloge Blanc (1920-1923), Emidio Del Re (1923-1925). Provincials were: Emidio Del Re (1925-1928), Giovanni Basile (1928-1934), Maturino Blanchet (1934-1940), Luigi Rossetti (1940-1949). The Province published *Voce di Maria* which was founded in Rome in 1921; in 1955 it was renamed *Fino al Polo* and, in 1959, *Missioni OMI*.

¹⁹ John William Kulawy, who was the first juniorist, and his brother Albert. These two made their scholasticate in Ottawa, Canada, and received their obedience for the Canadian West: Albert in 1898 and John William in 1899. Brother Anthony Kowalczyk, the second Polish Brother in the Congregation, an Oblate from 1892 onwards, was the first to go to Western Canada.

other Polish Oblates who were attached to the house of St. Nikolaus in Germany, began ministering to the immigrants from their native land, especially in the Rhineland and in Westphalia. In 1905, they made up the first regular team of Polish missionaries.



*The first Polish community in Poland, at Krotoszyn in 1920-1921.
From l. to r.: (seated) Francis Kosian, Paul Czakaj, William Kulawy, John Nawrat; (standing) three juniorists, Brother Anthony Adamski, a juniorist, and Brothers James Ciesielski and John Schroeder.*

The 1914-1918 war restored independence to Poland with the hope for religious renewal. On the other hand, it accentuated the differences of origin and nationality between the German and Polish peoples. Because of these circumstances, the Oblates of Polish nationality in the St. Nikolaus house formed on May 20, 1919, a separate community at Hoentrop. As this house had to be evacuated, these Oblates in the following year established themselves in Poland itself, at Krotoszyn,

He arrived there in 1896, worked at first in the Indian missions, then at the juniorate of St-Jean in Edmonton. His cause for beatification was introduced in Rome in 1979.

where they had already undertaken measures to establish a juniorate.

At this time, upon the suggestion of the Provincial of Germany, the Superior General, by act of June 6, 1920, detached the house of Krotoszyn from the Province of Germany and placed it as well as all future establishments in Poland under the immediate authority of the General Administration.²⁰

The Oblates of Poland immediately organized houses for Oblate formation. The juniorate projected for Krotoszyn opened in the fall of 1920 with some thirty students. It was transferred to Lubliniec in 1922. In 1921, a novitiate was opened at Markowice. The next year, a scholasticate was established at Krobia, which in 1926 was transferred to Odra. To consolidate these nascent works in Poland, the Superior General in 1921 recalled the four Polish Fathers from Western Canada.²¹ Poland was erected as a Vicariate on February 22, 1922, and became a Province on June 13, 1925. Father Francis Kowalski was appointed first Vicar and then Provincial.²²

Inside and outside of Poland

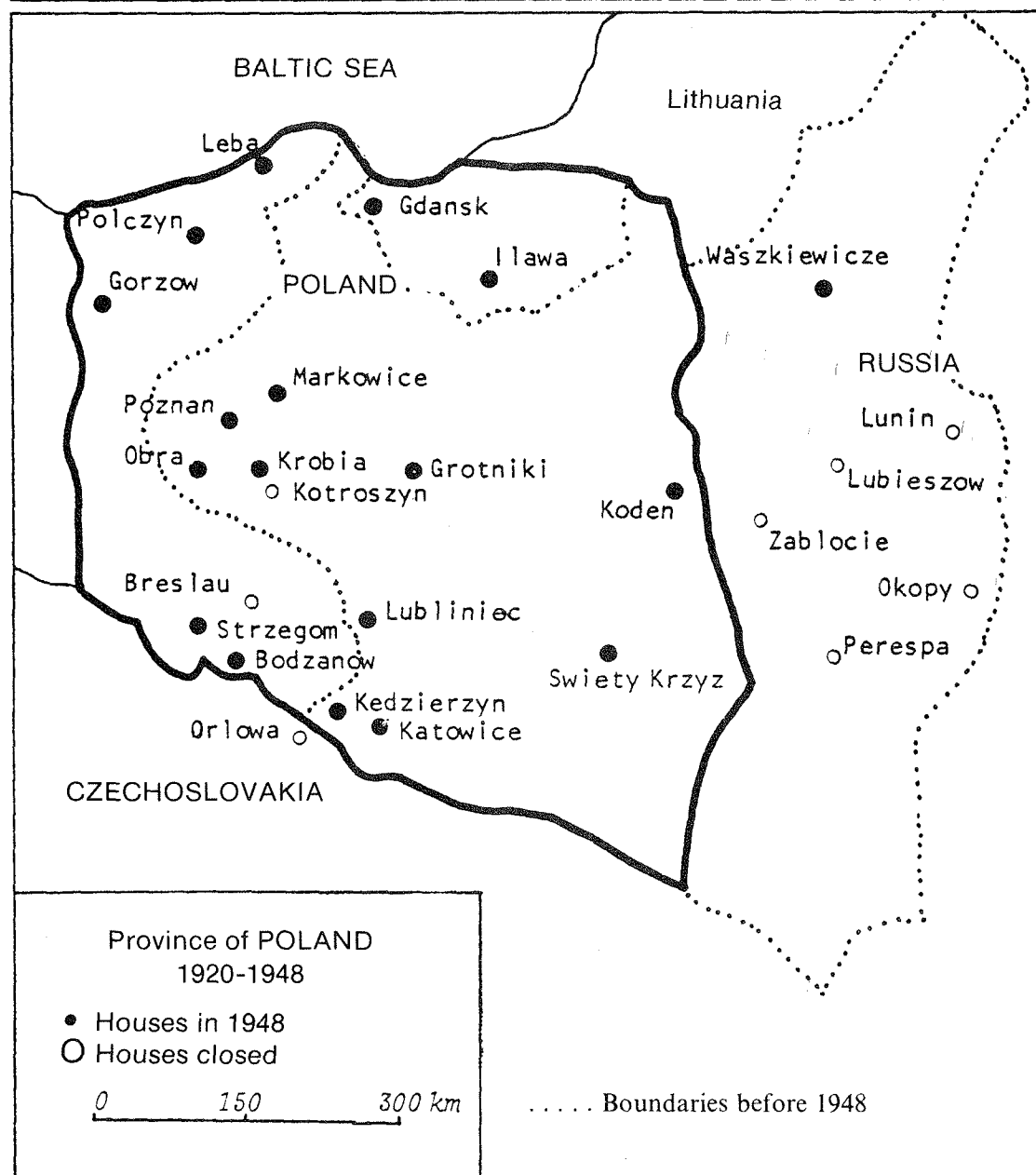
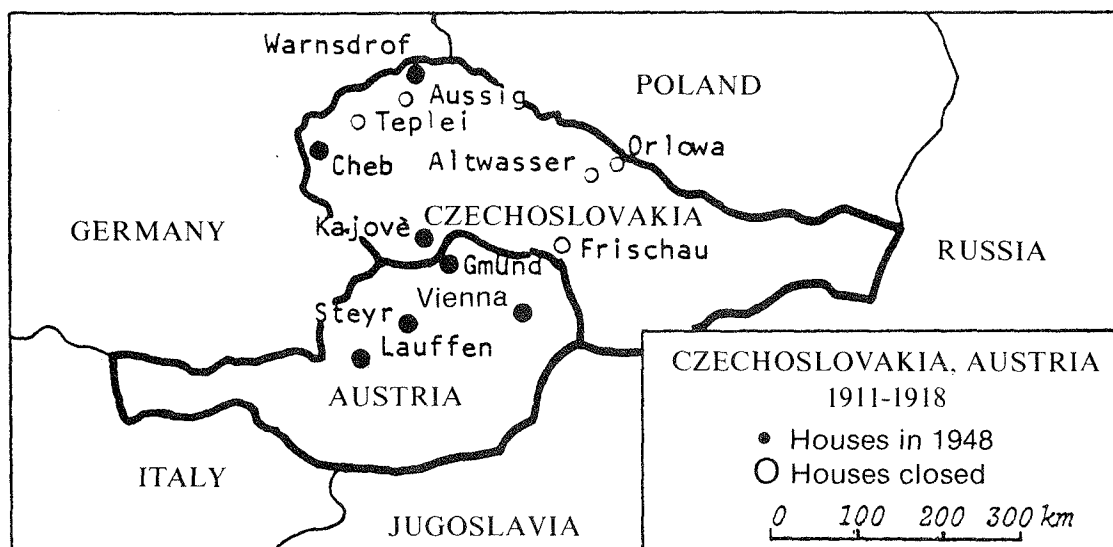
In 1927, the young Province opened two important houses: one a house of missionaries in the large city of Poznan, the other at Koden in Eastern Poland, where they accepted to serve a famous Marian shrine. Moreover, in this latter place they founded a parish of the Oriental rite and four Oblates passed over to this rite in order to serve this parish and even to try and bring the Orthodox faithful into the Roman Church.²³

²⁰ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Letter of February 22, 1922, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 95-97.

²¹ Francis Kowalski and Stanislaus Baderski from the Province of Manitoba, and Theophile Nandzik and Paul Kulawy from the Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan. Cf. F. Kowalski, O.M.I., "Rapport du Père Provincial de Pologne", to the General Chapter of 1926, *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 78-80.

²² A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter of June 13, 1925, *ibidem*, 59 (1925), p. 13.

²³ AROMI, 1935, pp. 87-89.



Three other establishments followed: a house of missionaries and the service of a Marian shrine in the capital of Upper Silesia, at Katowice, in 1934; two years later, a house to serve another famous pilgrimage place, Holy Cross, "the Mont Saint-Michel of Poland"; and, in 1938, the pastoral care of the parish of Orlowa in southern Poland.

Finally, in 1938-1939, at the request of the Bishops of Wilno, Pinsk and Luck, the Province accepted five posts on the eastern frontier of Poland,²⁴ where the population was mostly White Russian and Ukrainian, nearly all of them Orthodox. As in Koden, the Oblates worked to bring these Orthodox back to the Roman Church and, at the same time, they served the Polish Catholics who were, practically speaking, living in the diaspora.

Besides several Oblates sent to France in order to minister to their compatriots there, the Province of Poland from 1927 to 1939 sent 13 Oblates to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and 19 to the missions in the Canadian Far North.

Heavy losses in 1939-1945 and recovery

The war and enemy occupation during 1939-1945 caught the Polish Province — which was in rapid development — by surprise and inflicted great hardship upon it. 88 Oblates were imprisoned for terms of varying length, 35 of which were deported to concentration camps and 34 of which were slain. The Province lost its five residences in the East, which was ceded to the Soviet Union, as well as the parish at Orlowa.²⁵ It found all its other houses more or less seriously damaged and pillaged. During the time of hostilities, the ministry could

²⁴ The residences of Waszkiewiczze, Lunin, Perepsa, Okopi and Zablocie. *Missions*, 73 (1939), p. 507. The house of Lubieszow in the diocese of Pinsk, a house for priests in difficulty, was in the hands of the Oblates for one year only, 1932-1933.

²⁵ The eight other houses and residences were damaged and pillaged but recuperated after hostilities: Obra, Markowice, Lubliniec, Katowice, Poznan, Krobia, Holy Cross of Koden.

be carried on only with great risk, extra effort and often clandestinely.

When the war was over, the Oblates' priority concern was the houses of Oblate formation and then resuming their works, especially that of preaching missions. From 1945 to 1947, 250 missions of 10 days duration each and as many parish retreats were preached. Seventeen Fathers were assigned exclusively to this ministry. "Those who preach the most missions in Poland are definitely the Oblates," their Provincial stated.²⁶ Besides the ministry of preaching, a number of Oblates were looking after many Poles who were poor and without religious assistance: these were people who had to leave their homes which were occupied by the Soviet Union and to take refuge in the northern and western parts of Poland.

A Polish district in France

During the war, the Polish Fathers who were finishing their scholasticate at Notre-Dame de Lumières each year increased the ranks of their confreres who were already at work among their compatriots in France. On September 4, 1946, Father Hilaire Balmès, Vicar General of the Congregation, detached the apostolic works done in Polish in the France South Province and constituted the same as a district called the "Polish District of France", placing it directly under the Provincial of Poland.²⁷ The centre of this District was established at Laferté-sous-Jouarre, some 60 kilometers east of Paris. The District expanded into Belgium and Luxembourg. It opened a juniorate at Béthune in 1947.

In January 1947, the Province of Poland, including the Polish Districts in France and in England, numbered 148

²⁶ B. WILKOWSKI, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province de Pologne" to the 1947 General Chapter, in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 13.

²⁷ On October 2, 1946, another district, similar to that in France, was established in England; it was dissolved, however, on August 23 of the following year. Cf. J. PIELORZ, O.M.I., *Les Oblats polonais dans le monde 1920-1970*, p. 137.

Oblates: 120 Fathers, 8 scholastics, and 20 Brothers. Its effective personnel was much reduced in comparison to before the war when it had 276 Oblates: 78 Fathers, 119 scholastics and 79 Brothers. Its formation institutions, however, were all re-established and the juniorate already was blessed with 115 students.²⁸

IV – *The Province of Czechoslovakia*

First ministries

At the invitation of the Christian social party and with the enthusiastic authorization of Bishop Josef Gross of Leitmeritz, the Oblates of the German Province in 1911 opened a house at Warnsdorf. This house was located in the German part of Bohemia, in a region that had been strongly affected by diverse heretical sects, by socialism and communism.²⁹ The Oblates served one church and were founding different associations for Catholic workers and young people. Two years later, Father Wilhelm Schwane even became president of the German-speaking General Association of the Catholic Youth.³⁰ At the same time missionaries were beginning the work of the missions. They used, with some adaptations, the methods used in the Province of Germany.³¹

²⁸ The Provincials of Poland were: Francis Kowalski (Vicar Provincial 1922-1925) (1925-1931), John Nawrat (1931-1936), Bronislas Wilkowski (1936-1947). The Province launched a magazine in 1926, *Oblat Niepokalanei* (The Oblate of the Immaculate): it appeared regularly until 1939.

²⁹ J. PIETSCH, O.M.I., "Province de Tchéco-Slovaquie, Rapport rétrospectif sur les débuts de la Province", in *Missions*, 64 (1930), pp. 164-165.

³⁰ AROMI, 1936, p. 61.

³¹ J. KROELL, O.M.I., "Province de Tchecoslovaquie", in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 84. Father Alois Schillings, the soul and support of the house at Warnsdorf, was the missionary par excellence and he contributed a great deal to the Oblates' good name at Warnsdorf and elsewhere. "The Province is being built up on him as upon a solid foundation," former Provincial Father John Kroell wrote. J. Kroell, O.M.I., "P. Alois Schillings 1877-1953", in *Missions*, 91 (1964), p. 252.

Upon the invitation of Bishop Paolo de Huyn of Bruenn, the Oblates in 1912 established themselves in the south of the country, at Frischau in Moravia, where they took the pastoral care of a large parish and devoted themselves to the ministry of preaching missions.

A Province is formed

When in 1918 the independent republic of Czechoslovakia was formed — a republic “zealous in defending itself against every foreign intervention”³² — the two Oblate houses there were in a new situation. Their being under the jurisdiction of Germany “could be the source of serious embarrassment”.³³ Thus, at the suggestion of the Provincial Council of Germany, Archbishop Dontenwill, the Superior General, on March 19, 1924, erected these houses as a Vicariate distinct from the Province of Germany.³⁴ This Vicariate then consisted of 8 Fathers, 3 Brothers and two houses. It was put under the direction of Father Charles Haim.

The founding of the Vicariate was immediately followed by the establishment of three important houses. The first of these was opened in 1924 itself, in the diocese of Budweis in the southwest of Czechoslovakia, a diocese that was the poorest in the number of priests. It was situated in a region where the faith and the Christian life were much more intense than in the areas that had been evangelized elsewhere in the country. This house was first established at Holy Cross; in 1930 it was transferred to Gojau, a much more important religious centre. The Oblates there looked after a parish, served a much frequented Marian shrine, and preached missions and retreats.³⁵

³² J. PIETSCH, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 64 (1930), p. 168.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 168.

³⁴ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter to the Oblate religious of the Houses of Warnsdorf and Frischau, March 24, 1924. Oblate General Archives, Rome. Dossier Circ. adm. gen., Tchecoslovaquie.

³⁵ J. KROELL, O.M.I., *art. cit.* in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congregation . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 86-87.

A second foundation was made in 1925 at Eger, a city of some 40,000 people who were nearly all Catholic, a very important communications centre. The Oblates there took on the direction of a boarding school and dedicated themselves to preaching missions. A third foundation, finally, was put down at Teplei in 1926: here the Oblates were the guardians of a small chapel which housed a miraculous image of our Lady that had been venerated in this place for two centuries. This was a favorable spot for locating the Province's juniorate.

On April 4, 1927, Archbishop Dontenwill, the Superior General, raised the Vicariate to the rank of Province and appointed Father Haim as its Provincial.

New foundations and works

Three new establishments marked the expansion and progress of the new Province. The first of these dates from 1930, at Altwasser: here the Oblates looked after a parish, served a place of pilgrimage to St. Anne, and preached missions. The second was in Austria, in Vienna, in 1934: here they founded a new parish in a sector of the city that was the most infected by socialism, communism and an anti-religious spirit.³⁶ The third was at Aussig, in Bohemia, in 1935, where they accepted a parish in an industrial area and gave themselves to the preaching of missions.

The missionaries' apostolate in preaching missions and serving parishes amid the worker population aimed at reawakening the faith that was dormant or had even died out in cities and entire regions. Their ministry had to be carried on with prudence and tact, considering the contrast of the Czech and

³⁶ The centre of the parish entrusted to the Oblates was an ensemble of apartments for workers located in an immense building put up in 1928-1929 that was one kilometer long and housed 7000 persons. It was called the *Karl Marx Hof*. This enormous building did not bear in vain the name of this great socialist leader, for its inhabitants were mostly socialists and communists. The Oblates rented a hall inside this building as a place for worship. In 1939, the Nazi Party had this hall closed. Cf. *Missions*, 68 (1934), pp. 317-318; *OMI Information*, February 28, 1968, pp. 5-6.

German nationalities which were in “violent opposition”³⁷ to each other, and the political circumstances involved.

The Province opened a juniorate at Teplei (1925) and a novitiate at Gojau (1935). It sent its scholastics to Huenfeld in Germany.

The Province is displaced

The Province which in 1938 had 64 Oblates and 8 well established houses,³⁸ was displaced under the thrust of the political events which afflicted the country from 1938 to 1947.

The invasion and occupation by Hitler’s Reich of that part of the country inhabited by Germans brought with it the prohibition of all ministry in the Czech language. The Province was now provisionally referred to as the Province of the Sudetans.³⁹

The 1939-1945 war worsed the situation. The continuous levy of recruits decimated the Oblates’ ranks: 13 of them were slain; 4 of the 8 houses were heavily damaged.⁴⁰

In the end, when Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Russians in line with the Potsdam treaty, the Germans were expelled from the country and the Oblates, nearly all of them of German nationality, with them. Ten of them rejoined Germany and some twenty others made their way to Austria where they reformed the Province. A few were able to remain in Czechoslovakia but they could not communicate with their Provincial who had been expelled and was now in Vienna.

In its September 27-28, 1946 session, the General Council made Czechoslovakia a district that was directly dependent

³⁷ J. KROELL, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 85-86.

³⁸ 64 Oblates: 39 Fathers, 11 scholastics and 14 Brothers. The 8 houses and residences were: Warnsdorf, Frischau, Gojau, Eger, Teplei, Altwasser, Vienna, and Aussig.

³⁹ *Missions*, 73 (1939), p. 300.

⁴⁰ Vienna, Altwasser, Aussig and Eger. On the other hand, the Province opened a house at Brno (Bruenn), the capital of Moravia, where the ministry was carried on in Czech and in German. Cf. AROMI, 1940, p. 71.

upon the General Administration. Five or six Fathers were then in the houses of Eger (Cheb), Warnsdorf and Gojau. In the course of time, these Oblates gradually left the country. All their goods were confiscated by the State. Father John Straka, a Czech, carried on parish ministry in the country until his death on January 2, 1970.

The Province of Czechoslovakia was officially suppressed on January 25, 1967.⁴¹

V – *The Province of Austria*

Oblates of Czechoslovakia

The nucleus of a new Oblate unit in Vienna in 1946 consisted of 19 Fathers, 11 scholastics, one house in Vienna, all scarred by the events of the war.

The Oblates of Czechoslovakia were warmly and generously welcomed in Austria by Cardinal Theodor Innitzer, the Archbishop of Vienna, and by Bishops Joseph Fliesser of Linz and Michael Memelauer of Saint Poelten. Eight Fathers were attached to the house in Vienna;⁴² the rest were grouped into two districts: five were in the diocese of Linz and four in that of Saint Poelten. One year later, in 1947, each of these two districts was centered upon a parish among the working class which had been entrusted to the Oblates: Steyr-Muenichholz in the diocese of Linz and Gmuend-Neustadt in the diocese of Saint Poelten. The Oblates had also accepted to serve a small Marian shrine at Lauffen, right in the heart of the Alps, to which was attached a parish of some 400 people.⁴³

⁴¹ The Provincials were: Charles Haim (1927-1929), John Kroell (1930-1936), Alois Schillings (1936-1939), Georg Fromm (1939-1946). District Superior was John Straka, 1946. The Province published the German magazine *Der Missionsfreund* from 1928-1939.

⁴² The Oblates resumed their parochial work in the Vienna parish. From May 1, 1945, they used an army barracks as a parish church; this was replaced with a new church in 1967. Cf. *OMI Information*, February 28, 1968, pp. 5-6.

⁴³ J. KROELL, O.M.I., "Province d'Autriche, Rapport présenté au Chapitre général de 1953" in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 51-58.

A Province

On August 1, 1947, Father Leo Deschâtelets, Superior General, detached from the Province of Czechoslovakia the Oblates and works in Austria and constituted the same a new Province, that of Austria. Father Johannes Kroell was its first Provincial.⁴⁴

VI – The Vice-Province of Spain

Entering Spain

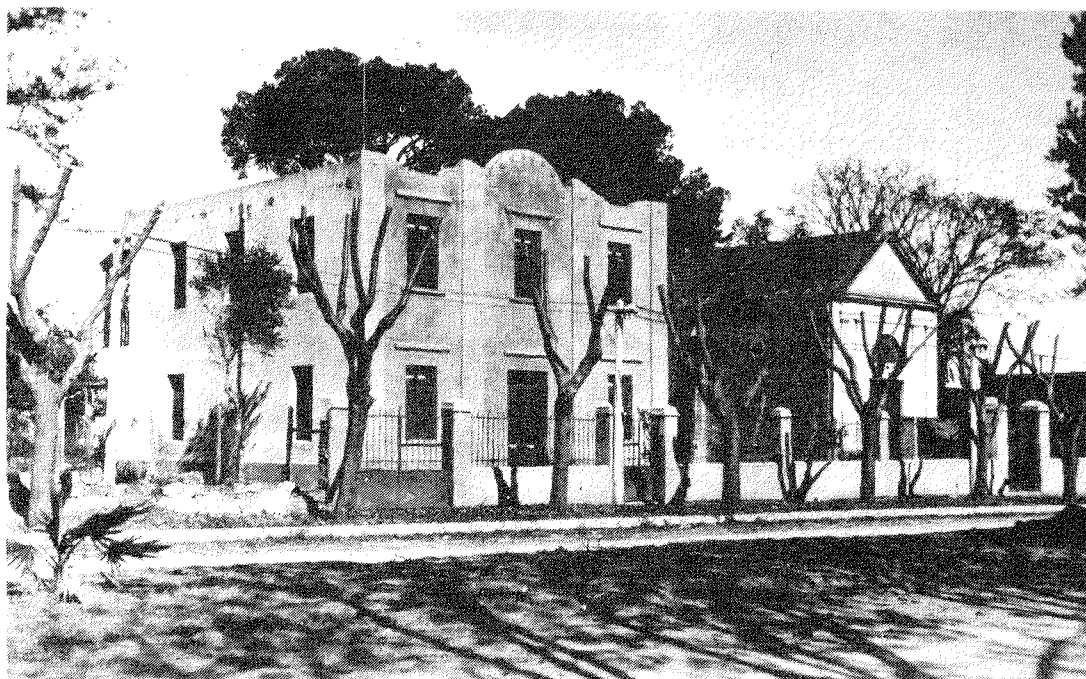
The Oblates of the General House entered Spain by making a foundation in Madrid in 1882. They were the chaplains of the Holy Family Sisters of Bordeaux located there. Some years later, in 1893, the France South Province opened a house at Soto, where it organized a juniorate in 1895. In 1898, this juniorate was transferred to Urnieta, near San Sebastián. According to the customs of the religious Orders in this country, they had to take in the juniorists gratis, and this placed a heavy financial burden upon the France South Province. In 1920, this Province had to yield this work into other hands: it was accepted by the United States Second Province (Texas).⁴⁵

Under the Province of Texas

The Province of Texas promoted the development of the juniorate and novitiate at Urnieta. It transferred the novitiate to Las Arenas in 1926 and in 1929 founded a scholasticate at Pozuelo, at the gates of Madrid. In 1930, it undertook an apostolate proper to Spanish Oblates by a foundation at Salto, in Uruguay. To begin with, Father Jesus Prieto was sent there

⁴⁴ *Missions*, 75 (1948), pp. 222-224.

⁴⁵ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter 128, April 13, 1921, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 3, pp. 368-369. This institution was attached to the Province of Texas on December 4, 1920. The Superior General wrote: "This juniorate (Urnieta) could have had two main ends: to furnish the Mexican missions of the United States Second Province, and to prepare the expansion of the Congregation in Spain. In point of fact, this second end has not been achieved, nor does it promise to be in the near future." *Ibidem*, p. 368.



The house of Salto, the first foundation in Uruguay, 1929-1947

for a time, then Fathers Pedro Centurioni, Emiliano Diez and Jesus Calleja, and, a little later, Brother Santiago Martinez⁴⁶ were established there. In 1931, another house was opened in Uruguay, at Paso de los Toros, and other Oblates joined the others there.

A Vice-Province

Since the three houses in Spain, juniorate, novitiate and scholasticate were so far distant from the provincial authority in Texas, they were placed on November 1, 1931, under the government of a Vicar Provincial, Father Francisco Esteban, who was assisted by two Councillors.⁴⁷ The development of the formation houses in Spain, the opening of Spanish ministries in Uruguay, and the hope of solving the economic problems which had motivated incorporating the Spanish apostolic works into the Texas Province, decided the Superior General

⁴⁶ E. ALONSO, O.M.I., *Historia de la Provincia Espanola de los Padres Oblatos 1882-1960*, p. 354; cf. below, p.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Missions*, 66 (1932), pp. 148-149; Chaptres généraux 1906-1938, copy in Archives Deschâtelets, pp. 479-480.

to constitute these works in Spain and Uruguay as a Vice-Province. The new Vice-Province, erected on December 8, 1932, consisted of the three houses in Spain and the two residences established in Uruguay. The Vicar Provincial, Father Esteban, was appointed Vice Provincial of the Vice-Province.⁴⁸

In spite of numerous attempts, the Oblates of the house in Madrid⁴⁹ and the Texas Province authorities were not able to broaden the Oblates' ministry in Spain itself. Their ministry was limited to serving certain religious communities.⁵⁰ It was only after the 1936-1937 civil war that other ministries were granted them.

In Uruguay and Argentina

The Vice-Province's first growth came about in Uruguay where it accepted three new establishments: the parishes of Polanco (1933), Rio Branco (1935-1944) and Montevideo (1939). Difficulties of development in Uruguay, however, induced the missionaries to gradually withdraw from this Republic. They centered their forces mainly in Argentina,⁵¹ where they devoted themselves especially to preaching missions. From 1935 to 1937, five posts were opened in this country: Buenos Aires (1935), La Plata (1944), Santa Fe (1944), Cruz de Piedra (1946) and Cordoba (1947). In each of these posts, one or two missionaries served the parish or church

⁴⁸ The Vice-Province of Spain was raised to the rank of Province by letter of the Superior General on January 25, 1948. Cf. *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 225.

⁴⁹ The house in Madrid was directly under the General Administration from 1882 to 1893 and from 1930 to 1935; under the France South Province from 1893 to 1930, and under the Vice-Province of Spain after 1935.

⁵⁰ Cf. E. ALONSO, O.M.I., "Vice-province hispano-sud-americaine. Rapport historique présenté au Chapitre général de 1938", *ibidem*, 73 (1939), pp. 6-7; Th. LABOURÉ, O.M.I., *Tentatives de travaux apostoliques en Espagne*, MS. 4 p., Oblate General Archives, Rome, Dossier Fondation Espagne; *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 138-139.

⁵¹ S. LUCAS, O.M.I., "Rapport sur la Vice-Province d'Espagne et d'Amérique du Sud", presented to the 1947 General Chapter, in *Missions*, 75 (1948), pp. 28, 29. Salto, the first house founded in Uruguay, was abandoned in 1947.

attached to it, while a team of three or four devoted themselves — with success — to preaching missions.⁵²

Ravages of the 1936-1937 civil war

During this time, in Spain itself, the young Vice-Province experienced a martyrdom: it was cruelly struck by the excessively violent civil war that broke out in July 1936. Its four houses were all located in the areas where the marxist forces at first conquered and all endured the vicious onslaught. The scholasticate at Pozuelo, the house of Madrid which had just been attached to the Vice-Province, and the juniorate at Urnieta were all occupied, pillaged, and their members were dispersed. At Pozuelo, 22 Oblates were savagely shot; the house of Urnieta was destroyed by fire. Only the novitiate at Las Arenas escaped pillage and dispersal, but it lived under a regime of terror and alarm and was the object of a thorough search and an active surveillance.⁵³

During this 1936-1937 war, 27 Oblates were registered as having disappeared,⁵⁴ 25 in violent death and 2 because of privation or illness. The Vice-Province thus lost one third of its personnel which in 1936 had numbered 83 Oblates (which includes the 17 in South America).

Restoration; works in Spain

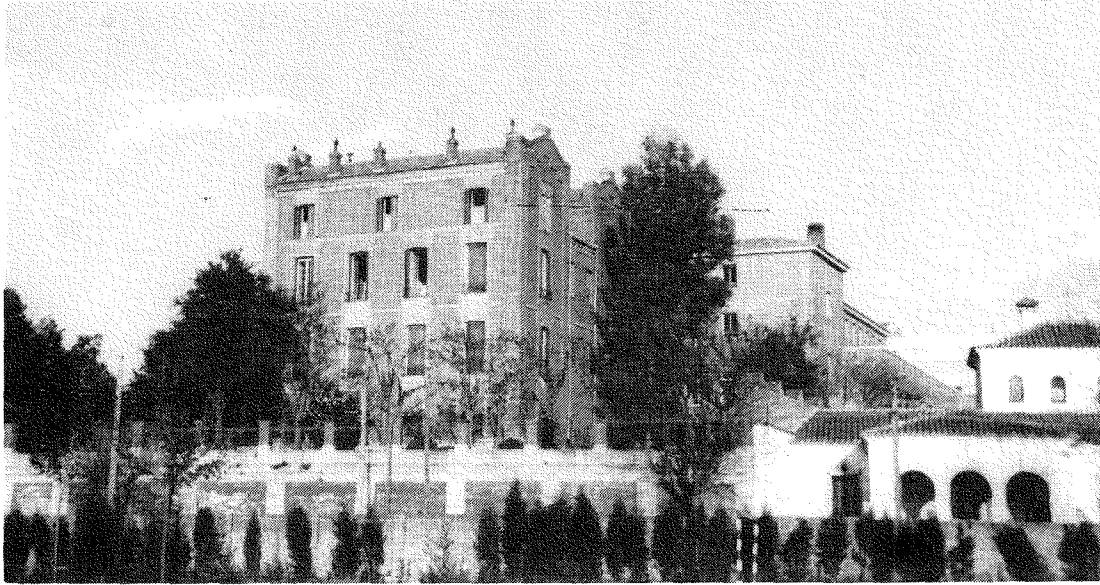
The Vice-Province promptly united and reorganized its forces. To begin with, it received permission to open a public chapel in Madrid. It re-established its scholasticate at Pozuelo, its novitiate at Hernani and its juniorate at Las Arenas. At the request of the bishop of Malaga, one of the diocese that lost the most priests during the 1936-1937 civil war, the Vice-Province in 1939 accepted a parish in Malaga itself.⁵⁵

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 30. A parish in Brazil, Santa Victoria do Palmar, was accepted in 1938 and given up in 1941. In 1947, there were 6 Oblates and 3 residences in Uruguay and 25 Oblates and 4 residences in Argentina.

⁵³ Cf. E. ALONSO, O.M.I., "Rapport historique présenté au Chapitre général de 1938", *ibidem*, 72 (1938), pp. 9-18.

⁵⁴ 6 Fathers, 16 Scholastics and 5 Brothers.

⁵⁵ S. LUCAS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 75 (1948), pp. 19-22.



The house of Pozuelo, in Spain.

Scholasticate opened in 1929 and enlarged since. Today, the novitiate, the pre-novitiate and a retreat centre are also located in this building.

A new trial lay in store, however. The world war that broke out in 1939 isolated Spain from all outside communications and thus the Vice-Province was deprived of every assistance from the Congregation. It therefore suffered great poverty and even had to close its juniorate for two academic years (1941-1943). After this painful period, new developments took place. To its great satisfaction, it in 1945 opened at Cuenca a first Oblate house of missionaries in Spain. The following year it also accepted two new parishes in the diocese of Malaga.⁵⁶

In January 1947, the Vice-Province's personnel numbered 55 Fathers, 27 scholastics and 12 Brothers; there were 5 houses in Spain, 3 in Uruguay and 4 in Argentina.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

⁵⁷ The Provincials were: Francisco Esteban (1932-1938), Emilio Alonso (1938-1945), Sinforiano Lucas (1945-1948). The Vice-Province founded an Oblate magazine, *La Purísima*, at Madrid in 1925; since 1960, it goes by the name *Fatima*.

CHAPTER 5

The Province of Canada East – 1898-1947

I. The missions: – The North Coast: departure and return – Establishing the Vicariate of Labrador – The missions of James Bay – The Apostolic Vicariate of James Bay – Other Indian mission territories – Union with Basutoland – Committed to missions. **II. Preaching and parishes:** – Missions and retreats – Closed retreats – Ministry in the lumber camps – Parishes. **III. Special Works:** – Shrine of Our Lady of the Cape – University of Ottawa – The Catholic Centre at the University – Assisting the Franco-Ontarians – Catholic Action – Social works and other ministries. **IV. Formation houses and personnel:** – Formation houses – The Brothers – Personnel in 1947.

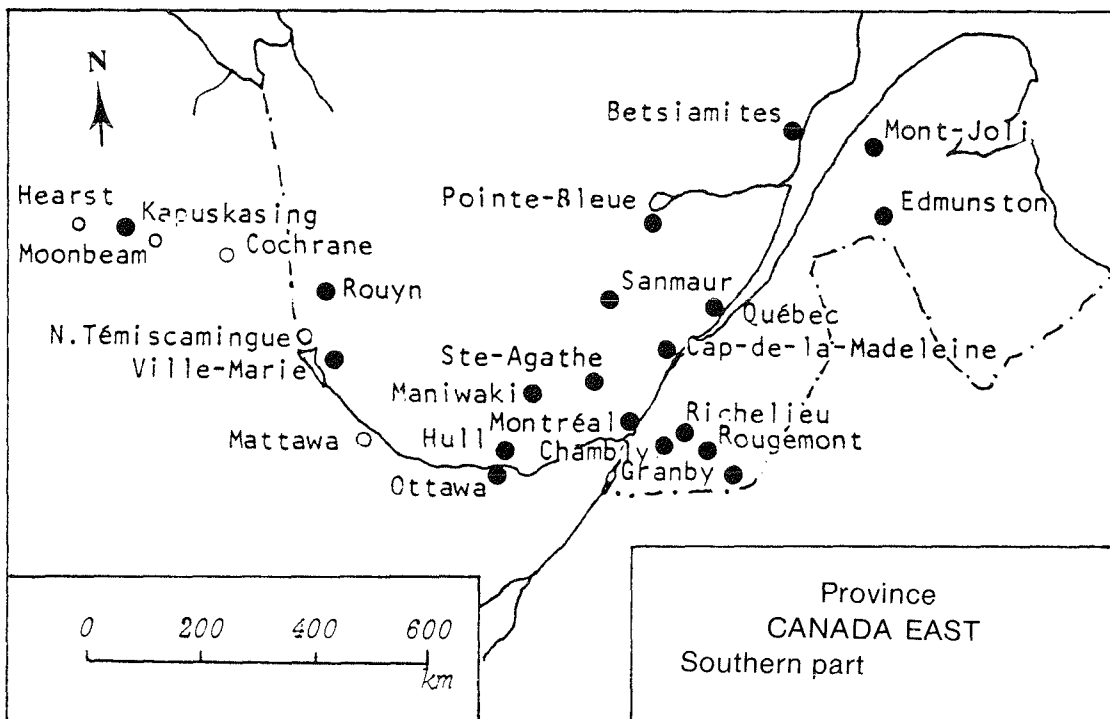
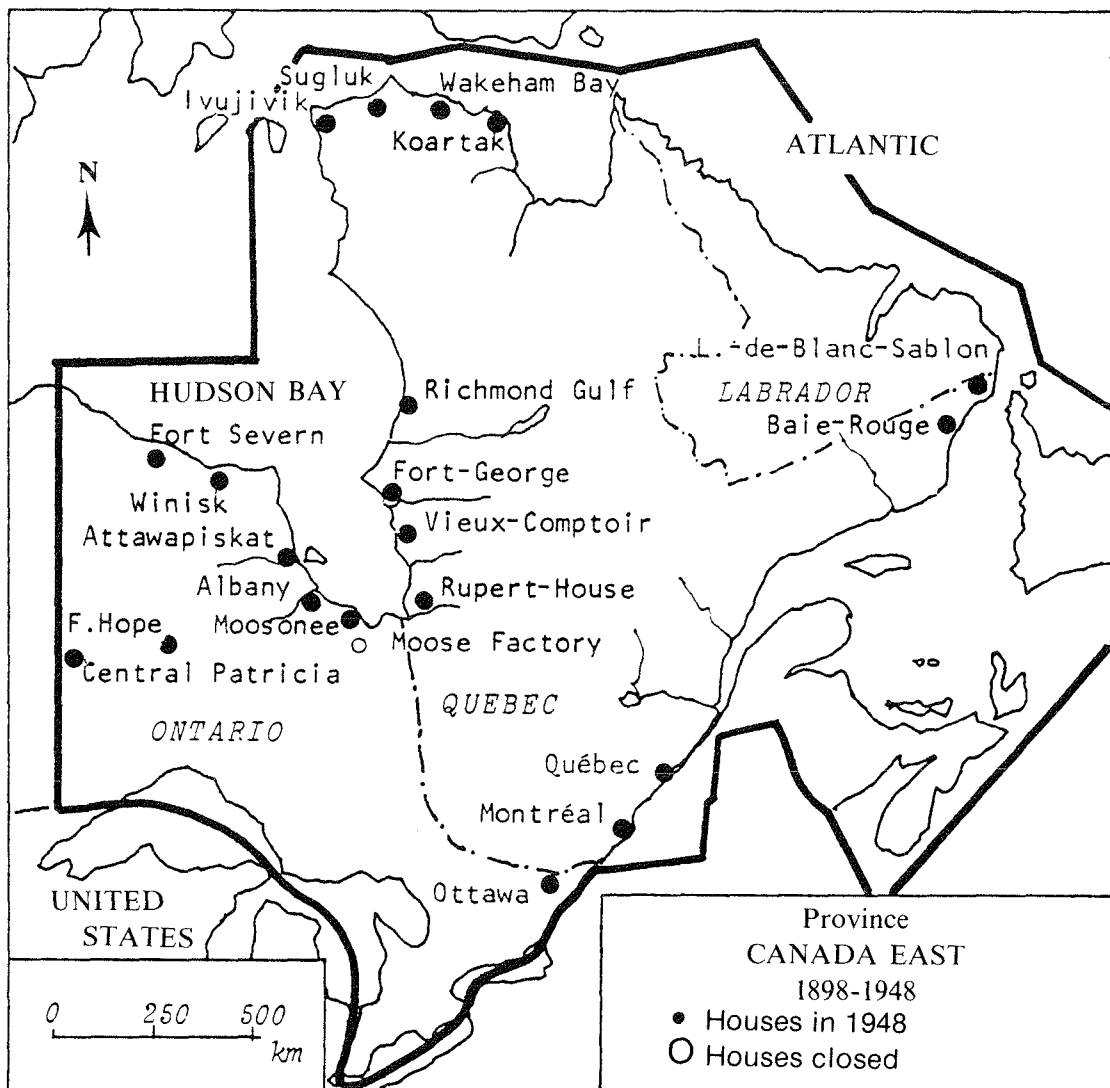
I – *The Missions*

The Province of Canada East extended over the civil provinces of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes; more precisely, this was from the 91st degree of longitude to the limits of Canada on the Atlantic ocean and the boundary with the United States, to the northern limits of Ontario, Quebec and Labrador. Especially in the north of this territory there were large portions that were mission fields: here lived dispersed Indians of various tribes and the Eskimo, the latter in the farthest North.

The North Coast: departure and return

In 1911, the missionary sector of the North Shore of the St. Lawrence River, of which Betsiamites is the centre and which the Oblates had been serving since 1844, was handed over to the Eudist Fathers. These latter were in charge of the Apostolic Vicariate of the Gulf of St. Lawrence since 1903.¹

¹ Twelve Eudists left France in 1901 on account of the persecutory laws and, in 1903, took over the posts or parishes of Whites in the Apostolic Prefecture of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In 1905 this was made an Apostolic Vicariate.



The Provincial Council of Montreal made this transfer for the following reasons: "because such is the desire of his Excellency, the Vicar Apostolic, and then on account of the distance and isolation of these posts.² The last Fathers to serve these Indian missions, Fathers Charles Arnaud, Louis Babel and Benjamin Boyer, were transferred to the residence of Pointe-Bleue.³

These missions were back in Oblate hands by 1945, however. Bishop Napoléon Labrie, C.J.M., Vicar Apostolic of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in a letter of July 17, 1945, expressed his personal regret that the Oblates left these Indian missions in his Vicariate and he offered the Oblates the chance of taking them back again.⁴ In taking this step, he was strongly encouraged by the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, who was also favorably considering this transfer.⁵ Making the Apostolic Vicariate of the Gulf of St. Lawrence into a diocese was being considered at this same time. The offer was accepted,⁶ and the Oblates were again at Betsiamites in November 1945, engaged in the harsh but sympathetic Montagnais missions on the North Shore.⁷ Fathers Paul Langlois, Joseph Décarie, Brother Conrad Auger and, several months later, Father Léo Laurin

² Minutes of October 30, 1909, in *Conseil provincial*, Montreal, vol. 3, p. 91. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

³ The posts served from Betsiamites were: Sept-Iles, Moisie, Mingan and Musquaro. The Montagnais groups of Natashquan, La Romaine and St-Augustin would meet at Musquaro for the mission. Cf. L. GARNIER, Eudist, *Du cométique à l'avion, les pères Eudistes sur la Côte-Nord*, 1947, p. 62.

⁴ Letter of July 17, 1945. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal, dossier *Betsiamites 1945*.

⁵ Letter of Bishop N.-A. Labrie to the Provincial, August 30, 1945. *Ibidem*.

⁶ Minutes of August 31, 1945, in *Conseil provincial*, Montreal, vol. 11, pp. 46-48. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

⁷ On November 24, 1945, the Vicariate of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was raised to the rank of a diocese. Its boundaries were the Saguenay River to the west and the Natashquan River to the east.

(who had just completed his scholasticate in Ottawa), took over this mission.⁸

Establishing the Vicariate of Labrador

Another vast missionary territory was accepted in 1945. In fact, the negotiations in view of having the Oblates return to their former missions on the North Shore had scarcely begun when the Holy See on July 13, 1945, erected the Apostolic Vicariate of Labrador⁹ and entrusted it to the Oblates' zeal. Here, too, they were returning to some of their former Montagnais missions, namely, the lower North Shore, Eskimo Bay and Fort Chimo.

The new Vicariate extended to the whole north of Quebec, to Labrador and to the lower North Shore; in its farthest northern point, it included a territory inhabited by the Eskimo. When it was established, it had only 3 Oblates: Fathers André Steinmann and Hubert Mascaret and Brother André Chauvel, all missionaries to the Eskimo and established at Wakeham Bay and Ivujivik.

Bishop Lionel Scheffer, O.M.I. was appointed Vicar Apostolic on March 14, 1946. His was the heavy task of organizing this Apostolic Vicariate which was located on a vast desolate territory of 560,000 square kilometers wherein communications were difficult, populated by only some 10,000 people, 2000 of whom were Catholic. On June 28, 1946, he took official possession of his Vicariate in a simple ceremony celebrated in the church of Lourdes-de-Blanc-Sablon, the location he had chosen as the see for his Vicariate.

⁸ In 1947, the main posts served from Betsiamites were: Les Escoumins, Sept-Îles, Moisie, Mingan, Natashquan, St-Augustin, La Romaine and Musquaro. The last three belonged to the Apostolic Vicariate of Labrador. L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "La province de l'Est du Canada (1938-1947)" in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 97.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 345-347. The Vicarial General Council of America had in its January 18, 1945 session accepted in the name of the Congregation to take charge of the future Apostolic Vicariate of Labrador. *Registre de Conseil général vicarial d'Amérique*, t.2, p. 2. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

Two years later, besides the residence at Lourdes-de-Blanc-Sablon, the residences of Baie-Rouge on the lower North Shore and of Richmond Gulf on Hudson Bay had been founded. The missionary personnel of the new Vicariate consisted of 8 Fathers and 4 Brothers. The Vicariate was in May 1946 attached to the Province of Canada East and on September 8, 1947, it became an integral part of the Province.¹⁰

The missions of James Bay

The James Bay missions¹¹ were continued at the price of great sacrifices and were experiencing noteworthy changes. Three new residences were added to that of Albany and thus increased the missionaries' permanent presence. These residences were Attawapiscat (1912), some 160 kilometers north of Albany; Fort George (1922), on the east coast of James Bay; and Winisk (1924) on the shore of Hudson Bay. The first two were founded by Father Louis-Philippe Boisseau and the last one by Father Louis-Philippe Martel.

These missions and their few outposts reached the Cree Indians to the West and East of James Bay, two groups that differed in the language they spoke and in religion. Those to the West were Catholic, those to the East were Anglicans. The missionaries were also reaching the Objibwe Indians in the interior region at the headwaters of the Albany River. In 1918, the missions to these latter Indians were ceded to the Jesuits who were already active in the neighboring areas.¹²

In 1929, the Provincial Council made the missions of James Bay into a religious district and assigned Father Émile Saindon as superior with the powers of a vicar provincial.¹³

¹⁰ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "Décret d'union entre la Province du Canada et les Vicariats apostoliques de la Baie James et du Labrador", in *Missions*, 74 (1947), pp. 757-762. Also cf. G. CARRIERE, O.M.I., *Les Oblats de M. Im. dans le vicariat apostolique du Labrador 1944-1956*, p. 235 ff.

¹¹ Cf. above, vol. I, p. 214-215.

¹² Minutes of January 25, 1917, in *Conseil provincial*, Montreal, vol. 3, p. 267. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

¹³ Minutes of 11-12 April, 1929. *Ibidem*, vol. 9, p. 103.

During the same year, a residence was opened at Moose Factory, where in 1932 a vicarial house was built: this was in the part of Moose Factory that is today Moosonee. In 1937, Fathers Lionel Labrèche and Aram Ethier and Brother Gérard Lavoie opened a second house on the east shore of James Bay, at Vieux-Comptoir some 150 kilometers to the south of Fort George.

The Apostolic Vicariate of James Bay

On December 3, 1938, the Holy See constituted the west and east sides of James Bay into an apostolic vicariate to which it gave the name of James Bay. On December 11 following, it named Apostolic Vicar Father Henri Belleau, a worthy apostle of these missions. At the time of its establishment, the new Vicariate had a missionary force of 14 Oblate Fathers and 24 Oblate Brothers assigned to six residential missions, and two communities of the Sister of Charity of the Cross from Ottawa, who were in charge of the schools and hospitals at Albany and Fort George. The Objibwe missions, which were in the far west of the Vicariate, were served by a Jesuit Father. At the Jesuits' request, these latter missions were taken back by the Oblates in 1941.¹⁴ Fathers Maurice Ouimet and Robert Charland, who were assigned to them, established themselves at Fort Hope. In 1943, Father Charland opened a second residence at Central Patricia in view of serving the miners at this place as well as the Indians at Lake St. Joseph (Osnaburgh).¹⁵ The mission of Rupert House was opened on the east shore of James Bay in 1943.

A few names are especially worthy of mention to illustrate the devotedness and work of the James Bay missionary craftsmen. Father Arthur Bilodeau was much esteemed by the Indians who called him *Kochawishinau*, "our dear little

¹⁴ Minutes of 5-6 November, 1940, *ibidem*, vol. 9, p. 454.

¹⁵ The mission posts among the Objibwe were: Ogoki, formerly Marten's Falls; Lake St. Joseph or Osnaburgh; Lake Attawapiscat or Lansdowne House; and Kagianagami. H. BELLEAU, O.M.I., "Les missions de la Baie James", in *L'Apostolat*, 1940, p. 56.



At Albany, James Bay, in September 1928.

From l. to r.: (seated) Brother Conrad Lavoie, Father Arthur Bilodeau, Director, Brother Léo Beaudoin; (standing) Brothers Roland Lachance, Euclide Desaulniers, Joseph Turgeon, François-Xavier Brodeur, Joseph Morel and Henri Fontaine.

Father”; he spent 44 years of his life as a missionary in James Bay. Father Damase Couture spent 45 years in the thankless missions of Fort George and Rupert House without experiencing the consolation of founding a Christian community there. Brother Joseph Turgeon, named by the Indians *Kamionteet*, “the man with a good heart”,¹⁶ gave his 63 years as a religious exclusively to the James Bay missions. Brother Joseph Laflamme spent 58 years in these missions and Brother Joseph Martin fifty-six. Other missionaries who are still living, some still active, others retired, have registered a career of more than 40 and 50 years in these missions.

Besides their missionary presence, the Brothers, whose work was often shared by the Fathers, played an exceptionally

¹⁶ G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., “Turgeon, Joseph” in *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblates de Marie Immaculée du Canada*, t. 3, p. 245.

important role in the material organization, maintenance and development of these missions. At the price of great fatigue they assured the provisioning of the missions, the boarding schools and hospitals. Thus they cultivated a soil that was nearly everywhere poor or swampy and also went hunting and fishing in a land that was infested with mosquitoes in summer and bitterly cold in winter.¹⁷

Other Indian mission territories

The Province's missionaries to the Indians were busy in four other fields that were not quite so large. Father Joseph-Étienne Guinard regularly visited, from the turn of the century until 1940, the missions at the upper Saint Maurice River where the Attikamic Indians lived. This Father left a deep impression on these Indians. He was followed by Father Édouard Meilleur. After a long wait, the missionary of this territory in 1946 was given his own residence near the Indians at Sanmaur.¹⁸

The mission posts among the Algonquins of Temiscaming and Abitibi were during the first half of the century served by Fathers Armand Laniel, Étienne Blanchin, Isidore Evain, Louis-Philippe Martel, Léon Carrière, Édouard Baudet, Gérard Deschênes and others. The reserve of Maniwaki, also populated by Algonquins, from 1915 to 1939 benefited from the services of a veteran missionary, Father François-Xavier Fafard. The mission at Pointe-Bleue, finally, on a Montagnais reserve, prospered under the direction of Fathers Benjamin Boyer from 1913 to 1930 and of Joseph Décarie from 1931 to 1942. The latter also served an outpost at Lake Onistagan, some 300 kilometers north of Pointe-Bleue.

In all these missions — as also in those on the North Shore, in Labrador and James Bay — the missionaries,

¹⁷ On September 8, 1947, the Vicariate of James Bay became an integral part of the Province of Canada East. Cf. above, p. 90, note 10.

¹⁸ Cf. Minutes of May 22 and November 25, 1946, in *Conseil provincial*, Montreal, vol. 11, pp. 183-184, 267. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

according to their traditional method, stayed close to the Indians, spoke their language, taught in a catechism fashion, gave short missions in the posts they visited, and worked to



Jean-Marie Rodrigue Villeneuve (1883-1947)
Archbishop of Quebec (1932-1947)
created Cardinal in 1933.

improve the human and social conditions of the Indians by opening schools and hospitals as well as by other means. They spared no effort in caring for the 6800 Catholic Indians who were very much dispersed all over a vast territory.

Union with Basutoland

The need for a greater number of missionaries in the flourishing missions of Basutoland, today Lesotho, gave rise to the project of entrusting these missions to the Province of Canada East which was blessed with good recruitment. Study of this project was under way before 1926 and matters were accelerated by the intervention of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide which proposed it in 1928. The Provincial Councils

of the Canada East Province and of the Vicariate of Basutoland studied the proposal, and Father Georges-Étienne Ville-neuve, Provincial of Canada East, made a general visit of Basutoland from August to December 1929. As a consequence of these steps, Archbishop Dontenwill, the Superior General, on June 8, 1930, decreed the linking of the Vicariate of Basutoland to the Province of Canada East. This link did not mean that the Vicariate was incorporated into the Province; but it consisted in the Provincial of Canada East being also appointed Vicar of Missions of Basutoland. The Province and the Vicariate continued each to subsist integrally with all their rights and respective Provincial Councils; the Provincial of Canada East was represented by a Pro-Vicar in Basutoland.¹⁹ In 1947, these missions in southern Africa counted 102 Oblates from Canada.

Committed to missions

Besides the 102 missionaries sent to Basutoland, the Province had 74 Oblates serving the Indian and Eskimo missions on its own territory. It had also gave a number of Fathers, Brothers, scholastics to the missions in the Canadian West and North, as well as some to Laos and to Haiti.²⁰ The Congregation's personnel book of 1948 shows that there were at that time about 400 French-speaking Oblates, natives of Canada East, in the missions.

II – *Preaching and parishes*

In the southern part of its territory, the Province was serving dioceses in terms of preaching missions and different kinds of retreats and of ministering in certain parishes.

¹⁹ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter to the Oblates of Canada and of Basutoland, in *Missions*, 64 (1930), pp. 314-316; cf. below, pp.

²⁰ Cf. Ph. BOURASSA, O.M.I., "Province du Canada" in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 111. L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "La province de l'Est du Canada", in *Missions*, 75 (1948), pp. 44-45. A Provincial Council decision to accept missions in the Philippines was not put into effect. Cf. below, p. 253, note 43.

Missions and retreats

At the turn of the century, the Province had some ten full-time mission preachers who were occasionally assisted by five to seven others.²¹ These numbers gradually increased. Besides the house of Saint-Pierre-Apôtre in Montreal — which till then had been nearly the only house of missionaries — other groups of missionaries were formed and based mainly in the houses of Saint-Sauveur in Quebec, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, and, after 1922, at Mont-Joli. Requests for preaching retreats in parishes, colleges, religious communities and in dioceses for the clergy were becoming more and more numerous. Advent and Lent were seasons wherein the missionaries were extremely busy: often they would be preaching for a good four weeks in the same parish, speaking in turn to different categories of persons.

Even though the former style of mission was not used in Canada since the turn of the century, the missionaries always did strive to maintain the true traditions of Oblate preaching.²² To take stock of the preaching situation, the Province held two important missionary congresses: one in 1918 at Ottawa,²³ the other at Cap-de-la-Madeleine in 1938.²⁴ A school of preaching was opened in 1936 and maintained in various forms thereafter: it served as a guide to young missionaries. Each year the missionaries met together for their own retreat.

In 1941, some missionaries, under the direction of Father Gaston Champagne, began missions referred to as “in the

²¹ N.-S. DOZOIS, O.M.I., “Province du Canada”, *ibidem*, 43 (1905), p. 26; *ibidem*, 48 (1910), p. 9.

²² For a sample of the kind of preaching that was done at the turn of the century, cf. *Notes (pour la prédication) préparées par le R.P. Dozois, o.m.i.*, 118 typewritten pages.

²³ Congress held August 18-20, the aims of which were: maintaining the true Oblate traditions, further formation of the missionaries, study of certain practical questions. “A conservative orientation dominated the proceedings,” Father G. Charlebois remarked. Letter to N.-S. Dozois, 25-8-1918. Oblate General Archives, Rome. Dossier Charlebois, G. – Dozois, N.-S.

²⁴ Cf. *Réunion plénière des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée, au Cap-de-la-Madeleine, du 20 au 25 janvier 1938*, p. 216.

Mazenod style". With the necessary adaptations and according to the needs of the time, they took up again the formula used in the first missions given by the Congregation. These missions included visiting families, different great celebrations, and the planting of the cross at the end of the mission.²⁵

In 1947, the Province had 35 Fathers who were exclusively assigned to preaching missions and some twelve others who did this part-time. Father Léo Deschâtelets stated: "The Oblates are looked upon by our people as those who are capable of best adapting themselves to the most varied of Canadian contexts."²⁶

Closed retreats

The Province's work of closed retreats originated at St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa in 1911. It was due to the initiative of the Superior of this house, Father Rodrigue Villeneuve, who later became Archbishop of Quebec and Cardinal. For eleven years, the exercises of the closed retreat were given in the scholasticate facilities during the holidays of the scholastics.

The work took root in different Province centres, beginning in houses which lodged a sizeable community or in those specifically intended for this ministry. Such retreats began to be offered at Cap-de-la-Madeleine in 1914, in Quebec in 1921, at Mont-Joli in 1922, in Hull in 1925, at Ste-Agathe-des-Monts in 1935, at Rouyn in 1939, at the École Frère Moffet at Ville-Marie in 1939 (until 1945), at Ville LaSalle in 1943, at New Richmond in 1946, and in Edmundson, New Brunswick, in 1947.

These retreat houses were hearths of conversion, spiritual renewal and prayer. They received adults who were workers

²⁵ Cf. Letter of D. Plaisance to Cardinal J.-M. R. Villeneuve, O.M.I., January 8, 1945. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal, Dossier *Mazenod* (*Mission à la Mazenod*).

²⁶ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "La Province de l'Est du Canada (1938-1947)", in *Missions*, 74 (1974), p. 461.

and rural people, students, occasionally professional people. The retreats lasted three days and sometimes only a weekend. Personal and trusting relationships between the missionaries and the retreatants were established in individual encounters where the sacrament of forgiveness and spiritual direction was received. A good number of retreatants came every year to strengthen themselves in their Christian living. Annually some 20,000 persons benefited from the Province's retreat houses. As Father Léo Deschâtelets observed, "Our experience of closed retreats is one of the most precious and fruitful in Canada. We feel that we have created a style that is our own and that works wonders."²⁷



*House of closed retreats "Jésus-Ouvrier", Quebec
founded by Father Victor Lelièvre*

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 469.

In 1948, the personnel assigned to the retreat houses numbered 32 Fathers and 14 Brothers. The ardent apostle of the Sacred Heart was Father Victor Lelièvre. He was seconded by generous confreres and a committee of highly committed laity. All these people contributed to the exceptional apostolic influence wielded by the house of closed retreats of Jésus-Ouvrier in Quebec, which this Father had founded.

Ministry in the lumber camps

The lumber camps, that is, the forest industry which employed thousands of young people and men, did not diminish but multiplied. Hence the missionaries continued to ply their ministry in these milieus. During a 2-month period in winter, some ten missionaries evangelized these workers in short missions lasting 24 hours. In 1946, they were particularly active in four main centres: Maniwaki, Sanmaur, Kapuskasing and Senneterre. The region of Mattawa, where the missionaries had carried on this ministry in the past, had been abandoned in 1917.

Parishes

The Province retained its parishes of Saint-Pierre-Apôtre in Montreal,²⁸ Saint-Sauveur in Quebec, Notre-Dame de Grâce in Hull, Ville-Marie in Maniwaki, and Sacred Heart in Ottawa. It had given the parish at Mattawa to the secular clergy in September 1917. The Provincial Council had come to the conclusion that the Oblates were no longer in their proper place there.²⁹ In 1929 it ceded the English-speaking parish of St. Joseph in Ottawa to the Oblates of St. Peter's Province.

New parishes were accepted: Holy Family, in Ottawa (1901);³⁰ St. Mary Magdalene, attached to the Marian pilgrimage shrine at Cap-de-la-Madeleine (1902); Saint-Nazaire in

²⁸ The church of St-Pierre-Apôtre in Montreal was opened in 1848 as a public chapel; it became a parish church in 1900.

²⁹ Minutes of December 28, 1915, in *Conseil provincial*, Montreal, vol. 3, p. 233. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

³⁰ In 1930, the English-speaking faithful of Ottawa's Holy Family parish

Montreal (1916); Immaculate Conception at Kapuskasing (1921); Mont-Joli (1922), a parish which became the home base for the missionary preachers in that region; Sainte-Bernadette Soubirous in Montreal (1938), a new parish in a poor sector of the city; Immaculate Conception at Rouyn (1938), serving a very poor population at the outskirts of the city; and lastly, in 1946, Sacred Heart in Hull, which was detached from the Oblate parish of Notre-Dame de Grâce in the same city.

In these parishes, the Oblates preached constantly, directed congregations of young people and of others, looked after the poor, often seeing to their daily sustenance, made the Blessed Virgin loved, devoted themselves to hearing confessions during long daily and weekly sessions.³¹ After the 1930s, the Catholic Action movements, especially that of the Young Catholic Workers, men and women, was developed in these parishes.

III – *Special Works*

Shrine of Our Lady of the Cape

Besides the parochial ministry, the Oblates had to undertake many other different apostolic activities needed by the Church in their milieu.

On May 1, 1902, Bishop François-Xavier Cloutier of Three Rivers installed the Oblates as guardians of the shrine of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. The sons of Bishop de Mazenod became quickly attached to this Marian work and have put their whole heart into its development. Two important events came to stimulate their zeal. In 1904, Pius X granted the rare privilege of solemnly crowning the miraculous statue; and in 1909, the representatives of all the dioceses in Canada, assembled in Plenary Council in

formed the new parish dedicated to the Canadian Martyrs which was entrusted to the Oblates of St. Peter's Province.

³¹ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 473.

Quebec, recommended the Madonna of Cap-de-la-Madeleine to the devotion of the faithful and thus gave a national character to this shrine.³²

Pilgrimages multiplied: the number of pilgrims reached over 300,000 in 1946. Work was undertaken to make the locale of the shrine more attractive and favorable to piety. The Annals of the shrine were being published since 1892 and were more and more being received in Canadian households and also in those of the neighboring American republic. In May-June 1947, a replica of the Madonna of this shrine was triumphantly brought to Ottawa where it presided a grandiose Marian congress. Soon afterwards, it travelled to Western and Northern Canada, and then to the Maritime Provinces. On its journey, parishes received it with honor in celebrations that had been prepared for by retreats and prayer.

University of Ottawa

The University of Ottawa, a bi-lingual institution still under the direction of the Canada East Province, strengthened its university character in the first half of the twentieth century, even though it had to overcome trials and difficulties inherent in this work itself and in the milieu in which it was developing. Early in this century, on December 2, 1903, the main building of the University was completely levelled to the ground by fire. There were at that time 28 Fathers, 7 scholastics, 6 Brothers and 500 students.³³ The work was carried on as well as possibilities allowed until the opening, in 1905, of the central part of the new building which was enlarged in 1914, 1923 and 1931.

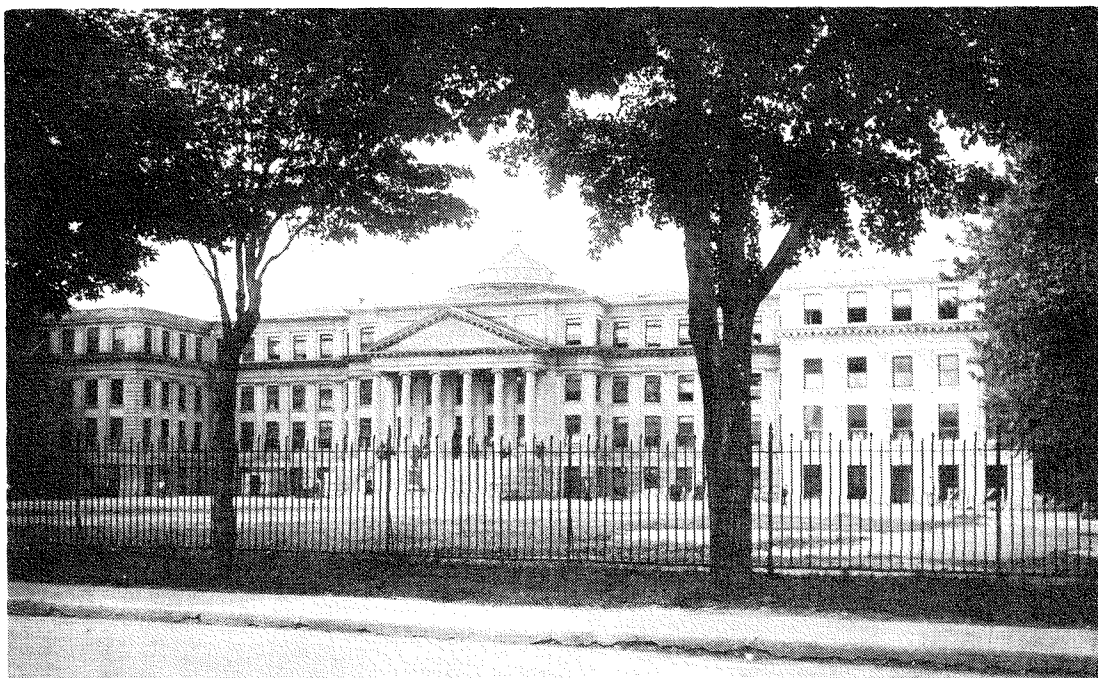
Aside from the Faculties of Arts, Theology, Canon Law and Philosophy, the development of other appropriate university elements was a slow process.³⁴ Besides extending to the

³² *Acta et decreta Concilii plenari Quebecensis primi, anno Domini MCMIX*, Quebeci, 1912, Caput IX, art. 575, p. 416-417.

³³ N.-S. DOZOIS, O.M.I., "Province du Canada", in *Missions*, 43 (1905), p. 31.

³⁴ The 1906 General Chapter studied at great length the University of

English-speaking college of Saint Patrick, opened in 1930 by St. Peter's Province, the Faculty of Arts received the affiliation of some 15 other institutions. The ecclesiastical Faculties received a fresh impulse from the 1920s onwards, especially after 1934 when the University's charter was brought into conformity with the apostolic constitution *Deus scientiarum Dominus*. In this same year, a university seminary was inaugurated: its director was the University's Vice Rector, Father Joseph Rousseau, who was aided by some conferes. This



The University of Ottawa, the main building

seminary was well received by the bishops of Canada and those of the north-eastern United States, and it was praised by the Holy See.³⁵ In 1937, it moved into a new building where it continued to grow. It received ecclesiastical students from several dioceses in Canada and the United States.

Ottawa's growth problems and future. Cf. *Chapitres généraux 1906-1938*, copy on Archives Deschatelets, Ottawa, pp. 57-64.

³⁵ Cf. "Un commencement de séminaire universitaire au Canada", in *Missions*, 68 (1934), pp. 347-348; Letter of the Cardinal Prefect of the S.C. for Seminaries to Reverend Father Labouré, August 18, 1936. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

To the Faculty of Arts and the Faculties of Sacred Sciences, several schools and institutes of higher learning were added and, in 1945, a Faculty of Medicine. New buildings and facilities were constructed, especially in the 1940s.

Ottawa's major seminary, which had been entrusted to the Oblates at the University, was in stages transferred to the secular clergy: its administration in 1925, and formation of the seminarians in 1928. The Oblates felt this loss, for they had been directing this seminary since it was founded in 1848.

The Catholic Centre at the University

The University of Ottawa accomplished a remarkable work of formation not only with its students, but also with the people of Canada by means of certain services offered to those not at the University. This was especially done by its *Centre catholique* which in the course of time became *Novalis*. Established in 1935 by Father André Guay, the *Centre catholique* immediately created a liturgical education service; from this in 1936 came the weekly booklet *Prie avec l'Église* (today, *Prions en Église*), and in 1937 its English edition *Pray with the Church* (today, *Living with Christ*). Its success was extraordinary. Within a short time these booklets had a circulation of several thousands of copies each week and, later, attained a circulation of hundreds of thousands.

A second service of the Catholic Centre was also most successful, *Le Cours par correspondance de préparation au mariage* (Correspondence Course in Mariage Preparation). It was launched in 1944 on the basis of a course given orally by the Young Catholic Workers in Montreal. In 1946, this course had registered more than 2200 French- and English-speaking students and had already achieved an international acclaim. In 1947, it was being used not only in Canada, but also in the United States, China, Philippines, the Antilles, Brazil, Spain; other countries were in the process of translating it for their usage.³⁶

³⁶ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), pp. 193-194.

Assisting the Franco-Ontarians

The French Canadian Association of Education in Ontario came into being in 1910 as the result of a large congress of Franco-Ontarians organized by Father Émile David and some laity. This Association's aim was the just vindication of all the rights of French Canadians in the province of Ontario and the continual protection of their interests.

In 1912, the adversaries of French education obtained a Government law which restricted and forbade teaching in French. This measure elicited a lively reaction from the Association. Father Charles Charlebois was the inspiration and soul of this resistance. He was supported by his confreres of St. Joseph Scholasticate in Ottawa and of Hull, as well as by devoted, generous secular priests and eminent lay leaders. He was daring enough to found a newspaper, *Le Droit*, of which he was the main director until 1929. He gave impetus to and activated the Association's combat strength. After a tenacious struggle, victory was achieved in 1927: the Ontario Government had to suspend its law (Regulation 17) against French in the schools.

Father Léo Deschâtelets, the Provincial, stated in 1947: "If the Catholic and French schools exist in Protestant and English Ontario, it is due to the tenacity, work, wisdom, supernatural outlook of the Oblate Fathers who managed to maintain the (French) people's will to have schools according to their faith and language. This is a brilliant success after a terrible and exhausting struggle."³⁷

Catholic Action

Movements of specialized Catholic Action like the Young Catholic Workers, both the male (JOC) and female (JOCF) branches and the Catholic Workers League (LOC) were implanted in Canada by Oblates. At the request of Archbishop

³⁷ *Ibidem*, in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 351.

Georges Gauthier, coadjutor and administrator of the archdiocese of Montreal, Father Henri Roy in September 1930 opened the first section of the JOCF in the parish of Saint-Alphonse d'Youville in Montreal; and, the following November, the first section of the JOC in the parish of Saint-Pierre Apôtre.

These movements were soon implanted in other Oblate parishes and elsewhere. In 1935, a congress brought together 6000 delegates of the Young Catholic Workers in Montreal, and a second one in 1939 brought together some 20,000. This latter congress included the imposing ceremony in which was celebrated the marriage of more than 100 couples who had been prepared by the services of the JOC and the JOCF. This latter congress also founded the LOC for married persons and the Marriage Preparation Service which was at the origin of the marvelous marriage preparation course. Father Albert Sanschagrin was the prime mover of this initiative.

Father Victor-Marie Villeneuve, the successor to Father Henri Roy in 1939, was in September 1940 officially appointed by the Quebec Bishops chaplain general of the JOC, JOCF and LOC.

Thanks to the initiative of the same Father Victor-Marie Villeneuve, the first groups of Young Catholic Students (JEC) was formed at the juniorate of Chambly in 1932. With the authorization of the local bishop, the first presentation of badges took place there in 1934. The general direction of this movement was entrusted to the Holy Cross Fathers of the College Saint-Laurent in Montreal; from here it extended to the colleges and teaching institutions of the province of Quebec.

Social works and other ministries

The Oblates were initiators and apostles in yet other works and activities. The first Catholic national labor unions in the diocese of Ottawa came into being between 1915 and 1920, due to the influence of Father Stanislas Lajoie. Father Gustave Sauvé of the University of Ottawa, an apostle of

social education on the popular level and an ardent propagandist of Catholic social teaching, gave conferences, wrote articles and brochures, used the cinema, started study circles and correspondence courses. At the request of the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, he became the opponent to communist propaganda by means of his writings and the conferences he gave in all the dioceses of Eastern Canada.³⁸

In 1934, Father Léo Deschâtelets launched the *Semaines missionnaires du Canada*, which were major missionary conventions held annually in different cities of the country. He was president of this organization until 1947. In 1938, a secondary school of agriculture, the École Frère Moffet, was founded at Ville-Marie; it was "the inevitable crowning of our pioneering efforts at Temiscaming."³⁹ The first Canadian Lacordaire Centre brought together 54 already existing Lacordaire Circles. The Centre was set up in 1939 through the initiative of Father Ubald Villeneuve, who was the Lacordaire general chaplain from 1939 to 1941 and from 1945 to 1964.⁴⁰ Father Laurent Tremblay, while devoting himself to preaching, produced, in a lively style that was much appreciated by the public, books, theatre plays, stage plays, radio plays and epic historical shows. Father Jules Martel, a musician of renown, director of the Music School of the University of Ottawa, wielded considerable influence in the country in the realm of sacred music.⁴¹

³⁸ Cf. C. LEBLANC, O.M.I., *Le père Gustave Sauvé, o.m.i., 1899-1961*, Necrological sketch, mimeographed, pp. 6-11.

³⁹ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 346.

⁴⁰ Cf. U. VILLENEUVE, O.M.I., "Lutte pour la sobriété au Canada-français", in *Histoire des Cercles Lacordaire, des Maisons Domremy*, Quebec, 1983, I^{re} partie, 1940-1950, pp. 7-9, 29.

⁴¹ Father Louis-Marie Parent, a missionary in the Vicariate of Grouard, founded in 1943 at Tangent, Alberta, a contemplative community, the *Récluses Missionnaires de Jésus-Marie*. After his return to Eastern Canada, he in 1952 founded at Grand Falls, New Brunswick, the secular institute of the *Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée*. This institute had some 700 members in 1977. It is working still in some 34 countries, in several of which the Oblates are also at work. In 1958, Father Parent also founded the secular institute *Voluntas Dei*, which has both clerical and lay members. In 1983, this latter institute had some 250 members working in 13 countries.

IV – *Formation Houses and Personnel*

Formation houses

The personnel of St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa consisted of varied ethnical elements coming from the East and West of Canada and from the United States. In 1917, it became a scholasticate for the sole Province of Canada East.⁴² Because of the growing number of scholastics, the house was enlarged in 1925; a second scholasticate was opened at Richelieu in 1930 for some of the philosophy students and those in first year theology; then, a third scholasticate was established at Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts in 1934 for the scholastics of feeble health. After the closing of the one in Richelieu in 1942 and that of Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts in 1945, all scholastics were in the one scholasticate in Ottawa.

The novitiate at Ville LaSalle, formerly Lachine, was more than filled for several years; in 1942, it was transferred to the large house at Richelieu. The juniorate in Ottawa, only French-speaking since 1910, was also over-crowded. A second one was therefore opened at Chambly in 1926. A parallel development took place in regard to the postulanship and novitiate for the Brothers. To the postulanship and novitiate at Ville LaSalle, a postulanship was added at Chambly in 1929, a postulanship and a novitiate at Richelieu in 1930, and a postulanship at Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts. The novitiate, which had been opened at Albany, James Bay in 1907, was for years without novices and it was transferred to Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts in 1934.

The Brothers

The numbers of Brothers began to increase considerably in the 1930s, so that in 1948 the Province had more than one fourth of the Brothers in the entire Congregation, that is, 289 out of 1121. They played an important role in the formation

⁴² Around 1936, the Scholasticate again received students coming from other Oblate Provinces and having university studies in view.

houses, in the houses of closed retreats, in parishes, in propaganda works such as the magazines *La Bannière de Marie Immaculée* and *L'Apostolat*, and in the missions, particularly in James Bay. They were receptionists, sacristans, farmers, specialized workers such as tailors and carpenters. In 1932 they founded the Imprimerie Notre-Dame (Our Lady's Printing Press) at Richelieu and continued to manage it. They were also more immediately associated with the apostolate, particularly in the houses of formation and closed retreats.



Brother Alfred Desrochers (1887-1972)
He directed several important building projects in the
Province of Canada East and in the missions

The personnel in 1947

In 1947, the Province had 400 Bishops and Fathers, 167 scholastics, 269 Brothers, making a total of 836 Oblates. It had

21 houses and 26 residences.⁴³ Worthy of mention is the fact that it gave a great archbishop to the see of Quebec, Jean-Marie Rodrigue Villeneuve, who was created Cardinal in 1933. Always united in heart and soul to the Congregation, this great Oblate was a wise and valuable counselor to the Province's authorities.

⁴³ The Provincials were: Joseph-Marie Jodoin (1897-1903), Nazaire-Servule Dozois (1903-1904); Ernest Tourangeau (1904-1907), Joseph Dozois (1907-1913); Guillaume Charlebois (1913-1921), Georges-Étienne Villeneuve (1921-1930), Philémon Bourassa (1930-1936), Gilles Marchand (1936-1944), Léo Deschâtelets (1944-1947). The Province published a monthly magazine, *L'Apostolat*, since 1929, and the yearly *La Bannière de Marie Immaculée*.

CHAPTER 6

The Provinces of Western Canada 1898-1947

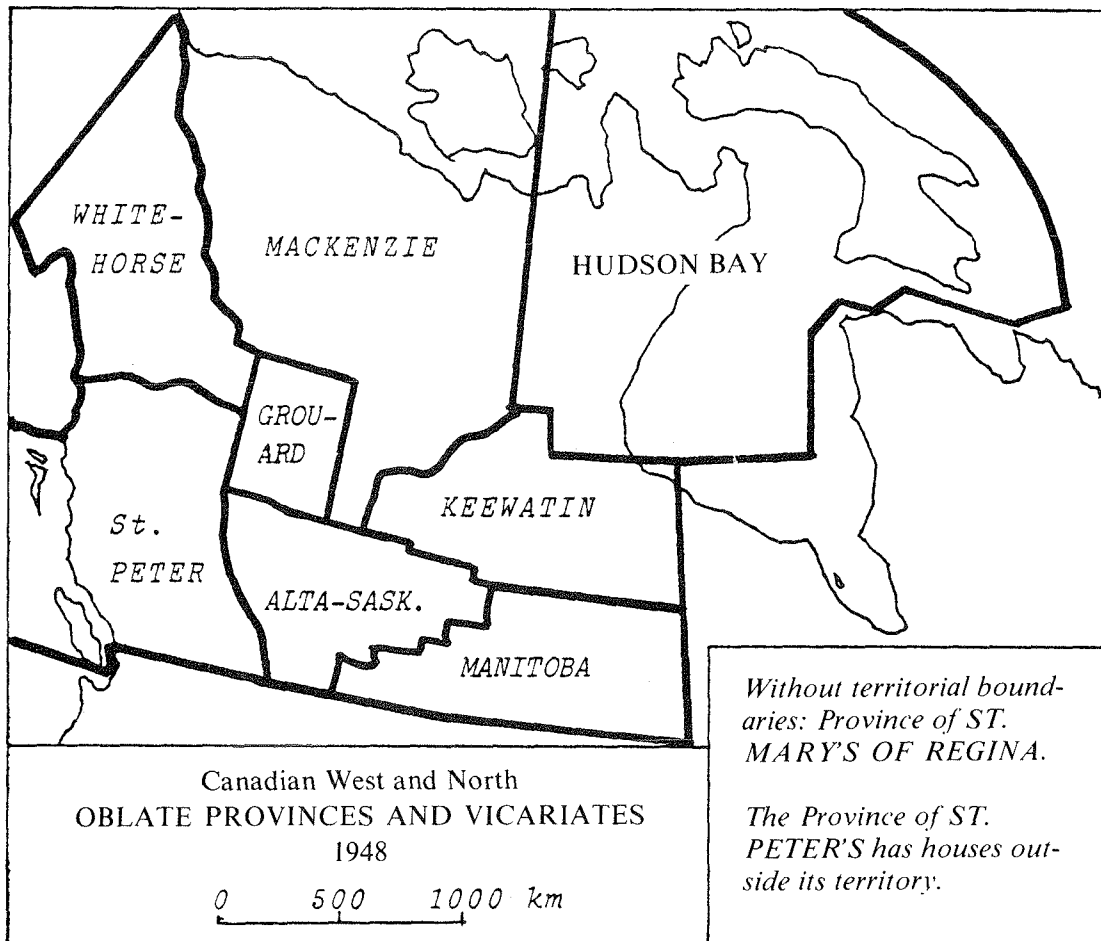
I. In the Canadian West from 1898 to 1947: – A change in Oblates' responsibilities – Regrouping Oblates according to language – Priority of the Indian Missions – Engaged in activities relating to the whole. **II. The Province of Manitoba:** – To the rank of Province – Expansion of Indian works – Care of immigrants – Polish and German Oblates – Parishes – Apostolate of the press – Works of education – Personnel. **III. The Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan:** – The Vicariate of St. Albert and of Saskatchewan – Raised to the rank of a Province – Serving immigrants – In the diocese of Edmonton – In the diocese of Calgary – In the diocese of Prince Albert – Personnel. **IV. St. Mary's Province:** – Raised to the rank of Province – Parishes – Formation houses; personnel. **V. The Vicariate of British Columbia and St. Peter's Province:** – Changes in the Vicariate – Missionaries to the Indians – Changes in mission work – Ministry to the Whites – Formation of St. Peter's Province – Its centre is fixed in Ottawa – Personnel.

I – *In the Canadian West from 1898 to 1947*

A change in Oblates' responsibilities

During the course of the first half of the century, the numbers of diocesan clergy in Western Canada grew rapidly. It gradually took over parishes, especially those in cities and in populated centers. At the same time, different clerical religious Congregations offered their ever more important collaboration. New dioceses, entrusted to secular bishops, came into being: Regina in 1910, Calgary in 1912, Winnipeg in 1915, Saskatoon in 1933, Nelson in 1936, and Kamloops in 1945. A Ukrainian eparchy was established in 1912 and an *abbatia nullius* at Muenster, Saskatchewan, in 1921.

Older sees once held by Oblate bishops now passed, one after the other, to pastors from the secular clergy: Vancouver



in 1908, Saint Boniface in 1915, St. Albert, transferred to Edmonton, in 1920, Prince Albert in 1921, Gravelbourg in 1932. This latter diocese, without having been entrusted to the Oblates, had as its first pastor in 1930 Bishop Rodrigue Villeneuve, Oblate of Mary Immaculate.

Due to these changes in the country and in the Church, the Oblates gradually ceased shouldering the first pastoral responsibility for dioceses. Their mission Vicariates and religious Provinces were no longer identified with an apostolic vicariate or a sole diocese, but often extended over several. Thus, from henceforth, the Oblates tried to retain certain posts in populated centres which would facilitate their community life, recruiting and the provisioning of their numerous isolated places that were far from the main centres and often very poor. Their main apostolate was carried on in small places

where Whites lived and in the Indian missions which they liked to keep in their capacity as missionaries.¹

Regrouping Oblates according to language

In 1925, the Superior General set up a special Commission to study the possibilities of a new reorganization of the Oblates in Western Canada. This issue had been raised several years previously. The members of this Commission² met at St. Boniface on May 28-29, 1925. They recommended reorganizing the Oblate Provinces in the West according to the languages most in use in the region, that is to say, French, English and German. It was their view that, by this arrangement, "our efforts will be better directed to meet the people's needs"; that the religious spirit, far from being weakened, will rather be strengthened by a greater unity of outlook and mutual confidence; and that recruitment and formation would be better provided for."³

The Commission's conclusions were endorsed by the General Administration and approved by the Congregation of Religious. In his circular letter of March 15, 1926, the Superior General raised the Vicariate of British Columbia to the rank of Province; the new Province was called St. Peter's of New Westminster and was meant for English-speaking Oblates and their works. He erected a new Province, called St. Mary's of Regina, for German- and Polish-speaking Oblates and their

¹ Cf. letter of Cassien Augier to Bishop Vital Grandin, August 4, 1899, Edmonton Diocesan Archives; F. BLANCHIN, O.M.I., "Rapport du Père Provincial d'Alberta-Saskatchewan", in *Missions*, 61 (1927), p. 368; U. LANGLOIS, O.M.I., "Province d'Alberta-Saskatchewan", in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 158.

² Georges-Étienne Villeneuve, Provincial of Canada East, was president; Jean-Baptist Beys, Provincial of Manitoba, was vice-president; François Blanchin, Provincial of Alberta-Saskatchewan; John Welch, Vicar of Missions of British Columbia; Julien Bédard, Paul Hilland, Joseph Meissner, André Daridon, Prisque Magnan and William Patton, the latter as a future councillor.

³ *Rapport de la réunion interprovinciale*, St. Boniface, May 29, 1925, p. 2. Oblate General Archives, Rome. Dossier Division des Provinces: Nord-Ouest.

works. And he maintained the Provinces of Manitoba and Alberta-Saskatchewan for French-speaking Oblates and their works.⁴

Priority of the Indian Missions

The growing presence of diocesan clergy and of priests from other religious Congregations in the dioceses allowed the Oblates to dedicate themselves more fully to their preferred work, namely, to the Indian missions to which they had already been so devoted. Father Théodore Labouré, the Superior General, encouraged this orientation during his comprehensive visit to the missions of the West in 1935-1936.⁵ In his act of visitation, he confirmed that, in line with an agreement made with the bishops concerned, Indian missions and schools would continue to be confided to Oblates' zeal.⁶ Furthermore, for a joint study of the apostolate in the Indian and Eskimo missions, to better coordinate missionary work and to represent and defend the Indians' interest, he established a permanent committee for the Oblate missions in the Canadian North and West. This committee was called the *Conseil oblat des oeuvres indiennes et esquimaudes* (The Oblate Council for

⁴ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter 134, March 15, 1926, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 4, pp. 35-39.

⁵ In 1935, there were in the Canadian West and North four ecclesiastical provinces with 11 dioceses, one *abbatia nullius* and five apostolic vicariates. These latter were all entrusted to the Oblates. The 11 dioceses had 563 secular priests and 393 religious priests, about 200 of which were Oblates. Cf. *Le Canada ecclésiastique* 1935.

⁶ Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, Secretary of State at the Vatican, had asked Father Th. Labouré to study the possibility of founding a seminary for the Indians and Metis in Western Canada. Father Labouré replied to him in a *Memorandum* that this was not possible on account of the vastness of the territory and the multiplicity of the races, tribes, languages and dialects. The most that was feasible was opening small houses or apostolic schools in centres that were closest to tribes that were best disposed to furnish vocations. Cf. *Memorandum sur le projet de séminaire indigène dans l'Ouest canadien a son Eminence le cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, secrétaire d'État*, April 27, 1936. Oblate General Archives, Rome. Cf. Léo DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., Circular letter 181, November 1, 1947, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 5, p. 163.

Works among the Indians and Eskimoes) consisted of the Vicars Apostolic, Provincials and Vicars of Missions who had Indians under their jurisdiction. It turned out to be a most useful instrument for the Indian missions. Its first president was Omer Plourde, who held that position from 1935 to 1951.⁷

Engaged in activities relating to the whole

Various factors marked the development of the society and the Church in Western Canada: occupation of the Metis lands; relegating the Indians to the reserves and submitting them henceforth for the most part to treaties concluded with the Canadian Government; the invasion of the territory by English-speaking and Protestant elements which soon dominated its destiny; the influx of several European minorities; the 1905 law establishing Saskatchewan and Alberta as provinces, which thus also limited the rights of minorities in regard to schools of their own language and religion.

These facts of history are at the origin of certain joint actions set in motion by the bishops to which, along with the diocesan clergy and the Catholic faithful, the Oblates committed themselves fully, and perhaps even more than others on account of their number and their firm rootedness in the West. Thus, they intervened in the issue of Indians' rights, undertook numerous steps to give European minorities priests of their language and for some also of their own rite, they promoted initiatives of colonization in order to bring a Catholic and French-speaking population into the country and they strove to protect the rights of Catholics and French Canadians to their own schools. Archbishops Taché and Langevin and Father Albert Lacombe were the leaders in this struggle in Manitoba and Bishops Grandin and Legal, and Father Hippolyte Leduc in Alberta and in Saskatchewan.

⁷ Cf. Th. LABOURÉ, O.M.I., *Acte général de visite des missions indiennes du Nord-Ouest canadien, juin 1935-Février 1936*, Rome, 1936. Cf. A. RENAUD, O.M.I., "La belle carrière du père Omer Plourde", in *L'Apostolat*, juin-juillet 1951, pp. 16-17.

Also ought to be mentioned certain works that were maintained with devotedness and often at the cost of great sacrifices: building and caring for Catholic parochial schools, maintaining French and Catholic colleges at St. Boniface, Gravelbourg and Edmonton; founding Catholic and French newspapers: *La Liberté* in Manitoba, *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* in Saskatchewan, *La Survivance* in Alberta; French radio stations in Edmonton, Prince Albert and Saskatoon; and, finally, various campaigns conducted in Eastern Canada to acquire both backing for the rights and resources to support what was done for the minorities in the West.

Mention should also be made of the tensions and difficulties that arose at certain times within some local Churches. These originated from debatable attitudes taken by the authorities in regard to minorities or to the diversity of cultures in a given milieu.

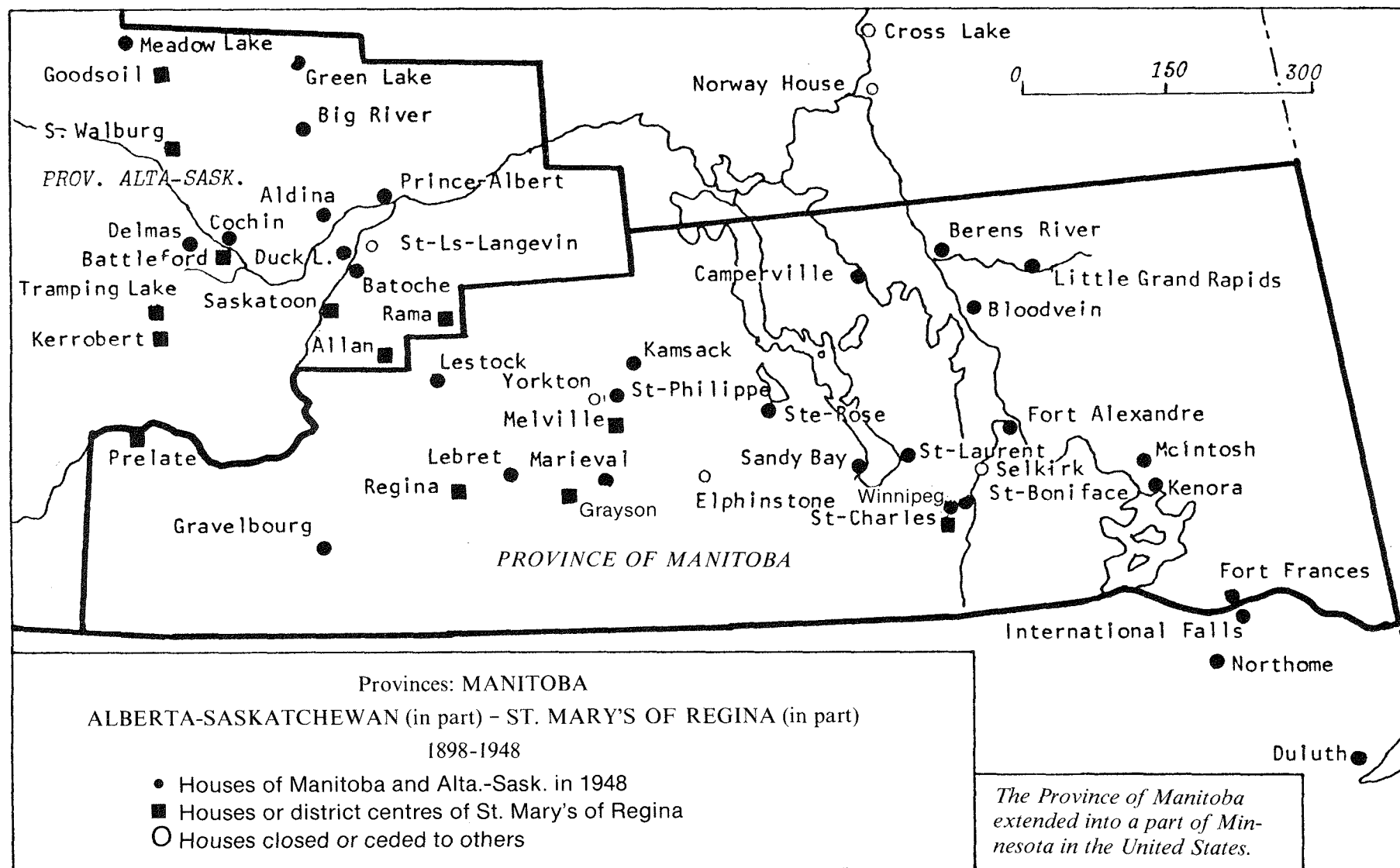
The limitations of the present work do not allow greater detail about these joint ventures which have marked the activities of the Oblates who have always been intimately linked to the growth of the Church on the plains of the Canadian West. This brief outline should, however, to some degree clarify the history that is sketched in the pages that follow.

II – *The Province of Manitoba*

To the rank of Province

In 1904, the Vicariate of Missions of St. Boniface had a personnel of 76 Oblates: 1 Archbishop, 54 Fathers, 4 scholastics and 17 Brothers. It had 22 houses and residences, served 50 posts for Whites and 60 mission posts for Indians.⁸ Because of its good condition, Father Cassien Augier, Superior General, raised it to the rank of Province by his October 5, 1904

⁸ J.-P. MAGNAN, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat de St-Boniface au Chapitre général de 1904", in *Missions*, 43 (1905), pp. 137, 143, 144.



letter. This Vicariate of Missions was the first in the Congregation to be raised to the status of a Province.⁹ The territory of the new Province was mostly located in the civil province of Manitoba and extended into the southern part of the civil province of Saskatchewan, to the western part of the civil province of Ontario, and to the counties of Couchiching and St. Louis in the State of Minnesota in the United States.

Expansion of Indian works

We are already familiar with the activities and fields of apostolate to the Indians that the missionaries of Manitoba were involved in.¹⁰ This ministry continued and expanded during the period that we are studying. The number of boarding schools directed by them rose from three to ten. To those at Lebret, Lestock and Kenora were added the ones at Marieval and Camperville in 1899, Saint-Philippe 1903-1913, 1928, Fort Alexander, Fort Francis and Sandy Bay in 1905, and McIntosh in 1925. In 1947, these ten schools harbored some 1500 Indian students.¹¹

New missions were opened. The first two were located north of Lake Winnipeg and carried Oblate missionary activity into a vast region peopled by Cree Indians who were as yet little touched by the Gospel. The first, Cross Lake, some 450 miles north of Lake Winnipeg, was opened in 1901 by the intrepid Father Étienne Bonnard; the second, Norway House, closer to Lake Winnipeg, was opened in 1905 by Father Julien

⁹ C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular letter 81, October 5, 1904, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, pp. 38-41.

¹⁰ Cf. above, vol. 1, pp. 235-244.

¹¹ M. LAVIGNE, O.M.I., "Rapport de la province du Manitoba 1938-1947" in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 523. The Oblates in charge of Indian Schools over the entire Canadian West held important meetings at Lebret in 1924 and Duck Lake in 1925 in order to treat of questions relating to the education of the Indian children. The resolutions adopted were sent to the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa and were accepted by the Federal Government. Father Joseph Guy was thereafter recognized as the official representative of the missionaries to the Government in Ottawa. Cf. J. WELCH, O.M.I., "Rapport du R.P. Provincial de New Westminster", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 392-393.

Thomas. These two missions became part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Keewatin that was created in 1910.

A missionary was assigned to Sandy Bay in 1904, west of Lake Manitoba. From here, a number of outposts were served, and here Father Oscar Chagnon spent 62 years of his life. Among reserves of still pagan Indians¹² east of Lake Winnipeg, Father Simeon Perrault in 1912 founded the mission of Berens River, to which were affiliated that of Bloodvein in 1936¹³ and Little Grand Rapids in 1944. The mission of McIntosh, opened in 1924 north of Kenora, was a centre for several outposts.

In 1947, sixty Oblates — 42 Fathers and 18 Brothers — were working with the Indians and Metis. They were distributed over twenty residential missions and in the Indian schools. Their zeal ministered to a total Indian population of 18,047 of which 8217 were Catholic and to 2887 Metis.¹⁴ As Father Majorique Lavigne wrote: "To sum up, we have one of the largest groups of missionaries in the country serving one of the largest groups of Indians. Good work is being done, but the task remains arduous, for it is difficult to keep our faithful in the practice of their Catholicism and even more difficult to attract the 7138 Protestants and to overcome the resistance of some 2693 pagans who all make up too solid a block in the eastern part of our Province."¹⁵

Care of immigrants

"The work of the German, Polish and Galician missions . . . is presently one of the most important in our country," Father Joseph-Prisque Magnan, Provincial, wrote in 1905. "For it is extremely important that we do all that we possibly

¹² J.-B. BEYS, O.M.I., "Rapport du R.P. Provincial du Manitoba", *Ibidem*, 54 (1920), p. 280.

¹³ In 1920, Brother Frederick Leach had opened a school at Bloodvein. Cf. F. LEACH, O.M.I., *50 Years with Indians and Settlers on Lake Winnipeg*, Winnipeg, 1971, 73 pages, polycopy.

¹⁴ M. LAVIGNE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 521.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 527. Cf. also pp. 521-523.

can to establish on a solid basis the Kindgom of Jesus Christ in these vast fertile regions that have just been opened to colonization. And the Germans, along with the Poles and Galicians, make up the great majority of the Catholic people that divine Providence is sending us. Thousands of families are already settled in our areas.”¹⁶



A group of Oblates of the Manitoba Province in 1908

From l. to r.: (seated) Joseph Cordes, Augustin Suffa, Louis-Marie Lejeune, Joseph-Prisque Magnan, Provincial, Damase Dandurand, Jean Van Gistern; (standing: first row) August Kim, Jean-Baptiste Schulte, Francis Kowalski, Charles Groetschel, Leo Gabriel, Peter Habets; (standing: back row) Leonard Nandzik, Philippus Funke, Paul Hilland, André-Marie Steuer, Pierre Bour

Archbishop Adélarde Langevin, O.M.I., of St. Boniface, Bishop Vital Grandin, O.M.I., of St. Albert, his successor, Bishop Émile Légal, O.M.I., and Bishop Albert Pascal, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of Saskatchewan, continued negotiating with the General Administration of the Oblates, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide and with the religious authorities of Galicia in view of obtaining priests who speak the

¹⁶ J.-P. MAGNAN, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 43 (105), pp. 127-128.

immigrants' language and, for the Ukrainians, priests of their rite. They appealed especially to the influential Father Albert Lacombe¹⁷ to back up their requests.

Their efforts — so long, difficult, and almost without hope of success in regard to helping the Ukrainians of the Greek Ruthenian rite — did produce some results. In 1902, the Basilians of the Greek-Ruthenian rite took charge of the Ukrainian immigrants: these obtained their own bishop in 1912, Bishop Niceta Budka. In its turn, the Oblate General Administration sent Polish- and German-speaking missionaries to the bishops of Western Canada.¹⁸

Polish and German Oblates

The first Polish Father¹⁹ to come to Western Canada, Father Albert Kulawy, came in 1898 and was assigned to all the Slavs and Germans in the area of Winnipeg and even of the entire West, right up to the Rocky Mountains. His brother, John, joined him in the following year. The parish of Holy Spirit in Winnipeg, founded in 1899 for Poles, Germans and Ukrainians, was their first religious centre. In 1900, the Ukrainians were detached therefrom and the Germans in 1904.

¹⁷ In 1900, after audiences with the authorities of Propaganda Fide and with the Pope, Father Albert Lacombe went to Austria where he had an audience with Emperor Francis Joseph; from there he went to Galicia where he met the Greek Archbishop of the Ruthenian rite. In 1904, he returned to Europe, this time accompanied by Archbishop Adélarde Langevin, O.M.I., and again met Emperor Francis Joseph to further the interests of the Catholic Ruthenians in Western Canada. Cf. "Les Galiciens dans le Nord-Ouest canadien", in *Missions*, 38 (1900), pp. 453-462; *Le Père Lacombe, "L'Homme au bon coeur", d'après ses mémoires et souvenirs . . .* Montreal, 1916, p. 497.

¹⁸ Cf. *Mémoire sur la situation des sujets ruthenes de Sa Majeste apostolique l'Empereur d'Autriche dans l'Ouest canadien*, by Archbishop Adélarde Langevin, O.M.I., of St. Boniface, Vienna, July 2, 1904, 12 pages. Copy in the Oblate General Archives, Rome. Dossier Galiciens ruthenes; Canada, Nord-Ouest.

¹⁹ Brother Anthony Kowalczyk, O.M.I., had been devoting himself to the Indian missions in Western Canada since 1896.

For the Poles, the Holy Spirit parish will remain as their most authentic religious and national home in Canada.²⁰

From this centre, the Polish Oblates functioned as itinerant missionaries to their compatriots established in many localities, often in very small groups. They were parish priests or in charge of churches. The names of Fathers Albert and John Kulawy, Karl Groetschel (Greczel), Theofil Nandzik, Wladeslaw Grochowski, Richard Kosian and others have marked the history of Polish parishes and chapels in Manitoba: Cook's Creek, Ladywood, Tolstoi, Fish Creek, Garson, Sifton, Vita, Gimli, etc.²¹ In 1905, Father John Kulawy founded a Polish newspaper, *Glos Kanadyjski* (the Voice of Canada) which in 1908 was renamed *Gazeta Katolicka Kanadzie*.

In 1895, Father Georg Nordmann, assigned to the diocese of St. Albert, was the first German Oblate to come to the Canadian West. Father Augustine Suffa, who arrived in Manitoba in 1900, and Father Joseph Cordes, who came in 1901, began their ministry with the Polish Fathers in the Holy Spirit church in Winnipeg. Called to Regina, the German Oblates in 1903 started a parish for their compatriots, dedicated to Saint Mary. Father Suffa was the founder of this parish.²² The next year, Fathers Joseph Cordes and Paul Hilland opened a church in Winnipeg, St. Joseph's, to bring the German-speaking faithful together.

Later, in 1914, Bishop Olivier-Elzéar Mathieu of Regina entrusted to them the German colony of Prelate where the missions of Blumenfeld, Rosenthal, Krassna and Prelate were

²⁰ "Of all the Polish Parishes in Manitoba, the Holy Ghost parish in Winnipeg has best succeeded in preserving its Polish-Canadian character. That character, which is a living in the present conscious of the memory of the past, is more deeply rooted here than elsewhere. And I venture the prediction that here it will endure longer. The Oblate Fathers have helped two generations of Poles grow up in Polish religious traditions. Both the Church and the Country are richer for it." Ed. M. HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba, a Collection of Historical Sketches*, London, 1960, p. 59.

²¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 59 ff.

²² J.-P. MAGNAN, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 43 (1905), pp. 125-126.

opened. He gave them the parish of Grayson, east of Regina, in perpetuity. The German Fathers of the Manitoba Province also served some posts in the diocese of Saint Paul, Minnesota, in the United States.

Secular priests and religious from other Congregations — La Salette missionaries, Redemptorists, Franciscans — soon came to share the ministry among the Poles and Germans.

Parishes

At the turn of the century, the Manitoba Province was serving seven parishes. To most of them Indian and Metis missions were attached. These parishes were Lebreton, Saint-Laurent, Kenora, Fort Frances, Camperville, Saint-Philippe and Sainte-Rose-du-Lac. This last parish was looked after by the diocesan clergy from 1909 to 1938. Afterwards, the Province accepted new ones: Sacré-Coeur in Winnipeg, in 1905, serving the French Canadians in the city; Kamsack, in 1917, as a sort of base for the Indian missions; Saint-Jean-Baptiste at Duluth, in 1902, to serve the 500-600 French Canadian families of the city and others in the region; St. Thomas, at International Falls, in 1919, to serve a poor working population; and lastly, Saint Michel at Northome in 1936.

These parishes, for the most part well established, continued to develop. The missionaries' task was to maintain the faith of their people who were submerged in a Protestant population. The missionaries had the heavy responsibility of financing through voluntary alms the building and maintenance of separate or parochial schools which were necessary for the Christian formation of the youth.

The parish ministry was also carried on in many "White missions" (49, in 1947), that is to say, groups of White people who were too few to constitute a regular parish. This itinerant ministry inflicted great fatigue on the missionaries and required a lot of generosity from them. "We are practically the only ones willing to accept the care" of these missions, Father Majorique Lavigne, Provincial, pointed out.²³

²³ M. LAVIGNE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 529.

The Province had to cede 14 Fathers, 12 residences and the posts dependent on them, when the new Province, St. Mary's of Regina, was founded in 1926. Besides this heavy loss, it had to give up the parish of Saint Mary's in Winnipeg which in 1915 became the cathedral parish of the new archdiocese; along with this parish, they had to give up the large rectory they had built there as the central house for the Province's Oblates. A little later, the Province also had to give up the parish of St. Charles.²⁴

Apostolate of the press

An apostolate of the Catholic press initiative saw the light of day in 1908 in Winnipeg when the *West Canada Publishing Company* came into being. Its task was to publish the weekly newspapers *West Kanada*, founded by the German Oblates in 1907, and *Kazeta Katolicka Kanadzie*, founded in 1908 by the Polish Oblates. Other publications followed: *North West Review*, founded in 1885 by Archbishop Taché, taken over by the Oblates in 1908 when it was on the point of folding; the weekly *Canadian Ruthenian*, in 1910, for Ruthenian Catholics; and the French newspaper *La Liberté*, founded in 1913 by this publishing house itself. The magazines *L'Ami du Foyer* and *The Indian Missionary Record* were also printed by this establishment. In 1942, *Le Patriote de l'Ouest*, a Saskatchewan weekly, was transferred to this printing company and merged with *La Liberté*, and thus appeared *La Liberté et le Patriote*.

Financial difficulties brought about the closing of the publishing company in 1925. Aware of the importance of such an enterprise, the Oblates bought its equipment and properties and reconstituted the Company under the name of *Canadian*

²⁴ J.-B. BEYS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 54 (1920), p. 270; 61 (1927), p. 351. The Province, from its beginnings onward, had only a few missionaries qualified for preaching missions and parish retreats. In 1945, it accepted a house of closed retreats, at St. Boniface, and some of the Fathers attached to this house were also able to devote themselves to giving parish retreats.

Publishers Limited. Father Omer Plourde was the manager and animator of this press venture from 1909 to 1942²⁵ and Brother Charles Sylvester rendered it his precious services from 1910 to 1952 as a mechanic.

Works of education

At the request of Archbishop Mathieu of Regina, the Province in 1920 accepted the direction of the Catholic college at Gravelbourg.²⁶ Through the education it offered to the young and the professional people it was preparing, this French-speaking College played a role of the first rank in terms of Catholic and French survival in Saskatchewan and recruitment for vocations. In 1955, its alumni could boast of 45 medical doctors, 8 lawyers, 11 engineers, 19 graduates in various cultural careers, 34 vocations to the secular clergy and 42 for the religious clergy.²⁷

Bishop Rodrigue Villeneuve, O.M.I., the first Bishop of Gravelbourg, confided his diocesan major seminary to the Oblates. It had been founded in 1931 under the name of Séminaire de Mazenod. When this major seminary closed in 1946, the Oblates were given the direction of the one that succeeded it at St. Boniface, a more suitable place for bringing together seminarians of French culture in the West. The Oblates directed this institution until 1948.

Finally, the Province attended to its own houses of Oblate formation. It opened a juniorate at St. Boniface in 1905. Its novitiate, established at St. Charles in 1887, was first transferred to the juniorate of St. Boniface in 1909, then definitively

²⁵ Cf. O. PLOURDE, O.M.I., "L'Oeuvre de Presse Catholique à Winnipeg", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 126-138; M. LAVIGNE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 534-537; P. PICHE, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province du Manitoba au Chapitre général de 1953", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 407-412.

²⁶ Archbishop Olivier-Elzéar Mathieu ceded the property of the College to the Oblates; the civil deed dates from 1922, the canonical one from 1926.

²⁷ I. TOURIGNY, O.M.I., *Étude monographique sur le college de Gravelbourg*, Gravelbourg, 1955, mimeographed, p. 11.

in 1924 to Saint-Laurent, some 100 kilometers to the north of St. Boniface. Its scholastics were at first sent to St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa, then, from 1917 onwards, to the Scholasticate of the Immaculate Conception in Edmonton; the Province had its own scholasticate at Lebreton from 1927 onwards. Until 1931, this inter-provincial scholasticate took in scholastics from the Provinces of St. Mary's and St. Peter's. It was always open to French-speaking scholastics of other Provinces and Vicariates of Missions.

Personnel

The period we are studying here witnessed the departure of a number of exceptional missionaries. Worthy of special mention are: Archbishop Adélard Langevin, O.M.I., a truly great and noble Oblate bishop of St. Boniface, who fought tenaciously that the rights of minorities be respected; Adélard Chaumont, "a great resource person for the Province in regard to its most difficult and important works";²⁸ Joseph Camper, a noteworthy apostle to the Indians, thirty years a missionary at Saint-Laurent, Manitoba; Jules Decorby, a veteran missionary, founder of several missions, a polyglot, a devoted servant to the Galicians; Joseph Hugonnard, the founder and supporter of the industrial school at Lebreton from 1884 until his death; Augustine Suffa, builder of the parish plant of St. Mary's in Regina and itinerant missionary in the German colonies; Zacharie Lacasse, a great missionary, "the man of our Congregation who is the most known and popular in Canada";²⁹ Damase Dandurand (1819-1921), the first Canadian Oblate who lived to be more than 100 years old; Pierre-Eugène Lecoq, a man of the greatest zeal and activity, founder of many parishes and missions; Theodore de Bijl, a Brother of great merit, especially as a carpenter and a diploma architect who drew the plans for many buildings; and Agapit Page, a valiant missionary to the Hungarians in their several colonies.

²⁸ J.-B. BEYS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 54 (1920), p. 271.

²⁹ IDEM, *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 342.

In 1911, the Province ceded two of its houses in the north to the Keewatin Vicariate of Missions. In 1924, it ceded 19 Oblates of German origin and the district of Fletcher, Minnesota, to the United States in view of the formation of the Vice-Province of St. Henry's of Belleville.³⁰ In 1926, it ceded the German and Polish personnel and their works on its territory in view of the formation of the Province of St. Mary's of Regina. In 1947, its personnel consisted of 128 Fathers, 24 scholastics and 27 Brothers.³¹

III – *The Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan*

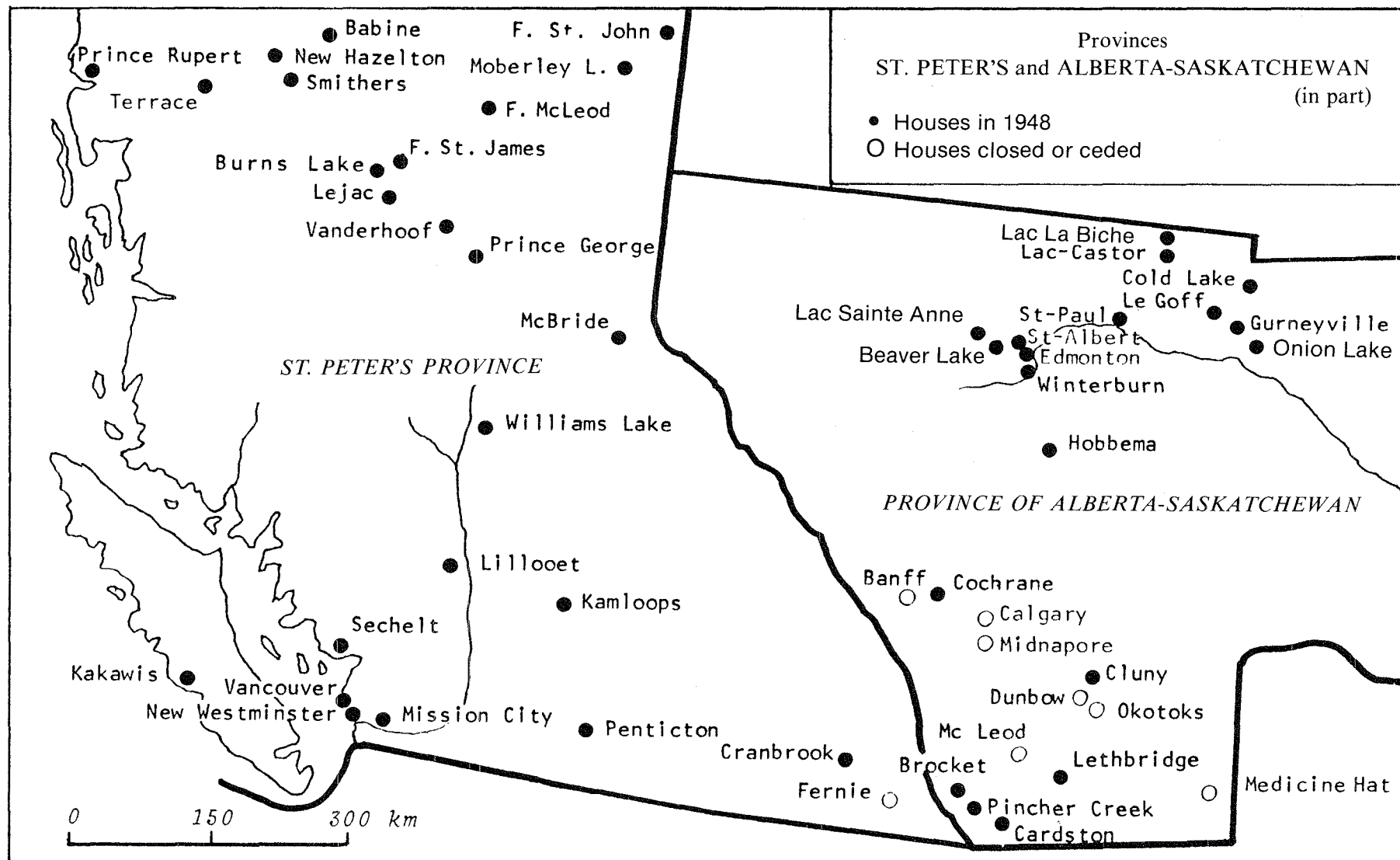
The Vicariate of St. Albert and Saskatchewan

In 1906, the Oblates of the diocese of St. Albert and of the Apostolic Vicariate of Saskatchewan were united to form the Vicariate of Missions of St. Albert and Saskatchewan. Father Henri Grandin was appointed Vicar of Missions. The Oblates' field of apostolate under his jurisdiction extended over the southern half of the civil province of Alberta, the central and northern parts of the civil province of Saskatchewan, and the western side of Hudson Bay. This latter was Eskimo land which the Oblates had not yet reached.

Because of its immense territory and the different conditions of life between the south and the north, this Vicariate of Missions was soon modified in its boundaries. And so, in 1911, the north of Saskatchewan and the west side of Hudson Bay — which had just been established as a new apostolic vicariate

³⁰ J. POTHMANN, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vice-provincial de Belle-ville", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 404-405.

³¹ *Personnel O.M.I.*, 1947, p. 54. Vicars of Missions were: Archbishop Adélard Langevin (1893-1900), Joseph Camper (1900-1901), Joseph-Prisque Magnan (1901-1904). Provincials were: Joseph-Prisque Magnan (1904-1911), Charles Cahill (1911-1918), Jean-Baptiste Beys (1918-1926), Josaphat Magnan (1926-1936), Édouard Lamontagne (1936-1942), Majorique Lavigne (1942-1948). The Province published the Oblate magazine *L'Ami du Foyer*, which was founded at St. Boniface in 1905; it was discontinued in 1968.



called Keewatin — was detached therefrom and made into a Vicariate of Missions, also called Keewatin. It was entrusted to the Apostolic Vicar himself, Bishop Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I.

Raised to the rank of a Province

The Vicariate of Missions of St. Albert and Saskatchewan, now shorn of its northern part, extended over a territory on which regular dioceses were being established. In 1907, the Apostolic Vicariate of Saskatchewan became the diocese of Prince Albert. In 1912, the diocese of St. Albert — whose see was transferred to Edmonton — was raised to the status of an archdiocese, and the southern part of Alberta became the new diocese of Calgary.

In these developing local Churches, the Oblates consolidated their works and began to recruit on the spot. In 1908, at the initiative of Father André Daridon, a juniorate was opened in the parish of Pincher Creek, Alberta, with four students — a modest beginning indeed. It began to flourish after it had been transferred to Edmonton in 1910.³² Those aspiring to be novices were sent to the novitiate of Manitoba. Scholastics were sent either to St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa, or to the scholasticate in Tewksbury in the United States. The Vicariate even opened its own scholasticate in 1917 in Edmonton, in the vicariate house, the rectory of Saint-Joachim.

Taking all these developments into account, Archbishop Dontenwill, the Superior General, having received the 1920 General Chapter's recommendation to this effect, raised the Vicariate to the status of a Province on January 20, 1921. It was called the Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan.³³

³² The juniorate took on the role of a college when the only French-speaking college in Alberta, conducted by the Jesuits from 1913 onwards, had to close its doors in 1943 because of its huge debts. Cf. E. DROUIN, O.M.I., "The Beginnings and Development of the Catholic Church in the Edmonton Area", in *Vie Oblate Life*, 41 (1982), p. 37.

³³ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter of January 20, 1921, to the Religious Oblates of the Vicariate of Alberta-Saskatchewan, in *Missions*, 55 (1921), pp. 126-127.

Serving immigrants

Bishop Vital Grandin, O.M.I., of St. Albert, in response to urgent requests from the Poles resident in his diocese in the environs of Calgary and Edmonton, in 1898 and 1899 obtained the collaboration of Fathers John and Albert Kulawy in view of a periodic ministry among their compatriots. The brother of these two Oblates, Paul Kulawy, arrived permanently in 1903. After some time in Lethbridge, Paul Kulawy stayed in Calgary from 1904 to 1906, then at Round Hill (Lake Demay) and finally in Edmonton where he devoted himself until 1921 to regularly visiting several posts or groups of Poles and built several churches for them.

Another Oblate, Father Anton Sylla, arrived in 1909 and established his residence at Canmore, near Banff. In 1917, he joined Father Kulawy, pastor of the Holy Rosary church in Edmonton, who was all alone to look after some three or four thousand Poles scattered over that region. Ten years later, when Archbishop Henry Joseph O'Leary of Edmonton decided to replace the Oblates who were looking after the Poles with the secular clergy, Father Sylla had to leave Edmonton and his dear Polish people, a departure which gave him much pain. That spelled the end for a long time of the Oblates' apostolate among the Poles in Alberta.³⁴

In Saskatchewan, in the diocese of Prince Albert, the Oblates established flourishing works among Polish immigrants and especially among German immigrants who were coming together in great numbers. Father Wilhelm Brueck and Theodor Krist in 1900 started a parish in Fish Creek, near Prince Albert.³⁵ Fathers Joseph Laufer and Theodor Schweers were the first missionaries to the German immigrants brought into Saskatchewan by a Catholic colonization society directed by a

³⁴ Cf. A. PHILIPPOT, O.M.I., "L'oeuvre des Oblats polonais parmi les Polonais d'Alberta", *ibidem*, 64 (1930), pp. 334-361. In 1961, the Oblates were again put in charge of the Our Lady of the Rosary parish in Edmonton.

³⁵ Cf. A. FORNER, O.M.I., "Rapport sur la mission de l'Immaculée Conception à Fish Creek, Sask., Canada", *ibidem*, 47 (1909), pp. 251-259.

zealous layman, Mr. F. J. Lange, an excellent organizer. In 1905, they opened the first missions at Leipzig and at Revenue; these were followed in 1906 by those at Carmelheim, Handel, Kerrobert, Tramping Lake, Luseland and Salvador.³⁶ This was St. Joseph's Colony. The Oblates assured the Christian education of the young and built some beautiful churches. Priestly and religious vocations were soon a reality.

In the diocese of Edmonton

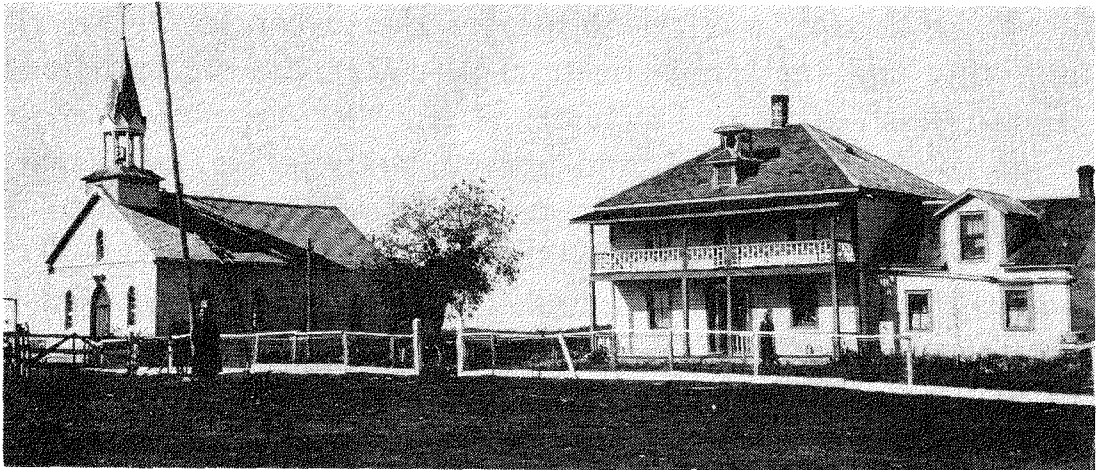
The Province had a special position and works in each of the three dioceses in which it was at work: in Edmonton, Calgary and Prince Albert.

The centre of the Province was located in Edmonton itself. Edmonton was the locale for the provincial house; the juniorate and the scholasticate (1917-1927); the old and flourishing parish of Saint-Joachim; the Holy Rosary parish for the Poles opened in 1903 and served until 1927; the French Catholic newspaper for Alberta, *La Survivance*, founded in 1928, edited and directed by the Oblates from 1931 to 1972; and the major seminary, founded in 1918 and first housed in the scholasticate itself, which then was handed to the direction of St. Peter's Province in 1926-1927, and finally to the secular clergy.

Certain houses and works took on a certain importance in regard to Edmonton's sphere of influence. The residence at Lake Sainte Anne, the very place where the Church in Alberta was founded, served a parish of Metis and a pilgrimage shrine dedicated to St. Anne to which Whites and Indians came to worship. The house of St. Albert looked after a French-speaking parish and Indian missions. St. Albert, like an Oblate

³⁶ Cf. *St. Mary's Province 1926-1976*, Battleford, 1976, pp. 30-31; W. SCHULTE, O.M.I., *Pictures and Pages on the Silver Jubilee of St. Joseph's Colony compiled by the Oblate Priests in the Colony*, 1976, viii-169-xxv pages: translation of the German *St. Joseph Kolonie 1905-1930*. D. F. ROBERT-SON, *The Sword of Saint Paul, A History of the Diocese of Saskatoon 1933-1983*, pp. 167-168.

reliquary, is the place for the Oblate family cemetery: in 1947, the remains of 85 Oblates were interred there. Among them are several pioneers of the Church in the Canadian West. The old cathedral of Bishop Grandin has been preserved intact and shelters an exhibition of precious memorabilia of the missionary past. At the urging of Bishop Grandin, the Oblates in 1900 founded at St. Albert a minor seminary under the name of Holy Family. In 1911, it was entrusted to the Sons of Mary Immaculate and remained open until 1919. The residence at Hobbema was in charge of a large Indian school and also served several Indian outposts in the area. Brother Henri Guibert printed a Cree monthly newspaper³⁷ there from 1917 to 1955.



*Mission of Lake Sainte Anne, Alberta, in 1920.
The oldest mission in Alberta.*

The Oblates had been serving for a long time a vast area north of the diocese of Edmonton which was divided into three parts: Lake La Biche, Saint Paul and Cold Lake. Saint Paul itself, a Metis mission from 1896 to 1909, became quite a flourishing French Canadian parish; in 1948, it was chosen as the see for a new diocese north of Edmonton. Near Saint Paul, the Oblates were in charge of an important Indian school at Blue Quills, where the boarders numbered some 160 young people.

³⁷ *Kitcitwa miteh Atchimomasinakigamissa* (Little Magazine of the Sacred Heart), founded by Father Léo Balter in 1905. Cf. *Missions*, 53 (1919), pp. 237-238.

In the diocese of Calgary

Vinini Byrne, the historian of the diocese of Calgary, rightly credits the generosity, energy and faith of the Oblates for the founding and growth of the Church in the diocese. For forty years, that is, from 1873 to 1913, he specifies, these missionaries worked and made tremendous sacrifices to establish missions across the diocese's vast territory.³⁸ They established flourishing parishes, not only in Calgary itself, but in several other centres of Whites, along the railroad's route, in mining regions, in the beautiful Bow River valley.³⁹

With the arrival of Bishop John Thomas McNally, Calgary's first bishop, the Oblates had to cede to the secular clergy the beautiful parish of St. Mary's, which became the cathedral parish. In 1915, the Bishop further asked them to hand over to the secular clergy the second parish they had been serving in the city, that of Sacred Heart. The Oblates were thus completely withdrawn from the city of Calgary, and this was painfully felt by them. Father Henri Grandin, Vicar of Missions, wrote in 1920: "When I think that we no longer have even a foothold in the city of Calgary, where we had been doing everything and where the diocese was benefiting from the work and gifts of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate . . ."; he was able to add, however: "Today, the relations between the bishop of Calgary and the Vicar are as good as one could wish."⁴⁰

Outside the episcopal city, the Oblates also had to withdraw in 1916 from the parish at Fort McLeod which they had been serving since 1873; and, in 1921, from Banff where they

³⁸ M. B. V. Byrne, *From the Buffalo to the Cross*, p. 373.

³⁹ From 1865 to 1871, the Oblates provided itinerant missions in the territory that has become the diocese of Calgary. From 1871 to 1814, they opened the important parishes and missions of Calgary, Fort McLeod, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Pincher Creek, Banff, and missions on the Indian reserves of the Blackfoot, Blood, Piegan and Sarcies; during this time, they built 47 churches in the diocese. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 375.

⁴⁰ H. GRANDIN, O.M.I., "Rapport du Révérend Père Vicaire d'Alberta-Saskatchewan" in *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 283.

had been working since 1888. The parishes of St. Patrick in Lethbridge and St. Michael at Pincher Creek remained in Oblate hands.

The Indian missions to the Blackfoot, Piegans, Blood and Sarcies remained as their main lot in the diocese. The industrial school of Dunbow, founded in 1884, closed its doors in 1921. It was replaced by day schools opened on the Indian reserves and by boarding schools on these same reserves at Cluny, Cardston and Brocket.

In the diocese of Prince Albert

The Oblate works among the Whites, the Metis and the Indians in the diocese of Prince Albert were in 1947 grouped in five districts: Prince Albert, Duck Lake, Meadow Lake, Battleford and Onion Lake.

The main Oblate house in Prince Albert sheltered the Oblates who served the cathedral — until 1921 and again from 1931 to 1934 — and the missionaries who were looking after eight missions scattered over a radius of some 150 kilometers north of the city. The editor of the newspaper, *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* also resided in Prince Albert. This newspaper was founded as an initiative of Father Ovide Charlebois, the future Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin; it first appeared in Duck Lake in 1910 and was transferred to Prince Albert in 1912. It was the “instrument of the French groups in Saskatchewan and one of the most powerful weapons at their disposal”.⁴¹ Also at Prince Albert was St. Patrick's Orphanage, the work of Father Wilhelm Brueck: it housed more than 100 children. He himself was in charge of this diocesan work from its very beginnings in 1900; he assured its existence through the activities of his charity and he devoted himself to this work until his death in 1947.

The other districts in the diocese consisted of a number of small parishes and posts among White, Metis, immigrants and

⁴¹ O. HÉROUX, “Le Patriote de l'Ouest”, *ibidem*, 66 (1932), p. 457.

Indian missions. The parish of St. Paul, in Saskatoon, became the see of a diocese in 1933. Three important boarding schools, run by Sisters, were under the missionaries' direction: that at Duck Lake, started in 1894; at Delmas, opened in 1895, and at Onion Lake, begun in 1927. Each had as many as 150 to 200 boarders.

In the dioceses of Saskatchewan, lastly, the bishops requested the Oblates to visit the Catholic schools regularly in view of assuring religious instruction to youth. "Here is a work of exceptional importance for the future of religion in our regions," Father François Blanchin, the Provincial, noted.⁴²

Personnel

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the deaths of great missionaries. Among these were: Bishop Vital Grandin, O.M.I., a pioneer of the Church in Western Canada and a saint; René Rémas, a veteran expert as a missionary to the Indians; Valentin Végréville, a zealous missionary with a talent for the Indian tongues and the author of several manuscripts; Albert Lacombe, an influential missionary, a pioneer of the Church in Western Canada, venerated by all the Indian tribes who loved him as one of their own; Hippolyte Leduc, the right hand of the Bishop of St. Albert, defender of Catholic schools in the West and author of several written works on the school question; Henri Grandin, nephew of Bishop Grandin, "universally loved and esteemed",⁴³ who presided over the destiny of the Vicariat of St. Albert for 18 years; Christopher Tissier, who "all his life personified energy, renunciation, work — heroic at times . . . an impetuous missionary made of the stuff saints are made of";⁴⁴ Léon Doucet, a great missionary in southern Alberta from 1882 to 1939; Achille Auclair, the inspiration and support of the French-Canadian Catholic Association of Saskatchewan for fifteen

⁴² F. BLANCHIN, O.M.I., "Rapport du Père Provincial de l'Alta-Sask.", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 369.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 361.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 362-363.

years (1910-1925) and, at the same time, director of the newspaper *Le Patriote de l'Ouest*; Brother Anthony Kowalczyk, an apostle to the Indians and then, until his death, assigned to the juniorate in Edmonton, noteworthy for his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, referred to as *Brother Ave* and venerated as a saint.

In 1947, the Province personnel consisted of 106 Fathers, 23 scholastics and 24 Brothers; the Province had some forty houses and residences. 46 Oblates were doing ministry among the Indians, 36 were working among Whites, and 16 were involved with teaching.⁴⁵

IV – *St. Mary's Province*

Raised to the rank of Province

When the Superior General, Archbishop Dontenwill, in March 1926 erected the Province of St. Mary's of Regina — which grouped together the German- and Polish-speaking Oblates and works in Western Canada — he completed what was already in the process of becoming a Province since the beginning of the century. What was said above concerning the history of Manitoba and Alberta-Saskatchewan has already described the origins and growth of the German and Polish-speaking Oblate personnel and works in Western Canada.

Furthermore, erecting a Province that had a German and Polish national character corresponded to a strong desire that

⁴⁵ In 1932, there were on the territory assigned to the Province 11,500 Indians, 6,700 of whom were Catholic: Cree, Blackfoot, Montagnais. The Oblates were serving 14 key posts and 27 auxiliary ones. The 9 boarding schools had over 1000 students. Cf. U. LANGLOIS, O.M.I., "Province d'Alberta-Saskatchewan", in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 171.

The Vicars of Missions were: Bishop Émile Legal, O.M.I. (1897-1906, for St. Albert), Bishop Albert Pascal, O.M.I. (1891-1906, for Saskatchewan), Henri Grandin (1906-1921). Provincials were: Henri Grandin (1921-1923), François Blanchin (1923-1926), Jean-Baptiste Beys (1926-1929), Ubald Langlois (1929-1938), Henri Routhier (1938-1944), Armand Boucher (1944-1950).

had been expressed for some years, especially by the German Oblates of the important St. Joseph's Colony, who felt far removed from the religious authorities at St. Boniface and St. Albert. On the other hand, the German and Polish Oblates were aware that their being grouped together as a Province was a measure called for by the cultural particularities of their people and was for the good of their apostolate.⁴⁶

In its beginnings, the Province brought together the German and Polish speaking Oblates and works of the Provinces of Manitoba and Alberta-Saskatchewan; it was authorized, however, "to extend its ministry with time and according to need"⁴⁷ to any point in Canada. Father Bernard Ueberberg became its first Provincial. The new Province had 38 Fathers, 4 Brothers, 2 scholastic novices, 1 Brother novice and 40 juniorists.

Parishes

One of the first decisions of the Provincial Council was to regroup the Province's houses and missions into seven religious districts: Holy Spirit and St. Joseph's in Winnipeg; St. Mary's in Regina; Grayson; Tramping Lake and Kerrobert in St. Joseph's Colony; and Prelate in the colony of the same name. There was also the mission of Cook's Creek, the sole mission to the Ukrainians, which Father Philippe Roux (called Ruh) devotedly served from 1930 to 1962.⁴⁸ In all the posts served in these districts, the Oblates were doing parish ministry, whether

⁴⁶ Cf. *St. Mary's Province 1926-1976*, Battleford, p. 31.

⁴⁷ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter 134, March 15, 1926, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 4, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Father Roux spent his whole life in serving the Ukrainians. He was the first Oblate to pass over to the Ruthenian rite. He was an architect and built several churches, among them that of Cook's Creek itself, a church in the oriental style and referred to as "the cathedral of the prairies". Cf. G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de Marie Immaculée au Canada*, vol. 3, p. 143; J. BOKENFOHR, O.M.I., "Report of St. Mary's Province (Regina) to the General Chapter of May 1947", in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 72.

in centres with a larger population or — more often the case — in small localities.

Afterwards, the Province expanded its field of action. Bishop Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin, in 1930, confided to it the missions of Goodsoil and St. Walburg, in the nascent colony of Saint Boniface⁴⁹ in Saskatchewan. In 1933, the Bishop of Regina put it in charge of the Rama district, where Father Anton Sylla, a pioneer, spent 30 years of his life. In 1935, the Polish parish of St. Stanislas in Toronto was given to the Province's care. The Bishop of Prince Albert also entrusted to it the Polish mission of Krydor in 1938 and, the year following, six small missions in the Caruthers area. Lastly, the Oblates of the Province were called in 1944 to serve the Polish parish of St. Casimir and, in 1945, the German one of Holy Family, both of them in the city of Vancouver.

Everywhere it was the same parish ministry, carried on often with groups that were changing and forming in locations without religious assistance, where churches, schools and residences needed to be built.

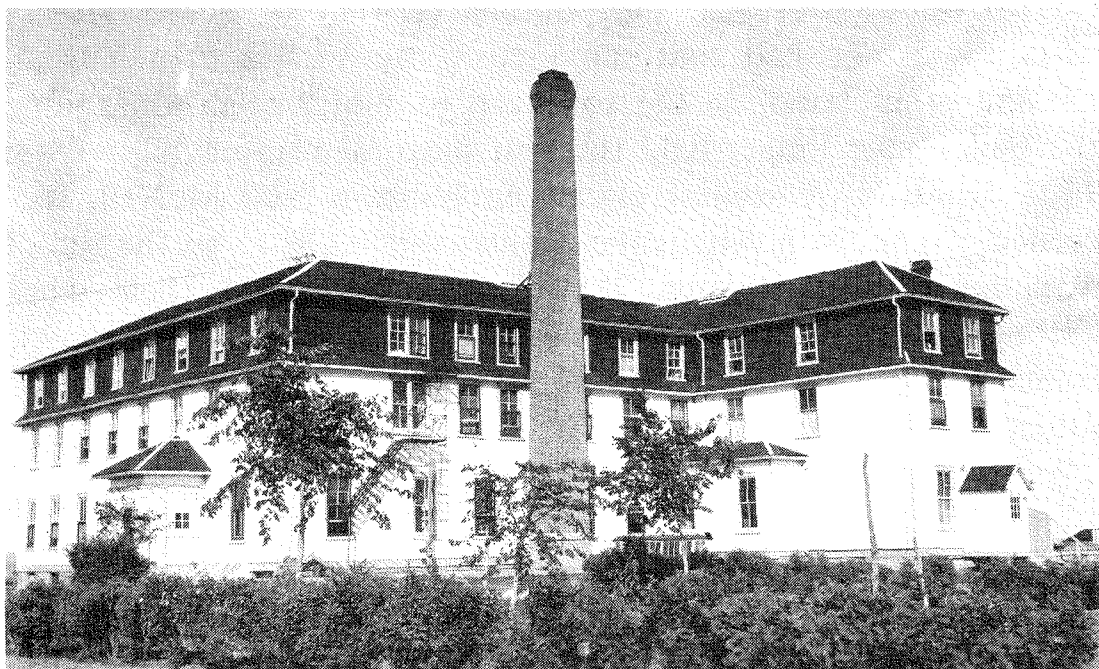
Works of formation; personnel

Immediately after its foundation, the Province opened a college in Winnipeg which was named St. Paul's College. It was closed in 1931. The purchase of the property of the former Government of the Northwest Territories, at Battleford, near to the important St. Joseph's Colony, provided a centre much more suitable for recruiting vocations.⁵⁰ Here the Province established its juniorate in 1932 and, at the same time, opened its scholasticate. A fine farm, skillfully managed,

⁴⁹ This part of the Keewatin Apostolic Vicariate was transferred to the diocese of Prince Albert when the boundaries of the Vicariate were changed in 1934.

⁵⁰ Cf. S. WACHOWICZ, O.M.I., "St. Joseph's Colony is the cradle of St. Mary's Province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate", in *Ripening Harvest, The Story of St. Joseph's Colony, 1905-1955*, p. 4.

helped to support these works. In 1929, the Province had established its own novitiate in St. Charles, Manitoba.



*Scholasticate of St. Mary's Province from 1932 to 1972.
Building of the former Government of the Northwest Territories,
at Battleford, Sask.*

At the time of the 1947 General Chapter, the Province was divided into 11 religious districts, served 63 churches with resident priests, 69 mission churches and 14 missions, all spread out over 9 dioceses, most of them in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Its personnel then stood at 102 Fathers, 26 scholastics, 8 Brothers, for a total of 136 Oblates.⁵¹

V – The Vicariate of British Columbia and St. Peter's Province

Changes in the Vicariate

At the turn of the century, the Vicariat of Missions of British Columbia extended over the entire civil province of the

⁵¹ Cf. J. BOKENFOHR, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 61. Provincials were: Bernard Ueberberg (1926-1929), Thomas Schnerch (1929-1935), Philip Funke (1935-1939), John Bokenfohr (1939-1947). *Der Marienbote*, a monthly review published by the Province, was founded in Regina in 1932.

same name. In 1909, it was reduced to the southern part of the province only; the northern part — about two thirds of the province — became part of the territory of a Vicariate of Missions established that same year, the Vicariate of Yukon. On the other hand, in the southern part of British Columbia, the Oblates no longer held the first pastoral responsibility from 1908 onwards. A secular cleric, Archbishop Neil McNeil, succeeded Archbishop Augustine Dontenwill, O.M.I., to the see of Vancouver. The Oblates, nevertheless, continued their work among the Whites in collaboration with the secular clergy; ministry among the Indians remained the proper field of the Oblates.

Missionaries to the Indians

Some of the great missionaries died at the turn of the century: in 1899, Bishop Paul Durieu, O.M.I., and Father Jean-Marie Lejacq, the “missionary princes”, as they were referred to; in 1903, James McGuckin, the first English-speaking Oblate to come to British Columbia⁵² and founder of the mission at Williams Lake; in 1906, Fathers Georges Blanchet and, in 1907, François Jayol, two old-timers who began as missionaries in Oregon; in 1907, Father Pierre Richard, an active and worthy missionary; in 1912, Father Léon Fouquet, “indisputably the best missionary of the Pacific along with Fathers Durieu and Lejacq”.⁵³

Other experienced missionaries, equal in quality to those who had disappeared, still continued to serve the missions: Father Eugène-Casimir Chirouse, a missionary all his life at Mission City (1879-1927); Father Jean-Marie Le Jeune, still in charge of 32 missions in 1939 when he was seventy years old, at a time when there were very few missionaries,⁵⁴ and noteworthy for his works on the Indian languages; Father

⁵² K. CRONIN, *Cross in the Wilderness*, p. 108.

⁵³ A. MORICE, O.M.I., *Histoire de l'Église catholique dans l'Ouest canadien . . .*, vol. 4, p. 234.

⁵⁴ G. FORBES, O.M.I., “Les missions indiennes de la Colombie Britannique” in *Missions*, 73 (1939), pp. 40-41.

François-Marie Thomas, disciple of Bishop Durieu,⁵⁵ a tireless, legendary apostle of the missions in the Williams Lake district, to which he gave 60 years of his life; Father Julien Bédard, a zealous apostle and true builder; Father Victor Rohr and others.

Changes in mission work

After 1908, Europe, and France especially, up to then the main provider of missionaries to British Columbia, was no longer furnishing any.⁵⁶ Moreover, French missionaries were returning to their native land. A certain break occurred in the traditions regarding the work of the Indian missions. A new generation of missionaries was about to appear with the development of St. Peter's Province.⁵⁷

The missionaries at the turn of the century still held to the methods of evangelization established by Bishop Durieu and referred to as the "Durieu System".⁵⁸ Soon, however, this System, which grouped Catholic Indians in quasi-"reductions", became more and more difficult to implement. Against it were the changing times and the changes in the life of the Catholic Indians resulting from their more and more frequent contacts with the Whites, the Protestant Indians and others. On the other hand, some missionaries as late as 1944 were working

⁵⁵ M. WHITEHEAD, *Now you are my Brother Missionaries in British Columbia*, pp. 27-29.

⁵⁶ G. FORBES, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 73 (1939), p. 41.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 41. Cf. J. BOKENFOHR, O.M.I., Visitor General, *St. Peter's Province - Confidential - to V.R. Fr. A. Desnoyers*, v.g., p. 2, Oblate General Archives, Rome; W. GRANT-BYRNE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 185.

⁵⁸ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., "Rapport lu au Chapitre général de 1904", in *Missions*, 43 (1905), pp. 274-275. "This missionary system of Bishop Durieu is still in vogue. It has done an immense good and to it is largely due the stability and perseverance of the Indians." *Historical Number*, published under the direction of the Right Rev. Alexander Macdonald, D.D., Bishop of Victoria, 1913, p. 165. Cf. E. BUNOZ, O.M.I., "Note sur le ministère auprès des sauvages en Colombie Britannique" in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 225-226.

successfully by retaining the essential point of the System, namely, an appeal to the Indians' responsibility.⁵⁹ The missionaries' zeal continued to be admirable.

A privileged context used by the missionaries to strengthen the Christian faith of the young Indians were the boarding or industrial schools the missionaries directed. The missions at Mission City, Williams Lake, Cranbrook, Kamloops, and Sechelt were blessed with these institutions. In his 1920 report, Father John Welch stressed that the children of both sexes leave these schools "well equipped and they bring into their respective camps elements of prosperity and well-being."

In 1938, a new Indian centre opened up to the Oblates' zeal. Upon the departure of the Benedictine Fathers, the Oblates took over a group of 636 Catholics of the Christie industrial school at Kakawis, on the coast of Vancouver Island, in the diocese of Victoria.⁶¹

In 1947, 38 Fathers and 18 Brothers were serving 12,747 Catholic Indians, out of a total Indian population of 25,515.⁶²

Ministry to the Whites

In their zeal, Oblates were ministering to Whites in the cities of Vancouver and New Westminster and in the mining centers which were developing especially in southern British Columbia.

New Westminster remained the centre of the Vicariate. The house of St. Charles, the oldest and main house of the Oblates in British Columbia, looked after the parish of St. Peter's which had been granted in perpetuity to the Oblates, provided chaplains to the penitentiary, a girls' boarding school,

⁵⁹ Cf. J. BOKENFOHR, O.M.I., Visitor General, *St. Peter's Province - Confidential - to V.R. Fr. A. Desnoyers*, v.g., p. 7.

⁶⁰ J. WELCH, O.M.I., "Rapport du Révérend Père Vicaire de Colombie" in *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 19.

⁶¹ G. FORBES, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 73 (1939), p. 42.

⁶² J. SCANNELL, O.M.I., "Report from St. Peter's Province Canada (1938-1947), Appendix 1", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 508.

a hospital and an orphanage. It also looked after the college of St. Louis until 1917 when it closed because there were no more boarders,⁶³ and of Nazareth, a minor seminary which was closed in 1909 because its results were disproportionate to the monetary sacrifices it entailed.⁶⁴

The house of St. Charles was also the residence of the Vicar of Missions, the novitiate house, the house which received young missionaries upon their arrival in the region, and the retirement home for missionaries. The name of Brother Francis Betancourt, the first Brother who was a native of British Columbia, is linked to the house and St. Peter's parish: for sixty years he was the parish-priest's right hand.⁶⁵

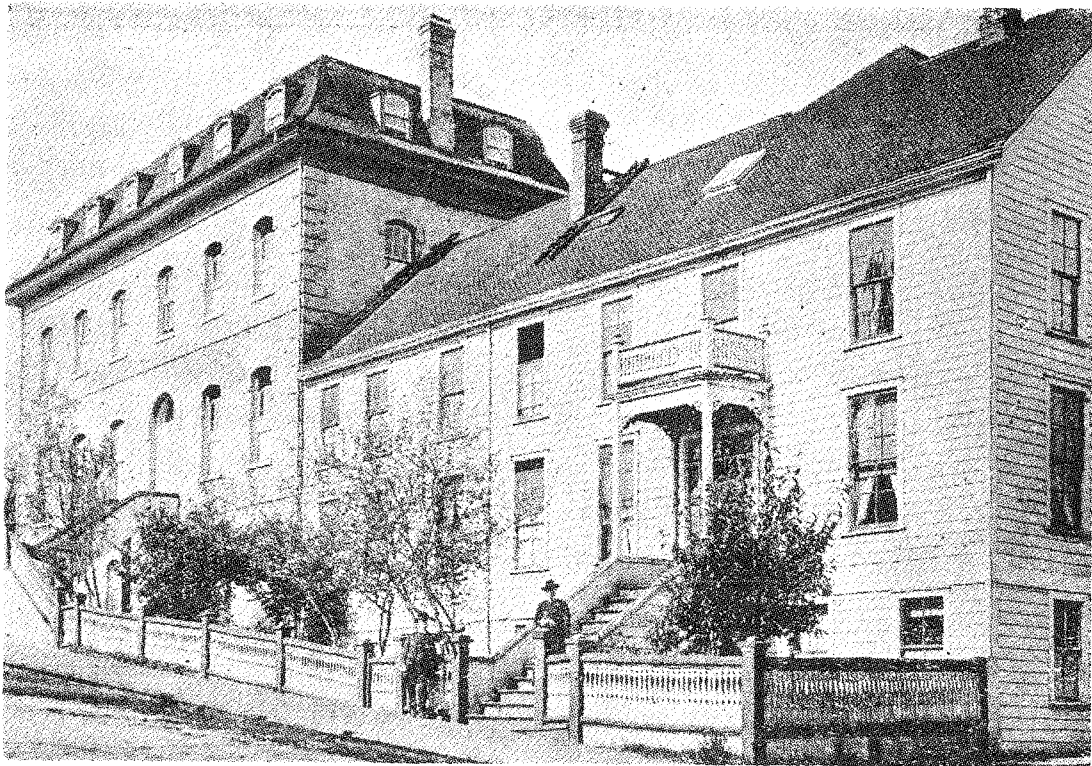
In 1897, in Vancouver, the Oblates succeeded to the secular clergy in the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, where they built a magnificent gothic-style church which in 1912 became the cathedral church. This parish was given back to the secular clergy in 1927. At the same time, the Oblates were temporarily looking after the parishes of Sacred Heart (1905-1911) and St. Patrick (1910-1911); they also received in perpetuity the parish of St. Augustine's which flourished and prospered. They also plied their zeal in the parish of St. Edmund in North Vancouver. Lastly, the Oblates opened a residence in the city for mission preachers, which they named the house of St. John. The work of preaching parish missions began with two or three missionaries who were assisted by a couple of others from the residence of St. Charles in New Westminster.

The missionaries to the Indians, particularly those in south-eastern British Columbia, were the first to care for the

¹⁰ G. FORBES, O.M.I., "The History of St. Peter's Parish", in *St. Peter New Westminster, B.C., 100th Anniversary 1860-1960*, p. 22.

⁶⁴ A. MORICE, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 332.

⁶⁵ G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de Marie Immaculée au Canada*, t. I, p. 90. Also worthy of mention are Brothers Patrick Allen, professor at the St. Louis college from 1863 to 1911, and James Flynn, who spent his whole life (1887-1907) serving this same college. *Ibidem*, t.I, p. 21; t.2, pp. 31-32; G. FORBES, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *St. Peter's New Westminster, B.C., 100th Anniversary 1860-1960*, p. 27.



New Westminster.

In the foreground, the house of St. Charles; in the background, attached to it, the college of St. Louis (1865-1917)

groups of Whites which were coming together in the mining centers. A number of these posts became parishes: Cranbrook, Fernie, Kimberley, Nelson, Vernon, Kamloops, Lillooet, Okanagan and Penticton. Two of these parishes remained in Oblate hands: Okanagan, founded in 1914, and Penticton, founded in 1915. All the rest passed on to the secular clergy. The growth of the Church in these regions resulted in the creation of the diocese of Nelson in 1936 and that of Kamloops in 1945.

Formation of St. Peter's Province

In 1926, the Vicariate of Missions of New Westminster was raised to the status of a Province with the name of St. Peter's of New Westminster.⁶⁶ The new Province was author-

⁶⁶ Cf. A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter 134, March 15, 1926, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 4, pp. 35-39. The words "New Westminster" have been dropped from the Province's name. Circular letter of Archbishop Dontenwill, July 16, 1930, to the Religious of the Province.

ized, after agreement with the Provinces concerned, to accept existing works in the English language, or to found them, right across Canada.

The Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan ceded to it the parish of St. Patrick in Lethbridge, of St. Paul in Saskatoon, and the work of the major seminary in Edmonton. In 1929, the Province of Canada East transferred to it certain English-speaking ministries in Ottawa: St. Joseph's parish, until then attached to the University of Ottawa, and the nascent St. Patrick's College, a part of the University of Ottawa. The year following, the St. Peter's Province received the new parish of the Holy Canadian Martyrs, which was formed from the English-speaking portion of the bi-lingual Sainte-Famille parish that was being served by St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa. In 1943, the Province accepted to serve in the mining centre of Flin Flon, in the Vicariate of Keewatin. Lastly, in 1944, the missions of the Apostolic Vicariate of Prince Rupert were confided to it.⁶⁷ These missions included 13 places and an Indian residential school at Lejac.

Its centre is fixed in Ottawa

Father William Grant-Byrne, who became Provincial in 1929, established his residence in the rectory of St. Joseph's church in Ottawa. The year following, he opened a novitiate and a scholasticate in the capital city of Canada. The Province of Ontario seemed to be a promising field for the Province's recruiting efforts, and St. Patrick's College was a source of growing influence.

The Province's beginnings in Ottawa were marked by great financial difficulties which were especially due to the high costs of building St. Patrick's College in the city of Ottawa itself, and Holy Rosary Scholasticate at Orleans on the outskirts of Ottawa. Besides that, the Province had to organize a

⁶⁷ Today, the diocese of Prince George. Cf. A. DESNOYERS, O.M.I., Vicar General, *Decree for the organization of the Mission Territories of White Horse and Prince Rupert*, September 15, 1944, 4 pages.

full professorial team for St. Patrick's College and, on the academic level, define their relationship to the University of Ottawa. Among other things, the financial difficulties were studied at the 1932 General Chapter and were solved with the



Joseph Scannell (1872-1966)
Provincial of St. Peter's Province, 1935-1947

help of the General Administration.⁶⁸ Father Joseph Scannell, Visitor of the Province in 1934-1935 and Provincial from 1935 to 1947, did a great deal to settle all these problems.

Personnel

When it began, the Vicariate of British Columbia was made up of French-speaking missionaries. Out of 27 Fathers in

⁶⁸ Cf. *Chapitres généraux, 1904-1932*, Rome, pp. 492-493; 499-501; Th. LABOURÉ, O.M.I., Circular letter 153, January 21, 1933, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 4, p. 249; Circular letter 154, February 1, 1933, *ibidem*, vol. 4, p. 258.

1899, only 5 were English-speaking. These latter gradually increased in number. At the time of the creation of the Province, they were 19 out of 45. Thereafter, a number of English-speaking Oblates were called from the United States, from Ireland and elsewhere to fill the needs of St. Patrick's College. Holy Rosary Scholasticate was not tardy in providing others. In the 1930s, the majority of the Province's Oblates was already English-speaking.

In 1948, the Province's personnel consisted of 185 Oblates: 132 Fathers, 22 scholastics and 31 Brothers. It had 9 houses and 10 residences, and, moreover, the Prince Rupert district.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Vicars of Missions were: Bishop Augustine Dontenwill, O.M.I., (1898-1908), John Welch (1910-1926). Provincials were: John Welch (1926-1929), William Grant-Byrne (1929-1932); (Father Ernest Connolly functioned as Vice-Provincial for the western part of Canada from July 1930 to October 1932); Denis Finnegan (1932-1935); Joseph Scannell (1935-1947). The Province published the magazine, *Oblate Missions*, which began to appear in Ottawa in 1941.

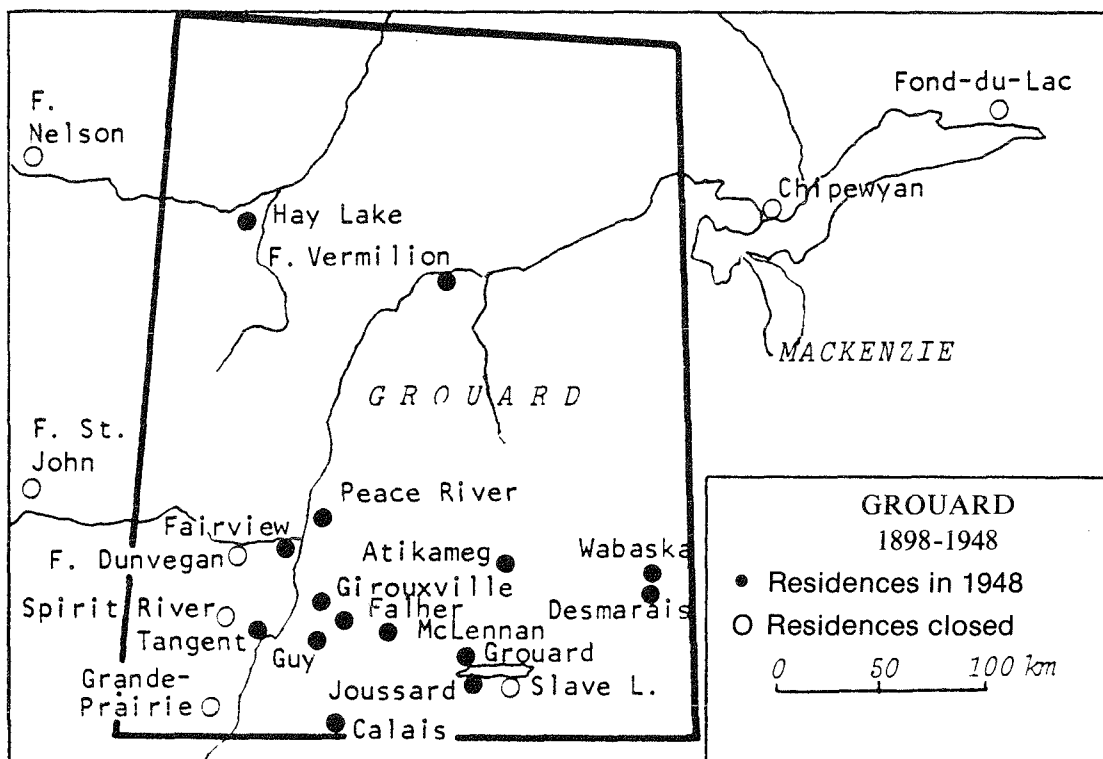
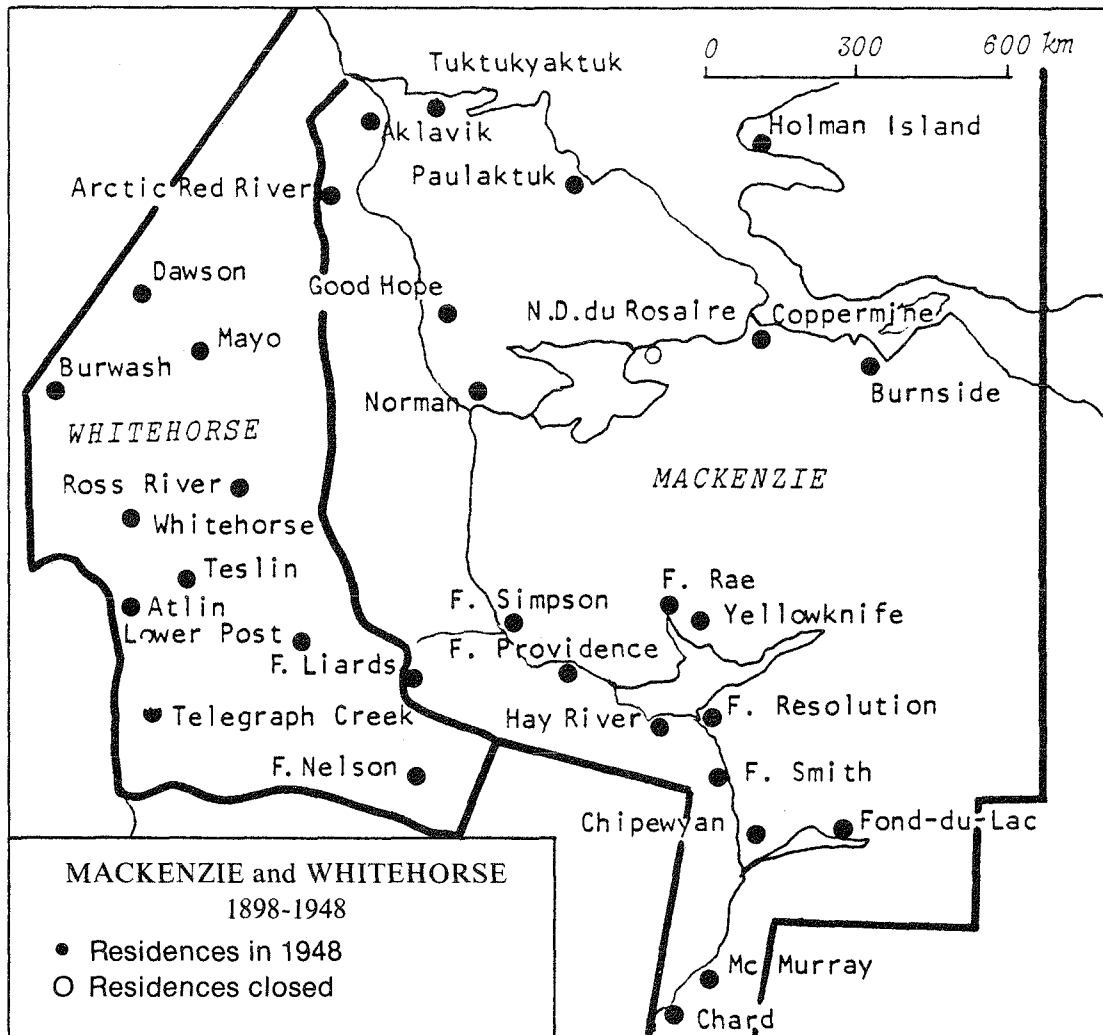
CHAPTER 7

The Vicariates of Northern Canada 1898-1947

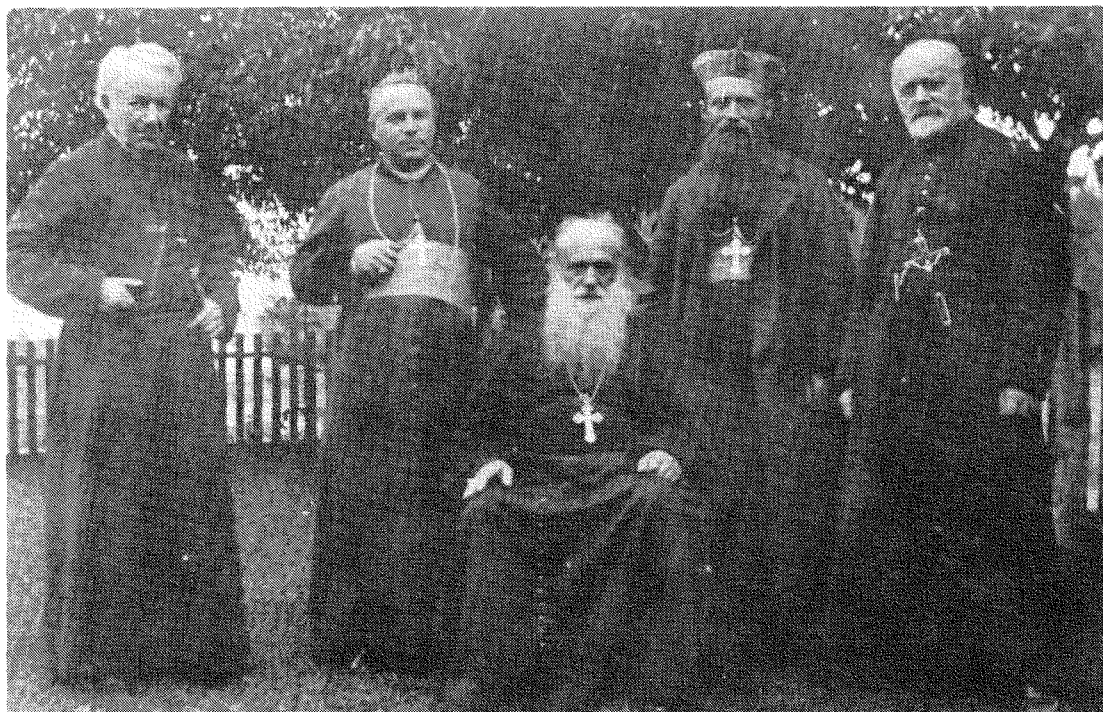
I. The Vicariate of Grouard: - Division of Athabaska-Mackenzie - The district of Athabasca - The district of Lesser Slave Lake - The Peace River district - White population increase - Personnel. **II. The Vicariate of Mackenzie:** - The new Vicariate - Progress - The missionaries' work - In Eskimo land: Aklavik - Massacre of two missionaries - Father Frapsauce is drowned - Father Fallaize wins the Eskimos' respect - The Coppermine mission - The Vicariate in 1947. **III. The Vicariate of Yukon:** - The Vicariate of Yukon - First developments - New missionary thrust - State of the Vicariate in 1939 - The missionaries - The Vicariates of Prince Rupert and Whitehorse. **IV. The Vicariate of Keewatin:** - The Vicariate of Keewatin - The General Administration not fully committed - Favored Eskimo missions - Foundation at Chesterfield Inlet - The first conversions - Stabilization of the mission - Indian missions of the West - Indian missions of the Centre and the East - Among the Whites - The Vicariate in 1947. **V. The Vicariate of Hudson Bay:** - An Apostolic Prefecture - The mission's progress - Some events - Provisions - The missionaries' apostolate - Personnel.

In 1947, there were six Apostolic Vicariates in the Canadian Northwest, all of them entrusted to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Grouard, Mackenzie, Prince Rupert, Whitehorse, Keewatin and Hudson Bay. All were established in the period that we are studying and extended over territory where the Oblates had already been at work. They succeeded to the former Vicariates of Athabaska-Mackenzie, Saskatchewan and British Columbia and to the Apostolic Prefecture of the Yukon which was established in 1908.

With the exception of Prince Rupert, each of these six Apostolic Vicariates of the Canadian Northwest also formed a



religious Vicariate of Missions. Generally speaking, the Apostolic Vicar himself fulfilled the role of religious superior, that is, of Vicar of Missions.



From l. to r.: Albert Lacombe, Bishop Émile Legal, Bishop Émile Grouard, Bishop Gabriel Breynat, Auguste Husson

I – The Vicariate of Grouard

Division of Athabaska-Mackenzie

The General Administration of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1901 proceeded to divide the immense Vicariate of Missions of Mackenzie-Athabaska which had been established in 1864. The portion north of the 60 degrees parallel became the Vicariate of Missions of the Mackenzie; that south of this parallel became the Vicariate of Missions of Athabaska. In this measure, it was following the lead of the Holy See which in that same year had divided the Apostolic Vicariate of Mackenzie-Athabaska in the same manner.¹

¹ July 30, 1901. Bishop Grouard had presented a request in this sense. Cf. *Missions*, 43 (1905), pp. 179-183. The name of Grouard was in 1927 given both to the Vicariate of Missions and the Apostolic Vicariate of Athabaska.

Bishop Émile Grouard, O.M.I., remained Vicar Apostolic of Athabaska; at the same time, he carried out the task of religious superior of the Oblates in his Vicariate as Vicar of Missions.²

The Vicariate of Athabaska comprised three regions or districts which, generally speaking, were formed by the basins of the Lake and River Athabaska, Lesser Slave Lake, and the Peace River.

The district of Athabaska

Two old missions were located in the district of Athabaska: the Nativity at Fort Chipewyan, which had been visited as early as 1847 by Father Alexandre Taché and established by Father Henri Faraud in 1849; and Our Lady of Sorrows at Fond-du-Lac, which had been opened in 1853 by Father Henri Grollier. Two other missions were soon founded: St. Mary's at Fitzgerald in 1902, and St. John the Baptist at Fort McMurray in 1914.

Valiant apostles were devoting themselves in these Indian missions. Such were: Father Alfred Chambeuil, missionary at Fort Chipewyan from 1881 to 1923; Father Adolphe Laffont, founder of the mission at Fort McMurray; Father Jean-Louis Riou, an apostle for 25 years at Fond-du-Lac; Bishop Célestin Jossard, O.M.I., coadjutor to Bishop Grouard from 1909 onwards, missionary at Fort Chipewyan and district superior from 1917 to 1927; Brothers Hérmias Charbonneau and François-Marie Hemon, who each gave 37 years of their life to the mission of Fort Chipewyan; and Brother Louis Crenn who gave 67 years of his life to the same mission.

Because of important developments that were occurring in the other parts of his Vicariate and especially because of the colonization that was taking place, Bishop Grouard in 1914 proposed that an Apostolic Vicariate be formed consisting of

² Cf. A. BOUCHER, O.M.I., *Provinciaux et Vicaires des Missions dans la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, p. 73, note 2.



A group of Oblate Brothers of the Vicariate of Athabaska at Fort Chipewyan, ca. 1915. From l. to r.: Louis Crenn, Rodolphe Courtelle, François Hemon, Hermas Charbonneau and Tugdual Mousset

the district of Athabaska and that his coadjutor, Bishop Jousard, be named Vicar Apostolic of this new Vicariate. This proposal had no immediate effect. The Holy See responded to it later, in 1927, not by erecting the district of Athabaska into an Apostolic Vicariate but by attaching it to the Apostolic Vicariate of Mackenzie.³ Thus the portion located east of 113 degrees longitude was detached from the Vicariate of Athabaska. Since the name of the latter was now no longer appropriate, it was replaced by that of Grouard, the name of its venerated Pastor.⁴ The place where he resided already bore that name.

³ Cf. A. PHILIPPOT, O.M.I., "Vicariat de Grouard", in *Centenaire des Oblats dans l'Ouest canadien*, p. 63.

⁴ Cf. "Vicariat apostolique de Grouard, Aperçu historique . . .", in *Missions*, 71 (1937), pp. 277-279. DANIEL-ROPS makes the observation: "The sole example of a missionary who in his own lifetime saw his own name given to the town that sprang up around his mission and to the apostolic circumscription entrusted to him is: Bishop Grouard, Vicar Apostolic of Grouard, resident at Grouard!" *Un Combat pour Dieu*, p. 682.

The district of Lesser Slave Lake

The mission of St. Bernard is the centre of the Lesser Slave Lake district. The location of this mission, called Grouard since 1909, the site of a trading post, was visited in 1845 by the Abbé Joseph Bourassa and then, from 1864 onwards, by Father René Rémas who settled there in 1872.⁵ The mission had its own church in 1878, dedicated to St. Bernard, its own school in 1888, and boarding school in 1894. The latter was conducted by the Sisters of Providence from Montreal. Bishop Grouard transferred his vicariate residence to Grouard in 1904.⁶

From Grouard, Father Rémas and his successors, Fathers Joseph Dupin, François-Xavier Le Serrec, Alphonse Desmarais, Constant Falher and Henri Giroux among others, evangelized the Indians and Metis around Lesser Slave Lake, especially at Sturgeon Lake (Calais), Whitefish, Trout Lake and Wabasca. Missions with resident priests were established: Desmarais (Wabasca) in 1897, Calais in 1903, Jousard in 1912. Brothers also brought their precious collaboration. Among them were: Eugène Courteille, who was 36 years in the mission at Jousard, and Michel Mathis, who was 48 years in the mission at Calais. The Sisters of Providence established themselves at Desmarais in 1901, at Calais in 1907, and at Jousard in 1913.⁷

Thanks to the activity of Father Henri Giroux,⁸ who was appointed to be a colonizer missionary, a first centre of

⁵ Cf. A. PHILIPPOT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Centenaire des Oblats dans l'Ouest canadien*, p. 63. On December 23, 1901, the Holy See assigned to the Apostolic Vicariate of Athabaska the entire territory of the diocese of St. Albert that lay north of the 55th degree latitude. The region of Lesser Slave Lake is part of this territory.

⁶ The locality named Grouard seemed in 1909 destined to great development but ceased growing after 1914. Cf. *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 71 (1937), p. 428.

⁷ Cf. A. PHILIPPOT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Centenaire des Oblats dans l'Ouest canadien*, p. 63.

⁸ Because the region was being invaded by Protestant and English-speaking elements, Bishop Grouard and his council decided to promote colon-

French Canadian and Catholic colonization was founded at Falher in 1912; it became a parish in 1917. Other centres were thereafter opened which became the parishes of Donnelly (1922), McLennan (1928), Girouxville (1928), Tangent (1929), Guy (1931),⁹ and Jean-Côté (1935). Jousard became the "promoter of Catholic and French colonization". He himself travelled on foot through the entire territory on which parishes were established.

The Peace River district

The evangelization of the Peace River district began at Fort Dunvegan as early as 1845 when the Abbé Joseph Bourassa visited this spot. Other missionaries, the Abbé Albert Lacombe — the future Oblate — and Father Henri Faraud came to this place. Father Christopher Tissier was the first resident missionary: he stayed there from 1868 to 1883, all alone during the first thirteen years. Afterwards, Father Joseph Le Treste was one of the main missionaries there, from 1885 to 1903. This first mission lost its importance at the turn of the century and was later abandoned.¹¹

Other missions sprang up in the vast plains that are watered by the Peace River. Fort Vermillion, 500 kilometers down from Fort Dunvegan, a place already visited by the Abbé Bourassa in 1846 and by Father Henri Faraud in 1858

ization by Catholics, especially by French Canadians. He appointed Father Henri Giroux to be a colonizer missionary. The latter was also accredited by the Canadian Government which in 1911 gave him the official title: "agent for repatriation and colonizer missionary of the Peace River." He fulfilled this role until 1922. Cf. A. PHILIPPOT, O.M.I., "Missionnaire colonisateur", in *Missions*, 84 (1957), pp. 255-256.

⁹ A parish founded in 1931 and given to the Oblates in 1946. Cf. A. PHILIPPOT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Centenaire des Oblats dans l'Ouest canadien*, p. 63.

¹⁰ G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de Marie Immaculée au Canada*, t. 2, p. 179.

¹¹ The old mission has been restored and is maintained by the Government as a historical building; it is part of an Alberta provincial park.

and by other missionaries later, became a residential mission in 1876. Father August Husson and Arthur Laity were its first residents. Father Célestin Joussard spent 20 years of his missionary life there. Afterwards the missions of Spirit River, Grande Prairie, Fort Saint John and Pouce Coupé, all in British Columbia.

The missionaries of Fort Vermilion extended their activity in a northerly direction as far as Upper Hay River, Hay Lakes and even Fort Nelson. This last mission post, opened by Father Émile Grouard in 1868, was until 1932 served by the missionaries of the Vicariate of Mackenzie.

The portion of the Vicariate of Grouard which was located in the civil province of British Columbia — the Vicariate extended to the peaks of the Rocky Mountains — was in 1944 attached to the Apostolic Vicariates of Prince Rupert and Whitehorse. The mission in this portion, namely, Fort Saint John became part of the Vicariate of Prince Rupert and Fort Nelson part of the Vicariate of Whitehorse.

In all these missions and outposts, the peoples evangelized were especially the Cree, Beaver and Slave Indians¹² and Metis. The Peace River valley received colonists very quickly, and thus parishes sprang up: Peace River, Friedenstal, Fairview, etc. Grande Prairie soon became an important town.

White population increase

In 1920, Bishop Grouard wrote: "We can say that in 1908 we had only our missions to the natives to maintain; we have since, however, been invaded by a multitude of Whites of every nationality who are spread out over the vast plains on either side of the Peace River."¹³ In 1947, the Catholic popula-

¹² Cf. "L'Évangélisation des Esclaves du vicariat de Grouard 1858-1951" in *Voix du Vicariat de Grouard*, 1951, pp. 23-53, 59-70.

¹³ E. GROUARD, O.M.I., "Rapport au Chapitre général de 1920", in *Missions*, 56 (1922), p. 481.

tion of the Vicariate stood at 21,894; only 6400 of these were Indians or Metis.¹⁴

In the parishes opened to serve the new population, the Oblates did the work of the pioneer missionaries. They organized Christian communities, served small outposts in the environs of their parishes, built churches, schools and rectories. In 1946, they opened a classical college at Falher for the French Canadian element and organized a financial drive to build it.

The Oblates of St. Mary's Province were requested to care for groups or parishes of Germans and Poles, especially at Fairview. In 1932, Bishop Joseph Guy, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic since 1929, gave the important parish of the Grande Prairie district to the Redemptorists. In 1947, the Vicariate had six secular priests and six Redemptorists: two of the latter were Brothers.¹⁵

Personnel

Between 1902 and 1933, the number of Oblates in the Vicariate varied between 39 and 50; then it grew so that it passed from 57 to 89 during the years 1934-1947. In 1947, there were 2 Bishops, 57 Fathers, 23 Brothers and 7 scholastics. The Vicariate was organized into seven religious districts, had 14 houses or residences and 14 posts with a resident priest. The vicariate house was transferred from Grouard to McLennan in 1943.¹⁶

¹⁴ H. ROUTHIER, O.M.I., "Rapport du vicariat des missions de Grouard", *ibidem*, 75 (1948), p. 379. The total population of the Vicariate was 55,000.

¹⁵ In 1947, the Vicariate also had: 108 Sisters of Providence from Montreal, 51 Holy Cross Sisters from St-Laurent, near Montreal, 7 Grey Nuns of the Cross from Ottawa, 4 Little Sisters of St. Joseph from Montreal, 3 Sisters of Service from Toronto, and a community of the Recluses Missionnaires de Jésus-Marie who in 1947 were 14 in number.

¹⁶ The Vicars of Missions were: Bishop Émile Grouard, O.M.I., (1901-1930), Father Jules Calais (1930-1932), Bishop Joseph Guy, O.M.I. (1932-1938), Bishop Ubald Langlois, O.M.I. (1938-1944), Bishop Henri Routhier, O.M.I. (1944-1950). The Vicariate's magazine was *La Voix du Vicariat de Grouard*, which was published at McLennan from 1942 onwards.

II – *The Vicariate of Mackenzie*

The new Vicariate

The Apostolic Vicariate of Mackenzie, created by the papal Brief of July 30, 1901, extended over the Mackenzie district and the Yukon territory.¹⁷ Its first Vicar Apostolic was Father Gabriel Breynat. In the Mackenzie district, the Oblates were already present among the Indian tribes and Metis who made up a population of 4000 to 5000. They had not as yet conquered for the Gospel the Eskimos on the Arctic shore or of the islands in the Arctic Ocean. Their presence in the Yukon is quite recent. They arrived there in 1898 and in 1901 were five Fathers and one Brother plus one secular priest. The Yukon Territory was detached from the Vicariate of the Mackenzie in 1908 and was made into a Prefecture Apostolic. On the other hand, to facilitate access to the south, Bishop Breynat in 1927 obtained from the Holy See that the Athabasca district be added to his own Apostolic Vicariate.

Progress

In 1901 there existed already a network of missions which covered the territory inhabited by the Indians and Metis of the Mackenzie district. These missions are established at Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Fort Wrighley, Fort Liard, Fort Rae, Fort Norman, Good Hope and Peel River. In 1927, the missions of the Athabasca district were added: Fort Chipewyan, Fond-du-Lac, Fort McMurray and Fitzgerald. New ones were opened, like Chard in 1935 and Yellowknife in 1938. Indians and Whites were served by these missions. After 1925¹⁸ were added those which were opened in Eskimo territory.

Material developments also occurred. In terms of buildings, churches, schools, hospitals, missionary residences were

¹⁷ Its boundaries were from the 60th degree latitude to the North Pole and from 102nd degree longitude to the boundaries of Alaska.

¹⁸ Cf. below, pp. 169-173.

built or re-built. Provisioning by boat, already organized by Bishop Grouard on the Athabasca and Mackenzie Rivers, was extended so as to include the Eskimo missions all the way to the Arctic Ocean. New institutions were established. To the boarding schools of Chipewyan and Providence are added those at Fort Resolution in 1903 and of Aklavik in 1925. The Government opened six hospitals: at Fort Smith (1914), Fort Simpson (1916), Aklavik (1925), Fort McMurray (1938), Fort Resolution (1939) and Fort Rae (1940). These boarding schools and hospitals were operated by the Grey Nuns from Montreal.

Progress in communications in the Canadian Far North also benefited the life in the missions. Thus, in 1924, wireless telegraph reached Fort Smith, Fort Simpson and Aklavik, and came to other posts later. In 1927, a commercial airplane service came to Fort Simpson and, two years later, Bishop Breynat and his missionaries were able to use this service to travel in the Vicariate.¹⁹

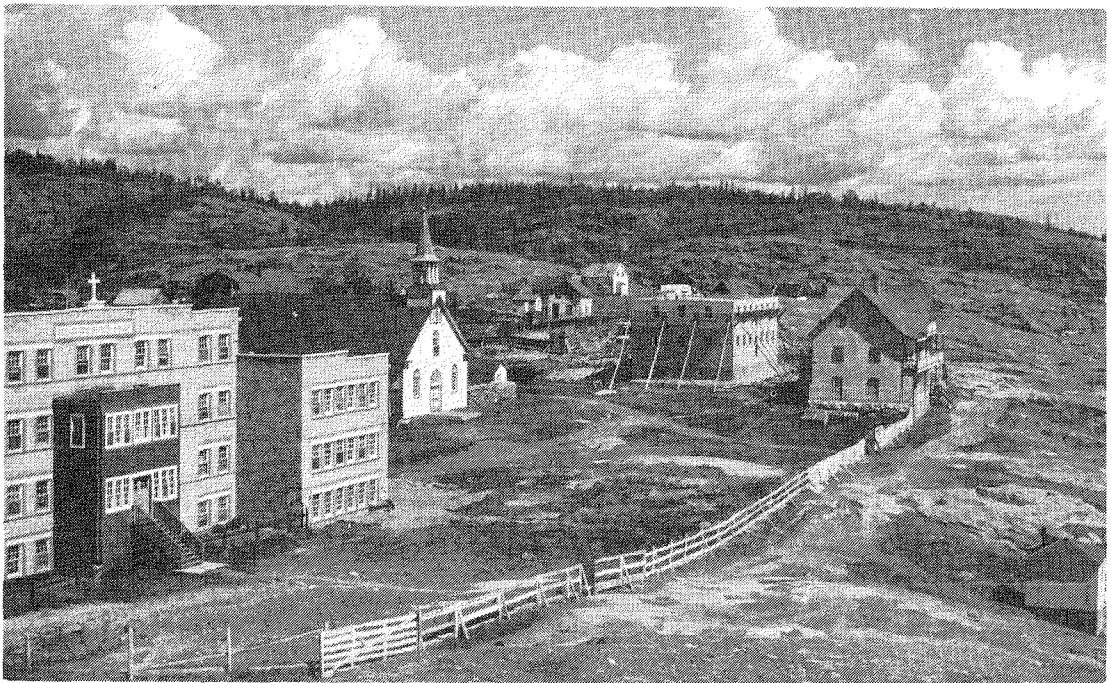
The missionaries' work

In terms of their regular ministry, the missionaries preached missions to the Indians who came together a few times each year at the trading posts. They looked after the faithful who lived in permanent fashion at the missions or outposts, and they visited the hunting and fishing camps. As in the past, they learned the language of the Indians, composed or published again books of prayer, hymnals and other items in the Indian languages.

There were ardent and generous missionaries at work here. To mention just a few: Zephirin Gascon, the "Francis

¹⁹ Thanks to the collaboration of Father Paul Schulte and the MIVA, Bishop Breynat received his own airplane in December 1936, piloted by Louis Brisson. Four years later this airplane was no longer used: commercial airlines were now available to the Vicariate's needs. From 1939 to 1945, airports were arranged in McMurray, Embarrass Portage, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Hay River, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Wrigley and Norman Wells. Cf. *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 123.

Xavier of the Dene",²⁰ a tireless traveller, the first to bring the Gospel to the Indians of the Liard River; Gabriel Houssais, who spent his whole life as a missionary to the Indians of Fort Hope and Fort Norman; Georges Ducot, a missionary for forty years at Fort Norman; Bruno Roure, thirty-nine years a missionary at Fort Rae, the first fourteen of which were spent in complete solitude; Julien Lecuyer, who spent his whole life in the polar regions of Good Hope and the Arctic Red River; Joseph Turcotte, who for fifty-six years was a devoted and very much loved missionary.



*The mission of the Nativity, Fort Chipewyan, in 1947.
To the left, the school of Our Lady of the Angels; next, the church,
then the Oblate residence still under construction. The building
against the enclosure is the former Oblate residence.*

During the period that we are studying, the Brothers still plied their devotedness in works that assured the maintenance and temporal life of the missions, boarding schools and hospitals. They also ran a large farm, called St. Bruno farm, near Fort Smith as a benefit to the missions. They were always the

²⁰ P. DUCHAUSSOIS, O.M.I., *Aux glaces polaires*, p. 276.

priest's companions, both in the mission and when travelling, men of good example and his advisers when it came to contact with the people.

A few names of Brothers are: Joseph-Patrick Kearney, a missionary for 57 years in the polar mission of Fort Good Hope; Wilhelm Beckschaefer and Gerhard Kraut, skilled mechanics and masters of other trades; Jean-Marie Beaudet, known as a "traveller of merit" and "regular as a Trappist";²¹ Yves-Marie Legall, who was at Fort Smith from 1909 to 1951, in charge of the St. Bruno farm and of the portage between Fort Smith and Fort Fitzgerald at the rapids of the Slave River; Laurent Bruyère and Philippe Lecuyer, skilled builders; Derrien Kérautret, Benoit Meyer-Marguerit, Albin Plante and Émile Roy, as well as the three Latreille brothers, Henri, Medard and Philippe, all efficient artisans who served devotedly in a number of mission posts.²²

In Eskimo land: Aklavik

The outstanding event of the Oblates' apostolate in the Mackenzie during the first half of this century was the opening of missions among the Eskimo people of the Arctic Ocean. Since the end of the last century, attempts to reach the group of Eskimos at the mouth of the Mackenzie River had even been abandoned, much to the missionaries' regret. Aklavik, a trading post for the Hudson Bay and Northern Trading companies, where two or three times yearly a good number of the 300 to 350 Eskimo families of the Mackenzie delta gathered, seemed to be the ideal spot for founding a mission to the Eskimos.

²¹ G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *Dictionnaire biographique des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, t.1, p. 56.

²² Father Pierre Duchaussois made the missionary work of the Oblate Brothers in Northern Canada known in his book, *Apôtres inconnus* which appeared in 1924. He also publicized the marvellous part played by the Grey Nuns of Montreal in his book *Femmes héroïques* which appeared in 1920.

In 1923, Father Pierre Fallaize chose the terrain of the future mission and two years later, Fathers Joseph Trocellier, Julien Lecuyer, Alphonse Duport and Brother Wilhelm Beckschaefer established the mission. Right from the outset, a boarding school and a rudimentary hospital were opened and entrusted to the Grey Nuns. The latter arrived that same year. The Eskimos, however, without being hostile to the missionaries and even appreciating them and helping them on occasion, preserved their allegiance to Protestantism.²³ In spite of this, the missionaries remained at this post and continued their works of charity.

Massacre of two missionaries

Another missionary effort to penetrate Eskimo territory was launched at the same time that the mission of Aklavik was being established. At the suggestion of Mr. J. Hornby, a Protestant explorer and trapper, Bishop Breynat asked Father Jean-Baptiste Rouvière to visit the Eskimos who during the summer of 1911 were to meet the Indians north of Great Bear Lake. These were the Copper Eskimos, a still very primitive group, different from the ones at the mouth of the Mackenzie River. With M. Hornby as guide, the missionary went to the remotest part of Great Bear Lake and went upstream the Dease River to Lake Imerenick, today Lake Rouvière. The Eskimos, however, had already left for their homeland. He spent the winter near Great Bear Lake and in the spring returned to Fort Norman. During the course of this great excursion, he had made contact with some 150 to 200 Eskimos.²⁴

Accompanied by Father Guillaume Le Roux, Father Rouvière returned to his little hut at Imerenick Lake. The two valiant missionaries wanted to spend the winter in Eskimo

²³ P. FALLAIZE, O.M.I., "Les Esquimaux du Vicariat apostolique du Mackenzie", in *Missions*, 70 (1936), p. 47.

²⁴ Cf. J.-B. ROUVIERE, O.M.I., "Rapport sur les Esquimaux du Mackenzie", *ibidem*, 51 (1913), pp. 26-41; also cf. G. BREYNAT, O.M.I., *Cinquante ans au pays des neiges*, vol. 2, pp. 211-213; 226-229.

land of the Arctic Ocean. They went there with a group of Eskimos in the autumn of 1913. They were well received. The hunting season had not been too successful and the sorcerers convinced them to return, and so they left. After travelling for several days, two Eskimos, Sinnisiak and Oulouksak, caught up with them and shamefully and cruelly massacred them. This double murder happened between October 28 and November 2, 1913, at about 25 kilometers from rapids on the Coppermine River called Bloody Falls; definitive light on what happened was available only by 1916, thanks to the cooperation of the Canadian constabulary.²⁵

Father Frapsauce is drowned

The attempt to evangelize the Eskimos of the Coppermine district was not abandoned. Volunteers to succeed the two martyrs came forward. Father Joseph Frapsauce, an active and courageous man, was chosen to continue this heroic mission. He had in 1917 established himself at Dease Bay, north of Great Bear Lake, in the mission of Our Lady of the Rosary. From there he made two trips to the Arctic Ocean and brought back an Eskimo family to spend the winter at Fort Resolution. In July 1919, he left again for the mission of Our Lady of the Rosary, in the company of this family and Brother Benoit Meyer-Marguerit.

Father Pierre Fallaize had also been assigned to the Eskimo mission. He arrived in 1920, accompanied by Brother Meyer-Marguerit, who had come to fetch him from Fort Norman. The two arrived at the mission on October 21. Father Frapsauce was not there. After some vain waiting, they found some clues. The priest had gone fishing and had drowned, probably on October 24, shortly before the place of

²⁵ Cf. J. MICHEL, O.M.I., "R. P. Joseph Frapsauce, o.m.i., (1875-1920)", in *Missions*, 84 (1957), pp. 44-45; A. ROCHE, O.M.I., *Le Secret des iglous, Recit historique*, ed. du Chalet, Lyon, p. 208.

this tragedy had been discovered.²⁶ This was another cruel trial for the young mission.

Father Fallaize wins the Eskimos' respect

Father Pierre Fallaize lived alone in the Our Lady of the Rosary mission at Great Bear Lake from 1920 to 1926: Brother Meyer-Marguerit had been recalled to another mission. He was studying the Eskimo language and customs.



*Bishop Pierre Fallaize (1887-1964)
Coadjutor to the Mackenzie Vicariate.
Pioneer of the Eskimo Missions in the Arctic*

He baptized the Eskimo family which had spent the 1918-1919 winter at Fort Resolution and two others who were on the point of death. In 1923, after being authorized to absent himself from the mission, he undertook a three months long journey into Eskimo territory itself at the Arctic Ocean. With

²⁶ Cf. J. MICHEL, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 84 (1957), pp. 56-60; Letter of Father Fallaize, *ibidem*, 56 (1922), pp. 717-718.

courage and determination, he shared their life and did not manifest any repugnance at their primitive mores. The mockery of these proud and ruthless Eskimos did not discourage him. One day, they wanted to chase him away, but he refused to leave. An Eskimo threatened him with: "Would it matter to you if we stuck a knife into your ribs?" He calmly replied: "Not very much." Disconcerted by such self-control and patience, the Eskimos found themselves impelled to esteem and admire him. He had conquered them. As he himself put it, "Upon returning from this trip, I had acquired my place under the Eskimo sun, so to speak."²⁷ In 1926, after a careful visit of the Arctic Ocean coastline, he chose the mouth of the Coppermine River as the most suitable centre for a missionary residence.

The Coppermine mission

Harsh trials awaited the missionary. Father Fallaize noted that the year 1927 almost proved fatal to the evangelization of the Eskimos. At the General House, where he had gone in 1926, he could not get a companion for the new mission. In the Vicariate of Mackenzie itself, Bishop Breynat, faced with a lack of missionaries, delayed *sine die* to go ahead with the proposed foundation at the Coppermine River and decided to abandon the mission of Our Lady of the Rosary until a better time.²⁸ Father Fallaize was named master of novices. Towards the end of 1927, however, the Vicar Apostolic changed his mind, due to the influence of his missionaries and to the fact that he had received some reinforcements. In 1928, Father Fallaize again took the road to Coppermine via the Arctic Ocean.

²⁷ P. FALLAIZE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 70 (1936), p. 53.

²⁸ Letter of Bishop Breynat to Is. Belle, May 29, 1927. Oblate General Archives, Dossier Breynat. The Vicariate Council was led to take the same decision: cf. Report of the Vicariate Council addressed to N.-S. Dozois, July 18, 1927, MS. p. 8. Oblate General Archives, Dossier Mackenzie Vicariate Council. Also cf. P. FALLAIZE, O.M.I., *Quelques notes sur l'évangélisation des Esquimaux du Mackenzie à partir de 1911*, MS, 3 pages. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal, Dossier Mackenzie 1948-1954.

But, as he himself narrates, difficulties were accumulating in an incredible fashion. An epidemic was decimating the Indians and Eskimos; the Hudson Bay Company refused to transport him and his companions, Father Antoine Binamé and Brother Wilhelm Beckschaefer; the Anglicans were establishing themselves at Coppermine; the cargo boat could not manage the sea and they were compelled to halt at Letty Harbor where the house meant for Coppermine was built. Only in 1929 did the Coppermine foundation become a reality, and that "under bitter and tenacious opposition", for the Eskimos had been prejudiced against the missionaries. With Brother Leopold Berens' assistance, Father Fallaize built a house there.

Two years later, when Father Fallaize was recalled to take up his duties as Coadjutor Bishop of the Vicariate, twenty Catholic Eskimos had been laid to rest in the mission cemetery and as many others made up the Christian community in that place.²⁹ Other missions were then opened: Burnside (1935), Stanton (1937), Tuktoyaktuk (1940), and the farthest north in the Vicariate, Holman Island (1939), which was dedicated to Christ the King. In 1936, the mission of Letty Harbor was transferred to Paulatuk. More than anywhere else, the missionaries in these missions worked in the most rudimentary conditions and especially in a painful isolation. From 1911 to 1925, nearly 25 missionaries had served this Arctic territory for a period more or less long.

The Vicariate in 1947

In 1948, the Vicariate had 61 Fathers and 47 Brothers³⁰ who were divided among 3 houses, 19 residences and 12 stations with house and chapel. Its Catholic population consisted

²⁹ P. FALLAIZE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 70 (1936), p. 55; cf. also L. LEMER, O.M.I., *Les chutes du sang*, Coppermine, 1950, 114 pages.

³⁰ The *Personnel o.m.i.* show that from 1911 onwards, the Brothers were almost as numerous as the Fathers in the Vicariate and even outnumbered the priests from 1924 to 1936. Two Metis from the Vicariate, Napoléon Laferté (native of Fort Rae) and Patrick Mercredi (native of Chipewyan) became Oblate priests, the former in 1923, the latter in 1934.

of 4338 Indians, 1974 Metis, 220 Eskimos and 1446 Whites, out of a total population of 12,842.³¹ 88 Grey Nuns from Montreal were also missionaries there.

III – *The Vicariate of Yukon*

The Vicariate of Yukon

In 1908, the Holy See established the Apostolic Prefecture of Yukon and Prince Rupert and entrusted it to the Oblates. Its territory took in not only the Yukon territory but also the northern part of British Columbia. The Prefecture's territory was peopled by several Indians tribes and Whites. It was already blessed with the care given it by seven Oblates located in four central residences: two in the Yukon (Dawson and Whitehorse) and two in British Columbia (Stuart Lake, the oldest post opened in the middle of the last century, and Atlin). The Prefecture became an Apostolic Vicariate in 1916³² and its Apostolic Prefect, Bishop Émile Buno, O.M.I., was promoted to Vicar Apostolic. The General Administration of the Oblates had constituted the Prefecture's territory into a Vicariate of Missions.

First developments

Due to the lack of sufficient apostolic workers, missionary work progressed rather slowly for several years. In British Columbia, the nascent city of Prince Rupert, terminal of a transcontinental railway, promised to be a future centre. In 1910, it became the residence of the Vicar of Missions and of

³¹ *Le Canada ecclésiastique*, 1948, p. 576. Vicars of Missions were: Bishop Gabriel Breynat, O.M.I., (1901-1942); Bishop Joseph Trocellier, O.M.I., (Pro-Vicar in 1942, Vicar of Missions, 1943-1950). *Le Courrier de famille* was the Vicariate's news bulletin from 1937 onwards.

³² The Prefecture's boundaries were: the 54th degree of latitude to the south, Alaska to the west, the Arctic Ocean to the north, and the Rocky Mountains to the east. It retained the same boundaries when it became an Apostolic Vicariate except for the south where it went to the 55th degree of latitude and included the Queen Charlotte archipelago.

the missionaries who looked after the posts on the Pacific coast and the Queen Charlotte archipelago. Other missionaries, while looking after the Indians, were visiting the localities that were springing up along the railroad; they established themselves in the main towns: Smithers (1915), Lejac³³ (1922), Prince George (1914), Terrace (1920), etc. The Whites in these centres were miners, prospectors, trappers, a rather cosmopolitan group and mostly English-speaking.

The Yukon, the land of the famous Klondike, was in a recession. Its 55,000 population of prosperity days was now no more than two or three thousand Whites.³⁴ The capital city, Dawson, still had one or two missionaries plus the Sisters of St. Anne of Lachine who ran a school and a hospital. But "the creeks" — the gold-bearing places — which depended on it, where for some ten years there had been centres of 200 to 300 Catholics, were abandoned.³⁵ There was still one missionary at Whitehorse. The Indian missions were almost given up: Catholic Indians numbered "only a few dozen at the most at this time".³⁶

The statistics of 1900-1932 give the Vicariate a total population of 50,000, of whom from 8000 to 10,000 are Catholic. As late as 1932, Yukon had, out of a total population of 4230, only 647 Catholics.³⁷

New missionary thrust

After a brief visit to the Vicariat of Yukon in 1935, Father Théodore Labouré, Superior General, decided to send

³³ In 1922, at Lejac, a large Indian residential school replaced that of Fort James (Stuart Lake) which the missionaries had built earlier. K. CRONIN, *Cross in the Wilderness*, p. 215.

³⁴ J.-L. COUDERT, O.M.I., "Rapport du vicariat de Whitehorse (1938-1947)", in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 550.

³⁵ E. BUNOZ, O.M.I., "Vicariat des Missions du Yukon, Canada", *ibidem*, 54 (1920), pp. 195-196.

³⁶ J.-L. COUDERT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 551.

³⁷ E. BUNOZ, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Yukon", in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 220.

more missionaries there and, the year following, obtained the appointment of a new bishop. Father Jean-Louis Coudert was named coadjutor bishop. He first established himself at Smithers and took charge of the northern missions especially. With the arrival of new missionaries — in a few months the personnel of the Vicariate doubled — missions with resident priests were organized or reopened: McLeod, B.C., Telegraph Creek Babine in 1936; Lower Post in 1937; Teslin in 1938; Stony Creek, Moricetown and Vanderhoof in 1939. Outstations depended on these centers.

With the opening of the missions of Mayo and Teslin in 1938 along with other posts, the apostolate to the Indians was taken up again in the Yukon. The missionaries worked zealously among an Indian population that was already partly won over by the Protestants. Father Albert Dréan wrote: "Until these latter years, our missionaries were too few and for the most part too old and over-burdened; hence they could not care for the Indian camps which were dispersed over the mountains and glaciers of Yukon. Thus these Indians became the prey of the Protestant ministers."³⁸

State of the Vicariate in 1939

Father Achille Auclair paints the following picture of the Yukon in 1939: "Thirty Oblate missionaries and two secular priests, divided among 21 residences, are devoting themselves to serving souls. The Catholic population consists of more or less two equal parts: Whites of various nationalities and Indians of different languages and dialects, according to the tribes. Eighteen missionaries serve ten parishes and thirteen mission chapels along the Canadian National railway from Jasper Park to Prince Rupert; sixteen others did their ministry in eleven mission posts situated from 50 to 1500 kilometers away from

³⁸ A. DREAN, O.M.I., "En avant! Vive Marie!", in *L'Apostolat*, 12 (1941), pp. 54-55.

any railroad. They visited 28 missions provided with chapels in this vast territory.”³⁹

During the 1939-1945 war, Yukon experienced new development with the arrival of many military and civil personnel and the building of the Alaska Highway which opened the Yukon to travellers from the south. The population of Whitehorse rose to 20,000 during those years, and fell back to 3500 in 1949.⁴⁰

The missionaries

Among the oldest missionaries in the Vicariate are the following. Godfroy Eichelsbacher, a missionary for 68 years (1901-1969), was in charge of looking after the Whites, and yet he managed to rush constantly from one Indian mission to the other. Joseph Allard was a most active missionary from 1903 to 1941 in the Whitehorse, Atlin,⁴¹ and Smithers areas. Elphège, his brother, was a missionary from 1918 to 1935, tireless in zeal and devotedly looking after mission posts that were quite distant from each other: Telegraph Creek, McDame, Lower Liard Post.⁴² Nicholas Coccola, a missionary in the south of British Columbia since 1881, came into the Vicariate in 1905. In 1920, he was still in charge of the largest number of Indians whose ancient traditions he maintained.⁴³ From 1906 to 1936, Honorius Rivet worked zealously in a number of missions in the Yukon and in British Columbia. Philias Gagné was a missionary for 36 years (1919-1956), thirty of which were spent in Dawson; he was known for his wisdom and devotedness. Bernard Anderson was for a long time the

³⁹ A. AUCLAIR, O.M.I., “Colombie et Yukon” in *Pèlerinage d’amour et de reconnaissance*, special issue of *L’Apostolat*, May 1940, p. 14.

⁴⁰ “Provinces! . . . Vicariats! . . . Prefectures! . . .” in AROMI, 1949, p. 107.

⁴¹ E. BUNOZ, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 54 (1920), p. 297.

⁴² E. BUNOZ, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 223; J.-L. COUDERT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 551.

⁴³ E. BUNOZ, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 54 (1920), p. 298.

only Brother in the Vicariate, and served with dedication the school at Lejac for 30 years.

The Vicariates of Prince Rupert and Whitehorse

In January 1944, the Holy See divided the Apostolic Vicariate of Yukon: the northern part became the Apostolic Vicariate of Whitehorse, with Bishop Jean-Louis Coudert, O.M.I., as its shepherd; and the southern part became the Vicariate of Prince Rupert (today the diocese of Prince George), entrusted to Bishop Émile Bunoz, O.M.I.⁴⁴

The Oblate General Administration in its turn, in September of the same year, established a Vicariate of Missions in the Apostolic Vicariate of Whitehorse and attached the Oblates of the Apostolic Vicariate of Prince Rupert to St. Peter's Province.⁴⁵

In 1947, the Vicariate of Whitehorse had 2500 Catholics — 1600 whites and 900 Indians — out of a total population of 10,000. There were two quasi-parishes, nine mission centres and thirteen mission stations. Its missionary personnel consisted of one Bishop, 20 Fathers and 3 Brothers.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The 58th degree of latitude marked the boundary line between the two Vicariates, except for the districts of Telegraph Creek and Atlin which were located below this line but remained attached to the Vicariate of Whitehorse. The boundary of the two Vicariates with that of Grouard was no longer the height of the Rocky Mountains, but the 120th degree of longitude. Thus the missions of Fort Nelson and Fort St. John, which were located west of the 120th degree of longitude, were detached from the Vicariate of Grouard; the former was attached to the Vicariate of Whitehorse, the latter to that of Prince Rupert. Cf. above, p.

⁴⁵ Cf. A. DESNOYERS, O.M.I., *Decree for the Organization of the Mission Territories of White Horse and Prince Rupert*, 15 Sept. 1944; *Nouvelles Oblates* (Vicarial General Administration), Montreal, January 13, 1945, pp. 9-10. In May 1941, the Vicariate of Missions of Yukon had been divided into two districts: that of Yukon, which was immediately under the care of the Vicar of Missions himself, Bishop Jean-Louis Coudert, O.M.I.; and that of Prince Rupert, entrusted to a Pro-Vicar, Father Godfroy Eichelsbacher.

⁴⁶ J.-L. COUDERT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), pp. 553, 555.

In the same year, the Vicariate of Prince Rupert had about 4000 Catholics out of a total population of 8000,⁴⁷ and had eleven posts with a resident priest and some 50 out-stations. Its personnel consisted of one Bishop, 21 Fathers and a Brother.⁴⁸

IV – *The Vicariate of Keewatin*

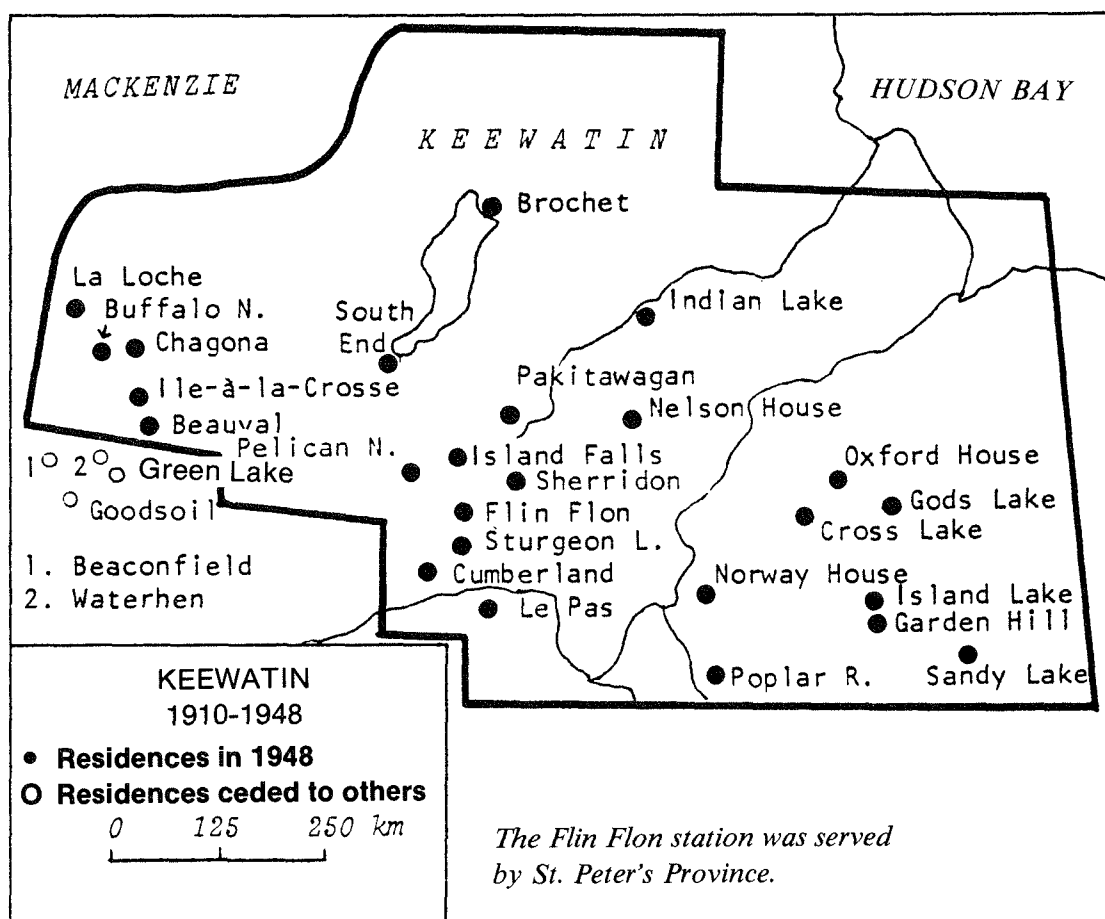
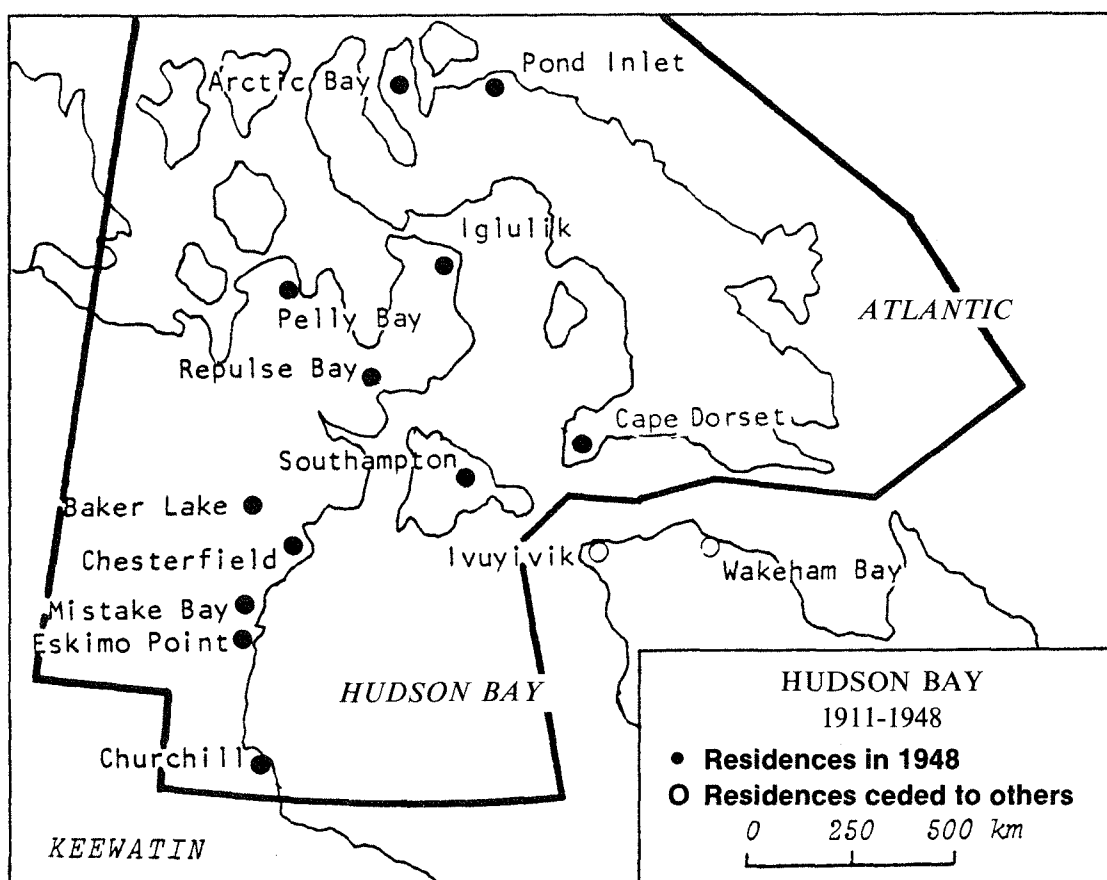
The Vicariate of Keewatin

The missionaries of the northern part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Saskatchewan — which became the diocese of Prince Albert in 1907 — strongly requested the organization of an Apostolic Vicariate in their territory. They felt isolated, deprived of necessary visits by their Pastor whose activities were more directed to the south which was gradually developing. Archbishop Adélarde Langevin, O.M.I., of St. Boniface, with the support of the Vicars of Missions of Saskatchewan and St. Boniface, had in 1902 outlined a project for establishing such a Vicariate. The Oblate General Administration had agreed to it. Its implementation, however, was delayed by the measures taken by Bishop Albert Pascal, O.M.I., of Prince Albert: as compensation for the loss of territory that would have to be ceded to the new Vicariate, he wanted a slice of the diocese of St. Boniface. The Congregation of Propaganda Fide decided to establish the new Vicariate only on March 4, 1910. The new Apostolic Vicariate was called Keewatin and Father Ovide Charlebois became its Vicar Apostolic.⁴⁹

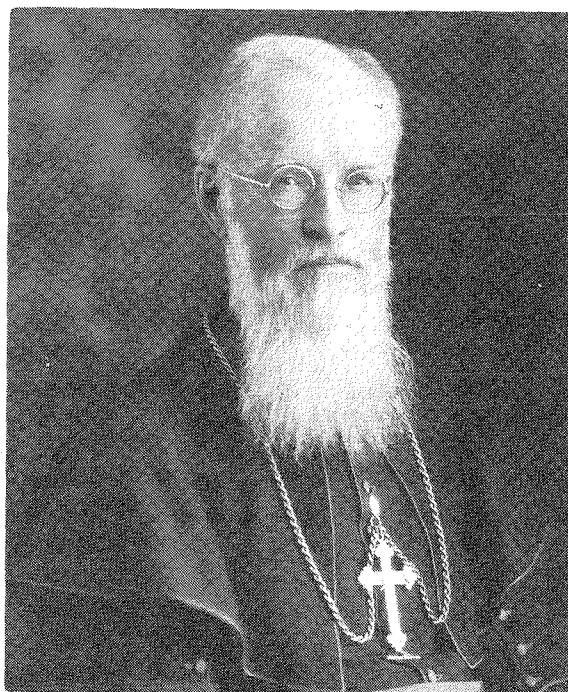
⁴⁷ A. JORDAN, O.M.I., "Report of the Vicariate of Prince Rupert (British Columbia), Canada (1953)", *ibidem*, 50 (1953), p. 169.

⁴⁸ *Personnel o.m.i.*, 1947, pp. 50-51; *Centenaire des Oblats dans l'Ouest canadien*, p. 72. Vicars of Missions for Yukon were: Bishop Émile Buno, O.M.I., (1909-1936), Bishop Jean-Louis Coudert, O.M.I., (1936-1944), Godfroy Eichelsbacher, Pro-Vicar for the district of Prince Rupert (1941-1944), and Vicar of Missions for Whitehorse: Bishop Jean-Louis Coudert, O.M.I. (1944-1957).

⁴⁹ Cf. G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *Le martyr du devoir, Mgr. Ovide Charlebois, o.m.i., 1862-1933*, vol. 2, pp. 1-127.



The new Vicariate thus created encompassed the northern part of the two civil provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, plus the vast western side of Hudson Bay, and extended all the way to the North Pole, including Baffin Island.⁵⁰ Its population to the north consisted of about 4000 Eskimos who had not as yet been evangelized; to the south, of 9500 Cree and Montagnais Indians, 5000 of whom were Catholic and the rest



Bishop Ovide Charlebois (1862-1933)
First Bishop of Keewatin, 1910-1933

⁵⁰ Cf. O. CHARLEBOIS, O.M.I., "Rapport du Révérendissime Vicaire des Missions" in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 32-33. An important change in Keewatin's territory was made in 1925, when its northern part was detached from it and became the Apostolic Prefecture of Hudson Bay. Two other less important changes were made: the first, in 1934: a southeast portion of the Vicariate was ceded to the diocese of Prince Albert (cf. *ibidem*, 68 (1934), p. 406); the second, in 1940, when the boundary with the Vicariate of Hudson Bay was readjusted (cf. *ibidem*, 75 (1948), p. 397). In 1960, the boundaries which followed the water courses of the Keewatin and Mackenzie rivers, was replaced by boundaries based on meridians and parallels (Decree of February 13). Cf. AROMI, 1960, p. 36.

largely Protestant. At the time of the Vicariate's creation, the missionary personnel numbered 15 Fathers, 6 Brothers, 12 Sisters; the main missions with a residence for missionaries numbered nine.⁵¹

On March 7, 1911, Bishop Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., established his see at Le Pas. Until then, this location was a stronghold of English Protestantism and the Catholic mission was seen as secondary. At the beginning, he had nothing at all. An old cabin that was loaned to him became the bishopric and a log structure measuring seven by five meters was the cathedral.⁵² In 1912, Le Pas became the terminus of a railway from the south, and then the starting point of another railway to Churchill. The latter was completed only in 1930.

The General Administration not fully committed

Because it felt that it had not been sufficiently consulted and invoking "the shortage of members", the Oblate General Administration did not fully accept responsibility for the new Vicariate.⁵³ It agreed to leave in place the Oblates who were already working there and on June 21, 1911, established a Vicariate of Missions and named Bishop Charlebois Vicar of Missions. The latter was very much attached to his religious Congregation and made it a duty to recruit Oblate vocations for his Vicariate himself. In 1917, he founded a scholasticate at Beauval. In this way he succeeded, at the price of great pain and sacrifice, to assemble a suitable number of missionaries.

⁵¹ O. CHARLEBOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), p. 33.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 35.

⁵³ Oblate General Council, Rome, May 5, 1911. Cf. also G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 68, 121-126. In the days of Bishop Charlebois, the General Administration sent only two missionaries to Keewatin: Louis Moraud and Mederic Adam. All the others were recruited by and did their novitiate and scholasticate at the Apostolic Vicariate's expense. Letter of Bishop M. Lajeunesse, O.M.I., to A. Desnoyers, O.M.I., October 3, 1935. Oblate General Archives, Rome. A few missionaries were given to the Vicariate, however, to establish missions in Hudson Bay.

This unusual situation in which the Keewatin Vicariate found itself was corrected right after the 1932 General Chapter. In the name of the Congregation, the Superior General, Father Théodore Labouré, accepted responsibility for the Vicariate of Keewatin and had this acceptance ratified by the Congregation for Propaganda Fide on March 13, 1934.⁵⁴

Favored Eskimo missions

One of the most noteworthy efforts of the new Vicar Apostolic was the immediate organization of a mission to evangelize the Eskimo of Hudson Bay. In his deep faith, Bishop Charlebois was convinced that the Eskimo, in spite of their few numbers and their being scattered and far afield in a frightful land, had a right to the fruits of the Redemption and that there was an obligation to preach the Gospel to them. Even before he took possession of his episcopal see, he sent Father Arsène Turquetil to Churchill to inquire into the feasibility of establishing a mission in Eskimo territory. From the Superintendent of the Canadian Police, Father Turquetil obtained the necessary information; he also learned from a representative of the Hudson Bay Company that the Company was outfitting a boat in Montreal in view of opening a trading post at Chesterfield Inlet. Father Turquetil's report recommended the establishment of a mission at Chesterfield Inlet. Bishop Charlebois, with his vicariate council, decided on February 15, 1912, to put this into effect.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Chapitres généraux 1906-1938*, copy in Archives Deschâtelets, p. 546.

⁵⁵ A. MORICE, O.M.I., *Monseigneur Turquetil, o.m.i., apôtre des Esquimaux et le miracle de ses missions*, Winnipeg-St. Boniface, 1935, pp. 82-84. O. CHARLEBOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 44-45. Cf. Letter of A. Turquetil to Bishop O. Charlebois, June 14, 1911, Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal; A. TURQUETIL, O.M.I., *Informations au sujet d'une mission à établir chez les Eskimaux au Cap Fullerton ou aux environs*, MS (1911), 7 pages and 6 pages. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

Foundation at Chesterfield Inlet

Father Turquetil and a young Father who had just arrived from Europe, Father Armand Le Blanc, boarded the *Nascopia*, the Hudson Bay Company's boat. They brought with them all that was needed to build a residence-chapel and for their own subsistence for one year. They left Montreal on July 24, 1912, and arrived at Chesterfield Inlet the following September.⁵⁶ The mission was placed under the patronage of Our Lady of Deliverance.

The beginnings of this mission were problematical and painful, both because of the difficulty inherent to understanding and converting to the Gospel a people that was still deeply plunged into paganism and because of the isolation and sufferings of all kinds attached to living in a depressing land, in vast steppes of ice and snow, a land of desolation. In spite of letters filled with goodness and supernatural spirit which Bishop Charlebois wrote to sustain the missionaries — there was at least one in each of the rare mail deliveries — Father Le Blanc, after three years of suffering, exhausted and disheartened with disappointment, had to leave for Europe in 1916. He died during the trip.⁵⁷ Brother Prime Girard was sent as a temporary companion to Father Turquetil and, through his strong personality and great talent to establish contact with the people, played an important role in the nascent mission.

The first conversions

In October, 1916, "a little while after Father Le Blanc's death" — such is Bishop Charlebois' observation — "a medicine man suddenly renounced all his superstitions; to the astonishment of the missionaries and everyone else, he asked to be baptized; he became a Catholic with all the members of

⁵⁶ A. TURQUETIL, O.M.I., and A. LE BLANC, O.M.I., "Fondation de la première mission chez les Esquimaux du Keewatin", *ibidem*, 51 (1913), pp. 32 ff.

⁵⁷ A. TURQUETIL, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Eskimo*, vol. 33, (September 1954), p. 3.

his family and a number of others who were influenced by his example.”⁵⁸ Bishop Turquetil attributed the graces of these first conversions to the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which was posted on the door of the mission and to the intercession of the little Therese of the Child Jesus.⁵⁹ “We cannot possibly describe Bishop Charlebois’ joy” when he heard news of this.⁶⁰ His decision to retain this mission to the Eskimo which, though sterile for four years, was now full of promise, was strengthened thereby. After having received good religious instruction, the first converts were baptized on July 2, 1917; they were from four Eskimo families.

Stabilization of the mission

The period from 1917 to 1922 is characterized by absences and personnel changes. Father Turquetil and his temporary companion, Brother Prime Girard, spent the 1917-1918 winter in Eastern Canada preparing books in the neophytes’ language. Father Turquetil returned to Chesterfield Inlet with a new partner, Father Paul Pioget, but the latter could not last beyond two years. Brother Prime Girard then returned to stay. During that same year, however, the mission was temporarily closed: Father Turquetil again had to go to Eastern Canada in the interests of his mission.

The return of Father Turquetil and of Brother Prime Girard and the arrival of the new missionaries in 1921, Father Emmanuel Duplain and the scholastic Lionel Ducharme, made

⁵⁸ O. CHARLEBOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), p. 45.

⁵⁹ A. TURQUETIL, O.M.I., Letter of January 17, 1917, in *La Bannière de Marie Immaculée*, 26 (1918), p. 30. “Recit du frère Prime Girard sur les débuts de la mission de la Baie d’Hudson”, in *Études Oblates*, 21 (1962), pp. 173-177.

⁶⁰ A. TURQUETIL, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Eskimo*, vol. 34 (December 1954), p. 15. Bishop Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., was the promoter of the petition which brought Pius XI on December 14, 1927, to proclaim St. Therese of the Child Jesus as “Patroness of all missionaries, men and women, and of all the existing missions in the world, on the same principal title as St. Francis Xavier.” Decree of Pius XI. Cf. “Patronne des missions”, in *Missions*, 62 (1928), pp. 3-12.

it possible to consolidate the mission. Bishop Charlebois himself came to Chesterfield Inlet two years later. He ordained the scholastic Ducharme to the priesthood, decided the founding of a new mission at Eskimo Point — which the young Father Ducharme and Brother Girard established in 1924 — and projected founding another on Southampton Island in 1925, and one other at Pond Inlet in 1926.⁶¹ In the meantime, Father Honoré Pigeon arrived in 1924 to join the small team of missionaries.

The enterprising Father Turquetil and his heroic confreres had responded magnificently to the mission they had received from Bishop Charlebois, the Shepherd of the Vicariate. The good seed of the Gospel was being sown on the icy steppes; it was beginning to sprout and only needed a chance to grow and develop.⁶²

Indians missions of the West

The Keewatin Vicariate had to assign the greater portion of its missionary personnel to the Indian people on its territory. In its western part, old missions are already very active: Île-à-la-Crosse, Portage La Loche, and, much more to the north and quite isolated, St. Peter's, north of Cariboo Lake. These main missions and their satellites served Montagnais and Cree Indians who were nearly all Catholic.

Here valiant missionaries were at work, such as: Father Marius Rossignol at Île-à-la-Crosse (1911-1956), where he directed the mission for 30 years; Father Jean-Marie Penard, the first to reside at Portage La Loche (from 1895 to 1917); Father Jean-Baptist Ducharme, who succeeded him from 1917 to 1950; Father Louis Moraud, the founder of several missions and builder of as many churches; Father Jules Teston, founder

⁶¹ O. CHARLEBOIS, O.M.I., "Rapport du Rme Vicaire des Missions", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 451.

⁶² For a detailed history of the Eskimo missions of the Keewatin Vicariate, cf. G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *Le martyr du devoir, Mgr. Ovide Charlebois, o.m.i., 1862-1933*, tome 3, pp. 298-478.

and director for 34 years (1890-1923) of the French-speaking Metis-Cree mission at Green Lake; Father Joseph Egenolf, missionary to the St. Peter of Cariboo Lake mission from 1905 to 1957, during which time he lived alone for several years; Brother Jean-Marie Pouliquen, faithful support to the missionary and a man skilled in every trade, who served at Île-à-la-Crosse from 1895 to 1936; and Brother Urbain Drouin, a heroic missionary at St. Peter of Cariboo Lake from 1912 to 1964.

Indian missions of the Centre and the East

The Indian missions of the Vicariate's Centre and East were more recent and served a territory inhabited mostly by Cree, among whom the Protestants are already solidly established. Four important missions, each with resident priests, were already operative in these areas: Cumberland, Pelican Lake, Cross Lake and Norway House. New foundations were added to these old ones and the missionary field was thus gradually extended to the last group of non-believers in the Vicariate. Besides Le Pas, these missions included Pukatawagan, Nelson



*Founders of the Eskimo missions of Hudson Bay
From l. to r.: Lionel Ducharme, Arsène Turquetil,
Bishop Ovide Charlebois, Emmanuel Duplain and Prime Girard.
Photo taken at Chesterfield Inlet, August 1923.*

House, Island Lake, God's Lake, Garden Hill, Oxford House and Poplar River.

Apostolic pioneers were at work in this central and eastern portion of the Vicariate. Among them were: the veteran Étienne Bonnald, founder of five missions and converter of a large number of Indians; Henri Boissin, who was a missionary all his life in this part of the Vicariate, at Cumberland House, Cross Lake or Norway House; Father Ignatius Renaud, the first resident priest at Pukatawagan and an itinerant missionary as far as Fort Nelson; Nicholas Guilloux, a hard worker and courageous traveller, missionary from Cumberland to Pelican Lake from 1904 to 1949; Father Joseph Dubeau, a specialist in Indian missions situated in a Protestant milieu; Brothers Auguste Duclaux and Joseph Cordeau, expert builders of churches, schools and missionary residences.

In 1947, the Apostolic Vicariate of Keewatin had 6803 Catholic Indians out of a total Indian population of 13000.⁶³

Among the Whites

The considerable work of building a railway linking Le Pas to Churchill, the discovery of mineral deposits, especially at Sherridon and Flin Flon, open colonisation in some areas, especially in the southwest area of the Vicariate attracted a certain number of White people. The southwest area of the Vicariate, which had been opened up to colonization, was in 1934 transferred to the diocese of Prince Albert, and this entailed a change in the Vicariate's boundaries. The missions of Green Lake, Waterhen Lake and Big Island Lake then became the responsibility of the Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan, whereas the mission of Goodsoil, made up of German-speaking people, already entrusted to St. Mary's Province, remained the latter's responsibility. In 1943, St. Peter's Province accepted the quasi-parish in the mining centre at Flin

⁶³ Ph. SCHEFFER, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le Vicariat du Keewatin au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), p. 425; *Centenaire des Oblats dans l'Ouest canadien*, p. 67.

Flon. Elsewhere, the Whites were cared for by the missionaries. Quasi-parishes were established in Le Pas and Sherridon. In 1947, the Vicariate had 3654 Catholic Whites.

Bishop Charlebois and his successor, Bishop Martin Lajeunesse, O.M.I., promoted to the utmost the establishing of schools and hospitals both for the Indians and for Whites.⁶⁴

The Vicariate in 1947

In 1947, the Vicariate had one Bishop, 49 Fathers, 27 Brothers, divided among 27 houses or residences to which were attached another 33 secondary posts that the missionaries visited. In order to help his missionary personnel and to unify the pastoral care in his Vicariate, Bishop Martin Lajeunesse, O.M.I., in 1942 published *Directives missionnaires*.⁶⁵ As he wrote: "We think that this Directory will have the great advantage of unifying the apostolic work of the missionaries and, what is more, will constantly remind them both of their duties and of the sublimity of their wonderful vocation."⁶⁶

V – The Vicariate of Hudson Bay

An Apostolic Prefecture

On February 19, 1925, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide erected the northern part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Keewatin into an autonomous mission; on the following July 15, it gave this mission the rank of an Apostolic Prefecture.

⁶⁴ In 1947, the Vicariate had 5 Indians boarding schools, 12 day schools, 3 hospitals and one dispensary. 111 Sisters taught in these schools and worked in the hospitals. M. LAJEUNESSE, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat du Keewatin", in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 399.

⁶⁵ *Directives missionnaires publiées par S. Exc. Mgr. M. Lajeunesse, o.m.i., V.A. pour ses collaborateurs du Keewatin*, Le Pas, 1942, 628 p.

⁶⁶ M. LAJEUNESSE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 390. Vicars of Missions were: Bishop Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., (1911-1933); Bishop Martin Lajeunesse, O.M.I., (1933-1952). Beginning in 1934, the Vicariate published *Le Courrier du Keewatin*.

The new Prefecture comprised, in addition to the Eskimo missions of the Keewatin Vicariate, the Eskimo territory situated in the north of the civil province of Quebec. This latter region had until then been under the jurisdiction of Bishop Julien Leventoux, Vicar Apostolic of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On April 6, Father Turquetil had been named by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide Director of the mission of Chesterfield Inlet and, the following July 15, he was appointed Prefect Apostolic.

The project of separating the Hudson Bay missions from the Keewatin Vicariate had materialized suddenly in 1924 and was ardently promoted by Father Arsène Turquetil before the General Administration and the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Father Turquetil had in 1924 been sent to Rome in order to participate in the following year in a worldwide missionary exhibition at the Vatican. The reasons given were the difficulties of communication between Chesterfield Inlet and Le Pas and the prospect that these missions would grow and develop. What is astonishing here is that, under the pretext of lack of time, the Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin, Bishop Ovide Charlebois, was not consulted about this project to divide his Vicariate. The Bishop who had founded the Eskimo missions of Hudson Bay accepted the decision of the authorities with respect and entire submission, overlooking the humiliating element that such a procedure had for him.⁶⁷

The mission's progress

With the erection of the Apostolic Prefecture, the evangelization of the Eskimo that was still in its first stages, was now

⁶⁷ The General Council had this project on its agenda for its December 12, 1924 session. It approved the project on February 3, 1925 and immediately forwarded it to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Father N.-S. Dozois in a letter of February 8, and Father A. Estève, Procurator to the Holy See, in a letter of March 2, explained to Bishop Charlebois that the urgency of this matter and lack of time had not made it possible to consult him. Cf. G. LESAGE, O.M.I., *Notes historiques sur le vicariat du Keewatin*, pp. 247-248; G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, tome 3, pp. 386-445.

well-launched: missions were already opened at Chesterfield Inlet and Eskimo Point, and a third was being prepared for Southampton Island. The missionary personnel, besides Father Turquetil, included Brother Prime Girard,⁶⁸ Fathers Emmanuel Duplain, Lionel Ducharme and Honoré Pigeon. All except the latter, who died accidentally in 1934, had a long and fruitful career in these Arctic missions.⁶⁹

The arrival of new recruits made it possible to open missions over nearly the whole extent of that territory: the mission in preparation on Southampton Island in 1926, then Baker Lake in 1927, Pond Inlet in 1929, Igloolik in 1932, Repulse Bay in 1933, Pelly Bay in 1938, Cape Dorset in 1939, and Cariboo Post (an Indian mission) in 1940. From these main missions, the missionaries visited Eskimo camps in the hunting and fishing grounds as far as 100 to 150 kilometers away.

Some events

In 1931, the Holy See raised the Apostolic Prefecture to the status of an Apostolic Vicariate and appointed Father Arsene Turquetil its Vicar Apostolic. In 1936, the Oblate General Administration created the Vicariate of Missions of Hudson Bay. In the same year, Bishop Turquetil was given a coadjutor bishop, Father Armand Clabaut, whom he ordained to the episcopate at Chesterfield Inlet. This ceremony brought together some 20 missionaries who were all happy to see each other again; it was the occasion also to celebrate the first Vicariate synod whose theme was "the general principles and methods of a good apostolate in the land of the Eskimo".⁷⁰ In 1945, the portion of the Vicariate located in the north of the

⁶⁸ Father Turquetil invited Brother Prime Girard to prepare for the priesthood; he was ordained priest on May 19, 1929.

⁶⁹ Arsène Turquetil was a missionary for 31 years (1912-1943), Prime Girard for 33 years (1916-1949), Emmanuel Duplain for 18 years (1921-1939), Lionel Ducharme for 58 years (1921-1979), and Honoré Pigeon for 10 years (1924-1934).

⁷⁰ Cf. *Synode Vicarial de la Baie d'Hudson 1937*, 79 pages, polycopied.

civil province of Quebec, which included the missions of Wakeham Bay and Ivujivik, was transferred to the new Apostolic Vicariate of Labrador.

Provisioning

Bishop Turquetil established himself in Churchill in 1930. From this railway terminus and seaport, he busied himself each year with the buying and distributing of provisions for the missions: nearly all of the latter were without local resources. In order to economize as much as possible and to be freed from a sometimes annoying dependence on the boats of the Hudson Bay Company, he provided boats for his Vicariate. In 1930, it was the boat *Thérèse*, which was replaced in 1933 by the *Pie XI*. In 1937 was added the *Marie-Françoise Thérèse*, a semi-icebreaker of 200 tons which, unfortunately, perished on a reef in 1944. Later, in 1947, Bishop Marc Lacroix, O.M.I., acquired another, the *Regina Polaris*.

The missionaries' apostolate

From the very beginnings of the Eskimo evangelization, Father Turquetil and his first companions required the neophytes to take prolonged religious instruction before they were admitted to baptism. This requirement was all the more needed because the newly baptized had to live in a milieu which was still totally pagan.⁷¹ The first Christians who had been baptized at Chesterfield Inlet became proselytes⁷² who had their influence on the conversions that took place in the other missions. The missionaries learned and used the Eskimo language in their apostolate. Some translated and published religious materials, using syllabic characters known to the

⁷¹ Cf. A. TURQUETIL, O.M.I., "Rapport quinquennal, de 1929-1935, présenté à la S.C. de la Propagande . . ." in *Missions*, 69 (1935), pp. 310-314.

⁷² A. TURQUETIL, O.M.I., "La petite Thérèse et le miracle de la conversion des Esquimaux de la Baie d'Hudson" in *Prêtres et Missions*, 1934, p. 332.

Eskimo.⁷³ In 1947, there were 859 baptized Eskimo and about 700 catechumens out of a total population of around 6000.

Personnel

Bishop Turquetil, exhausted from his labors, presented his resignation to the Holy See on March 18, 1940. It was accepted only on September 7, 1942. In the meantime, on May 28, 1940, came the resignation of his coadjutor, Bishop Armand Clabaut, O.M.I., who had returned to Europe in 1939. In December 1942, the Holy See appointed Vicar Apostolic one of the intrepid missionaries of Hudson Bay, Father Marc Lacroix. The Oblate General Administration also gave him the task of Vicar of Missions.

The number of Oblates for Hudson Bay had risen from 5 in 1925 to 40 in 1942. This number went down some during the years of the world war. In 1947, the Vicariate had one Bishop, 26 Fathers and 6 Brothers, distributed over 10 missions.⁷⁴ To these missionaries must be added the 6 Grey Nuns of Nicolet who ran the hospital at Chesterfield Inlet since it was opened in 1931.

⁷³ The first syllabary was presented to the Eskimo around 1918 by the Reverend Doctor E. J. Peck, an Anglican missionary. It was thereafter perfected by the Catholic and Anglican missionaries, and especially by Bishop Turquetil. Cf. *Missions*, 72 (1938), p. 361.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 75 (1948), p. 400. Vicars of Missions were: Bishop Arsène Turquetil, O.M.I. (1936-1943), Bishop Marc Lacroix, O.M.I., (1943-1952). The Vicariat published *Trait d'Union*, which was started in 1944 and in 1945 took the name *Eskimo*.

According to the statistics of 1947, 454 missionary Sisters from 14 different religious institutes were at work in the Oblate Apostolic Vicariates of the Canadian North, those of Hudson Bay and Labrador included. They are as follows: Grey Nuns of Montreal: 125; Sisters of Providence: 119; Holy Cross Sisters of Montreal: 58; Grey Nuns of Saint-Hyacinthe: 37; Grey Nuns of the Cross of Ottawa: 31; Sisters of St. Joseph of Saint-Hyacinthe: 17; Sisters of St. Anne: 15; Sisters of the Presentation of Mary: 12; Oblate Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate: 11; Sisters of the Child Jesus (du Puy): 10; Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto: 9; Sisters of St. Martha of Saint-Hyacinthe: 4; Little Missionary Sisters of St. Joseph: 3; Sisters of Service: 3. *Canada ecclésiastique 1947*.

CHAPTER 8

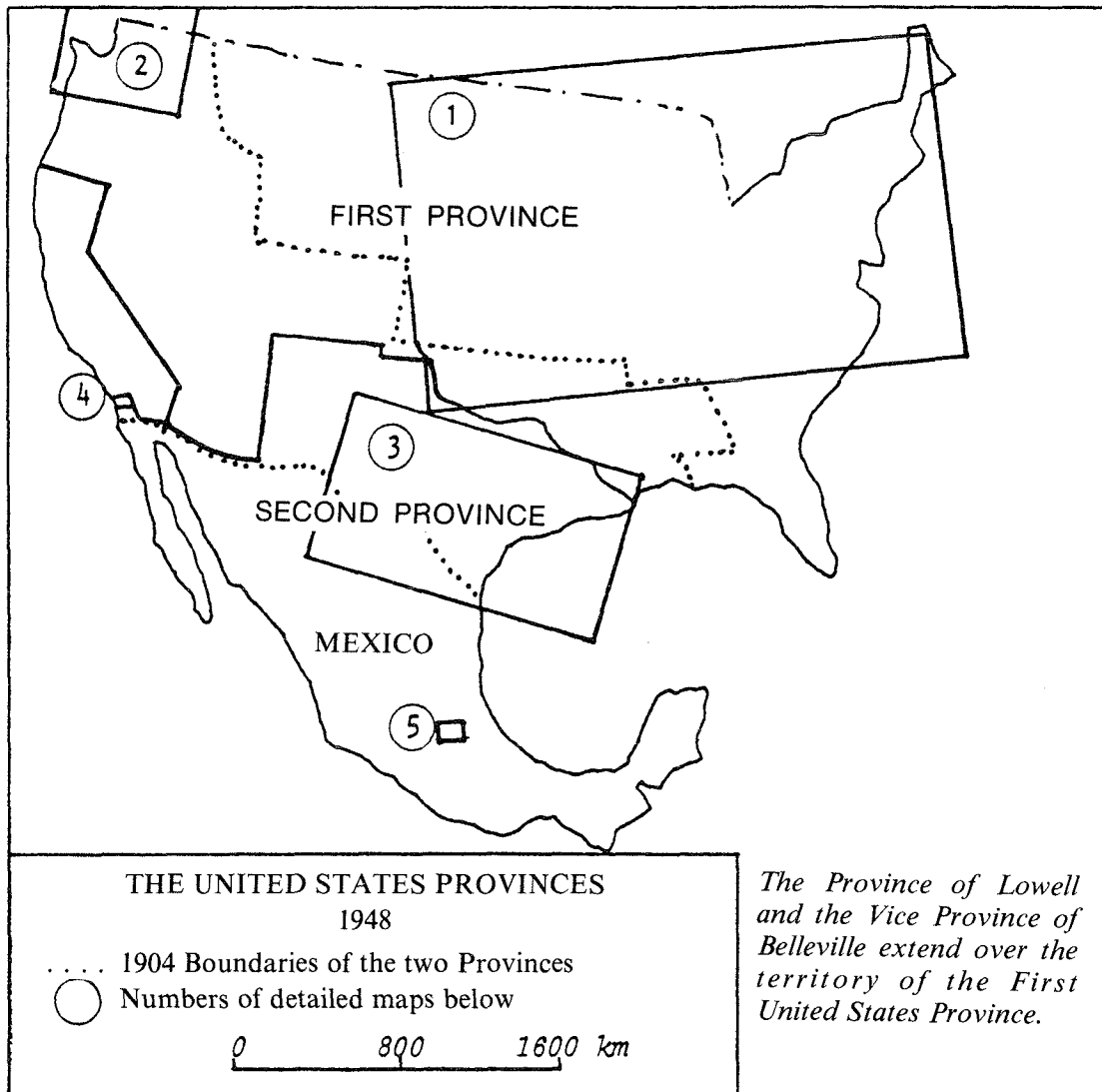
In the United States and in Latin America 1898-1947

I. The First United States Province: - Division into two Provinces - New apostolic works 1904-1921 - Separating the Franco-American works - Preaching missions - Among the Blacks - In foreign missions: Brazil - Houses of formation - Personnel. **II. The Second United States Province:** - Texas becomes a Province - The country's material progress - New missionary needs - Major development in Texas - Called to other States - In Mexico - Union with Spain - Works of formation - Personnel in 1947. **III. The Province of St. John the Baptist of Lowell - Haiti:** - Foundation - Houses of formation - Preaching - Parishes - Called to Haiti - Ministry in Haiti - Personnel. **IV. The Vice-Province of St. Henry of Belleville:** - Origins - The Vice-Province is established - Works of Belleville - Preaching - Parishes and works - The Vice-Province in 1947. **V. The Vicariat of Missions of Pilcomayo:** - Foundation - The mission called into question - The war of 1932-1935 - The mission's progress - The missionary work - The Vicariate in 1947.

I - The First United States Province

Division into two Provinces

The Province of the United States was founded in 1883. In 1899, it had six houses, five residences, and a personnel of 62 Fathers, one scholastic and 24 Brothers. Important developments were in progress in the south: the 1899 establishment of two new missionary residences as centres for the ranchos: Del Rio and La Lomita (Mission); acceptance of a college in 1903 at Puebla, in Mexico; and, also in 1903, the opening of a seminary-scholasticate in San Antonio. On the other hand, the houses and works in the northern part continued to prosper and flourish.



Difficulties arose, however, from the very structure of the Province: it was made up of two portions that are not only very distant from each other, but quite different in character. The ministry in the North was directed to Americans and to Franco-Americans; in the South, the ministry was directed mainly to Spanish-speaking people. The same recruiting and formation institutions found it difficult to satisfy these very different apostolic contexts. Hence, the Provincial Council had the idea of suggesting the forming of a new Province in the southern part of the United States. The Provincial, Father Joseph Lefebvre, submitted this project to the Capitulars of 1904.¹

¹ "Province des États-Unis" in *Missions*, 43 (1905), pp. 76-77; *Chapitres*

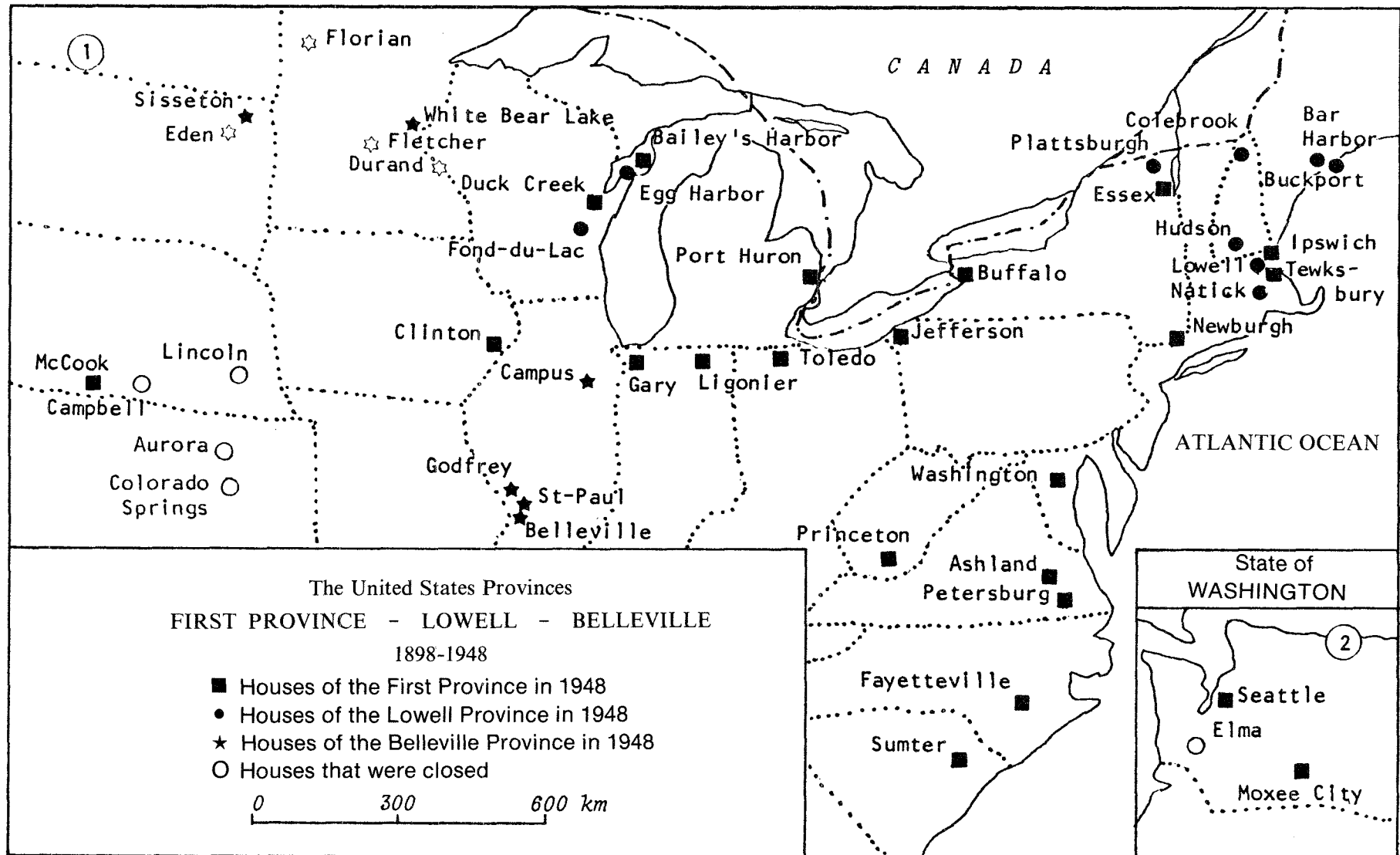
The Chapter was favorable to the proposal. Father Cassien Augier, Superior General, followed up on it and by letter of October 2, 1904, created the Second United States Province. Its territory extended over Texas, into Mexico, and through the States of the United States south and west.² The rest of the country remained the territory of the Province that was henceforth referred to as the First United States Province.



Bishop Michael Fallon (1867-1931)
First Provincial of the First United States Province, 1904-1909
Bishop of London, Canada, 1910-1931

généraux 1824-1904, copy in Archives Deschâtelets, p. 798; P.-É. LECOURTOIS, o.m.i., *Histoire du Texas 1849-1904*, MS., Archives Deschâtelets, p. 486-487.

² Besides the territories of Mexico and Texas, the new Province's field of apostolate extended into the following States: Alabama, Mississippi,



Father Henri Constantineau was appointed Provincial of the Second Province and Father Michael Fallon Provincial of the First Province.³

New apostolic works 1904-1921

In 1904, the First United States Province had five houses and one residence.⁴ Its personnel consisted of 38 Fathers and 11 Brothers, some English-speaking and some French-speaking. The latter were engaged mainly in works that serve the Franco-Americans.

During the first two decades of this century, new foundations broadened the field of the Province's apostolate. There were new English-speaking parishes: Duck Creek, Bailey's Harbor, McCook, and St. Benedict's in Seattle. There were new French-speaking parishes: Our Lady of Lourdes in Lowell, Aurora, Egg Harbor, and Fond-du-Lac. Taking care of these parishes, as well as of those already being looked after by the Province, meant directing Catholic schools, various chaplaincies and the spiritual care of old people and the poor. Preaching missions and certain military chaplaincies are ministries that must be added to the care of these parishes.⁵

Separating the Franco-American works

In order to better respond to the spiritual needs of the Franco-Americans and to unify the activity of the Oblates who were serving them, the project of a Franco-American Province

Arkansas, Louisiana, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Cf. C. AUGIER, O.M.I., Circular letter 80, October 2, 1904, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 3, 35. Towards 1910, the following States passed from the Second Province to the First United States Province: Alabama, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

³ *Ibidem*, vol. 3, pp. 36-37.

⁴ The Houses were: Buffalo, Plattsburgh, Tewksbury, Lowell: Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph. The residence was Sacred Heart in Lowell.

⁵ T. SMITH, O.M.I., "Rapport au Chapitre général de 1920" in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 747, 753-754.

was presented to the 1920 General Chapter. Following up on this, the Superior General, Archbishop Dontenwill, by his circular letter of May 1, 1921, erected the Vice-Province called St. John the Baptist of Lowell. The new Vice-Province was carved out of the First United States Province and began with a personnel of about 23 Fathers and 6 Brothers. It was authorized to extend its works on the territory of the First Province itself.⁶

Preaching missions

Preaching missions and retreats, formerly a great part of the Province's activity, was rather minimal in 1904. Father Joseph Lefebvre, the Provincial of the time, noted: "A rather painful gap to be noted in regard to our Province is the lack of workers for diocesan missions. We receive many requests . . . In most cases, unfortunately, insufficient personnel forces us to refuse."⁷

Father Terence Smith, the second Provincial of the First United States Province, was to re-launch this work for good. He raised the number of missionaries assigned to preaching from two in 1910 to 15 in 1920.⁸ In 1912, he established a residence of missionaries at Tewksbury. In 1920, he could say that the Oblates as missionaries "rank among the best Orders or Congregations who carry on this kind of work."⁹

This trend continued. In 1926, there was a team of some 30 missionaries and in 1947, one of one hundred. It was operative in a large portion of the United States. Thus, from 1926 to 1932, this team had preached in 26 out of the 48 States of the Republic.¹⁰ These missionaries were preaching in cathedrals

⁶ Cf. below, pp. 213-214.

⁷ J. LEFEBVRE, O.M.I., "Province des États-Unis", in *Missions*, 43 (1905), p. 75.

⁸ T. SMITH, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 56 (1922), p. 750.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 56 (1922), p. 751.

¹⁰ *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 118. Also cf. L. TIGHE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Provincial des États-Unis" in *Missions*, 61 (1927), p. 338.

and in the lowliest of churches; they were evangelizing the workers in the largest cities and the people in small country parishes. They were also preaching retreats to the clergy, to religious men and women. They were based in several areas of the Province, namely, at Lowell and Tewksbury in Massachusetts, Gary and Ligonier in Indiana, Toledo in Ohio, Clinton in Iowa, Port Huron in Michigan, etc. The Province's report to the 1947 General Chapter underlines that a special effort was being made more and more to preach missions in parishes and milieus that were poor.¹¹

It should be mentioned that parish ministry was also growing in the Province at the time that this progressive activity of preaching missions and retreats was taking place. In 1947, the Province was serving more than 20 parishes; to some of these were attached missions which were usually located in poorer areas.

Among the Blacks

The Province's most noteworthy innovation was its option to evangelize the Blacks. This option, taken in 1938, corresponded to an urgent need of the Church in the United States. On the eve of the second world war, in fact, only 350,000 out of some 13,000,000 Blacks in the Republic were Catholic.¹²

Having considered this situation, the 1938 General Chapter had expressed the following hope: "That the Oblates consider themselves as God's special envoys to the Blacks in the United States. No other work corresponds better to the end of the Congregation." The Chapter added that evangelizing the Blacks required a good preparation; that such evangelization is to be done in an attitude of respect for these people; and that it ought to foresee, when circumstances make it feasible, the recruiting of priestly vocations from among the Blacks.¹³

¹¹ W. A. ROBBINS, O.M.I., "Report of the 1st American Province to the General Chapter O.M.I., 1947", in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 133.

¹² DANIELS-ROPS, *Un combat pour Dieu*, Fayard, 1963, p. 591.

¹³ *Chapitres généraux 1938-1947*, p. 76. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

The First United States Province rapidly multiplied its centres among the Blacks. Before the 1938 General Chapter, it had already accepted a parish for the Blacks in Toledo, Ohio. From 1938 to 1941, it accepted other posts in the States of Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia and Indiana, in the cities of Douglas, Fayetteville, Sumter, Petersburg, Bluefield, Gary, etc. At the outset, this ministry to the Blacks was laborious and difficult. It had to confront the poverty and misery of the people, break down racial and social prejudices, and be carried out in milieus where there was but a tiny minority of Catholics. Blacks who were Catholics were themselves very few: thus, at Fayetteville, there were only 8 Catholics out of a population of some 8000 Blacks; in Sumter, there was none at all, in Petersburg, there were only four.¹⁴

In foreign missions: Brazil

When Father William J. Stanton was Provincial (1933-1937) and under his successors, the Province extended its zeal to the foreign missions. From 1933 to 1947, it assisted the missions of Natal by sending them some fifteen missionaries, and the missions in Northern Canada by sending them eight. The missions in the Philippines, which the four United States Provinces had accepted in 1939, received thirteen missionaries from the First United States Province.

The Province opened its own field in the apostolate of the foreign missions by founding a mission in Brazil. In 1943, the Provincial, Father James McDermott, responded favorably to an official, urgent invitation from Archbishop Jose de Gaspar de Afonseca e Sylva of Sao Paulo to begin an establishment in his archdiocese. This project was momentarily suspended by the Archbishop's death.¹⁵

¹⁴ AROMI, 1940, pp. 58-59. A. ROBBINS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 130.

¹⁵ "Report to the Most Rev. Father General on the Brazil Mission (General Chapter 1953)", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), p. 633. Cf. *Registre du Conseil générale vicarial d'Amerique*, I, 1943-1944, p. 10 (May 27, 1943), pp. 30-32 (August 1943).



Residence of the Oblates at Sao Paulo, Brazil

After a new request was received from the new Archbishop, Archbishop Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta, the Oblates went to Brazil in 1945. Fathers Walter F. Mooney, the Superior, John J. Lyons, Joseph A. Ryan, William Sheehan, Wilhelm Lindekugel and George White began their work at two posts in Sao Paulo itself: Alameda Franca and Vila Alpina. The following February, they accepted the parish of San Sebastiano at Pocos de Caldas with an out-station, Santa Rita, at Palmeiral; both of these places were in the diocese of Guaxupe.¹⁶ In August of the same year, they took over a par-

¹⁶ "Report to the Most Rev. Father General on the Brazil Mission (General Chapter 1953)", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 633-641; A. ROBBINS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 128-129.

ish at Suzano, in the dioces of Sao Paulo, which covered a district of four to five thousand families. In these localities, the missionaries were ministering to English-speaking Catholics and to Brasilians.

By decree of October 11, 1947, the Superior General, Father Leo Deschâtelets, officially entrusted the immediate administration of the missions in Brazil to the First United States Province; this was a *de facto* arrangement; *de iure*, such a mission was under the Superior General's jurisdiction.¹⁷

Houses of formation

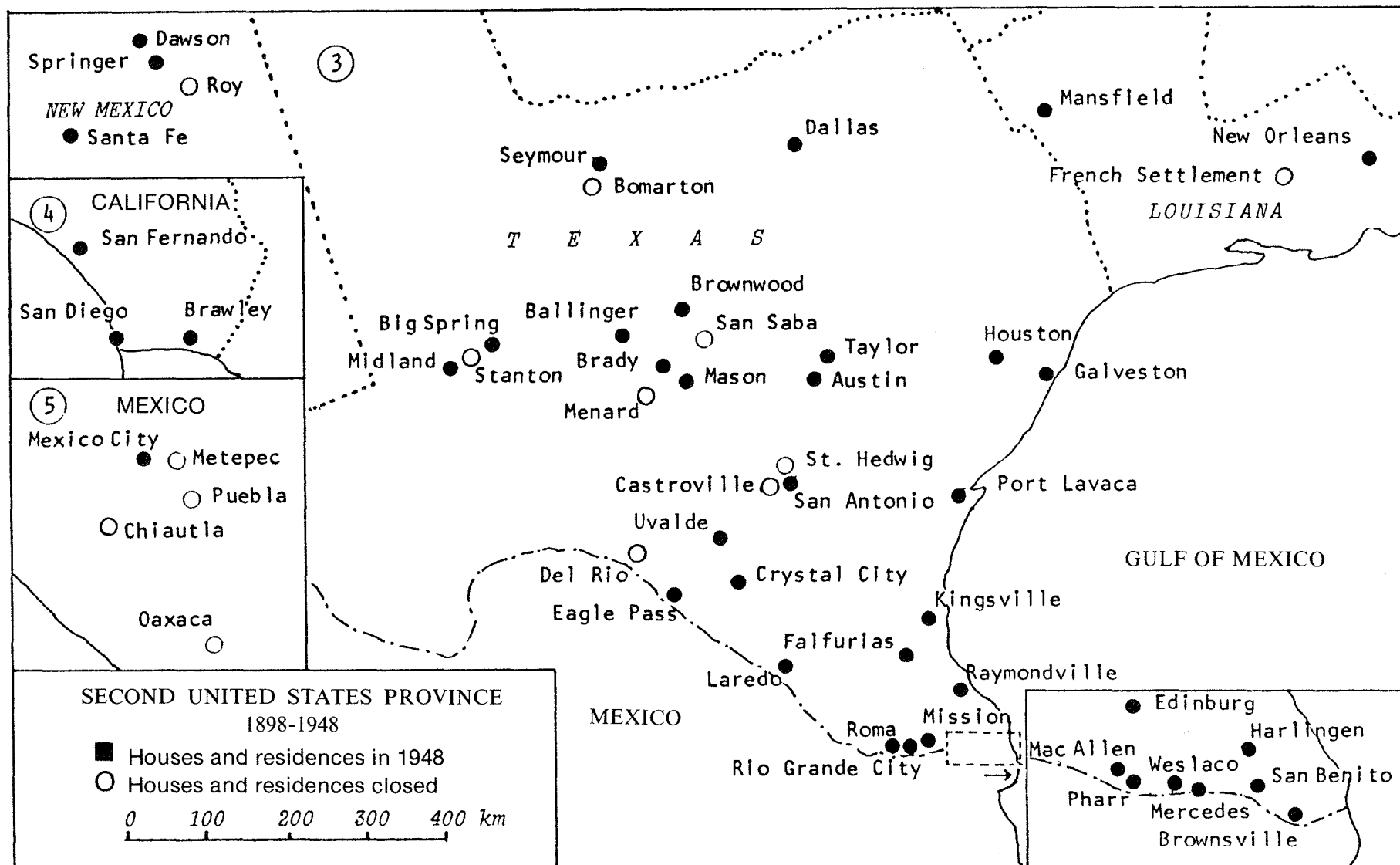
Generally because the number of young recruits was increasing, the Province's formation houses either were doubled or changed locale. Besides the juniorate in Buffalo, opened in 1891, a second one was opened in Tewksbury in 1946. The novitiate, which had been established at Tewksbury since 1883, was transferred to Ipswich in 1947; the novitiate for the Brothers which had been at Essex since 1933, was also transferred to Ipswich. The scholasticate, which had been at Tewksbury since 1904, was transferred to Washington in 1916, where it was housed in a fine building near the Catholic University in the city. A second scholasticate was operating at Newburgh from 1926 to 1946.

Personnel

The Province's personnel grew steadily from 49 in 1904 to 278 in 1947. The number of Brothers decreased after the Vice-Province of St. John the Baptist of Lowell was detached from the First United States Province. At the time of the 1947 General Chapter, the Province had 215 Fathers, 18 Brothers and 45 scholastics.¹⁸

¹⁷ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "Administrative Union of the Brazilian Mission Field with the First American Province", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 762-764.

¹⁸ The Provincials were: Michael Fallon (1904-1910), Terence Wade Smith (1910-1921), Lawrence Wade Tighe (1921-1929), William Stanton (1933-1937), James McDermott (1937-1944), William Amos Robbins (1944-



II – *The Second United States Province*

Texas becomes a Province

In 1898, there were some 23 Oblates distributed in five centres, serving the missions in Texas. At Brownsville, they were in charge of a parish and a college. In the little village of Roma, they ministered to the ranchos; in this ministry, Father Joseph-Marie Clos, in spite of his 72 years of age, was still riding horseback like a young man.¹⁹ Eagle Pass was another centre of a ranchos region; Father Rigomer Olivier, a veteran who for 40 years had crisscrossed the ranchos in every direction, was serving the little parish at this place. In Rio Grande City, they were ministering to the areas of the poor. In San Antonio, lastly, they were in charge of St. Mary's parish; here, another Texas veteran, Father Pierre Parisot, was still active.

Six years later, when the Second United States Province was established,²⁰ four other foundations were added: the residences of Del Rio and La Lomita (today, Mission), the college Pio at Puebla in Mexico — to this latter two churches were attached, and the seminary-scholasticate in San Antonio.

At its outset, the new Province had a personnel of 30 Fathers and 12 Brothers. It was under the direction of Father Henri Constantineau, "a man of exceptional activity and with an administrative talent of the first order."²¹

The country's material progress

The vast State of Texas, nearly by one third larger than the whole of France, completely changed its physiognomy during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Americans took possession of its large tracts of land and established thousands of colonists on them each year. In 1906, Father

1950). The magazine of the Province was *Oblate World* which was published in Essex from 1939 and then from Buffalo after 1943.

¹⁹ "Rapport de la province des États-Unis", in *Missions*, 36 (1898), p. 317.

²⁰ Cf. above, p. 195

²¹ P.-E. LECOURTOIS, O.M.I., *Histoire du Texas 1849-1904*, p. 488.

Constantineau remarked: "Since four or five years, we are pervaded by an atmosphere of progress which has an almost hypnotic effect on all those who visit this country."²² One of his successors, Father Émile Lecourtois, described this progress to the 1920 Capitulars: "Where our valiant missionaries had to travel for days and days on horseback, following barely discernible trails through immense plains covered with thorny



Henri Constantineau (1861-1940)

First Provincial of the Second United States Province, 1904-1913

cactus and mosquitos . . . we now have real cities and many flourishing towns. The population has increased more than tenfold. Thousands of automobiles . . . traverse well-maintained roads. Railroads transport thousands of railcars filled with the fruits of the most luscious vegetation. Thanks to gigantic irrigation works, the valley of the Rio Grande has become the Nile valley of the United States."²³

²² H. CONSTANTINEAU, O.M.I., "Rapport présenté au Chapitre général de 1906 . . .", in *Missions*, 44 (1906), p. 367.

²³ P.-É. LECOURTOIS, O.M.I., "Rapport du R.P. Provincial au Chapitre (de 1920)", *ibidem*, 56 (1922), p. 462; *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 125-127.

New missionary needs

Overwhelmed by the new needs resulting from the development of the country, the Bishops of Texas readily yielded ministry posts to whoever was willing to take them; in fact, they were generously offering them. The problem of serving the Spanish-speaking Mexicans was particularly acute: poverty, religious ignorance, lack of priests, churches and schools was the order of the day. As late as 1937, of the two million Catholic Mexicans who were living along the boundary from Texas into California, over 80% did not or could not go to Sunday Mass.²⁴

Since the traditional itinerant ministry to the ranchos was diminishing, the Oblates were obliged to revise somewhat their form of apostolate. In response to the Bishops' requests, they accepted to serve new groupings of Mexicans, Americans or other nationalities. After consulting with the General Administration, they multiplied residences so that they would be present in places which were on the way to becoming parishes. Everywhere they applied themselves not only to organizing and maintaining places of cult, but also to establishing parish schools which they saw as indispensable for the Christian formation of the youth.²⁵

Major development in Texas

The Province grew mostly in the State of Texas. The home mission of Brownsville was in charge of seven out-

²⁴ Cf. "Le problème des Mexicains aux États-Unis", the results of an enquiry conducted by Father Charles Taylor, O.M.I., in AROMI, 1937, p. 43.

²⁵ *The Catholic Church Extension Society*, founded in 1906, generously assisted the Oblates. "More than 50 of our chapels were partly built or repaired through its assistance; it also furnished us with sizeable sums for building and maintaining our schools." A. ANTOINE, O.M.I., "Deuxième Province des États-Unis, Texas", in *Missions*, 54 (1920), pp. 69-70. In 1947, there were 50 schools or academies attached to parishes served by the Oblates, with a school population of some 80,000 students. T. J. KENNEDY, O.M.I., "Report of the Second American Province (1938-1947)", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 563.

stations in Mexico and gave birth to two Oblate residences: one in the parish of Mercedes (1909) and of San Benito (1911).

Three other large Texan cities benefited from the missionaries' zeal. In San Antonio, they were in charge of the fine parish of St. Mary's. At Houston, they were looking after an American parish, the entire Mexican population in the city, and the chaplaincy to the State penitentiary. Father Hugh Finnegan, dubbed "the chaplain of the electric chair", during his nineteen years of service (1926-1945) assisted more than 175 persons who had been condemned to death.²⁶ In Dallas, more to the north, the Oblates were since 1905 looking after a German community. Bishop Edward Dunne, the local Bishop, entrusted to their care some twenty counties outside the city; the main centres that were opened were Menard (1905), Brownwood (1907) and Ballinger (1909).

In the valley of the Rio Grande, the old missions of Roma and Rio Grande, located as they were in an area less transformed by the recent progress, still preserved for a number of years the stamp of the ranchos ministry of days gone by.²⁷ Elsewhere in the valley, new centres were emerging: Mission (1908), Mercedes (1908), McAllen (1917), and Laredo (1920). Two residences, Del Rio and Uvalde, were attached to the old mission of Eagle Pass in 1906.

Called to other States

Archbishop Giovanni Battista Pitaval of Santa Fe in 1917 called the Oblates into the State of New Mexico. He entrusted to them the parish of Springer and all the missions that were

²⁶ Cf. "Le chapelain de la chaise électrique", in AROMI, 1939, pp. 9-11; "Two Oblates die in Texas", in *Mary Immaculate*, Jan.-Feb. 1959, p. 31.

²⁷ P.-É. LECOURTOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), p. 474. *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats de la Congrégation . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 126-127.

dependent on it. Two of these, Dawson and Roy, became missionary residences that same year. He also asked the Oblates to preach missions throughout his entire archdiocese.²⁸

At the close of 1918, Archbishop John William Shaw of New Orleans in the State of Louisiana, entrusted to the Oblates the cathedral parish, St. Louis, and the Italian parish of St. Mary's located on the same territory as the cathedral parish. The ca. 20,000 people served here were Creoles, French, Americans, Mexicans, Italians, and others. The next year, the Archbishop put them in charge of the missions in Livingston, 100 kilometers north of the city.²⁹

Lastly, the Oblates entered the State of California. In 1923, they accepted an establishment at San Fernando in the archdiocese of Los Angeles. Two others were accepted afterwards in the diocese of San Diego, namely, San Diego and Brawley.

In Mexico

Mexico was a field of apostolate the Oblates had always coveted, yet it remained difficult to penetrate. They were established in this land as far back as 1858 and were putting forth great efforts there when they had to leave it in 1866 due to the violent religious persecution.³⁰ They returned in 1902. For a little while they were looking after works of education in the cities of Oaxaca and Chiaulta; then, in 1903, they took charge of the Colegio Pio de Artes y Oficios in Puebla, which they directed until 1911. When they left the college, the

²⁸ P.-É. LECOURTOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 473-474.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 56 (1922), pp. 471-472.

³⁰ B. DOYON, O.M.I., "Early Years of the Oblate Mission in Texas and Mexico", in *Études Oblates*, 8 (1949), p. 340. The little post of Agualeguas escaped the expulsions. The Oblates were present here from 1863 to 1884. In its session of August 18, 1943, the Vicarial General Council for America approved in principle the project of the Provincial Council of Texas "to establish a house of missionaries in Mexico City, in Mexico, in view of thereafter preparing for a juniorate in Mexico."

Oblates took charge, of a parish at Metepec in the diocese of Tulancingo, to which parish many missions were attached. In the meantime, in 1906, other missionaries took on the parish of San Jeronymo, near the cathedral in Mexico City. But again, persecution broke out and the Oblates were driven out of the country in 1914.

In 1943 they returned again. Fathers Valentin Rodriguez and Theophil Okruhik once more began Oblate ministry in Mexico by looking after a small chapel, "La Guadalupita" in Mexico City.³¹

Union with Spain

In 1920, the Province accepted responsibility for the juniorate of Urnieta in Spain, in order to ensure this institution's survival and development.³² In return for the aid it was giving to Spain, it benefited from the ministry of Spanish Fathers. Besides Fathers Evaristo Repiso, Ramon Vila and Esteban de Anta, who had been working in the Province since 1920, it received three others for its teaching needs and 19 for its parish works.³³

This union with Spain was only for a time and it was normal that Spain become a Province, not only because of the way the formation houses in Spain developed and the opening of Spanish ministries in Latin America,³⁴ but also because the Second United States Province itself was called to develop as a Province that was specifically American.³⁵ This union, therefore, came to an end in 1932.³⁶

³¹ Cf. *Missions*, 41 (1903), pp. 157-158; A. ANTOINE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 54 (1920), p. 71; P.-É. LECOURTOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 56 (1922), pp. 475-477; B. DOYON, O.M.I., "The Oblates in Mexico" in *Études Oblates*, 12 (1953), pp. 29-34.

³² Cf. above, pp. 89-90.

³³ Cf. A. VEGA, O.M.I., *Misioneros Oblatos espanoles por el mundo*, p. 48.

³⁴ Cf. above, p. 91.

³⁵ Cf. Th. LABOURÉ, O.M.I., *Formation of a New Spanish Province*, May 1, 1931, MS. 11 pages. Oblate General Archives, Rome. Dossier: Fondation, Espagne.

³⁶ Cf. above, p. 91.

Works of Formation

The Province's juniorate was founded in 1905 in a wing of the scholasticate of San Antonio. When the latter was transferred in 1920, the juniorate occupied the entire building. The novitiate had been opened at Brownsville, was transferred to San Antonio where it existed from 1905 to 1909, and was finally fixed at Mission in 1912. The scholasticate was founded in San Antonio in 1903, then transferred to Castroville in 1920, and in the end returned in 1927 to San Antonio where it took the name of De Mazenod Scholasticate.³⁷

Since recruits from Texas were rare, the juniorate and scholasticate tried to fill out their number by welcoming young men and scholastics coming from outside the Province.³⁸ Even in 1943, a canonical Visitor noted that few Mexicans were available to the Oblates as future priestly replacements.³⁹

Personnel in 1947

In 1947, the Province's personnel consisted of 181 Fathers, 40 scholastics and 21 Brothers. There were 10 houses, 11 districts and 40 residences. Missions without a resident priest were 144 in number. This personnel served 70,000 Catholic Americans and 250,000 Spanish-speaking people. Of the 70 parishes served by the Province, 14 were English-speaking, 30 Spanish-speaking, 23 were "mixed" i.e. both English and Spanish, one was Italian-speaking, another German and another Polish.⁴⁰ The main ministry of the Oblates remained that

³⁷ Until 1911, the scholasticate also took in the seminarians of the diocese of San Antonio. Cf. J. Michel, O.M.I., "Le nouveau scolasticat de Castroville (Texas)", in *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 367-381; P.-É. LECOURTOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 56 (1922), pp. 463-466.

³⁸ A. ANTOINE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 54 (1920), p. 74; P.-É. LECOURTOIS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 56 (1922), p. 464.

³⁹ G. MARCHAND, O.M.I., *General Act of the Canonical Visitation of the Second American Province*, September 1942-March 1943, p. 40.

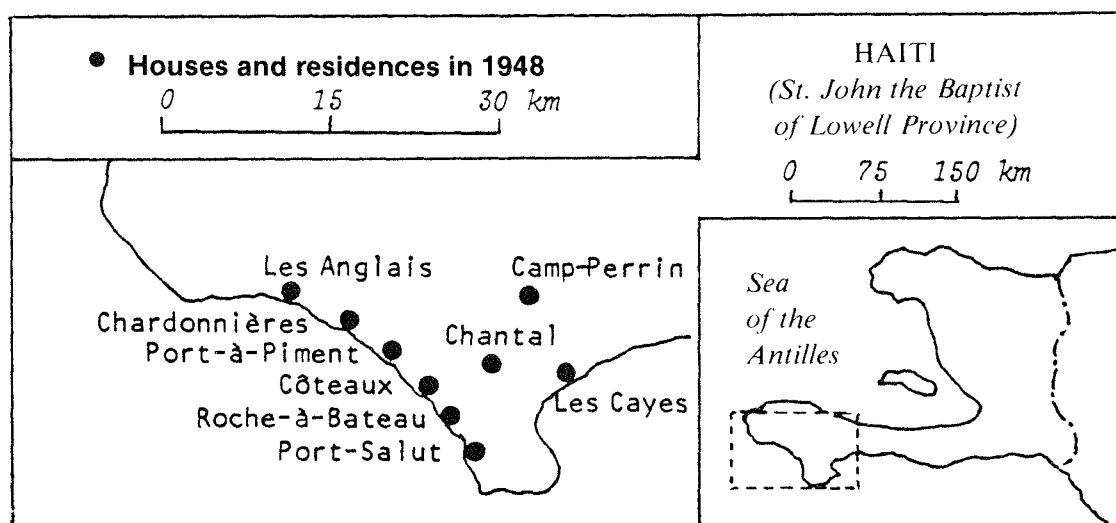
⁴⁰ T. J. KENNEDY, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 74 (1947) p. 563.

addressed to Spanish-speaking people. In 1943, more than two-thirds of the missionaries in the active ministry were involved in this apostolate.⁴¹

III – *The Province of St. John the Baptist of Lowell*

Foundation

In the last century, an Oblate presence in the northern United States was motivated mainly by the spiritual needs of the French Canadians who had emigrated to the United States. When the First United States Province was formed in 1904, French-speaking Oblates and works were an important part of



⁴¹ G. MARCHAND, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, p. 36. Provincials were: Henri Constantineau (1904-1913); Albert Antoine (1913-1920), Émile Lecourtois (1920-1926), Théodore Labouré (1926-1932), Wayne Cozad (1932-1933), François-Xavier Lefebvre (1933-1935), Arthur Dusseau (1935-1939), Walter Arnold (1939-1944), Joseph Thomas Kennedy (1944-1950). The Province's magazine, *Mary Immaculate*, was founded in 1915 at San Antonio, Texas; it was renamed *O.M.I. Missions* in 1968.

it. Soon the element of English grew stronger and it was difficult to assure French-speaking Oblate recruiting in the Province's formation houses. On the other hand, French-speaking works were needed even more and the Bishops recognized the need for a French-speaking clergy to care for the spiritual needs of some two million Catholics who were French-speaking.

The project of forming a Province which would bring together the French-speaking Oblates and works had been talked about for some fifteen years,⁴² before it was submitted by Father Léon Lamothe to the deliberations of the 1920 General Chapter. The creation of a Franco-American Province, he explained, "was necessary and urgent for recruiting and developing the French-speaking apostolic works in the United States."⁴³ This proposal received the Capitulars' support; moreover, they pronounced themselves in favor of derogating in this case from the custom of never creating a Province that is located on the territory of another Province.

The final decision was left to Archbishop Dontenwill, the Superior General. On March 1, 1921, he established a Franco-American Vice-Province under the name of St. John the Baptist of Lowell. It consisted of the houses of Plattsburgh, St. Joseph of Lowell, Our Lady of Lourdes of Lowell, and the residences and stations of Aurora, Egg Harbor and Fond-du-Lac.⁴⁴ It was placed under the direction of Father Eugene Turcotte. On May 7, 1924, it was raised to the rank of Province. Its personnel then consisted of 34 Fathers, 4 scholastics, and 11 Brothers.⁴⁵

⁴² Such a project had already been raised at the November 18, 1908 session of the General Chapter.

⁴³ *Chapitres généraux 1904-1932*, Oblate General Archives, Rome, pp. 333, 345-347.

⁴⁴ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Circular letter of March 1, 1921, in *Missions*, 55 (1921), pp. 135-137. Cf. also E. TURCOTTE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Provincial de Lowell", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 371-373.

⁴⁵ Letter of D. Dontenwill, O.M.I., to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Vice-Province of St. John the Baptist of Lowell, Rome, May 7, 1924, *ibidem*, 58 (1924), pp. 224-226.



Group of Oblates gathered at the scholasticate of Natick in 1927. From l. to r.: (seated) Paul-Marie Germain, Eugene Turcotte, Provincial, Archbishop Augustine Dontenwill, Superior General, Victor Viaud, Superior, Georges-Étienne Villeneuve, Provincial of Canada, Julien Gendron. (standing, 1st row) Georges Saint-Jean, Leo Desmarais, Alphonse Houle, Eugene Labrie, Eugene Beaucage, Lionel Labrie. (standing, back row) Leon Moisan, Alfred Jutras, André Payette, W. Laliberté, Emilien Lecompte, and Brother Louis Dejadons.

Houses of formation

A major priority for the Vice-Province was its houses of formation. In 1922, it opened its novitiate at Hudson, where the novice master, Father Napoléon Pelletier, received a first group of four novices. In the same year, it opened a juniorate at Colebrook; there were 25 students and Father Edward Carrier was its director. Lastly, in 1927, it opened a scholasticate at Natick with 11 students; Father Victor Viaud was its first superior.

The abundance of vocations resulted in transferring the juniorate of Colebrook to Bucksport in 1941, and, in 1944, a second juniorate for the higher classes was opened at Bar Harbor. The novitiate at Hudson had been enlarged in 1924 and now was transferred to Colebrook, after the juniorate had

vacated that locale. The novitiate statistics from 1922 to 1947 show that 219 took the habit as scholastic novices and 164 of these made first vows; and 66 took the habit as Brothers and 37 of these made their first profession.⁴⁶

Preaching

During the first years of the Province's existence, only a few missionaries were assigned to the ministry of preaching missions and retreats: two in 1926, five in 1930. Fathers Charles Denizot, Adolphe Fortier, Rodolphe Smit, Alphonse Breault and Arthur Lemire were involved in this ministry.

Once the Province's scholasticate began to furnish priests, the Provincial, Father Louis Bachand, resolved to launch for good the work of preaching missions and retreats. He opened a school of preaching which held three major sessions during the summers of 1934, 1937 and 1938. The results were encouraging. The numbers of missionaries assigned to preaching grew and varied thereafter. They were seven in 1947.⁴⁷

Closed retreats were started in 1933, at the scholasticate of Natick, during the summer holidays. They were continued during the following years. Missionaries also preached closed retreats for women in women's religious institutes in Lowell and Marlboro. The house of Hudson became a house for closed retreats in 1948.⁴⁸

Parishes

The parish ministry done by the Province of St. John the Baptist of Lowell was mainly in the city of Lowell itself. The

⁴⁶ *Rapport statistico-historique 1955-1957, Province Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-Lowell*, Lowell, pp. 25, 26.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 40-G. Also cf. "Rapport de la province de Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Lowell (1938-1947)", in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 85; A. DESNOYERS, O.M.I., *Acte de la visit de la Province Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Lowell*, Nov. 1947-Jan. 1948, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁸ Closed retreats were started at Hudson in 1945 and became a regular feature there from 1948 onwards. Cf. *Rapport statistico-historique 1955-1957, Province Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-Lowell*, p. 88.

parish of St. Joseph, the first one opened in Lowell by the French-speaking Oblates in 1868,⁴⁹ remained the largest and best organized in the Province. For many years it had served the Franco-Americans of the whole city and, at the end of the last century, it had a chapel of ease dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

Since the numbers of French-speaking people were growing in the different sectors of the city, new parishes were opened in consequence: Our Lady of Lourdes in 1908, St. Joan of Arc in 1922 (chapel of ease since 1920), St. Mary's in 1931 (chapel of ease since 1906). In all of these parishes, the Oblates built and maintained parochial schools with the help of the Grey Nuns of the Cross from Ottawa, the Assumption Sisters from Nicolet, the Marist Brothers and the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The Province was also in charge of some parishes outside the city of Lowell: St. Peter in Plattsburgh, St. Louis at Fond-du-Lac, and St. John the Baptist at Egg Harbor. The latter was a small country parish that included the missions of Jacksonport and Fish Creek, in an area where a Catholic minority was immersed in a militant Protestant element. The mission of Aurora was abandoned in 1930.

Called to Haiti

The highest religious and civil authorities of Haiti — Mr. Eli Lescot, the ambassador of Haiti to Washington; Mr. Stenio Vincent, President of the Republic; Archbishop Joseph Le Gouaze of Port-au-Prince, supported by Monsignor Michael Ready, the secretary general of the United States "National Catholic Welfare Council" — in 1940 undertook urgent negotiations to obtain the help of the Oblates for the Church in Haiti. Father James McDermott, Provincial of the First United States Province, was approached first; he referred the request

⁴⁹ The Patron of this parish was changed in 1948: St. John the Baptist replaced St. Joseph.

to Father Louis Bachand, Provincial of the St. John the Baptist of Lowell Province.

The latter did not obtain the General Administration's authorization to respond favorably to this request. Because of the upheaval in the Oblate Provinces of Europe being caused by the war, the General Council thought it best not to accept any new missions until after the end of this conflict.⁵⁰

Mr. Eli Lescot became President of the Republic and, as such, addressed a petition to Pius XII himself. On April 13, 1942, the latter gave the Oblates a formal order to accept these missions.⁵¹ With great spirit of faith, the Superior General, Father Labouré, immediately accepted this order and instructed Assistant General Father Anthime Desnoyers, resident in Montreal, to see that this order was carried out without delay. The following September 30 the news was published that Father Louis Collignon, Superior of the Scholasticate at Nat- ick, had been appointed to the see of Les Cayes; this see itself, however, was not entrusted to the Oblates.

Ministry in Haiti

Bishop Louis Collignon, O.M.I., assisted by Father Armand Bédard as secretary, arrived at Les Cayes on January 25, 1943. Father Eugene Turcotte and Jean Bertrand joined them on April 23 following. A little later came Fathers Bruno Letarte, Laurent Fortin, René Moreau, Henri Langlais, and Brother Donat Joyal. The Bishop's diocese was the most destitute of priests. To the Oblates the Bishop entrusted the already flourishing parish of Sainte-Anne of Camp-Perrin with its seven auxiliary chapels; and, on the coast, the parish at Les Côteaux and that at Roche-à-Bateau with its seven chapels. In

⁵⁰ Cf. J. SACHOT, O.M.I., *Fondation des missions oblates en Haiti*, pp. 13-16.

⁵¹ Cf. "L'acceptation des missions d'Haiti, documents", in *Études Oblates*, 1 (1942), pp. 249-254.

these first placements, the Oblates had the care of 55,000 baptized people. At the end of 1943, they were in charge of four parishes and sixteen auxiliary chapels.⁵²

In 1946, there were 25 Oblates, distributed over nine residences, at work in 60 churches and chapels. Everywhere they were serving a rural population immersed in misery and ignorance, but 95% of whom were baptized Catholics. The missionaries had also opened Habitation de Mazenod at Camp-Perrin, which consisted of a juniorate-seminary, a novitiate and a dispensary, all of which was started in 1945. The Oblates also accepted the chaplaincy of a sanatorium in Port-au-Prince in 1946.

Personnel

In January 1947, the Province had, in the United States, 77 Fathers, 32 scholastics, and 15 Brothers, 8 houses and 4 residences. In the missions of Haiti which were officially an integral part of the Province, there were, on September 8 of the same year, one Bishop, 23 Fathers and one scholastic, 2 houses and 8 residences.⁵³

IV – The Vice-Province of St. Henry of Belleville

Origins

Since the turn of the century, some Oblates of Alberta-Saskatchewan and Manitoba would on occasion do ministry in the central States of the United States. One of these, Father Andrew Steuer (Stojar) was even the pastor of a Polish-speaking parish in St. Paul, Minnesota, which he directed from 1916 to 1955.

⁵² J. SACHOT, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁵³ Vice-Provincial of the Province was: Eugene Turcotte (1921-1924). Provincials were: Eugene Turcotte (1924-1933), Louis Bachand (1933-1942), Arthur Saint-Cyr (1948-1948). The Province's magazine was *L'Apostolat* from 1935-1953 (a special edition of the magazine published by the Canada East Province).

After the 1914-1918 world war had been declared, German Oblates in Canada belonging to the Provinces of Manitoba and Alberta-Saskatchewan, went to the United States. These were joined in 1916 by German missionaries expelled from Ceylon (Sri Lanka); these had come by way of San Francisco after they had been held for a time in a concentration camp in Australia. These Oblates, refugees in the central States of the United States, remained dispersed. Thanks especially to the efforts of Father Joseph Laufer, most of them were able to get parish work.

Since it was most difficult for them to return to their former posting, fifteen of them wrote a collective letter on March 25, 1919, requesting the General Administration to form them as soon as possible either into a district, or a Vicariate or a Province.⁵⁴

In 1921, there were seven German Oblates in the American midwest, doing ministry in the archdiocese of Saint Paul, Minnesota, and belonging to the Province of Manitoba; and there were 12 others working in the diocese of La Crosse in Wisconsin and in North Dakota, belonging to the Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan. This latter group could come together in a house opened at Durand, Wisconsin.⁵⁵ All of these Oblates were assigned to the jurisdiction of Manitoba. In 1922, the latter formed them into a religious district under the direction of Father Joseph Pothmann. The district's centre was at Fletcher, in Minnesota.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Oblates of Mary Immaculate 50 Years in the Central United States 1924-1974*, pp. 38-43. The question of founding a Province for the Germans in the United States was discussed in the 1920 General Chapter. Cf. *Chapitre généraux 1904-1932*, pp. 354-357. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

⁵⁵ On the Durand house and the German Oblates in the United States, cf. J. LAUFER, O.M.I., *Rapport sur la maison St. Mary's Hill Mission House, Durand, Wisc.*, to Archbishop Dontenwill, O.M.I., Superior General, September 12, 1920. Oblate General Archives, Rome, Dossier, Laufer, Joseph. Also cf. Letter of Father J.-B. Beys to Father N.-S. Dozois, October 18, 1921. Oblate General Archives, Rome, Dossier, Beys, J.-B., Dozois, N.-S., 1920-1921.

The Vice-Province is established

After Assistant General Maximilian Kassiepe had visited the Oblates of the Fletcher district, and after receiving the assurance that a future establishment would soon be given to them in Belleville, the Superior General, Archbishop Dontenwill, on December 8, 1924, raised the Fletcher district to the status of a Vice-Province with the name of St. Henry of Belleville. He explained his decision in these terms: "Wanting to remedy the inconveniences which are the result of your dispersal and your being too far removed from your present Provincial, and wanting to grant you an effective means to be together as a group in view of furthering religious observance and the development of apostolic works, according to our Congregation's spirit, we have decided to constitute you as a separate organism in the form of a Vice-Province."⁵⁶

Father Joseph Pothmann was named Provincial. No territorial boundaries were established for the Province. The Vice-Province had houses and works in the States of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and South Dakota.⁵⁷ Of the 19 Oblates that made up the Vice-Province in its beginnings, 13 came from the Canadian West, 4 from Ceylon and 2 from Texas.

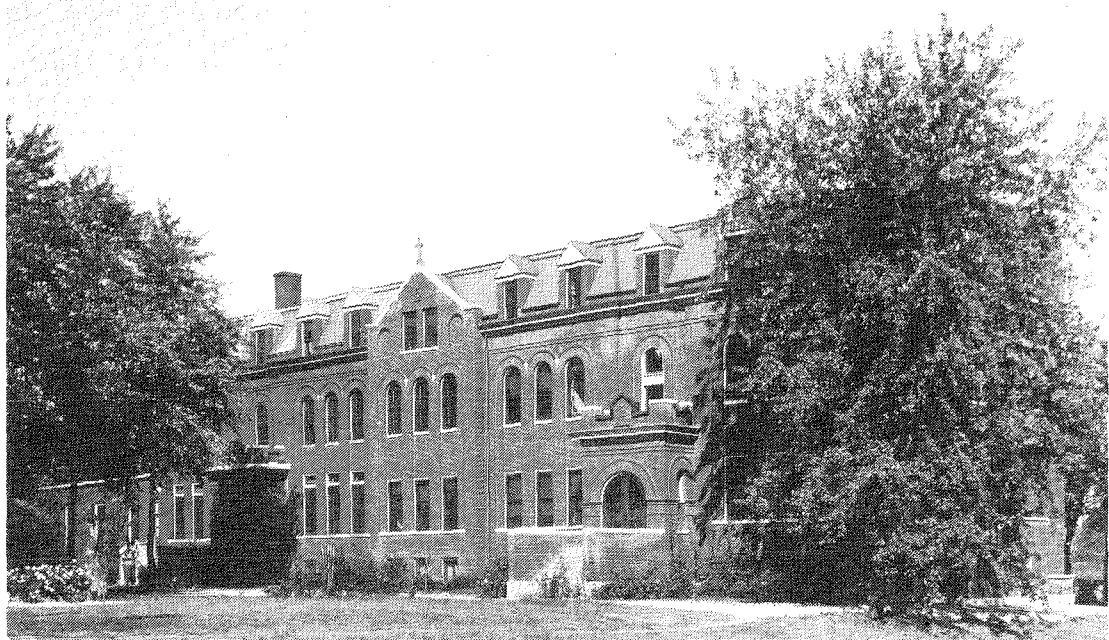
Works of Belleville

The establishment of St. Henry of Belleville was opened in 1925. It was located on a beautiful property of 53 acres, near Belleville, ceded to the Oblates by Bishop Henry Althoff of Belleville. In order to fulfill a condition attached to the ceding of this property, a minor diocesan seminary was opened in 1926. With the Bishop's consent, some juniorists were also received here from the very outset. Their numbers increased as

⁵⁶ A. DONTENWILL, O.M.I., Letter to the Oblates of Belleville, December 8, 1924, in *Missions*, 58 (1924), pp. 228-230.

⁵⁷ Cf. L. POTHMANN, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vice-Provincial de Belleville", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 404-410.

time went by. In 1947, this institution had given to the Church 57 priests: 32 to the diocesan clergy, 22 to the Oblates and 3 to other religious orders.⁵⁸



St. Henry's College, Belleville, in 1932

Due to the importance of the work begun there, the establishment of Belleville immediately became the centre of the Vice-Province. The Provincial fixed his residence there and there, too, the mission preachers were grouped together. Besides the seminary work, the Oblates accepted a parish that was to be started; at first, the seminary chapel was the place where the parishioners worshipped. At the suggestion of the Oblates, a Marian shrine, dedicated to our Lady of the Snows, was also started. Furthermore, the Vice-Province organized at Belleville a section of the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate which was soon flourishing. In 1947, this Association had some 65,000 members and the Superior General, Father Leo Deschâtelets, described it as one of the best organized in the entire Congregation.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ "Report of the Vice-Province of Belleville (March 1947)" *ibidem*, 75 (1948), p. 361.

⁵⁹ Letter of L. Deschâtelets to Ed. Guild, December 1, 1949, *ibidem*, 76 (1949), p. 592.

Preaching

The first missionaries who came into the American mid-west were especially involved in preaching. In 1926, the Vice-Province of Belleville had seven Fathers who were full-time in this ministry. Their preaching was simple, of the kind that all could understand, and sought after by all. Thus, they were kept abundantly busy preaching either in German or in English.⁶⁰ The residence of White Bear Lake, Minnesota, opened in 1928 in a central locality near Saint Paul, always remained a house that was specifically for mission preachers. In 1942, another one was opened at Campus, in the southern part of the State of Illinois. From 1936 onwards, closed retreats were preached at Belleville during the summer.

Parishes and works

When it was created, the Vice-Province was serving some fifteen parishes, most of them small, isolated and poor. Several of these were subsequently taken over by the secular clergy and new ones had to be accepted. In 1947, the Vice-Province was looking after some twenty parishes. Most of these were bilingual, that is to say, German and English; two were Polish, namely, St. Casimir in the city of Saint Paul and Assumption at Florian. The parish at Starkenburg was also a pilgrimage place dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows.

The Oblates were also chaplains of four hospitals. At Sisseton in South Dakota, they were also in charge of two Indian reserves of some 2500 Sioux, 800 of whom were Catholic. An orphanage, a clinic and a school cared for by the missionaries were attached to these missions. The name of the Sisseton mission was *Tekakhwita Indian Mission*.

The Vice-Province in 1947

Gradually, the Vice-Province was organizing its works of Oblate formation. To the seminary-juniorate of Belleville, the

⁶⁰ P. BOUR, O.M.I., "La mission de White Bear Lake". *ibidem*, 71 (1937), pp. 455-463.

Vice-Province added another juniorate which it opened at Carthage in 1944 and which was dedicated to Our Lady of the Ozarks. In 1947, it definitively established its novitiate for scholastics and Brothers at Godfrey, Illinois. From this time forth, it no longer sent its novices to the novitiates of other Provinces. The scholastics, however, continued to make their studies in scholasticates outside the Vice-Province.⁶¹



Group of Oblates of the Vice-Province of Belleville, in 1930. From l. to r.: (seated) John Fuchs, Peter Bour, Joseph Pothmann, (Provincial), Frank Jansen, Francis-Xavier Rapp. (standing) Brother Boody, Augustine Siebert, Emil Metzger, Lorenz Eckhardt, G. Gorden, Valtine Goetz, and Jakob Kievel.

The personnel of the Vice-Province grew steadily, from 19 Oblates at its beginnings to 77 (55 Fathers and 22 scholastics) in 1947. As a first contribution to the foreign missions, Father Paul Drone and Brother Michael Braun were sent to the Philippines in 1940. Unfortunately, they were killed two years later during the war.⁶²

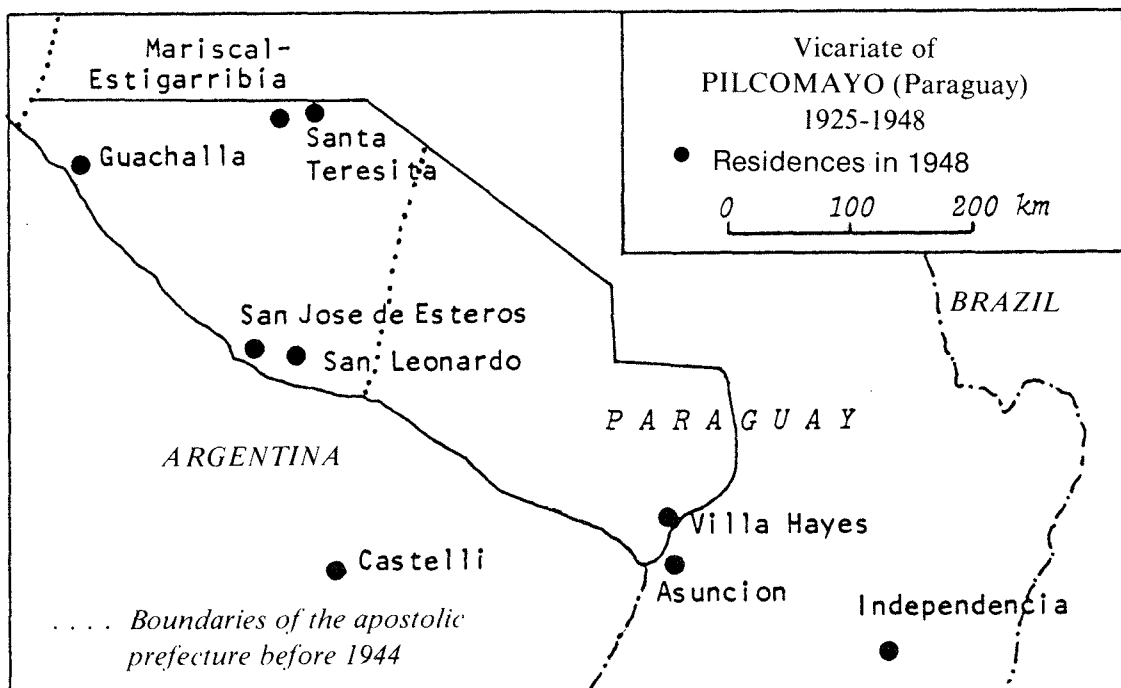
⁶¹ "Report of the Vice-Province of Belleville (March 1947)", *ibidem*, 75 (1948), pp. 364, 372-373.

⁶² Vice-Provinceals were: Joseph Pothmann (1924-1931), Aloys Rosenthal (1931-1934), Franz Huellweg (1934-1940), Alphonse Simon (1940-1949). The

V – *The Vicariate of Missions of Pilcomayo*

Foundation

The Congregation of Propaganda Fide had invited the Oblates to provide German missionaries in order to evangelize the district of Pilcomayo, in Bolivia. After it had received the assurance from the Province of Germany that the needed missionaries would be forthcoming, the General Administration replied favorably to this invitation.

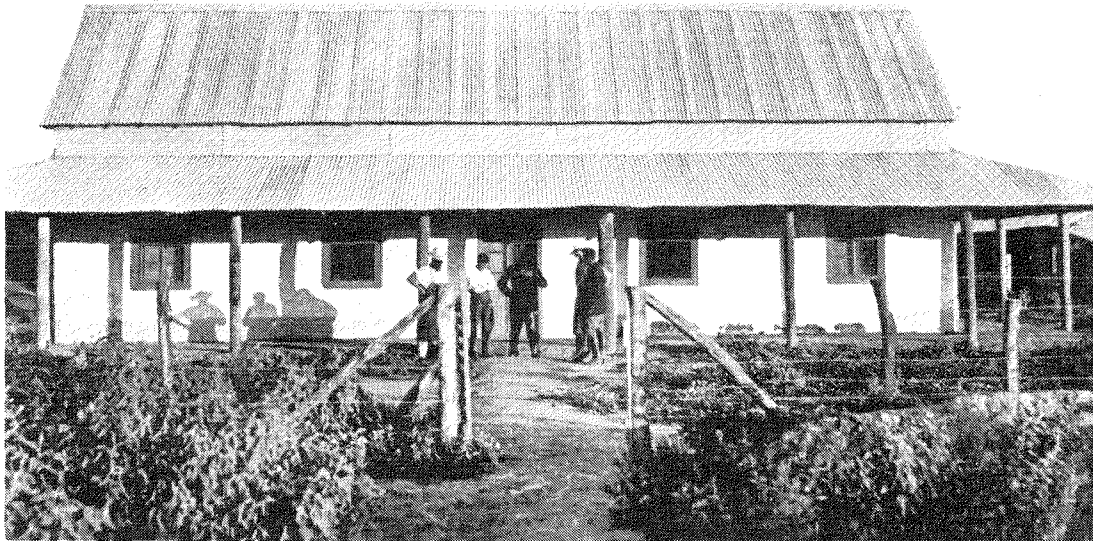


A Prefecture Apostolic named Pilcomayo was thereupon detached from the Apostolic Vicariate of Chaco and officially entrusted to the Oblates on March 12, 1925. Father Joseph Rose, a missionary from Texas, was appointed Apostolic Prefect and was also the religious superior of the missionaries.⁶³

Vice-Province published two monthly bulletins: *Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows*, Belleville, Ill., since 1943; and *Roses and Gold from Our Lady of the Ozarks*, Carthage, Mich., since 1946.

⁶³ Cf. "Les Oblats de Marie en Bolivie", in *Missions*, 59 (1925), pp. 1-4. The Apostolic Prefecture of Pilcomayo was founded on the request of the Internunciature in La Paz, Bolivia. The Bolivian Government for political reasons had asked for missionaries in the Chaco: it wanted to use the Roman

The first caravan of missionaries was made up of Fathers Joseph Rose, Henry Breuer and Henry Lambertz, and of Brothers Joseph Kremer and Friedrich Widmann. In December 1925, it arrived at Fortin Esteros, a colony of some Whites and a military post in the territory of the Chulupis Indians on the Chaco.



*Mission of San Jose de Esteros, in the Apostolic Vicariate of Pilcomayo
— the first Oblate mission in Latin America.*

The mission called into question

When the missionaries had arrived, they could see that the reality confronting them was completely other than that which had been stated by the Bolivian Government. The missionaries' task turned out to be most arduous. In addition to adapting to an untamed region which required courage and energy, the missionaries were held in open distrust, and were subjected to the systematic harrassing ill-will of the Bolivian military authorities on the spot who were opposed to their coming.⁶⁴

decision and back up its "rights" to the Chaco through the Catholic missionaries there. Cf. R. BECKER, O.M.I., Assistant General, *Rapport à l'Administration générale sur la visite canonique 15 avril - 15 juin 1949*, pp. 3-4. Oblate General Archives, Rome.

⁶⁴ Cf. "Pilcomayo, Fondation et état actuel de la Préfecture", (June 1928), in AROMI, pp. 16-17.

Moreover, the Indians they came to evangelize were obliged to flee here and there on account of the military operations between Bolivia and Paraguay who were both claiming this territory. This made it very difficult for the missionaries to have access to these Indians. Father Rose became discouraged and Father Lambertz depressed: both left the mission in 1926.

In May and December of the same year, the General Administration saw fit to inform the Congregation of Propaganda Fide about the insurmountable difficulties of this mission.⁶⁵ The mission was nevertheless maintained. On June 18, 1927, Father Henry Breuer was named administrator of the Prefecture. The missionary effort continued. The year following, a second mission under the patronage of San Leonardo was opened at Laguna Escalante.

The opposition against the missionary work did not diminish. Father Breuer, in his turn, had to return to Germany and on November 24, 1930, resigned his responsibility as apostolic administrator of the mission.⁶⁶ The situation seemed impossible. After this resignation and because of the crippling difficulties stemming from the context in which the Oblates had to work in this mission, the General Administration strongly requested the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to relieve the Oblates of the responsibility for the mission of Pilcomayo. But, in compliance with the decision of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, the General Administration consented to maintain its missionaries there.⁶⁷

On October 24, 1931, Father Walter Vervoort was named apostolic administrator and, on February 27, 1932, Prefect

⁶⁵ Cf. Sessions of the General Council, May 2 and December, 1926, *Registre du conseil*, vol. 9, pp. 9 and 128.

⁶⁶ Father Breuer returned to Pilcomayo in 1936.

⁶⁷ Cf. Sessions of the General Council of November 14 and December 2, 1930, *Registre du Conseil*, vol. 9, pp. 417-418, 421; "Rapport du T.R.P. E. Blanc, vicaire general sur la Congrégation en général" in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 14.

Apostolic.⁶⁸ On October 15, 1932, the statistics of the Prefecture listed 4000 Catholics, all of them White, 1 Indian who was Catholic, 3 Catholic Metis, and 16,000 pagans.

The war of 1932-1935

The war declared in 1932 between Bolivia and Paraguay, each of which claimed the territory on which the Prefecture was located, often placed the missions of Fortin Esteros and San Leonardo in grave danger. It made the work of evangelization almost impossible and it also brought about the closing of the boundaries with Argentina from which the mission received its supplies.⁶⁹

In this conflict, as Bishop Vervoort explained, the missionaries had to take delicate and important stands. "It was not an easy task for us to serve as intermediaries between the military authorities, the old settlers and the native Indians in an effort to settle the rights and demands of all these parties. But we did succeed to preserve our natives from total extermination. Twice the military authorities of Bolivia had given the order to have all the Indians killed; both times we managed to have this order withdrawn."⁷⁰

Paraguay emerged the victor of this war in 1935 and thus obtained the disputed territory. It showed itself sympathetic to the missionary work.⁷¹ Among the faithful served by the missionaries were several hundred Whites and the missionaries saw these settlers return to Bolivia after the war. The missionaries then concentrated more exclusively on caring for the

⁶⁸ Bishop Walter Vervoort, O.M.I., directed the missions of Pilcomayo until 1962, first as Apostolic Prefect and then, from 1950 onwards, as Vicar Apostolic.

⁶⁹ "Préfecture apostolique du Pilcomayo, Extrait du rapport de Mgr Vervoort, o.m.i., au Cardinal-Préfet de la Propagande sur la situation actuelle," in *Missions*, 68 (1934), pp. 309-310.

⁷⁰ Report of Bishop Vervoort, O.M.I., to Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, *ibidem*, 72 (1938), p. 423.

⁷¹ Extract from a report of Bishop W. Vervoort, O.M.I., *ibidem*, 70 (1936), p. 75.

natives, the Chulupis and Guarani Indians; the latter had entered the territory of the Prefecture during course of the war.⁷²

The mission's progress

In 1935, the missionaries were able to open a catechumenate which in the beginning brought together 35 natives. To these neophytes, still so close to paganism, they assured a solid Christian formation in addition to instruction. A little catechism that had been translated into their native language was placed into their hands.⁷³

In 1936, the Oblates opened an agency outside the territory of the Prefecture, in the city of Asuncion, from which the Vicariate's treasurer could provide for the mission's needs and look after a small German community. At the request of the Salesian Bishop Sosa Gaona of Concepcion, the Prefecture in 1937 accepted to serve Villa Hayes and Monte Sociedad, some 35 kilometers away from Asuncion, as well as some stations in the environs. All of these new places together had a population of 12,000.

A new severe trial hit these missions during this progress. A severe drought from October 1937 to the summer of 1938 caused a great shortage of food and water and an epidemic with many deaths. Two Oblates succumbed: Father Joseph Otto in December 1937, and Brother William Wilbert in February 1938. The schools had to be closed.⁷⁴

⁷² "Une missions difficile" in AROMI, 1939, pp. 157-158. W. Vervoort, O.M.I., "Report of the Vicariate of Missions and the Apostolic Prefecture of Pilcomayo (1st January 1947)" in *Missions*, 75 (1948), p. 407.

⁷³ Extract of a report of Bishop W. Vervoort, O.M.I., *ibidem*, 70 (1936), pp. 76-77.

⁷⁴ W. VERVOORT, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Pilcomayo", *ibidem*, 72 (1938), p. 69 ff.

On January 15, 1938, Father Théodore Labouré, Superior General, raised the religious district of Pilcomayo into a Vicariate of Missions.⁷⁵ Eleven Fathers and ten Brothers were working there at that time.

New places were opened: Independencia, in 1939, in the diocese of Villarrica, a parish with many out-stations serving Paraguayans and Germans; Mariscal Estigarribia, in 1941, which became Bishop Vervoort's residence, a parish of 1000 Whites; Fortin Guachalla, in 1941, serving the Guarani Indians; Castelli, also in 1941, in the Argentina part of the Chaco, a parish plus out-stations located in the diocese of Resistencia, with a population of Argentinians and Germans; and the residence of Santa Teresita, in 1942, in an Indian village not too far from Mariscal Estigarribia.

In 1944, the Holy See considerably enlarged the Prefecture's territory by adding to it the southern part of the Chaco, detaching it from the diocese of Concepcion. The area of the Prefecture was now 100,000 square kilometers.⁷⁶

The missionary work

When the Prefecture was established, everything had to be put into place for evangelizing its population. Bishop Vervoort writes: "Before the coming of the Oblates, the Gospel had never been preached either to the Whites or to the natives. No one knew the natives' language. Our Fathers elaborated the first dictionary and established the rules of grammar."⁷⁷ He writes further: "We made it a point to visit them (the Indians) in their villages, leaving small gifts for them, and, what is more, trying to find some work for them; as needed, we

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, 72 (1938), p. 195.

⁷⁶ W. VERVOORT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 75 (1948), p. 408.

⁷⁷ "Préfecture apostolique du Pilcomayo. Extrait du rapport de Mgr Vervoort, o.m.i. au Cardinal-Préfet de la Propagande sur la situation actuelle", *ibidem*, 68 (1934), p. 311. The Jesuit missionaries, who had organized and maintained the famous Reductions of the Catholic Guarani Indians from 1610 to 1678, had not been able to reach the Chulupis in the territory of the future Apostolic Prefecture of Pilcomayo.

attended them in their sickness and provided them with remedies. There you are! Of all the doors which open human hearts, unselfish charity is the best.”⁷⁸

In 1938, Bishop Vervoort’s evaluation of the missionary work to be done among the Indians was as follows: “Christianity can only make slow headway among these masses because, up to now, every external cult has been lacking with our Indians. There is no foundation on which we can build. Slowly the terrain has to be prepared so that it can receive the seed. Giving them catechetical instruction is not enough; young Christians must receive a moral education before receiving baptism.”⁷⁹ Thus, the conversion especially of the Chulupis Indians — who had never been reached by the Gospel and who were first approached by the Oblates — remained slow and difficult. In 1947, there were in this tribe only 46 Christians and 29 catechumens.⁸⁰

In their ministry to the Whites, the missionaries were working with people who had long been neglected and without priests, people living in great religious ignorance. Though few in number, the missionaries tried their best to look after large parishes and the many out-stations. To the degree that they could, they were also concerned with schools.

The Vicariate in 1947

In 1947, the missionaries were caring for 252 Catholics and 144 catechumens among the Indians, and about 62,000

⁷⁸ *Pôle et Tropiques*, February 1953, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Report of Bishop Vervoort, O.M.I., to Cardinal Fumasoni-Bicondi, Prefect of Propaganda Fide, in *Missions*, 72 (1938), p. 424.

⁸⁰ The first celebration of baptisms at Fortin Esteros was held at Easter of 1940. Fifteen adults, the first from the Chulupis tribe, received baptism. Cf. W. VERVOORT, O.M.I., “Report of the Vicariate of Missions and the Apostolic Prefecture of Pilcomay (1st January 1947)”, *ibidem*, 75 (1948), p. 407.

Catholics in the large White parishes: Villa Hayes, Castelli and Independencia. There are 14 Fathers and 8 Brothers, and 9 residential posts.⁸¹

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 412. Superiors of the Mission were: Joseph Rose (1925-1927), Henry Breuer (1927-1930), Walter Vervoort (1930-1938). Vicar of Missions: Walter Vervoort (1938-1952).

CHAPTER 9

The Vicariates of Missions in Asia 1898-1947

I. The Vicariate of Missions of Ceylon: – The missionaries in 1898 – The apostolic work – Preaching of missions – Among Hindus and Buddhists – Success of the Catholic schools – The Catholic schools in danger – A Church that is established – The Oblates from 1898 to 1947. **II. The Vicariate of Missions of Laos:** – Its beginnings – First activities – In the midst of wars – The Vicariate in 1947. **III. The Mission of the Philippines:** – Acceptance – The missionaries – Interruption and resumption.

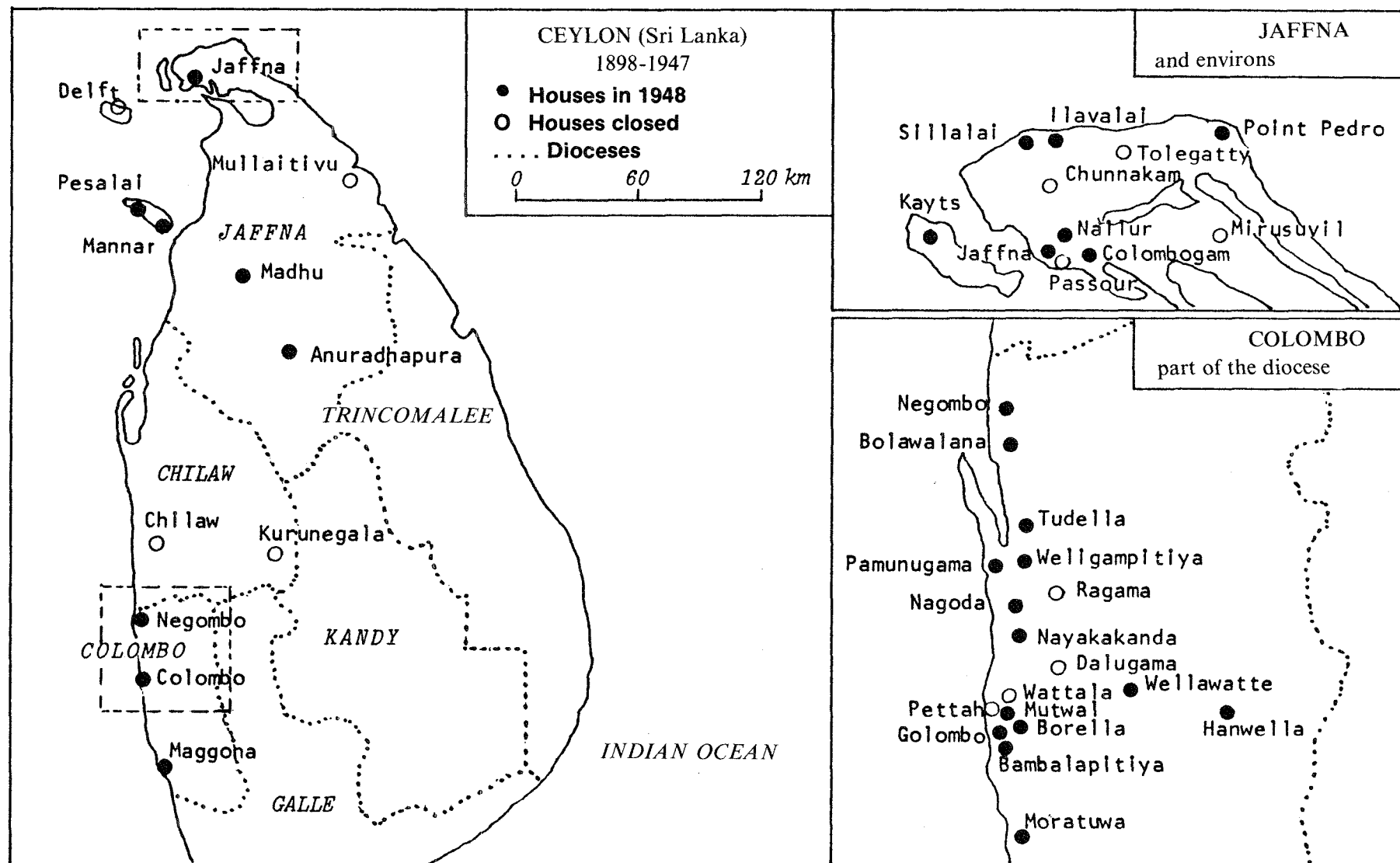
I – *The Vicariate of Missions of Ceylon*

During the course of the first half of the twentieth century the Oblates on the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) were at work in the Churches of Jaffna and Colombo, which Churches were steadily achieving their full maturity.

The missionaries in 1898

In the diocese of Jaffna, 37 missionaries were at work in two districts of unequal importance: the district of Jaffna itself, which extended to the northern peninsula of the Island, where the greater majority of the diocese's Catholics lived; and the district of Mannar-Mantotte, a vast territory covered with forests, where communications were difficult and the population sparse and poor.¹ In 1898, there were only four missionaries who were at work in this latter district. The Oblates in the diocese of Jaffna were manning 19 stations and serving some 40,000 Catholics. The total population was about 330,000, nearly all of them Tamils.

¹ "Rapport du vicariat de Jaffna", in *Missions*, 36 (1898), p. 383.



In the diocese of Colombo, 72 missionaries distributed over nine districts and houses were serving 47 main stations and were particularly attending to St. Joseph's College where ten Fathers were at work. The 183,826 Catholics of the diocese — still a tiny minority in a total population of 1,083,781 — were for the very great part Singhalese and were living along the coast of the Island, as, for that matter, was also the case for the people as a whole.

The missionaries in the two dioceses did their ministry in Tamil or in Singhalese² and were often alone in their missions where the work was extremely absorbing. This isolation of the missionaries, detrimental to their religious life, was due to the insufficient numbers of Gospel workers and would last for some years more.³ Veterans were still on the frontlines, such as Fathers Yves Le Cam, Jean-Marie Lelons, Joseph Laclau-Pussacq, Adrien Saint-Geney, and — the oldest of the lot — Constant Chounavel. Since the Congregation established itself on this Island, forty-one Oblates had already fallen on the field of honor.⁴

The apostolic work

The Oblates were responsible for the diocese of Jaffna and Colombo and as such performed a multiplicity of tasks. They were professors and directors of schools, colleges, minor and major seminaries; chaplains of institutions, members of diocesan curias, directors of various works; most of them, however, were in charge of Christian communities in the parish ministry. Here, close to the people, they catechized, administered the sacraments, visited the sick, inspected schools, saw

² The missionaries who came from abroad usually spent two years studying the languages and customs of the country before undertaking the regular ministry. Cf. *ibidem*, 36 (1898), p. 382. "Rapport du Vicariat de Colombo", *ibidem*, 36 (1898), p. 366.

³ *Ibidem*, 36 (1898), p. 366; J. COLLIN, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat de Ceylan", *ibidem*, 47 (1909), p. 74; N. LEFRÈRE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Père Vicaire de Ceylan", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 583.

⁴ "Rapport du vicariat de Colombo", *ibidem*, 36 (1898), p. 364.

to the running of parochial organizations and associations, and looked after the temporal administration of the parish or the mission. Since Pius X's decree on frequent Communion — which also entailed frequent confessions — the missionaries' work more than doubled. This was stated by the Vicar of Missions who also remarked: "Our Ceylonese are practising Catholics."⁵

With the arrival of new missionaries, the number of main missions rose from 66 in 1899 to 103 in 1946. Each main mission on the average included four Christian communities with a church, and, nearby the church, a school in the native language for boys and another for girls.⁶ Many pilgrimage places, of greater or lesser importance, in honor of St. Anne or of the Blessed Virgin Mary — especially that of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary at Madhu, to which hundreds of thousands of pilgrims flocked each year — played a particular role in the Catholic life of the Ceylonese people who are deeply religious in character.⁷

Towards the end of the period we are studying, a revolution was in progress among the people of the Island. "The war changed many things in Ceylon. The presence and contact with the troops of all countries in the land, protracted over several years, have brought in the desire for comfort and ushered in new habits which will remain. The war industries have enriched the youth: both young men and young women . . . The people of our villages have lost their simplicity, have

⁵ "Rapport du vicariat de Ceylan (1938-1947)", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 584. Father Isidore Belle, Visitor of the missions of Ceylon in 1924, after giving the number of 3,355,000 Communions for the 312,000 Faithful of the dioceses of Colombo and Jaffna during the year 1923, added: "We could ask, without exaggerating, if there is any diocese in the world wherein the great thought and intent of the venerated Pontiff, Pius X, concerning frequent and even daily Communion has been better understood than it is in the Archdiocese of Colombo." I. BELLE, O.M.I., *Acte général de Visite du Vicariat de Ceylan 1924*, p. 4.

⁶ Cf. L. COQUIL, O.M.I., "Rapport du Révérend Père Vicaire de Ceylan", in *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 30.

⁷ Cf. I. BELLE, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

become more demanding and restless. Communists . . . are penetrating everywhere . . . These profound changes in the mores and customs of Ceylon will require of our missionaries, besides the usual virtues, also great vigilance and prudence and even new methods.”⁸

Preaching of missions

Preaching great missions, a valuable means for maintaining and reawakening the fervor of Christian communities, continued to haunt the hearts of the Oblates. In 1901, one of these great missions was preached in the city of Jaffna; it was the first since 1862 and a veritable success.⁹ The project of preaching others like this was postponed from year to year, however, for lack of available missionaries: it became a reality only in 1948 when, at last, a house of missionaries was opened at Wennapuwa, in the diocese of Chilaw.

The preaching of retreats to different associations and groups of men, women, boys and girls and children in the parishes was an integral part of the missionaries' work; and so for some was the preaching of retreats for religious men and Sisters.

Among Hindus and Buddhists

The missionaries were constantly concerned about the great masses of non-Catholics in the dioceses of Jaffna and Colombo. To be sure, the presence of fervent and influential Christian communities is a priceless means of presenting Christ to these people; nevertheless, the missionaries have always wanted to do a direct ministry in their regard.

Among the Hindus in the diocese of Jaffna, the active missionary approach was under the direction of a most remarkable missionary, Father Swaminader Gnana Prakasar, who

⁸ Cf. “Rapport du vicariat de Ceylan (1938-1947)”, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 582.

⁹ Cf. H. JOULAIN, O.M.I., “Vicariat de Jaffna (Ceylan). Rapport pour le Chapitre général de 1904”, *ibidem*, 43 (1905), pp. 321-322.

was himself a Tamil and a former Hindu. In 1904, he was put in charge of the effort to convert the Hindus, a responsibility he held for 40 years. With the assistance of other missionaries, he opened 37 mission centres around the main centre at Nallur. He brilliantly overcame the obstacles and difficulties that his former co-religionists moved against him. He could do this especially because of his profound knowledge of the Hindu world and of the wisdom in his approach.¹⁰

The apostolate to the Buddhists in the diocese of Colombo, even though it did not result in group conversions, did nevertheless regularly end up in the conversion of individuals and families. This apostolate was not carried on by an open and direct preaching, which would have been very difficult and productive of very little, as experience had shown.



Swaminader Gnana Prakasar (1875-1947)
Excellent apostle among the Hindus

¹⁰ Cf. "Le R.P. Gnanaprakasar, o.m.i., et ses Missions hindous", *ibidem*, 71 (1937), pp. 202-205; "Savant et missionnaire: R.P. Gnana Prakasar", *ibidem*, 71 (1937), pp. 557-560; "Rev. Fr. Swaminader Gnana Prakasar, o.m.i. (1875-1947)", *ibidem*, 75 (1948), pp. 506-507; P. DUCHAUSSOIS, O.M.I., *Sous les feux de Ceylan*, pp. 324-326.

It was rather carried on by means of the schools, the influence of good Catholics, feasts and preaching in little churches located in Buddhist areas, by pilgrimages in which a large number of non-Catholics took part. The number of adult conversions usually numbered about one or two thousand a year.¹¹

Success of the Catholic schools

The Catholic schools, a privileged means for Christian education, were reaping the benefits won at the cost of great struggle in the last century, especially by the intervention of the illustrious Bishop Bonjean. The position of the mission's native schools, free and subsidized by the Government, was very good. In 1908, however, clouds began to appear. The conflict in the domain of education was always latent; now it became more intense and militant. It was a matter of who will have in hand the youth and form them to his point of view. Protestants, Buddhists, Hindus were increasing the number of their schools and colleges; and the Government was putting up neutral schools and colleges. The Vicar of Missions laid down the following guidelines for the missionaries: "We must therefore strenuously maintain our position and at all costs follow the progressive advance of modern education; otherwise we risk seeing the youth withdrawn from us and, consequently, the future, I would even say the present."¹²

The activity of the Oblate missionaries, as well as that of the religious men and women of other Congregations who

¹¹ Cf. P. MARQUE, O.M.I., "Extraits du rapport de l'Archidiocèse de Colombo pour l'année 1933-1934" in *Missions*, 69 (1935), p. 29; "Rapport de l'archidiocèse de Colombo pour 1934-1935", *ibidem*, 69 (1935), p. 499; "Statistiques de l'archidiocèse de Colombo (30-6-39)", *ibidem*, p. 392.

¹² J. COLLIN, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat de Ceylan", *ibidem*, 47 (1909), p. 65. It is good to mention Father Jean-Baptiste Martin's vigorous efforts put forth during the last months of 1913 against the monopoly in education that the State wanted to arrogate to itself. The strength and clarity of his arguments had great influence in favor of the freedom of education. Cf. "La cause de l'éducation catholique a Ceylan", *ibidem*, 52 (1914), pp. 84-97.

were committed to education, did not give way.¹³ It retained its high quality and even led the students of the Catholic colleges to a level of brilliant success. Thus, in 1920, St. Patrick's College at Jaffna, with its 700 students, "came off the best in the whole peninsula, even in the assessment of the inspectors."¹⁴ St. Joseph's College at Colombo, with its 1100 students, "successfully competed with the best colleges of the capital city."¹⁵ The college at Negumbo, operated by the Marist Brothers, and that at Kalutara, which Father Francois Breton directed, each with some 350 to 400 students, are likewise prosperous. And lastly, the institution of St. Vincent at Maggona, with 300 students, "is flourishing more than ever".¹⁶

A testimony of 1932, twelve years later, says: "Our colleges and convents enjoy the highest reputation and our students have the most brilliant results in the exams administered by the Universities of England."¹⁷

The Catholic schools in danger

In 1932, more clearly than in 1908, a planned attack against the confessional schools and colleges was evident. Numerous vexations were the signs that a Government change of policy was imminent. The Government was increasingly swayed by the influence of the Buddhists. A movement had

¹³ The Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Marist Brothers, the Brothers of St. Joseph, the Ceylonese Franciscan Brothers, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux (these in 1946 were 302 in number, 245 of them Ceylonese), the Good Shepherd Sisters, the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary, the Sisters of St. Francis Xavier.

¹⁴ L. COQUIL, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 55 (1921), p. 31.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 55 (1921), p. 31.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 55 (1921), p. 32. Cf. above, vol. 1, p. 270.

¹⁷ L. PERROT, O.M.I., "Vicariat de Ceylan", in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 236. Also cf. "Éloge de l'enseignement catholique par un Ministre bouddhiste", in *Missions*, 68 (1934), p. 199.

been launched which postulated one single neutral school system. The Vicar of Missions at the time wrote: "We must foresee the struggle and prepare ourselves for it; it will burst forth under the fallacious pretext of nationalism."¹⁸



Group of Oblates of St. Joseph's College, Colombo, in 1912. From l. to r.: (seated) James McCarthy, Pierre Schmitz, Charles-Henry Lytton, Rector, Archbishop Augustine Dontenwill, Superior General, John Mary Lanigan, Antoine Vernat, George MacDonald; (standing) Theodore de Sylva, Emile Nicolas, Gregory Gunewardene, Joseph-Aime Majorel, Julien Jamoays, Jean-Baptiste Martin, Joseph Marie Cajetan, T.D. Joseph, Antoine Helmbucher and Yves-M. Lejeune.

The persecution against the confessional schools was openly declared after the 1939-1945 war. In the 1947 report on the Vicariate of Missions, we read: "Since one year, our Catholic schools in Ceylon are subjected to a violent and clever persecution from the native Ministry of Education which is anti-European and anti-Christian."¹⁹ The Minister had the Island's native Parliament approve an education plan which

¹⁸ L. PERROT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, pp. 236-237.

¹⁹ "Rapport du vicariat de Ceylan (1938-1947)", in *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 578.

offered free education for all, from kindergarten all the way to University inclusively. Its purpose was to establish "that there be only the State school and to abolish confessional schools by imposing on them conditions that could not possibly be met."²⁰

The Hierarchy protested vigorously. As the report adds, however: "One fact is certain. Under such rapid and repeated blows, our system of confessional schools, built up at the cost of so many years and such great sacrifices, is falling into ruin. Since they cannot exist without Government subsidies, our many Singhalese and Tamil schools are forced to accept the system of 'free education', a necessary condition for receiving Government grants."²¹ The Singhalese Catholic schools then numbered 345 primary schools and 12 secondary ones, with a total enrollment of 65,101 students, 17,219 of which were Catholic. The Tamil Catholic schools then numbered 138 primary schools and 8 secondary ones, with 15,944 students, non-Catholics included. The Oblates took directly in hand the large colleges of St. Joseph of Colombo, St. Patrick of Jaffna, St. Peter of Wellawatte (Bambalapitiya) and the higher industrial school of St. Vincent at Maggona.

A Church that is established

Initiatives undertaken and promoted by the Oblates in view of forming a local secular and religious clergy resulted in real success. The number of Ceylonese priests grew steadily. From 20 (13 Oblates and 7 seculars) in 1898, it rose to 145 (101 Oblates and 44 seculars) in 1946.²² They became the

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 578.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 579.

²² Cf. A. PERBAL, O.M.I., "Le clergé indigène à Jaffna-Colombo" *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 148-151. "Rapport du vicariat de Ceylan (1938-1947)", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 575. From 1939 on, the 25 Ceylonese secular priests of Colombo who passed to the diocese of Chilaw, which was established in that year, are not counted. Cf. also M. QUERE, O.M.I., "The Missionary Oblates in Ceylon 1947-1962", in *Études Oblates*, 22 (1963), pp. 216-226.

majority in the diocese of Jaffna around 1923 and in the diocese of Colombo around 1929.²³ This clergy was an honor to the Church. The Vicar of Missions of Ceylon told the Capitulars of 1932: "We are happy not only about the number but also of the quality of our native priests. In their priestly virtues and intellectual and moral qualities, they can be compared to the clergy of the most Catholic countries in Europe."²⁴

From this Ceylonese Christendom came forth religious men and women who consecrated themselves to the Lord either in Congregations that originated outside the Island or in a few Congregations that were founded in Ceylon, such as: the Brothers of St. Joseph at Jaffna, the Franciscan Brothers at Colombo, the Sisters of St. Peter at Jaffna, and the Sisters of St. Francis Xavier at Colombo. The diocese of Jaffna witnessed the birth of a contemplative order, the Rosarians, which began at Tolegatty on February 2, 1928 and was canonically established on August 15, 1934. The purpose of this Order is to obtain the conversion of Ceylon and India through prayer and penance; it is made up of Brothers and a few priests. A feminine branch of the Order was definitively established in 1948.²⁵

The Holy See crowned, so to speak, this progress of the Ceylonese Church when in 1939 it created the diocese of

²³ According to a graph published by Officium Propag. et Mission O.M.I., Rome (No. 453).

²⁴ L. PERROT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 240. Cf. A. PERBAL, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 61 (1927), pp. 148-158.

²⁵ Bishop Alfred Guyomard, O.M.I., of Jaffna took the initiative in this founding after receiving Pius XI's encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* which was published on February 28, 1926. In this encyclical, the Pope had expressed the hope that the contemplative life would flourish in mission lands. Bishop Guyomard asked a Tamil Oblate, Father Anthony Thomas, to take this project in hand. In 1948, the Order had 45 professed members, 20 novices and postulants; it was also established in India, at Vadakangulam in the diocese of Tuticorin; Father Thomas was still in charge of its general direction. Cf. *Congregation of the Rosarians*, 1957, 28 pages.

Chilaw and entrusted it exclusively to the country's secular clergy. The diocese's territory had formerly been part of the Archdiocese of Colombo.²⁶ Later, on December 14, 1945, the Holy See named a Ceylonese Oblate, Father Thomas-Benjamin Cooray, coadjutor bishop of the Archdiocese of Colombo. In 1947, this son of Ceylon became Colombo's bishop.²⁷

The Oblates from 1898 to 1947

The main artisans of the mission of Ceylon were the missionaries who had come from the Oblate Provinces in France. Oblates from other Provinces in the Congregation brought their valuable collaboration. This latter group numbered from 13 to 20 and even more in the missionary personnel; they came from the Provinces of Belgium and Holland, Italy, Germany, Poland and others, but especially from England-Ireland, for such were much needed for the colleges which were run in the English language.

The Congregation of the Oblates in Ceylon, however, was becoming more and more Ceylonese. While the number of Oblates from abroad stopped growing after the 1914-1918 war, that of Ceylonese Oblates continued to increase steadily. The statistics reveal the following. Oblates coming from outside the Island were 95 in 1898 and 143 in 1911, then dropped to 119 in 1921 and 108 in 1948. On the other hand, the Ceylonese Oblates grew in number from 17 in 1898 to 57 in 1921, to 122

²⁶ The new diocese of Chilaw had 80,000 Catholics and 25 Ceylonese secular priests. Father Aloysius Perera, O.M.I., was the appointed bishop, but he died several months later before he had been ordained a bishop. Father Edmund Peiris, O.M.I., succeeded him as Shepherd of Chilaw.

²⁷ Paul VI raised Bishop Thomas Benjamin Cooray, O.M.I., to the dignity of Cardinal in 1965. The diocese of Jaffna was in 1949 also entrusted to the direction of a Ceylonese Shepherd when Father Emilianus Pillai, O.M.I., was appointed to be its bishop. The general statistics of the diocese of Colombo in 1947: 243 churches, 63 parishes, 266,367 Catholics, total population: 1,877,885. The general statistics of the diocese of Jaffna in 1947: 256 churches, 41 parishes, 63,924 Catholics, total population: 512,835. *Annuario Pontificio* 1947, Citta del Vaticano, pp. 156, 205.

in 1948, so that at this latter date they were more than 52% of the Oblates in Ceylon.²⁸

In regard to their religious organization, the Oblates in Ceylon were originally grouped in two Vicariates of Missions: Jaffna and Colombo; in 1907, these two units were merged into one which was referred to as the Vicariate of Missions of Ceylon. In 1911, the novitiate was definitively installed in the house of the Vicar of Missions at Bambalapitiya. The scholasticate was located, along with the major seminary, in the house of St. Bernard, at Borella, near Colombo; after 1934, it had its own residence separate from the major seminary. However, the scholastics continued to follow courses at the major seminary.²⁹ In 1948, the Vicariate of Missions of Ceylon had 230 Oblates: 1 Archbishop, 2 Bishops, 192 Fathers, 17 scholastics, and 18 Brothers.³⁰

II – *The Vicariate of Missions of Laos*

Its beginnings

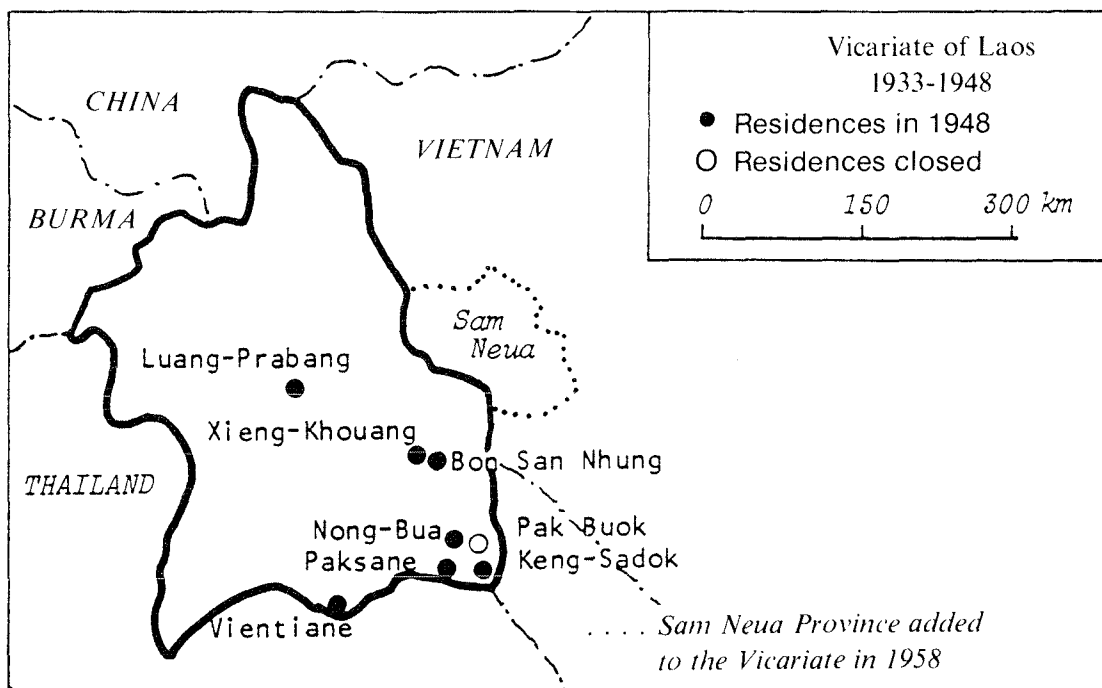
At the request of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, the General Council of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in June 1933 accepted an apostolic mission field in Laos. This

²⁸ Cf. *Personnel o.m.i.*, 1898, 1911, 1921, 1948.

²⁹ The houses of the novitiate and the scholasticate are the only ones, even as late as 1948, that the Congregation owned in Ceylon: all the other residences were diocesan property. Father John Bokenfohr, Visitor General in 1948, paid the following tribute to the Oblate Congregation's generosity: "If so many beautiful churches, schools and institutions have been built, if the dioceses are considered to be among the best organized flourishing in the East, it is due in great measure to the help they have received from the Congregation. Even to this day, *Mass stipends* and *Stole Fees* are given to the Dioceses." *Act of Visitation 1948*, p. 6.

³⁰ *Personnel o.m.i.*, 1948. Vicars of missions were: for the Vicariate of Jaffna: Bishop Henri Joulain, O.M.I., (1893-907); for the Vicariate of Colombo: Isidore Belle (1897-1907); for the Vicariate of Ceylon: Jules Collin (1907-1913), Louis Coquil (1913-1921), Narcisse Lefrère (1921-1926), Pierre Marque (1926-1929), (Thomas Guglielmi, Pro-Vicar: 1930), Jean-Louis Perrot (1930-1937), Pierre Monnier (1937-1947), François Bizien (1947-1953).

apostolic area was part of the immense Apostolic Vicariate of Laos which was entrusted to the Priests of the Foreign Missions of Paris and directed by Bishop Ange-Marie Gouin, M.E.P. It was this Bishop who had appealed to the Oblates. The portion accepted by the Oblates extended over the north of Laos, a region of high mountain chains, wild and wooded, of deep valleys and some level ground to the south. Its population, estimated at about half a million, consisted in part of Laotian Buddhists grouped in the plains and valleys, and, in part of a mosaic of different minorities of Indonesians, Chinese, even Tibetans, scattered over the mountains and given over to fetish and animist religions. Two priests were looking after the two thousand Vietnamese Christians of the Vientiane mission and its two small out-stations; and two other priests were in charge of the Laotian posts of Kengsadok and Paksane, to which two out-stations were attached also.³¹



The first missionaries arrived in Laos in January 1935. They were Father Jean Mazoyer, who had been a missionary

³¹ Cf. J.-P. BROUILLETTE, O.M.I., "Les Oblats au Laos", in *Études Oblates*, 22 (1963), p. 447.

in Ceylon for 25 years; Father Jean-Paul Brouillette, from Canada; and Father Étienne Loosdregt from France. The following October, Fathers Fernand Chotard and Leon Gentil came to join them. Under the guidance of the Priests of the Foreign Missions of Paris, they immediately began to study the language of the country and to initiate themselves into the ministry that would soon be theirs.

First activities

Father Mazoyer, the superior of the group and in charge of the mission as a whole, established his base at Vientiane. On November 6, accompanied by Father Anthelme Excoffon of the Foreign Missions of Paris, he undertook a long and dangerous trip into the northern areas of Laos. Thinking of establishing a mission in the province of the Upper-Mekong, he met a missionary from the neighboring region in Burma, Father Clement Vismara, P.E.M., who provided him with useful information and assured him of his cooperation. On the return trip, he visited several mission posts. On January 20, 1936, he returned to Vientiane; he had covered some 3000 kilometers.³²

In the month of May, 1936, the five Oblates were sufficiently introduced to their ministry and effectively took charge of the missions on their territory. The four priests of the Foreign Missions of Paris, who had remained at their posts until this time, now withdrew. Father Brouillette was established at Kengsadok, where there were 705 Christians, Muoi, who all spoke Laotian. Father Gentil was posted to Paksane, where he had 190 Christians, Phethengs. Father Chotard was also assigned to Paksane to be in charge of two villages, Nong Bua (Nong Venz) which had 160 Catholics, and Sin-Sai which had

³² Cf. "Rapport du R.P. Mazoyer au T.R.P. Supérieur général", in *Missions*, 70 (1936), pp. 436-442; J. Mazoyer, O.M.I., "Pars monts et par vaux dans le Laos septentrional", in *Revue apostolique*, Lyons, 1936, an article of several instalments.

60. Father Loosdregt was parish priest at Vientiane, where he served some 50 Frenchmen and an Annamese population of



The arrival of the Oblates in Laos: photo of January 11, 1935. From l. to r.: Anthelme Excoffon, M.E.P., Jean Mazoyer, O.M.I., Bishop Ange-Marie Gouin, M.E.P., Vicar Apostolic of Laos, Etienne Loosdregt, O.M.I., Malaval, M.E.P., and Jean-Paul Brouillette, O.M.I.

about 800 Catholics. His assistant was Father Thomas Nantha, an Annamese priest who spoke Laotian and Annamese perfectly. The small posts of Bang Ilay (200 Catholics) and Bang-Nakha (30 Catholics) — all Annamese — were attached to Vientiane. Father Loosdregt also visited the Christian communities at Luang-Prabang and Xieng-Khouang.³³

The apostolic activity of these missionaries and those who soon joined them — in January 1938, they will number 10 Fathers and 1 Brother — intensified and expanded. On June 14, 1938, the Holy See detached from the Apostolic Vicariate

³³ "Rapport du R.P. Mazoyer au T.R.P. Supérieur général", in *Missions*, 70 (1936), pp. 436-442.

of Laos the mission territory that had been entrusted to the Oblates and made it into an Apostolic Prefecture with the name of "Apostolic Prefecture of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang". Father Jean Mazoyer was appointed Prefect Apostolic.³⁴ The new Prefecture extended over a territory of 120,000 square kilometers, had a population of about 500,000, 2946 of whom were Catholic.³⁵

In 1938, Monsignor Jean Mazoyer, O.M.I., opened two posts with a resident priest: Xieng-Khouang and Pak-Beua. The former was a city of some 2000 people and was entrusted to Fathers Leon Gentil and Victor Calvez. These two Fathers had to serve the 200 Annamese Christians in this place and the Catholics in the military camp of the Foreign Legion, some 45 kilometers away from Xieng-Khouang. The latter, a secondary post up to now, became the residence for Fathers Chotard and Louis Morin, who tried to extend their apostolate to other villages which were still completely pagan.³⁶ Lastly, the post of Luang-Prabang was opened by Father Loosdregt, but had to be closed for a time because its missionary had to leave on account of illness.³⁷

In the month of August, 1939, the Prefecture had 3672 Catholics: 116 catechumens, 1912 Annamese Catholics, 1600 Laotian Catholics, and some 300 European Catholics. There were five main mission posts and seven minor ones.³⁸

³⁴ The Prefecture covered the civil provinces of Vientiane, Xieng-Khouang (or Tran Ninh), the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, the province of the Upper-Mekong (or Huei Sai), the 5th Military Region (of Phong-Sali), and a little portion of the province of Tran Ninh which until that time had been part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Vinh. Cf. *ibidem*, 73 (1939), pp. 167-169.

³⁵ "Nouvelle Préfecture", *ibidem*, 72 (1938), p. 373.

³⁶ "On essaime", *ibidem*, 73 (1939), pp. 151-152.

³⁷ Cf. "Laos. Préfecture apostolique de Vientiane et Luang-Prabang. État actuel", in *ibidem*, 73 (1939), pp. 24-26.

³⁸ L. MAZOYER, O.M.I., "Préfecture de Vientiane et Luang-Prabang. Laos. Extrait du rapport annuel 1938-1939", *ibidem*, 73 (1939), pp. 388-389.

In the midst of wars

At the beginning of the 1939-1945 world war, nine of the sixteen missionaries were mobilized and, one month later, demobilized, and then mobilized again for about one year, during the time of the war between Laos and Siam (Thailand) in 1941. In spite of the multiple harrassments of this restive period and the climate of uncertainty that hovered over the mission's future, the missionaries did not hesitate to forge ahead. In 1941, the post of Luang-Prabang was again occupied by a resident missionary. A short time after the missionaries were again demobilized, or given leave without pay. At the end of 1941, Monsignor Mazoyer saw to the founding of a minor seminary. The Annamese Christians whose beginnings are rather ancient and the Laotian Christians who are of a more recent date were considered fit to provide priestly vocations for Laos. "A major council meeting was held in February 1942 and it was decided that, in spite of all kinds of difficulties — personnel, housing, money, etc., — the minor seminary would be started at Paksane with Father Brouillette as its superior. And on September 1, 1942, the minor seminary was opened in the provisions house of the mission of Paksane."³⁹

A few months after the opening of the minor seminary, the vicissitudes of war obliged its superior to go to Hue in Vietnam where he was compelled, together with Father Leo Plante, a Canadian confrere, to remain in "special confinement" in a monastery of Redemptorists from Canada.

The great trial for the mission came on March 9, 1945, when the Japanese army completely invaded Indochina. This brought about the internment or the dispersal of all the missionaries: the latter went into neighboring regions or hid in the bush, with the exception of two native priests of the Prefecture who stayed at Vientiane and Paksane. After the Japanese armies surrendered in August 1945, the Chinese in their turn

³⁹ J.-P. BROUILLETTE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Études Oblates*, 22 (1963), p. 448.

invaded the whole country and the situation of the missionaries remained the same.

It was only after the French troops returned in March 1946 that the missionaries could return to Laos and take up their missions again. They found their posts of Vientiane, Luang-Prabang, Paksane and Xieng-Khouang pillaged and more or less devastated. All these works were in desolation, nearly annihilated: everything had to be begun anew. Furthermore, in the beginning of 1945, the 3000 Annamese Catholics of the Prefecture who had been living in the cities were, under



Cathedral of Vientiane, Laos
The Oblate in the photo is Father J.-P. Brouillette

the Laotian nationalist movement, forced to leave Laos and were not allowed to return. In this area there remained now

only some 1571 Laotian Catholics, some 30 Metis Catholics and about 100 or 200 European Catholic soldiers.⁴⁰

After this period of trials, some missionaries had to regain their health in their own native soil; the rest went courageously to work at re-establishing the mission. A re-enforcement of three young missionaries was sent to them during the course of 1947. In his annual report of 1947-1948, Monsignor Mazoyer described the situation as of July 1, 1947, as follows: four mission posts remained in ruins; the houses of Vientiane, Luang-Prabang, Xieng-Khouang, BanSan Nhung, Paksane, the minor seminary and the convent of the native Sisters were repaired or being repaired; and three new chapels had been built.⁴¹

Peace, however, was far from restored in the country: the Viet-Minh guerrilla, communist inspired, had installed itself and hampered the comings and going of the missionaries and sometimes put their lives in danger.

The Vicariate in 1947

The missions of Laos were formed into a Vicariate of Missions by the General Administration on February 2, 1940. In May of 1947, the Vicariate consisted of one Prefect Apostolic, sixteen Fathers and one Brother. However, five of these Fathers were still in their home country rebuilding their health and two others were still in the army as chaplains. The missionaries were looking after four missions where they were resident and seven mission posts dependent on the same. The re-opened seminary at Paksane had 20 students. One novice had begun his novitiate in France.⁴²

⁴⁰ E. LOOSDREGT, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat apostolique de Vientiane (Laos) au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), p. 239.

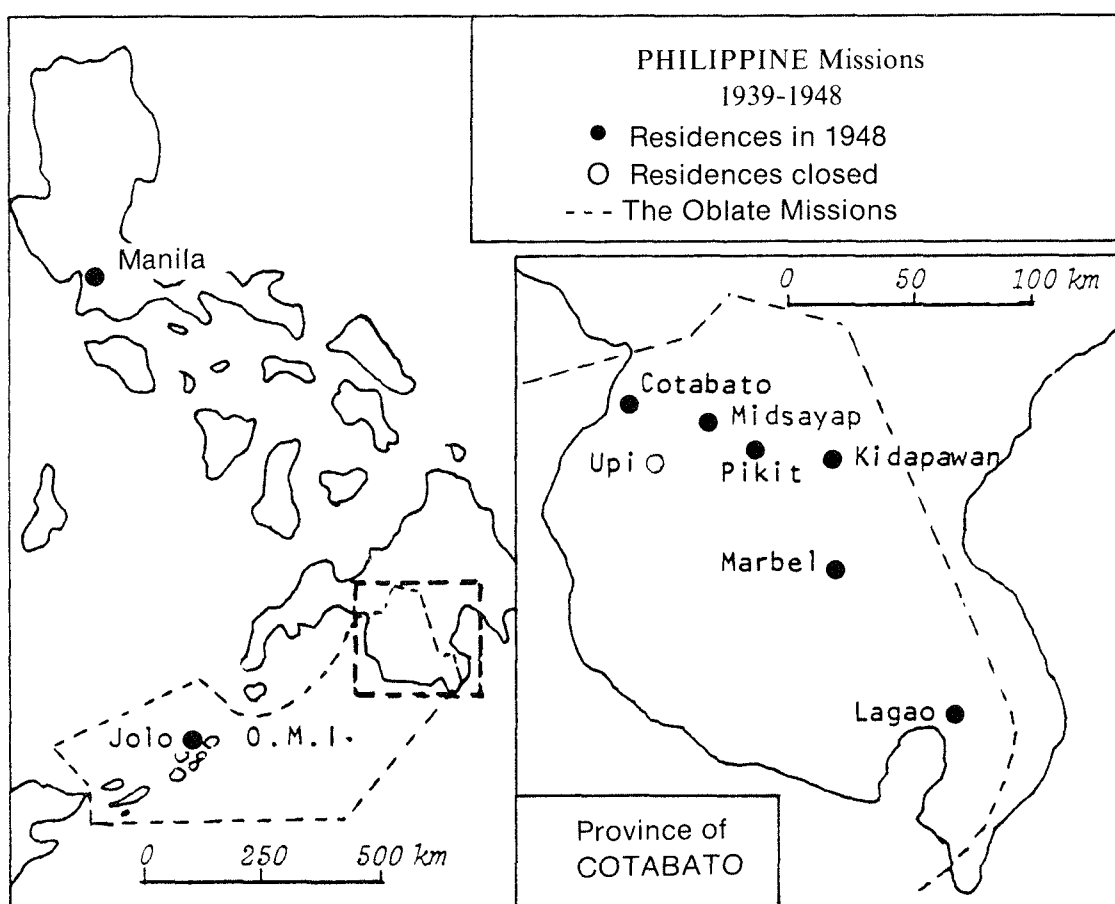
⁴¹ J. MAZOYER, O.M.I., "Préfecture du Laos. Extrait du rapport annuel de 1947-1948", *ibidem*, 76 (1949), p. 20.

⁴² J. MAZOYER, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Préfecture du Laos au Chapitre général de 1947", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 174. Superior of the Laos Mission: Jean Mazoyer (1935-1940). Vicar of Missions: Jean Mazoyer (1940-1952).

III – *The Mission of the Philippines*

Acceptance

In 1938, Salesian Bishop Louis La Ravoire Morrow, secretary to Archbishop William Piani, Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, was negotiating with the Superior General, Father Théodore Labouré, that the Oblates of Mary Immaculate accept a mission territory in the diocese of Zamboanga. The idea of calling the Oblates had been suggested to the Bishop of Zamboanga and to the Apostolic Delegate by the Abbé Ulric Arcand, a Canadian missionary to the Philippines.⁴³



⁴³ Bishop Del Rosario of Zamboanga personally met Father Philemon Bourassa, Provincial of the Canada East Province, in July 1933, and, on May 5, 1935, formally requested that the Oblates of Canada East assume the care of the parts of his diocese that were the civil provinces of Davao and Sulu. His request was seconded by Archbishop William Piani, the Apostolic Delegate to

Father Labouré, after receiving a favorable report from Father Francis Huellweg, Provincial of Belleville, who had been sent to examine the situation on the spot, stated that he was prepared to accept the two missions in the diocese of Zamboanga. The official request from the Holy See came on March 14, 1939, and the Superior General's reply was given on March 25 following.⁴⁴

Thus two mission territories were entrusted to the Oblates. One extended over the civil province of Cotabato on the island of Mindanao, and the other included the Sulu archipelago (300 islands, 130 of which were inhabited). The Philippines is a Christian country; the two areas where the Oblates were to work, however, are largely under the sway of Islam. The archipelago of Sulu, in fact, has only some 5000 to 6000 Catholics against 250,000 Mohammedans; and the province of Cotabato has 70,000 Catholics as compared to 160,000 Mohammedans and 40,000 pagans. When the Oblates came, there were three Jesuit Fathers serving the province of Cotabato and two others that of Sulu.⁴⁵

The Missionaries

The first four Oblates to reach the Philippines were Fathers Gérard Mongeau, Superior of the Mission, Émile Bolduc, Georges Dion and Égide Beaudoin. They arrived at Man-

the Philippines (letter of April 25, 1935, Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal). In its August 9, 1935 session, the Provincial Council of Canada East declared itself favorable to this missionary proposal; the official acceptance of the same was in the competence of the General Administration in Rome. Father Théodore Labouré, the Superior General, was firmly opposed to this venture, however, for he felt that the Congregation at that time had many great needs in the mission fields it had already accepted. Cf. letter of January 1, 1936, to Father Ph. Bourassa. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

⁴⁴ General Council, meeting of March 17, 1939. "Mgr L. La Ravoire-Morrow", in *Missions*, 73 (1939), p. 540; G. MONGEAU, O.M.I., "Où en est la mission des Philippines", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 604-605.

⁴⁵ "Les Oblats aux Philippines", *ibidem*, 73 (1939), p. 196; "Missions des Philippines", *ibidem*, 73 (1939), pp. 491-496; G. MONGEAU, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 604-607.

ila on September 25, 1939 and were received by the Apostolic Delegate. They were accompanied to Cotabato — where they arrived on October 24 — by the Abbé Arcand. At the beginning of November, Fathers Joseph Boyd, Francis McSorley and Cuthbert Billman joined them.

The assignments given to each missionary were as follows. In the province of Cotabato, Father Boyd was put in charge of the missions along the west coast, with some 30 to 40 posts to visit, stretching over a distance of 280 kilometers; Father Beaudoin was given the missions in the interior along the road leading to Davao, serving some fifteen chapels; Father McSorley was put in charge of three churches and a number of chapels around the city of Cotabato, of the ministry in the central region of the province, where the population was Moslem and a Government school with 700 students was located; and Father Mongeau himself took the parish of Cotabato itself, a city of some 10,000, nearly all Catholics.

In the archipelago of Sulu, the great majority of Catholics lived on the island of Jolo and mainly in the city of the same name. Father Bolduc took charge of the parish of Jolo; Father Dion visited the mission posts around Jolo, on the island. Since there were no chapels, he often used the facilities of the police or the army. Father Billman visited the Christians living outside the island of Jolo, particularly those at Siasi, Tawi Tawi and Cagayan.”⁴⁶

Interruption and resumption

The Japanese attack and occupation of the Philippines in December 1941 took the Oblates by surprise as they were fully at work in missionary endeavours that were flourishing and full of promise. There were then 18 Oblates: 17 Fathers and 1 Brother. Fifteen were taken prisoner and had to endure a painful internment in Manila for the duration of the war. The three others, Fathers Paul Drone and Edward McMahon and

⁴⁶ “Missions des Philippines”, *ibidem*, 73 (1939), pp. 492, 494-495.

Brother Michael Braun, tried to escape by boat to Australia; they were cruelly massacred by the enemy at Morotay in the Celebes Islands. In the province of Cotabato, the churches and chapels were destroyed, except that of Marbel; in the islands of Sulu, all the little chapels were likewise destroyed, with the exception of the church and rectory at Jolo.

An initiative of real promise emerged after the war. Already in July 1945, the missionaries opened a secondary school in Cotabato: Notre Dame Academy, under the direction of Father McSorley. From the very outset, it was a success. In 1947, it had 500 students. By this time, three other similar schools, all under the name of Notre-Dame and all equally flourishing, were already in operation: one at Midsayap with 400 students, one at Marbel with 460 students, and the other at Lagao with 200 students. Father Joseph Boyd, for his part, resumed the editorship of a Catholic newspaper, *The Philippines Commonwealth*, at Manila; he had become its editor shortly before the war. He was also looking after a small parish which the Archbishop of Manila had entrusted to the Oblates. In 1947, all the Fathers had returned and were at work. The parishes were as active as before the war, in spite of the poor condition of the churches and the great material poverty.⁴⁷

In May 1948, the Mission had 22 Fathers and 6 scholastics. There were 8 residences: Cotabato, Jolo, Manila, Midsayap, Pikit, Kidapawan, Marbel and Lagao. From the time of its founding, the Philippines mission depended directly upon the General Administration and its personnel was requested from the four United States Provinces. On September 8, 1947, the Superior General officially established a twinning bond between the Missions in the Philippines and the Provinces of the United States.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Cf. G. MONGEAU, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 604-610.

⁴⁸ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., Circular letter 177, September 8, 1947, in *Circ. Admin.*, vol. 5, p. 38. Father Gérard Mongeau was named religious superior of the Missions in the Philippines until 1951. At this date, the Mission was raised to the status of a Vicariate of Missions and Father Edward Gordon was appointed Vicar of Missions.

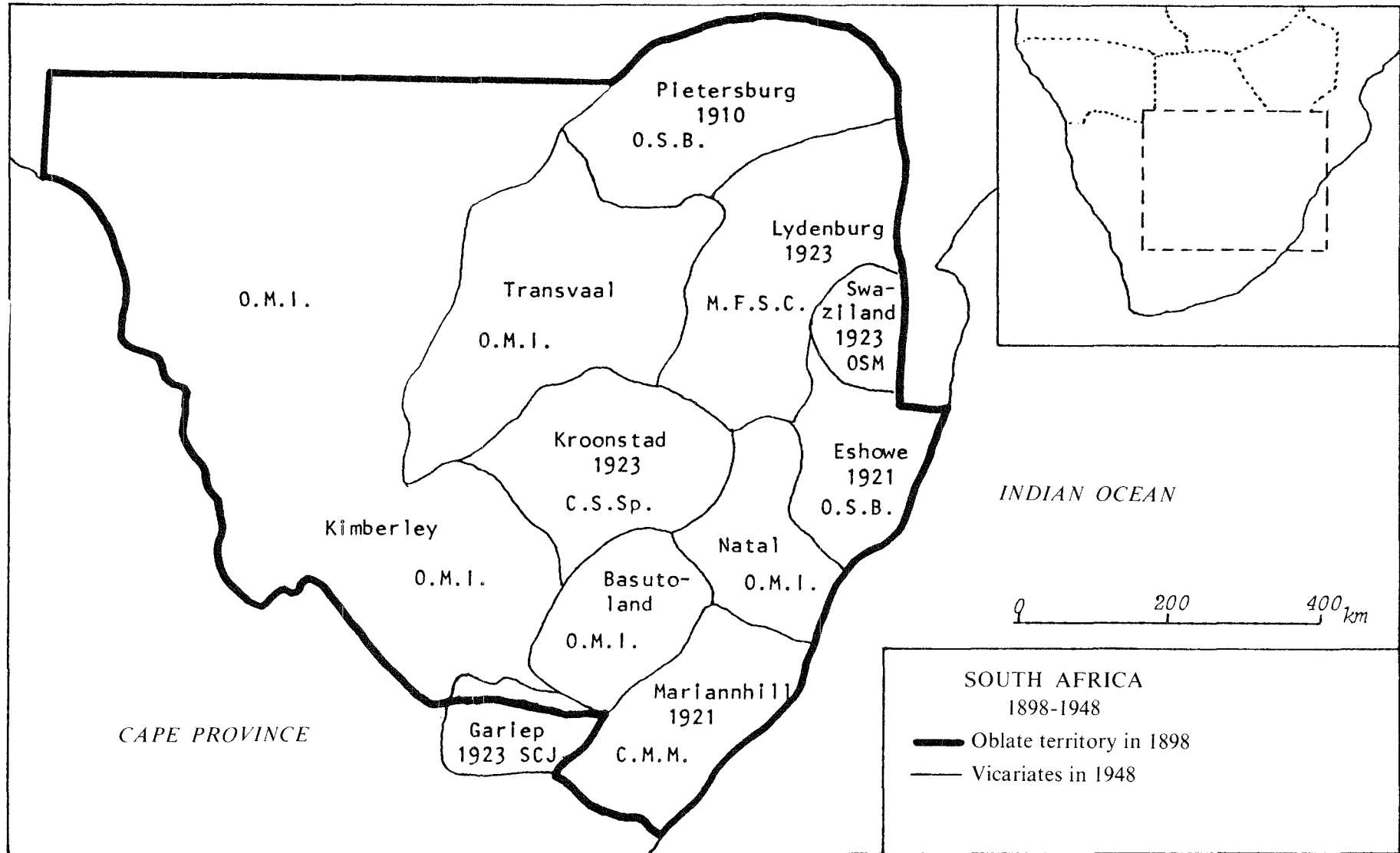
CHAPTER 10

The Vicariates of Missions in Africa 1898-1947

I. The Vicariate of Missions of Natal: – Debts and shortage of missionaries – Outline of works during 1898-1921 – Problems of groups and languages – Divisions of the Apostolic Vicariate – Expansion of the missions to the natives – Common endeavours – The Oblate personnel in 1947. **II. The Vicariate of Missions of Basutoland:** – The mission from 1898 to 1909 – Coping with increasing conversions – State of emergency – Basutoland-Canada 1930 – Under Bishop Gerard Martin – Distress and conversions – Live force at work – The University College Pius XII and the Catholic Centre – The Vicariate in 1947. **III. The Vicariates of Missions of Kimberley and Transvaal:** – In the heart of southern Africa – The missions in 1922 – The ecclesiastical territories in 1923 – Two Oblate religious Vicariates – The Vicariate of Kimberley from 1927 to 1947 – The Vicariate of Transvaal from 1927 to 1947. **IV. The Vicariate of Missions of Windhoek:** – First establishments – Among the Herreros and the Kaffirs – Foundation on the Okavango: setback of 1903 – Resumption of 1907-1910 – Among the Ovambos – The ministry. **V. The Vicariate of Missions of Ipamu:** – Origin of the mission – Growth and development – Evangelization. **VI. The mission of Garoua (Cameroon):** – Foundation – Population and missionary work.

I – *The Vicariate of Missions of Natal*

In 1898, the Vicariate of Missions of Natal extended over the territories of Natal, Transkei, Zululand and Swaziland. Its total population amounted to about seven thousand Whites plus a million Zulus or natives and a few thousand Indians and coloured people. Some 12,000 people of this total were Catholic. Such is the field of the apostolate in Natal at the end of the last century. In the first half of this century, its history is divided into two periods: the first part, until 1923, during which the missionaries continued their work over that vast



territory; and a second part during which their activity intensified over a more limited area.

During the course of the first period, the missionaries were working in a situation in which they were far removed from each other, serving in mission posts which needed to be strengthened and developed. Their work was partially paralyzed by their need for resources and missionary personnel.

Debts and shortage of missionaries

When Bishop Henri Delalle, O.M.I.,¹ succeeded to Bishop Charles Jolivet, O.M.I., in 1904, the Vicariate of Natal was laden with heavy debts. These debts were contracted in a period of prosperity and were now most burdensome because of the financial depression that affected South Africa at the beginning of this century. These heavy liabilities hampered missionary efforts for many years.²

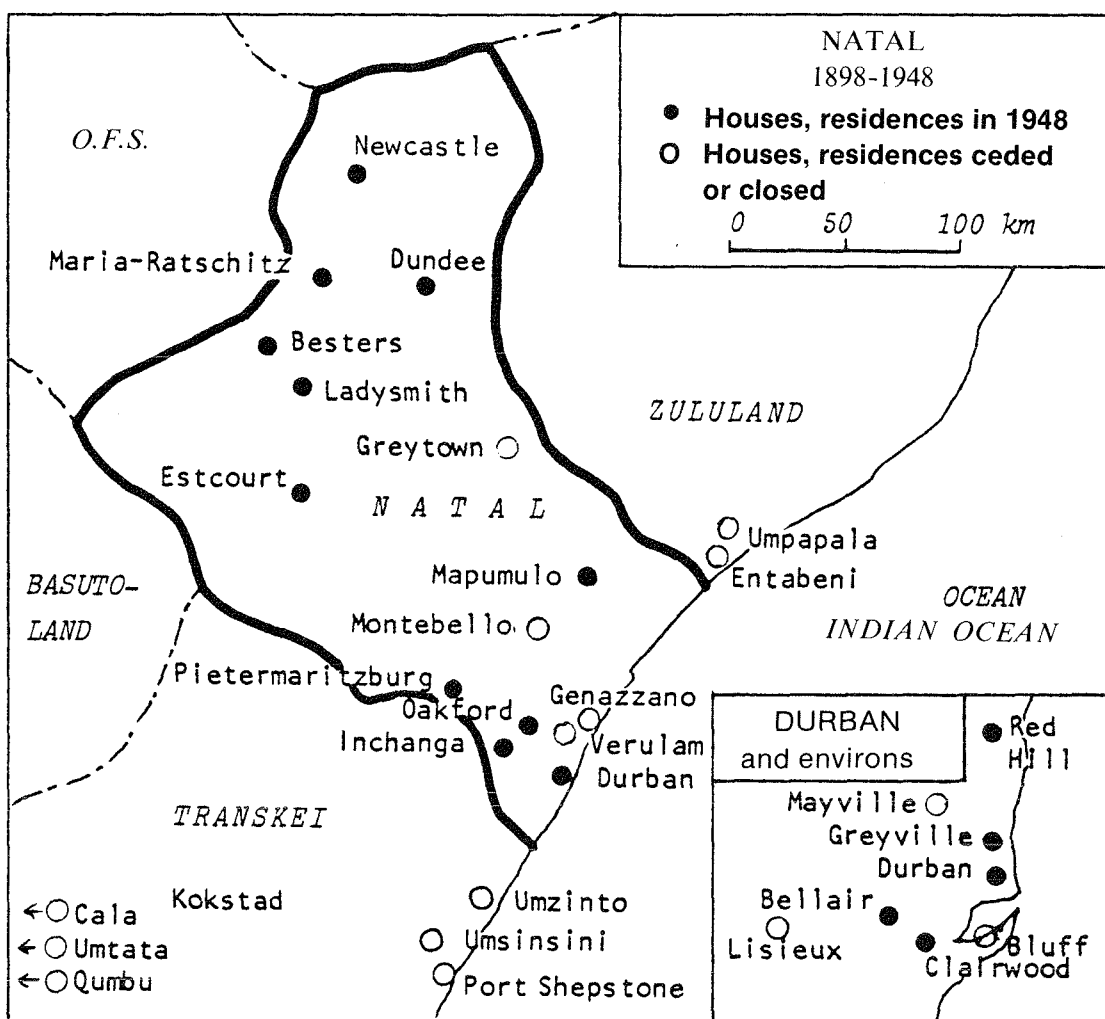
Still, the most agonizing problem for the missionaries and their ecclesiastical and religious Superiors was the lack of missionary reinforcements from the turn of the century up to 1926. The religious persecution which had broken out in France in 1902, urgent missionary needs in the Congregation's other apostolic fields, and the 1914-1918 war explains this. As a partial remedy for this situation, the Vicar Apostolic in 1914 entrusted St. Charles College at Pietermaritzburg to the Marist Brothers and assigned the three Oblates who had been there to other tasks. He also ceded to Marianhill Missionaries some missions that had been entrusted to the Oblates³ and, when

¹ Appointed Apostolic Vicar of Natal on December 19, 1903, Bishop Henri Delalle, O.M.I. (1869-1949) succeeded to Bishop Charles Jolivet, O.M.I., (1826-1903), who had died the previous September 15. At 34 years of age, he was the youngest bishop in the world. J.B. BRAIN, *Catholics in Natal II 1886-1925*, 1978, p. 170.

² H. DELALLE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Révme Vicaire du Natal", in *Missions*, 61 (1927), p. 589; J.B. BRAIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

³ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Reverendissime Vicaire du Natal", in *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 291; "Rapport du Révme du Natal", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 590.

the 1914-1918 war had been declared, he obtained from the civil and military authorities the concession that the German missionaries of his Vicariate, be they Oblate or Marianhill, would be left in their respective missions with sufficient freedom of movement needed for their work.⁴ This war, however, deprived him of no less than eight missionaries who were called up to serve in the French armies. Fortunately, they all returned at the end of hostilities.



At the 1926 General Chapter, the Prelate, who had received only three Fathers since 1911⁵ and was seeing his missionary personnel getting on in years, sounded an agonized cry

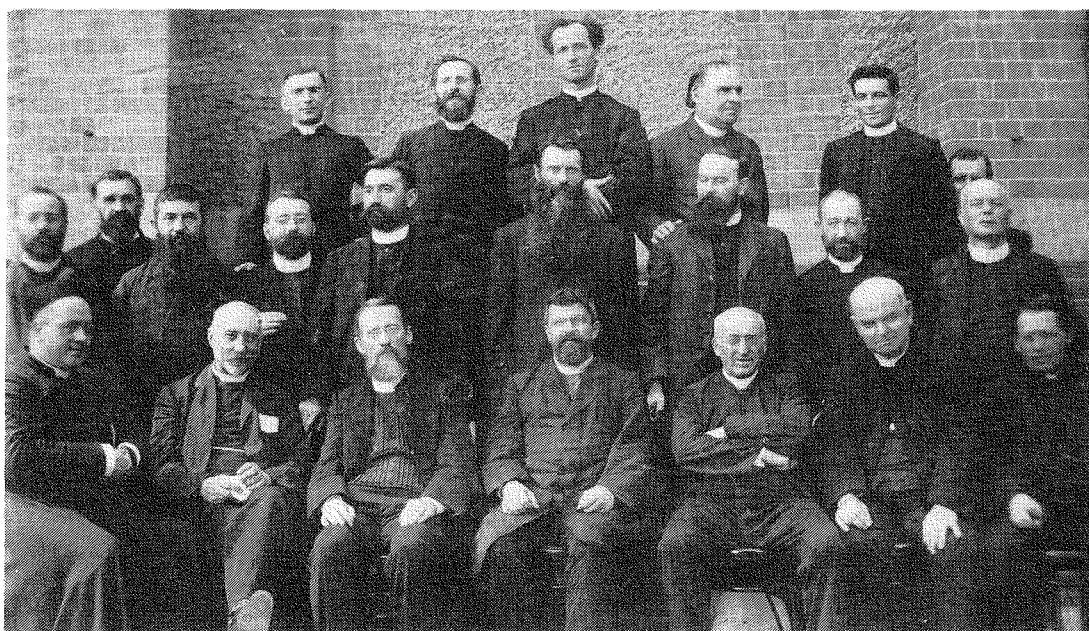
⁴ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 55 (1921), p. 286.

⁵ Joseph Kérautret, in 1921, the first since 1911; René le Voguer, in 1923; and Brian Kelly, a native of Natal, in 1925.

of alarm. He summed it up thus: "In a word, it is of the utmost importance that sacrifices be made and that men are sent to us;" the alternative was to give up the mission altogether.⁶ Men were sent to him and the same Prelate could write in 1932: "We have received a substantial reinforcement."⁷ Oblates were coming to him not only from the French and Anglo-Irish Provinces but also, from 1932 onwards, from the First United States Province.

Outline of Works during 1898-1921

Yet, despite the nearly total absence of missionary reinforcements, one is amazed when one considers the work accomplished by the thirty Oblates of the Vicariate during the first two decades of this century.



A group of Oblates at Durban, February 17, 1914. From l. to r., seated: James O'Donnell, Aloysius Crétinon, Raoul Maingot, Bishop Henri Delalle, Jean-Nicolas Meyer, François-Xavier Rousseau, Charles-Antoine Serrière; 2nd row: Jacques Saby, Auguste Chauvin, Félix Coupé, Léon Sormany, Lucien Delagnes, Anselme Rousset, Prosper Garrigou, Corentin Le Louët, Pierre J. Vernhet; 3rd row: Gabriel Vialard, Hermann Bold, Victor-Jean Belner, Louis-François Rousseau, Jean-Louis Tual and Maurice Foley.

⁶ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 594.

⁷ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., "Vicariat de Natal" in "Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932", p. 250.

The city of Durban, where the Vicar Apostolic was in residence since 1900, was the principal centre of the missions. Here the Oblates were in charge of two parishes for Whites, one of which was the cathedral, and of churches or parishes for the Indians and Mauritians living in the city. At Greyville on the outskirts of the city, besides looking after St. Joseph's parish for Whites, they were in charge of the St. Paul's mission for the natives: the latter became a vital centre for all the native missions of the Vicariate.

From Durban as their focal point, missions multiplied. The mission to the natives of St. Francis Xavier at Bluff led to St. Henry's mission at Illovo. The parish for Whites at Bellair was paralleled by a mission for natives beside it. Further away, on the north coast, the mission at Oakford branched out to Genazzano and to the important mission of St. Peter at Mount Sergeant. On the south coast the missions of Umzinto, Mount Kerry and Port Shepstone were founded one after the other.

At Pietermaritzburg, the next major centre of the Vicariate, the Oblates were looking after an important parish for Whites, another for Indians, and St. Charles College from 1904 to 1914,⁸ as well as the natives of the city and the nearby locality of Maryvale.

Outside of these two major centres, three vast regions were served by the missionaries' zeal. In the north of the Vicariate, Father Hermann Bold started an apostolic work for the natives in the mission of Estcourt and Father Pierre Vernhet was working at Greytown. Further north still, Father Jacques Saby was busy at Ladysmith and Father Jean-Louis Le Texier took over a large district that was attached to the mission of Dundee.

⁸ This boarding school, founded by Father Jean-Marie de Lacy, was the only Catholic high school for young people in the Vicariate. Cf. H. DELALLE, O.M.I., "Rapport présenté au Chapitre général de 1904", in *Missions*, 43 (1905), p. 424.

In the Transkei territory, the missionaries were serving the missions of Kokstad, Umtata, Cala and Qumbu, all of them missions among the natives and quite distant from each other.

In Zululand, finally, Father Anselme Rousset continued to look after his mission at Emonyeni, while Father Joseph Rosenthal served the new mission of St. Joseph at Mbongolwane.

Problems of Groups and Languages

In nearly all of the Vicariate's apostolic centres the missionaries had to cope with the problems that stemmed from the diversities of peoples and languages. The Vicariate's population consisted of Whites, Blacks or Zulus, peoples of every intermediary shade referred to as Métis, and two groups of recent immigrants, namely, the Indians who spoke Tamil and the Mauritians who spoke French. The sometimes deep antipathy between these groups and the difference in their languages most often required separate parishes, missions and works for each element of the population. This greatly hindered the missionaries' mobility. Each missionary could not learn each of the spoken languages (English, Zulu, Tamil, French, etc.) nor could every missionary hope to succeed equally with each of these groups.

Divisions of the Apostolic Vicariate

The second period of the Vicariate's history extends from 1921 to 1947 and is marked in its beginnings by a noteworthy lessening of its missionary territory. Even though it worked zealously and effectively, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was not able to satisfy the urgent needs of men and resources that were required by the huge Vicariate of Natal which had been entrusted to it. The Holy See therefore intervened and entrusted considerable portions of it to other missionary Institutes.

On August 1921, the Holy See established the Apostolic Prefecture of Zululand, which in December 1923 became the Apostolic Vicariate of Eshowe; this field of apostolic labors was confided to the Benedictines of Saint Odila (Bavaria).

Thus a northern portion of the Vicariate of Natal passed to other hands. On September 10 of the same year, the Holy See established the Apostolic Vicariate of Transkei, which included some southern districts of Natal, and entrusted it to the Missionaries of Marianhill.⁹ Thus a large southern portion was sliced off the Vicariate of Natal. The Oblates withdrew from the missions that were located in the territory of the new Vicariate: from Cala, Umtata, Kokstad, Port Shepstone, Umzinto and Umsinsini. Lastly, two years later, on April 19, 1923, upon Bishop Delalle's request, the missions of Swaziland which Propaganda Fide had entrusted to the Servites of Mary in 1913, were established as an Apostolic Prefecture and definitively detached from the Vicariate of Natal. No Oblate had ever worked there.

Though considerably reduced by these amputations, the Vicariate of Natal still offered its thirty Oblates a task disproportionate to their number. Its population included 87,784 Whites, 494,847 natives, 114,671 Indians and Metis.¹⁰ The missionaries were then present in 23 missions and were also regularly serving 69 chapels.¹¹ In 1925, the total number of Catholics stood at 27,115.

Expansion of the missions to the natives

Because their territory was now reduced, the missionaries' activity following these divisions became more concentrated. It especially stressed the evangelization of the natives. Stations where churches were built multiplied, and some of these stations became missions with resident priests. Developments like these occurred across the entire Vicariate: in the districts of Durban, Pietermaritzburg, on the North Coast, in the valley of

⁹ Apostolic letter of September 10, 1921, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 73-74. The Trappists who were established at Marianhill, Natal, since 1882, changed their Constitutions and name in 1909 in order to enable them to respond better to missionary tasks. They styled themselves as the Congregation of the Missionaries of Marianhill.

¹⁰ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 591-592.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 598.

the Thousand Hills, in the vast northern regions where the mission centres of Estcourt, Ladysmith and Dundee were located. The district of New Castle, which served native places and which had passed to the Dominicans, reverted to the Oblates around 1925. The missions of Besters and Maria Ratschitz, which had been confided to the Fathers of Marianhill, were taken back by the Oblates in 1940 and 1942.¹²

In 1926 Bishop Delalle could state that all the White parishes and missions had one or several missions to non-Whites attached to them.¹³ And in 1929 he added: "We take advantage of every occasion to open up new centres among the natives."¹⁴

In the central missions, the missionaries organized a catechumenate that for the neophytes lasted two years as a rule. To be admitted to baptism, the neophytes had to have received a truly Christian formation. As in the other missions of Africa, the missionaries relied on native catechists who taught on a regular basis in the secondary mission stations. These catechists were themselves carefully trained, took part in special sessions and made an annual retreat together.¹⁵

Common endeavours

Besides the local apostolic activities, some initiatives and activities of a broader importance need to be mentioned. In 1927, the Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Delalle, founded the *Catholic African Union* (CAU). This association addressed to the natives, had a social and economic purpose and was meant

¹² Cf. L. MATHIEU, O.M.I., "La Mission de Kruisfontein près d'Oakford", in *Missions*, 59 (1925), pp. 283-295; A. HANON, O.M.I., "La mission du Natal Sud Africain", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 595-597; H. DELALLE, O.M.I., "La marche des oeuvres au Natal", *ibidem*, 63 (1929), pp. 507-508.

¹³ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 596.

¹⁴ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 63 (1929), p. 507. He stated further: "We accept all the places that we can get from the chiefs or magistrates, even though we must begin there with a little school and a very poor church."

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 63 (1929), p. 506; also cf. *ibidem*, 65 (1931), p. 894.

as a counter measure to the *Industrial and Commercial Union* (ICU) which was quite infected with Bolshevism.¹⁶ Father Joseph Kérautret, pastor of the native parish of St. Paul at Greyville, was its brilliant animator for several years. The CAU passed beyond the boundaries of Natal and took root also in the other Apostolic Vicariates of South Africa.¹⁷ Besides being an educative and inspirational force for native activities, movements and associations, the CAU, ever intent on being constructive, sometimes had to defend vigorously the natives' rights to a just salary, to decent human conditions of work and to other social benefits.¹⁸

Committees of Catholic Action were in 1934 established in the Vicariate: the chief promoters of these were Fathers Léon Sormany for the Whites and Joseph Kérautret for the natives.¹⁹ Father Sormany, a man of prestige and talent, wielded influence in the area of higher education. He was on the university council of Natal from 1908 onwards; in 1921, he was called to represent, as a priest, the interests of Catholic education on the high council of the University of South Africa at Pretoria: here he served in this capacity for several years. Father James O'Donnell was one of the principal founders of the Catholic newspaper, the *Southern Cross*, which was published at Capetown. "Without the truly herculean work of this apostle, the diffusion of this newspaper would never have known the success that it did."²⁰ Also worthy of mention is the Eucharistic Congress held at Durban in 1929: it was the first in Africa, was marvellously successful in bringing

¹⁶ H. DELALLE, O.M.I., *art cit.*, *ibidem*, 63 (1929), p. 505.

¹⁷ Cf. H. DELALLE, O.M.I., "Extrait du rapport annuel 1939-1939", *ibidem*, 73 (1939), p. 387. This text says: "This Union is now a national one for the whole of South Africa; every two years a Congress brings together its delegates from all the Vicariates." Bishop David O'Leary, Vicar Apostolic of Transvaal, was a great promotor of this Union.

¹⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, 66 (1932), p. 547; 67 (1933), pp. 89-91.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 68 (1934), pp. 369-370; 69 (1935), p. 504.

²⁰ Cf. *Ibidem*, 70 (1936), p. 362.

together, in a demonstration of faith, more than 15,000 Catholics of some 20 races.²¹

The Oblate personnel in 1947

Some Oblates were natives of Natal itself. The first of these are the following. Among the Brothers: Leo Gumede, who became an Oblate in 1902. Among the Fathers: Noel de Gersigny and Terrence Kelly, Whites, who were ordained in 1928; Claude Lawrence and Leo Gabriel, Indians, ordained in 1934; Jerome Mavundla and Dominic Khumalo, Zulus, ordained in 1946. In 1947, there were 9 South African Fathers working in the Vicariate; at their head was Bishop Denis Hurley, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic and a South African himself.

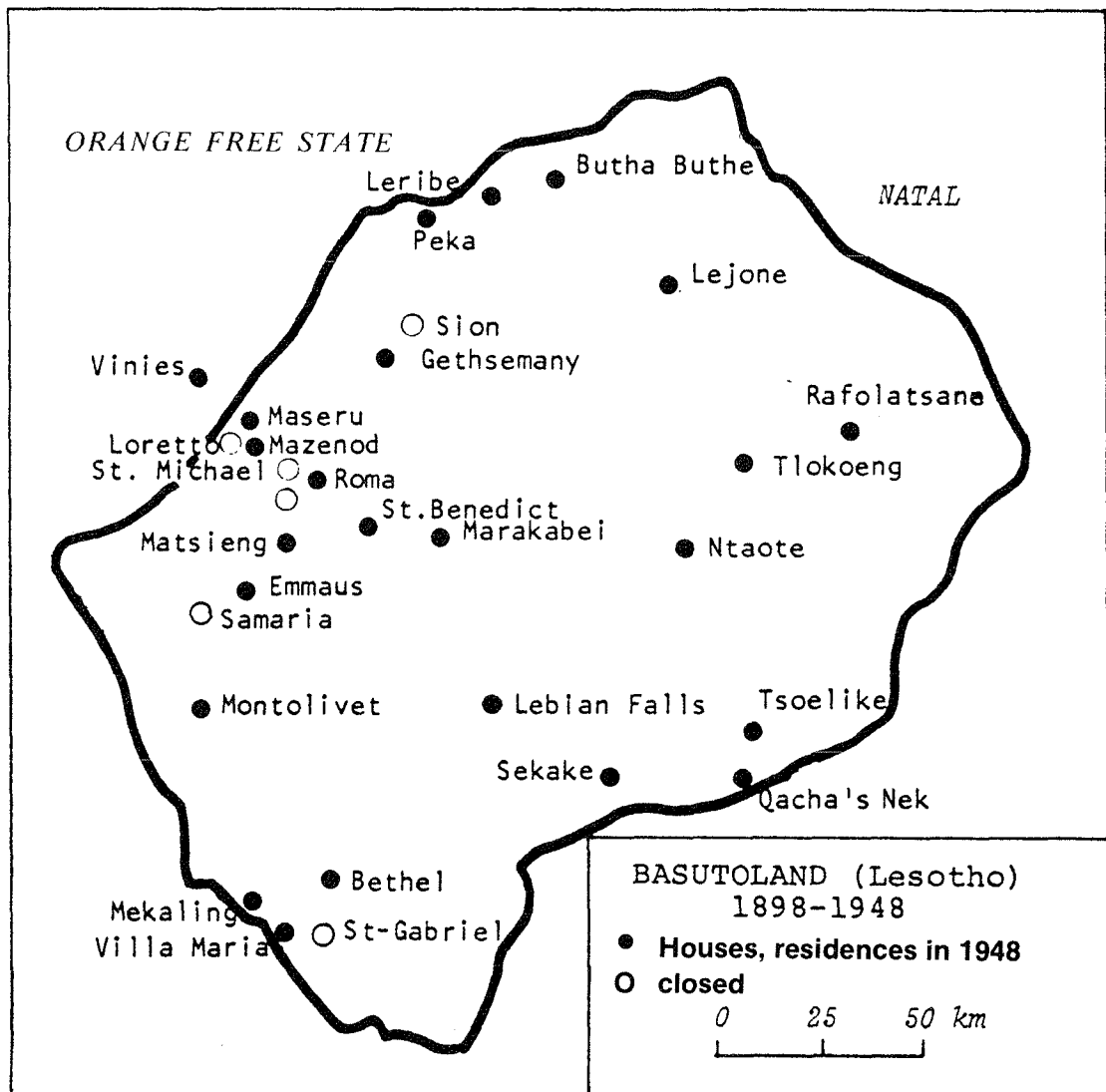
The formation houses were often outside the Vicariate. The novitiate was either at Germiston, Transvaal, or at Villa Maria in Basutoland, or in the novitiates of Europe; the scholasticate was at Roma, Basutoland, or in the scholasticates of Europe. In 1927, a novitiate for Brothers was opened at Inchanga, Natal, and in 1943, a scholasticate at Presbury, near Pietermaritzburg. The latter was a temporary measure at first; in 1946, by decision of the General Administration, it became a permanent scholasticate for South Africa. It was transferred to Cleland in 1947.

In 1947, the Vicariate of Natal had 2 bishops: Bishop Henri Delalle, O.M.I. (retired since April 4, 1946), and Bishop Denis Hurley, O.M.I., his successor; 88 Fathers,²² 19 scholastics and 6 Brothers. For the same year 1947, the statistics for the Apostolic Vicariate listed 72,204 Catholics, 13,537 of whom were Whites.²³

²¹ Cf. H. DELALLE, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 63 (1929), pp. 508-510.

²² From 1939 to 1947, 41 Fathers were assigned to the missions of Natal: 18 Irish, 7 South African, 7 Frenchmen, 6 Americans, 1 Belgian and 2 Italians. Cf. J. KÉRAUTRET, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Natal, Rapport au Chapitre général de 1947", *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 138.

²³ *Catholic Directory of South Africa*, 1947, Table I, Vicars of Missions: Bishop Charles Jolivet, O.M.I. (1875-1903), Bishop Henri Delalle, O.M.I. (1904-1935), Joseph Kérautret, O.M.I., (1935-1948).



II – *The Vicariate of Missions of Basutoland*

At the turn of the century, the Christian people of Basutoland (Lesotho today) counted 5,233 baptized persons and 333 catechumens. It was served from six main mission centres²⁴ and seven mission stations, by eleven Oblate Fathers and nine Oblate Brothers, assisted by 32 Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, 24 of whom were Europeans and 8 were native. The period we are studying is one in which the progress of the

²⁴ Roma, St. Monica, Montolivet, Sion, Korokoro, Gethsemane.

mission was advancing and accelerating. Until 1930, we witness the difficult work of a limited number of missionaries who are faced with many conversions; after 1930, more and more missionaries arrived, thus enabling the local Church to grow and develop.



Henri Lebreton (1878-1959)
Missionary in the Mountains (1906-1930)
Pro-Vicar (1930-1935)

The missions from 1898 to 1909

The number of main missions nearly doubled between 1898 and 1909. Resident missionaries were established at St. Michael (1899), St. Gabriel (1904), Loretto (1905), Samaria (1908) and Bethel (1909). As much as possible, each main mission had two Fathers: one responsible for the mission itself, one to visit the stations two or three times a week. The regular tasks of the missionaries were the Sunday ministry, teaching catechism, visiting homes, looking after schools and the missions' temporal needs. Around 1906, Father Henri Lebreton, for his part, from Roma organized the ministry for the Moun-

tains²⁵, where he contacted Catholics who were dispersed and separated from each other. Here he laid the foundation for churches and schools. Every year he covered twice a large portion of Malouti territory.

During the first years of this century, two new missionary communities joined the Oblates and the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux. The Marist Brothers from the Vicariate of the eastern Cape accepted to direct a boys' school at Roma; and the Holy Cross Sisters of Menzingen, who were established at Aliwal, the gateway to Basutoland, opened a house in St. Gabriel's mission.

The Holy See raised the Apostolic Prefecture of Basutoland to the rank of an Apostolic Vicariate in 1909, and placed Bishop Jules Cénez, O.M.I., at its head as Vicar Apostolic. The new Vicariate at that time counted some 10,000 baptized persons and catechumens.

Coping with increasing conversions

Basutoland was experiencing a strong conversion movement. This movement was abetted by the example of Chief Griffith: he was converted in 1910 and, in the beginning of 1913, he became the King of the nation; he remained ever faithful to his religious duties.²⁶ The missionaries multiplied stations and schools which were headed by catechists as teachers.²⁷ A hundred schools were opened between 1912 and 1918²⁸; three new missions also received resident priests:

²⁵ The area of this country — more than half its surface — has high mountains and is generally referred to as "the Mountain" or the Malouti. The Basotho established themselves in this territory at the turn of the century.

²⁶ Father Joseph Foulonneau at Bethel had received Nathaniel Griffith's (at the time still a district Chief) statement of conversion and directed him to the moment of baptism. Father Camille Valat, missionary at St. Louis of Matsieng, where Griffith, as King of the nation, practised his faith, was his spiritual adviser throughout his entire reign, that is, from 1913 to 1939.

²⁷ Cf. E. LAPOINTE, O.M.I., *Des communautés chrétiennes enracinnées et responsables. L'expérience du Lesotho*, p. 138.

²⁸ R. GUIBAULT, O.M.I., "Nos écoles", in *Basutoland*, ed. Grands Lacs, 1942, p. 115.

Emmaus and Massabielle in 1910, and St. Louis of Matsieng in 1913. As a matter of fact, the number of baptized persons rose from 8,474 in 1907 to 30,219 in 1920; the number of catechumens during the same period rose from 850 to 10,744.²⁹

There followed an acute shortage of apostolic workers. The pioneer missionaries were disappearing. Father Joseph Gérard, the heroic apostle of the beginning and much venerated by the Basotho, died in 1914. The courageous and zealous Father Ernest Rolland also died in 1914. Father François LeBihan, who had been an intrepid traveller and founder of the first Christian community in the south at Montolivet, where he served for 26 years, died in 1916. Father Aloysius Biard, missionary at Korokoro from some 20 years, died in 1919. The persecution in France and the 1914-1918 war cut off missionary reinforcements and resources which until that time had been coming almost entirely from Europe. In 1921, the Vicariate had even three missionaries less than it had in 1911, that is to say, 26 instead of 29.³⁰

State of emergency

Faced with this state of emergency, the General Administration between 1919 and 1926 sent to Basutoland six missionaries from France, seven from Belgium and ten from Canada. This new strength prevented the Vicariate from being divided³¹ and made it possible for the missionaries to be permanently present in Christian centres that were already developed: Holy

²⁹ Cf. J. CÉNEZ, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat du Basutoland", in *Missions*, 47 (1909), p. 99; *Reponse au Questionnaire de la S.C. de la Propagande* (1920), p. 10. Oblate General Archives, Lesotho file: S.C. of Propaganda Fide.

³⁰ Bishop Cénez had unsuccessfully tried to get Marianhill and Servite Fathers. Cf. J. CÉNEZ, O.M.I., "Vicariat des missions du Basutoland, S.A.", *ibidem*, 55 (1921), p. 54.

³¹ Cf. J. CÉNEZ, O.M.I., "Rapport du Rme Vicaire du Basutoland", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 611. On October 30, 1925, Bishop Cénez wrote to Father J.-M. R. Villeneuve: "Long live Canada who has saved our life! We were lost without you and Basutoland too would have been lost, at least in part, to the Congregation." Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa.

Cross (1922) in the south, Bethany (1925) in the centre, Butha Buthe (1923), St. Therese (1926), and Pontmain (1928) in the north. Four missions were opened in the Mountain: L'Ermitage (1923), St. James (1923), Paray (1924) and Marakabei (1929).

The missionary needs kept on increasing nevertheless. In the older missions, the many conversions continued and required an ever greater ministry plus the construction work of enlarging or building new churches and schools.³² The seminary for native clergy, decided by Bishop Cénez and organized in 1924 at Roma by Father Odilon Chevrier, was growing quickly. The building, which housed the two institutions of the minor and major seminaries, was solemnly blessed on August 15, 1927, by the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Bernard J. Gijlswijk, O.P. This seminary was soon receiving seminarians from the neighboring Vicariates.³³ In order to be adequate in a growing society, the Catholic school system needed strong promotion and coordination.

Thus the flourishing mission of Basutoland still keenly needed a major missionary reinforcement and missionary resources.

Basutoland-Canada 1930

The project of a Basutoland-Canada union, which had been suggested at the 1926 General Chapter, appeared to everyone to be the solution to the problem. In Canada, well before 1926, under the foreseeing impulse of the superior of St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa, Father Jean-Marie Rodrigue Villeneuve, a strong interest in the missions of Basutoland existed among the scholastics.³⁴ In Basutoland itself, Bishop

³² "With two or three exceptions, all the churches, even that of Roma, need to be enlarged and added on to." J. CÉNEZ, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 61 (1927), pp. 618-619.

³³ Cf. H. THOMMEREL, O.M.I., "Le séminaire Saint-Augustin à Roma", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), pp. 798-804.

³⁴ Cf. G. CARRIÈRE, O.M.I., "Un promoteur des missions canadiennes au Lesotho", in *Vie Oblate Life*, 38 (1979), pp. 3-26. Father J.-M. R. Villeneuve

Cénez, who was at first somewhat hesitant about this project, espoused it fully. He wrote to the Provincial of Canada in 1927: "I feel . . . that here we have the solution. I have reflected much on this, prayed a great deal over it, and I cannot conceive of any other way out."³⁵ His Vicariate council made the formal request in autumn of the same year. In Rome, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, informed of the mission situation in Basutoland,³⁶ "officially requested" the General Administration if this mission of Basutoland could not be entrusted to the Province of Canada which, if it adopts these missions as its work, will have the means to assure a greater number of personnel for them.³⁷

Induced especially by this latter request, the General Administration on June 10, 1928 presented a project of a Basutoland-Canada union to the Province of Canada. This project became final after an official visit of the missions in Basutoland had been made in 1929-1930 by the Provincial of Canada, Father Georges-Étienne Villeneuve. According to the decree of this union, Basutoland remained a Vicariate of Missions as heretofore, but the Provincial of Canada was from

wrote the following about the scholastic Albert Lachance, one of the first Canadian Oblates sent to Basutoland: "Practically speaking, it is he who initiated the enthusiasm for the Basutoland missions among the scholastics." *Notes pour la première obédience*, February 1924. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

³⁵ Letter of July 23, 1927, Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal. He even proposed to cede his own position to a Canadian and suggested Father J.-M. R. Villeneuve as his successor.

³⁶ Msgr. Arthur Hinsley, delegated by the S.C. of Propaganda Fide to study the education of natives in the English possessions of Africa, wrote on March 20, 1928, to the Provincial of Canada from St. Monica, Basutoland: "Your Canadian Fathers are most suitable for the work here . . . I would therefore implore you to send here Fathers and Sisters as many as you can and without delay . . . I shall urge the Holy See, yes! humbly and respectfully will urge, to ask you to send more men and women here to do God's work." Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

³⁷ Cf. A. DONTENWILL, Superior General, "Circulaire sur la nouvelle constitution du Vicariat du Basutoland", June 8, 1930, in *Missions*, 64 (1930), p. 317.

henceforth the Vicar of Missions and administered the Vicariate through the intermediary of a Pro-Vicar.

Consequently, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide on March 24, 1930, accepted the resignation of Bishop Jules Cénez as Vicar Apostolic of Basutoland and, on the same day, appointed Father Gérard Martin apostolic administrator of the Vicariate. Father Henri Lebreton became Pro-Vicar of Missions. The Province of Canada was fully committed to this missionary enterprise. Besides the 10 Oblates it had already sent to the Vicariate, it sent 92 others from 1930 to 1939: among these, 32 were Brothers.

Under Bishop Gérard Martin

Under the administration of Bishop Gérard Martin, O.M.I., the Catholic schools were strongly promoted throughout the entire territory, and so was the work of the printed word. From June 30, 1931 to June 30, 1933, the number of elementary schools rose from 172 to 251 and the number of students rose from 10,700 to 22,224. Father Odilon Chevrier, as secretary of schools, was the Vicariate's representative to the Government, and devoted himself totally in this capacity from 1926 to 1932.³⁸ From 1931 onwards, two teaching Congregations from Canada contributed to this work of education and schools: the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary from Montreal and the Sisters of Charity of the Cross from Ottawa.

Encouraged and supported by Father Philémon Bourassa, the Provincial of Canada, the Vicar of Missions, Father Lebreton, with the collaboration of Oblate Brothers, established a printing press at Mazenod in 1932. This initiative,

³⁸ Cf. *ibidem*, 64 (1930), p. 574. In 1929, the 1922 prohibition concerning the founding of new schools was lifted. In but a few months, 80 were added to the already existing 114. Cf. *ibidem*, 64 (1930), p. 489. The following were thereafter secretary of schools: Fathers Jean-Marcel Bélanger (1932-1936), André Blais (1936-1940), Roméo Guilbault (1940-1954).

already the desire of Bishop Cénez³⁹, was needed to publish books of every kind: classroom texts, pious and other books, and especially to bring out a Catholic newspaper which would balance the two other native weeklies, one Protestant and one pagan. The first issue of *Moeletsi oa Basotho* (The Basotho Councillor) appeared on January 10, 1933. It was a newspaper in the English and Sesotho languages; a bi-monthly at first, and a weekly from 1938 onwards.

Distress and conversions

Bishop Joseph Bonhomme, O.M.I., the new Vicar Apostolic, took possession of his see on October 10, 1933. As soon as he arrived, this courageous and daring man quickly and efficiently organized and brought assistance and relief to the people who were reduced by hunger and ravaged by a typhus epidemic. This first gesture revealed one of the traits of the new pastor's activity: he always devoted himself to creating or supporting welfare measures, be these social or economic, not only as a response to an emergency, but also to help the people take their own destiny in hand.⁴⁰

The demands of the direct apostolate became more and more exacting. The people in crowds were asking to enter the Church. A missionary of the time explains that during the terrible trial of 1933, during which one tenth of the population died and more than half of the people were affected, "the people turned to God". He adds that "this movement to conversion lasted for years. We no longer had to go to them: by tens they were coming every Sunday in each mission to be accepted as catechumens."⁴¹

³⁹ "We have come to the point where we simply must have a printing press." Letter to Father G.-E. Villeneuve, October 30, 1925. Oblate Provincial Archives, Montreal.

⁴⁰ Cf. D. LEVASSEUR, O.M.I., *Mgr Joseph Bonhomme, O.M.I., 1839-1973*, Notice nécrologique de la prov. St. Joseph, Montreal, pp. 7, 8, 12.

⁴¹ M. CHARBONNEAU, O.M.I., *Le Pere Albert Lachance, O.M.I., 1894-1981*, Notice nécrologique de la prov. de N.-D. du Rosaire, Quebec, p. 5.

Live force at work

Abetted by the arrival of a considerable number of young and energetic missionaries, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, as well as by an abundance of material resources, Bishop Bonhomme did not hesitate to modernise the mission equipment and to make it more effective — which was especially due to the Oblate Brothers — and to deploy all forces to the maximum in the apostolate. He could dispose of his missionary personnel all the more freely because in his Vicariate, contrary to the situation in the others of South Africa, they had to address themselves to one and the same Basotho people with a common language and the same traditions.



*Bishop Joseph Bonhomme (1889-1973)
Vicar Apostolic of Basutoland (1933-1947)*

Thus thirteen new missions are founded between 1934 and 1939, seven in the plain and six in the Mountain.⁴² Four new

⁴² In the plain: Villa Maria (1934), St. David (1935), St. Rodrigue (1935), St. John the Evangelist (1936), St. Gerard (1937), St. Rose (1938), Tsepo (1939); in the Mountain: St. Leonard (1934), St. Martin (1936), Christ the King (1938), Lejone (1938), St. Benedict (1938) and St. Anne d'Auray (1939).

communities of religious from Canada came to give a hand in the works of education: the Good Shepherd Sisters from Quebec and the Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart from Sherbrooke came in 1935; the St. Joseph Sisters of St. Hyacinthe came in 1938; and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Granby arrived in 1937. Colleges were opened in 1939 by Father André Blais for the young Mountain people at Qacha's Nek: that for the boys was directed by the Oblates, that for the girls by the Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart of Sherbrooke. The minor and major seminaries at Roma were developed and were already furnishing the first native priests.⁴³

The 1939-1945 war deprived the missions of Bishop Bonhomme's presence, for he was held back in Canada; and of the reinforcement of 12 Oblates and 5 Brothers of the Sacred Heart who were taken prisoner on their way to Basutoland in 1941.⁴⁴ The missionaries in place held firm, however, and even moved forward. New missions were added to the Vicariate's map — in the plain: Sebetia (1940), St. Peter Claver (1943), St. Bernadette (1944), Mount Royal (1944) and St. Charles (1946); on the Mountain: St. Francis (1940) and Montmartre (1940).

Bishop Bonhomme returned to Roma on February 2, 1945, together with seven new missionaries. Before his resignation in 1947⁴⁵, he approved the founding of two important works: the Pius XII University College and a Catholic Centre.

⁴³ In 1940, Father André Blais founded at l'Hermitage the *Institute of Christ the Priest*, with its two branches: that for men (priests and Brothers) and that for women. The Congregation in 1947 had 9 religious: 1 priest and 9 Sisters. Cf. D. J. DESROSIERS, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat du Basutoland (1938-1947)", in *Missions*, 74 (1947), pp. 596-597.

⁴⁴ Cf. E. NADEAU, O.M.I., *La perle au fond du gouffre "Zam-Zam" et barbelés*, ed. Fides, Montreal, 1946, 308 p. Seven of the twelve Oblate prisoners resumed their journey to Basutoland after the war.

⁴⁵ Father Joseph Hébert was named apostolic administrator of the Apostolic Vicariate of Basutoland in the interim. On March 11, 1948, Bishop Delphis Desrosiers, O.M.I., was appointed Vicar Apostolic.

The University College Pius XII and the Catholic Centre

The Church in South Africa was entirely without a university institution for young Catholic natives. According to a decision taken in 1938, the Episcopacy had already tried in vain to open a boarding house for Catholic students at the one and only native university college in South Africa, the *South Africa Native College* at Fort Hare. There remained one other solution to which some thought had been given: to found a university college in Basutoland. Archbishop Bernard Gijlswijk, O.P., the Apostolic Delegate, requested Bishop Bonhomme to implement this project.

Fathers Paul-Émile Beaulé, Roméo Guilbeault and Gérard Sylvain were directed to lay the foundations: they began this work on February 6, 1945, with 6 students. The following April 6, 7, 8, the constitution of a Catholic university entity for Southern Africa was definitively accepted and approved by the 22 Ordinaries of the region who were meeting at Roma. The Pius XII University College was then officially opened. The Oblates were responsible for providing the teaching personnel. The College was affiliated to the *University of South Africa* at Pretoria, and could grant the diploma of Bachelor of Arts. In 1947, the number of students for the three years of courses totalled twenty.⁴⁶

Father Marcel Ferragne, who had already been initiated to the work of the Catholic Centre of the University of Ottawa, launched a similar one at Roma on February 17, 1945. On the following October 7, it was affiliated to the Pius XII University College. This Centre was mainly oriented to the natives. Under the direction of its founder, a man who was active and open to the needs of his milieu, it quickly offered a

⁴⁶ Cf. J.-M. QUIRION, O.M.I., "Simples notes sur le Collège universitaire Pie XII", in *Basutoland*, ed. Grands Lacs (1949), pp. 123-125; G. MARCHAND, O.M.I., "Le Collège universitaire Pie XII", in *Études Oblates*, 11 (1952), pp. 341-349.

variety of services and reading material in the native languages. In a short time its service went beyond the borders of Basutoland.⁴⁷

The Vicariate in 1947

The Basutoland-Canada union, established in 1930, had borne fruit: there was now the challenge of administering a well organized Vicariate of Missions. Thus the Superior General, Father Leo Deschâtelets, in his decree of May 20, 1947, gave Basutoland back its full administrative autonomy. On June 3 following, he established a new kind of link between Basutoland and the Province of Canada, a bond of twinning such as the 1947 General Chapter had defined: it was simple assistance in terms of furnishing personnel and financial resources.⁴⁸

Young natives were now part of the Oblate personnel in the Vicariate: four priests and eight Brothers. The first scholastic novice, Emmanuel 'Mabathoana⁴⁹, began his novitiate in 1932, and the first two Basotho Brother postulants presented themselves at the novitiate in 1927.

Since 1931, the Vicariate of Missions owned a well-established house at Thoteng-ea-Moli (Mazenod today), located some 15 kilometres from Maseru. It was the residence of the Vicar of Missions and of an important group of Oblate Brothers. For a while it was also the novitiate and in time it became

⁴⁷ Cf. M. FERRAGNE, O.M.I., "Le Centre Catholique du Collège universitaire Pie XII", in *Basutoland*, ed. Grands Lacs, pp. 126-128.

⁴⁸ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "A tous les Oblats de la Province du Canada et du Vicariat du Basutoland", September 8, 1947, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), pp. 753-756.

⁴⁹ Emmanuel 'Mabathoana (1904-1966) was born in Roma and ordained priest on May 6, 1934. On December 11, 1952, he became Bishop of Leribe and Archbishop of Maseru on January 3, 1961. From its beginnings until 1947, the Seminary of St. Augustine at Roma gave the Church in South Africa 17 native priests, of whom 8 were for the Vicariate of Basutoland (3 Oblates, 3 seculars, 1 priest for the Institute of Christ the Priest). The first mosotho priest, Father Raphael Mohasi, was ordained on December 8, 1931.

the central reference point for the Oblates in the Vicariate. An important printing establishment, including the De Mazenod Press founded in 1932, was attached to it. Fire destroyed this printshop in 1946, but it was immediately rebuilt.

In 1947, the Oblate personnel of Basutoland consisted of one Bishop, 100 Fathers, 37 Brothers and 6 scholastics. It was serving 45 missions with a resident priest and 248 secondary stations⁵⁰, and a Catholic population of 188,844, of whom 17,070 were catechumens.

III – *The Vicariates of Missions of Kimberley and Transvaal*

In the heart of Southern Africa

In the heart of Southern Africa, a small band of Oblates was working in the immense territories of Kimberley (western Griqualand had passed to Cape Province in 1880), the Orange Free State, Transvaal and Bechuanaland. In 1899, they were 32 in number, distributed over eleven missions.⁵¹ They were accomplishing a quasi parochial ministry among some ten to twelve thousand Catholics who were living in urban and mining milieux or dispersed over the large farms in the countryside. The aim of their zeal was to protect and develop the faith of these Catholics who were immersed in an area where mainly the Protestant element dominated. At this time, they

⁵⁰ Cf. D. J. DESROSIERS, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 589-592. The following were the Vicars of Missions: Bishop Jules Cénez, O.M.I. (1897-1930); the Provincials of Canada: Philémon Bourassa (1930-1936), Gilles Marchand (1936-1934), Léo Deschâtelets (1944-1947); Pro-Vicars: Henri Lebreton (1930-1935), Honorat Labrecque (1935-1944), Delphis Desrosiers (1944-1947); Vicar of Missions: Delphis Desrosiers (1947-1948). The Vicariate published *Voix du Lesotho* which in 1945 took the name *Voix du Basutoland*.

⁵¹ In the Vicariate of the Orange Free State, 17 Oblates were posted in the key missions of Kimberley, Beaconsfield, Jagersfontein, Harrismith, Taung and Mafeking; in the Vicariate of Transvaal, 15 Oblates were serving the missions of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Potchesfroom, Lydenburg and Vleeschfontein.

had, strictly speaking, only two missions to the natives: Taung and Vleeschfontein; they were also ministering to natives in the places where they were serving the Whites.

The missions in 1922

In 1922, the eve of territorial changes which will greatly reduce the field of their apostolate, there were 42 missionaries distributed over eight main centres. Five of the latter were in the Apostolic Vicariate of Kimberley⁵² and the other three in that of Transvaal.

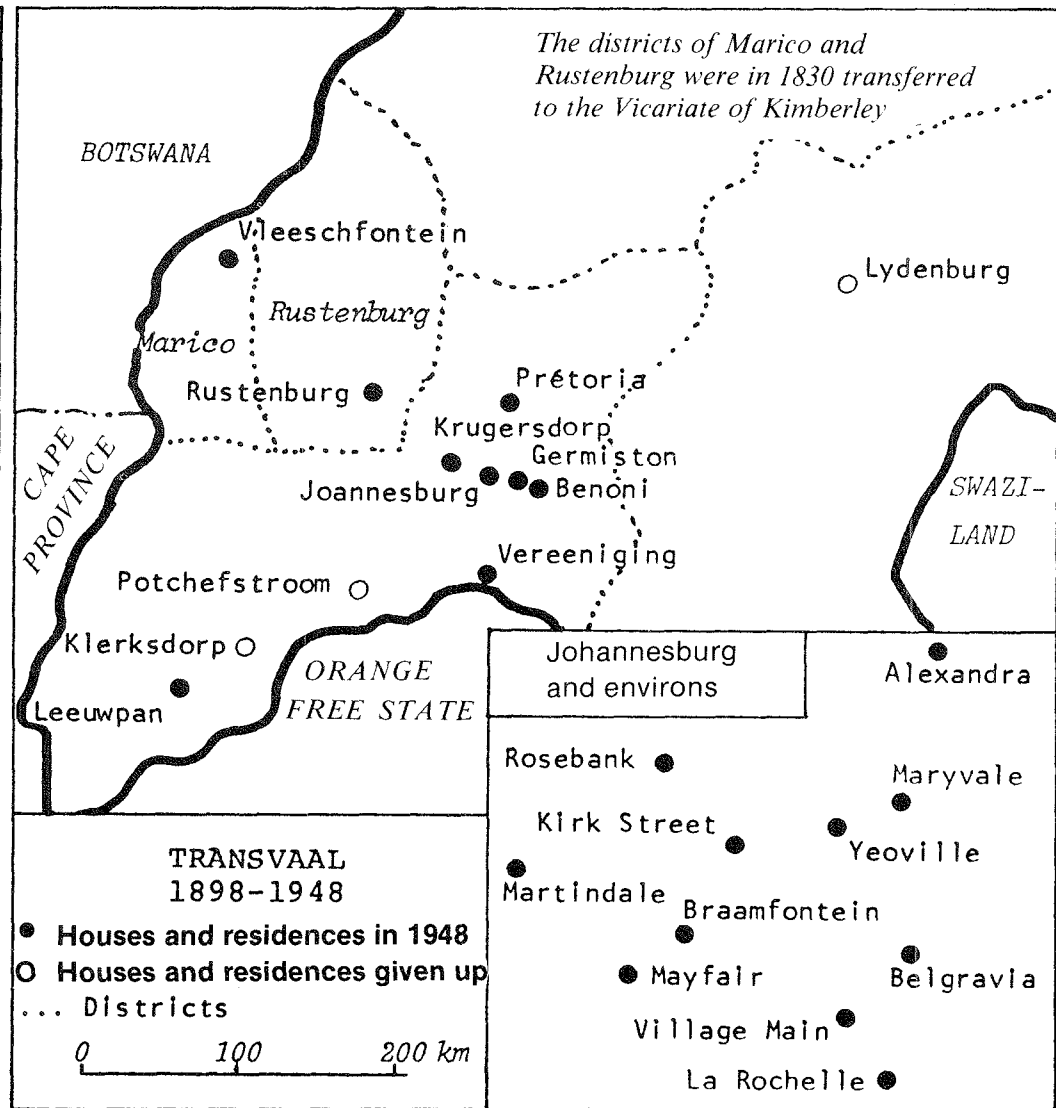
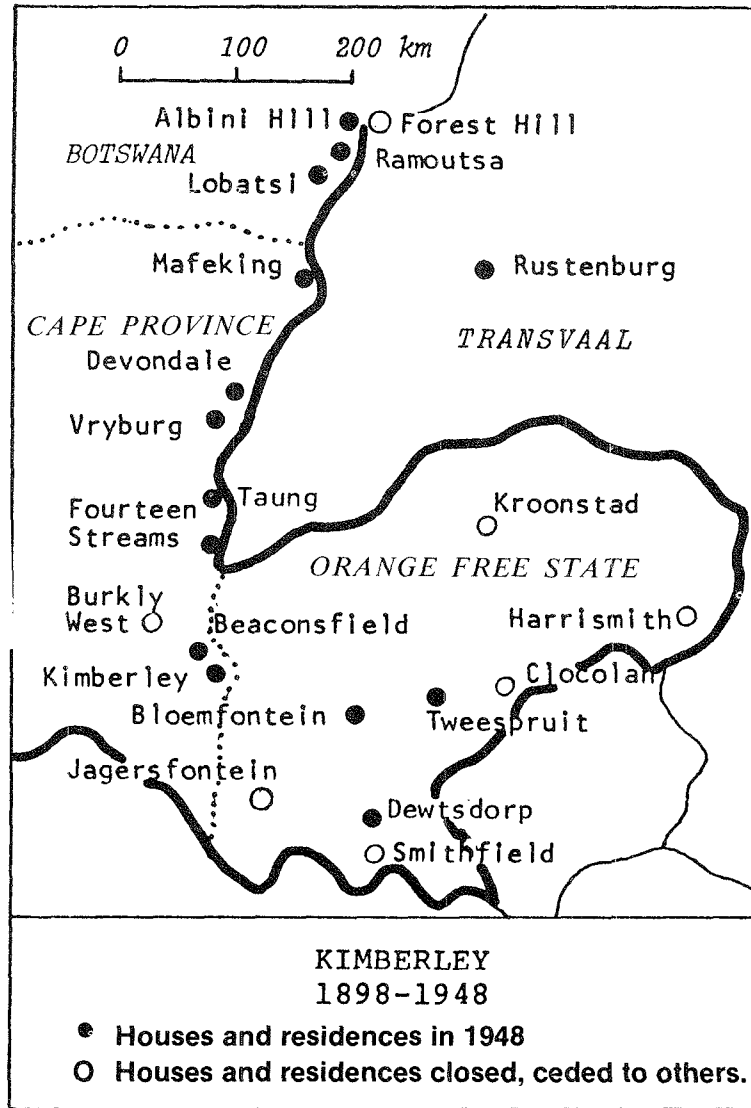
In Kimberley, Father Joseph Morin was looking after the 1500 faithful who belonged to the cathedral church of St. Mary. Together with his confreres, he was also serving the natives and the Indians of the city as well as 25 stations for Catholics in the surrounding area. Some of the latter were quite distant from the diamond city. The centre of Beaconsfield, which had been served by the Oblates for quite some time, was now entrusted to the secular clergy.

At Bloemfontein in the centre of the Orange Free State, two Oblates and a secular priest were serving the parish of the Sacred Heart and three other churches in the city: there were some 1000 Catholic Whites and 200 natives. They were also looking after some thirty stations, ministering thereby to a total of about 1450 Catholic Whites and 300 natives.

At Jagersfontein, to the south of the Orange Free State, one missionary was serving the 95 Catholics of the city and three neighboring stations. Two missionaries were working at Kroonstad in the north Orange Free State: one was serving the 175 Catholics in this place plus eight stations besides; the other ministered to the Catholics at Harrismith and to those dispersed throughout the whole northwest of that region.

In the north of the Vicariate of Kimberley, Father Frédéric Porte, assisted by Brother Joseph Cyris, had been

⁵² Cf. "Vicariat du Sud-Afrique", in *Personnel O.M.I.*, December 1922, pp. 29-30.





Oblates gathered at Taung for a retreat in 1922. From l. to r. — seated: Brother Joseph Kribs, Fathers Frédéric Porte and Jacques Schang; standing: Brothers Johannes Kürten, Joseph Otrzonsek, Joseph Cyris and Jean-Baptiste Kock.

serving the mission at Taung for 27 years. A Christian community of some 1000 native Bechuanas was flourishing there: several hundreds of them lived near the church, while the rest were dispersed here and there over a vast area in which there were not as yet any chapels. Farther north was the mission of Mafeking, which was served by Father Daniel Durand. It had some 350 Catholics, a good number of whom were Indians, Metis and Blacks.

Johannesburg, the main city of Transvaal, was the most important mission centre of all. This city, along with its hundred populous suburbs, had about 280,000 people of whom 150,000 were Whites. Here there were colleges, schools, convents and other Catholic institutions. The Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Charles Cox, O.M.I., and three missionaries were serving these works and the cathedral parish which had some 3300

Catholics. A dozen missionaries were serving the churches attached to the cathedral, the most important of which were Belgravia (2100), Mayfair (1500) and La Rochelle (1104). Among the native groups, that served by the church at Doornfontein was one of the largest with its 450 members.

Outside the city of Johannesburg, the Oblates in Transvaal were serving Pretoria, which including the ministry at St. Therese and a leper colony of 900, 150 of whom were Catholic. Father Camille De Hovre was looking after it. They were also looking after the posts of Germiston, Potchesfroom, Klerksdorp and Lydenburg.⁵³ They were also at work in the native mission of Vleeschfontein which was located on the sole native reserve that existed in the Vicariate of Transvaal.

The ecclesiastical territories in 1923

In March 1921, the two Apostolic Vicariates of Kimberley and Transvaal counted, out of a total population of 1,950,000, only 24,348 Catholics. The Protestant sects, who had arrived in these territories long before the Catholics did, had 683,000 adherents. This left more than one million two hundred thousand non-Christians to be evangelized.⁵⁴ Sensitive to this situation, especially in regard to the mass of non-Christian natives, the Oblates of South Africa made a stirring appeal at the 1920 General Chapter for a larger number of missionaries.⁵⁵ The Church at large was concerned about this situation. In December 1922, the Holy See established an Apostolic Delegation for South Africa and proceeded to an important restructuring of the ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the whole of South Africa; at

⁵³ Cf. C. COX, O.M.I., "Vicarius Kimberliensis (Kimberley)", an excerpt, in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 440-441; A. PERBAL, O.M.I., "Visite canonique de nos oeuvres africaines", *ibidem*, 56 (1922), pp. 245-319, 756-850. 116 Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux were also at work in the Apostolic Vicariates of Kimberley and Transvaal.

⁵⁴ Cf. C. COX, O.M.I., *art. cit.* in *Missions*, 56(1922), p. 441; "Vicariatus Transvaalensis (Transvaal)", *ibidem*, p. 440.

⁵⁵ F. PORTE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Révérend Père Vicaire du Sud-Afrique", *ibidem*, 55 (1921), pp. 47-48.

the same time, it invited new missionary communities to serve in this land.⁵⁶

In the territories of the Orange Free State and Transvaal which had been entrusted to the Oblates, three new Apostolic Prefectures were created and confided to other religious Institutes. By the rescript of June 12, 1923, the eastern part of Transvaal became the Apostolic Prefecture of Lydenburg and was entrusted to the Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who were of German nationality.⁵⁷ On the same date, the southern district of the Vicariate of Kimberley became an integral part of the Apostolic Prefecture of Gariep, established further south, and was entrusted to the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, also of German nationality.⁵⁸ Lastly, the eastern part of the Kimberley Vicariate on November 16, 1923, became the Apostolic Prefecture of Kroonstad⁵⁹, and was entrusted to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, it too of German nationality.

The Oblates' apostolic field was considerably reduced by these divisions; nevertheless, it still remained immense in comparison to the number of available apostolic laborers.

Two Oblate religious Vicariates

From the outset the Apostolic Vicariate of the Orange Free State, referred to after 1903 as Kimberley, and the Apos-

⁵⁶ Archbishop Bernard Gijswijk, O.P., the first Apostolic Delegate, arrived in South Africa in April 1923 and resided in Bloemfontein. His successor, Archbishop Martin H. Lucas, S.V.D., appointed in 1945, took up residence in Pretoria. The north part of the Vicariate of Transvaal was in 1910 made into an Apostolic Prefecture and entrusted to the Benedictines.

⁵⁷ Cf. Rescript of June 12, 1923, in *Missions*, 57 (1923), pp. 609-610. The new Prefecture took in the districts of Lydenburg, Barberton, Carolina, Middelburg, Bethel, Ermelo, Piet Retief, Wakkerstroom and Standerton.

⁵⁸ Cf. Apostolic Letter of June 12, 1923, in *Missions*, 57 (1923), pp. 743-5. The districts given up were the following: Jagersfontein, Rouxville, Smithfield and Bethulia. Cf. Y. SACCADAS, O.M.I., "Rapport du Père Vicaire du Sud-Afrique", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 608.

⁵⁹ Cf. Apostolic Letter of November 26, 1923, in *Missions*, 57 (1923), Kimberley the civil districts of Kroonstad, Vredefort, Heilbron, Lindley, Senekal, Bethlehem, Ficksburg, Harrismith and Vrede.

tolic Prefecture of Transvaal, which had become the Apostolic Vicariate of Transvaal in 1904, each constituted an Oblate religious Vicariate of which the Vicars Apostolic were also the religious superiors. To promote Oblate religious interests, the General Administration in 1907 merged these two religious Vicariates into one under the title of Vicariate of Missions of South Africa and appointed Father Frédéric Porte its Vicar of



Frédéric Porte (1856-1926)
Began the missions in Bechuanaland (1893-1926)
Vicar of Missions of the Vicariates of the Orange Free State
and of Transvaal (1907-1926)

Missions.⁶⁰ This merger of the Oblate religious of two Apostolic Vicariates under the direction of one Vicar of Missions separate from the Vicariates occasioned a number of conflicts which were submitted to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. These conflicts were settled by drawing up a contract

⁶⁰ General Council, Session of March 9, 1907.

between the two parties, namely, the ecclesiastical authority and the religious authority, which clearly spelled out the areas of jurisdiction belonging to each.⁶¹

In 1924, in response to a request from the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, the General Administration entrusted the works of the Apostolic Vicariate of Kimberley to the Oblates of the Province of Germany.⁶² Three years later, in 1927, the General Administration divided the Vicariat of Missions of South Africa and again established two Vicariates of Missions, that of Kimberley and that of Transvaal. The former was put under the direction of Father Hermann Meysing, O.M.I., the latter under that of Bishop David O'Leary, O.M.I.⁶³

The Vicariate of Kimberley from 1927 to 1947

When it was established on April 12, 1927, the Vicariate of Missions of Kimberley had 19 Oblates (12 Fathers and 7 Brothers) and 5 main missions. It was serving a population of 5501 Catholics, 3094 of whom were Europeans and 2437 were natives.⁶⁴

The arrival of missionaries from the Province of Germany after 1924 made it possible to open new centres, especially in regard to the natives. Thus the Oblates soon established several native missions and stations: St. Boniface (Kimberley), Devondale, Fourteen Streams, Beaconsfield (St. Peter's),

⁶¹ Cf. above, p. , footnote 35.

⁶² Letter of Archbishop Francisco Marchetti-Selvaggiani, Secretary of the S. C. of Propaganda Fide, to the Superior General, October 25, 1924. Cf. letter of Archbishop Döntenwill, Superior General, to the Oblates of Kimberley, November 21, 1924, in *Missions*, 58 (1924), pp. 226-227.

⁶³ Father Hermann Meysing (1886-1963): administrator of the Vicariate of Kimberley, November 5, 1924; Vicar Apostolic of Kimberley, December 19, 1929; Archbishop of Bloemfontein, January 11, 1951; retired in 1954. Bishop David O'Leary, O.M.I. (1880-1958): Vicar Apostolic of Transvaal, May 13, 1925; retired in 1950.

⁶⁴ H. MEYSING, O.M.I., "Vicariat de Kimberley", in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 251.

Mafeking (St. Mary's), all located in Cape Province; Tweespruit, Dewetsdorp and Assisi, located in the Orange Free State. Among the natives of Bechuanaland, they developed the missionary effort that had been scarcely begun by opening new missions: Albin Hill, Khale, Lobatsi, Ramoutsa and others. And lastly, in 1936 they opened a mission at Rustenburg, in the district of Marico and Rustenburg of Transvaal, which had been joined to the Apostolic Vicariate of Kimberley in 1930.

During the world war of 1939-1945, the Vicariate of Kimberley lost eight missionaries and was cut off from all missionary reinforcements that could have come from Europe. Fifteen of its missionaries were put into internment camps from 1940 onwards, some for several months and others for several years. In spite of these reductions in personnel, the Vicariate was able to maintain its 20 main missions and even increase the number of its secondary stations: these latter passed from 31 in 1938 to 108 in 1947. The number of Catholics in 1947 was 29,514, of whom 3,384 were catechumens.

In 1947, the Vicariate had 33 Fathers and 18 Brothers.⁶⁵

The Vicariate of Transvaal from 1927 to 1947

In 1926, there were 27 Oblates in Transvaal who were distributed over 17 main centres, serving quasi parishes and missions, 28 churches and chapels in all. They gave spiritual care to 31 schools, 8 colleges, a residential school, an orphanage and a sanatorium.⁶⁶

Bishop David O'Leary, Apostolic Vicar in Transvaal since 1925, gave a vigorous thrust to the missions addressed to the natives and the coloured people. About two thirds of the almost six to seven hundred thousand natives of the Vicariat were living in the midst of Whites, either as domestic servants

⁶⁵ Vicars of Missions were: Bishop Hermann Meysing, O.M.I. (1927-1935); Hermann Janssen (1935-1947).

⁶⁶ Cf. Y. SACCADAS, O.M.I., "Rapport du Père Vicaire du Sud-Afrique", in *Missions*, 61 (1927), pp. 600, 605.

or as otherwise hired by the Whites in the city. The Vicariate included only one limited quarter, to the northwest of Pretoria, where the natives were living their normal existence with their chiefs and customs.⁶⁷ The Prelate had to keep in mind also the white population which was rapidly increasing in the large cities, especially in Johannesburg and Pretoria; hence he was obliged to build churches and parishes to serve these Catholics and to increase the number of priests who would minister to them. In 1926 he founded the *Catholic Federation*, an organization that was very active and was in 1934 replaced by the Catholic Action movement.

In 1947, the Vicariate consisted of four districts: the district of East Rand, a developing region, where eleven Oblates were working in four parishes and main missions; the heavily populated district of Johannesburg, which had thirty-one Oblates in 15 parishes and missions; the district of Pretoria, where eleven Oblates were working in six parishes and other stations; and the district of West Rand, in which fourteen Oblates were serving eight parishes or missions. Besides these four districts, the missionaries were serving two mission centres: Bloemhof, with its many native stations; and Vleeschfontein, a native mission which had reverted to the care of the Oblates of Transvaal in the early 1940s.

The Vicars Apostolic had to appeal to other religious priestly Congregations in order to provide for the needs of the rapidly growing white population. Thus the Redemptorists came in 1912, the Dominicans in 1916, the Servites of Mary in 1931, and the Paulists in 1938.

In 1947, the Vicariate of Missions had 77 Fathers, 5 scholastics and 6 Brothers. A novitiate was opened at Germiston in 1934. Before this date, novices and scholastics were sent

⁶⁷ Cf. *Missions*, 65 (1931), pp. 175-176: the situation of the Blacks in Transvaal, according to a letter of Bishop David O'Leary, O.M.I.

to formation houses in Europe.⁶⁸ In 1947, the Apostolic Vicariate counted 75,600 Catholics: of these, 33,000 were Whites and 4100 catechumens.

IV – *The Vicariate of Missions of Windhoek*

First establishments

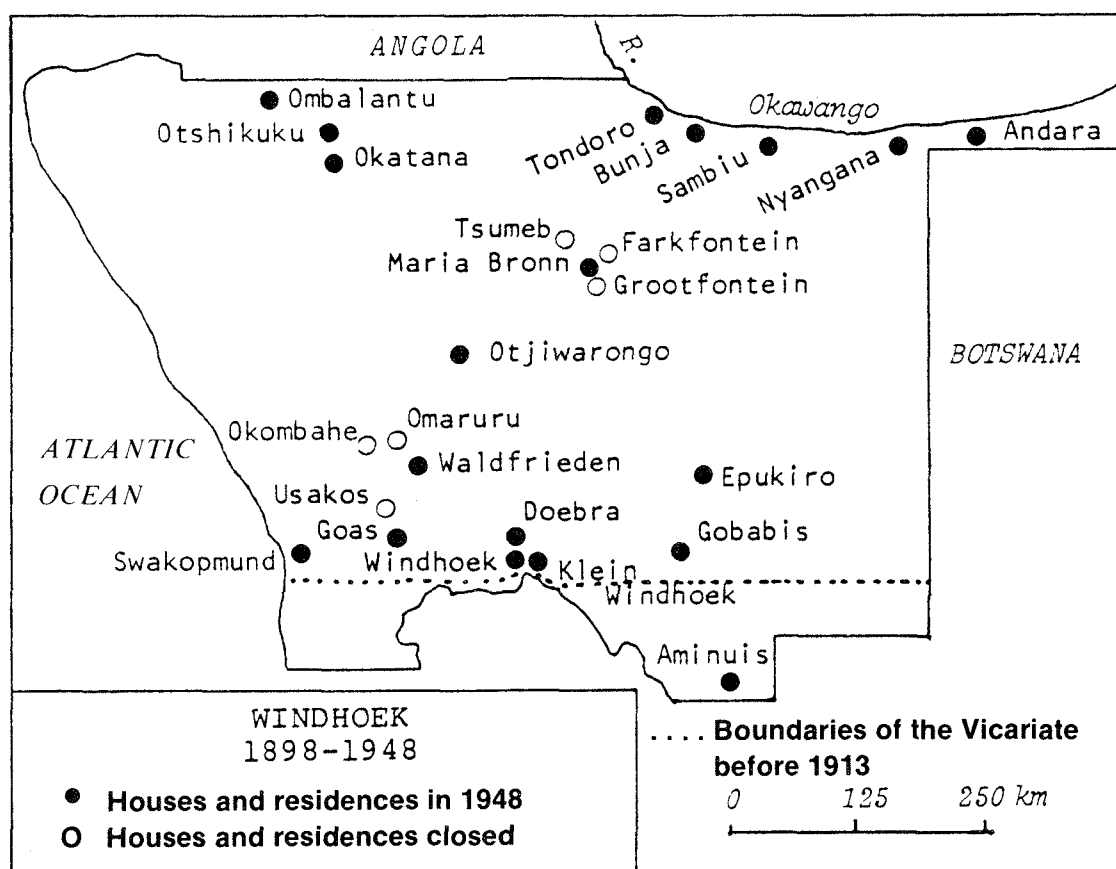
The Oblates in charge of the northern part of Southwest Africa (Namibia today) established themselves at Windhoek in 1896. Step by step, they spread out to the different regions and peoples of their missionary territory.

In the beginning, the Government authorities restricted their activity to the colonists and European military, and forbade them to evangelize the natives in the parts of the Protectorate that had for a long time already been penetrated by Protestant missionaries. Only the people along the Okavango River in the northeastern part of the land could be evangelized by them.⁶⁹

The Oblates of Windhoek therefore began by serving the Whites and, as opportunity permitted, the natives. Missions were founded one after the other. Three posts were opened in 1899: Klein Windhoek, where they looked after an orphanage for coloured children; Swakopmund, an important city of the land, where they ministered to Whites; and Aminuis, where they were military chaplains. This latter post in 1902 took on a mission — the first — to the Bechuanas. Between 1902 and 1905, missions were established at Usakos and Doebrä and a second one among the Bechuanas was also opened. The latter

⁶⁸ The first native Oblate of the Vicariate, Boniface Legwate, was ordained priest in 1948. Vicars of Missions were: Yves Saccadas (1927-1936), Arthur Delport (1936-1939), Louis Peron (1939-1946), Patrick Whelan (1946-1948).

⁶⁹ Cf. "Rapport de la préfecture apostolique de la Cimbébasie inférieure (Damaraland)", in *Missions*, 36 (1898), p. 414.



was at Epukiro and quickly flourished, in spite of its complete destruction during the Herreros war of 1904 - 1906.⁷⁰

During this time, the superior of the mission, Father Bernard Hermann took the direction of Ovamboland and opened a mission at Ongandjera. At the same time, he evangelized the soldiers who were stationed in the localities through which he passed. The Ovambo chief at Ongandjera had promised Father Aloysius Schoch that he would receive the missionaries. The three painful expeditions undertaken in 1897, 1899 and 1900 to reach this post were unfortunately not successful. Each of them was plagued by the diseases that ravaged the draft animals during the journey.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Cf. "Rapport du R. P. Auguste Nachtwey, O.M.I., Préfet apostolique (de Cimbébasie)", *ibidem*, 46 (1908), p. 82.

⁷¹ Cf. J. J. FILLIUNG, O.M.I., "Essais de fondation d'une mission parmi les Ovambos", *ibidem*, 48 (1910), pp. 463-465.

In 1906, the Oblates of Windhoek already numbered 29 Fathers and 17 Brothers. The colony had 1100 Catholics, 211 of whom were natives and 407 catechumens.⁷²

Among the Herreros and the Kaffirs

In 1905, the missionaries were authorized to devote themselves freely among the different populations of the country.⁷³ Mission posts were soon opened among the Herreros and the Kaffirs in the south and centre of the country: Omaruru and Okombahe in 1906, Gobabis in 1907, and Grootfontein in 1909. Bishop Augustine Nachtwey, O.M.I., the Apostolic Prefect, could in 1907 say that "the first step in evangelizing the Herreros and Kaffirs has been taken" and "after ten years of difficult labor and preparation, we are on the threshold of a new era."⁷⁴ In 1913, two other missions were opened at Tsumeb and Kokasib.

Foundation on the Okavango: setback of 1903

After the 1897, 1899 and 1900 failures to establish a mission in Ovamboland, the missionaries in 1903 took the road north and set out this time towards the north-east in order to contact the people who were reserved for them in the Okavango valley.

Fathers Hermann Biegner, Joseph Filliung, Louis Hermandung and Brothers Joseph Bast and Anselm Reinhart left on January 12, 1903, with everything needed to found a mission. After much fatigue and unheard of trials, they reached the banks of the Okavango on March 18. Chief Himarua, who had in writing promised to receive them, now reneged on his word. All negotiations with this devious man proved to be futile. Approaches made to Nampardi, a neighboring chief some 70 kilometres downstream of the Okavango, resulted in nothing positive either. To make matters even worse, Father

⁷² "Rapport du R.P. Auguste Nachtwey, O.M.I.", *ibidem*, 46 (1908), p. 93.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, 46 (1908), p. 83.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 46 (1908), p. 92.

Biegner, laid low by a terrible fever, died on April 16 and had to be buried on the banks of the river. Since they were the only Whites in the area and found that their lives were threatened, the other missionaries had no choice except to turn back. The return journey was as difficult as was the journey there. Brother Reinhart, also a victim of this fever, died the following August after they had returned to Windhoek.⁷⁵

Resumption of 1907-1910

The 1904-1906 war between the Herreros and the Germans suspended new efforts in the direction of the Okavango. Immediately afterwards, in 1907, a trip made by Fathers Francis Krist and Louis Lauer to gain information resulted in Chief Libebe at Andara giving assurance that he would receive the missionaries. A second founding expedition was organized, this time from Grootfontein, the end of a railway line that had just been extended from Swakopmund and where a mission had just been opened. The caravan left on August 22 but had to return after it had made some 130 kilometres: the route was entirely impassible because of the torrential rains.

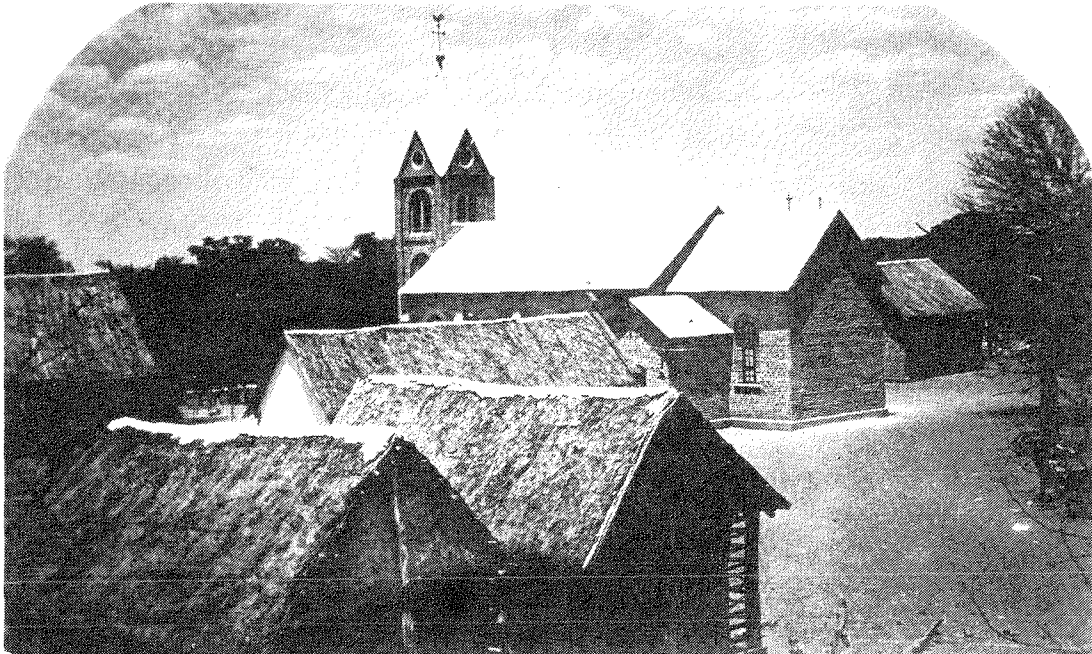
The expedition was undertaken again the following November. After a most exhausting journey, it arrived at its destination, at Andara, on January 6, 1909. The team included Fathers Lauer and Krist, Brother John Langehenke, and a German layman. Mr. Heer Kurz. While Father Lauer and Mr. Kurz were arranging things at Andara, Father Krist and Brother Langehenke returned to Grootfontein for provisions. Father Krist, struck down with black fever, died en route.

Father Joseph Gotthardt was in charge of the return expedition. Leaving Grootfontein at the end of April 1909, he and his companions, Brothers Langehenke and George Russ reached Andara on May 19. They were stunned to learn then that Father Lauer and Mr. Kurz, who had stayed alone at

⁷⁵ Cf. J. J. FILLIUNG, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, *ibidem*, 48 (1910), pp. 465-488.

Andara, had both died in March of the fever. Father Gotthardt, faced with the exorbitant demands of Chief Libebe, who proved to be an inconstant and greedy person, decided to return to Grootfontein.

The foundation of the first mission on the Okavango was accomplished only in the following year, in May 1910, at Nyangana where Jangana was chief. It was made by Fathers Gotthardt and Augustin Biefert and Brothers John Rau, George Russ and Conrad Heckmann. In 1913, a second mission was opened at Andara, where Libebe was still chief; he had regretted his ill treatment of the missionaries and had repaired this wrong.



The mission of Andara in 1938. It was one of the first missions opened on the banks of the Okavango in the Vicariate of Windhoek.

The founding of the missions on the Okavango, barely sketched above in regard to its dramatic and painful history, is one of the most heroic episodes in the history of the Oblate missions.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, 48 (1910), pp. 465-488; E. KLAEYLE, O.M.I., Apostolic Prefect, "Rapport annuel sur la Préfecture apostolique de la Cimbébasie inférieure, 1er avril 1909 - 31 mars 1910", *ibidem*, 49 (1911), pp. 19-33; A.

Among the Ovambos

There still remained the Ovambo people who were living in the north-west part of the country, the most fertile and populated area of the Protectorate. The missionaries had for a long time now been dreaming of making an establishment there. A foundation in this region was urgent if the religious practice and faith of a good number of Ovambos who had been working in the mines outside their home territory, had been converted and then returned, was to be maintained. The Government of the Union of South Africa, master of South-west Africa from 1920 onwards, was at first stubbornly opposed. After long negotiations, permission was granted to evangelize one sole zone of the area; the two others were reserved to the Anglicans and Danish Protestants who had been in that region for some considerable time.

The first mission was opened in 1924, at Ukuambi (Otshikuku today) and was placed under the patronage of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. A second one was founded the year following at Ombalantu. Some years later, in 1928, the Government granted the Catholic religion freedom to spread over the entire territory of Ovamboland.⁷⁷ A third mission was opened at Ukuanjana in 1932.

With the establishment of the missions in Ovamboland, the Oblates of Windhoek were present in every part of their mission territory. On May 11, 1926, the Holy See raised the Apostolic Prefecture of Cimbebasia to the rank of an Apostolic Vicariate with the name of Windhoek; and it kept at its head Bishop Joseph Gotthardt, O.M.I., who was now the Vicar Apostolic.⁷⁸

PERBAL, O.M.I., "Histoire d'une fondation", *ibidem*, 57 (1923), pp. 415-422; "Ceux qui ont semé dans les larmes aux bords de l'Okavango", *ibidem*, 69 (1935), pp. 343-350; AROMI, 1960, p. 89.

⁷⁷ J. GOTTHARDT, O.M.I., "Rapport du Rme Vicaire de Windhoek", in *Missions*, 61 (1927), pp. 635-636.

⁷⁸ Cf. Brief of Pius XI, May 11, 1926, in *Missions*, pp. 256-259. The Apostolic Prefecture had been created under the title of Lower Cimbébasia; in 1921

The ministry

The Oblates were accomplishing a quasi-parochial ministry among a white population that until 1912 consisted nearly exclusively of Germans; afterwards, there was also a growing number of white South Africans. In the east of the Vicariate, near the Kalahari desert, they were evangelizing the Bechuanas; in the central part of the country, they were evangelizing the Herreros and the Damaras or Kaffirs; in the south, the Hottentots; in the north, the Bantu tribes on the Okavango and Ovamboland; they were also evangelizing several thousand Boschiman nomads. The language differences — German, English, Afrikaans among the Whites, Nama, Otjiherero and several Bantu dialects among the natives — made their ministry particularly difficult and often was an obstacle to changing Fathers from one mission to the other.

The Oblate Brothers, whose numbers were almost equal to that of the Fathers, looked after the needs of transport and did other work: construction, gardening, cultivation and farming; some of them also were in education in schools for the Blacks. "If the Mission has been able to grow materially in quite a satisfactory way, this is largely due to the devotedness and skill of our good Brothers."⁸⁰ In the area of transport, MIVA was precious.⁸¹

The number of Catholics, only several hundred at the beginning of the mission, rose steadily: 1100 in 1906, 5100 in 1925, 12,128 in 1938, 16,601 in 1946.⁸²

it became simply Cimbébasia; in 1926, when raised to the rank of Apostolic Vicariate, it received the name of *Windhoek*.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 277.

⁸¹ Cf. above, p. 60.

⁸² Cf. *Missions*, 46 (1908), p. 93; J. GOTTHARDT, O.M.I., "Rapport du Rme Vicaire de Windhoek", *ibidem*, 61 (1927), p. 637; "Rapport du Vicariat

In January 1947, the Vicariate had one Bishop, 35 Fathers, one scholastic and 32 Brothers, distributed over 7 residences and 18 mission posts. The Christian community of Windhoek had already given the Church its first priest, Gerard Molelekwa, an Oblate, who was ordained in 1942.⁸³

V – *The Vicariate of Missions of Ipamu*

Origin of the mission

The Province of Belgium wanted a mission territory in the Belgian Congo (Zaire) both in order to exercise its zeal more widely and also to promote recruiting in Belgium. After being authorized to do so by the General Administration, it contacted Bishop Sylvain Van Hee, S.J., the Vicar Apostolic of Kwango: the latter offered them the opportunity to evangelize a portion of his Vicariate. On March 5, 1931, Cardinal William Van Rossum, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, ratified the agreement reached between Bishop Van Hee and the General Administration of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.⁸⁴

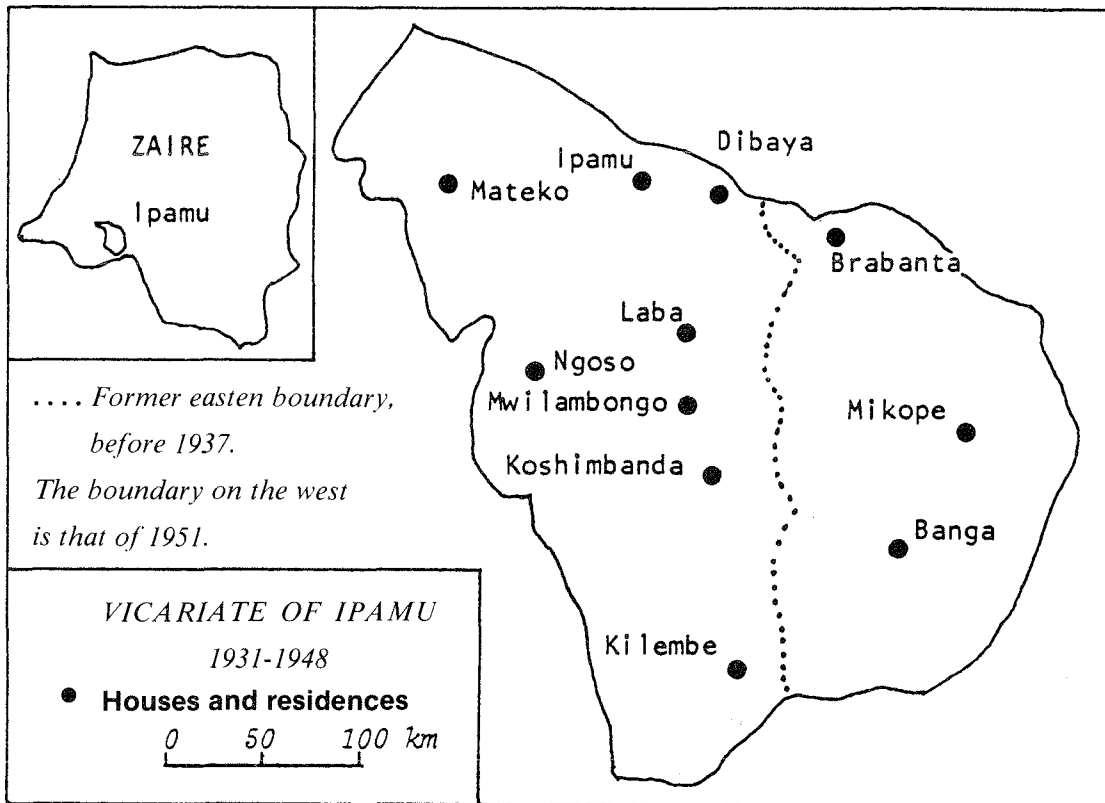
The mission entrusted to the Oblates was located in the civil province of Kasai and extended from the Kamtsha River to the Loange River. There were seven tribes in this territory: the Badinga, Balori, Bangoli, Babunda, Bashilele, Bawongo and Bapende; all of them belonged to the Bantu race. The

de Windhoek au Chapitre général de 1947”, *ibidem*, 75 (1948), p. 103. The *Catholic Directory of South Africa 1947* gives the following: 18,280 Catholics, of whom 1679 are catechumens. Table 1.

It should be mentioned that during the 1939-1945 war, “none of the mission members had to suffer even a temporary restriction on his freedom” and that “the economic situation was excellent.” J. GOTTHARDT, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Missions*, 75 (1948), pp. 100, 101.

⁸³ Vicars of Missions were: Bernard Peter Hermann (1897-1901), Augustine Nachtwey (1901-1909), Joseph Schemmer (1909-1910), Eugene Klaeyle (1909-1920), Joseph Gotthardt (1921-1961).

⁸⁴ Cf. P. PRAET, O.M.I., *Note sur une fondation des Oblats au Congo Belge*, p. 1. Oblate General Archives, Foundation file, Ipamu.



Jesuits had already established three missions among them: Ipamu, in the north, in 1922; in the centre, Mwilambongo, in 1923; in the south, Kilembe, in 1926.⁸⁵

Father Eudore Hubert, a missionary in Basutoland, came to Ipamu on July 12, 1931. On the following September 23, Bishop Van Hee appointed him superior of Ipamu and vicarial delegate for the territory entrusted to the Oblates. In October, Fathers Jean-Baptiste Adam and Edmond Renson joined him from Belgium and, a short while later, Father Joseph Picard came from Basutoland. In 1932, Belgium sent six other missionaries and a third Father, Alphonse Bossart, came from Basutoland. The year following, the Jesuits left this territory for good and the Oblates took over the apostolic work that was in place.

⁸⁵ P. PRAET, O.M.I., "Province de Belgique et de Hollande", in *Rapport sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre générale de 1932*, p. 58.



Eudore Hubert (1893-1962)
First superior of the mission entrusted
to the Oblates in the Belgian Congo (1931-1938)

Growth and development

The mission at Kilembe had been temporarily abandoned by the Jesuits because of lack of missionary personnel; it was now again taken up by the Oblates. Two new central missions were soon opened: Ngoso in the western region and Koshimbanda in the centre of a very populated area; these were to share the work of the missions at Mwilambongo and Kilembe. Secondary stations with schools increased in number. In 1937, the mission had 17,000 baptized persons and 15,719 catechumens: this out of total population of 320,000 people in the region.⁸⁷

Two events then occurred that affected the mission. On April 13, 1937, the Holy See raised the mission to the rank of

⁸⁷ Cf. A. BOSSART, O.M.I., "Premier rapport officiel, en date du 15 septembre 1937. Préfecture d'Ipamu", in *Missions*, 72 (1938), p. 63.

an Apostolic Prefecture, named Ipamu; and the Holy See also considerably increased its territory by adding to it, on the west, the civil district of Basongo (which was detached from the Apostolic Vicariate of Haut-Casaï) and, on the east, the civil district of Njadi (detached from the Apostolic Vicariate of Kwango).⁸⁸ The missionaries soon established themselves in the new territory that had been confided to them. In the Basongo district, they took possession of the already existing mission at Brabanta; a little later, they opened a second one at Banga, then a third one at Mikope. In the Njadi district, they were at the mission of Mateko.

Evangelization

When the Oblates took over the missions of Ipamu, a movement to conversion was clearly in progress. The three central missions that had been opened then counted about 7000 Christians and 10,000 catechumens. In 1932, the Provincial of Belgium could say: "A territory rich in promise has been entrusted to us. The harvest there is ripe, quite ripe."⁸⁹ The missionaries continued working energetically and in the midst of consolations. Msgr. Bossart, the Apostolic Prefect, in 1937 assessed as follows the response of the Ipamu peoples to the missionaries' work: "The Babunda and Badinga of the Khamatsha are inclined towards Catholicism and the results have been marvellous among them. Others, the Bawongo, are not hostile but we have only had little success among them. There still are, however, tribes or portions of tribes who nourish a latent hostility towards the Europeans and among whom the influence of sorcerers and immoral practices are a great

⁸⁸ The district of Basongo, an area of 20,000 sq. km., had 20,000 people, 2000 of whom were Catholic. It was officially part of the Prefecture from July 1, 1937 onwards. Cf. *Missions*, (71) 1947, pp. 217, 413-414. The boundary was altered somewhat on April 25, 1939. Cf. *ibidem*, 38 (1939), pp. 548-549.

⁸⁹ P. PRAET, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, in *Rapports sur les Provinces et Vicariats . . . présentés au Chapitre général de 1932*, p. 59.

obstacle to evangelization.”⁹⁰ At the time, “the Christian population consisted of nearly 20,000 baptized persons. There were seven central missions and 21 secondary stations. The total population was nearly 350,000.”⁹¹

The work in each centre was generally divided among three missionaries. Besides the general direction of the work, the mission director was responsible for the admission, instruction and accepting adult or school catechumens for baptism, and he was pastorally in charge of the mission’s Christians. The itinerant missionary — the bush-rover — looked after the schools in the villages and the nuclei of Christians dispersed here and there, and was in contact with the pagans in their home milieu. The director of the central school supervised the teaching and especially had to wield an educating influence upon the teachers.⁹²

In 1947, the mission had 24 churches and 334 chapels in the bush wilderness; 588 primary and elementary schools with an enrolment of 21,869 pupils, a normal school at Mwilambongo with 80 students, a school for catechists at Ipamu, and a minor seminary which had been founded at Ipamu in 1947 itself. The missionaries numbered 41 Fathers, 3 Brothers and one scholastic.⁹³

This Oblate mission in the Congo, which in 1932 had been officially attached to the Province of Belgium, was made an independent Vicariate of Missions on May 23, 1947. It retained a twinning relationship with the Province of Belgium,

⁹⁰ A. BOSSART, O.M.I., *Préfecture apostolique d’Ipamu erigée le 13 avril 1937*, p. 3. Archives Deschâtelets. Ottawa.

⁹¹ Ben-Awis KABONGO, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁹² J.-B. ADAM, O.M.I., “Rapport sur le vicariat apostolique d’Ipamu au Chapitre général de 1953”, in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 502-504.

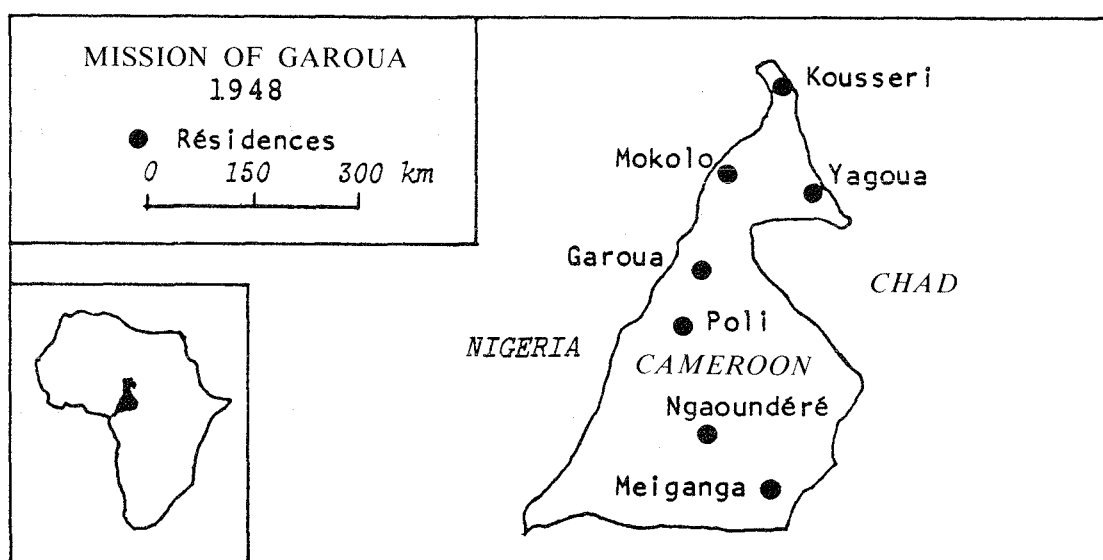
⁹³ D. ALBERS, O.M.I., “Rapport sur la Province de Belgique, de 1938 à 1947”, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), pp. 422-423. “In 15 years the Province was able to give 56 missionaries to the Vicariate of Ipamu”, *ibidem*, 74 (1947), p. 428. The Provincial Vicars were: Eudore Hubert (1932-1938), Alphonse Bossart (1938-1947). Vicar of Missions: Jean-Baptiste Adam (1947-1957).

such as was defined by the 1947 General Chapter.⁹⁴ On February 12, 1948, the Holy See raised the Apostolic Prefecture of Ipamu to the rank of an Apostolic Vicariate. Bishop Alphonse Bossart, O.M.I., who had been Apostolic Prefect till then, was now appointed its Vicar Apostolic.

VI – *The Mission of Garoua (Cameroon)*

Foundation

On March 5, 1946, the Holy See entrusted to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate a vast field of apostolate in the heart of Africa, at first referred to as the Mission of Cameroon-Chad. The territory had been detached from the Apostolic Vicariate of Fouban and included the northern part of French Cameroon, from the 6th parallel south to Lake Chad, so that it encompassed a large portion of Chad. Father Hilaire Balmès, the Vicar General of the Congregation, was a fervent promoter of this project and had carefully prepared it. In 1946, he selected fourteen Fathers and two Brothers from the Provinces of France to found this new mission.



⁹⁴ *Missions*, 74 (1947), p. 354; L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., Admin. circ. 177, September 8, 1947, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 5, p. 37.

Father Yves Plumey, the superior of the mission, arrived in mid-August at Fort Lamy, a city of 25,000 natives and 600 Whites. Father Gabriel Renault arrived shortly afterwards. On November 5 the other missionaries, in the company of Father Plumey, came to Garoua, Cameroon, where some 200 Christians gave them a joyful welcome. Besides Fort Lamy, missionaries were immediately assigned to two other places: Garoua itself and Ngaoundere.

On January 9, 1947, however, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, when officially promulgating the mission's boundaries, made an important change to its territory: the area of Chad was detached from it and confided to the Jesuits. On the same date, it raised the mission entrusted to the Oblates to the rank of Apostolic Prefecture and appointed Father Yves Plumey its Apostolic Prefect.⁹⁵

Population and missionary work

The northern part of Cameroon which had been entrusted to the Oblates was cut off from the rest of the country by a thick forest and had already long ago been invaded by Arabs called Foulbes who continued to dominate the autotochtonous population. The latter have their origins in the Sudan and consist of different social groups, each with a language that is clearly distinct from that of its neighbor.⁹⁶ These natives, numbering about 700,000, who were considered to have been won over by Islam, remained in large numbers attached to their original religions and were not closed to the Gospel.

This northern part of Cameroon had not as yet — or only scarcely — been touched by the Church. One sole mission had been opened in 1935 by a priest of the Sacred Heart

⁹⁵ Cf. AROMI, 1946, pp. 38-39, 53, 98; 1947, p. 13; Letter of the S.C. of Propaganda Fide to Father Hilaire Balmès, Vicar General, January 13, 1947, in *Missions*, 74 (1947), pp. 350-351; H. JOUNEAUX, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le Vicariat de Garoua (Cameroun) au Chapitre général de 1953", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 510-511.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 514-515.

of Saint-Quentin, from the Vicariate of Foumban; it was closed, however, when the missionary died in 1940. From then on, one Father came alone each year from the south to make a swift visit to the administrative centres of the North.⁹⁷

From the very outset, the pastoral orientation adopted by Msgr. Yves Plumey, O.M.I., was to place missionaries as quickly as possible over the whole territory by establishing them in key missions. The founding of the first seven missions clearly manifests this orientation: Ngaoundéré in the southern part of the territory; Garoua, towards the centre; Kousseri, in the very north; Meiganga, in the far south-east; Mokolo, in the northwest; Poli, between Garoua and Ngaoundéré, and Yagoua in the northeast. The first two were established in 1946, the other five in 1947.

The missionaries began by learning the native languages and looking after the Christians. With the collaboration of Sisters, they were hoping to establish works of charity and welfare — dispensaries, hospitals, schools — both in the centre and in the bush wilderness. A leprosarium was opened at Mokolo.⁹⁸ On June 30, 1947, the Prefecture's statistics indicate the following: 600 native Catholics, 150 other Catholics coming from elsewhere, 200 catechumens, and 9 missions or stations with a resident priest.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 515-516.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 517.

⁹⁹ *Rapport de Mgr Plumey à la S.C. de la Propagande au 30 juin 1947*, p. 3. Oblate General Archives, S.C. Prop. file: Garoua.

On April 25, 1951, the mission was established as a Vicariate of Missions, under the name of Vicariate of Missions of Garoua (Cameroon); its first Vicar of Missions was Father Honoré Jouveaux. Cf. Letter of L. Deschâtelets, April 25, 1951, in *Missions*, 78 (1951), pp. 286-287. On the following May 17, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide confided to the Oblates' care the region of Mayo-Kebi in Chad: it had a population of about 300,000. Thus the Oblates regained a part of the territory that they had to give up in 1947. Cf. *ibidem*, 78 (1951), pp. 565-567.

The Period from 1898 to 1947: An Overview

Apostolic works – Inside the Congregation – Personnel

Apostolic works

During the course of the first half of the 20th century, the Oblate Missionaries brought a number of local Churches to a state of maturity. In the Canadian West, a vast mission field that had been entrusted to them in the last century, seven dioceses were formed and handed over to the secular clergy between 1908 and 1921: St. Boniface, Edmonton, Vancouver, Regina, Calgary, Prince Albert and Winnipeg; this was also the case for four others between 1930 and 1940: Gravelbourg, Saskatoon, Nelson and Kamloops. On the isle of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), where the Oblates had also begun working in the last century, the Ceylonese clergy — whom the Oblates had diligently formed — took charge of the new diocese of Chilaw and was on the point of taking over the dioceses of Colombo and Jaffna. In these Churches, which had become regular dioceses, the Oblates retained a missionary role and accepted pastoral ministry as they have done in any other country that is referred to as “Christian”.

On the other hand, the Congregation also accepted new mission fields. It seconded local Churches that were already established and laid the foundation for new ones. In Latin America, it made missionary foundations in Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Haiti and Brazil; in the Far East, in Laos and the Philippines; in the countries of Central Africa, in Zaire and Cameroon.

In “Christian” countries, the Oblates gave priority to the ministry of preaching. Though severely put to the test by the dispersals that occurred during the first two decades of this

century, the Provinces of France remained generous and faithful to the ministry of missions to the people; they adapted their apostolate to the new conditions that set in after the 1939-1945 war. The same priority of parish missions was evident in the Provinces of Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and United States Eastern.

Certain Provinces experienced a considerable development. The Province of Canada-East was noted for important apostolic works: preaching, closed retreats, Catholic Action, university work which reached out to the people through the Catholic Centre, missions to the Indians. The Provinces of France-North, Germany, United States Eastern and Southern, Anglo-Irish saw their personnel increase and they consequently augmented their apostolic and missionary work.

In Southern Africa, the vast expanse of mission territory that had been entrusted to the Oblates in the middle of the last century was considerably reduced during the course of the 1920-1930 decade. On the other hand, the arrival of greater numbers of missionaries, and especially the link of the Kimberley Vicariate to the Province of Germany and the Vicariate of Basutoland to the Province of Canada-East made a more intense missionary activity possible.

Inside the Congregation

France's outlawing the Oblates in 1903 forcibly hindered the development of the France-South and France-North Provinces; it also affected the entire Congregation which, at the turn of the century, still found its heart and a large part of its resources in the country where it was born. The two world wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 afflicted and disorganized the Provinces of Europe, especially those of France, Germany, Poland and Belgium-Holland. The Vice-Province of Spain bled under the onslaughts of the 1935-1936 civil war.

These trials were the occasion of the Congregation's expansion within Europe itself. France's outlawing hastened the foundations in Italy, Belgium and Holland. The world

wars, the first one especially, led to the creation of new Provinces in Europe. By the same token, Oblate formation houses multiplied and Congregation was able to benefit greatly from the abundance of missionary vocations at that time.

In mission countries, the life proper to the Congregation was intensified, thanks to a better harmony between the ecclesiastical and religious authorities, as well as a heightened concern on the part of the Oblates to work according to the proper aims of the Institute.

Personnel

The Congregation's personnel increased remarkably during this period. It passed from 1427 members in 1898 to 5692 in 1948. At this date, the average age of the Oblates was a young 40.2 years. Certain Provinces had a large number of members, even after they had been generous towards the missions and other Provinces. Thus, in 1948, Canada-East had 849 Oblates, Germany 381, France-North 335, the First United States Province 274, Belgium 248, the Second United States Province 246, Ceylon 230, and the Province of France-South 209.

The Brothers, whose numbers during this period increased from 392 to 1106, devoted themselves mainly in the formation houses and in the foreign missions. Certain Provinces were particularly favored in regard to Brothers. In 1948, after having sent over the years a goodly number to the foreign missions, Canada-East had 289, Germany 124, France-North 61, Ireland 52, and Poland 45.

Finally, the origins of the Oblate personnel were more and more diverse. The Oblates in 1948 had come from 414 dioceses and from 40 different countries. The dioceses which had furnished the most Oblates were: Quebec 299, Boston 263, Montreal 198, Quimper 152, Nicolet 149, Namur 134, and Fulda 121.¹

¹ Cf. below, *The Congregation's Personnel in 1948*, pp. 460-463.

PART FIVE

Expansion and Renewal

1947 - 1985

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

- 1 - Part Five of this Oblate history, which extends from 1947 to 1985, covers a period that is too recent to allow it to be studied under every aspect. In this part, we will give only a summary description, and thus one that is necessarily incomplete, of the Congregation's life at its Centre and in each group of Oblates that is integral to it.
- 2 - The names of the community and administrative units of the Institute were made more precise in 1966. These units now are: Province, Vice-Province, General Delegation, Provincial Delegation, according to its degree of development. We note that the designation Vice-Province replaces what we have up to now referred to as a Vicariate of Missions (or a religious Vicariate). General and Provincial Delegations are new terms and designate certain groups of Oblates who are directly dependent on the General Administration or a Provincial Administration respectively. Finally, the term Mission or Mission *ad extra* designates a Province's or Vice-Province's mission that is located outside their own territory.
- 3 - In January 1985, the General Administration re-classified the categories of Province and Vice-Province by taking into account the number of Oblates who are their members. Those who did not have 100 Oblates were declared to be Vice-Provinces and those with 100 Oblates or more were declared to be Provinces.

CHAPTER 11

The General Government 1947-1985

I. Under Father Léo Deschâtelets 1947-1972: - Father Léo Deschâtelets - Meeting of formators - Administrative reorganization - Studium Generale Superius - De Mazenod retreat - New measures relating to formation - Revision of the Constitutions and Rules - Decreasing personnel - A time of uneasiness - An aggiornamento - A dynamic animation.

II. Under Fathers Richard Hanley and Fernand Jetté 1972-1985: - Fathers Richard Hanley and Fernand Jetté - Administrative structures reviewed - Structures put in place - Plenary sessions of the General Council - Orientations concerning the mission - Formation - The plenary General Council in the Regions: Asia-Oceania, Latin America, Africa-Madagascar, Canada, Europe, United States - Definitive text of the Constitutions - Return to the sources - Personnel and recruitment.

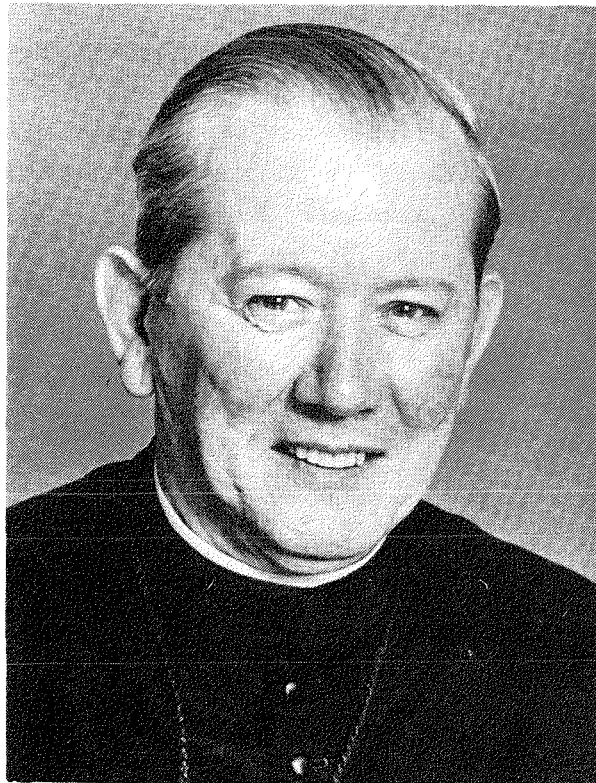
I - Under Father Léo Deschâtelets 1947-1972

Father Léo Deschâtelets

On May 2, 1947, the General Chapter elected Father Léo Deschâtelets¹ as Superior General of the Congregation. He was

¹ Léo Deschâtelets: born in Montreal, March 8, 1899; entered novitiate at Ville LaSalle, P.Q., May 12, 1918; ordained priest at Ottawa, June 12, 1925; named professor at St. Joseph's Scholasticate, Ottawa, in 1926; under-secretary of the International Missionary Union of the Clergy in Rome, in 1937; superior of St. Joseph's Scholasticate, in 1938; provincial of the Province of Canada-East, in 1944; Superior General, in 1947; resigned and retired to Villeneuve Residence, Ottawa, in 1972; died at Ottawa, January 11, 1974, buried at the Oblate cemetery at Richelieu. Cf. I TOURIGNY, O.M.I., *Le pere Léo Deschâtelets (1899-1974), supérieur général des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée (1947-1972), Esquisse biographique*, Ottawa, 1975, 165 p.

a man of faith and of the future. "With no illusions in regard to strength and qualities," he wrote in his first circular letter addressed to the Congregation, "I look to the future with determination and optimism, because I have faith in God from whom all assistance comes."² Some years later, in 1961, Father Albert Perbal of the General House described the man elected by the 1947 General Chapter in these terms: "As one who has a most profound knowledge of the Founder's history and soul, the newly elected (Superior General) brought with him a great understanding of the Rules and of the interior life, a keen sense of the Congregation's Marian and apostolic vocation, and a very positive awareness of the Institute's responsibilities inasmuch as it has become one of the more powerful agencies in the ranks of the Catholic apostolate."³



Léo Deschâtelets (1899-1974)
Superior General (1947-1972)

² Circ. 175, June 13, 1947, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 5, p. 2.

³ A. PERBAL, O.M.I., "Une Congrégation missionnaire dynamique", in *Missions*, 88 (1961), p. 255. The General Council under Father Léo Deschâtelets from 1947 to 1972 were: Assistants General: Anthime Desnoyers (1947-

From the very outset of his mandate, the new Superior General began to implement a number of important measures, most of which had been either the hope or the decision of past General Chapters, especially that of 1947.

Meeting of Formators

The 1947 General Chapter was barely over when Father Deschâtelets called the Congregation's scholasticate superiors to a meeting in order to define the orientation that the formation of candidates to the priesthood was to take in the new post-war era. This meeting was held in Rome from September 29 to October 9, 1947.⁴ On this occasion, he arranged to have a personal assistant who would help him in his duty of vigilance in regard to the Congregation's works of formation. He invited the participants to study the role and tasks of this assistant. On October 5, towards the end of the session, he appointed Father Daniel Albers to this new post, giving him the title of Director General of Studies.⁵

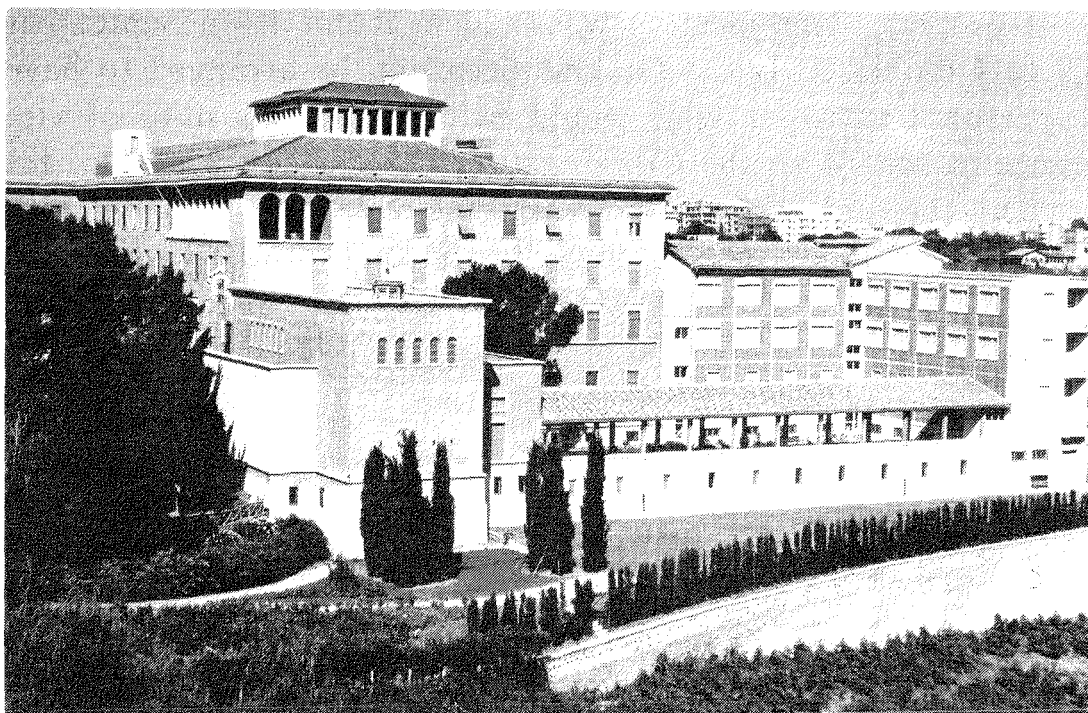
1953), Robert Becker (1947-1966), Michael O'Ryan (1947-1953), Gaetano Drago (1947-1953), John Bokenfohr (1947-1953), Paul Peron (1948-1953), Hilaire Balmès (1947-1948), Jean Drouart (1953-1966), Sinforiano Lucas (1953-1962), Joseph Birch (1953-1959), Stanislas-A. La-Rochelle (1953-1972), John Walsh (1953-1966), Joseph Fitzgerald (1959-1966), Joseph Voogt (1962-1966), Jacques Dherbomez (1966-1972), Carmelo Conti Guglia (1966-1972), Thomas Reddy (1966-1968), Joseph Schulte (1966-1972), Godfrey Kuckartz (1966-1972), John King (1968-1974). General Treasurers: Edmond Servel (1947-1959), Michel Dupuich (1959-1976). Procurators General: Joseph Rousseau (1947-1960), André Guay (1960-1966), Michael O'Reilly (1966-1987); Secretary General: Irenée Tourigny (1969-1974); Postulators General: Francesco Saverio Cianciulli (1945-1953), Joseph Morabito (1953-1962), Angelo Mitri (1962-1984).

⁴ Cf. "Problèmes de formation oblate. Rapport du Congrès des Supérieurs de scolasticats, Rome, du 29 septembre au 9 octobre 1947", in *Études Oblates*, 7 (1948), pp. 81-168.

⁵ Cf. AROMI, 1947, pp. 121, 136. On February 17, 1960, Father Armand Reuter succeeded to Father Daniel Albers. The post of Director General of Studies ended in 1966 when a General Secretariate for Formation was established.

Administrative reorganization

To respond better to the needs of the Congregation which was in rapid expansion, he began already in 1947 to improve the Institute's administrative services by reorganizing the General Secretariate and by promulgating precise administrative norms for the different levels of authority in the Congregation.⁶ In 1950, he opened a new General House which he had built in such a way that it would correspond adequately to the needs of the Congregation's centre.⁷



*Rome, General House (290 Via Aurelia) opened in 1950
and the Oblate International Scholasticate*

⁶ Circ. 180, October 15, 1947, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 5, pp. 64-127. Circular 235 of March 25, 1967, brought these norms up to date. *Ibidem*, vol. 8, pp. 1-92.

⁷ The new General House at 290 Via Aurelia replaced the former one which was located in a building adjacent to the International Scholasticate at 5 Via Vittorino da Feltre in Rome. After the buildings at 5 Via Vittorino da Feltre were sold in 1961, the International Scholasticate was moved to a building adjacent to the General House. Here it remained except for 1966-1972, during which years it was located in a new building at 78A Via della Pineta Sacchetti in Rome. This latter building became too large because of the decrease in the number of scholastics and was sold.

Studium Generale Superius

Responding to a desire expressed by several General Chapters, the Superior General in 1950 founded an institution, the *Studium Generale Superius*, whose purpose was the professional perfecting of Oblates.⁸ It had a double aim: to receive for a training period Oblates engaged in formation, preaching and other works, and to bring together Oblates who were doing post-graduate studies at the Roman universities. Each year, until 1954 inclusively, the *Studium Generale Superius* received Oblates who were mainly in scholasticates, novitiates and juniorates; it also received a group of missionaries and preachers.⁹ After 1954, however, it could only receive the students at the Roman universities, due to lack of space.¹⁰

De Mazenod retreat

Finally, among the important measures adopted at the beginning of the Father Léo Deschâtelets mandate as Superior General was the founding, on February 17, 1954, of another institution whose purpose was the perfecting of Oblates. This one related to the spiritual domain and had been for a long time wished for in the Institute and accepted in principle by the 1953 General Chapter.¹¹ This institution received the name of the De Mazenod Retreat. It consisted of a time for spiritual perfecting that was offered to Oblates who had already several

⁸ The decree of March 7, 1950 established the *Studium Generale Superius* and named its first superior, Father Daniel Albers. The *Studium Generale Superius* opened the following November 2 and was located at 5 Via Vittorino da Feltre in the former locale of the General House.

⁹ The acts of the mission preachers' session, held from April 24 to June 9, 1955, have been published. "Le mission de l'intérieur", *Missions*, 83 (1956), pp. 1-518; and "The Parish Mission", *ibidem*, 84 (1957), pp. 1-351.

¹⁰ After the property on Via Vittorino da Feltre was sold in 1961, the *Studium Generale Superius* was located at the General House, except for 1966-1972 when it had transferred to location of the new International Scholasticate on the Via della Pineta Sacchetti.

¹¹ Cf. *La Retraite De Mazenod de Rome (3 oct. 1954 au 10 avril 1955)*, *Notes et documents*, Ottawa, ed. des Études Oblates (Archives d'Histoire oblate, 11), pp. 1-14.

years of experience in the religious life and the ministry. It included a 30-day retreat according to the Ignatian formula and a period of about five months of study, exercises and self-examination under the direction of experienced masters.¹² The first De Mazenod retreat was given in Rome from October 3, 1954 to April 10, 1955, under the direction of Father Raymond Brohan. Thereafter, this retreat was also given in various countries, and several times at Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts in Canada.¹³

New measures relating to formation

The Superior General implemented without delay the Holy See's prescription concerning the formation of young religious published in 1956 in the documents entitled *Sedis Sapientiae* and *Statuta Generalia*.¹⁴ He ordained that a *Magister spiritus* be appointed in scholasticates and he organized, at the General House, a General Direction for Studies; the latter already existed in part since 1947 by the presence of a General Director of Studies. A *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* proper to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was also drawn up; it had been requested and was elaborated on the basis of a consultation made among the superiors, professors and directors of juniorates and scholasticates. The *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* received the approval of the Sacred Congregation of Religious

¹² By letter of May 2, 1956, the S.C. of Religious expressed congratulations and encouragement to the institution that was the De Mazenod retreat. Cf. circ. 206, May 14, 1956, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 6, pp. 196-213.

¹³ Cf. R. BROHAN, O.M.I., *Retraite De Mazenod*, rapport présenté au Chapitre général de 1966, p. 28. Circ. 220, August 15, 1965, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 7, pp. 187-189. From 1954 to 1966, 19 retreats were given in Europe and Canada; these brought together 473 participants, 17 of whom were Brothers. In 1973, the General Administration suggested to the Regions that they themselves organize the De Mazenod Retreat according to their needs. AAG, vol. 1, p. 250.

¹⁴ The Apostolic Constitution *Sedis Sapientiae* is dated May 31, 1956; the *Statuta Generalia* were published by the S.C. for Religious the following July 7.

and was promulgated by the Superior General on March 25, 1960.¹⁵

Revision of the Constitution and Rules

Father Deschâtelets' term as Superior General effected a revision of the Congregation's Constitutions and Rules. The need for an in-depth revision of the Constitutions and Rules became progressively necessary and the revision was made in stages.

The 1947 General Chapter felt it was good to make certain changes in the text of the Rules which had not been modified since 1926. The 1953 General Chapter asked for a new edition of the Rules and established a Commission to prepare the same for the next General Chapter. The 1959 General Chapter wanted a more far-reaching revision than the one that had been prepared and undertook to do this itself. After one month and a half, however, it had to leave to a post-Chapter Commission¹⁶ the task of continuing this work and consulting the whole Congregation and preparing a text of the Constitutions and Rules that was to be submitted to the next General Chapter. The 1966 General Chapter, finally, after having found the text prepared by the Commission to be inadequate, itself undertook to draw up a new text: it accomplished this by two months' hard work. It was improved by a post-Chapter Commission and translated into Latin. This new text was a completely new version of the Constitutions and Rules, one that was strongly inspired by the thought of Vatican Council II. It

¹⁵ *Missions*, 87 (1960), pp. 720-721. *Ratio Studiorum generalis congregationis Oblatorum B.V.M. Immaculatae*, 1960, Curia generalis Congregationis, Romae, 70 p.

¹⁶ The members of this Commission, appointed by the Superior General, were: Gérard Fortin, president, Stephen Wessel, Joseph Chaudier, Rodrigue Normandin and Armand Reuter. On May 11, 1962, Fathers Michael O'Reilly and Ulrich Lang were added. In 1964, Chaudier, Normandin and Reuter were replaced by Sylvio Ducharme, Frederick Sackett and Noel Savina. *AROMI*, 1960, p. 1; 1964, p. 114.

was promulgated *ad experimentum* by the Superior General's decree of August 2, 1966.¹⁷

By virtue of the faculties granted by the Instruction *Renovationis Causam*, published by the S. C. for Religious on January 6, 1969, the Superior General in Council, after having consulted the Congregation, made some changes in the renovated text of the Constitutions and Rules. He authorized periods of apostolic experience outside the novitiate, the choice of promises or temporary vows (both having the same juridical effects), and the possibility of extending in individual cases up to nine years the period of probation between the novitiate and perpetual profession.¹⁸

Decreasing personnel

The second half of Father Deschâtelets mandate as Superior General was characterized by profound changes in the Congregation, changes that were largely due to the changes that were at that time occurring within the Church and society.

The phenomenon of the decrease in vocations and religious leaving their institutes — a phenomenon that appeared in the 1960s, became general within the Church, and is to be attributed to an identity crisis concerning the priesthood and the religious life — affected the Oblates as much as it did other religious Institutes. Thus, during the period of 1962 to 1972, the number of scholastics, Brothers and Fathers was continually dropping. To the marked decrease of entries into the novitiate during these years must be added the numerous departures of Oblates in temporary vows and even in perpetual vows, including Oblate priests. Including those who died, the Congregation between 1965 and 1973 lost 1081 Oblates, that is, about 14.6% of its personnel. On the other hand, the personnel that stayed saw that it was reinforced but little by new

¹⁷ Cf. circ. 233, September 8, 1966, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 7, pp. 424-436. The Superior General had been authorized by the S.C. of Religious to promulgate the new Constitutions and Rules.

¹⁸ Cf. circ. 242, August 15, 1969, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 8, pp. 266-267.

entries and was experiencing an accelerated aging, especially in the older Provinces.

This blunt and rapid decrease in the overall personnel of the Congregation was not equally verified in all the Provinces. Some managed to retain their usual recruitment with slight ups and downs; others who had a rather young personnel, were not immediately affected.¹⁹

A time of uneasiness

At the same time that it was suffering from a decrease in personnel, the Congregation also experienced the good and not so good reactions that set in with the renewal of Vatican II. Father Deschâtelets remarked: "At every step and, due proportion being kept, we have found in the Congregation the same problems as those which exist in the Church and in other Institutes."²⁰ The ecumenical Council had opened the Church's doors and windows to renewal. The calling into question of so many positions, often even of those which appeared to be the most firm and stable, shook a good number of Oblates. The Congregation was going through a period of uncertainty, research and expectation.²¹

An aggiornamento

Energetic were the efforts put forth within the Institute to achieve the required renewal. Father Deschâtelets wrote that at the 1966 General Chapter, the Congregation found itself "united and strong in its desire to progress and adapt."²² It adopted Constitutions and Rules that were entirely renewed, penetrated by the Council's vision; it reorganized its administrative structures in order to promote communication and participation of

¹⁹ According to the Congregation's general statistics of 1972, 20% of the Oblates were below 35 years of age; 30% were from 36 to 50 years old; 40% were from 51 to 70; and 10% were 71 years old and over. Circ. 247, April 11, 1972, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 8, p. 386; *ibidem*, p. 384-387.

²⁰ Circ. 222, January 25, 1966, *ibidem*, vol. 7, p. 252.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 251.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 250.



The Oblate Fathers of the Second Vatican Council: photo taken on October 11, 1962. 1. Henri Belleau. 2. Joseph Bonhomme. 3. Albert Sanschagrín. 4. Anthony Jordan. 5. Sinforiano Lucas. 6. Armand Clabaut. 7. Ignatius Pakoe. 8. Etienne Lóosdregt. 9. Rudolph Koppmann. 10. Denis Hurley. 11. René Toussaint. 12. Edmund Peiris. 13. Benjamin Thomas Cooray. 14. Leonello Berti. 15. Léo Deschâtelets. 16. Paul Dumouchel. 17. Emilianus Pillai. 18. Fergus O'Grady. 19. Delphis Desrosiers. 20. William Patrick Whelan. 21. John Taylor. 22. Walter Vervoort. 23. Francis McSorley. 24. Lionel Scheffer. 25. John Bokenfohr. 26. Emmanuel 'Mabathoana. 27. Jean-Louis Coudert. 28. Yves Plumey. 29. Paul Piche. 30. Henri Routhier. 31. Marc Lacroix. 32. Gerard Mongeau. 33. Maturino Blanchet.

the base with the different levels of government in the Institute; and it committed itself resolutely to a renewal of its life and ministry.

After the 1966 Chapter, the Administration saw to establishing the new administrative system in the Congregation, an undertaking that had its moments of groping, for this system was couched in a complex and heavy formulation. The Administration also energetically promoted true renewal in the Congregation's life and ministry. The Superior General invited the Oblates to effect this renewal first of all in the domain of their own spiritual and apostolic attitudes. Renewal of the Congregation, like that of the Church, must be accomplished in the Institute's life and works with charity, humility, frankness and openness of soul and spirit.²³ Father Deschâtelets wrote three key circular letters on this topic²⁴ and published a revision-guide that was distributed to all the Oblates to help communities review their situation and to adapt to the requirements of the new Constitutions and Rules. Two Extraordinary General Councils which brought together Provincials with the General Council were held in 1967 and 1969 and were also concerned with renewal.²⁵

A dynamic animation

In governing the Congregation during the twenty-five years of his mandate as Superior General, Father Deschâtelets wielded a unique influence both through his position as Superior General and through the impact of his strong personality. His animation was characterized mainly by his deep attachment to the Church and to Blessed Eugene de Mazenod, the Founder of the Congregation, to the Rules and the living tradition of the Institute. He insisted on the Oblate's need for a

²³ Circ. 221, August 22, 1965, *ibidem*, vol. 7, p. 210.

²⁴ Circ. 238, February 17, 1968; 240, March 19, 1968; 242, August 15, 1969, *ibidem*, vol. 8, pp. 137-147; 151-175; and 261-288.

²⁵ Circ. 236, May 21, 1967, and 241, April 1, 1969, *ibidem*, vol. 8, pp. 93-126; 179-259.

deep interior life and on the basic unity between the religious and the apostolic life.²⁶ He was animated by a deep Marian piety and he is the first Superior General to dedicate a long and substantial circular letter on the Oblate vocation in union with Mary Immaculate²⁷, a circular letter which was read, commented upon and pondered by the Oblates.

Attentive as he was to the Institute's missionary activity, he constantly recalled the Oblates' need to be apostles to the poor and to the masses, to adapt the apostolate to the situation of the times, and to prepare specialists for key ministries. The Oblate, he explained, had to know, when the time comes, how to cede responsibility for a local Church which he had founded and formed and to move on to other missionary frontiers. He must constantly evaluate the work he is doing and avoid becoming fixed in a given stance.²⁸ While he was Superior General, he accepted 28 new mission territories: several in Latin America, in Asia and in Scandinavia.²⁹

Finally, the Oblates owe to Father Deschâtelets the grace of better knowing their Founder, Eugene de Mazenod, and of being able to venerate him today as one of the Blessed. Right from 1947 on he began to promote the Founder's cause of beatification which had been halted during the 1939-1945 war. He ordered new research into the Founder's writings which have proven to be very fruitful³⁰ and he had a biography of

²⁶ Cf. S. LA ROCHELLE, O.M.I., "L'animation religieuse dans les circulaires du père Deschâtelets", in *Études Oblates*, 28 (1969), pp. 117-134; I. TOURIGNY, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, pp. 66-69.

²⁷ Circ. 191, 15 August 1951, in *Circ. Adm.*, vol. 5, p. 298-386. Father Deschâtelets treated this topic in even greater detail in his circular letter of November 1, 1953, published on the occasion of the Marian Year announced by the encyclical *Fulgens corona* of 8 September 1953. Cf. Circ. 202, 1 November 1953, in *Circ. Adm.*, vol. 6., pp. 78-106.

²⁸ Cf. Circ. 201, 1 May 1953, *ibidem*, vol. 6, pp. 68-69; his conference to the Oblates of Southern Africa, given at Maseru in 1955, in *Missions*, 83 (1955), pp. 42-43.

²⁹ Cf. I. TOURIGNY, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, p. 162.

³⁰ Cf. P.-E. DUVAL, O.M.I., "Les recherches mazenodiennes" in *Études Oblates*, 16 (1957), pp. 170-177.

the Founder written by a famous specialist in French religious history, Msgr. Jean Leflon.³¹ When his mandate as Superior General ended, this cause was almost at its successful term.³²

II – *Under Fathers Richard Hanley and Fernand Jetté 1972-1985*

Fathers Richard Hanley and Fernand Jetté

Father Richard Hanley³³ was elected Superior General of the Congregation on May 9, 1972, for a mandate of six years, the first Superior General to be elected for a limited term of office. He succeeded to Father Léo Deschâtelets. To the Congregation he gave his devotedness, sincerity, facility of making contact and giving encouragement. He carried out his responsibilities according to the orientations of the General Chapter that had elected him. "One of the traits of his two years as General was the nearly superhuman tour de force of personal contacts with the 6500 Oblates of the Congregation found in 46 of the world's countries."³⁴ He resigned for personal reasons in June 1974.³⁵

³¹ J. LEFLON, Eugène de Mazenod, Évêque de Marseille, Fondateur des Missionnaires O.M.I. . . . Paris, 1957-1965, 3 vol.

³² Two new causes of beatification of Oblates were begun when Father Deschâtelets was Superior General: in 1951, that of Bishop Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., Bishop of Keewatin, Canada; and in 1952, that of Brother Anthony Kowalczyk, a Polish Oblate, who spent his religious life in Alberta, Canada. Three other causes had already been introduced previously: that of Father Dominique Albini, of Bishop Vital Grandin, O.M.I., and of Father Joseph Gérard. Cf. "Historique des Causes", in AAG, vol. 5, suppl., p. 175.

³³ Richard Hanley was born at Jamaica in the diocese of Brooklyn, U.S.A., on February 22, 1931. He made his novitiate at Ipswich in 1951-1952 for the Province of United States Eastern. He studied at the International Scholasticate in Rome and was ordained priest at Roviano, Italy, on July 13, 1958. He was professor at the scholasticate of Washington, D.C. In June 1969, he was appointed Provincial to the United States Western Province, a position he held when he was elected to the office of Superior General.

³⁴ AAG, vol. 2, p. 189.

³⁵ This resignation was received by the S.C. for Religious and Secular Institutes on June 8, 1974 and accepted on June 21.



*Richard Hanley (1931-)
Superior General (1972-1974)
He resigned his office.*

Father Fernand Jetté³⁶, the successor to Father Hanley, was elected Superior General on November 26, 1974, also for a term of six years. The newly elected Superior General had impressed the capitulars by his faith, wisdom, clear insight into the present situation and the determination he had shown in his position of Vicar General of the Congregation. He was re-elected Superior General for a second mandate in the 1980 General Chapter.³⁷

³⁶ Fernand Jetté was born on December 13, 1921, at Ste-Rose-de-Laval, near Montreal, Canada. He entered the novitiate at Ville LaSalle in 1940, studied philosophy and theology at St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Ottawa, and was ordained priest in Ottawa on December 20, 1947. He was professor, then superior (1965-1967) of St. Joseph's Scholasticate, then Vicar Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, Montreal (1967-1972). He was elected Vicar General of the Congregation in 1972, the first to occupy this new position in the new administrative structures.

³⁷ Members of the General Administration from 1972-1985: Vicars General: Fernand Jetté (1972-1974), Francis George (1974-1986); Assistants Gen-

Administrative structures reviewed

The 1972 General Chapter, "one of the most important in the Congregation's history"³⁸, renewed the structures and the spirit of government in the Institute. As the basis of its reform, the Chapter had three general principles: the primacy of life: "Structures, far from seeking to hinder freedom of persons and the expression of life, have as their end the furthering of these values by guaranteeing their communitarian expression."³⁹ Then there is the primacy of the mission: "It is important that at all levels of the government of the Congregation the aim or end to which we are ordained, namely the evangelization of the poor, be primary."⁴⁰ Finally, decentralization through the application of the principle of subsidiarity, according to which "decisions are taken on the level where they can best be made in a responsible manner, due consideration being given to the actual situation . . . The governmental process should start from living apostolic communities, fully recognized and respected in their relative autonomy, and then move upwards."⁴¹ Such a process of government calls for the authority and service of the General Administration, "whose

eral: René Motte (1972-1986), William Cagney (1972-1974), Marcello Zago (1974-1980), James Cooke (1980-1984), Bernard Quintus (1984-1986). General Councillors for the Regions: Europe: Albert Schneider (1972-1980), Bernard Ferkinghoff (1980-1987); Canada: Lucien Casterman (1972-1980), John Greene (1980-1986); United States: John King (1972-1974), Charles Breault (1974-1986); Africa: Patrick Hogan (1972-1980), Thomas Manyeli (1980-1985), Alexander Motanyane (1985-); Asia: Dalston Forbes (1972-1978), James Cooke (1978-1980), Desmond O'Donnell (1980-); Latin America: Luis Valbuena (1972-1975), Leo Guilmette (1976-1986); The Major Officials were: Treasurer General: Michel Dupuich (1972-1974), Léo-Paul Nobert (1974-1987); Procurator General: Michael O'Reilly (1972-1987); Secretary General: Irénée Tourigny (1972-1974), Laurent Roy (1974-1986); Postulator General: Angelo Mitri (1972-1984).

³⁸ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "Le Chapitre général. Un an après", in *Études Oblates*, 33 (1974), p. 37.

³⁹ *Administrative Structures*, Rome, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

task is to provide for the unity of the Congregation in its life and mission.”⁴² From the General Administration the Congregation expects firm and effective leadership as well as the ability to animate and to provide a service of coordination.



Fernand Jetté (1921-)
Superior General (1974-1986)

Structures put in place

As a follow up to these general principles relating to the Institute's government, the 1972 General Chapter officially recognized the formation of Regions within the Congregation, that is to say, groupings of Provinces and Vice-Provinces of a given territory in order to facilitate between them the exchange of information and experience, dialogue, and even common orientations and action. These Regions were six in number:

⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10.

Europe, Canada, United States, Latin America, Asia-Oceania, and Africa-Madagascar.⁴³

The General Chapter, furthermore, modified the structure of the General Council which was to be as follows: besides the Superior General, there was to be a permanent Vicar General so that the Superior General could more easily exercise his leadership through his personal presence across the Congregation; a General Councillor for each Region who ordinarily resides in his own Region; two Assistants General who stay at the General House where they take part in the sessions of the General Council for current matters and direct two important Secretariates, that of the Mission and of Formation. At least twice a year there is to be a plenary session of the General Council which brings together under the presidency of the Superior General the Vicar General, the Assistants General and the General Councillors for the Regions.

Already in 1974, as Vicar General, Father Jetté could say: "In the last two and one half years . . . the style of the General Administration has changed greatly . . . Decentralization, subsidiarity, collegiality, respect for pluralism are more than mere words."⁴⁴

Plenary sessions of the General Council

The plenary sessions of the General Council — the central team — have taken on a primary importance, not only because they bring together all the members of the Council, but because they are the setting in which their thought and

⁴³ These Regions had already been constituted by a circular letter of Father L. Deschâtelets, dated October 7, 1966. *Circ. adm.*, vol. 7, pp. 439-440.

⁴⁴ AAG, vol. 2, p. 98. The 1972 General Chapter introduced into the Constitutions the permanent diaconate "for those Brothers who are suitably qualified and who have a vocation for this form of ministry." AAG, vol. 1, p. 69. The indult needed for this purpose was obtained on December 14, 1972 and promulgated on the following January 6, together with the norms established by the Church for the permanent diaconate. AAG, vol. 1, pp. 149-160. In 1985, there were four Brothers who were deacons: one each in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

orientations are worked out. In these meetings, the central team lives a life of prayer, study and fraternity; there is exchange and decision making in a spirit of collegiality. An account of each of these sessions is immediately communicated to the entire Congregation.

The principal role of the plenary sessions is animating the Congregation: to clarify short and long term objectives in view of the present needs and situations; to promote and support initiatives, even to call them forth as a response to the many diverse appeals that are heard; to develop exchange, dialogue and reflection across the Congregation in view of a clear and regular evaluation of its life and ministries.⁴⁵ From May 1972 to November 1985, the central team has met 41 times in plenary session: nine of these were held outside of Rome, in different Regions of the Congregation.

Orientations concerning the mission

The Congregation's specific mission, namely, evangelizing the poor, remains the primary concern of the central team. The orientations that have been given can be summed up as follows: to promote a review of our apostolic commitments in the light of the Oblate charism; to encourage response to new appeals in fidelity to this charism; to determine the missionary orientation and strategy of the Congregation, keeping in mind the territories to be evangelized; to obtain from the bishops with whom Oblates are working a certain latitude allowing Oblates to serve the local Church according to the charism proper to the Institute; to promote ministries of the laity and to form responsible laity in the Church; to include in evangelization ministry that directly promotes justice.⁴⁶ In foreign mis-

⁴⁵ Cf. AAG, vol. 2, pp. 467-468.

⁴⁶ In regard to ministry for justice, the central team has worked out a program of formation and action which is addressed to Oblate persons, communities and provinces. Cf. AAG, vol. 3, pp. 301-306. It has organized a network of Oblates who are engaged more directly in the field of justice. In 1980, this network had some 132 members who came from 25 different countries. Cf. AAG, vol. 3, suppl. p. 132.

sions, to implant the local Church, make it possible for this Church to have its own original physiognomy and, whenever possible, cede our place of direction to the priests of the country concerned.

Formation

The central team considered research and reflection in the area of first formation of Oblates to be another of its important tasks. Its hope has been to support and assist the remarkable effort put forth across the Congregation to develop formation and to adapt it to the present-day needs of the Mission. The central team has taken certain initiatives in this domain. In conformity with a mandate from the 1974 General Chapter, a permanent General Formation Committee was established in 1975⁴⁷; it is composed of one member from each Region and is usually called once a year to hold a study meeting. During the course of 1979, the members of the central team themselves established contact with the formation personnel of each formation house in the Institute in order to be informed of what the experience was and to evaluate it on the spot.⁴⁸ In June 1983 and again in June 1984, the central team organized sessions of formators at the General House: these sessions brought together 25 and 21 participants respectively.⁴⁹

The plenary General Council in the Regions

The plenary sessions of the central team held in the different Regions have a special importance because members can familiarize themselves on the spot with the situation in each Region and because of the meeting they hold with the Provincials, Vice-Provincials and other group superiors of the Region

⁴⁷ AAG, vol. 2, p. 473.

⁴⁸ The important elements of these contacts that the General Council retained are contained in AAG, vol. 5, pp. 92-97. On March 30, 1980, the Congregation had 30 scholasticates, 19 novitiates, 26 pre-novitiates, 4 juniorates and 2 high schools. Cf. AAG, vol. 5, suppl. pp. 70-74.

⁴⁹ Cf. AAG, vol. 6, p. 78; *OMI Information*, 211/84, p. 4.

— only the very first session in a Region did not include such a meeting. These meetings comprise a study of the milieu and the Oblate works there and are the occasion for initiatives and decisions that are apt to develop coordination, cooperation and common orientations within the Region.

Asia-Oceania — The central team held a first session in Asia at Colombo, Sri Lanka, from January 15 to February 3, 1975, and a second one at Cotabato, Philippines, from November 21 to December 10, 1982. The first one examined the strategy missionaries should take in a Region where the great oriental religions dominate, a Region rich in religious values, and what should be the particular Gospel commitment in milieus that are often extremely poor.⁵⁰ The second session again considered what the missionary who works in such a poor milieu must be and focussed on the collaboration and mutual support that missionaries who work among small minorities in a vast Region need.⁵¹

Latin America — The central team also held two sessions in Latin America, one at Asuncion, Paraguay, from January 22 to February 9, 1974, and the other at Sao Paulo, Brazil, from September 12 - 30, 1983. In this continent where “social agitation and misery are constant features”⁵², the importance of “base communities” (small living groups of Christians who strive to live the Gospel fully and are organically inserted into their milieu) was recognized, in accord with the bishops of the Region. The importance of forming responsible laity for the ministries was also recognized.⁵³ The main result of the second meeting can be summed up as follows: to be for the poor, with them and like them; to defend their life under ever aspect - material, social, cultural, religious; to support them in establishing and developing popular social movements of workers and others.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Cf. “Strategie missionnaire en Asie”, AAG, vol. 1, pp. 207-218.

⁵¹ Cf. *ibidem*, vol. 6, pp. 128-132.

⁵² *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 142.

⁵³ Cf. *ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 141-144.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Communiqué OMI*, 34/83, pp. 1-3; Appendix, pp. 1-3.

Africa-Madagascar — The central team held two sessions in Africa: at Maseru, Lesotho, from January 21 to February 13, 1976, and at Garoua, Cameroon, from January 14 to February 1, 1985. The grave problems posed by apartheid in South Africa and in Namibia were a major item on the agenda. The Oblates must continue to identify themselves with those who are struggling for justice. Two other elements figured in the exchange: how to incarnate the Gospel in the African context and how to establish local communities that take in hand their own destiny.⁵⁵ The main points considered in the meeting at Garoua were inculturation and Christian base communities.⁵⁶

Canada — The central team met at St. Norbert, Manitoba, from May 23 to June 10, 1977. An attentive study focussed on the society, the Church and the Oblates in Canada. The participants shared three major concerns: the urgency of forming Christian laity in leadership in view of promoting living Christian native and White communities; the need to be more aware of the problems of social justice; the importance of intensifying inter-Provincial collaboration, especially in the areas of mission, formation and structures.⁵⁷

Europe — In their meeting at Huenfeld, Germany, from April 30 to May 17, 1979, the central team and the Provincials of the Region considered the situations which today most strongly challenge the Oblates in Europe. Among these challenges, the following are retained as a priority: youth, unbelief and religious indifference, migrants and other poor people, Europe and its relationship with the Third World and with people from the Third World living in Europe.⁵⁸

United States — The session held in San Antonio, Texas, from September 23 to October 12, 1979, considered three

⁵⁵ Cf. AAG, vol. 3, pp. 51-59; 66-68.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Communique OMI*, 38/85, pp. 1-3; Appendix, pp. 1-4.

⁵⁷ Cf. AAG, vol. 3, pp. 267-270; 280-283; *Orientations oblats au Canada, session 23-29 mai 1977*, Saint-Norbert, Man., 18 p.

⁵⁸ Cf. AAG, vol. 4, pp. 361-365, 371-375.

priority orientations for the entire Region: ministry to minorities, especially to Spanish speaking peoples; development of lay responsibilities and ministries in the perspective of the Church as the People of God; personal and community renewal of Oblate life in order to witness better in the mission we are to accomplish. In its recommendations, the General Council added: to continue, with confidence and tenacity, the work being done for vocations and to assure a quality formation, both initial and ongoing.⁵⁹

Definitive text of the Constitutions

The 1972 General Chapter felt that the time had not come to adopt definitively the text of the Constitutions and Rules that were being used *ad experimentum* since 1966.⁶⁰ It nevertheless produced three important documents that relate to the life of the Institute. The first one, entitled "Missionary Outlook", formulated the Congregation's mission in today's world. The second one, "Administrative Structures", transformed the structures that had been adopted in 1966. The third one, "Community", was drawn up by the central team at the Chapter's request and treats of the style of community life in the world of today and in regard to the future.

The special General Chapter held in 1974 decreed the establishing of a Commission whose responsibility it was to prepare a text of the Constitutions that the next General Chapter would finalize in view of obtaining the approval of the Holy See. This Commission was composed of Fathers Alexandre Taché, president, Marius Bobichon, Michael O'Reilly and Jean Drouart. According to its mandate, this Commission organized across the entire Congregation, reflection on present-day Oblate life and it drew up a text of the Constitutions and

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, vol. 4, pp. 391-395, 398-403.

⁶⁰ By virtue of the authorization contained in the Apostolic Letter *Ecclesiae Sanctae* of August 6, 1966, the General Chapter prolonged the period of experimentation in regard to the Constitutions and Rules until the next ordinary General Chapter. Cf. *Administrative Structures*, pp. 41.

Rules on the basis of that of 1966, using also the results of consultations made among all the Oblates, previous editions of the Rules, the 1972 and 1974 Chapter documents, and especially the writings of the Founder.

The text prepared by the Commission was carefully revised by the capitulars of 1980 and received their full approval. The Superior General, Father Jetté, could write: "In an atmosphere of work and peace, of frankness and freedom, of cooperation and prayer, the Capitulars voted, with near unanimity, the new text of the Constitutions and Rules."⁶¹ The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, after having made some modifications to the text, officially approved the Constitutions by its decree of July 3, 1982.⁶² Father Jetté, the Superior General, ordained that they would go into effect for the whole Congregation on May 21, 1983.⁶³

Return to the Sources

After the crisis that the religious life experienced in the 1960s, the years from 1972 to 1985 registered renewal among

⁶¹ AAG, vol. 5, p. 50.

⁶² Cf. letter of Father Jetté, Superior General, of June 27, 1982, in AAG, vol. 6, pp. 17-22. For the steps taken in regard to the approbation and the list of changes required by the S.C. for Religious, cf. M. O'REILLY, O.M.I., "L'approbation des Constitutions et Règles par le Saint-Siège", in *Documentation OMI*, 124/84, pp. 1-12.

⁶³ AAG, vol. 6, pp. 40-41; *Information OMI*, 192/82, p. 5. In virtue of a decree from the S. C. for Religious and Secular Institutes of February 2, 1984, the Superior General in Council made some modifications to the Constitutions and Rules in order to bring them into conformity with the new Code of Canon Law which went into effect on November 27, 1983. Cf. *Communiqué OMI*, 36/84, 2 p.

In 1983, the General Administration published *Choix de textes relatifs aux Constitutions et Règles O.M.I.*, 588 p. It contains passages from the writings of Bl. Eugene de Mazenod, our Founder, which throw light on the new text of the Constitutions and Rules and indicate its "sources, continuity and underlying inspiration" p. 7. The General Administration has also published three directories: *General Norms for Oblate Formation*, 1984, 131 p.; *Administrative Directory*, 1985, 110 p.; and *Directory for the Administration of Temporal Goods*, 1985, 32 p.

the Oblates. Several factors can be offered as an explanation. The interest shown in the beatification of the Founder, Eugene de Mazenod, which took place on October 19, 1975, nearly everywhere aroused a number of initiatives both in terms of welcoming this event as a grace for the Congregation and to make the Founder and his work known outside of the Congregation. The publication of the Founder's letters and an important congress held in 1976 on his charism brought about a return to the sources of the Institute.⁶⁴ The active and almost universal participation of the Oblates in the revision of the definitive text of the Constitutions and Rules — all had been invited to review a text and express their views of it on two occasions — resulted in deep reflection on the Oblate religious life. Finally, the contribution of different religious renewal movements within the Church, in which Oblates were taking part, also wielded a favorable influence.⁶⁵

For its part, the General Council, through its efforts to promote the mission proper to the Institute in the Church today and to further the return to the Institute's living sources, also helped to establish the Oblate identity in a concrete way.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Congresses and other general meetings in a number of Provinces and Vice-Provinces were showing a new and remarkable interest in the Institute's specific mission and in the Oblate community.⁶⁷

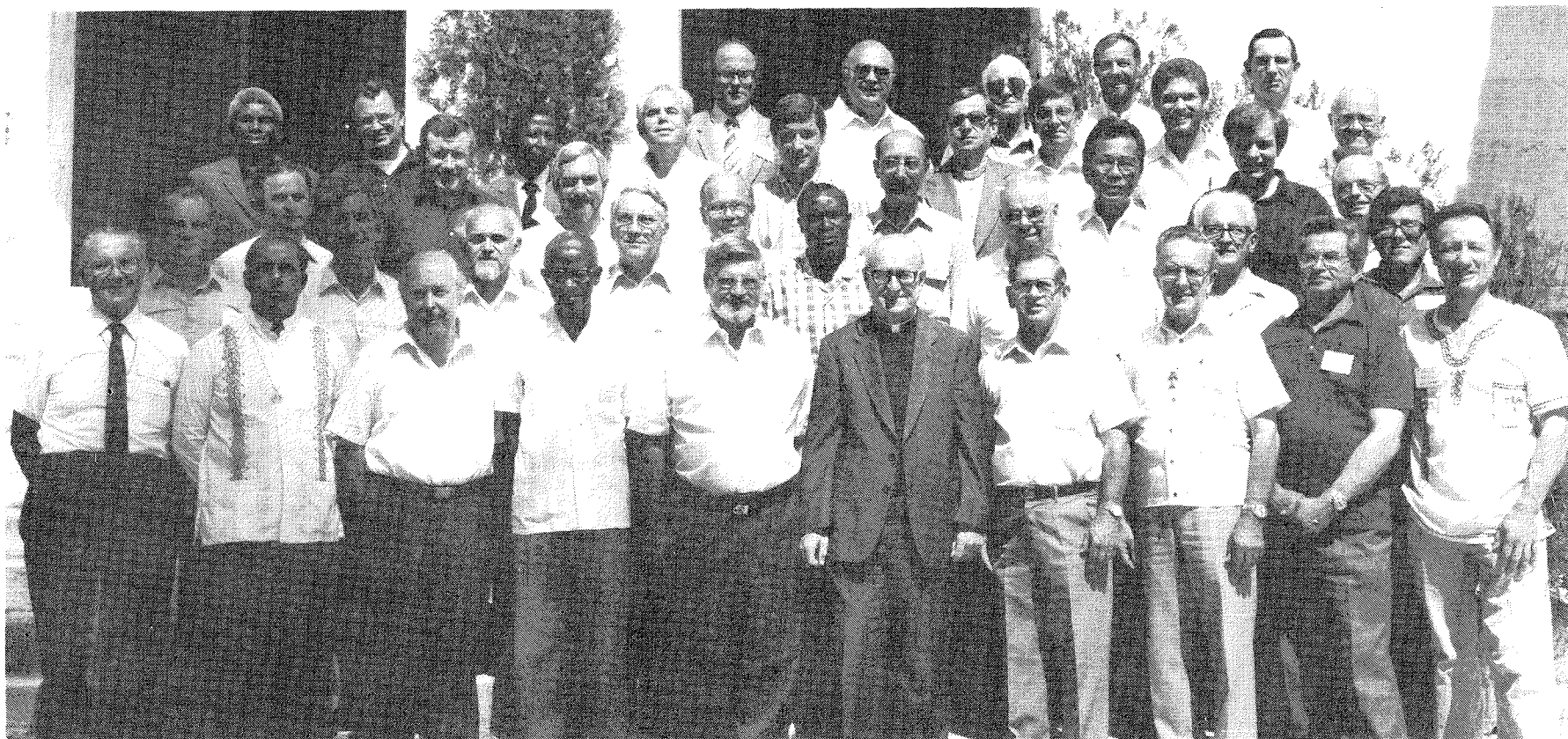
The Superior General, Father Jetté wrote in 1980: "Today, we are about to set out anew. We know ourselves

⁶⁴ The acts of the congress on the charism of the Founder have been published in *Vie Oblate Life*, 36 (1977). The S.C. for the Causes of Saints on April 2, 1982, accepted to open the cause for canonisation of Bl. Eugene de Mazenod. AAG, vol. 6, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁵ Cf. AAG, vol. 2, p. 465; *ibidem*, vol. 5, suppl. p. 11.

⁶⁶ In view of the fact that the Holy See and bishops keep addressing to the Congregation many urgent requests for missionaries, it is clear that the Oblates' missionary task has a true place in the Church of today. Cf. the list of requests and acceptance from 1972 to 1980, in AAG, vol. 5, suppl., pp. 34-35.

⁶⁷ Cf. reports of the Provinces and Vice-Provinces to the 1980 General Chapter.



International Congress of Oblate Brothers, held in Rome, from August 25 to September 14, 1985. From l. to r.: 1st row: Donat Leblanc, Gilbert Pullenayagam, Heinz Kranz, Brenus Piard, Donat Daigle, Fernand Jetté, Maurice Violette, Louis Tardif, Stefan Szymanski, Hervé Givélet; 2nd row: Denis Laroque, Aurele Gallant, Malcolm Barber, Omer Lafrance, Raymond DesChenes, John Nangoro, Thomas Cruise, René Motte, Marcello Togna; 3rd row: Willibald Raab, Emile Louis, Pat McGee, Hubert Spruyt, Philippe de Harveng, Melchor De la Cuarda, William Johnson, Georges Moigne; 4th row: Trudon Pebangu, Peter Buchkremer, Paul Makhele Shelile, Wayne Jarvo, Jan Sowa, André Koumans, André Weir, Alphonse Nadeau; 5th row: James Beggan, Louis Andreas, Robert Pelletier, Marcos Van Rijckeghem and Bernhard Ferkinghoff.

better with our greatness and our miseries, we know better what our Founder was and what he expects from us, we are on the eve of giving ourselves new Constitutions.”⁶⁸

Personnel and recruitment

Still, the decline in number of the Congregation's personnel which began in the 1960s continued in the period from 1972 to 1985. In January 1972, there were 7010 Oblates, 5286 of whom were bishops and priests, 1143 were Brothers and 581 were scholastics. In January 1985, there were 5572 Oblates, of whom 4320 were bishops and priests, 768 were Brothers and 484 were scholastics. Thus, an overall decrease of 1438.⁶⁹ This decline in personnel is due to deaths, departures from the Congregation, and weak recruitment.

In the Congregation as a whole, this decline has resulted in certain works being abandoned, especially in Provinces where the Oblates are older; the mission territories have been much less affected. Some of these territories have even experienced an increase in the numbers of missionaries. Thus, in Latin America, the number of Oblates from 1972 to 1985 rose from 258 to 340; in Africa it rose from 685 to 745. Since certain Provinces and Vice-Provinces had very few and almost no new entries, a number of large formation houses have also been closed. In their stead have arisen a great variety of formation places and methods which, in the beginning, were perhaps not sufficiently planned and thought out.⁷⁰

The drop in the Congregation's personnel became evident first of all in the ranks of the scholastics, and it is precisely in these ranks that an increase has been noted for several years. This movement of growth is strong in certain Provinces: in Poland since 1967, Lesotho and Zaire since 1977; elsewhere it is still weak and unsure. From 1980 to 1986, the number of

⁶⁸ AAG, vol. 5, suppl. p. 16.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Information OMI*, 64/72, p. 1; *ibidem*, 217/85, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Cf. AAG, vol. 2, p. 83.

scholastics rose from 332 to 518 and that of those making first vows from 95 (80 scholastics and 15 Brothers) to 141 (122 scholastics and 19 Brothers).⁷¹

⁷¹ *Information OMI*, 173/81, p. 3; *ibidem*, 228/86, p. 1, 3. For the criteria of admitting people to Honorary Oblate, cf. AAG, vol. 3, p. 278. In July 1985, there were about 159 Honorary Oblates in the Congregation: 22 in Europe, 70 in Canada, 48 in the United States, 9 in Latin America, 5 in Asia-Oceania, and 5 in Africa. Survey made by the Oblate General Secretariate, Rome.

CHAPTER 12

The Region of Europe *1947-1985*

In **France**: Evolution of the parish mission – Manpower and tasks – Personnel – Vice-Province of France-Benelux; – In **Ireland and the United Kingdom**; – In **Germany**; – In **Belgium**: Belgium South – Belgium North; – In **Poland**; – In **Italy**; – In **Spain**; – In **Holland**; – In **Austria** – The **Delegation of Scandinavia**: Denmark, Greenland, Sweden, Norway; – The Polish Mission in Sweden-Norway – Some **common characteristics** of the Region.

There are Oblates in nearly all the countries of Western and Northern Europe, as well as in the Democratic Republic of Germany, in Poland and in Greenland. They have their roots in these peoples whose political history, social and cultural milieux are sometimes so diverse. Strong currents of migration characterize these peoples during the period that we are considering. The Oblate Region has 8 Provinces, 5 Vice-Provinces, one Provincial Delegation and one Mission. At the beginning of 1985, the total number of Oblates stood at 1900: 1407 priests, 268 Brothers and 225 scholastics.¹

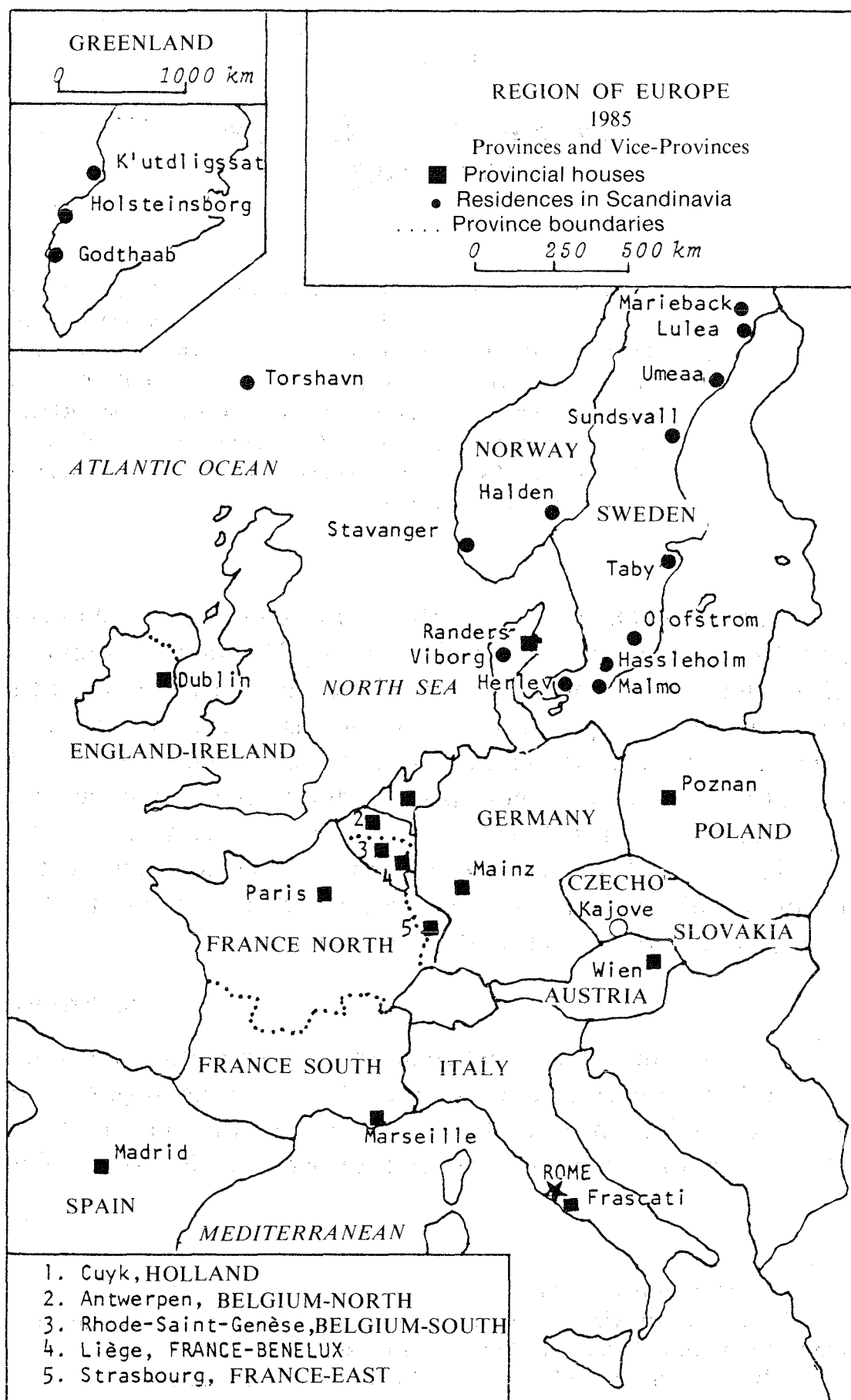
In France

France, the country wherein the Congregation was born and still an important area for the Oblates, brings together the Provinces of France-South and France-North and the Vice-Provinces of France-East² and of France-Benelux.³ The

¹ *OMI Information*, 206/84, p. 1.

² The Vice-Province of France-East extends into Switzerland and since 1950 into the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg also.

³ Benelux: groups in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.



Vice-Province of France-East has establishments in Switzerland and in Luxembourg. The Vice-Province of France-Benelux serves Polish immigrants or nationals in France, Belgium and Luxembourg. These Provinces and Vice-Provinces in France have a total of 428 Oblates, some of whom are working in Delegations and the foreign missions, in Latin America and in Indonesia.

Evolution of the parish mission

During the period under study here, the Provinces of France-North, France-South and France-East have all practically lived the same vicissitudes in what concerns their traditional main apostolic activity, namely, parish missions. This work had been maintained in the same style from the first generations of Oblates, then became subject to changes and thereafter it has almost disappeared completely. Challenged by the new situations, the missionaries around 1950 adopted, besides the popular traditional mission style which at that time was less and less successful, the formula of the "General Mission". This "general mission" was carried out especially in urban settings and consisted in evangelizing several parishes in the city at the same time; it aimed at a global evangelization of the human reality in a given milieu and required a long preparation that included a sociological survey. Inter-community teams were formed to prepare and carry out this specialized missionary work. An organism for research and collaboration was founded in 1951 by the Institutes that were committed to the mission inside France: its purpose was to inspire and animate this new mission formula.⁴

This kind of mission, however, lasted only for a relatively short period of time, namely, some fifteen years. "The undertaking proved to be a heavy one and its objective, namely, the

⁴ This organism was the Comité Pastoral des Missions de l'Intérieur (C.P.M.I) — the Pastoral Committee for the Mission at Home. Father Hervé Pennec was one of its founders and Father Georges Laudin also played a key role in its operation.

renewal of the local Church, was found to be too ambitious.”⁵ More and more the Oblates found themselves in a world of unbelief that saw itself as autonomous in regard to the Church. In the Provincial Congresses held between 1968 and 1970, the Oblates opted for new orientations which would either lead to new commitments or renew commitments already made. The Congress of France-South in 1970 retained groups of “itinerant missionaries”, chose to serve the most abandoned in the outskirts of the large cities, maintained establishments in de-christianized rural areas, and chose to favour in every way the area of Provence and the Mediterranean.⁶ In its congress of 1968-1969, the Province of France-North “was led to bring into play the only basic issue that one is faced with . . . : to live, situate oneself, act in the midst of today’s people, the poor especially, as witnesses and missionaries of the Church.”⁷ That of France-East in 1969 favored the creation of pastoral teams in the milieu of workers and the commitment of new forces in the pastoral care of migrants and the emarginated.⁸

Manpower and tasks

The following is a tableau of the apostolic manpower situation in 1980 in the three Provinces of France. In France-South, half of the Oblates were working directly in parishes, the other half in the pastoral ministry of chaplaincies, pilgrimages, hospitality, refugees and retreats.⁹ In France-North, 40 Oblates were working in hospitality and retreat houses that are attached to the Province’s pilgrimage centres; 74 were occupied with “pastoral tasks”, that is, 42 in parishes and 32 in various chaplaincies and other works; 45 were engaged “in professional situations: 27 of these were worker priests and 18 in social and other services.”¹⁰ In France-East, 9 Oblates were working in a

⁵ Rapport de France-Nord au Chapitre général de 1980, MS. p. 8.

⁶ Rapport de France-Midi au Chapitre général de 1980, MS. p. 5.

⁷ Rapport de France-Nord au Chapitre général de 1980, MS. p. 9.

⁸ Rapport de France-Est au Chapitre général de 1980, MS. p. 4.

⁹ Rapport de France-Midi au Chapitre général de 1980, MS. p. 5.

¹⁰ Rapport de France-Nord au Chapitre général de 1980, MS. pp. 2-3.

workers milieu or for migrants, 22 were working in parishes or in pilgrimage places, 14 in different chaplaincies and in catechetics; the rest were in Oblate formation and in different services.¹¹

Personnel

The manpower of the three Provinces in France was on a slightly descending curve since 1948 and suffered a rapid decrease when the vocation crisis struck, a crisis that was general in France as well as in the whole Church. The number of scholastics was down to some individuals from 1974 onwards. The total manpower of the three Provinces fell from 642 in 1948 to 379 in 1985. As a consequence of this lack of vocations, major institutions of Oblate formation had to close their doors¹² and their personnel went into other apostolic work. Sending missionaries abroad became more and more rare. Nevertheless, the three French Provinces, together with Belgium-South, in 1966 accepted a new mission in Brazil, in the dioceses of Belem, Maraba and Rio de Janiero where they have maintained some fifteen missionaries. In 1977, the Provinces of France also accepted missions in the diocese of Sintang in Indonesia and to serve immigrants in Guyana.¹³

¹¹ Rapport de France-Est au Chapitre général de 1980, MS, p. 2.

¹² The juniorate-college of Ste-Foye-lès-Lyon became a college in 1960; the juniorate opened at Notre-Dame de Lumières in 1959 was abandoned in 1961; that at Pontmain was definitively closed in 1967, that of Augny in 1975 became a secondary college, and that of Strasbourg, transferred to Vendenheim in 1958, was abandoned in 1976. The novitiate at La Brosse-Montceaux and the scholasticate at Solignac ceased to be formation houses in 1971.

¹³ Cf. J. POUTS, O.M.I., "Rapport de la 1re Province de France (Midi) au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 595-627; H. PENNEC, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province de France-Nord au Chapitre général de 1953", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 1-7; L. JEROME, O.M.I., "Rapport de la 3e Province de France (Est)", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 8-14; J. CHAUDIER, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province de France-Midi (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 3-30; A. PRONOST, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province de France-Nord (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 31-43; A. WEBER, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province France-Est (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 44-54; "Province de France-Midi", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 3-31; J. DHERBOMEZ, O.M.I., "Province de France-Nord", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 32-105; J. KESSLER, O.M.I.,

Vice-Province of France-Benelux

The Vice-Province of France-Benelux,¹⁴ whose members are Oblates of Polish origin, has been working zealously under the direction of the Catholic Polish Missions of Paris and Brussels. Its chief work is looking after Polish parishes. Its apostolic activity is gradually changing, for it must adapt itself to the character of the Polish population in France which is also changing with the times. The arrival of immigrants from Poland has ceased and the second and third generation of immigrants are being gradually integrated into the local French communities and are rising on the scale of the social classes.

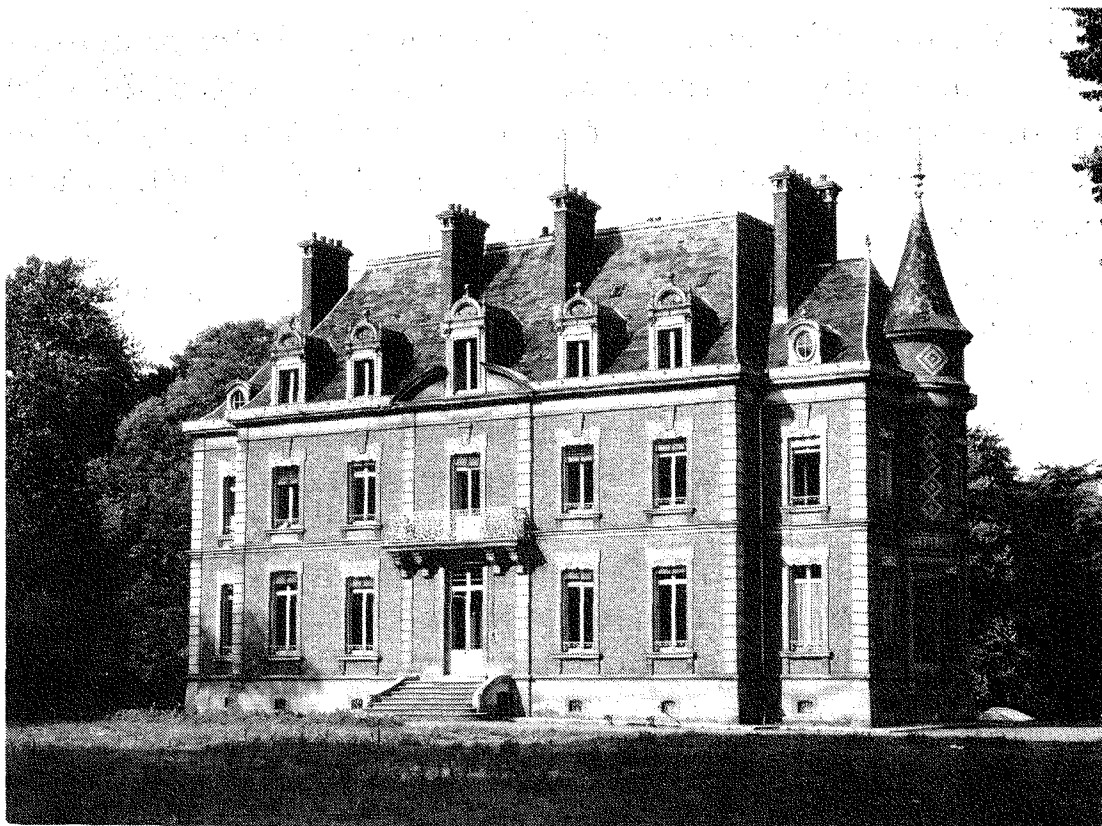
Since 1947, the Vice-Province has been running a boarding college, St. Casimir, primarily for Polish young men who are interested in the priesthood. It has been engaged in the apostolate of the press: at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, they have been publishing an Oblate monthly magazine, *Niepokalana* (The Immaculate), founded in 1954, and the official weekly paper of the Catholic Polish Mission of Paris, *Głos Katolicki* (The Catholic Voice). An Oblate occupies the post of Rector of the Catholic Polish Mission in Brussels, and another Oblate is national chaplain in France to the Association of the Polish Catholic Youth.

In 1985, the Vice-Province's personnel numbered 49 Oblates, 43 of whom were Fathers, 4 Brothers and 2 scholastics.¹⁵

"Province de France-Est", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 106-116; "Province France-Midi", *ibidem* 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 1-34; "Province France-Nord", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, p. 35-108; "Province France-Est", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 109-126.

¹⁴ This Vice-Province consists of the Polish district of France-Belgium, cf. above, pp. 83-84. The Polish district had been directly dependent upon the General Administration from April 26, 1949 onwards; it became a religious Vicariate on July 7, 1964, under the title of Our Lady of Czestochowa.

¹⁵ Cf. K. KUBSZ, O.M.I., "Rapport du district polonais (France-Belgique-Luxembourg) 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 62-71; H. REPKA, O.M.I., "Rapport du district polonais en France-Belgique (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 140-151; J. PAKULA, O.M.I., "Vicariat polonais Notre-Dame de Czestochowa en France-Belgique", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 327-346; L.



*The community residence of the boarding college
of St. Casimir at Vaudricourt, France.*

In Ireland and the United Kingdom

The Anglo-Irish Province extends from Ireland to the countries of the United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since 1962, it has the mission of Jatai-Uberlandia in Brazil. The Oblates of Australia were attached to this Province until 1953.

Parish missions, which were always a major ministry of the Province, suffered a certain decline in the 1970s. The number of missionaries, which had usually been around twenty, was greatly reduced and one of the two houses of missionaries, that of Crewe in England, was remodelled into a house of retreats. The Provincial nevertheless stated in 1980:

LEWICKI, O.M.I., "Vice-Province polonaise France-Belgique", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 279-284; K. SZYMURSKI, O.M.I., *Vice-Province polonaise 1974-1980*, MS, 7 p.

"At this time, the demand for this form of the Oblate apostolate is increasing."¹⁶ There were at that time seven full-time missionaries and they were very much in demand, especially in Northern Ireland where a new interest in the parish retreat and mission was manifest.

The public church in Dublin, established as a parish in 1972, became the first parish that was entrusted to the Oblates in Ireland. Others followed. The population served in most of the parishes in England and Scotland, once consisting of a strong Irish majority, was becoming more diversified: a considerable decline in the Irish immigration into the United Kingdom had set in and Irish families were leaving the urban centres. In 1980, the Province was in charge of 29 parishes, some large, others small, populated for the most part by poor people. 93 Oblates are engaged in this ministry.

The apostolate in the immigrant centres in Birmingham and in London remained varied and very much alive.¹⁷ Working with young delinquents, an apostolate that is traditional among the Province's Oblates, from 1974 onwards was carried on at the Scoil Ard Mhuire Centre at Oberstown; following government reforms in the penal system, the latter replaced the school at Daingean (Offaly). From 1953 until these last years, the Oblates maintained a work for priests in difficulty; it was called Ara Coeli, was located at Sicklinghall, and had been founded at the request of the bishops of the United Kingdom.

In 1984, the Anglo-Irish Province had 224 Oblates, 97 of whom were in the United Kingdom and 20 in the missions of Jatai-Uberlandia in Brazil. Because of the drop in vocations, the Province's personnel has decreased since 1964: it then stood at 330 Oblates.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Rapport de la province Anglo-Irlandaise au XXXe Chapitre général pour la période 1972-1978*, MS, p. 6.

¹⁷ Cf. W. McGONAGLE, O.M.I., "Immigrant Work — Anglo-Irish Province", in "Rapport-Region d'Europe", 1984, MS, 3. p.

¹⁸ Cf. M. FITZSIMONS, O.M.I., "Report of the Anglo-Irish Province to the General Chapter 1953" in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 15-35; P. McDONNELL, O.M.I., "Report of the Anglo-Irish Province (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp.

In Germany

The Province of Germany extends over the Federal Republic of Germany — wherein most of its houses, works and personnel are located — and to the Democratic Republic of Germany where in 1980 there was still one Oblate house.

They had barely come out of the second world war when the Oblates in Germany vigorously resumed the work of parish missions which they have held in high esteem since the beginnings of the Province. From 1947 to 1960, the missionaries — whose number usually varied between 40 and 50 — met yearly in a congress. In the years that followed, the number of missionaries declined somewhat and the formula of the “regional mission” was added to that of the traditional mission. Nevertheless, the Province’s priority in the pastoral field, as was reaffirmed in the 1971 Provincial Congress, remained the parish mission (for which there are many requests) and retreats. The youngest and strongest men of the Province are engaged in this apostolate.¹⁹ With 23 missionaries committed full-time to preaching missions and 9 missionaries assigned to the retreat houses, the Oblates in Germany and the Redemptorists are the only two communities who offer the country a strong team of missionaries.²⁰

Oblates are at work also in other pastoral initiatives. In 1980, 38 were working in parishes, 26 in secondary schools, colleges and boarding schools, 37 in hospitals and specialized ministries: serving the handicapped, the military, prisoners, religious women, and so forth. Foreign missions have remained a Province priority. From 1972 to 1980, the Province sent eight missionaries abroad, even though in this same period of

55-83; “Anglo-Irish Province”, *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 117-179; “Anglo-Irish Province”, *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 127-151; “Rapport de la province Anglo-irlandaise au XXXe Chapitre général pour la période 1972-1978”, MS, 13 p.

¹⁹ B. FERKINGHOFF, O.M.I., “Rapport de la province d’Allemagne (1980), MS, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

time it received only fifteen new Fathers. The noteworthy decline of vocations in the Province led to the formation of two vocation recruiting teams which operate in the different sectors of the country; it has also occasioned different forms of workshops and efforts whose aim is to arouse vocation interest.²¹



*House of St. Nikolaus
Community of missionaries and retreat house, Germany*

In 1985, the Province had 245 Oblates: 163 Fathers, 14 scholastics and 68 Brothers.

In Belgium

By decree of the Superior General, dated September 24, 1956, the Province of Belgium was divided into two Provinces.

²¹ The Province's juniorates have been replaced by two boarding schools; the novitiate at Engelpport has been transferred to Huenfeld and the scholasticate to Mainz. Cf. also J. BRASS, O.M.I., "Rapport de la province d'Allemagne (1953)" in *Missions* 80 (1953), pp. 36-49; "Rapport de la Province d'Allemagne (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 84-98; A. SCHRODI, O.M.I., "Province d'Allemagne", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 180-181; "Province Allemagne", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. I, pp. 153-189.

One of these Province, given the name of the Immaculate Conception, extends over the area of the Walloons and speaks French; the other, given the name of Regina Mundi, speaks Flemish and extends over the area of Flanders. After 1967, the former is referred to as Belgium-South and the latter as Belgium-North. When they were established, each of these two Provinces had their own houses of formation: juniorate, novitiate and scholasticate, and each had a team of mission preachers. The Province of Belgium-South had a personnel of 123 Oblates: 79 Fathers, 25 scholastics and 19 Brothers; that of Belgium-North had a personnel of 108 Oblates: 70 Fathers, 19 scholastics and 19 Brothers.²²

Belgium-South

When it was established, the Province of Belgium-South, besides its works of Oblate formation, also had: 2 parishes, one at Liège and the other at Marchienne-au-Pont, an important house of mission preachers at Jambes, a pastoral enterprise which would shortly achieve remarkable success, namely, the community of Oblates and laity of La Poudrière: the latter is located in a populated sector of Brussels and is a community of witness in the midst of the workers' milieu.²³

After 1960 the parish or regional mission was deemed to be inadequate in a world where there was more and more unbelief. Some Oblates initiate what they called the pastoral care of unbelievers and permanently inserted themselves in the world of the workers.²⁴ Thus was born the workers mission of Quaregnon in 1963, and of Jumet in the industrial sector, as well as other initiatives. In 1976, responding to a specific missionary need, a work to help youth in difficulty was opened: it

²² *Personnel abrégé O.M.I.*, november 1956, pp. 44, 47. Also cf. A. NOTTEBAERT, O.M.I., "Rapport de la province de Belgique au Chapitre Général de 1953" in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 321-349.

²³ Cf. *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 109-110; 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 236-237; *Information OMI*, 134/77, pp. 6-7.

²⁴ *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 234.

is called the "Maison de la rue de France" and is located in Brussels.²⁵

Other new works were undertaken. The houses of the scholasticate at Velaines and of the novitiate at Barvaux, left vacant by the transfer of the scholastics to Bruxelles and by the lack of vocations after 1970, became hospitality and retreat houses; the juniorate of Gemmenich became a college; the return of 16 missionaries from Zaire between 1970 and 1980 brought about the district of South Meuse which consists of Oblates who are mainly in the parish ministry; in 1966, together with the Provinces in France, the Province accepted to take charge of a mission in Brazil.

The Province of Belgium South in 1985 had 102 Oblates: 85 Fathers and 17 Brothers.²⁶

Belgium-North

During the first years of its existence, the Province of Belgium-North maintained a team of seven Oblates for the preaching of missions and five others for other forms of preaching. Parish and regional missions were less and less in demand, however. Thus some new activities were added to the former ones. The concrete direction of the Province was formulated in 1980 in the following terms: missions abroad, "the first and oldest option of the Province"²⁷; missions to the people, though this was a lesser activity; preaching to religious

²⁵ Cf. J. OLLES, O.M.I., "Oeuvre de la rue de France, Belgique-Sud", 1 p., in *Rapport-Region d'Europe*, MS.

²⁶ In 1984, in common with the Province of France-East, the Province organized a novitiate at Velaines, Belgium, and a scholasticate at Vendenheim, France. Also cf. L. LHERMITTE, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province de l'Immaculée Conception (Belgique - 1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 99-120; "Province de l'Immaculée Conception (Belgique)", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 232-281; F. ÉTIENNE, O.M.I., "Province Belgique-Sud", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, p. 203-242; C. HOET, O.M.I., *Rapport de la province Belgique-Sud, XXXe Chapitre général 1980*, MS., 8 p.

²⁷ In 1961, the Province accepted to direct the district of West Transvaal in South Africa. Cf. below, p. 449.

women, specialized groups and to youth; publishing catechetical material and the religious formation of adults; parish ministry: in this latter, 23 Oblates were at work, doing their ministry in the spirit of a permanent mission.²⁸

In his report of 1980, the Provincial observed that the sense of community, both on the local and provincial levels, has been growing since the 1970s: "The community with its richness and obligations is being re-discovered"; "it is understood now that the question of what the Flemish Oblates ought to do has no sense if we have not previously found an answer to the question of what they ought to be."²⁹ The beatification in 1975 of the Founder, Eugene de Mazenod, was a help to better situate the charism of the Oblates.

In 1985, the Province had 110 Oblates: 93 Fathers, 2 scholastics and 15 Brothers; its average age was 52.7.³⁰

In Poland

The apostolic activity of the Oblate Missionaries in Poland is based upon the needs of the local Church and is in conformity to the directives of the country's bishops. The first apostolic option of the Province from its beginnings, namely, the preaching of missions and retreats, was the ministry of a large number of Oblates, even as many as sixty at one time. The parish ministry, always an important commitment, in 1980 occupied 66 Fathers in 20 parish and 10 pastoral stations. Moreover, a certain number of Oblates were involved in formation and recruiting.

From the time that it was possible to obtain the authorities' permission to leave the country, the Oblates of Poland

²⁸ *Rapport de la Province de Belgique-Nord pour le chapitre général de 1980*, MS., p. 3.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 6; 2.

³⁰ Cf also: J. ROOSE, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province Regina Mundi (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 121-139; D. ALBERS, O.M.I., "Province Regina Mundi (Belgique)", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 282-326; "Province Belgique-Nord", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 243-260.

have become involved in missions abroad. In 1966 the Province accepted missions in Sweden, in Northern Cameroon in 1972, in Norway in 1980, and at Madagascar in the same year. In 1985, it had 41 missionaries in these missions.

In 1980, the Province had 16 houses, 7 residences and 2 stations in Poland itself. It is intent on developing its religious and community life in fidelity to the Founder's charisma.³¹ It is blessed with an abundance of vocations. Its personnel is in constant increase since 1960: the number of scholastics has risen rapidly from 1980 to 1985, from 67 to 147. In 1985, the Province had a total of 419 Oblates: 229 Fathers, 147 scholastics and 43 Brothers.³²

In Italy

Towards the end of the 1960s, the Oblates of the Province experienced a kind of crisis in the area of authority and the religious community life; there was also some dissatisfaction with the Province's priorities. There was even some consideration given to dividing the Province into the North and the South. This crisis, however, was a crisis of growth and was soon resolved. Two extraordinary Provincial Councils and a Provincial Congress focussed the Oblates' concerns on what is fundamental, internally and externally, in the missionary commitment; added to this was the success of the youth centre opened at Marino, which was a blessing for vocations. These things filled the Province's Oblates with confidence.³³

The Province wants to have its pastoral activity adapted to the present times. The witness of the Oblates as an apostolic community is an integral part of its parish or regional missions.³⁴ Its parish ministry³⁵ is more and more taking on a

³¹ Rapport au Chapitre général de 1980, Province de Pologne, MS., p. 6.

³² Also cf. J. TOMYS, O.M.I., "Province Pologne", in *Missio*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, p. 261-268.

³³ Cf. *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 301-303; *Chapitre général 1980. Rapport de la province d'Italie*, MS., p. 8.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 4, 5.

³⁵ In 1980, 60 Oblates were working in 21 parishes.

missionary color and the option for the foreign missions is ever more strong. The twenty-five Italian missionaries whom the authorities expelled from Laos in 1975, have gone to found missions in Senegal, Indonesia, Uruguay and Cameroon; young confreres from Italy have since joined them. In all these pastoral activities, evangelizing the poor is the top priority.

Vocation work among the youth, begun with the centre at Marino in 1967, has been extended to other localities according to the same well-defined method;³⁶ it brings in a steady flow of novices whose perseverance is remarkably high. This work also promotes the growth of other religious and ecclesiastical vocations.

In 1985, the Province had 252 Oblates: 197 Fathers, 37 scholastics and 18 Brothers.³⁷

In Spain

In 1948, the Vice-Province of Spain³⁸ had, in Spain itself, besides its Oblate formation houses (juniorate, novitiate, scholasticate), communities in Madrid, Malaga and Cuenca which were devoted to the ministry of preaching and parishes. At that time, it was present in Uruguay and Argentina in South America, where nearly half of its members, established in eight residences, were also engaged in preaching and the parish ministry. The works of Uruguay and Argentina were detached from Spain in 1956 and became a distinct Province in themselves.

When these works in Latin America were divided from the Province, Spain was blessed with vocations. The Province

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

³⁷ Also cf. C. IRBICELLA, O.M.I., "Rapport de la province d'Italie au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 660-672; L. PETRIN, O.M.I., "Rapporto della Provincia Italiana (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 152-173; F. MILARDO, O.M.I., "Provincia d'Italia", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 347-381; "Province d'Italie", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 301-326.

³⁸ Cf. above, pp. 90-93. After having been a Province from 1948 to 1985, Spain has reverted to being a Vice-Province.

developed its ministries within Spain and also sent missionaries to the Apostolic Prefecture of Ifni and the Western Sahara: it had accepted this responsibility a short time before, in 1954. After 1975, it had to withdraw most of its missionaries because most of the Spaniards in the Prefecture, to whom the Province had been authorized to minister, left the country which was now occupied by Morocco.

About half of the effective Oblate manpower in Spain remains engaged in the service of the poor in parishes located for the most part in the outskirts of large cities. These parishes are largely populated by people who have come in from the rural areas, who have been attracted to the cities by industry and by the desire to better their socio-economic situation. They nevertheless sometimes suffer from being thus uprooted and from poverty.³⁹

The renewal ushered in by Vatican Council II and the special circumstances of the Spanish milieu occasioned, especially among the young, certain contestations about the formation they were receiving and even about important elements of the religious life. During the decade of the 1970s, the number of scholastics gradually declined to zero. In a Provincial Congress held in 1970, there was "a serious effort made to get in touch again with the religious values that build community."⁴⁰ There have been vocations again in these last few years.

In 1985, the Vice-Province had 74 Oblates: 64 Fathers, 4 scholastics and 6 Brothers.⁴¹

³⁹ Cf. F. ALONSO, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Province d'Espagne (1980)*, MS., p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

⁴¹ Also cf. S. LUCAS, O.M.I., "Rapport de la province d'Espagne (1953)", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 72-82; A. VALBUENA, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province d'Espagne (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 174-187; "Province d'Espagne", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 382-402; "Province d'Espagne", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 327-362.

In Holland

The Vice-Province of Holland⁴², broadened its apostolic field in Holland itself — which until then had been rather limited — by accepting in 1957 the workers' parishes of Capelle in the diocese of Rotterdam and of Santpoort in that of Haarlem. The Vice-Province's mission preachers gave missions until the 1960s: this work practically ceased in the country thereafter. Ever generous in sending missionaries abroad, the Vice-Province in 1949 accepted a mission territory in Surinam in South America.⁴³ A survey of the apostolic work done in the Vice-Province in 1980 showed that 25 Oblates were in the parish ministry, 20 were army chaplains, chaplains of hospitals, prisons, etc., 7 were in teaching and catechetics, 12 in community tasks and others were in various kinds of work.

Towards 1955 and after Vatican II, the Church in the Netherlands took a definite orientation towards secularism as renewal and adaptation to the contemporary society. This position gradually influenced the outlook of a number of the Vice-Province's Oblates and the Vice-Province then began to feel its way to a new future.⁴⁴ Its apostolic commitments are centred on service to the Church, on serving the needy in the Gospel sense. In this, however, the religious life and the apostolic community have not yet found their proper place. A number of members of the Vice-Province work and live alone. The Provincial in 1980, however, noted the following: "These latter years, there is a growing felt need for mutual contact"⁴⁵ and regular regional meetings were being organized.

⁴² Cf. above, pp. 68-69. Since the Province of Holland no longer had 100 members, it was put into the ranks of a Vice-Province in 1985.

⁴³ Cf. below, pp. 409-410.

⁴⁴ Cf. "Province Neerlandaise", in *Missio*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 368-372.

⁴⁵ H. STEENBERGEN, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Province de Hollande*, MS., p. 1.

Recruitment in the Vice-Province is zero or almost so since 1975. In 1985, it had 78 Oblates: 70 Fathers and 8 Brothers.⁴⁶

In Austria

Austria, a country wherein monasteries and long established religious congregations abound, nevertheless had room for the Oblates' activity in areas where the workers live and with the ordinary people. When a group of about 20 Oblates of German origin arrived in 1946, they were given parish ministry and began to devote themselves to the same.⁴⁷ They



Marian shrine of Lauffen, Austria

⁴⁶ Also cf. J. VOOGT, O.M.I., "Rapport de la province de Hollande au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 363-375; A. EVERS, O.M.I., "Report of the Netherlands Province (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 188-304; F. de GRAUW, O.M.I., "Province de Holland", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 403-421.

⁴⁷ Cf. above, pp. 88-89. The Province became a Vice-Province in 1985.

immediately began to preach missions: until the 1970s, seven to ten missionaries were consistently assigned to this task. The death of several mission preachers brought about the cessation of parish missions.

The Oblates in the parishes are carrying out varying tasks in the pastoral ministry. Two parishes are also Marian shrines: Lauffen and Maria Taferl. The latter is much frequented and is seen as the second most important shrine in Austria. Young Oblates who are attached to parishes are serving the workers, the emarginated and prisoners. Some missionaries were able to be freed from ministry in Austria and be sent to the missions abroad.

The juniorate boarding school in Vienna which had been opened shortly after the foundation of the Province, closed its doors as a boarding institution in 1974. The few novices and scholastics are sent to the novitiate and scholasticate in Germany. In 1985, the Vice-Province had 21 Oblates, all of them priests.⁴⁸

Delegation of Scandinavia

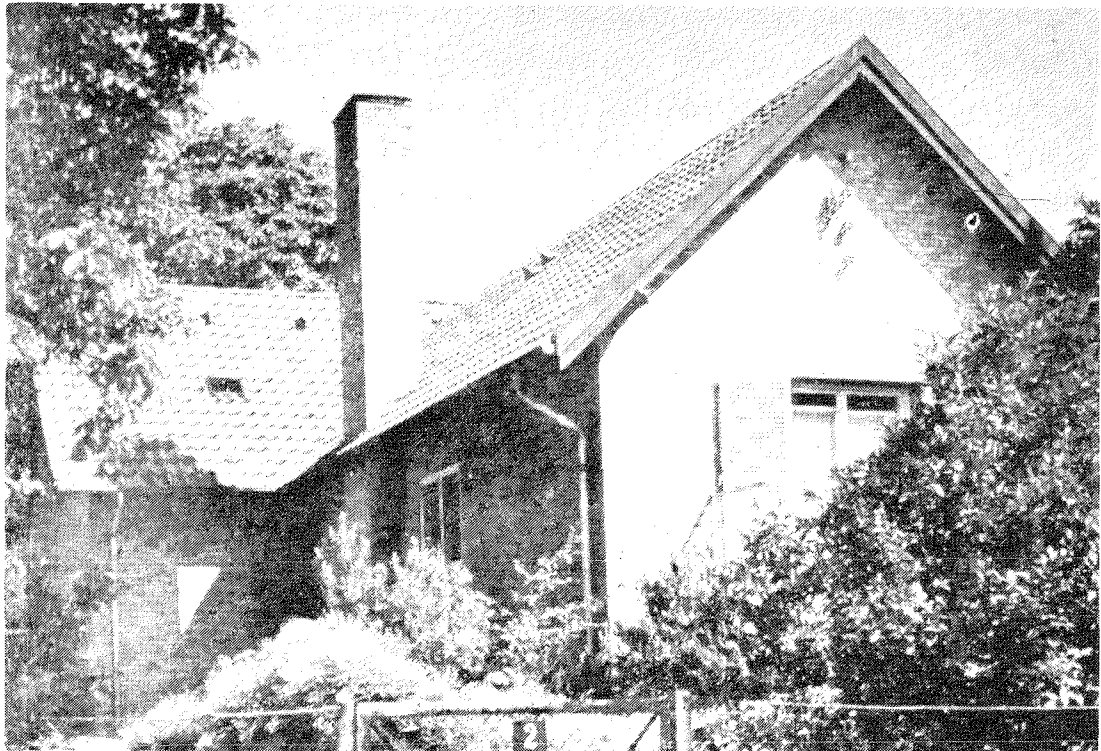
Denmark and Greenland. A new and vast territory was opened to the Oblates' zeal in 1958 when they accepted to work in the diocese of Bishop Theodor Surh, O.S.B., Bishop of Copenhagen and Greenland.⁴⁹ The first missionaries, Fathers John Taylor, Michael Wolfe and Urban Figge, all

⁴⁸ Also cf. J. KROELL, O.M.I., "Province d'Autriche. Rapport présenté au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 50-61; A. von THENEN, O.M.I., "Relatio Provinciae Austriacae ad Capitulum Generale 1959 deferenda", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 205-213; S. HERLT, O.M.I., "Province d'Autriche", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 422-436; "Province d'Autriche", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 1, pp. 379-388; J. PETER, O.M.I., *Rapport au Chapitre général 1980*, MS., 2 p.

⁴⁹ Cf. L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., Circ. 219, August 2, 1965, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 7, pp. 126-130. Agreement signed between the Bishop of Copenhagen and the Oblates, April 13, 1958, ratified the following April 21 by the S.C. of Propaganda Fide. The administration of the mission was entrusted to United States Central Province on May 1, 1958. Cf. "Les Oblats en Scandinavie", in *Missions*, 91 (1964), pp. 383-387.

from the United States Central Province — to whom the mission had been entrusted — arrived in Copenhagen in 1958 itself. The Bishop assigned them to a new parish opened at Herlev on the periphery of Copenhagen: here they were to establish a solid base for the mission of Greenland. Other parishes in Denmark were entrusted to them thereafter: at Randers, Bronshøj, Viborg, Aalborg, etc.

Father Wolfe was assigned to found a mission on the huge island of Greenland. After he had initiated himself by studying the island's language and history, he visited it for one month in 1959, returned again in 1960, and definitively established himself at Godthaab, the capital city, in 1961. There



The first Oblate house, at Herlev in Denmark

were less than 60 Catholics dispersed over the whole island, living in the midst of a population of about 35,000 faithful of the Lutheran religion. "Because it was impossible to do the work of a missionary there"⁵⁰, the number of missionaries,

⁵⁰ *Délégation de Scandinavie (Province centrale des États-Unis)*, MS., p. 1.

which had been three, was reduced to one.⁵¹

The Bishop of Copenhagen requested the Oblates to look after a small Catholic community of Thorshavn, the capital city of the Faroe Islands. Father Alex Kons devoted himself to this ministry from 1972 to 1977; in 1978 he was replaced by an Oblate from the Province of Belgium-North.⁵²

In Sweden. At the insistent request of the Apostolic Delegate of Scandinavia, the mission in Sweden was officially accepted on January 10, 1962. Shortly afterwards, on July 2, 1962, Father John Taylor was named Bishop of Stockholm, a diocese which extended to the whole of the country. The mission in Sweden was entrusted to the Central United States Province.

The first two Fathers arrived in September 1962. The Oblates were given two parishes in the outskirts of the capital city, and then the whole northern part of Sweden. Here they established themselves at Lulea in November 1964. From this centre, they visited the small groups of Catholics dispersed across this vast area. Twenty kilometres from their mission, they established a Catholic centre known as Marieback, a community that welcomes visitors, retreatants and people who are passing through. Other mission posts have been opened at Sundsvall, Taby, Umeaa.⁵³

In Norway. At the request of the Bishop of Oslo, Norway, the Oblates of the United States Central Province in 1977 accepted to found a mission at Stavanger — here the population consists of Norwegians, Americans and Frenchmen — and another at Haugesund, to serve some 150 dispersed Catholics in the area.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Cf. J. E. TAYLOR, O.M.I., "Copenhagen to Greenland", in *Missions*, 85 (1958), pp. 441-444; M. WOLFE, O.M.I., "Les Oblats au Groenland", *ibidem*, 90 (1963), pp. 45-63; AROMI, 1958, p. 49; 1959, pp. 29-30, 103.

⁵² Cf. A. KONS, O.M.I., "Faroe Islands Mission", in *Vie Oblate Life*, 34 (1975), pp. 39-44; *Information OMI*, 59/71, p. 8.

⁵³ "With the Oblates in Sweden", in *Missions*, 92 (1965), pp. 212-220.

⁵⁴ "Nouvelle mission oblate en Norvège", in *Information OMI*, 130/77, pp. 1-3.

The missions of Denmark-Greenland, Sweden and Norway entrusted to the United States Central Province have been established as a Provincial Delegation. In 1985, it had 19 Oblates: 17 Fathers and two Brothers.⁵⁵

The Polish Mission in Sweden-Norway

At the request of Bishop Taylor, O.M.I., the Bishop of Stockholm, the Oblates of Poland established themselves in 1966 in the pastoral district of Landskrona-Hassleholm in southern Sweden; here they were to look after Catholics who were mainly immigrants, a good number of them their own compatriots.

Other Oblates from Poland were sent to Norway. They established themselves at Halden in 1980 in order to look after the Catholics of the area and the Polish immigrants who had moved there.

In 1985, the Polish Mission in Sweden-Norway had 9 Oblates, all of them priests.⁵⁶

Some common characteristics of the Region

While it is too soon to assess the events that have marked the life of the Oblates during the course of these last decades, there are nevertheless certain common characteristics which can be easily discerned, evident as they are in realities that are at times very different from each other.

During the years that important changes in the Church and the society were taking place, the Oblates were reviewing

⁵⁵ Also cf. S. C. SERGOT, O.M.I., "Report on Central United States Province (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 226-228; "Central United States Province", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 353-367; "Oblates in Scandinavia", *ibidem*, 94 (1967), pp. 563-570; "Scandinavian Mission", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 522-526.

⁵⁶ *Information OMI*, 58/71, p. 9; J. PIELORZ, O.M.I., "Les Oblats polonais en Suède (21 mars 1966 - 21 novembre 1967)" in *Missions*, 94 (1967), pp. 501-511.

their traditional work, namely, preaching missions: it was seen as no longer responding adequately to peoples' major needs.

From 1968 to 1972, most of the Provinces held Provincial Congresses which were very important. Each of the Provinces took a clear orientation toward evangelizing the poor of the world today, a category that they tried to define precisely in a way that would not deviate from the vision of Bl. Eugene de Mazenod, the Founder of the Oblates. The poor are those who result as such from today's social, economic and political situations: those who do not believe, the youth in distress (unemployed, disoriented, victims of drugs), the poor of the 4th world who are more and more poor in a rich society, immigrants and migrants.

At the same time, these orientation congresses accepted a variety of ways by which the Oblates could get in touch with the poor: permanent insertion into the milieux of unbelief, special works for one or other category of poor people, renewed pastoral care in the parish sectors, and even a return — with appropriate methods — to the parish missions which, during the last years of the period being considered here, is more and more in demand in certain Provinces. The mission "ad gentes" remains an important priority in the Provinces.

Besides this orientation towards today's poor people, a renewal of community life is being achieved in different degrees in the ensemble of the Provinces. Provincial congresses are more frequent and so are meetings of Oblates in the various active domains. A greater awareness of the values of the apostolic community is developing. Attention given to the charism proper to Bl. Eugene de Mazenod, to his beatification and to the adoption of the Constitutions and Rules have inspired a useful return to Oblate sources.

The general vocation crisis within the Church, however, is still affecting most of the Provinces. Two are real exceptions here, the Provinces of Poland and Italy, both of whom are blessed with good recruiting.

In a word, the Oblates of Europe are still very much committed and active; they remain convinced of their *raison d'être*, and even of the urgent need of this *raison d'être* as missionaries to the new categories of poor people in today's Church and society.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Cf. A. SCHNEIDER, O.M.I., "Europe, Rapport du XXXe Chapitre Général", in AAG, vol. 5, suppl., pp. 177-201; "Rapport-Region Europe", (1984), MS., n.p., prepared for the Inter-Chapter meeting of 1984.

CHAPTER 13

The Region of Canada 1947-1985

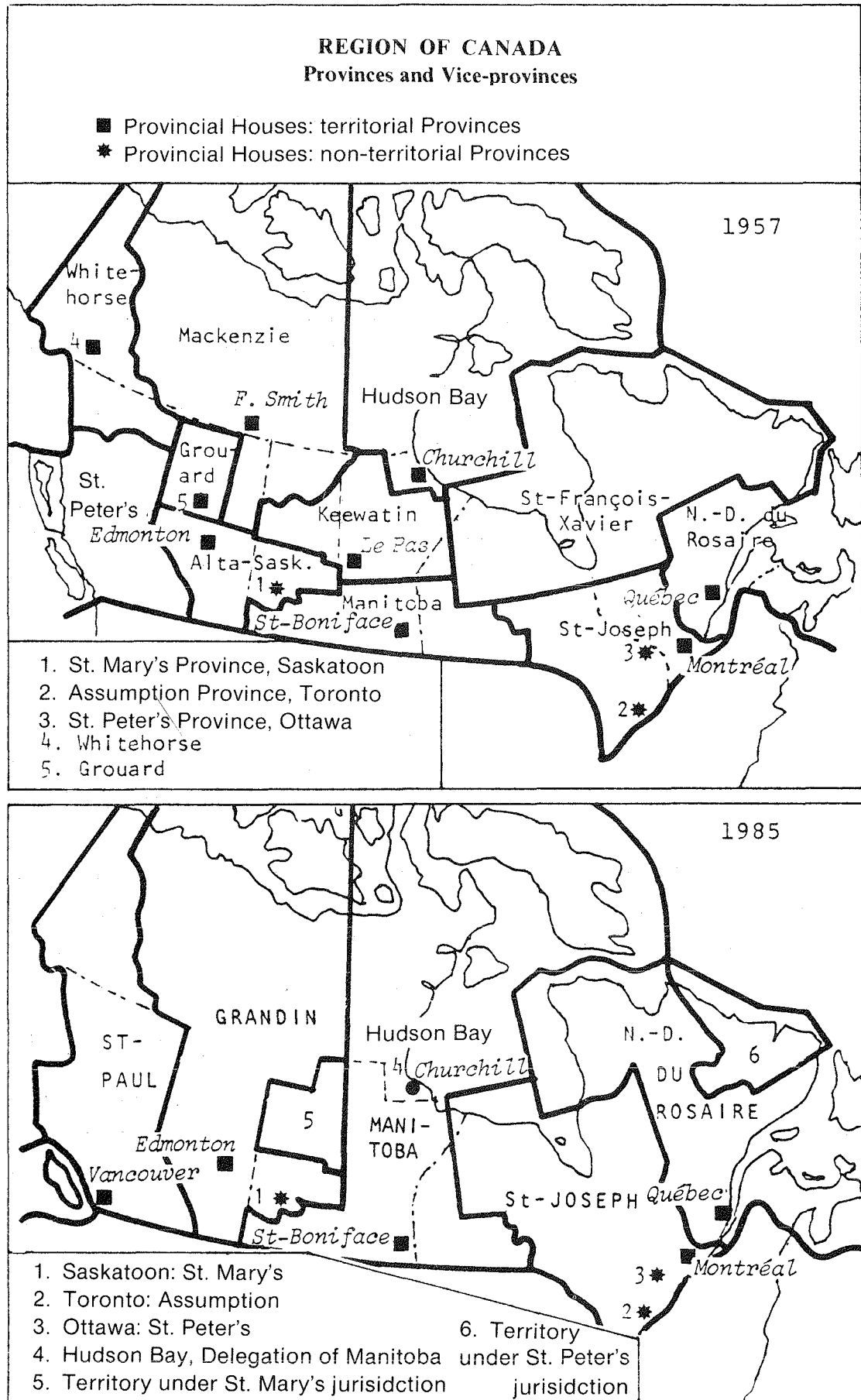
The Province of Canada-East 1947-1957 – The Province of St. Joseph – The Province of Notre-Dame du Rosaire – The Vice-Province of James Bay-Labrador 1957-1977 – The Province of Manitoba: the Southern Sector – The Keewatin Sector – Delegation of Hudson Bay – The Grandin Province – In the Southern Dioceses – In the Diocese of Grouard-MacLennan – In the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith – St. Peter's Province – St. Paul's Province – The Vice-Province of Whitehorse 1947-1982 – St. Mary's Province – The Vice-Province of Assumption – An Overview of the Region.

The Region of Canada, whose Provinces and Vice-Provinces were at one time as many as fourteen, in 1985 had only eight: the Provinces of St. Joseph, Notre-Dame du Rosaire, St. Peter's, Manitoba, Grandin, St. Mary's and St. Paul's; and the Vice-Province of Assumption. The Vice-Province of Hudson Bay has been integrated into the Province of Manitoba as a Provincial Delegation. In 1985, these eight Provinces and Vice-Provinces had 1328 Oblates and covered the entire country from east to west and to the far north.

The Province of Canada-East 1947-1985

Before its division in 1957, the Province of Canada-East¹ had a very large personnel: in 1952, it had risen as high as 963 Oblates: 486 Fathers, 200 scholastics and 277 Brothers, not

¹ Cf. above, pp. 95 ff.



counting the 102 postulants and novices. During the six previous years, it had given 150 men to other Provinces and missions, postulants and novices included.² It had many and varied works: teaching, missions among the Indians and in Latin America, parish ministry, preaching, closed retreats, Catholic action, Marian shrine, chaplaincies, etc.

From 1947 to 1957, the Province opened two classical colleges, one at Rouyn in 1948, the other at Jonquière in 1955; started missions in Chile in 1948, in Bolivia in 1952, and took the direction of the Indian schools at Saint-Marc-de-Figuert and of Sept Îles. During these same years, the University of Ottawa and the national shrine at Cap-de-la-Madeleine were marvellously developed.

In 1957, the Province of Canada-East was divided into three parts: the western part became the Province of St. Joseph — it kept the seat of the Canada-East Province at Montreal; the eastern part became the Province of Notre-Dame du Rosaire, with its centre at Quebec; and the northern part became the Vice-Province of James Bay-Labrador, whose centre was also established at Montreal.³

The Province of St. Joseph

The Province of St. Joseph had inherited a large personnel and many important works: it had to take stock of its situation and re-orient itself. In Ottawa, the rapid and demanding expansion of the University of Ottawa obliged the Province to cede in 1965 the direction and responsibility for this work into other hands⁴; the ecclesiastical faculties were

² S. A. LA ROCHELLE, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province du Canada (Est) au Chapitre général 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), p. 85.

³ The boundary separating the Provinces of St. Joseph and Notre-Dame du Rosaire was the western boundary of the Chicoutimi, Three Rivers, Nicolet and Quebec dioceses. The Bay James-Labrador Vice-Province extended over the same territory as the Apostolic Vicariates of the same names; its centre was at Montreal because it was the best place from which it could communicate to the whole of the Vice-Province.

⁴ The Oblates continued to work at the University of Ottawa after 1965.

retained in the University of Saint Paul.⁵ New realities that arose in the Church and Society during the 1960s had serious repercussions on the Province: retreat preaching greatly declined; its four houses of closed retreats ceased functioning one after the other due to lack of clientele; the college at Rouyn became a public educational institution; religious practice greatly diminished in the parishes; the work of Catholic Action went into eclipse and a rapid, radical decline in vocations resulted in a drop in personnel and either the closure of



Saint Paul University. To the right, Saint Paul Seminary

Father Roger Guindon, who was rector of this University at the time that it became a public corporation, was retained in that post until 1984.

⁵ Saint Paul University is, juridically speaking, the former University of Ottawa under a new name. By an agreement, it is federated to the new University of Ottawa and restricts its development to the ecclesiastical domain.

the Oblate formation houses or their transformation into something else.

During this period of change, the Provincial Council in its ordinary and extraordinary sessions, seriously evaluated the Province's works and ministries. The priorities of the Indian missions and Saint Paul University were retained; other priorities were the pastoral care of the family, missionary insertion of restricted groups of Oblates into the populated quarters of the cities of Montreal, Ottawa and Hull, and evangelization through the use of the social means of communications. These orientations were sanctioned in the great session held in 1970 at Ottawa when more than 300 Oblates became collectively aware of the new situation.

Other initiatives were added. The Procure of Missions in Montreal, now renamed the Oblate Missionary Centre, was organized as a true centre of missionary animation and as a more effective organism to assist the missions materially. The Saint-Pierre-Apôtre Centre at Montreal was established whose general purpose is to evangelize populated areas and also the missionary insertion into the mass media.

From 1967 onwards, a new style of community animation has been introduced into the Province by establishing several provincial commissions and by a carefully prepared and guided activity of the local Superiors.

The Province of St. Joseph was enlarged in 1977 when the Vice-Province of Bay James-Labrador was suppressed and the territory of the diocese of Moosonee was added to that of the Province. In 1985, the Province had a total of 411 members: 269 Fathers, 139 Brothers and 3 scholastics.⁶

⁶ Cf. also S. DUCHARME, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province de St-Joseph de Montréal (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 217-280; J.-Ch. LAFRAMBOISE, O.M.I., "Province Saint-Joseph de Montréal", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 437-543; "Province Saint-Joseph (Montréal)", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, p. 1-12; F. VALLEE, O.M.I., *Province Saint-Joseph (Montréal) - Rapport au XXXe Chapitre général* (1980), MS., 14 p.

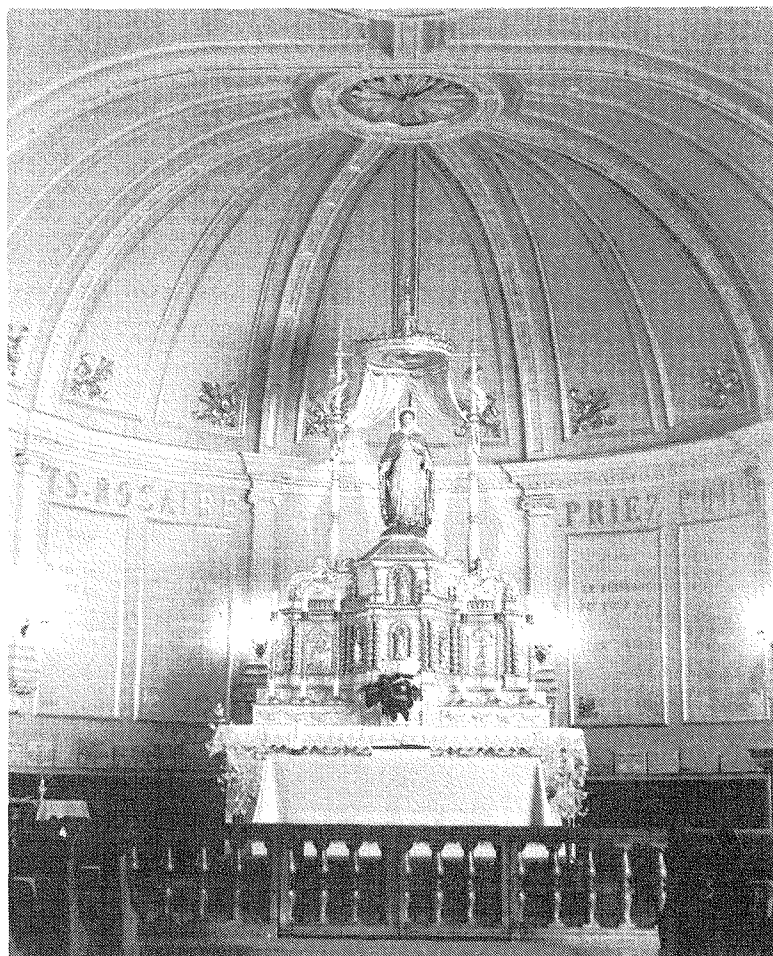
The Province of Notre-Dame du Rosaire

The Province of Notre-Dame du Rosaire resulted from the division of the Province of Canada-East; it inherited a personnel of 250 Oblates (117 Fathers, 96 scholastics and 37 Brothers) distributed over 16 houses and residences, as well as an ensemble of flourishing works: closed retreats, Indian missions, Indian boarding school at Sept Iles, parishes, the Marian shrine at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, the college at Jonquière and various chaplaincies.

While former works continue to progress, new works were begun. Among the latter were: in 1959, a classical school in Quebec, called College Saint-Vallier; in 1960, an Indian boarding school at Pointe-Bleue; in 1962, a parish at Chibougamau; in 1965, a house for students at Cap-Rouge. Later, in 1977, the missions of the diocese Labrador-Schefferville located in Quebec became this Province's responsibility.

The social and religious changes that came in during the 1960s resulted in some upheavals, however: the colleges of Saint-Vallier and Jonquière passed into the public educational system; the Indians schools at Sept Iles and Pointe Bleue were closed; the retreat houses of Mont-Joli and Edmunston ceased functioning as such; the departures, as well as weak recruitment, greatly reduced the ranks of the scholastics and the number of Oblates in the Province declined.

On the other hand, some works were doing well. The four houses of closed retreats which had been maintained were henceforth designated as Christian renewal centres, changed their pastoral ministry and were successful. One of them, Jésus-Ouvrier, already made famous by its founder, Father Victor LeLièvre, became a school for the formation of laity and has been attracting a large clientele with its many different activities. The shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, regardless of the decline of religious practice in the country, continues to receive thousands of pilgrims every year. A majestic basilica begun in 1955 was completed in 1964. The pastoral ministry in this much frequented place has been



*The sanctuary of the shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary
Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Canada*

greatly renewed and includes well thought-out initiatives that are carried out by a team.

Provincial congresses, regional meetings and other initiatives have been animating the communities and apostolic works. In 1985, the Province had 208 members: 154 Fathers, 50 Brothers and 4 scholastics.⁷

⁷ Also cf. J.-Ch. LAFRAMBOISE, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province Notre-Dame-du-Très-Saint-Rosaire (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 281-313; P.-H. BARABE, O.M.I., "Province Notre-Dame du Très-Saint-Rosaire de Québec", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 565-643; Y. ISABELLE, O.M.I., "Province Saint-Rosaire", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 13-28 plus appendices; G. LAPRISE, O.M.I., *Province Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire (Québec) — Rapport au XXXe Chapitre général (1980)*, MS., 18 p.

The Vice-Province of James Bay-Labrador, 1957-1977

The Vice-Province of James Bay-Labrador⁸ includes the two Apostolic Vicariates of James Bay and Labrador⁹: the missionary situation in each is rather different. In 1957, the missions of the James Bay Vicariate were already well established. Few changes came later: the founding of Post Bay on Lake Mistassini in 1958 and discontinued in 1972; the abandoning of the missions of Eastmain, Vieux-comptoir and Fort Severn, the population of which was nearly all Protestant. The civil developments of this region, however, have greatly improved the temporal existence of these missions. Thus the heavy task of providing for the material needs of life at the missions, which task had been carried out with heroic devotedness by the Fathers and Brothers, had come to an end.

In 1957, the Vicariate of Labrador-Schefferville was in full change: parishes of Whites and Indian missions were being established in Labrador and in New Quebec.¹⁰ On the Basse-Côte-Nord, the ministry takes in several small stations of Indians and Whites.¹¹ The few Eskimo missions, isolated in the

⁸ Before 1967, the Vice-Province of James Bay-Labrador was called the Vicariat of Missions Saint-François-Xavier.

⁹ By decree of July 13, 1967, the eight Apostolic Vicariates of Canadian North became dioceses and were arranged as two ecclesiastical provinces: the Archdiocese of Grouard-MacLennan and its suffragan dioceses of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, Prince George and Whitehorse; the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas and its suffragan dioceses of Churchill-Hudson Bay, Labrador-Schefferville and Moosonee.

¹⁰ In Labrador: Davis Inlet, North West River, Happy Valley, Black Tickle, Labrador City and Wabush; in New Quebec: a parish for Whites and an Indian mission at Schefferville, and a mission at Fort Chimo. In 1957, Bishop Lionel Scheffer, O.M.I., the Vicar Apostolic, transferred the seat of his Vicariate from Lourdes-de-Blanc-Sablon to Schefferville.

¹¹ With the encouragement of missionary Father Gabriel Dionne, a meeting of some twenty agglomerates of the Basse-Côte-Nord in February 1961 founded the "Conseil Economique de la Basse Côte Nord", an organism of cooperation and promotion which has proven to be very effective. Cf. Gabriel DIONNE, O.M.I., *La voix d'un silence, Histoire et vie de la Basse Côte Nord*, Lemeac, 1985, 278 p., particularly pp. 132-160.

north of Quebec, were from 1963 to 1974 under the jurisdiction of the Oblates of Hudson Bay, whose apostolate is almost exclusively with the Eskimo.

The Vice-Province of Bay James-Labrador was suppressed in 1977. The diocese of Moosonee was attached to the Province of St. Joseph and the diocese of Labrador-Schefferville was added to the territory of the Province of Notre-Dame du Rosaire, except for the Labrador section which was attached to St. Peter's Province.¹²

When it was founded in 1957, the Vice-Province had 2 bishops, 46 Fathers and 35 Brothers; when it was suppressed in 1977, it had 2 bishops, 34 Fathers and 29 Brothers.

The Province of Manitoba

The territory of the Province of Manitoba was considerably enlarged in 1983. To its former territory, located mostly in the southern part of the civil provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, were added in the north the diocese of Churchill-Hudson Bay and the Manitoba side of the diocese of Keewatin-Le Pas. The group of Oblates in the diocese of Churchill-Hudson Bay have been formed into a Provincial Delegation.¹³

¹² The parishes of Goose Bay and Happy Valley and the missions of Davis Inlet, North West River and Black Tickle had already been entrusted to St. Peter's Province by decree of the Superior General of May 31, 1974. Also cf. L. LEGUERRIER, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat de Missions Saint-François-Xavier (1959)", *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 321-350; M. MONGEAU, O.M.I., "Vicariat Saint-François-Xavier (Baie James et Labrador)", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 644-670; "Province Saint-François-Xavier (Baie James-Labrador)", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 77-86.

¹³ Changes in the Province of Manitoba's territory since 1947 are as follows: in 1953, the Province ceded to the United States Central Province 1 house, 1 residence and 2 stations in the diocese of Duluth; in 1957, the Province accepted a part of the diocese of Thunder Bay which had belonged to the Province of Canada-East; in 1983, the territories of Keewatin and Hudson Bay were integrated into the Province; and finally, still in 1983, the Province ceded to St. Mary's Province the missions of the Archdiocese of Keewatin that were located in Saskatchewan.

The southern sector

In its southern sector, that is to say, the territory that belonged to it prior to 1983,¹⁴ the Province of Manitoba before the 1970s was looking after Indians in a number of missions and in eleven residential schools that had a total enrolment of 2238 (1966). More than one hundred Sisters were engaged in these schools.¹⁵ For the Whites, the Province maintained a team of some preachers, and a house of closed retreats; it was responsible for some parishes, quasi-parishes and stations; it supported the apostolate of the press, i.e. *The Canadian Publishers*¹⁶, and since 1920 was in charge of Collège Matthieu at Gravelbourg.

Afterwards, under the impact of the questioning and renewal taking place within the society and the Church, the Province had to give up the important work of the Indian residential schools, the direction of Collège Mathieu of Gravelbourg, and the work of *The Canadian Publishers*. The scarcity of vocations resulted in the closure of the Oblate formation houses — juniorate, novitiate and scholasticate — and it affected the Province's personnel in its regular renewal.

Shaken by these events, the Province regained some of its vitality with an important Congress held in 1971 which adopted with a quasi-unanimity priority orientations concerning community life and apostolic objectives. Annual provincial congresses held thereafter have been strengthening the Province's unity, have encouraged renewal according to the Council

¹⁴ Cf. above, pp. 124-126.

¹⁵ In 1953, Father Apollinaire Plamondon opened a minor seminary for Indians. Soon afterwards, this work was taken on by the Archbishop of St. Boniface.

¹⁶ Father Aimé Lizée, the Provincial, wrote in 1966: "The only Catholic newspapers of the dioceses of Winnipeg and St. Boniface are the result of the work of a team of Oblates who in this domain are doing an excellent missionary work", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 779.

and have also resulted in personal and community commitments in line with this renewal.¹⁷

The Keewatin sector

In their tenacious and hard-working zeal, the missionaries of the Vicariate of Keewatin were present in the Vicariate's main Indian centres. A number of them lived separated from their confreres and many of them spent their life in these missions to the very end. About 50 Fathers and 30 Brothers were regularly at work among the Indians: this was practically the only work in the Vicariate for a long period of time.

In spite of the generous efforts put forth for recruitment, the number of missionaries diminished from the 1960s onwards. Those who died could not be replaced and missions were being deprived of their resident priests. At the same time, Whites, attracted by mining developments, were rapidly increasing in number. The White population rose to 39,000 in 1971 and was 65% of the Vicariate's population when in 1967 the Vicariate became an Archdiocese. Thus ministry to the Whites, nearly all of whom were English speaking and 20% were Catholic, required more and more missionaries.

In 1983, the merging of the Vice-Province of Keewatin with the Province of Manitoba and the ceding to St. Mary's Province of the missions in the province of Saskatchewan was a timely assistance to the Keewatin missionaries.¹⁸

¹⁷ J.-P. AUBRY, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province du Manitoba au XXXe Chapitre général (1980)", MS., p. 1-7; also cf. P. PICHÉ, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province du Manitoba au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 376-418; I. TOURIGNY, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province du Manitoba (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 371-402; A. LIZÉE, O.M.I., "Province du Manitoba (années 1960 à 1965 incl.)", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 715-779; "Province Manitoba", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 119-168.

¹⁸ Cf. Ph. SCHEFFER, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le Vicariat du Keewatin au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 425-439; L. POIRIER, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat du Keewatin (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 490-502; R. RHO, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Keewatin", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 938-952; E. RINGUET, O.M.I., "Vice-Province Keewatin", *ibidem*, 98 (1971),

Delegation of Hudson Bay

Evangelizing the Eskimos of Hudson Bay, begun in 1911, had to change direction. "The era of 'conquests' is over and, in terms of religious outlook, the stance is taken: at least nominally, all the Eskimos are Christian, either Catholic or Anglican. We are now in the era of deepening and assimilating and the Fathers' efforts are oriented in this direction."¹⁹ This deepening is all the more urgent because the missionaries are aware that "the Eskimo society, in conformity to the image of the White society which is invading it from all sides, will less and less be a Christian society."²⁰ The missionaries are hoping to establish gradually a local Church that is more Eskimo and autonomous through the formation of community leaders and the ever greater involvement of the faithful in different ministries.

This orientation is manifest in certain initiatives. Already in 1954, under the leadership of Vicar Apostolic Bishop Marc Lacroix, O.M.I., a first boarding school was opened at Chesterfield Inlet whose purpose was to form an Eskimo elite according to Christian principles. In 1969, a school for Eskimo catechists was founded at Pelly Bay and it has had a success that is encouraging. In 1973, Father Louis Fournier began a contemplative community at Ikpik on Baffin Island, which has become a prayer centre. From 1974 onwards, through the initiative of the Bishop of the diocese, Bishop Omer Robidoux, O.M.I., the missionaries meet every year for 15 days to make their annual retreat and for a session of missionary pastoral concerns.

suppl. 2, pp. 343-352; J.-P. AUBRY, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Vice-province du Keewatin au Chapitre général 1980*, MS., 11 p.

¹⁹ R. HARAMBURU, O.M.I., "Vicariat de la Baie d'Hudson" in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 956.

²⁰ R. LECHAT, O.M.I., *Rapport vice-province de la Baie d'Hudson (Janv. 1980)*, MS., p. 7.

In 1985, the Oblates of Hudson Bay, who have not received any reinforcements for several years now, were only 21 in number.²¹

The Grandin Province

In September 1985, the Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan and the Vice-Provinces of Grouard and Mackenzie were re-structured so as to form but one single Province under the name of Grandin Province.²² This new Province includes a large territory which runs from the United States-Canada boundary to the Arctic Ocean.

In the southern dioceses

The southern part of the Province takes in the dioceses of Edmonton, Prince Albert, Calgary, Saskatoon and Saint Paul. More than one third of the Oblates have regularly been engaged in ministry to the Indians and Metis. They have been in charge of many missions and stations, have been looking after Indians who have moved into the urban milieux of Edmonton and Calgary, and have directed Indian industrial schools. These schools were at their peak during the 1950s and 1960s, but thereafter quickly disappeared because of Government policies and trends within the Indian communities.²³ Different initiatives were made by the missionaries to promote the Indian's integral development and to help him to be a mature Christian. "Our aim is that the Indians gradually assume responsibility for the Church that is theirs. To achieve this goal, we are encouraging the Indians to participate actively at all levels."²⁴

²¹ Also cf. J.-M. COCHARD, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat de la Baie d'Hudson (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 503-510; "Vice-province Baie d'Hudson", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 353-356.

²² Cf. *Communiqué OMI*, 39/85.

²³ M. JOLY, O.M.I., *Province Alberta-Saskatchewan, Rapport pour le Chapitre général 1980*, MS., p. 5.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

A large portion of Oblates was dedicated to serving the White population in parishes and stations, in preaching, in a house of closed retreats opened at St. Albert in 1953, and in chaplaincies. Others were at work in the secondary and university college of Saint-Jean, Edmonton: this institution has become the Saint-Jean Faculty where courses are given in French at the University of Alberta.

After an Oblate Congress in 1973 on the problem of vocations, a house was opened, under the name of Nicodemus House, for young people to discern their vocation. It has been a very active place. The Province has established its Oblate formation program, its novitiate and scholasticate in collaboration with the Provinces of St. Paul, St. Mary's and St. Peter's.

In 1985, this part of the Province had 66 Fathers, 16 Brothers and 3 scholastics.²⁵

In the diocese of Grouard-MacLennan

The Oblates in the diocese of Grouard-MacLennan were largely occupied in looking after the Indians and Metis and of an important portion of Catholic Whites in the Archdiocese of Grouard-MacLennan²⁶ and have been at work mainly in missions, quasi-parishes and stations. Until the 1960s, they were in charge of Indian residential schools and of Collège Notre-Dame de la Paix at Falher. This college was founded in 1951; its purpose was to prepare young people for the priesthood and to form a Christian lay elite. In 1971, it became the Centre de Notre-Dame de la Paix, an educational and pastoral centre that provides various services for the diocesan community.

²⁵ Also cf. J.-O. FOURNIER, O.M.I., "Rapport de la province d'Alberta-Saskatchewan au Chapitre de 1953" in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 175-184; G. MICHAUD, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province d'Alberta-Saskatchewan (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 403-415; G.-M. LATOUR, O.M.I., "Province d'Alberta-Saskatchewan", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 780-824; "Province d'Alberta-Saskatchewan", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 169-196.

²⁶ Some Oblates from St. Mary's Province, some Redemptorists and secular priests are working in the Archdiocese of Grouard MacLennan.

The missionaries' first concern has been to implant the Church as solidly as possible in the area entrusted to them. "To the sensational conquests of the pioneers has succeeded the hidden and at times debilitating activity of those who are consolidating the acquired positions."²⁷ The modernization of the area, the building of large arteries of paved roads which provide new accesses in every direction, the centralization of education both for the Indians and the Whites, as well as other factors of modern living greatly affect the missionaries' activity.²⁸

With the assistance of the Canadian Oblate Conference and the missionary Bishops of the West and the North, the Kisemanito Centre was opened at Grouard in 1980. This is a promising institution. It is trying to prepare Indians, Metis and Eskimo for the priesthood or for the non-ordained ministries. It is being conducted according to an educational method that is clearly incarnated in the Amerindian culture.²⁹

The active manpower in the diocese of Grouard-MacLennan has been declining since 1962; in 1985, there were 39 Oblates: 33 Fathers and 6 Brothers.³⁰

In the diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

In 1953, 60 Fathers and 46 Brothers in the diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith³¹ were serving a Catholic population of 3961 Indians, 2406 Metis, 190 Eskimo and 1465 Whites, that

²⁷ J. MARSAN, O.M.I., "Vicariat de Grouard", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 877.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 894.

²⁹ Cf. J. JOHNSON, O.M.I., "Kisemanito Centre Training Native Men for the Priesthood", in *Kerygma*, 37 (1981), pp. 111-122.

³⁰ Cf. also A. BOUCHER, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat de Grouard au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 419-424; M. LAVIGNE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat de Grouard (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 448-464; J. MARSAN, O.M.I., "Vice-Province Grouard", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 225-256; Cl. RICHER, O.M.I., *Rapport de la vice-province de Grouard pour le XXXe Chapitre général 1980*, MS., 10 p.

³¹ The Oblates are the only priests in the diocese.

is, 60% of the population — the rest belonged to the Protestant religion. Besides missions and stations, the Oblates were looking after four Indian residential schools and three day-schools, six hospitals and four orphanages: in these institutions, a hundred Grey Nuns of Montreal were also at work.³²

Because of the accelerated exploitation of the area's natural resources, the White population soon increased from about 5000 in 1953 to 13,400 in 1959, and continued to grow thereafter; roads were coming into the North; airlines and telephone lines were crossing the territory; the Government became more and more conspicuous in the North, installed a system of public education, opened day-schools in the large centres, put an end to the residential schools and took charge of the hospitals. These changes ushered in a new social and economic situation: the image of the North was more and more different.³³

More and more the missionaries saw the need of establishing a living and flourishing local Church in a society that was becoming more and more secularized, even in these distant regions.³⁴ The general vocation crisis, however, as well as the great urgent needs elsewhere in the Congregation have considerably reduced missionary reinforcement.

In 1985, the effective Oblate manpower in the diocese consists of only 33 Fathers, 20 Brothers and 1 scholastic.

St. Peter's Province

In 1947, the Province of St. Peter's, whose administrative centre is in Ottawa, extended to all the English-speaking Oblate works in Canada. Due in part to the restoration of its

³² Cf. J. MICHEL, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat du Mackenzie au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 190, 195-198.

³³ Cf. L. CASTERMAN, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Mackenzie", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 895-898.

³⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 915; G. MOUSSEAU, O.M.I., "Vice-province Mackenzie", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, p. 264; J. PORTE, O.M.I., *Vice-Province du Mackenzie, Rapport pour le Chapitre général de 1980*, MS., p. 1.

finances, it was constantly and even rapidly growing. St. Patrick's College was developing its high school, courses and university activities. Another educational work was St. Francis Xavier high school, opened in Edmonton in 1958 and the Central Catholic High School in London, Ontario, in 1963. The number of parishes it was serving rose from 16 in 1947 to 47 in 1966: included here are 4 parishes in Peru which were accepted in 1963. Through missions on the reserves and eight residential schools, it was ministering to the Indians, especially in British Columbia. Recruitment was steady until about 1968: there was usually a group of some 50 to 60 scholastics.

In 1968, the Province was deprived of its personnel and works in Alberta and British Columbia by the establishment of St. Paul's Province which took charge of these. Later, in 1977, it became responsible for the Labrador part of the diocese of Labrador-Schefferville where it had already been serving some parishes and missions since 1974.

At the end of the 1960s, the Province was for a time deeply shaken by the upheavals of rapid change that was affecting society. There occurred the selling of St. Patrick's College, the closing of their novitiate for lack of novices, the sale of the scholasticate, the house of closed retreats near Ottawa, the laicization of some of its members. The Provincial Congresses of 1972 and 1973 enabled the Province to take stock and to reorient itself. In 1974, a pre-novitiate and a novitiate were opened; small fraternal and active communities were developping; there was a regaining of confidence. In 1980, the Provincial wrote: "In the Province there is an attitude filled with hope and there are permanent signs of new life."³⁵

³⁵ E. MacNEIL, O.M.I., *Province St. Peter's, Ottawa. Rapport pour le XXXe Chapitre général 1980*, MS., pp. 1-5. Also cf. J. R. BIRCH, O.M.I., "Report of St. Peter's Province to the General Chapter (1953)", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 154-168; L. K. POUPORE, O.M.I., "Report on St. Peter's Province (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 351-370; G. E. COUSINEAU, O.M.I., "Province of St. Peter's", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 671-714; "Saint Peter's Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 87-108.

In 1985, the personnel of the Province (including Peru) consisted of 81 Fathers, 11 Brothers and 18 scholastics.

St. Paul's Province

The Vice-Province of St. Paul's was established in 1968 — it became a Province in 1973 — and inherited the Oblate entities in British Columbia and English speaking apostolic concerns in Alberta: up to this time, St. Peter's Province had been looking after all these. From its very beginning, it has been busy mainly in ministering to Indians and manning some parishes of Whites.

A major feature of its apostolate disappeared after 1970 when the Indian residential schools were abandoned because of a change of outlook among the Indians. This event also entailed the loss of certain Indian reserves which had for a long time been served by the Oblates; at the same time, this occasioned a review of the apostolate among the Indians. The future apostolate to the Indians was more oriented towards the adults and the family and was also characterized by more openness to the people. New initiatives were taken: training Indians to leadership qualities in Kamloops and in the area of Fort St. James; specialized apostolic experiences midst the Indians in an urban milieu; a rehabilitation centre for Indians with alcohol problems was opened in the former Indian Christie school at Kakawis (Tofino).

Concerned about its recruitment, the Province established, in collaboration with the Provinces of Alberta-Saskatchewan and St. Mary's — as we have already mentioned — a pre-novitiate located in Nicodemus House in Edmonton, a novitiate at St. Albert, and a residence for scholastics in Edmonton.

In the reconstitution of 1982, the Province henceforth consisted of its former territory plus the territory of the Vice-Province of Whitehorse: the latter had been suppressed in view of this incorporation. Together with St. Peter's Province, it was responsible for the mission in Peru. In 1985, its personnel consisted of 108 Fathers, 17 Brothers and 1 scholastic.³⁶

³⁶ Cf. "Saint-Paul's Vice-Province", in *Missio*, 98 (1971), suppl. vol. 2, pp.

The Vice-Province of Whitehorse 1947-1982

The Vice-Province of Whitehorse was responsible for ministry in the diocese of the same name. This diocese extended over the whole Yukon Territory and the northern part of British Columbia, from the 58 degree of latitude onward: it was therefore an area in the Canadian Far North, in the very heart of the sub-arctic Rockies. The population was mostly of Whites who had come from several countries and a minority of Indians scattered over the area: estimates place it at 10,000 in 1947 and at 34,632 in 1983. The numbers of Catholics in these same years rose from 2500 to 7738.

In spite of their small numbers, the missionaries contacted the Indians in every nook and cranny of the diocese. In 1951, the mission of Old Crow was founded: it is the farthest north in the diocese, beyond the Arctic Circle. In the same year they opened an Indian residential school at Lower Post. Ministry to Whites was carried on in such important centres as Whitehorse, Fort Nelson, Cassiar, Dawson City, Faro, as well as in several small mining and other places.

The missionary personnel has been experiencing a slight decline in these latter years: in 1982, there were 22 Oblates: 19 Fathers, 2 Brothers and 1 scholastic. In this same year of 1982, the Vice-Province was suppressed in order to be integrated into St. Paul's Province.³⁷

St. Mary's Province

St. Mary's Province³⁸, whose administrative centre is in Saskatoon since 1947, continued to pursue the work that was

109-117; *Rapport Province Saint-Paul Vancouver B.C., Canada, 24 mars 1980*, MS. 8 p.

³⁷ Cf. A. DREAN, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le Vicariat de Whitehorse au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 440-447; A. DREAN, O.M.I., "Rapport du vicariat des missions de Whitehorse (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 475-489; *Annuaire de l'Église catholique du Canada*, 1983, pp. 212, 492-493.

³⁸ Cf. above, pp. 144 ff.

the *raison d'être* for its founding, namely, the apostolate to the German, Polish and Ukrainian immigrants to Canada and their descendants. The majority of the Province's members were pastors of parishes and stations in localities where these neo-Canadians settled down, mainly in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Three specialized works had been developed. The first was education of youth in parish settings and in the juniorate of St. Thomas at Battleford; the latter became a college in 1950 and was in 1984 replaced by teams working for vocations and in youth ministry. The second was an Oblate communications centre, located in Battleford. This centre publishes a monthly family magazine, the *Our Family*, distributes Catholic literature and catechetical materials, and offers the services of a printing press, the *Marian Press*. The third was a house for closed retreats, Queen's House, opened in Saskatoon in 1958: it offers a variety of services as a centre for Christian renewal. In response to the needs of a population that is gradually being integrated into that of the rest of the country, the Province is more and more diversifying its ministries.

The Province had for some time been sending some of its members to the missions abroad, especially to the missionary dioceses of Whitehorse in Canada, Kimberley in South Africa. In 1965, it accepted the parish of Iapi in Salvador, Brazil: here the Oblates were in charge of a very poor population of some 40,000 Christians. In 1982, it assumed responsibility for the Indian missions of the diocese of Keewatin-Le Pas which were located in the civil province of Saskatchewan.

The Province's Oblates of Polish origin were regrouped in 1956 into a new Vice-Province.

The Province's novitiate was in common with that of the Province of Manitoba from 1946 to 1968; thereafter, in the time of the vocation crisis, it changed locale a number of times.³⁹ Since 1982, it is integrated into the Western Inter-

³⁹ Saskatoon (1969-1970), Arnprior (1969-1971), Godfrey, Ill., U.S.A. (1971-1973), Battleford (1973-1981).

provincial Novitiate located in St. Albert, Alberta. St. Charles Scholasticate, founded in Battleford in 1932, was transferred to Edmonton in 1972.

The Province's personnel in 1985 consisted of 109 Oblates: 96 Fathers, 10 Brothers and 3 scholastics.⁴⁰

The Vice-Province of Assumption

On August 22, 1956, the General Administration established the Vice Province of Assumption which was to look after the Polish Oblate works in Canada. Its administrative centre was in Toronto. The original nucleus of the Vice-Province was a contingent detached from St. Mary's Province and consisted of 42 Fathers and 10 scholastics, all of Polish origin.

These Oblates continued and developed the parish ministry that they had been carrying out among the Polish speaking immigrants prior to their being established as a Vice-Province. They were engaged in rural and urban parishes, mainly in Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, and even in cities as far removed as Vancouver in British Columbia and Edmonton in Alberta. In 1963, some Italian Fathers were grouped with them in order to minister to Italian immigrants who were living in the Toronto area.

In 1963, the Province opened a retreat house at Port Credit (today Mississauga), which has since become a house of spiritual renewal (Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre) that is open to many diverse groups. A house of studies was opened in Toronto in 1947; it furnished some vocations until the period of the vocations crisis in the 1960s and 1970s. Serious effort for vocations is continuing. The Vice-Province is affiliated

⁴⁰ Cf. St. Mary's Province 1926-1976, 60 p.; J. P. SWITALLO, O.M.I., "Report on St. Mary's Province, Canada (1959)", in *Missions*, pp. 416-438; J. SIMON, O.M.I., "St. Mary's Province 1959-1965", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 825-847; S. LEWANS, O.M.I., *Rapport de la province Saint Mary's, Canada, au trentième chapitre général*, (1980), MS., 19 p.

to St. Peter's and St. Mary's Provinces for its novitiate and scholasticate formation. In 1985, it had 53 Fathers and 1 scholastic.⁴¹

An Overview of the Region

Because of their mission as evangelizers, the Oblates in Canada have accomplished the task of founding and being the mainstay of local Churches, especially in the Canadian West and North. Gradually, in the measure that these Churches developed, the Oblates ceded their direction to the secular clergy; this was especially the case in the south of the Canadian West. The dioceses of the North, where they are still the only priests (or almost so), remain in Oblate care. In all the dioceses they are working in the ministries proper to the Congregation, giving a preferential service to the Indians and Eskimos.

The bonds between the Region's Provinces and Vice-Provinces are helped by Canada's unity, the same official languages and the directives of one sole national episcopacy. These bonds are established and strengthened chiefly by the regular reunions of the Provincials who have been meeting twice a year since 1966, as well as by meetings of Oblates working in the areas of mission, formation, and the administration of temporal goods.⁴² This is the source for common orientations and collaboration between the Provinces and Vice-Provinces in a variety of projects.⁴³

⁴¹ Cf. M. J. SMITH, O.M.I., "Report of the Assumption Province (1959)", in *Missions*, pp. 439-447; F. KIATKOWSKI, O.M.I., "Assumption Vicariate", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 848-873; J. MAZUR, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Province de l'Assomption*, MS., 6 p.; J. PIELORZ, O.M.I., *Les Oblats polonais dans le monde 1920-1970*, pp. 153-166.

⁴² These meetings take place in the framework of Oblate Conference of Canada (OCC), the Canadian Oblate Conference of the Mission (OCC-M), of Formation (OCC-F) and of Treasurers (OCC-T).

⁴³ Cf. *Orientations oblates au Canada*, Session conjointe 23-29 mai, 1977, Saint-Norbert, Man., 18 p.



Participants in a 30-day retreat given at Sainte-Agathe-des Monts in April-May 1960 From l. to r.: seated: Laurent Poirier, Provincial of Keewatin, Majorique Lavigne, Provincial of Grouard, Jean Drouart, Assistant General, Jean Laplace, S.J., instructor, Sylvio Ducharme, Provincial of St-Joseph, Jean-Marie Cochard, Provincial of Hudson Bay, Guy Michaud, Provincial of Alberta-Saskatchewan, Robert Haramburu, Provincial of Mackenzie; standing, 1st row: Joseph Serrurot, Maurice Dussault, Alfred Lagacé, Roland Ostiguy, Raoul Bergeron, Jules Leguerrier, Paul Chamard, Anthime Desnoyers, Fernando Pepin, Jean Petrin; 2nd row: Gustave Tardif, Onésime Menard, Maurice Laplante, Hilaire Gagné, Victorien Benoit, Roger Gauthier, Alexandre Taché, Gérard Tétreault; 3rd row: Raymond Groulx, Didier Plaisance, Louis Collin, Roger Saint-Jacques, Yvon Poirier, Majella Leclerc, Germain Ranger, Rosario Cournoyer and Jean-Baptiste Gagnon.

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s were in all the Provinces and Vice-Provinces noted for a strong drop in vocations and the departure of Oblates through laicization. The Region's manpower declined from 2083 Oblates in 1967 to 1328 in 1985 and has aged in varying degrees in the Provinces and Vice-Provinces. A firm rise in recruitment is not yet happening. However, since 1973, an intense effort for vocations has been launched in a number of Provinces. Vocation directors have been appointed, residences to welcome interested young men have been opened; pre-novitiates, novitiates and scholasticates are appearing, not in large buildings as in the past, but as simple residences; the scholastics are taking their courses outside the formation house in ecclesiastical educational institutions.

The restructuring of the Region's Provinces and Vice-Provinces, begun in eastern Canada in 1977, was completed in 1985. The purpose that united certain Provinces and Vice-Provinces was to help the Oblate personnel itself and to bring about a greater collaboration in Oblate works.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Cf. "Canada. Rapport de la Region au Chapitre général 1980", in AAG, vol. 5, suppl. pp. 203-241; *Report of the O.C.C. to the preparatory meeting to the Chapter - Rome, May 1984*, MS., n.p. (19 p.).

CHAPTER 14

The United States Region 1947-1985

The United States Eastern Province – The United States Southern Province – The United States St. John the Baptist Province – The United States Central Province – The United States Western Vice-Province – Overview of the Region.

The United States Region consists of four Provinces and one Vice-Province, all located in the same country, and two Delegations and Missions located outside of the country. In 1985, it had a total of 742 Oblates, 43 of whom were in the Delegations and Missions abroad.

The United States Eastern Province

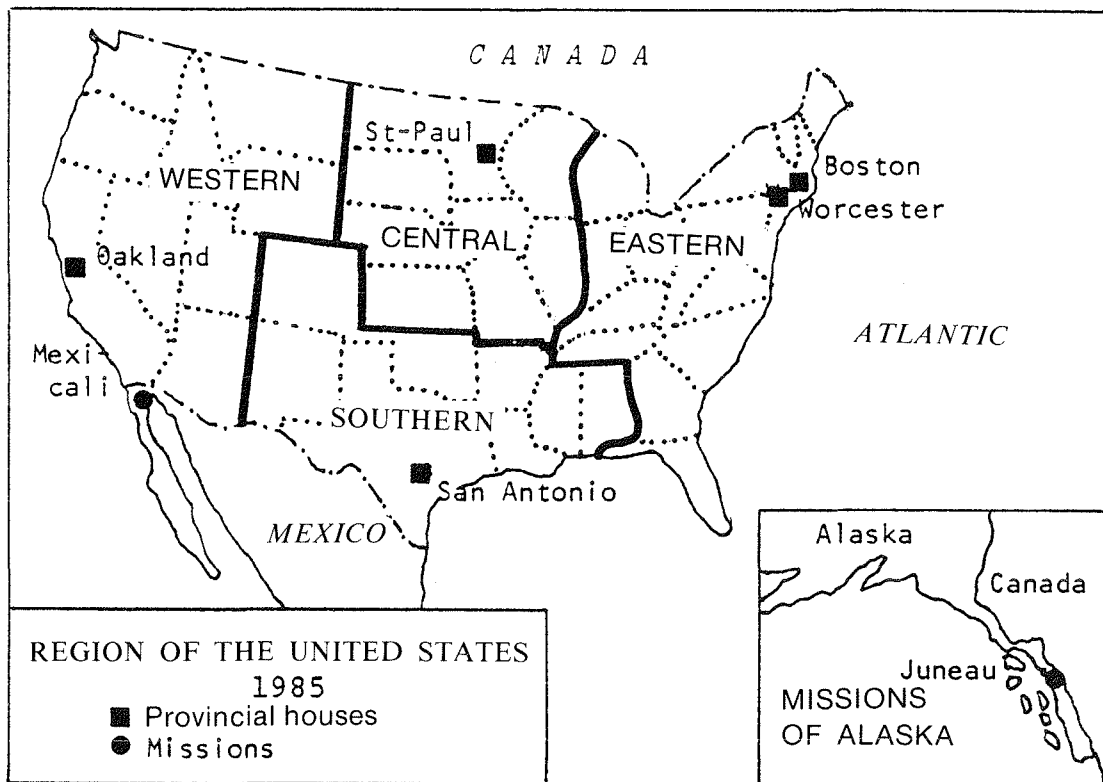
The United States Eastern Province, at one time known as the United States First Province, has since 1953 been present in some 23 American States and extends from the border with Canada all the way to Florida.¹ During the period under consideration here, this Province was engaged in prosperous works² such as mission preaching, parishes, education in Catholic parochial and high schools, apostolate among the Negroes and different chaplaincies. Some of its members were working in Brazil since 1945 and in Japan since 1948.³

Later, changes occurred in some of these activities. Thus the ministry to the Blacks took into account the trend to integrate the Blacks with the Whites, which gained momentum after the end of the second world war, began to be gradually

¹ Cf. circ. 199, July 10, 1953, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 6, pp. 1-4.

² Cf. above, pp. 199-202.

³ Cf. above, pp. 202-204; below, pp. 433-434.



identified with the ministry to the Whites. The Province was also affected by the migration of Blacks towards the States of the North.⁴ The ministry of mission preaching, which had been highly developed, declined considerably and thus the number of full-time preachers has decreased. Far less Oblates remain teaching in secondary schools.

The majority of the Province's men are now in parish work. The number of those who are working in rural areas, among minorities and in marginalized parishes has increased. In a Congress held at Bethesda, Maryland, in 1978, the Province, in accord with the Oblate charism, plainly opted for ministry to non-practising Catholics, for those who are abandoned, in marginalized situations, as well as for ministry to promote justice and leadership of the laity in the various ministries.⁵ In

⁴ Cf. "Eastern United States Province (Our Lady of Hope)", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 13-14.

⁵ Cf. *Rapport de la province Eastern American (1972-1980)*, MS. pp. 3-4.

1975, the Province accepted a mission in a very poor milieu in Porto Rico.⁶

Concerned for its own recruitment, the Province has developed a vocations apostolate. Meetings, vocation office and a pre-novitiate have been organized. Initial Oblate formation takes place at the novitiate at Godfrey, which is common to all the United States Provinces, and the scholasticate is made in Washington, D.C. The latter is established in a small residence since 1972.

In 1985, the Province personnel consisted of 204 members: 187 Fathers, 10 Brothers and 7 scholastics.⁷

The United States Southern Province

The large majority of the Oblates of the United States Southern Province⁸ had been doing parish ministry among people who were Mexican in origin. These people spoke Spanish; nearly all were Catholic but deprived of religious assistance; they were poor, at times very poor. Other ministries were added to this main one: serving parishes where the people

⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 4; below, p. 413.

⁷ Cf. "Report of the First American Province to the General Chapter 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 448-465; R. HUNT, O.M.I., "Report of the Eastern Province (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 511-533; W. P. RYAN, O.M.I., "Eastern United States Province", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 3-77; "Eastern Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, p. 373 ff.; *Rapport de la Province Eastern American* (1980), MS, 7 p. An important congress held in 1948 in Washington, D.C., brought together around Father General some 57 Oblates from the formation houses in the United States and Canada. It was the root beginning of the "Oblate Education Association" (OEA). This important association held, until about 1966, a yearly congress for Oblate formators from North America; the meeting was held in different Provinces of Canada and the United States.

⁸ Formerly, the Second United States Province. Cf. above, pp. 206-212. Since 1953, the Province's territory extended to the following States: Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama; it also extended into the Republic of Mexico. The Province also had the right to open missions in Cuba and Porto Rico. Cf. circ. 199, July 10, 1953, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 6, p. 3.

spoke English, chaplaincies to prisons, especially within the correctional system of the State of Texas comprising 11 penitentiaries, and to hospitals. Since 1955, they have been directing retreat houses.

The Province courageously faced the challenges that have confronted it since the 1960s with renewal in the Church and the decline of vocations. In its 1979 Congress, the Province stated its main options: improve Oblate living through personal and communitarian renewal, concern for vocations, renewal of ministries through lay leaders and ministers, maintain the commitment to minorities, especially to those who are Spanish speaking. It offered programs of renewal to the membership: seminars promoting personal growth, ongoing formation, various congresses for different sectors of the Province, etc. To improve the efficiency of its administrative structures, the Province regrouped its houses and works into nine sectors with each having a consultor on the Provincial Council.

Its Delegation in Mexico was raised to a Vice-Province in 1985.⁹ It accepted a new mission field in Zambia in 1983.¹⁰

In the beginning of 1985, the Province had 241 Oblates: 214 Fathers, 11 Brothers and 16 scholastics. Of this number, 25 Fathers, 2 Brothers and 6 scholastics are in Mexico and 4 Fathers are in Zambia.¹¹

Saint John the Baptist Province

The United States St. John the Baptist Province¹² had been progressing steadily in its different undertakings: eight

⁹ Cf. below, pp. 408-409.

¹⁰ Cf. below, p. 450.

¹¹ Cf. N. J. TANASKOVIC, O.M.I., "Report of the Second Province of the U.S. (Texas) to the General Chapter of 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 466-474; L. J. SEIDEL, O.M.I., "Report on the Southern American Province (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 534-547; "Southern United States Province", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No.320 bis, pp. 217-275; "Southern Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 445-452; *Rapport de la Province du Sud des U.S.A., évolution de la Province depuis 1972*, MS., 1980, 5 p.

¹² Cf. above, pp. 213-219.



Interprovincial congress on Oblate formation held in Washington, D.C., in June 1948. From l. to r.: seated: William A. Robbins, Léo Deschâtelets, Superior General, Daniel Albers; standing: 1st row: Lawrence Seidel, Armand Boucher, Joseph Birch, Robert J. Gill, Alphonse Simon, Philip Scheffer, Charles J. Costello, Stanislas La Rochelle, James T. McDermott, Eugene Labrie; 2nd row: Thomas Manning, Gerald Cousineau, Joseph Switallo, George Sexton, André Guay, Lucien Dufault, Irénée Tourigny, Patrick Healy, James Whelan; 3rd row: Thomas Cantwell, Philippe Cornellier, Louis Desruisseaux, Emmanuel Doronzo, Godfrey Kuckartz, Paul Decker, Armand Veilleux, Alexandre Gazé, James Sullivan; 4th row: Francis Crump, Timothy Mulvey, Leo Burke, Maurice Gilbert, James Kievel, Frederick Sackett, Harold Fraser, Alexander Gillis, Joseph Supple, Raymond Hunt, John Hakey, Francis Quinlan, Joseph Morissette, Joseph Wild, Ferdinand Richard, William Atkinson; 5th row: Maurice Savard, Henri Gratton, Garrett Barry, Maurice Dugal, Joseph O'Keefe, Joseph Champagne, Egide Beaudoin, Luc Miville.

parishes, mission preaching, five houses for closed retreats¹³ and various chaplaincies. It had developed the mission in Haiti for which it was directly responsible from 1942 to 1974.¹⁴ In 1948 it started a shrine to Our Lady of Grace at Colebrook, which quickly attracted many pilgrims. Its personnel had risen from 161 in 1948 to 250 in 1966.

The changes that in these last years have taken place in the Church and in society have affected the Province. In spite of serious efforts to renew it, the traditional ministry of preaching missions has gradually disappeared. The retreat houses expanded and modified their activities in order to respond to the new needs of the people. In parishes, the emphasis is on the laity taking part in the Church's mission. The large formation houses — juniorates, novitiate, scholasticate — have been replaced by residences; the novitiate is at the inter-provincial novitiate at Godfrey. Special efforts have been put forth to assure recruiting.

By renewing its structures in view of promoting a cooperative government, through Oblate meetings and different programs, the Province is focusing on the religious and community life of its members. The Province is aware that its distinctive mission to the French speaking people is no longer a motivating factor in its apostolate, for these people are now fully integrated into the American people at large. It is now more and more concerned about the Hispanic Americans, a minority group that needs special care. In 1977, the Province accepted a mission in Tahiti.¹⁵

In 1985, the Province's personnel consisted of 103 Fathers, 13 Brothers and 6 scholastics; of these, 4 Fathers and 1 Brother were in Tahiti.¹⁶

¹³ The houses of Hudson, Augusta, Manville, Willimantic, and Natick.

¹⁴ Cf. below, pp. 405-406.

¹⁵ Cf. below, p. 435.

¹⁶ Cf. "Province Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Lowell", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 276-278; "Saint John the Baptist Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 483 ff.; *Rapport de la Province Saint-Jean-Baptiste au 30e Chapitre général*, MS., 12 p.

The United States Central Province

In 1953, the non-territorial Vice-Province of St. Henry of Belleville¹⁷ became a Province with a definite territory that extended over the States of the central U.S.A.¹⁸, hence its name of "Central Province" or the United States Central Province.¹⁹

The Province's works were progressing: the college at Belleville; the many parishes, most of them small and in rural areas; the preaching of parish missions; the Indian mission at Sisseton to which that of Nett Lake was added in 1957; the shrine of Our Lady of the Snows at Belleville which was receiving up to one million pilgrims a year.²⁰ Other important works were being added: the opening of four retreat houses, which were soon flourishing;²¹ the foreign missions of Denmark-Greenland in 1958, of Sweden in 1962, of Norway in 1977,²² and the mission of Recife in Brazil, in 1963.²³

For more than a decade now, the Oblate community life has been finding new life, thanks to the renewal within the Church and the Congregation. A series of seminars held across the Province in 1975 brought about a greater awareness²⁴ of the Oblate vocation as a missionary vocation. In 1979-1980, the program "Being Pastors Together" was offered in view of establishing the Province's priorities: 90% of the Province's

¹⁷ Cf. above, pp. 219-224.

¹⁸ Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota. Cf. circ. 199, July 10, 1953, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 6, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, vol. 6, pp. 1-4.

²⁰ Cf. "Central Province", in *Missio*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, p. 515.

²¹ Houses of Belleville, opened in 1951, of Buffalo in 1952, of Austin in 1963, and St. Henry in 1966.

²² Cf. above, pp. 356-359.

²³ Cf. below, pp. 411-412.

²⁴ Cf. W. H. WOESTMAN, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Province Centrale des États-Unis au XXXe Chapitre général (1980)*, MS., p. 1.

membership took part in this exercise.²⁵ The Provincial noted that "a great interest for building authentic community"²⁶ resulted therefrom.

The centres of Oblate formation also experienced change. Because of lack of personnel and for financial reasons, the juniorate of Carthage was merged with that of St. Henry of Belleville in 1971. In 1968, the novitiate at Godfrey became the national novitiate. The scholasticate of Pine Hills, Pass Christian, opened in 1953, was closed in 1968; thereafter, the scholastics have been sent to a house of studies opened at Omaha and to the scholasticate at San Antonio.

Thanks to a vigorous vocations apostolate, the Province's personnel increased markedly from 1948 to 1967, rising from 81 to 254 members. The general vocations crisis that set in after this period seriously affected the Province. In 1985, the personnel consisted of 154 Fathers, 20 Brothers and 6 scholastics; of these, 17 Fathers and 2 Brothers were in the missions of Scandinavia, and 5 Fathers and 1 scholastic in those of Recife, Brazil.²⁷

The United States Western Vice-Province

The United States Western Vice-Province was established on July 10, 1953 by means of detaching elements from the United States Eastern and Southern Provinces.²⁸ One of the

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 2. The priorities established at the 1979-1980 Congress were: ministries to the non-practicing and foreign missions; apostolate to Indians, Hispanic Americans, and to Whites.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

²⁷ Cf. Ed. J. GUILD, O.M.I., "Report of St. Henry's Mid-West Province (General Chapter 1953)", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 642-659; S. C. SERGOT, O.M.I., "Report on Central United States Province (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 612-640; "Centreal United States Province" *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 340-382; "Central Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 513-522; W. H. WOESTMAN, O.M.I., *op. cit.*, MS., 5 p.

²⁸ Cf. Circ. 199, July 10, 1953, in *Circ. adm.*, vol. 6, 1-4. When it was established, the Vice-Province had 24 Fathers and 1 Brother. Its territory extended over the following States: Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and to the possession of Hawaii

new Vice-Province's concerns was to promote the effort for vocations. In 1958 it opened at Lafayette, near Oakland, a juniorate called *Mount Mary Immaculate*. The novices and scholastics were sent to the formation houses of the United States Central Province. Later, in 1972, a formation and pastoral centre in the house of St. Mary in Oakland received the scholastics who were in theology.

Right up to these latter times the Province maintained a team of some six mission preachers, some of whom are especially dedicated to giving missions in Spanish. Most of its members are assigned to parishes: most of these are located in poor areas and some of them are Spanish speaking. In response to the Church's urgent needs in the area of education, it accepted the high schools of San Fernando in 1956, of San Pedro in 1961, and at Oakland in 1964.

The image of the Province changed somewhat in the 1970s. Working in high schools ceased; pastoral activity now centred more on parishes: in 1980, 35 of the Vice-Province's 58 Fathers were working in parishes. The number of chaplaincies has also increased. The house *Mount Mary Immaculate* has become a renewal centre. In 1971, two mission fields were accepted: Mexicali in Mexico²⁹ and another in Alaska.³⁰ The questioning of the after-Council period occasioned not only an evaluation of the Province's ministries but also renewal in the community life of the members.³¹

and Alaska. *Ibidem*, p. 3. The Vice-Province became a Province in 1963; since it did not have 100 members, however, it reverted to being a Vice-Province in 1985.

²⁹ Cf. below, pp. 412-413.

³⁰ At the request of Bishop Francis Hurley of Juneau in Alaska, from two to four Oblates of the Vice-Province worked there from 1971 to 1978 among Christian fishermen and Government employees who are scattered over the southeast part of Alaska, adjacent to the Canadian border. The Oblates have been working at Juneau, Haines, Petersburg, Yakutat and Ketchikan.

³¹ Cf. P. WALDIE, O.M.I., *30e Chapitre général rapport de la province de l'Ouest des États-Unis*, MS., pp. 2-7. Also cf. Chas. BURNS, O.M.I., "Report on the Western American Vicariate (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 641-654; "Western United States Province", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis.

In 1985, the Vice-Province had 61 Fathers, 3 Brothers and 3 scholastics.

Overview of the Region

The renewal consequent to the Council and renewal within the Congregation have resulted to the advantage of the apostolic life and community life in the Provinces of the United States. Common objectives have been determined, such as ministry to minorities and migrants, particularly to the Spanish speaking, and promoting laity to positions of responsibilities and to ministry. Awareness to the values of community life in the accomplishment of the Oblate mission has grown. Furthermore, unity and collaboration between the Provinces of the Region have greatly developed.

The openness to missions abroad has been remarkable in each Province. Besides the missions in the Philippines, Haiti and Sao Paulo in Brazil, which the Oblates of the United States had accepted before 1947, several new mission fields have been taken on since: Japan, Scandinavia, Greenland, Recife (Brazil), Tehuantepec and Mexicali (Mexico), Tahiti, Zambia (Africa), Porto Rico and Alaska.

The Provinces of the Region have been faced with vocation problems for more than the last fifteen years. The number of Oblates in the Region itself — excluding the Delegations and Missions outside of the United States — was 1103 in 1967 (820 Fathers, 197 scholastics and 86 Brothers) and, in 1984, 742 (660 Fathers, 30 scholastics and 52 Brothers). Everywhere a serious and persevering effort is being put forth for vocations.³²

pp. 383-415; R. T. HANLEY, O.M.I., "Western Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 531-552.

³² Cf. "États-Unis, Rapport de la Region au XXXe Chapitre général", in AAG, vol. 5, suppl., pp. 243-260; *Oblate Mission - U.S. Region*, Rapport 1984, MS., 14 p.

CHAPTER 15

The Region of Latin America 1947-1985

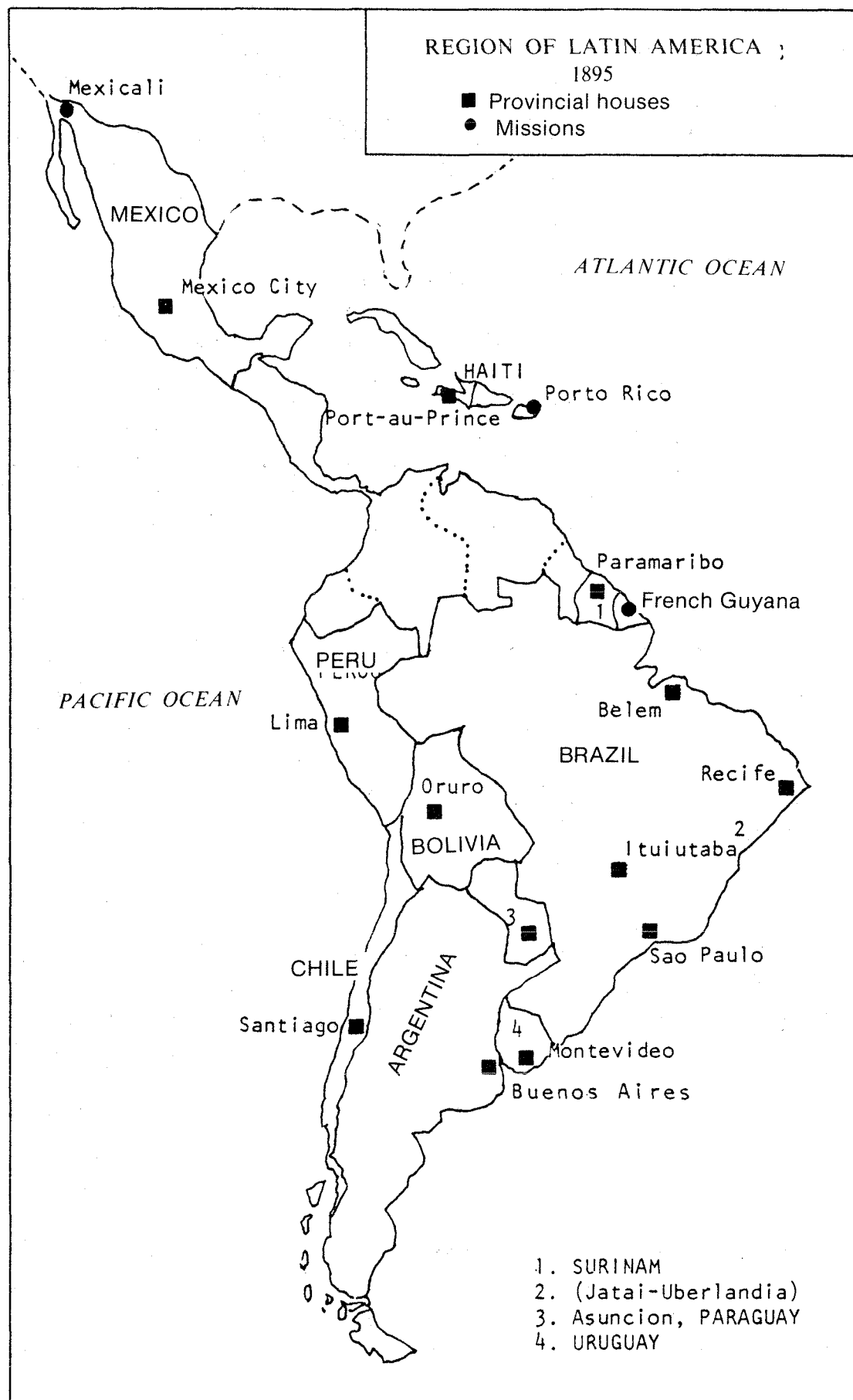
The Vice-Province of Argentina – The Vice-Province of **Chile** – The Vice-Province of **Bolivia** – The Vice-Province of **Pilcomayo** -- The Vice-Province of **Haiti** – The Vice-Province of **Sao Paulo, Brazil** – The Delegation of **Uruguay** – The Vice-Province of **Mexico** – The Delegation of **Surinam** – The Delegation of **Peru** – The Delegation of **Jatai-Uberlandia, Brazil** – The Delegation of **Recife, Brazil** – The Delegation of **Belem, Brazil** – The Mission of **Mexicali, Mexico** – The Mission of **Porto Rico** – The Mission of **French Guyana** – **Overview of the Region.**

In 1985, the Region of Latin America consisted of 16 groups of Oblates, most of them separated from each other by great distances, located in twelve different countries. These groups, varying in size, added up to a total of 340 Oblates and formed seven Vice-Provinces, six Delegations and three Missions.

The Vice-Province of Argentina

The Vice-Province of Argentina was established on June 18, 1956; it inherited six foundations in Argentina and three in Uruguay, foundations made by the United States Southern Province and the Province of Spain.¹ Its personnel consisted of 31

¹ Cf. L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., Lettre aux Oblats d'Argentine et d'Uruguay, June 18, 1956, in *Missions*, 83 (1956), pp. 110-111; cf. above, pp. 91-93. The foundations in Argentina: Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Cruz de Piedra, Cordoba, Villa Union and Carrodilla; in Uruguay: Paso de los Toros, Montevideo et San Gregorio de Polanco.



Fathers, 2 scholastics and 1 Brother. The territory of Uruguay was transferred to the Province of Italy in 1977.²

Since the beginnings of the Vice-Province, in response to the urgent needs of the Church in that milieu, the Oblates have been mainly engaged in parish ministry. They thereby serve people who are poor and religiously abandoned.³ Besides this main ministry, missions are also preached, often in parishes that have no priest.

Shortly after its foundation, the Vice-Province opened a juniorate which was definitively established at San Esteban; it was closed in 1972. It also organized a novitiate, first at Colastine Norte, later at Cruz de Piedra. Its priority in favor of vocations resulted in 1977 in the opening of a house at El Palomar which receives interested young men: it has also formulated a formation program for its young Oblates.

In 1985, the Vice-Province's personnel consisted of 24 Fathers and 1 scholastic.⁴

The Vice-Province of Chile

At its beginnings in 1956⁵, the Vice-Province of Chile included the foundations made by the Province of Canada-East in Chile and Bolivia. Its territory was reduced in 1963 when the establishments in Bolivia and those which had been started in Peru were detached from it.

² The Province of Argentina-Uruguay then took the name of Province of Argentina. Since this Province did not have 100 members in 1985, it became a Vice-Province.

³ The parish of Carrodilla is also a Marian shrine that is very popular, especially on certain days when some 70.000 to 80.000 people will come there. Cf. G. FERNANDEZ, O.M.I., "Province d'Argentine et d'Uruguay", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, p. 423.

⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 416-453; J. RODRIGUEZ, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province d'Argentine-Uruguay (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 655-675; S. REBORDINOS, O.M.I., *Province d'Argentine, Rapport au Chapitre général (1980)*, MS., 4 p.

⁵ It was then called the Province of Chile-Bolivia. It became a Vice-Province in 1985, for it did not then have 100 members.

At the insistent requests of the highest ecclesiastical authorities⁶, the missions of Chile were in 1948 accepted by the Province of Canada-East. The first missionaries arrived in December 1948 in the diocese of Iquique, in the northern part of the country. In February 1949, Bishop Pedro Aguilera, the local Bishop, established them at Victoria, giving them the direction of the large workers' parish of Lagunas on the Chilian Pampa. Other missionary foundations followed.⁷ In 1973, there



Oblates of Chile and Bolivia with Bishop Albert Sanschagrín at Cavanha, Chile, in 1959. From l. to r.: seated: René Ferragne, Robert Voyer, Bishop Albert Sanschagrín, Valérien Gaudet, Guy Brault; standing: Paul-Émile Laurin, Armand Turcotte, Léon Cantin and Bernard Rogeau

⁶ Concerning the negotiations for accepting the missions in Chile, cf. S. A. LA ROCHELLE, O.M.I., circ. 3, October 3, 1948, Montreal, pp. 2-5. By decree of September 8, 1948, the Superior General entrusted the founding of Chile to the Province of Canada-East. Father Albert Sanschagrín, a Bishop today, was its first superior, with the title of Vicar Provincial.

⁷ Sixteen foundations were made between 1949 and 1959: four among the miners, one at Iquique, a Marian shrine, a minor seminary-juniorate, a novitiate, a scholasticate, a provincial house, two parishes at Antofagasta, an English classical college at Antofagasta, and three parishes at Santiago. Cf. AROMI, 1959, pp. 88 ff.; A. SANSCHAGRIN, O.M.I., "Où en est la mission du Chili", in *Missions*, 77 (1950), pp. 47-70; M. VEILLETTE, O.M.I., "Rapport de la Province Chili-Bolivie (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 676-688.

were four in the diocese of Santiago, two in that of Antofagasta and three in that of Iquique. At that time, the Vice-Province's personnel consisted of 34 Fathers and 5 Brothers.⁸

The Vice-Province had its trials. When in 1970 a Government of marxist-socialist inspiration came to power, the Oblates were divided in their reactions and commitments. When the military regime came to power in 1973, thirteen Oblates were exiled, some works had to be abandoned and new difficulties resulted for evangelization. The religious and priestly identity crisis struck at the same time and occasioned some laicizations. Renewal was soon undertaken. The Vice-Province reviewed its missionary approach in the light of the directives of the Latin American episcopacy. It renewed its apostolic community life, resumed its monthly meetings at Santiago and its annual pastoral study days.⁹ Finally, it adopted the vocation apostolate as a priority. In 1975, it opened a house to receive interested young men, and soon "the promise of vocations aroused optimism and confidence."¹⁰

The Vice-Province's personnel in 1985 consisted of 22 Fathers, 2 Brothers and 3 scholastics.

The Vice-Province of Bolivia

At the urgent request of Archbishop Sergio Pignedoli, Apostolic Nuncio in Bolivia, the General Administration on December 2, 1952 definitively accepted the mission of Bolivia and entrusted it to the Province of Canada-East. The mission of Bolivia and of Chile together in 1956 constituted a single Province. Thereafter, in 1963, the mission of Bolivia, separated from that of Chile, was established as a Vice-Province.¹¹

⁸ Cf. *Personnel OMI 1973*, pp. 318-321.

⁹ L. GOULET, O.M.I., *Rapport de la province du Chili pour le Chapitre général de 1980*, MS., pp. 1-5; "Province Chili", in *Missio*, 93 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 387 ff.; R. VOYER, O.M.I., "Province du Chili", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 434-461.

¹⁰ L. GOULET, O.M.I., *art. cit.*, MS., p. 2.

¹¹ Cf. "Erection des Maisons de Bolivie. Leur rattachement a la Province de l'Est du Canada", in *Missions*, 79 (1952), pp. 882-884; V. GAUDET, A.

The Oblates in Bolivia plied their zeal amidst three groups of people, all of them poor and deprived of religious assistance: the miners of tin in the Andes region, on the Bolivian high plateau, the workers in certain urban areas¹², and the Aymaras Indians, who are farmers and shepherds in the arid region of the Carangas on the Bolivian high plateau. The missionaries were looking after parishes in which they organized a dispensary, services of social assistance, schools and even, at Siglo XX in 1959, a radio station serving the local people and



Maurice Lefebvre (1922-1971), missionary in Bolivia, killed during a coup d'état by a group of the extreme right

GAZE, A. SANSCHAGRIN, O.M.I., *Memoire concernant l'etablissement des Missionnaires OMI en Bolivie*, Catavi, 1952, 110 p., mimeographed; S. A. LA ROCHELLE, O.M.I., Circ. of December 25, 1952, Montreal, pp. 10-19. The houses of Bolivia, established as a Vice-Province in 1963, became a Province in 1967; because it did not have 100 members, it again became a Vice-Province in 1985.

¹² The miners at: the parishes at Catavi, in 1952, Llallagua in 1953, and of Siglo XX in 1953; with workers in urban areas: La Paz in 1953, Oruro in 1954, Cochabamba in 1956, and Santa Cruz in 1964.

those of the area. Their apostolate has often been hindered by Government interventions and by the harassments and threats of communist elements which have infiltrated into the milieu. Some missionaries who were heavily engaged in promoting social justice had to leave the country in the 1970s. Others were laicized during these same years. Thus, from 1972 to 1980, the number of Oblates in the Vice-Province dropped from 43 to 33.

During these latter years, the Oblate group in Bolivia has reaffirmed its priority to the poor, especially the Indians of Carangas, the miners on the Bolivian high plateau, and the peasant colonists of the San Julian mission in the Bolivian tropical East. The Oblates especially work with the ecclesial base communities, in ministry for justice, the formation of religious leaders, and the "Aymara Church" movement.¹³

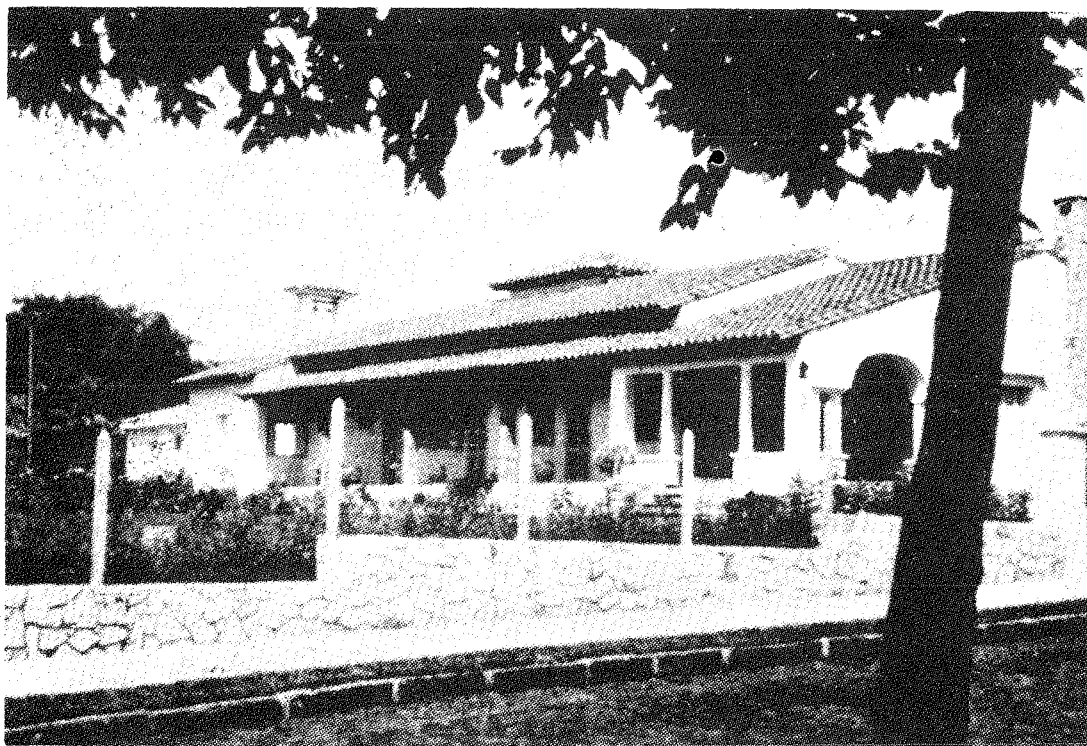
In 1985, the Vice-Province had 24 Fathers, 7 Brothers, and 1 scholastic.

The Vice-Province of Pilcomayo

The Vice-Province of Pilcomayo extends over the Apostolic Vicariate of the same name¹⁴ and has been serving mission posts located in diocese of Paraguay and Argentina. In the Apostolic Vicariate, the Vice-Province has been ministering to Indians who come to the mission posts as well as those who are scattered over the different areas. It has also been looking after some parishes of Whites. Outside of the Apostolic Vicariate, the Vice-Province has been caring for parishes

¹³ *Rapport de la province de Bolivie, le XXXe chapitre général*, MS., 3 p.; R. FERRAGNE, O.M.I., "Vicariat de Bolivie", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 462-496.

¹⁴ Cf. above, pp. 225-232. The Apostolic Prefecture of Pilcomayo was raised to an Apostolic Vicariate on July 14, 1950. In 1980, the Vicariate's territory was modified: the southern part was detached from it and became the diocese of Benjamin Aceval, which was entrusted to a Paraguayan bishop; on the other hand, the Department of Nueva Asuncion, which borders with Bolivia, was added to the Vicariate. Cf. *Information OMI*, 194/83, p. 4.



Provincial House of the Vice-Province of Paraguay, Asuncion

of Whites (at times very large) in the dioceses of Benjamin Aceval, Asuncion, and Villarrica in Paraguay, and Formosa and Presidencia Roque Saenz Pena in Argentina. In 1980, the Provincial stated: "It is a fact that the missionaries of our Vice-Province are at work in the poorest and most neglected areas of Paraguay and Argentina; and this remains always the Vice-Province's attitude: to be at the service of the poor."¹⁵

Renewal has also occurred in the Vice-Province. There is a yearly provincial congress which is seen as the highest authority. There are regular district meetings which are the means for both deepening religious and community life and taking part in the direction of the Province. Furthermore, the orientation to the poor and abandoned is stressed and so is the care given to the works of Oblate formation. The Vice-Province runs a juniorate at Colonia Independencia, an inter-

¹⁵ M. JUNEMANN, O.M.I., *XXXe Chapitre général. Rapport de la vice-province de Pilcomayo* (1980), p. 3.

provincial novitiate for Spanish speaking candidates, a pre-novitiate and a house for the professed students at Asuncion.¹⁶

In 1985, the Vice-Province's personnel consisted of 34 Fathers and 4 Brothers.¹⁷

The Vice-Province of Haiti

The Delegation of Haiti, which was dependent on the United States St. John the Baptist Province, was established as a Vice-Province on July 9, 1974.¹⁸ This Vice-Province, which had 62 Oblates at its beginning, was especially involved with parishes clustered around two main centres: since 1943, in the diocese of Les Cayes, in the south of the country, and since 1953, in the diocese of Cape Haiti in the country's northeast.¹⁹

While it was still under the immediate direction of the United States St. John the Baptist Province, the missions had a remarkable development: some 20 parishes, with out-stations attached to each, were accepted; everywhere, catechists were at work; a Catholic Centre, opened in the diocese of Les Cayes, influenced the entire country; dispensaries, cooperatives and development programs were initiated to respond to the needs of a population that was poor. As soon as they had arrived, the missionaries showed great concern for vocations and for the formation of the secular and Oblate clergy.

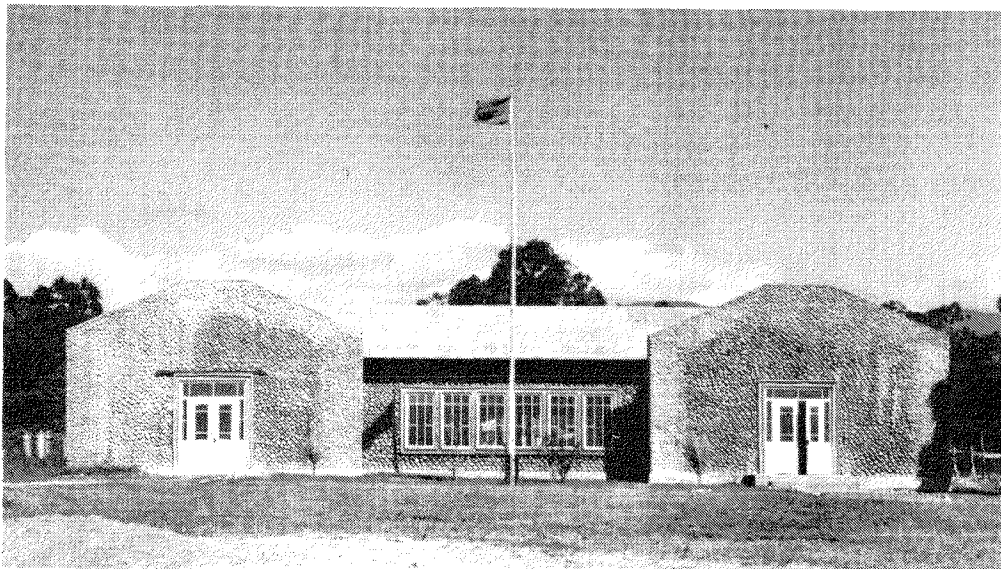
The Vice-Province established in 1974 steadily continued the work that had been begun. It has given special attention to the formation of catechists, directors of chapels, educators, to development and human promotion, to the work of vocations

¹⁶ These formation houses by 1980 had 2 Oblate priests from Argentina, 3 scholastics from Paraguay, and two young Chacos who were ordained diocesan priests for the Vicariate of Pilcomayo.

¹⁷ Cf. L. LIPPOLO, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat des Missions du Pilcomayo (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 689-696; A. SCHAEFER, O.M.I., "Vicariat de Pilcomayo", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 497-511; M. JUNEMANN, O.M.I., *XXXe Chapitre général, Rapport de la Vice-Province du Pilcomayo*, MS., 4 p.

¹⁸ Cf. AAG, vol. 2, p. 186; cf. above, pp. 217-219.

¹⁹ Cf. AROMI, 1955, p. 150.



General at Camp Perrin, Haiti, in 1955

(which has experienced some setbacks during the 1970s), and to the renewal of community life.²⁰

In 1985, the Vice-Province had 48 Fathers, 6 Brothers and 8 scholastics.

The Vice-Province of Sao Paulo, Brazil

In 1967, the missions of the United States Eastern Province located in the southeast of Brazil²¹ were established as a Vice-Province under the name of the Vice-Province of Sao Paulo. In 1980, the Vice-Province branched out to the missions of the Archdiocese of São Salvador, which had until then been served by the Oblates of St. Mary's in Canada.²²

²⁰ Cf. E. LABRIE, O.M.I., "Rapport sur la province de Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Lowell au Chapitre général de 1953" in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 488-495; R. LUSSIER, O.M.I., "Notre mission oblate en Haiti", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 594-610; "Province St-Jean-Baptiste de Lowell", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 303-314; "Delegation d'Haiti", *ibidem* 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 507-512; M. RANCOURT, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Vice-Province d'Haiti*, MS., pp. 1-8.

²¹ Cf. above, pp. 202-204. The territory of the Vice-Province extends over the following States in southeast Brazil: Minas Gerais, Espiritu Santo, Guanabara, Sao Paulo, Parana, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. Cf. "Brazil Mission", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, p. 188.

²² At the invitation of the Archbishop of São Salvador and with the

In the dioceses of São Paulo, Guaxupe, São Joao, Rio de Janeiro and São Salvador, the Oblates have been working mainly in parishes, serving Brazilians who speak Portuguese. In 1971, they were ministering to about 114,000 people, 88,000 of whom were workers who were poor and at times extremely so.²³ In line with the directives of the Latin American Bishops, they have been promoting where possible ecclesial base communities: this implies a special concern for the formation of responsible laity. Their zeal has inspired them to devote themselves even more to the poor²⁴, and even to relinquish certain parish works in order to attain a greater missionary mobility.

From the very outset, the Oblates of São Paulo have shown concern for youth and the pastoral care for vocations. In their recruiting efforts, they opened a juniorate, then a novitiate and a residence for scholastics. In 1985, the Vice-Province's personnel consisted of 26 Fathers, 1 Brother and 3 scholastics.

The Delegation of Uruguay

In 1971 the Oblates of Italy became associated with the Oblates of the Province of Argentina-Uruguay who were working in Uruguay. In 1976, four former missionaries in Laos joined their confreres in Uruguay. The next year, the establishments in Uruguay were entrusted to the Province of Italy and were established as a Delegation. The missionaries are

authorization of the General Administration given on December 3, 1964, St. Mary's Province, Canada, in 1965 accepted the parish of Iapi at Salvador, Brazil. Besides parish ministry, the Oblates were also active in diocesan and inter-diocesan concerns. Cf. J. SIMON, O.M.I., "St. Mary's Province 1959-1965", *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320, p. 827; L. R. ENGEL, O.M.I., "St. Mary's Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, p. 202.

²³ Cf. "São Paulo Vice Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, p. 489.

²⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 490; *Rapport pour le Chapitre général (1980) de la vice-province de São Paulo, Brésil*, MS., 3 p.

grouped into four residences and are looking after five parishes.²⁵ In 1980, they opened at Montevideo a Youth Centre as part of their vocation apostolate.

The Delegation's personnel in 1985 consisted of 12 Fathers, 1 Brother and 1 scholastic.²⁶

The Vice-Province of Mexico

The apostolic works of the United States Southern Province located in Mexico were in 1951 established as a Provincial Vicariate and in 1985 as a Vice-Province.

In 1943, the Oblates of the United States Southern Province entered Mexico for the third time.²⁷ At first, they were looking after a much-frequented public chapel in Mexico City, dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and thereafter began to serve in a number of parishes. At the explicit request of the Holy See, the Province in 1950 accepted missions to the Indians in the diocese of Tehuantepec, at Tehuantepec itself and at Salina Cruz. By 1966, these missions included nine parishes and twenty-four stations, with a total population of some 70,000 people.²⁸ In 1951, the Province opened a juniorate in Mexico City and later, in 1976, a novitiate destined for the Latin American Region.²⁹

Various factors determined the Province so to develop the foundation in Mexico that it would become an autonomous mission as soon as possible: Mexico was a different nation

²⁵ The residences and parishes of Montevideo, Achar, Paso de los Toros and San Gregorio de Polanco, and the parish of Rincon de la Rosa.

²⁶ Cf. *Délégation de l'Uruguay*, rapport pour le Chapitre général de 1980, MS., 2 p.

²⁷ Cf. above, pp. 210-211.

²⁸ Cf. "Southern United States Province", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, p. 253; N. J. TANASKOVIC, O.M.I., "Report of the Second Province of the U.S. (Texas) to the General Chapter of 1953", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 471-473; "Southern Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), Suppl. 2, p. 450.

²⁹ *Information OMI*, 120/76, p. 2. This novitiate was transferred to Paraguay.

with its own customs, culture and language; the Oblates working there were very far removed from the centre of the Province; and the laws which banned every foreign priest, while not being applied, have nevertheless not been abolished and do remain as a constant threat.

The program for the future was stated thus in 1980: "To be a Province as soon as personnel and finances allow; continue putting great importance on recruitment, formation, ongoing formation and mexicanization; to develop the sense of team in ministry, to promote social justice, community and personal growth in Jesus Christ; as personnel permits, to diversify more in the ministries."³⁰

In 1985, the Vice-Province had 25 Fathers, 2 Brothers and 7 scholastics.³¹

The Delegation of Surinam

At the invitation of the Vicar Apostolic of Surinam, Bishop Étienne Kuypers, C.ss.R., two Oblates from the Province of Holland, Fathers Willy Deliège and Pierre Verheggen, arrived in Surinam on October 24, 1949.³² They, as well as the confreres who joined them later, did their apostolic work in the district of Nieuw Nickeri which had been confided to them: here they looked after the parish of Nieuw Nickeri itself, the colonists of the environs, and the natives along the rivers of the country's interior, a most neglected people.³³ The heterogeneous character of the population, which consists of Hindus, Blacks, Creoles, Javanese, natives and others, made their ministry all the more difficult. Outside of their district, the

³⁰ *Rapport de la Délégation de Mexico, événements significatifs dans la vie de la Délégation 1964-1980*, MS., p. 2.

³¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, pp. 1-2; B. DOYON, O.M.I., "The Oblates in Mexico", in *Études Oblates*, 12 (1953), pp. 55-77.

³² Cf. AROMI, 1949, pp. 97-98, 172; "Oblate Mission in Surinam", in *Missions*, 76 (1949), pp. 55-57.

³³ Cf. *Information OMI*, 153/79, pp. 6-7.

Oblates have also been called to do parish ministry in Paramaribo, the country's capital city, and some posts outside the capital.³⁴ In 1985, there were 9 Oblates in Surinam.

The Delegation of Peru

In October 1960, the Superior General canonically established the first Oblate residences in Peru, Our Lady of Fatima at Chinchá Alta and Our Lady of Peace at Comas; they were attached to the Province of Chile-Bolivia which had opened them. Later, on January 23, 1963, he entrusted the missions in Peru to St. Peter's Province, Canada.³⁵

The main parishes served by the Oblates in Peru are: Our Lady of Peace and Our Lady of Miracles at Comas, on the outskirts of Lima; Our Lady of Fatima at Cincha Alta, a farming area; Jesus Salvator at Aucayacu, in the jungle to the east of the Andes. In their ministry, the missionaries are working on forming ecclesial base communities which are being established usually according to the geographical locality, on the formation of responsible laity, on the pastoral care of families and of the youth.³⁶

In 1985, the Delegation had 15 Fathers, 2 Brothers and 9 scholastics.

The Delegation of Jatai-Uberlandia

In response to Pope John XXIII's request addressed to the Bishops of Ireland that they help the Church in Latin America, the Anglo-Irish Province opened a mission in Brazil.

³⁴ The missionaries have been diversifying their ministry. Cf. *ibidem*, 131/77, pp. 6-7; A. EVERS, O.M.I., "Report on the Netherlands Province (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 201-203.

³⁵ L. DESCHÂTELETS, O.M.I., "Residentiae Peruviana Provinciae Sti Petri adjunctae", *ibidem*, 90 (1963), pp. 201-203.

³⁶ J. G. DUKOWSKI, O.M.I., *Rapport de la délégation de Perou*, MS. 7 p.; Cf. G. E. COUSINEAU, O.M.I., "Province of St. Peter's", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 687-696.

It was established in the diocese of Jatai in 1962), in that of Uberlandia in 1965, and in Rio de Janiero in 1966.³⁷

The Oblates's ministry is almost exclusively parochial: they are serving people who are poor and religiously neglected. At a general meeting in 1974, they defined their objectives as follows: realistic analysis of the parishes; solidarity with the emarginated; priority of ecclesial base communities as a means of evangelization; action designed to bring the people to have confidence in themselves, to make them aware of their human dignity, their rights, their need to be united. In their ministry, they encourage frequent meetings of pastoral agents, the formation of evangelization groups, the promotion of lay ministries, the pastoral care of country people, workers' meetings. The community Oru, founded on a farm near the city of Uberlandia, was the setting of a remarkable contestation which provoked much discussion on society's true and false values.³⁸

In 1985, the Delegation had 19 Fathers and 1 scholastic.

The Delegation of Recife, Brazil

With the Superior General's encouragement, the United States Central Province in 1963 accepted a mission in the northeast of Brazil, in the city of Recife. Archbishop Helder Camara, the bishop of the city, assigned the Oblates to the most neglected and deprived area referred to as "Brasilia". In 1964, the missionaries opened a parish here dedicated to St. Pius X. It had a population of some 30,000, most of them refugees from the interior of Brazil's northeast region: these people were reduced to absolute poverty.

In unison with their famous bishop, the Oblates carried out their parish ministry, directed social action groups, and made themselves the defenders of the poor to the point where

³⁷ Cf. "Anglo-Irish Province", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 129-134.

³⁸ Cf. P. MORIARTY, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Délégation provinciale Jatai-Uberlandia, Brésil (Province Anglo-Irlandaise) 1980*, MS., 6 p.

some of them became victims of physical maltreatment and were even expelled by the repressive authorities.³⁹

The number of Oblates in this mission has stayed between six and eleven. In 1985, there were 5 Fathers and 1 scholastic.⁴⁰
(40)

The Delegation of Belem, Brazil

In the desire to take part as a group in the Church's missionary commitment in Latin America, the Provinces of France-South, France-North and France-East in 1967 accepted to send missionaries to the diocese of Belem in the north of Brazil. An inter-provincial Delegation was established under the direct responsibility of the Provincial of France-North. The latter exercises his function in concert with the other Provincials. The Oblates form one community, even if each remains a member of his home Province.

Upon their arrival, the Oblates took over a parish of some 30,000 people and soon were also looking after other posts. They are at work among the poor and carry on their service in accord with the Bishops' directives.⁴¹

In 1985, this Delegation had 9 Fathers.

The Mission of Mexicali, Mexico

Upon the request of the Bishop of Mexicali, Bishop Manuel Perez-Gil, the United States Western Province sent Oblates to Mexicali in July 1971. The missionaries were put in charge of the parishes of Santa Teresita and San Juan Bosco and the stations attached to them, all located in the city's

³⁹ Cf. *Information OMI*, 18 January 1969, pp. 1-8; 130/77, p. 5; 148/79, pp. 6-7; 151/79, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Cf. "Central United States Province" in *Missions*, 98 (1971), suppl. 2, pp. 527-530; AROMI, 1963, p. 92; 1964, pp. 158-159.

⁴¹ Cf. *Information OMI*, May 15, 1967, p. 9; "Délégation du Brésil-Nord (Bélem)", in *Missions* 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 525-533; *Rapport de la Délégation interprovinciale de Bélem, Chapitre 1980*, MS., 5 p.

southeast section: there they were serving people who were traditionally Catholic and extremely poor; in 1973, they were about 70,000 in number. They take great care to be with these people, to work with them and to respect them for what they are. They have been forming catechists — in 1973, there were 14 catechetical centres with 100 catechists in the field — administer the sacraments and come to the help of the poor.⁴²

The Mission of Porto Rico

In 1975, Fathers John King and Gerald Flater from the United States Eastern Province took on the care of the parish of Ceiba in Porto Rico, an island of the Greater Antilles. Their locality was a very neglected one, replete with great misery: large unemployment, alcohol problems, high percentage of divorce and unfaithfulness, and therefore, many children (40%) living without their parents. To handle these problems, the Fathers concentrated on forming leaders of lay communities who would assume responsibility for this area. In January 1979, the Province also accepted the parish of Naguabo, where 5000 Catholics were without a priest.⁴³ There were 5 Fathers in Porto Rico in 1985.

The Mission of French Guyana

In 1977, Fathers René Charrier and Jacques Brix, both former missionaries in Laos, accompanied a first group of about 500 Hmong from Laos who were en route to French Guyana. Established in their midst at Cacao, they have continued to give them spiritual care while at the same time helping them take their place in the country they have adopted. Two years later, in 1979, a second contingent of about 440 Hmong, accompanied by Father Yves Bertrais, also a former Laos missionary, settled at Javouhey in French Guyana. In

⁴² Cf. *Information OMI*, 53/71, pp. 1-2; *Western Province Newsletter*, O.M.I., December 1973, pp. 2-4.

⁴³ Cf. *Information OMI*, 107/75, pp. 10-11; 149/79, p. 8; 193/82, pp. 5-6.

1985, 4 Oblates were looking after these refugees who are trying to settle down in their new country. The mission of French Guyana is attached to the Province of France-North.⁴⁴

Overview of the Region

Faithful to their preferential for the poor, the Oblates of the Latin American Region are offering a service to the local Churches which have grave pastoral needs, especially among the poor. The poor whom the Oblates are evangelizing are, for the greater part, people who have nothing, people without power and voice, emarginated, often people in a situation where human dignity is totally despised, people who are the victims of oppressive regimes.

Taking into account the orientations given by the episcopal conferences of Medellin and Puebla in particular as well as the orientations that have been given by the General Administration, the Oblates are more and more committed to forming ecclesial base communities, one of the most effective means for evangelizing and being present amid the poor. The Oblates are growing in their concern to give pastoral care to workers, to the country and native people, to promote ministry for justice.

The bonds between the different Oblate groups have been strengthened considerably since 1966 when the Interprovincial Latin American Conference (CIAL) was formed. This organism brings together on a regular basis the Major Superiors of the Vice-Provinces and Delegations and the Superiors of Missions. The vocations apostolate has been intensified in these latter years. In 1980, the Region had 8 pre-novitiates, 3 novitiates and 5 scolasticates.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Cf. AAG, vol. 3, p. 308; *Information OMI*, 130/77, p. 3; 157/80, pp. 1-2; 209/84, p. 6. "Les Hmong en Guyane", in *Pôle et Tropiques*, 1981, pp. 260-269.

⁴⁵ Cf. "Rapport de la Région au XXXe Chapitre général", 1980, in AAG, vol. 5, suppl., pp. 261-275; *ibidem*, pp. 73-74; *Informe de la Region de America Latina, rapport de la reunion intercapitulaire de 1984*, MS., 29 p; J. METZLER, O.M.I., "Développement externe de la Congrégation depuis 1947", in *Études Oblates*, 28 (1969), pp. 107-110.

CHAPTER 16

The Region of Asia-Oceania 1947-1985

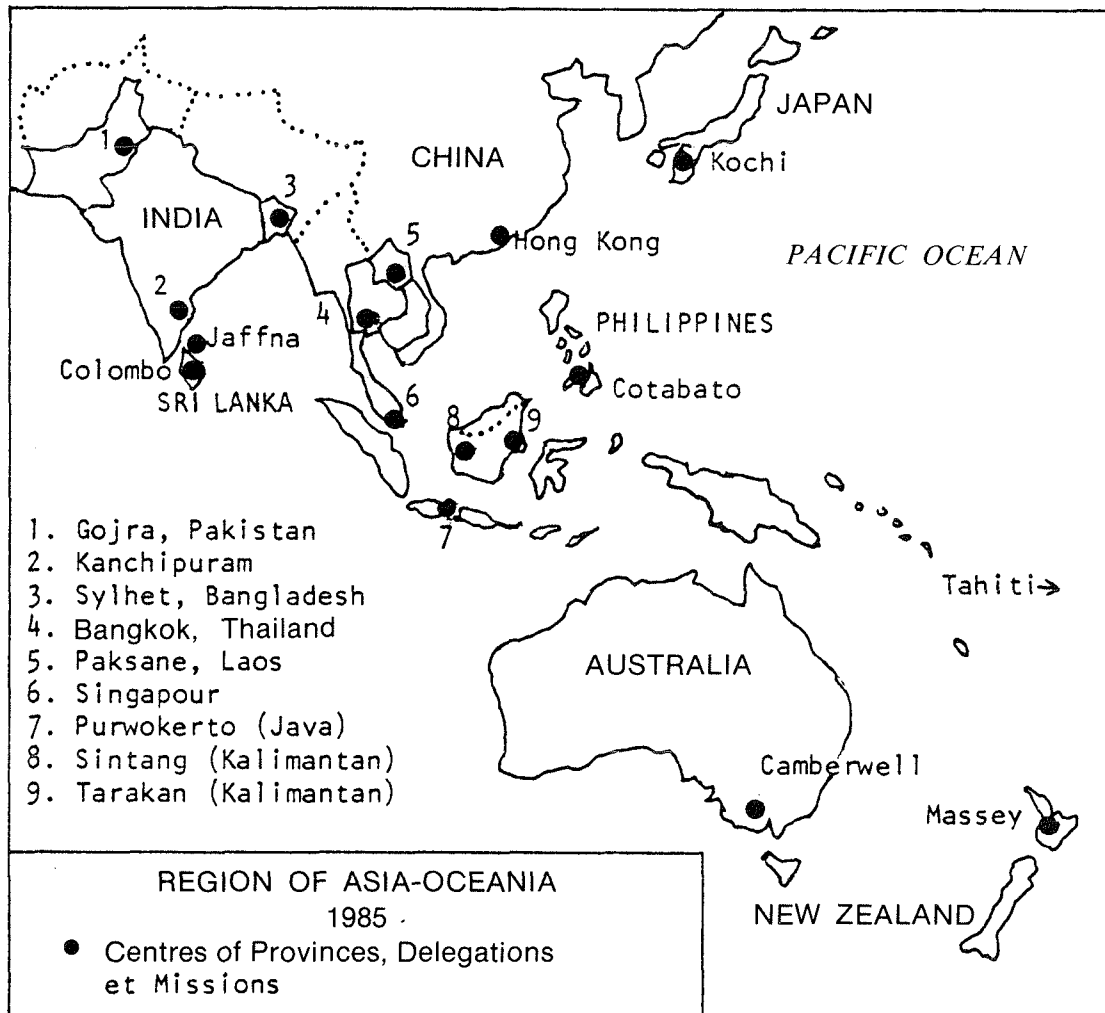
The Province of Sri Lanka and the Delegation of Jaffna - The Mission of Malaysia and of Singapore, 1965-1982 - The Delegation of India - The Delegation of Pakistan - The Mission of Bangladesh - The Province of Australia - The Mission of New Zealand - The Mission of Java-Indonesia - The Vice-Provinces of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang, Laos, 1947-1976 - The Departure from Laos - The General Delegation of Thailand - The Delegation of Sintang-Indonesia - The Province of the Philippines - The Mission of Hong Kong - The Vice-Province of Japan - The Mission of Tahiti - Overview of the Region.

The Oblate missions in Asia were launched by Bl. Eugene de Mazenod when he authorized and organized the implanting of his Congregation on the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1847. Since that time, and especially from 1930 onwards, Oblate missions have multiplied in the Far East. Today there are fifteen groups of Oblates of varying sizes in the countries of Asia and Oceania. Three other groups — two which were established in Laos and one in Malaysia — have been dissolved for political reasons. In 1985, there were 517 Oblates in Asia and Oceania: 428 bishops and priests, 35 Brothers, and 54 scholastics.

The Province of Sri Lanka and the Delegation of Jaffna

The Vicariat of Missions of Ceylon¹ on February 13, 1967, became the Province of Ceylon, which since 1973 has been renamed the Province of Sri Lanka. The district of Jaffna,

¹ Cf. above, pp. 233-245.



in the north of the island, had been constituted as a Provincial Delegation in 1961 and was completely detached from the Province in 1984 and made a General Delegation directly subject to the General Administration. This General Delegation extends over the territories of Jaffna and Mannar.

The missionaries' apostolate in Sri Lanka consists of parishes, educational works, and missions; the missionaries labor mainly in the dioceses of Colombo, Jaffna, Chilaw, Anuradhapura and Mannar. Their apostolate was affected by the policies of the civil authority, especially in 1960 by the nationalization of most of the schools and colleges, and thereafter by the threat to expel all foreign missions and the prohibition of missionaries from elsewhere to enter the country. On the other hand, the relationship between Catholics and Buddhists, after a period of tension that set in once independence had been

achieved, have improved, especially after Vatican Council II and the visit of Pope Paul VI to Colombo on December 4, 1970. There is now more dialogue. Various initiatives, among others the *Centre for Society and Religion*, founded by Father Tissa Balasuriya, have contributed thereto.

While maintaining the ordinary pastoral service within the framework of the diocesan structures, the Province has gradually been ceding parish and colleges to the secular clergy to the degree that the latter are sufficiently numerous. In accord with the Bishops and even at their request, the Province has been developing ministries that are more specific to the Oblate charism. In 1948, it accepted to open a house of mission preachers at Wennappuwa in the diocese of Chilaw, and later, in 1962, another in the diocese of Jaffna. In 1951, it took full responsibility for the youth work of the Institute of St. Vincent at Maggona.² Several parishes in poor districts were granted to the Province in the dioceses of Colombo, Jaffna and Chilaw.³ In 1955, it accepted the major seminary of Ampitiya, Kandy, which the Congregation of Propaganda Fide entrusted to it.⁴ It had the full direction of this seminary until 1971 when it gave up the direction but continued to furnish part of the teaching personnel.

Three very poor districts on the island were entrusted to the Province, districts populated by scattered and neglected Christians and non-Christians. In April 1963, the Holy See confided the district of Allegollawa to the Province; the superior of this district was given the powers of a Vicar Apostolic.⁵

² Cf. above, p. 240. This Institute is at present the approved School of St. Vincent.

³ Maradana and Ragama in the diocese of Colombo, Nikaweratiya in the diocese of Chilaw, and at Jaffna, in the diocese of Jaffna.

⁴ Decree of June 7, 1955. Cf. *Missions*, 82 (1955), p. 433.

⁵ In 1975, this district plus the district of Polonnaruwa were detached from the diocese of Trincomalie-Batticaloa and became an Apostolic Prefecture; on April 9, 1982, it became the diocese of Anuradhapura. Cf. AAG, vol. 2, pp. 293-294; vol. 6, pp. 5-6; Information OMI, 187/82, pp. 1-2.



Archbishop Thomas Cooray (1901-1988)
Archbishop of Colombo (1947-1976)
created Cardinal in 1965

The Bishops entrusted to the Province the care of the district of Veyangoda in the diocese of Colombo, a district which was opened in 1973 and is in a Buddhist milieu; and the district of Nikaweratiya, located in a remote and little developed part of the diocese of Chilaw. Outside of the island, the Province accepted missions in Malaysia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.⁶

The Province of Sri Lanka and the Delegation of Jaffna have been promoting their community life through Oblate meetings and through revitalizing their districts by dividing them into units that are smaller and more viable. In 1985, the personnel of the Province stood at 173 Fathers, 20 Brothers, and 26 scholastics; this includes the Oblates of the Provincial

⁶ Cf. below, pp. 419-422.

Delegations and the Missions outside. The personnel of Jaffa consisted of 47 Fathers, 1 Brother and 7 scholastics.⁷

The Mission of Malaysia and Singapore, 1965-1982

At the request of Archbishop Dominic Vendargon of Kuala Lumpur, two Oblates from Sri Lanka were sent to Malaysia in April 1965. They were put in charge of a parish of 3000 Catholics, Our Lady of Fatima, located in the outskirts of the episcopal city. They were also to look after some Indians scattered over an area of a rubber plantation. All of these people were poor. One of the missionaries wrote: "The hovels between large houses are countless in number and so is the moral misery."⁸ Two other missionaries came in November 1965. One was to look after Batang Berjuntal, an area of 4000 square kilometres north of Kuala Lumpur; the other was assigned to the parish of St. Anne at Port Swettenham. With the arrival of other confreres, other missions too were accepted, one of them being Singapore.

All these missionaries served the dioceses with great devotedness and availability. The Government forbade them to do any apostolate among the Moslem population; thus they were limited to working only among the Indians and the Chinese. When the Government also refused to renew the missionaries' visas, they had to leave Malaysia definitively in 1982.⁹

⁷ Cf. F. M. BIZIEN, O.M.I., "Rapport du vicariat de Ceylan au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 211-229; G. FORTIN, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat des missions de Ceylan (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 699-725; M. A. FERNANDO, O.M.I., "Vicariate of Ceylon" 1966, *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 512-546; L. SCHMITT, O.M.I., "Ceylon Province", (1971), *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 1-22; *Rapport de la province de Sri Lanka* (1980), MS., 15 p.

⁸ AROMI, 1965, p. 86.

⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, 1965, p. 86; 1966, pp. 53-54; 77; Information OMI, 159/80, p. 5; 193/82, pp. 6-7; L. SCHMITT, O.M.I., "Ceylon Province" (1971), in *Mission*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, p. 20; *Rapport de la Province de Sri Lanka* (1980), MS., pp. 1-3.

The Delegation of India

In 1968, the Province of Sri Lanka assigned Tamil-speaking missionaries to Archbishop Rayappa Arulappa of Madras. The first two missionaries were assigned to the parish of Kanchipuram which was located some 70 kilometres to the southeast of Madras. In a city of some 150,000 people, Hindu for the most part, this parish had only some 30 Catholic families and a prayer centre. It took in the surrounding area where also lived a few Catholic families scattered here and there. With the arrival of more missionaries, it was possible to take over the parishes or missions of Poonamallee and Pandravedu in the archdiocese of Madras, and of Musunuru in the diocese of Vijayawada. The Holy Family parish at Ramanpudur in the diocese of Kottar was accepted on a temporary basis. In these places, the missionaries were at work among a poor and illiterate people. In evangelizing them, they also made them aware of their human dignity and basic rights.

Candidates to the Oblate life have already come forward: three were ordained priests in 1979 and three others in 1983. One of them is presently a missionary in Bangladesh. A house of studies, a juniorate, has been established at Bangalore; the novitiate and scholasticate are at Poonamallee.

In 1984, the Delegation had 17 Oblates, 7 of whom were Indians.¹⁰

The Delegation of Pakistan

In response to an urgent appeal by Bishop Benedetto Cialeo, O.P., of Faisalabad, the Oblates of Sri Lanka in February 1971 sent three missionaries to Pakistan. These missionaries

¹⁰ Cf. *Information OMI*, April 1969, pp. 42-43; 87/73, pp. 3-4; L. SCHMITT, O.M.I., "Ceylon Province" (1971) in *Missio*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 20-21; M. QUERE, O.M.I., "En route pour Kanchipuram", in *Pôle et Tropiques*, 1970, pp. 264-267; P. LE FRIANT, O.M.I., "Les Oblats en Inde", *ibidem*, 1973, pp. 20-24; J. THIRUCHELVAM, O.M.I. and F. XAVIOUR, O.M.I., "Origin of the Indian Mission", in *Bharah Dhiyagavani*, Poonamallee, No. 2, October-November 1984.

were to work among Catholics who were immersed in a population that was 96% Moslem. Until 1975, they were associated with the diocesan priests and Dominicans who were already posted in parishes: this enabled them to learn Urdu, the language of the country, to familiarize themselves with the customs and mentality of the autochthonous people, and to discover the region's pastoral needs.

Established in Gojra, where they were looking after a parish and a seminary, the Oblates in 1975 also accepted three other parishes in the diocese of Faisalabad: Toba Tek Singh, Chak and Okara. They have been working as a team with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, who came from Sri Lanka, with catechists and lay leaders. In 1978, four other Fathers and a Brother were added to their number: thus they were able to strengthen the posts where they were already working and to make a foundation in the diocese of Multan. Bishop Bertrand Boland, O.P. of this diocese put them in charge of the parish of Khanewal where there were 695 families spread over some 55 hamlets. In March 1981, two Oblates were put in charge of the vast parish of Quetta, near the border of Afghanistan, in the diocese of Hyderabad: the bishop there, Bishop Bonaventure Paul, O.F.M., had been waiting for them since 1975. The city of Quetta has some 8000 Catholics and another 4000 are in the surrounding stations. Everywhere in the missions of Pakistan the missionaries are serving the poor and those who are most poor.

The mission was in 1979 established as a Delegation dependent on the Province of Sri Lanka. The following September, a formation house for aspirants to the Oblate way of life was opened in Karachi. In 1985, the Delegation had 13 Fathers, 2 Brothers and 3 scholastics.¹¹

¹¹ Cf. *Information OMI*, 38/70, p. 7; 51/71, pp. 1, 8; 127/77, pp. 6-7; 145/78, pp. 4-5; 157/80, p. 9; 176/81, p. 1; 180/81, p. 3; L. SCHMITT, O.M.I., "Ceylon Province" in *Missio*, 98 (1971) suppl. 3, pp. 21-22; V. GNANAPRAGASAM O.M.I., *Rapport de la délégation du Pakistan pour le 30e Chapitre général* (1980), MS., 3 p.; *Pôle et Tropiques*, 1982, pp. 139-158.

The Mission of Bangladesh

In the January-February 1973 plenary session, the General Council responded to the urgent request for missionaries made by the Bishops of Bangladesh. Twenty-two Oblates came forward to volunteer for this mission; the mission itself was placed under the jurisdiction of the Province of Sri Lanka. Of the first eight Oblates to arrive in Bangladesh, two teamed up with the Holy Cross Fathers to work in the major seminary, two others ministered in English in parishes, and four began studying the Bengali language in view of making a foundation among the people who spoke this tongue.

In 1975, the Oblates were given as their missionary area the district of Sylhet which is located in the northeast of Pakistan. They established themselves in the city of Sylhet itself where there were only about one dozen Catholics amid a population of 100,000. The missionaries worked especially in the neighboring villages where there were Catholic families scattered here and there. Mission posts were opened here. The Catholics are immersed in a large population mostly Moslem; these Catholics are very poor. In ministering to them, the missionaries also bring some social assistance.

A house of studies has been opened at Dhaka for Oblate aspirants. In 1977, the first scholastic made his oblation. In 1982, there were two Fathers and 7 scholastics who were natives of Bangladesh.¹²

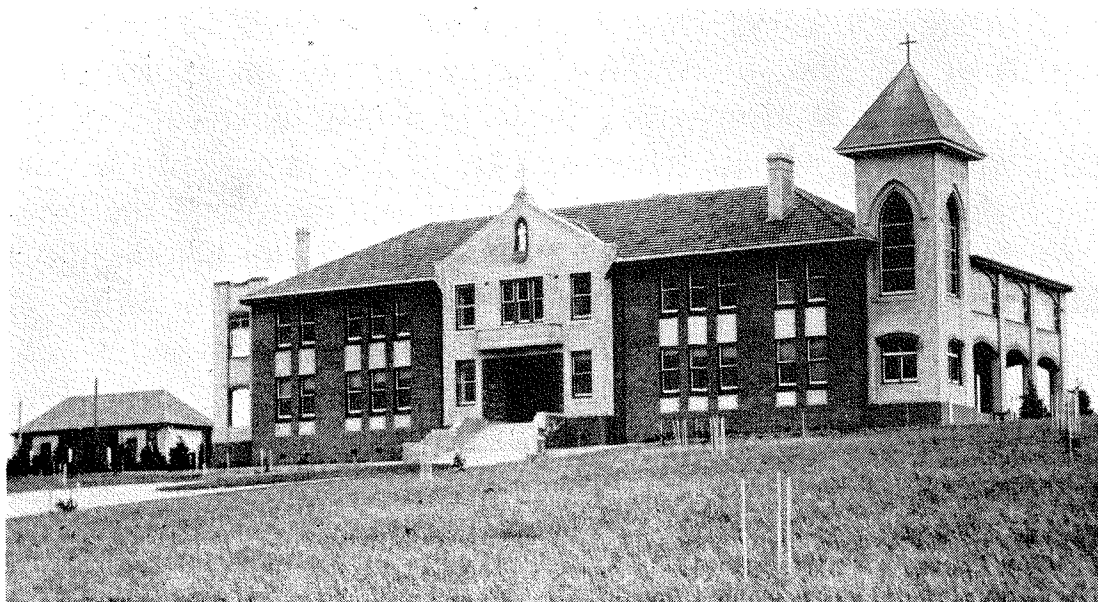
The Province of Australia

The Oblate houses and works of Australia, attached to the Anglo-Irish Province¹³, were in 1953 established as an independent religious Vicariate and, on February 13, 1967, as a Province.

¹² Cf. AAG, vol. 1, pp. 203, 245-246; vol. 2, pp. 148-149; *Information OMI*, 96/74, pp. 8-10; 110/75, pp. 9-10, 11; 115/76, p. 11; 157/79, pp. 4-5; 161/80, p.9; 212/84, pp. 5-6.

¹³ Cf. above, pp. 51-53.

The Congregation in Australia grew at an accelerated pace from the 1950s onward. In 1966, 30% of its personnel was engaged in the ministry of preaching across the entire country. Afterwards, this ministry was replaced by other forms of spiritual renewal. Parishes are an important ministry in the Province: in 1981, the Oblates had 11 parishes in Australia itself. Some of these, v.g. Sefton in North Melbourne, Moe at Derrancourt and Fremantle are in the worker-class quarters and include many kinds of poor people: the unemployed, refugees and immigrants.



*Australia. St. Joseph's House at Geelong.
First a novitiate, then a juniorate, now a retreat house*

New apostolic works were founded. In response to the Church's great need, the Oblates founded three colleges¹⁴ during the years from 1957 to 1968: in 1920, these had an enrolment of 2000 students. Seventeen Oblates have been teaching there and are engaged in the Christian formation of youth. The Province expanded beyond the boundaries of Australia when it accepted works in New Zealand in 1966 and missions on the island of Java, Indonesia, in 1970. Finally, it put the

¹⁴ Iona College at Brisbane, Mazenod College at Lesmurdie, and Mazenod College at Mulgrave.

finishing touch to its houses of formation when it in 1953 established at Mulgrave its own scholasticate; the novitiate too was transferred to this place.

The Province's 1977 general Congress retained its pastoral commitments and clearly stated its convictions on the necessity of Oblate community life. Its personnel in 1985 consisted of 75 Fathers, 3 Brothers and 7 scholastics: this includes the Oblates in New Zealand and in Java.¹⁵

The Mission of New Zealand

In 1966, the Province of Australia accepted to serve the parish of St. Paul at Massey, in the diocese of Auckland in New Zealand. It also agreed to serve a chaplaincy at the airport which was not far from the parish. The people of the parish included a large number of Maoris, the natives of the land. The number of faithful was rather small in the beginning; it has increased in these last few years because of the influx of immigrants from the Oceania Islands Fiji, Samoa and Cook. There are also refugees from Indo-China. In 1984, there were three Oblates working in New Zealand.¹⁶

The Mission of Java-Indonesia

Responding to the unanimous desire of its membership, the Province of Australia in Octobre 1970 accepted a mission in the Church of Oceania: it was in the diocese of Purwokerto, on the island of Java. The first four missionaries, who had already been introduced to the bahasa language, arrived in their mission in 1971. The parish of Cilacap which was entrusted to them had some 7000 Catholics living in the midst

¹⁵ Cf. Ed. RYAN, O.M.I., "Report on the Australian Province (1959)", in *Missions*, 86 (1959), pp. 873-883; W. J. CAGNEY, O.M.I., "Vicariate of Australia", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 845-899; "Australian Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, p. 171-198; *Rapport de la Province d'Australie au Chapitre général 1980*, MS., 6 p.; AROMI, 1963, p. 136.

¹⁶ Cf. "Australian Province" in *Missio*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, p. 176; *Rapport de la province d'Australie au Chapitre générale 1980*, MS., p. 5; *Information OMI*, 192/82, p. 10.

of a population of 1,300,000 who were nearly all Moslems. Half of the Catholics resided at Cilacap itself, the other half were scattered over the area. The parish of Mary Immaculate at Purwokerto was also entrusted to them. Two more Oblates came in 1974. In 1975, the missionaries took on a third parish, at Cengkareng in the archdiocese of Jakarta.

Poverty was extreme everywhere. In the parish of Cilacap's vast territory, which extends some 180 kilometres along the south coast of Java, the missionaries organized schools, even opened a college at Cilacap, organized assistance for the poor and began development projects. In their concern for vocations, they received aspirants to the Oblate way of life: the first three began their novitiate in 1980. They opened a house of studies, a pre-novitiate and a seminary at Jogjakarta. At the end of 1984, the mission of Java-Indonesia had 7 Fathers and 3 scholastics.¹⁷

The Vice-Provinces of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang, 1947-1976

The Vice-Provinces of Vientiane and of Luang-Prabang in Laos, Indochina¹⁸, were suppressed in 1976. They had taken a territory in upper Laos and an Oblate district established in Thailand.¹⁹

During the period under study here, the missionaries' activity and the life of the Christian communities in Laos are nearly constantly disrupted by the Viet-Minh guerilla, the

¹⁷ Cf. "Australian Province", in *Missio*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, p. 185; *Rapport de la province d'Australie au Chapitre général 1980*, MS., p. 1; *Information OMI*, 51/71, p. 1, 9-10; 88/74, p. 10; 161/80, p. 3; 168/80, pp. 9-10; 174/81, p. 5; 196/83, p. 10; 205/84, p. 6; D. HUGHES, O.M.I., "Evangelization and the O.M.I. in Australia". in *Vie Oblate Life*, 43 (1984), pp. 61-66.

¹⁸ The Oblate beginnings in Laos were referred to as the Mission in Laos; in 1940, as either the Vicariate or Vice-Province of Laos and, in 1971, as the Province of Laos-Thailand. The Province of Laos-Thailand was divided in January 1974 and became the Vice-Province of Vientiane and the Vice Province of Luang-Prabang.

¹⁹ Cf. above, pp. .

communist pressure in the areas bordering on China, and the nationalist pro-Buddhist movements. The missionaries plied their zeal among the Christians and visited the minority animist groups who lived in the mountains and among whom a serious movement of conversion to Christianity was in progress.²⁰ They also became active in a new area located in the administrative province of Sam Neua, which the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in 1958 attached to the Apostolic Vicariate of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang. Noteworthy reinforcements came, especially with the arrival of Italian Oblates in 1957.²¹

After the years from 1954 to 1959, which were relatively calm, politically speaking, the communist guerilla resumed with full violence. From 1960 to 1961, four Fathers and one Brother fell victims to the onslaughts²²; others just managed to escape being put to death. The district of Sam Neua, which had been so full of promise, was abandoned in 1960, that of Nam-Tha in 1962, and that of Xieng-Khouang in 1963. In spite of a situation that remained always critical and dangerous, the missionaries continued to serve their missions and, as much as possible, the stations dependent on them. In view of the future, they organized centres for the formation of catechists and the minor seminary at Paksane. The Oblates from Italy assumed responsibility for the new Apostolic Vicariate of Luang-Prabang that was established in 1963. In 1971, there were 99 Oblates in Laos: 2 Bishops, 84 Fathers, 10 Brothers and 3 scholastics.

The departure from Laos

On May 1, 1975, the communists unleashed the revolution which led to the proclamation of the Laotian People's Democratic Republic on the following December 2nd. During the

²⁰ Cf. E. LOOSDREGT, O.M.I., "Rapport du vicariat apostolique Vientiane (Laos) au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), p. 239.

²¹ Cf. *Information OMI*, December 2, 1967, pp. 10-11.

²² Fathers Mario Borzaga, Michel Coquelet, Louis Leroy, Vincent L'Hénoret and Brother Alexis Guemene were killed.

months of revolution, most of the foreign missionaries were expelled from the country. In view of the political circumstances and in accord with the views of the Christian faithful, priests and religious, Bishop Thomas Nantha, Vicar Apostolic of Vientiane and administrator of the Apostolic Vicariate of Luang-Prabang, in the beginning of 1976 invited all foreign priests and religious to withdraw; at this time, there were still six Oblates at their post.²³ It is with the greatest regret that the Oblates left the Church in Laos which they had served for some 40 years. They had built two Apostolic Vicariates there²⁴ and with heroic devotedness had contributed to the progress of the Christian community.

The Oblate Vice-Provinces of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang were suppressed in September 1976, due to the force of circumstances. At the same time, the General Administration established the General Delegation of Thailand to which the two Oblates still in Laos were attached.²⁵

²³ Cf. letter of Bishop Nantha of April 4, 1976, in *Information OMI*, 117/76, pp. 1-2. In Laos there remained only one Laotian Oblate, Father Jean Khamse Vithavong and one French Oblate, Father Michel Lynde, who stayed to serve the inter-national Catholic community. He too was forced to leave the country in July 1978. Of the 82 missionaries who left Laos, 44 went to other Oblate missions or founded new ones: 14 to Indonesia, 9 to Senegal, 5 to Uruguay, 4 to Haiti, 3 to Cameroon, 3 to Thailand, 2 to Chad, 2 to French Guyana, 1 to the Philippines and 1 to Tahiti; 31 found new assignments in their home Provinces; 2 were assigned to the General House and 5 have left the Congregation. Cf. *Information OMI*, 141/78, pp. 5-6.

²⁴ In 1952, the Apostolic Vicariate of Vientiane and Luang-Prabang was established. It was divided in 1963 and thus became the Apostolic Vicariate of Vientiane and that of Luang-Prabang. The first one stayed under the direction of Bishop Etienne Loosdregt, O.M.I., the second one was entrusted to Bishop Leonello Berti, O.M.I.

²⁵ Cf. J. H. MAZOYER, O.M.I., "Préfecture du Laos, extrait du rapport annuel 1947-1948", in *Missions*, 76 (1949), pp. 18-28; E. LOOSDREGT, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat apostolique de Vientiane (Laos) au Chapitre général de 1953", *ibidem*, 80(1953), pp. 230-251; J. HANIQUE, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat apostolique de Vientiane-Laos (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 726-751; P. CHEVROULET, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Laos", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 547-599; "Vice-Province Laos-Thaïlande", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 59-95; P. CHEVROULET, O.M.I., Délégation générale de Thaïlande, MS., 6 p.:

The General Delegation of Thailand

The steady presence of Oblates in Thailand goes back to 1966 when Fathers Gérard Fortin, Jean Haberstroh and Christian Gilles came to Bangkok from Sri Lanka. The Vicar Apostolic of Bangkok, Archbishop Joseph Khiamsum Nittayo had asked for Oblates during the time of Vatican Council II. After being introduced to the language of the country, the missionaries began their ministry by working with the local clergy. In 1970, the Archbishop gave them the parish of Our Lady of Fatima in the Bangkok city quarter Din Dang which was in full development. The Oblates were also given two small missions about 70 to 90 kilometres from Bangkok, in the direction of Burma.

The General Delegation of Thailand was established in September 1976 with 12 Oblates: 5 in the mission of Thailand itself, three who came from Laos — two of these were in the diocese of Udon Thani in the northeast of Thailand and the other was with the Hmong and other refugees in the diocese of Chiang Mai — plus the two who remained in Laos and 2 scholastics who had returned from the Philippines where they had finished their studies.

The Oblates in Thailand have been gradually finding their unity. In 1983, they decided to concentrate their forces in the diocese of Udon Thani and work there in the territory of the Loei where the Church is scarcely present.²⁶ They retain a foot-hold in the diocese of Bangkok. Even though Thailand has had missionaries in its midst for some 300 years, only 0.5% of its population is Christian. 95% of the people are Buddhists.

In 1985, the Delegation's personnel consisted of 11 Fathers and 1 Brother.²⁷

AAG, vol. 3, pp. 110-111, 128-129; Information OMI, "La situation au Laos", 109/75, 2 p. in appendix; 112/75, p. 8; 113/76, pp. 4-6; 117/76, pp. 1-2.

²⁶ Communiqué OMI, 33/83, pp. 4-5.

²⁷ Cf. *Information OMI*, February 28, 1968, p. 9; 41/70, p. 6; G. FORTIN, O.M.I., *Les Oblats en Thaïlande*, in *Études Oblates*, 32 (1973), pp. 65-81.

The Delegation of Sintang-Indonesia

In 1977, seven former missionaries in Laos, all of them French with the exception of one American from the United States St. John the Baptist Province, entered the service of the Sintang diocese²⁸ which is located in the west of Kalimantan (the former Borneo) in Indonesia. They began working out of four centres: Sintang, Sejiram, Bika and Putussibau. From these they regularly visited many villages located along the rivers and thus carried on an apostolic presence among the Dayak people. Their priority was to form a Christian community wherever this was possible.

The Oblates of the diocese of Sintang form an inter-provincial Delegation attached to the three Provinces of France. Each Oblate retains his membership in his home Province. In 1985, they were still seven Oblates in the mission.²⁹

The Delegation of Samarinda-Indonesia

A group of seven Oblates, former missionaries in Laos, all of them Italian, committed themselves to working in the diocese of Samarinda, located to the east of Kalimantan in Indonesia. This diocese has some 40,000 Catholics among a population that is more than one million. The Oblates arrived in 1977 and established themselves in the following centres: Tarakan, Tanjung Reder Berau, Mara, Malinau and Balikpapan. They have been serving Christians who are scattered over 48 mission stations which may be as far as 20 to 150 kilometres distant from each other. Forming catechists and responsible laity is their first priority. Their aim is to establish solid

²⁸ In the spring of 1975, the Fathers of Montfort who were in charge of the Sintang diocese, had called the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to their aid.

²⁹ Cf. AAG, vol. 3, p. 101; vol. 5, p. 89; *Notre Midi*, Marseilles, 1977, no. 2 (17 February), pp. 3-7; *Information OMI*, 125/77, p. 9; 143/78, p. 6-7; *Rapport Délégation OMI - Sintang (Indonesie)*, Chapitre général 1980, MS., 7 p.; B. KERADEC, O.M.I., "Au service de l'Église de Sintang en Indonésie", in *Apostolat*, September 1984, p. 11.

Christian communities which are able to carry on in case an eventual expulsion of foreign missionaries would leave them without priests.

In 1985, the missionaries were still seven in number and they form a Delegation which is attached to the Province of Italy.³⁰

The Province of the Philippines

In the Philippines, the Oblates³¹ have been working in the archdiocese of Cotabato³², in the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo³³ and in the archdiocese of Manila. They also have a mission outside the country, in Hong Kong.

In the archdiocese of Cotabato, the Oblates have been working in the midst of a Catholic population. Their limited number has not allowed them to go in a regular manner to the natives in the mountains who are still practising the primitive religions, nor to the Moslems. It is mainly parish ministry that has been their work. Certain initiatives second and make their apostolate more fruitful: such has been the establishing of a network of schools and colleges crowned by a Catholic university, the entire system referred to as Notre-Dame. There is also a weekly newspaper, *The Mindanao Cross*, which has been published at Cotabato since 1948; and there is also a

³⁰ Cf. AAG, vol. 3, p. 101; vol. 5, p. 89; *Information OMI*, 125/77, p. 9; 143/78, p. 6; *Délégation de l'Indonésie*, Rapport pour le Chapitre général 1980", MS., 2 p.

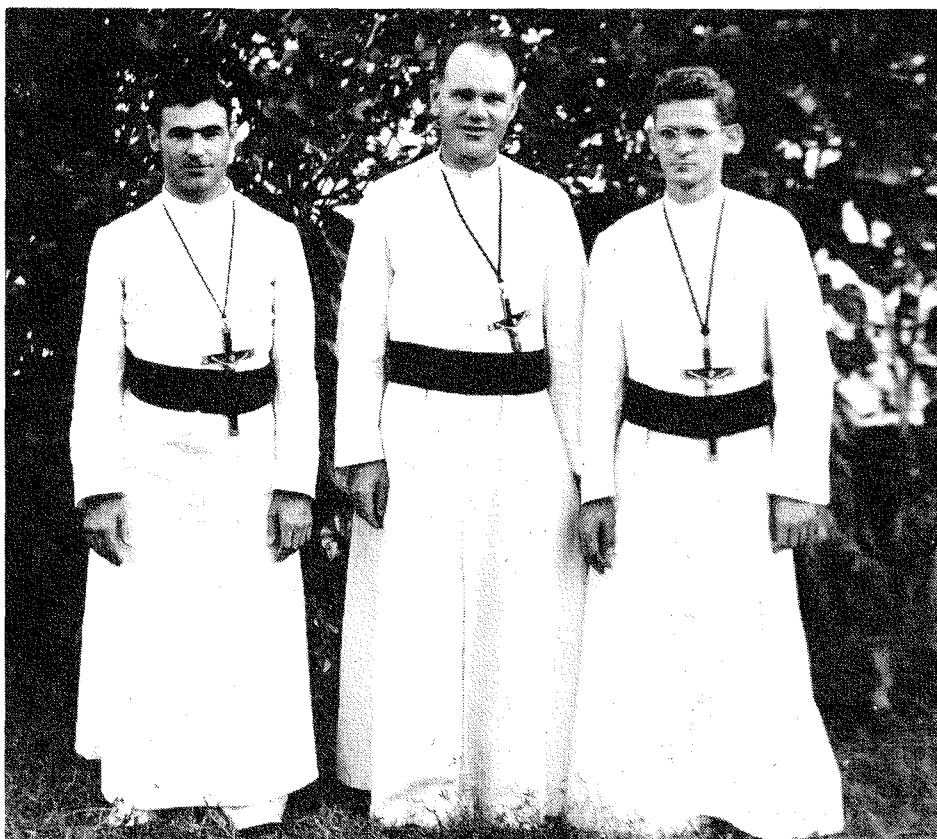
³¹ Cf. above, pp. 253-256. The Mission in the Philippines was established as a religious Vicariate on August 23, 1951 and as a Province on February 13, 1967.

³² The mission territory in the Philippines that was entrusted to the Oblates in 1939 was detached from the diocese of Zamboanga and made a prelature nullius in September 1950. This prelature became a diocese in 1976 and an archdiocese in 1979.

³³ Detached from the prelature nullius of Cotabato, the territory of the Sulu archipelago became an Apostolic Prefecture in 1953, then an Apostolic Vicariate in 1958.

radio station that was put into operation in 1948 and is sufficiently powerful to cover the whole missionary territory of Cotabato.

Because of a large increase in its population, due to immigration from the islands to the north, the ecclesiastical territory of Cotabato has been divided twice: in 1961, its southern part became the prelate nullius of Marbel and was entrusted



At Jolo, in the Philippines. From l. to r.: Emile Laquerre, Emile Bolduc and Georges Dion. The latter in 1980 became Vicar Apostolic of Jolo

to the Passionist Fathers; and its eastern part in 1976 became the prelate of Kidapawan — here the Oblates in 1980 were still in charge of eight of the prelate's twelve parishes.

The Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo, which has been confided to the Congregation of the Oblates, is populated almost exclusively by Moslems. The missionaries are in charge of a parish at Jolo; elsewhere, they are looking after some Catholic missions of a few Catholics who are dispersed here and there over

the islands. Wherever possible, they have established clinics and opened schools whose enrolment is 65% to 70% Moslem. Their approach to the islamic world has reduced many prejudices; nevertheless, this has not induced any notable number of Moslems to accept the Gospel. The missionaries are continuing with faith and patience.

The Oblates in the archdiocese of Manila in 1948 took charge of the parish of Our Lady of Grace at Caloocan City; here they have also opened a large school. They have set up their scholasticate at Quezon City in 1954. In 1976, they accepted another parish at Caloocan City, a parish of some 100,000 Catholics, one of "the most neglected" in the archdiocese.³⁴

The first Filipino Oblate priest was ordained in 1950 and he has been followed by others. In 1971, Filipinos were one third of the Province's personnel and in 1976 one of them, Father Jose Ante, was appointed Provincial. In 1985, the Province had 82 Fathers, 9 Brothers and 14 scholastics.³⁵

The Mission of Hong Kong

After an agreement with Bishop Lorenzo Bianchi, P.I.M.E., of Hong Kong, the Oblates of the Philippines have accepted an establishment at Hong Kong in view of looking after Chinese refugees. Father Michael Molloy arrived there in 1966 and other Oblates joined him the following year. The missionaries first learned the language of Chinese in the city, namely, Cantonese, and then opened a secondary school which

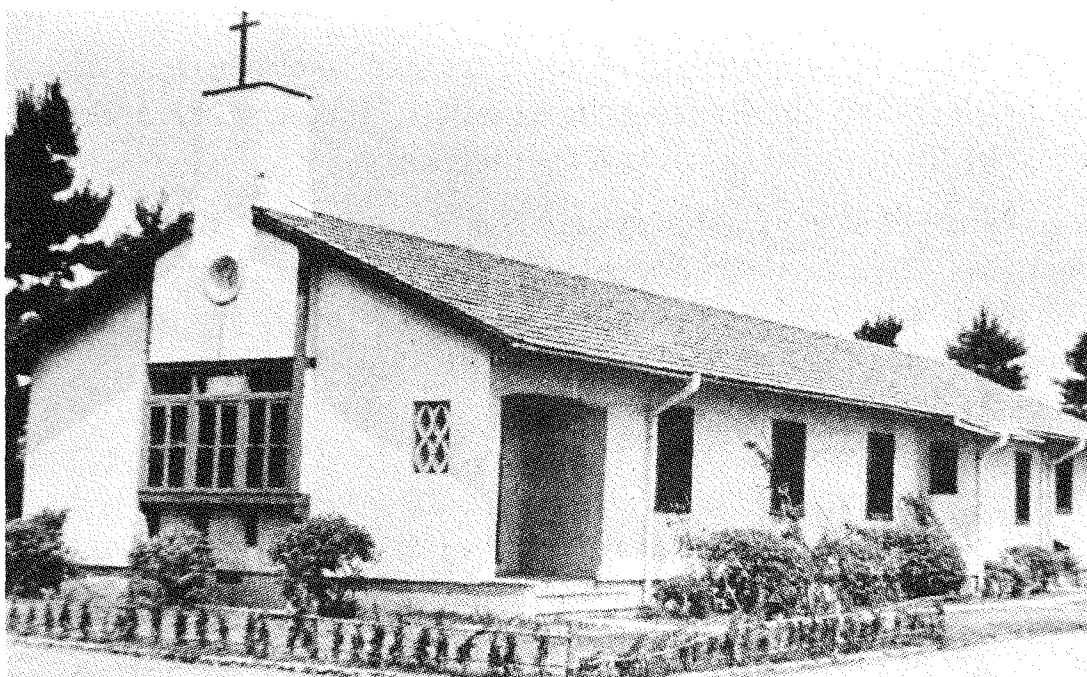
³⁴ *Information OMI*, 115/76, pp. 11-12.

³⁵ Cf. "The Oblate Mission Field in the Philippines (1952)" in *Missions*, 79 (1952), pp. 140-163; Ed. GORDON, O.M.I., "Report of the Philippine Mission to the General Chapter 1953", *ibidem*, 80 (1953), pp. 519-527; J. W. BURKE, O.M.I., "Report of the Philippine Vicariate (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 752-771; "Philippine Vicariate", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 600-621; "Philippine Province" (1971), *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, p. 97-134; J. ANTE, O.M.I., *Rapport de la Province des Philippines*, (1980), MS, 3 p. On the project of a foundation in the diocese of Ambon in Indonesia in 1975, cf. AAG, vol. 1, p. 247; vol. 2, pp. 149-150.

soon flourished. They also accepted ministry in certain quarters of this over-populated city. They have been paying special attention to the youth: half of the city's population is less than 21 years of age. A youth centre has been organized. In 1985, there were four Oblates working in Hong Kong.³⁶

The Vice-Province of Japan

In response to a repeated appeal that came from the Holy See³⁷, the Superior General on January 25, 1948, accepted a mission to Japan and entrusted it to the United States Eastern Province. On August 4, 1967, this mission became the Vice-Province of Japan.



Japan. Mission of Itami

³⁶ Cf. AROMI, 1966, p. 33; M. MOLLOY, O.M.I. and C. BILLMAN, O.M.I., "The Oblate Mission in Hong Kong", in *Vie Oblate Life*, 33 (1974), pp. 121-130; *Information OMI*, 132/77, pp. 4-5; J. EMMANUEL, O.M.I., "Oblats, que faites-vous à Hong Kong?", in *Pôle et Tropiques*, 1978, pp. 77-87.

³⁷ Efforts relating to a mission in Japan were being made as early as 1946. An official request from the Holy See was addressed to the Superior General on January 21, 1948. Cf. *Missions*, 75 (1948), pp. 212-213.

The first Oblates arrived at Osaka on November 29, 1948. The Bishop of Takamatsu in 1948 and 1949 assigned to them the cities of Kochi and Tokushima with the territories dependent on the same. The Oblates were thus put in charge of half of the island of Shikoku; there was a population of about two million, the large majority of which was Buddhist and in which Catholics were a tiny minority, about 1000 in all. It was a poor region which had suffered much destruction during the war and where the missionaries had to rebuild churches, rectories and schools. Outside the island of Shikoku, the Oblates accepted parishes in other dioceses: Itami in 1950, Fukuoka in 1953, Koga in 1955, etc. In 1956, they were serving ten parishes in the dioceses of Osaka, Fukuoka and Takamatsu. These were small parishes of unequal size: the largest of them, Itami, has 750 Christians, the smallest, Ikeda, only a dozen. Most of these parishes cover a vast territory.

Most of the missionary work is done in the framework of parishes. Its aim is to deepen the faith of the Christians who are often scattered and isolated from each other, to form catechumens and to make contact with non-Christians through ministry in the hospitals, visiting or teaching in schools, or in some other way. Regular meetings of the Oblates have been taking place since 1971 and the Vice-Province is thus clarifying the main orientations for its mission: it is open to new missionary approaches to their milieu and to promoting more lay participation in the Christian communities.

The first candidates to the Oblate way of life were sent to the formation houses of the United States Eastern Province. Afterwards, a novitiate was opened at Aki in 1952, then transferred to Tokyo in 1961; in 1961, a scholasticate was also opened in Tokyo. The Vice-Province had 22 Fathers in 1985.³⁸

³⁸ Cf. "Report of the First American Province to the General Chapter 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), p. 456; R. HUNT, O.M.I., "Report of the Eastern American Province (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 527-528; Th. REDDY, O.M.I., "Japan: Looking Ahead", *ibidem*, 88 (1961), pp. 237-244; "Japanese Mission", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 203-216; "Japan Vice Province",

The Mission of Tahiti

In 1977, the United States St. John the Baptist Province accepted to make a foundation in the archdiocese of Papeete, on the island of Tahiti in French Polynesia. At Faaa, it accepted the parish of St. Joseph which has a population of 22,000, 10,000 of whom were Catholic; they also accepted the "Foyer Jean XXIII" at Papeete, which institution receives seminarians in theology. In 1983, the Province was requested to found a major seminary at Punaauia: this is a school of theology as well as a centre of formation in view of inculturating the faith. It is an inter-diocesan seminary for French Polynesia. There were four Fathers and one Brother in the Mission of Tahiti in 1985.³⁹

Overview of the Region

The Region of Asia-Oceania is a varied and disparate entity. The Oblate groups in the Region are far removed from each other by distance: from Sri Lanka to Japan, from Pakistan to Tahiti. Australia and New Zealand have conditions of life and apostolate that in many things resemble those of the West, whereas in the other countries in which Oblates are working things are typically oriental. In the Philippines, the only country in the Far East where the majority of the people are Catholic, the mission cared for by the Oblates is in a territory where at least half is exclusively under islamic influence.

There are, however, also major points of identity. With the exception of Australia and New Zealand, the areas being

ibidem, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 135-170; R. LAFRAMBOISE, O.M.I., Vice-Province du Japon (1980), MS., 6 p.; AROMI, 1959, pp. 105-106; 1960, p. 153; 1963, pp. 11-12; *Information OMI*, 84/73, p. 2; 88/74, pp. 1-2; J. VAN HOYDONCK, O.M.I., "Les Oblats au Japon", in *Pôle et Tropiques*, 1970, pp. 123-127; ID., "Trente-cinq ans au Japon" in *Apostolat*, September 1984, p. 8.

³⁹ Cf. *Information OMI*, 128/77, pp. 2-4; 144/78, pp. 5-6; 165/80, pp. 4-5; F. JETTÉ, O.M.I., Superior General, Lettre de Papeete, Tahiti, October 20, 1983, in *Information OMI*, 204/83, pp. 1-3; *Pôle et Tropiques*, 1984, pp. 123-124.

evangelized by the Oblates are all under the influence of the great oriental religions, especially Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. If we except certain centres in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, the Christian communities are isolated, small, at times reduced to a few individuals, and most often deprived of the presence of a priest. These little communities are in a minority situation, crushed by the great dominant religions; often they are poor, indeed, very poor.

In the various territories that they are evangelizing, the missionaries are working with small groups of Christians for whose benefit the Bishops have requested them. The missionaries' aim is to strengthen the faith, to form leaders, and even a local clergy, if possible. In regions of very great poverty, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Indonesia, they are working to promote justice, to make people aware of their basic rights and human dignity, to form leaders who will responsibly undertake what is needed in their milieu.

On the other hand, the missionaries are more and more conscious of their situation as foreigners and that the characteristic traits of their mission is one of service and of transition in local Churches that are either being developed or in need.

In regard to the great oriental religions, which can be penetrated only with great difficulty, the Oblates' objective is not immediate conversion, but rather a dialogue which recognizes the real values inherent in these religions and the cultures which these religions have largely formed, and which indicates the values these religions and cultures lack but which the Gospel contains.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Cf. "Asie, Océanie. Rapport de la Région au XXXe chapitre général" in AAG, vol. 5, suppl. pp. 277-286; *Asia-Oceania Region Report* (1984, MS., ca. 20 p.; cf. also the vast literary contribution of Father Marcello Zago, O.M.I., a specialist in missiology and the asiatic religions, of Buddhism especially.

CHAPTER 17

The Region of Africa-Madagascar 1947-1985

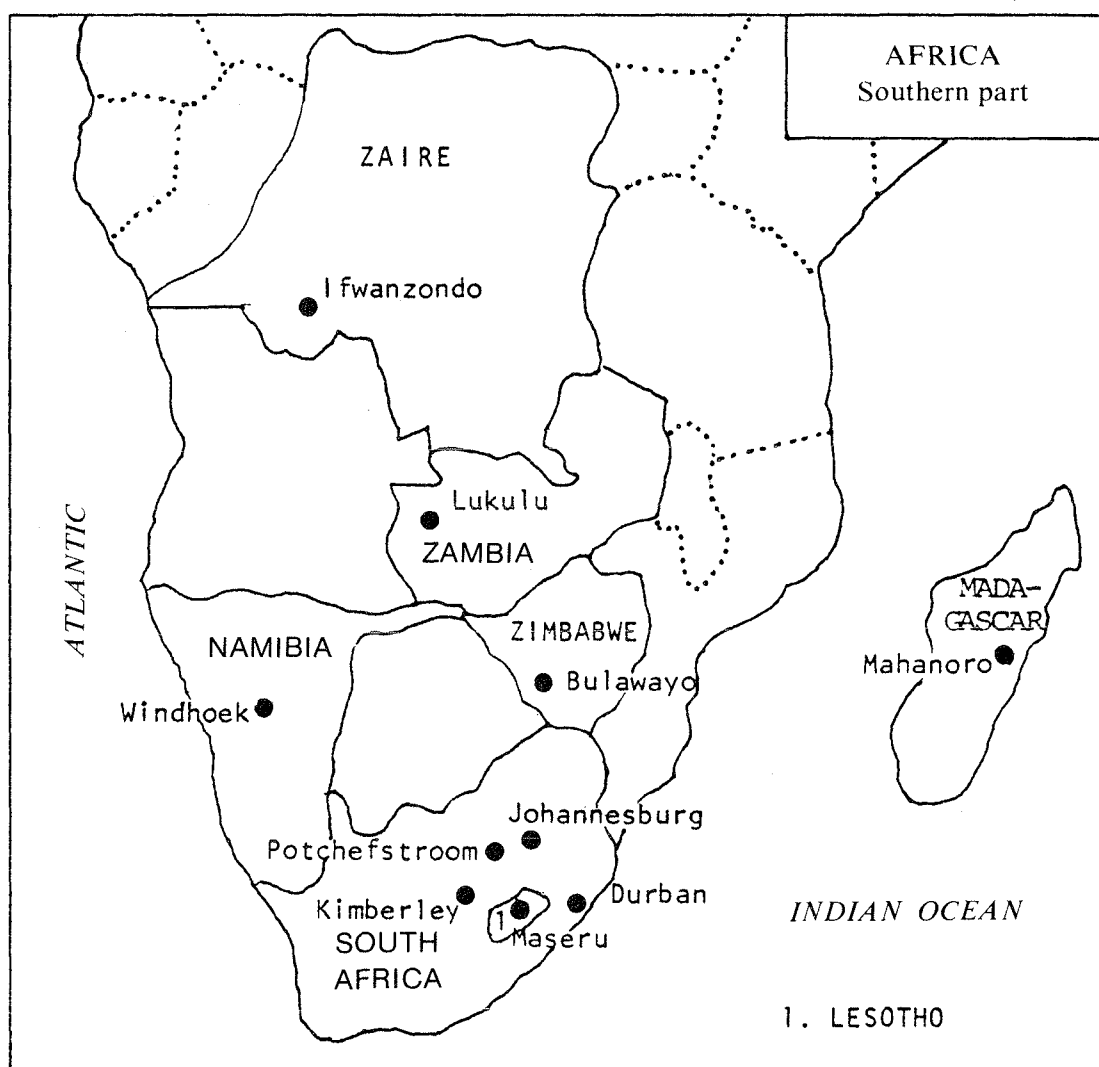
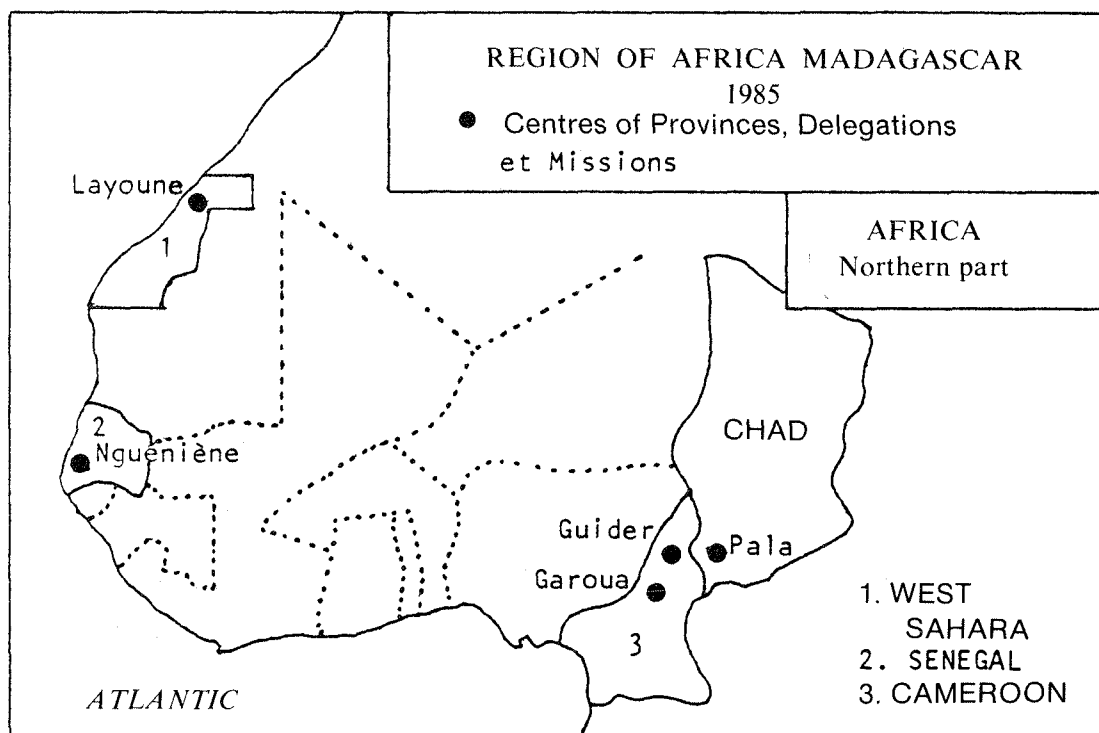
The Vice-Province of Natal – The Province of Lesotho – The Vice-Province of Transvaal – The Vice-Province of Kimberley-Bloemfontein – The Vice-Province of Windhoek – The Delegation of West Transvaal – The Mission of Zimbabwe – The Mission of Zambia – The Vice-Province of Zaire – The Province of Cameroon-Chad – The Delegation of Fiquil-Cameroon – The Delegation of West Sahara – The Delegation of Senegal – The Mission of Madagascar – Overview of the Region.

The main Oblate missions in Africa are grouped around two major centres: southern Africa and central Africa. Southern Africa represents the greater and older Oblate nucleus of the continent: here we have the missions of Natal, Lesotho, Transvaal, Kimberley-Bloemfontein, Windhoek, West Transvaal, and, a little further to the north, the new missions of Zimbabwe and Zambia. Central Africa represents groups of Oblates established more recently in Zaire, Cameroon/Chad, West Sahara and Senegal. The mission of Madagascar is a geographical unit separate from the other two major groups. The Region referred to as that of Africa-Madagascar consists of 14 Oblate jurisdictions; in 1985 it had 745 Oblates: 538 priests, 95 Brothers, and 112 scholastics.

The Vice-Province of Natal

The Vicariat of Natal¹, now a Vice-Province, covered the territory of the archdiocese of Durban in South Africa. The

¹ Cf. above, pp. 257-267.



Oblates, who are still the majority of the clergy in the archdiocese, have been working mainly in parishes and missions and, by preference, with the Zulu, Indians and coloured people.

During the period under study here, the missionaries' activity has had to adapt itself to the major changes that have occurred in the lives of the natives whom they are serving, especially in regard to the grouping of peoples on reserves and in closed quarters near cities of the industrial centres. During these latter years, the missionaries have had to cope with the fact that many Catholic schools have forcibly been closed; in the past, such schools were privileged means of Christian formation.



*Archbishop Denis Hurley, O.M.I. (1915-)
Vicar Apostolic of Natal in 1946
Archbishop of Durban since 1951*

In accord with the vigorous stance of Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban, the missionaries have been facing the grave problems of injustice resulting from the application, since 1948, of the apartheid or racial segregation system adopted by the

Government of the Republic of South Africa. Thus, an ever greater number of Oblates are giving a pastoral service which takes into account the social, economic and political dimension as part of the whole person.² Everywhere the missionaries are stressing the establishment of autonomous ecclesial communities and are trying to help the people become aware of their own potentialities. More and more they are directing their ministry to areas that are the most poor and abandoned.

At Inchanga, an Oblate centre which includes the mission of the place which is entrusted to the Oblates as their own, the Vice-Province has its novitiate, a place for retreats and other meetings, and a high school to which a juniorate was added in 1970. It also has a scholasticate which in 1953 was definitively established at Cedara.³ The students of all the Provinces and Vice-Provinces of South Africa and even those belonging to other religious Congregations come to this scholasticate. From 1956 to 1966, the scholastics from Australia also came here. It is affiliated to the Urban University in Rome since 1979 and is thus able to grant university diplomas.

In 1985, the Vice-Province's personnel consisted of 83 Fathers, 2 Brothers and 11 scholastics.⁴

The Province of Lesotho

The religious Vicariate of Basutoland, established in 1894, became the Province of Lesotho on February 13, 1967.⁵

² Cf. *Rapport de la Province du Natal, Chapitre général 1980*, MS., p. 4.

³ Cf. above, p. 267.

⁴ Cf. M. LENER, O.M.I., "Report on the Natal Vicariate (1947-1953)" in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 673-681; R. J. COATES, O.M.I., "Report of the Vicariate of Natal (1959)", *ibidem*, 86(1959), pp. 775-793; "Natal Vicariate", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, p. 622; *Rapport de la Province du Natal, Chapitre général 1980*, MS., 10 p.

⁵ Cf. above, pp. 268-280. Since its independence, which was proclaimed on October 4, 1966, Basutoland has taken the name of Lesotho.

During the more than one century of apostolic labor in Lesotho, the Oblates have founded the local Church and still today are the majority of the clergy in this Church. The Oblates have worked mainly in parishes and missions. They have carried out the regular parish ministry, have formed catechists and catechumens, have directed schools and visited the stations that are attached to the missions. With what means they have, they have helped the poor of this country which is nearly deprived of all natural resources and is often afflicted by drought. The people they have been serving is socially affected by the departure of thousands of men and young people who leave to earn their living in the mines of the Republic of South Africa.

Besides the parish ministry, the missionaries have been working in diocesan administrations, in diocesan minor seminaries, in the regional major seminary at Roma; they have been directing a printing and publishing centre established at Mazenod where the weekly *Moeletsi oa Basutho* is produced, and they have made the Church present in the national University of Lesotho at Roma.⁷

The few arrivals of foreign missionaries, the withdrawal of aged or ill missionaries and the scarcity of local vocations have

⁶ The Church in Lesotho, an Apostolic Vicariate since 1909, became a diocese on 11 January 1951, named Maseru. A second diocese, Leribe, was established in 1952, then a third, Qacha's Nek, on 25 January 1961. On this date, the ecclesiastical province of Basutoland was formed; the diocese of Maseru became an archdiocese and the two other dioceses were its suffragans. The diocese of Mohale's Hoek was added on 10 November 1977. The bishops of all these dioceses are native to the country.

⁷ At the outset, the national University of Lesotho was the Pius XII University College founded in 1945 under the patronage of the southern African Bishops. The Oblates who began this work in 1945, in 1947 were officially made responsible to provide its teaching personnel; in 1952, they were made wholly responsible for it. In 1964, this enterprise was ceded to a group of laity and it became the University of Basutoland, the Protectorate of Bechuanaland and of Swaziland and, finally, the national University of Lesotho. Its constitution guarantees the presence of the Catholic Church within its structure. Cf. above, pp. .

since the 1960s⁸ occasioned a progressively growing lack of priests. Thus, the vocations apostolate was seen as a major priority in the Extraordinary Provincial Council of 1976 and in the Provincial Council of 1977. The efforts put forth in this domain have borne fruit: entries into the novitiate from 1978 onwards have been a consolation. By 1985, more than one



*Archbishop Emmanuel 'Mabathoana (1904-1966)
first mosotho Oblate, Bishop of Leribe in 1952
Archbishop of Maseru in 1961*

third of Oblates in Lesotho are native to the country and there are now 46 scholastics. In an act of faith in the future, the Extraordinary Provincial Council of 1978 opted for accepting

⁸ Cf. Ph. GOUDREAU, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Basutoland", in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 699-700.

outside missions as soon as that is possible. In fact, the Province in 1985 accepted a mission *ad extra* at Qwa Qwa in the diocese of Bethlehem in the Orange Free State: here they were to minister to a Basutho population.⁹

At the beginning of 1985, the Province had 103 Fathers, 29 Brothers and 46 scholastics.¹⁰

The Vice-Province of Transvaal

The religious Vicariate of Transvaal¹¹, now a Vice-Province, has carried on its apostolate in the dioceses of Johannesburg and Pretoria. The Oblates, who were the pioneers and for a long time the only priests working in the Church of Transvaal, have now ceded important portions of their territory to other missionaries. Their work has grown especially in the Johannesburg area where there is a very heavy concentration of Blacks and Whites. Everywhere they are dedicated to looking after urban or rural parishes and missions.

Since 1947, several events have marked and at times modified their missionary history. In the territory that in 1948 became the Apostolic Vicariate of Pretoria and which has been entrusted to the secular clergy, they have since been ministering almost exclusively to the Blacks. The district of West Transvaal, which includes the important missions of Potchesfroom and Klerksdorp and which was ceded to the Dominicans in 1928, was given back to the Oblates in 1950.¹² Several years later, however, in 1961, this same district was attached to the

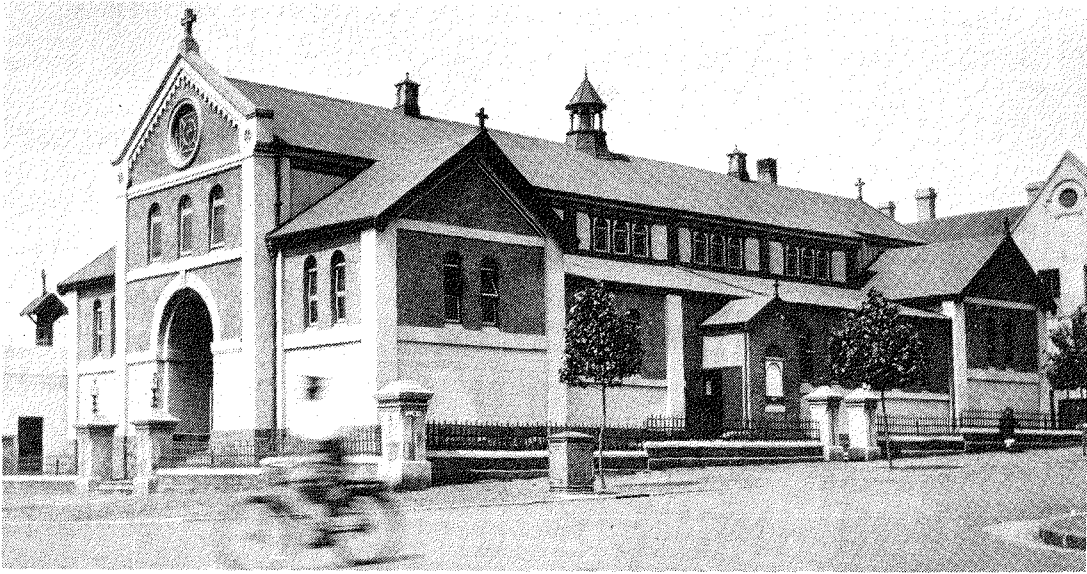
⁹ *Information OMI*, 220/85, p. 5.

¹⁰ Cf. E. PAGEAU, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat du Basutoland au chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 284-295; A. McCOMBER, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat des missions de Basutoland (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 812-831; Ph. GOUDREAULT, O.M.I., "Vicariat du Basutoland", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 697-751; "Lesotho Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 279-300; *Rapport de la Province du Lesotho pour le Chapitre général de 1980*, MS., 11 p.

¹¹ Cf. above, pp. 280-287.

¹² Cf. "Return of the Oblates to the Western Transvaal", in *Missions*, 77 (1950), pp. 197-200.

Province of Belgium-North. The direction of the diocese of Johannesburg, which is in the very heart of their apostolic activity, passed to the secular clergy in 1954¹³, but the Oblates remained the pastors of many parishes and missions.



Cathedral, Kerk Street, Johannesburg, before 1960

Released from being the main ones in charge of the dioceses, the missionaries now began to orient themselves to tasks that were more specifically Oblate. Consequently, in accord with the diocesan authorities, they developed their apostolic endeavours among the Blacks. In 1955, they constituted a team of mission preachers who preached in all the dioceses of South Africa and even elsewhere.¹⁴ Concerned as they were about the importance of education, the Oblates in 1958 opened St. Benedict's College at Bedford View: they supported this institution with personnel and finances.¹⁵

Their ministry amid the agglomerations of Blacks on the outskirts of cities and in the mining centres brought them face

¹³ The Oblates turned over the cathedral of Johannesburg to the secular clergy in 1960. They then left their house on Kerk Street which until then had been an Oblate centre for their work and hospitality.

¹⁴ Cf. "Transvaal Vicariate", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 675-678.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 680-684.

to face with the grave, burning problems of justice resulting from the politics of apartheid. At Soweto, an agglomeration of more than one million Blacks 14 kilometres south of Johannesburg — where in June 1976 violence erupted, violence that was suppressed militarily and was followed up by harrassments on the part of the Government forces — the missionaries took a determined stand in defending the Blacks, whose rights were being violated.¹⁶ Some Oblates were arrested, maltreated and even thrown into prison.¹⁷

Through a series of initiatives, the Vice-Province developed its own community and Oblate existence. Even though it was short of personnel for its own works, it sent missionaries to Zimbabwe¹⁸ in response to an urgent appeal from the Bishop of Bulawayo. In 1985, it transferred its novitiate to Germiston at Hope-Woolith, near Soweto, and reorganized it. Its personnel in 1985 consisted of 68 Fathers, 4 Brothers and 3 scholastics.¹⁹

The Vice-Province of Kimberley-Bloemfontein

The Vice-Province of Kimberley-Bloemfontein, formerly the Vicariate of Kimberley²⁰, covers the territory of the dioceses of Kimberley and of Bloemfontein.²¹ The Oblates are

¹⁶ In 1976, there were 18 Oblates in Soweto; they were in charge of 14 parishes each of which had from 5,000 to 10,000 Catholics.

¹⁷ Cf. *Information OMI*, 119/76, p. 14; 135/78, p. 1; 162/80, p. 3; 163/80, p. 9; 178/81, p. 9.

¹⁸ The Oblates of the Vice-Province were in favour of the Zimbabwe mission to the point that 19 declared themselves to be prepared to go there.

¹⁹ Cf. T. H. KELLY, O.M.I., "Report of the Transvaal Vicariate (1947-1953) to the General Chapter", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 265-271; P. ERASMUS, O.M.I., "Report of the Transvaal Vicariate", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 799-811; "Transvaal Vicariate", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 673-696; "Transvaal Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 243-273.

²⁰ Cf. above, pp. 287-288. The Vicariate of Kimberley took the name of Kimberley-Bloemfontein in 1951. Cf. General Council for February 2, 1951.

²¹ The diocese of Kimberley was divided on January 11, 1951 and thus the diocese of Bloemfontein was born. At this time, the Holy See attached to the diocese of Bloemfontein a portion from the diocese of Aliwal North, which

nearly the sole clergy for the two dioceses, and they are especially deployed in parishes and in missions. The Catholic population to which they are ministering consists of a minority of Whites and a large majority of Blacks. Most of the missionaries are working with the latter, either in the "locations" appended to the large cities such as Kimberley and Bloemfontein, or on the native reserves at Taung, Mafeking and elsewhere. They are also looking after the Catholics scattered over the large farms in the Orange Free State and in the Northwest Cape Province.

Since the 1950s, under the direction of Bishop John Bokenfohr, O.M.I., the missionaries in the diocese of Kimberley are working in the vast northwest area that borders on Botswana. Four missions have been established here, each with a chain of chapels in the wilds.²² The 50 Fathers of the Vice-Province are serving a very scattered population of more than 120,000 Catholics.

In accord with the orientations taken by the two dioceses, the Oblates are in every way promoting an in-depth Christian education and the formation of laity for the parish communities. The report of the Vice-Province for 1980 states: "There is a growing number of communities which are able to manage their own affairs and minister to themselves."²³ In order to respond better to the pastoral needs of the day, ongoing formation for the missionaries has been a priority in the Vice-Province during these last years. To this priority must be added that of recruiting diocesan and Oblate priestly vocations. On this latter point, the results have been little to date.

included two important missions: Jagersfontein and Zastron. In 1959, the English Protectorate of Bechuanaland was separated from the diocese of Kimberley and entrusted to the Irish Passionist Fathers who had been working there since 1952.

²² Cf. *Information OMI*, 104/75, pp. 7-8.

²³ J. HUBBART, O.M.I., *Rapport de la vice-province Kimberley-Bloemfontein pour le XXXe chapitre général*, (1980), MS., p. 1.

In 1985, the Vice-Province had 49 Fathers, 4 Brothers and 2 scholastics.²⁴

The Vice-Province of Windhoek

The Vice-Province of Windhoek²⁵ covers the northern part of Namibia, that is to say, the same territory as that of the Apostolic Vicariate of Windhoek. The Oblates, who are nearly the only priests in the Vicariate, are serving a Catholic population of about 130,000, of which the very large majority is native.



The Cathedral at Windhoek

The missionaries have been working in three distinct areas separated from each other by uninhabited terrain. In the south

²⁴ Cf. A. HARTJES, O.M.I., "Report of the Vicariate of Kimberley-Bloemfontein to the General Chapter (1953)", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 252-255; ID., *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 194-198; L. BAUSCHE, O.M.I., "Vicariate of Kimberley-Bloemfontein", *ibidem*, 98 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 664-672; "Kimberley-Bloemfontein Vice-Province", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 231-242; J. HUBBART, O.M.I., *Rapport de la vice-province Kimberley-Bloemfontein pour le XXXe Chapitre général*, MS., 2 p.

²⁵ Cf. above, pp. 290-297.

and centre of the Vicariate, which is the largest of these areas, they are caring for parishes of Whites of different nationalities and for parishes of natives situated in reserves and in the "locations" on the outskirts of urban centres. They are also ministering to groups of Catholics, which are often quite small, that are scattered over the farms. In the other two areas, namely, that of the Okavango River in the northeast and that of Ovamboland in the northwest, the Oblates are working amid various native tribes where a number of Christian communities have already been formed.

The missionaries are putting forth great effort and care to forming catechists, to education in schools, to forming a native clergy and to publishing materials in the languages of the country. Since 1962, they have been directing a newspaper, *Angelus*, which is produced at Dobra in three languages. During these latter years, the missionaries have had to manifest a daring pastoral commitment, faced as they are with acute and complex national problems, the causes of grave injustices.²⁶

The Vice-Province has its own Oblate centre at Dobra. The provincial house, which also serves as a place for retreats and meetings, an Oblate minor seminary and a novitiate were established there in 1961, 1962 and 1964 respectively. Workshops, a carpentershop and printshop among them, and the apostolate of the press have been established in this same place. In 1985, the Vice-Province's personnel consisted of 38 Fathers, 23 Brothers and 2 scholastics.²⁷

²⁶ Father Heinz Hunke, O.M.I., the Provincial, was expelled from the country for having denounced torture practised by the South African army and the irregularities committed when the voting lists were established for the balloting in December 1978. Cf. H. HUNKE, O.M.I., "L'Église catholique manquerait-elle d'allant?" in *Vivant Univers*, July-August 1981, no. 334, pp. 36-41; *Information OMI*, 121/76, p. 3; 136/78, pp. 9-10; 137/78, pp. 6-7; 142/78, pp. 2-3.

²⁷ Cf. J. GOTTHARDT, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat de Windhoek au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 272-283; A. von VAHLDE, O.M.I., "Report of the Windhoek Vicariate (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 832-849; "Windhoek Vicariate", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 753-782.

The Delegation of West Transvaal

West Transvaal had been established as a district in 1956. It was detached from the missions of Transvaal on June 23, 1961, and attached to the Province of Belgium-North. It then had four Oblate residences, a personnel of six Fathers, and a Catholic population of 15,000 persons.

Sustained effort on the part of the Oblates from Belgium resulted in the development of this missionary territory. In 1965, this district, which was a part of the diocese of Johannesburg, was detached therefrom and became the Apostolic Prefecture of West Transvaal. In 1978, the Prefecture was raised to the rank of a diocese with the name of Klerksdorp. At this date, it had 54,161 Catholics who were being served by 17 Oblate Fathers and one secular priest.

Since their priority is to establish the local Church, the Oblates have tried to make this Church present across the entire territory by founding stations, appointing catechists and building churches. Their aim is not only to form Christian communities but also to make them as autonomous as possible. In view of this, they are placing a heavy emphasis on forming responsible laity.

The Provincial Delegation of West Transvaal was established under this title in 1967. In 1985, it had 16 Fathers and one Brother.²⁸

The Mission of Zimbabwe

An urgent request for missionaries from Bishop Henry Karlen, C.M.M., Bishop of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe (the former South Rhodesia) was accepted by the General Administration in its February-March 1982 session. The requested missionary foundation was entrusted to the Vice-Province of

²⁸ Cf. A. ALBERS, O.M.I., "Province Regina Mundi (Belgique)", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320, pp. 296-298; "Delegation of West Transvaal", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 274-278; D. CORIJN, O.M.I., *Rapport de la délégation provinciale du Transvaal Ouest (Province de Belgique-Nord)*, MS., 5 p.

Transvaal, assisted by that of Natal and, according to possibilities, by the other Oblate groups in Southern Africa. In the summer of 1983, the first three Oblates arrived at Bulawayo, where they were assigned to the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes. Shortly afterwards, the Bishop gave them a district in native territory. These speak Sindebele, a language related to Zulu. In 1985, there were four Oblates working in Zimbabwe.²⁹

The Mission of Zambia

In April 1983, the General Council accepted a mission in the diocese of Livingston in Zambia (formerly North Rhodesia), Africa. This mission was entrusted to the United States Southern Province which had made the first contacts with the Bishop there. The first four missionaries — three priests and 1 Brother who is a permanent deacon — arrived on January 6, 1984, and immediately began to study the languages. The following June 28, they took charge of the mission of St. Mary at Lukulu. This mission includes schools on the primary and secondary levels, a hospital, a leprosarium and 36 mission posts spread over its territory. One of the missionaries wrote, "We are with the poorest of God's poor".³⁰ In 1985, there were 4 missionaries working here.³¹

The Vice-Province of Zaire

The Vice-Province of Zaire³² extends over the diocese of

²⁹ Cf. AAG, vol. 6, p. 76; *Information OMI*, 188/82, pp. 1-2; 189/82, p. 8; 202/83, pp. 7-8.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 210/84, p. 5.

³¹ Cf. *Communique OMI*, 33/83, p. 4; *Trust and Joy*, Southern USA Province Newsletter 14, March-April 1983, pp. 1-2; *ibidem*, Newsletter 22, July-August 1984, p. 5; *Information OMI*, 199/83, pp. 1-2; 210/84, p. 5; 214/84, pp. 6-7.

³² Cf. above, pp. 297-302. The Vice-Province of Zaire had a succession of names: Vicariate of Missions of Ipamu, on March 23, 1947; Vicariate of Missions of Idiofa, on September 1, 1961; Vice-Province of the Congo, January 25, 1967, and Vice-Province of Zaire, on February 1, 1972.

Idiofa³³ and to certain establishments in the archdiocese of Kinshasa (the former Leopoldville).

Until 1964, the missionaries' apostolate in the diocese of Idofa³⁴ was marked by a strong movement of conversions, by the multiplying of foundations and by the development of great mission centres with catechumenate, schools, social works, dispensaries or hospitals. The authorities of the time stated in 1953: "In a word, we can say that the Vicariate of Ipamu is in full blossom"³⁵, and again in 1959: "It is a ceaseless struggle not to be overwhelmed by this mass which is so eager to become Christian and by this ensemble of material works which are indispensable for the good progress of a supernatural enterprise."³⁶

After independence was proclaimed in 1960, grave social ills afflicted the people and discontent towards the Government grew. Subversive forces appeared on the scene and in 1964 a revolution broke out which attacked all of the country's institutions, including the missions. Three Oblates were massacred at Kilembe; 26 of the 30 missions were sacked and pillaged and their missionaries had to flee.³⁷ Gradually the violence abated but the problem remained.

The new situation that resulted from this revolution called for changes in the missionaries' apostolate. They decentralized their missions, paid more attention to forming laity who would

³³ In 1981, the diocese of Idofa had 382,000 Catholics out of a population of 794,000, and 25 diocesan priests.

³⁴ The Apostolic Prefecture of Ipamu became an Apostolic Vicariate in February 1948, a diocese on November 10, 1959, and received the name of Idiofa in January 1960.

³⁵ J.-B. ADAM, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat apostolique d'Ipamu au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), p. 509.

³⁶ J. VAN ROMPAEY, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le Vicariat d'Ipamu (Congo Belge) (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), p. 850.

³⁷ On January 22, 1964, Fathers Pierre Laebens, Gerard Defever and Nicolas Hardy were killed at the mission of Kilembe. Cf. AROMI, February 1964, pp. 23-24; R. TOUSSAINT, O.M.I., "Le martyr d'Idiofa", in *Missions* 92 (1965), pp. 147-150.

take their responsibilities both on the Christian and human domains, integrated the element of ministry for justice into their apostolate, promoted the building of community and adapted themselves more to the culture of the milieu.

At the time of the revolution, Archbishop Joseph Malula of Kinshasa accepted the Oblates in his episcopal city and assigned them to a parish, St. Eloi, that had to be started from the very beginning. A mission agency and a scholasticate were also opened in this city.

The diocese of Idiofa, where the Oblates had been working since 1931, in 1970 received a Congolese secular, Bishop Biletsi, as its pastor. It then had 24 Congolese diocesan priests and as many seminarians. Oblate vocations in this country are also multiplying during these latter years. At the beginning of 1985, there were 44 scholastics. The Vice-Province in 1985 had, besides these 44 scholastics, 28 Fathers and 18 Brothers.³⁸

The Province of Cameroon-Chad

The Province of Cameroon-Chad³⁹ covers the four dioceses of northern Cameroon: Garoua, Maroua-Mokolo, Yagoua and Ngaoundere, as well as the diocese of Pala in Chad. It has also entered the archdiocese of Yaounde in southern Cameroon.⁴⁰ There is a strong minority of Moslems in the ter-

³⁸ Cf. J. VAN ROMPAEY, O.M.I., "Les Oblats au Congo", *ibidem*, 89 (1962), pp. 296-304; "Dans le diocèse d'Idiofa", *ibidem*, 92 (1965), pp. 648-659; K. VERGOTE, O.M.I., "Vicariat d'Idiofa (Congo-Leo.)", *ibidem*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, pp. 783-796; J. GROSJEAN, White Father, "Le diocèse d'Idiofa refleurit", *ibidem*, 94 (1967), pp. 302-312; "Vice-Province Congo" (1971), *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 317-336; D. LOOBUYCK, O.M.I., *Rapport de la vice-province du Zaïre pour le XXXe Chapitre général - 1980*, MS., 9 p.

³⁹ Cf. above, pp. 302-304. The Mission of Garoua was made a Vicariate of Missions on April 25, 1951. On May 17 following, the district of Mayo Kebi, Chad, was added to the Vicariate's territory and the Vicariate became known as the Vicariate of Missions of Cameroon-Chad; in 1967, it became the Vice-Province of Cameroon-Chad. In 1985, the Vice-Province became a Province.

⁴⁰ A district of North Cameroon was in 1975 detached from the Province and became the Provincial Delegation of Figuil-Cameroon which is dependent on the Province of Poland. Cf. below, p. 454.

ritory of North Cameroon and of Chad; the majority, however, are people of the animist religions.



*Archbishop Yves Plumey (1913-)
founder of the missions in Cameroon
Apostolic Prefect in 1947,
Vicar Apostolic in 1953
and Bishop of Garoua (1955-1984)*

In Cameroon as in Chad, the Oblates established the Church in the midsts of masses of pagan peoples who had never had any contact with the Gospel. They opened main missions around which secondary mission stations developed. They took special care to form catechists whom they considered very important in the roles of responsible leader, pastors and counsellors to the Christian people.⁴¹ In their concern for priestly vocations in their Christian communities, they in 1954 opened De Mazenod college and in 1956 a minor seminary at Ngaoundere. They have also opened some residences for late vocations. In 1976, the major seminary at Maroua was

⁴¹ Cf. "Vicariat du Cameroun-Tchad" in *Missions*, 93 (1966), No. 320 bis, p. 802.

founded. Its formation program is, as much as possible, in accord with the African culture and soul. In their pastoral activity as well as in their social and development work, the missionaries have been striving to walk with their people and at the people's pace, to bring the African Church to birth, all the while keeping in mind that it will be the Africans themselves who will achieve this goal.⁴²

In 1963, the Province accepted a foundation at Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon; they were to begin a parish there and also carry on other pastoral activities on the diocesan level. As the parish flourished, it was handed back to the Bishop in 1982.

In important meetings held in 1975, 1977 and 1979, the missionaries reviewed all their apostolic objectives and also considered their religious and community life. A renewed Oblate existence has resulted from these gatherings.

In 1985, the Province had 107 Fathers, 10 Brothers and 3 scholastics.⁴³

The Delegation of Figuil-Cameroon

The Delegation of Figuil-Cameroon, located in a part of the diocese of Garoua in North Cameroon, was canonically established and attached to the Province of Poland on September 17, 1975. In 1981, the missionaries were working in nine central missions from which they branch out into a number of villages and religious teaching stations. They are also looking after a regional formation centre for catechists which is located at Lam. In 1985, their personnel consisted of 21 Fathers and 2 Brothers.⁴⁴

⁴² *Rapport de la Province Cameroun-Tchad*, (1980), MS., p. 2.

⁴³ J. JOUNEAUX, O.M.I., "Rapport sur le vicariat de Garoua (Cameroun) au Chapitre général de 1953", in *Missions*, 80 (1953), pp. 510-518; G. H. DUPONT, O.M.I., "Rapport du Vicariat de Cameroun-Tchad (1959)", *ibidem*, 86 (1959), pp. 861-870; "Province Cameroun-Tchad", *ibidem*, 98 (1971), suppl. 3, pp. 337-362; *Rapport de la Province Cameroun-Tchad* (1980), MS., 6 p.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Information OMI*, November 15, 1969, p. 117; 39/70, p. 5; *Rapport*

The Delegation of West Sahara

To the repeated request of the Spanish Government, made through the intermediary of the Apostolic Nuncio to Spain, the Superior General in 1954 accepted a mission in territories of Ifni and West Sahara, and attached the same to the Province of Spain. A little later, on July 5, the territories of the mission became an Apostolic Prefecture and Father Felix Erviti, who had already been appointed Vicar Provincial, became the Apostolic Prefect.

The missionaries arrived in their mission in October 1954. By order of the Government authorities, they had to limit their ministry to Europeans only: to the military and their families and to other civilians. They were in charge of parishes and did some teaching. Their activity amid the large majority of the population, the Moslem Berbers, could only be an apostolate of presence and good social relationships. Morocco's occupation of the mission's territories — Ifni in 1969 and West Sahara definitively in 1979 — gradually induced the European population to move away. The missionaries were eight in number in 1979; since then, they are only two or three.⁴⁵

The Delegation of Senegal

In the beginning, the Delegation of Senegal, founded on October 8, 1976 and attached to the Province of Italy, was manned by a group of former Italian missionaries coming from the Vice-Province of Luang-Prabang.⁴⁶ The first four who arrived in Senegal and were placed in the service of the Archbishop of Dakar were assigned to the rural sector of

au Chapitre général de 1980, *Province de Pologne*, MS., p. 5; E. JURECZKO, O.M.I., *Rapport Délégation provinciale* (1980), MS., 3 p.

⁴⁵ Cf. above, p. ; AROMI, 1954, p. 49, 64; 1964, p. 39; Fr. MARTIN, O.M.I., "La préfecture apostolique d'Ifni et Sahara espagnol" in *Études Oblates*, 15 (1956), pp. 281-283; *Information OMI*, April 1969, p. 26; 113/76, pp. 11-12; 126/77, pp. 11-12; D. LEVASSEUR, O.M.I., *Cours d'histoire de la Congrégation OMI*, p. 244.

⁴⁶ Cf. above, p. 427.

N'Guenierne-Kjilas, a Moslem milieu. There they looked after a group of 7500 Christians of the Sereer nation. The five others have been assigned to the diocese of Kaolakh. Here they are caring for about 500 Christians and 300 catechumens in the rural sectors of Kaffrine and Kongueul where the majority of the people too are Moslem. In the first sector, the Oblates succeeded to the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, in the second they succeeded to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudon.

Their mission has consisted in animating Christian communities, making contacts with the animist minority and initiating a dialogue with the Moslems.⁴⁷ It includes efforts to develop the country's agriculture: this is one of the poor countries that make up the Sahel. In 1985, the Delegation had 12 Fathers, 2 Brothers and one scholastic.⁴⁸

The Mission of Madagascar

In 1979, the General Administration definitively accepted a mission in the diocese of Bishop Jerome Razafindrazaka of Tamatave, Madagascar (the Malgache Republic) and entrusted the same to the Province of Poland. Five missionaries arrived at Tamatave in autumn of 1980 and began to study the malgache language. The next year they were put in charge of the sector of Marolambo to the south of the diocese. This region is still hardly touched by the Gospel. Here the Oblates have three missions, two of which were closed when they arrived. In 1985, there were nine missionaries in Madagascar.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Information OMI*, 181/81, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁸ Cf. E. ABBATINALI, O.M.I., *Rapport sur le délégation au Senegal au XXXe Chapitre général 1980*, MS., 6 p.; *Information OMI*, 122/76, pp. 1-2; 141/78, pp. 6-7; 196/83, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Cf. AAG, vol. 4, pp. 366-367; *Rapport au Chapitre général de 1980, Province de Pologne*, MS., p. 5; *Information OMI*, 129/77, pp. 1-2; 167/80, p. 8; 190/82, p. 3.

Overview of the Region

A number of common traits mark the missionary work that the Oblates have accomplished in the different regions of Africa: the ever-growing concern to establish autonomous Christian communities and, to achieve this objective, to form responsible laity; the concern not only of forming a local clergy but to hand over to it the leadership positions as soon as possible; the concern to undertake ministries that are proper to the Oblate charism, such as working among the poor and neglected and first evangelization. In social and development work, the missionaries are insisting on the formation of leaders and on respecting the needs and resources of the local milieu.

In a number of countries, the political context has wielded and is still wielding a definite influence on the missionaries' pastoral ministry. Thus, in South Africa and in Namibia, ministry for justice is in order on account of the grave injustices resulting from the politics of apartheid. In Zaire, the revolution of 1964 has led the missionaries to draw closer to the African life and culture of the country. The situations of political instability in West Sahara, Chad, and in the recent missions of Zimbabwe and Zambia have also affected and still do affect the missionaries' activity.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Cf. "Afrique, Rapport de la Region au XXXe Chapitre général" in AAG, vol. 5, suppl. pp. 287-303; *African Region Report on the Oblate Mission*, MS., n.p. (27 p.).

Documentary Notes

1 – *The Congregation's Personnel from 1898 to 1985*¹

	1898	1911	1921	1933	1939	1948	1950
Fathers	758	1,258	1,368	1,945	2,722	3,645	3,868
Scholastics	277	298	365	1,137	1,347	941	1,032
Brothers	392	507	477	906	1,127	1,106	1,141
Total	1,427	2,063	2,210	3,988	5,196	5,692	6,041

	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985
Fathers	4,218	4,740	5,170	5,420	5,002	4,625	4,320
Scholastics	1,339	1,249	1,137	723	389	350	484
Brothers	1,225	1,270	1,298	1,187	1,037	892	768
Total	6,782	7,259	7,605	7,330	6,428	5,867	5,572

¹ To compare, cf. the tables in vol. 1, pp. 320 ff. The figures for 1898 are from the Report of the General Administration to the General Chapter of May 1898; the corrected figures for 1911 (April), 1921 (April), 1933 (April), 1939 (April), 1948 (May), 1950 (September) and 1960 (May) are taken from the Personnel O.M.I. of these same years. The figures for 1965 (January) come from the 1965 AROMI, and those of 1970, 1975, 1980 and 1985, all of them from the beginning of the year, are taken from *Information OMI*, February for each of the years in question.

2 – Analysis of the Oblate Personnel in May 1948²

A – General Data

Fathers	3,645	64.1%	Average age: 43.4 years.
Scholastics	941	16.5%	“ “ 24.8 years.
Brothers	1,106	19.3%	“ “ 42.6 years.
Total	5,692	100%	“ “ 40.2 years.

B – Age Groups (by five years)

Years	Fathers	Scholastics	Brothers	Total
15-19	0	9	19	28
20-24	2	499	95	596
25-29	276	355	131	762
30-34	684	56	133	873
35-39	896	18	173	1,087
40-44	559	3	174	736
45-49	327	1	103	431
50-54	222	0	58	280
55-59	141	0	41	182
60-64	157	0	52	209
65-69	177	0	37	214
70-74	118	0	40	158
75-79	56	0	33	89
80-84	23	0	13	36
85-89	5	0	1	6
90-94	2	0	3	5
Total	3,645	941	1,106	5,692

² According to *Personnel de la Congregation des Missionnaires de Marie Immaculee*, No. 13, mai 1948, Rome, 398 p.

*C - Oblates' Country and Diocese of Origin*³

Country	Fathers	Schol.	Bros.	Total	%	Diocese
Canada	956	151	457	1,664	29.23	50
France	696	175	148	1,019	17.90	76
United States	476	119	55	650	11.41	67
Germany	398	42	188	628	11.03	24
Ireland	250	74	53	377	6.62	25
Belgium	211	107	31	349	6.13	6
Poland	159	13	59	231	4.05	21
Italy	128	41	34	203	3.56	49
Sri Lanka	95	20	10	125	2.26	5
Spain	83	22	14	119	2.09	14
Holland	66	24	15	105	1.84	6
South Africa	35	22	7	64	1.12	9
England	34	4	5	43	0.75	11
Czechoslovakia	10	10	8	28	0.49	5
Scotland	10	2	1	13	0.22	4
Lesotho	4	0	6	10	0.17	1
Haiti	1	3	4	8		3
Russia	6	0	1	7		3
Australia	3	2	1	6		4
Philippines	0	6	0	6	0.90	4
India	4	0	1	5		4
Luxembourg	5	0	0	5		1
Mexico 2		0	3	5		4
Switzerland	1	1	2	4		2
Mozambique	1	0	1	2		1
Jugoslavia	2	0	0	2		2
Antilles	0	0	1	1		1

³ An Oblate's country of origin is that country wherein his diocese of birth was located in 1948.

Country	Fathers	Schol.	Bros.	Total	%	Diocese
Austria	0	0	1	1		1
Egypt	1	0	0	1		1
Hungary	1	0	0	1		1
Lebanon	1	0	0	1		1
Lithuania	1	0	0	1		1
Malaysia	1	0	0	1		1
Mauritius	1	0	0	1	0.23	1
Reunion Island	1	0	0	1		1
Rumania	1	0	0	1		1
Singapore	1	0	0	1		1
Argentina	0	1	0	1		1
New Zealand	0	1	0	1		1
Vietnam	0	1	0	1		1
40	3,645	941	1,106	5,692	100%	414

D - Oblates' Main Dioceses of Origin

The dioceses which in each country have furnished the most Oblates. Between parentheses appears the number of Fathers, scholastics and Brothers, in that order.

Canada (30 Oblates or more)

Quebec, 299 (153, 32, 114); Montreal 198 (139, 23, 36); Nicolet, 149 (68, 14, 67); Ottawa, 118 (71, 17, 30); St-Hyacinthe, 113 (69, 13, 31); Three Rivers, 106 (63, 13, 30); Rimouski, 81 (43, 8, 30); Sherbrooke, 53 (25, 11, 17); St. Boniface, 52 (37, 12, 3); Joliette, 50 (35, 4, 11); Valleyfield, 45 (27, 6, 12); St-Jean-de-Québec, 33 (24, 5, 4).

France (30 or more)

Quimper, 152 (108, 27, 17); Metz, 105 (83, 1, 21); Strasbourg, 82 (64, 3, 15); Vannes, 63 (47, 2, 14); Rennes, 46 (33, 3, 10); Lille, 45 (27, 17, 1); Nancy, 34 (21, 4, 9); Paris, 32 (18, 8, 6).

United States (20 or more)

Boston, 263 (223, 32, 8); Manchester, 35 (21, 8, 6); New York, 33 (24, 4, 5); Chicago, 26 (15, 9, 2); San Antonio, 22 (17, 4, 1); Belleville, 20 (11, 8, 1); Buffalo, 20 (17, 2, 1).

Germany (20 or more)

Fulda, 121 (88, 10, 23); Cologne, 80 (54, 6, 20); Trier, 77 (51, 3, 23); Paderborn, 64 (43, 3, 18); Muenster, 62 (31, 8, 23); Rottensburg, 46 (14, 3, 19); Aachen, 45 (34, 1, 10).

Ireland (20 or more)

Dublin, 63 (43, 11, 9); Limerick, 29 (18, 5, 6); Down, 28 (22, 6, 0); Cashel, 25 (22, 3, 0); Kildare, 25 (15, 4, 6); Cork, 20 (11, 7, 2).

Belgium (20 or more)

Namur, 134 (95, 32, 7); Bruges, 77 (49, 22, 6); Malines, 65 (30, 25, 10); Liege, 33 (20, 10, 3); Tournai, 23 (12, 10, 1).

Poland (20 or more)

Poznan, 75 (45, 4, 26); Katowice, 52 (42, 3, 7); Breslau, 37 (17, 7, 13).

Italy (10 or more)

Ascera, 22 (13, 7, 2); Lucera, 19 (17, 2, 0); Patti, 17 (14, 2, 1); Treviso, 16 (12, 3, 1); Benevento, 14 (6, 2, 6); Campobasso, 10 (4, 3, 3); Caserta, 10 (8, 1, 1).

Ceylon (10 or more)

Colombo, 66 (45, 13, 8); Jaffna, 47 (40, 5, 2).

Spain (10 or more)

Leon, 57 (42, 12, 3); Vitoria, 12 (10, 0, 2); Burgos, 11 (5, 2, 4); Zamora, 11 (7, 1, 3).

Holland (10 or more)

Roermond, 42 (26, 9, 7); Utrecht, 31 (22, 5, 4); Haarlem, 22 (13, 5, 4).

South Africa (10 or more)

Johannesburg, 21 (10, 8, 3); Durban, 17 (10, 7, 0).

3 - Analysis of the Oblate Personnel in March 1981⁴

A - General Data

Fathers	4,522	78.8%	Average age: 56.0 years.
Scholastics	347	6.0%	" " 26.4 years.
Brothers	871	15.2%	" " 58.1 years.
Total	5,742	100%	" " 54.5 years.

B - Age Groups (by five years)

Years	Fathers	Scholastics	Brothers	Total
15-19	0	1	0	1
20-24	0	122	5	127
25-29	63	153	15	231
30-34	200	52	25	277
35-39	291	13	42	346
40-44	435	3	72	510
45-49	556	3	104	663
50-54	530	0	102	632
55-59	543	0	86	629
60-64	494	0	90	584
65-69	598	0	104	702
70-74	489	0	102	591
75-79	204	0	83	287
80-84	77	0	30	107
85-89	34	0	9	43
90-94	4	0	1	5
95-99	4	0	1	5
Total	4,522	347	871	5,740

⁴ According to *Personnel O.M.I., 1981*, General Administration, Rome, 648 p.

C – Oblates' Country and Diocese of Origin⁵

Country	Fathers	Schol.	Bros.	Total	%	Diocese
Canada	1,040	35	355	1,430	24.91	58
United States	749	27	67	843	14.69	100
France	601	2	74	677	11.79	74
Poland	291	83	48	422	7.35	27
Germany	263	7	97	367	6.39	21
Ireland	311	9	37	357	6.29	25
Belgium	274	4	52	330	5.75	9
Italy	220	29	26	275	4.79	73
Sri Lanka	183	19	22	224	3.90	6
Spain	115	2	9	126	2.20	20
South Africa	93	35	8	115	2.00	13
Holland	100	0	13	113	1.97	7
Lesotho	33	31	14	78	1.36	4
Philippines	50	12	6	68	1.19	23
Australia	32	8	1	41	0.72	11
Zaire	4	24	8	36	0.63	3
England	30	2	2	34	0.59	15
Czechoslovakia	18	0	5	23	0.40	6
Haiti	7	4	7	18	0.31	5
Russia	15	0	1	16	0.28	3
Austria	9	2	1	12	0.21	5
India	6	4	2	12	0.21	8
Scotland	8	1	2	11	0.19	4
Namibia	4	3	4	11	0.19	2
Brazil	4	4	0	8	0.14	6
Argentina	6	1	0	7	0.12	5
Jugoslavia	6	0	1	7	0.12	4

⁵ An Oblate's country of origin is that country wherein his diocese of birth was located in 1948.

Country	Fathers	Schol.	Bros.	Total	%	Diocese
Mexico	3	3	1	7	0.12	6
Switzerland	5	0	1	6	0.10	3
Chile	2	3	1	6	0.10	5
Luxembourg	4	0	0	4		1
Hungary	3	0	1	4		3
Japan	3	0	1	4		3
Lithuania	3	1	0	4		1
Cameroon	3	0	1	4		3
Bangladesh	1	3	0	4		1
Peru	0	4	0	4		1
China	3	0	0	3		2
Laos	3	0	0	3		1
Malaysia	3	0	0	3		2
Paraguay	0	3	0	3		1
Algeria	2	0	0	2		2
Ukraine	2	0	0	2		1
Sweden	1	0	1	2	1.05	1
Bolivia	1	0	0	1		1
Denmark	1	0	0	1		1
Morocco	1	0	0	1		1
New Zealand	1	0	0	1		1
East Germany	1	0	0	1		1
Rumania	1	0	0	1		1
Thailand	1	0	0	1		1
Vietnam	1	0	0	1		1
Zimbabwe	1	0	0	1		1
Trinidad	0	1	0	1		1
Indonesia	0	1	0	1		1
Malta	0	1	0	1		1
Mozambique	0	0	1	1		1
Portugal	0	0	1	1		1
58	4,522	347	871	5,740	100%	587

D – Oblates' Main Dioceses of Origin

The dioceses which in each country have furnished the most Oblates. Between parentheses appears the number of Fathers, scholastics and Brothers, in that order.

Canada (30 Oblates or more)

Quebec, 188 (158, 1, 29); Montreal 126 (104, 2, 20); Ottawa, 107 (82, 2, 23); Nicolet, 95 (55, 0, 40); Three Rivers, 89 (69, 0, 20); Rimouski, 71 (44, 1, 26); St-Hyacinthe, 67 (48, 0, 19); Saskatoon, 49 (39, 7, 3); St. Boniface, 47 (42, 1, 4); Ste-Anne de la Pocatière, 44 (31, 0, 13); Sherbrooke, 40 (29, 2, 9); Regina, 35 (27, 4, 4); Gravelbourg, 31 (28, 0, 3); Edmonton, 30 (18, 4, 8).

France (20 or more)

Quimper, 95 (86, 0, 9); Strasbourg, 51 (50, 0, 1); Metz, 47 (39, 0, 8); Vannes, 29 (25, 0, 4); Arras, 28 (27, 0, 1); Lyon, 25 (23, 0, 2); Nantes, 23 (22, 0, 1); Nancy, 20 (12, 0, 8); Rennes, 20 (16, 0, 4).

United States (20 or more)

Boston, 198 (189, 1, 8); Chicago, 56 (53, 1, 2); St. Paul, MN, 35 (31, 1, 3); Manchester, 33 (28, 0, 5); Portland, 33 (30, 1, 2); San Antonio, 33 (31, 2, 0); Belleville, 32 (29, 0, 3); Buffalo, 32 (29, 2, 1); New York, 29 (22, 2, 5); Springfield, 20 (16, 0, 4).

Sri Lanka (10 or more)

Colombo, 124 (98, 10, 16); Jaffna, 71 (62, 6, 3).

Poland (20 or more)

Katowice, 96 (83, 11, 2); Poznan, 73 (47, 8, 18); Siedlce, 35 (24, 10, 1); Opole, 32 (21, 9, 2); Chelmo, 21 (16, 2, 3).

Germany (20 or more)

Muenster, 79 (59, 1, 19); Fulda, 62 (50, 0, 12); Trier, 38 (29, 0, 9); Rottenburg, 31 (19, 1, 11); Paderborn, 29 (21, 0, 8); Cologne, 24 (19, 0, 5).

Belgium (20 or more)

Bruges, 88 (73, 3, 12); Namur, 83 (77, 0, 6); Gent, 36 (31, 0, 5); Antwerpen, 33 (25, 0, 8); Machelen-Brussel, 25 (18, 1, 6); Tournai, 23 (18, 0, 5).

South Africa (20 or more)

Durban, 43 (35, 4, 4); Johannesburg, 35 (28, 4, 3).

Zaire (20 or more)

Idiofa, 34 (4, 22, 8).

Ireland (20 or more)

Dublin, 80 (72, 3, 5); Kildare, 25 (21, 0, 4); Down, 21 (19, 1, 1);
Cork, 20 (20, 0, 0).

Holland (20 or more)

Roermond, 36 (30, 0, 6); Utrecht, 27 (26, 0, 1); Haarlem, 25 (23,
0, 2).

Italy (10 or more)

Treviso, 29 (27, 1, 1); Ascera, 17 (15, 2, 0); Bergamo, 17 (16, 1, 0);
Brescia, 14 (13, 1, 0); Benevento, 13 (6, 0, 7); Lucera, 11 (11, 0, 0).

Spain (10 or more)

Leon, 28 (13, 12, 3); Palencia, 14 (14, 0, 0).

Philippines (10 Oblates or more)

Cotabato, 15 (8, 7, 0); Manila, 12 (10, 2, 0).

Lesotho (10 Oblates or more)

Maseru, 47 (23, 13, 11); Qacha's Nek, 14 (5, 7, 2); Leribe, 12 (4,
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