

ON OUR MISSIONARY VISION (AN EXTRACT)

“Wherever I go in the Oblate world, I have the joy of finding missionaries who are really at the service of the poor, proud to be recognized as friends of the poor and in whom the poor place their trust. I have the impression that our Oblates are always ready to get rich humanly thanks to the poor, in whom they see the God that no one has ever seen (Jn 1:10) and who is revealed in the Cree, the Métis, the Inuit, the Zulu, the Basoto, the Laotian, in the old as in the young. He sends us “to bring good news to the poor... to free the oppressed”, and in this aim our humanity is liberated and made capable of growing. Announcing that Christ is present among them, we are evangelized ourselves, and the Gospel is proclaimed and discovered in the best way possible by our own transformation. But I do not think that we, the Oblates of 1973, can sit on our laurels. Our missionary vision urges us to question the order of our priorities in the distribution of our limited and rather old personnel and our resources. Do we have to continue doing and being for the next 10, 50, 100 years, what we have done and we have been for the past 10, 30 and 100 years? [...] How can we truly make the Gospel message indigenous, according to the cultural sensitivity of the people we serve? What is the best way to re-evangelize the old churches before it’s too late? How can we make ourselves more significant in a technocratic society, the urban world, to the lonely and the marginalized, etc.?

At Christmas, we remember the birth and rebirth of our Savior in our mind and heart. This is what St. Paul said: For me to live is Christ. My prayer for each of us is that Mary, model of our faith, may help us to believe a little more in the presence of her Son in each of us and those we serve, to have more and more mutual trust, to love each other more, in a word to improve as persons, thanks to the fellow Oblates with whom we share our life and ideals, so that the world may believe that God has sent us as his missionaries.” (R. Hanley, Circular Letter, December 20, 1972, Acta Administrationis Generalis O.M.I., I, p. 32-36)