



The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

CATHOLIC MISSION
5-6-26 HONMACHI
KOCHI 780 JAPAN
TEL 0888-72-3658



オブレート会
高知市本町 5-6-26
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NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1974

FR. FORBES COMING: Fr. Dalston Forbes, General Councillor for the Asian Region sends word that he will be arriving in Japan March 5th. There is no definite word about his length of stay nor his travel plans. We hope that he will at least be able to visit each of the Districts.

MASS WINE: For those who are running short of Mass wine here is an encouraging word. Fr. Robitaille has made arrangements with the Dominican Fathers to secure one barrel for each house. Those who have been buying the small bottles locally will appreciate the savings this will mean. You can expect delivery to your front door in a month or so....The bill of course will follow.

SUBSIDY FOR LANGUAGE LAB.: The Eastern American Province has been so generous as to provide a subsidy of \$20,540 for the construction of the Language Laboratory and equipment at the Night School (Seibo Gakuen), in Kochi. We are most grateful for their interest and cooperation in the development of this project.

I'M OK-YOU'RE OK! For all the Parents, Adults and Children who were delighted with the English edition, you will be glad to know that an abridged Japanese edition is out. You can order it from Daiyamondo-sha Tokyo-to, Chiyoda-ku, Kasumigaseki, 1-4-2, or telephone Tokyo 504-6403. It's only 680yen. Dave Ullrich in Fukuoka has some tapes about transactional analysis in Japanese and English.

SUPERIORS' CONFERENCE OF JAPAN: The next meeting of the Religious Superiors' Conference of Japan will be held in Tokyo from April 22-24. The theme is "Formation to Community Life" (Kyoodootai Zukuri). Details of the program will be sent to you as soon as possible. Your suggestions are most welcome.

PROVINCIAL BURSAR: As you know the Bursar's term of office expires with that of the Provincial. The Bursar for the next term is to be appointed by the Provincial Council. If you have any suggestions about the role of the Bursar and names for possible candidates send them to the Provincial at the above address, before March 15th.



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NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1974

CHRIST HAS DIED, CHRIST HAS RISEN, CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN! ALLELUIA!

I can think of no better way of offering Easter greetings than by sharing with you the following words of Louis Evelyn.

"Instead of asking you if you believe in the Resurrection of Christ, I should ask you if you believe in your own resurrection and if you have experienced it.

"Have you ever risen from the dead?

"A Christian does not believe in a future life but in life eternal. If it be eternal, it has already begun and we are now living it.

"Nor does he believe in a future resurrection. We are already risen, or are on the way to our resurrection. Eternal life has begun and it begins only with death and resurrection.

"There can be no Easter for us unless we are willing to die in a portion of ourselves in which we are only too much alive, - in our agitations, our fears, our interests, our egoisms. And also if we do not consent to rise in a portion of ourselves in which we are but too dead, - that is, to rise to peace, to faith and hope, to pardon, to love, and to joy.

"There can be no feast of Easter without a true confession, and what is a confession if it means not to die to ourselves, to our own wills, to our sad, weak, poor, and ugly wills which are our sins, and rise to the will of Christ, which is love, hope, renewal, and tenderness.

"There is no feast of Easter without the Easter communion, and what is an Easter communion but a leaving of one's dwelling place, one's habits, one's bread, and one's life in order to taste another bread, another life, - a life of love, of faith and fraternity, a bread of justice, of sincerity and sharing with others.

"An Easter like this means to leave one's old life and take up a new one, a life in which one finds oneself living the life and the love of the Father.

"Shame on the religion which has no witnesses but those of the long past!

"We need witnesses in this present day. We want people who have passed through death and experienced a resurrection, people who can assure the world that it is possible to die and to rise again.

"That is the message that the world is waiting to receive from us.

"How do you expect it to understand the Resurrection of Christ except by seeing our own? There is only one unassailable proof that Christ is risen, and that is to show that He is now living, and that His love, too, is still alive, and that means that there must be persons and there must be communities that live His life and love one another with His love.

"The only face that Christ now has to show our contemporaries is our own. They will be convinced and converted by what they see in us, and in our communities. 'Where two or three are gathered in my name - in my love - I am there in the midst of them'.

"We ourselves are the proof that Christ is risen. It is up to us to prove the Resurrection of Christ."

Louis Evelyn "The Word of God" p.170.

AN OBLATE AND THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE:

Having lived and worked with the Ecumenical Institute at their International Headquarters in Chicago for several years, Fr. Charles MORRISSEY, OMI (Minnesota) is in the Philippines on an "authorization visit". He gave a report to the Philippine Catholic Bishops' Conference in January, on behalf of Dean Joseph Wesley MATHEWS, Director of the Ecumenical Institute. Another purpose of Fr. Morrissey's trip is: "To enable all religious, but especially the Oblates to become aware of the tremendous potential of their involvement in this important movement."

ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE JAPAN:

Last month, Leo Simons, Bill Maher and Sister Kimura attended an Ecumenical Institute PLC (Parish Leadership Conference) in Hiroshima. Bill Maher's impression? "I came home in awe and bewilderment." But he seems to be ready for more.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Jose De Fruyt wants to inform you that similar PLC's in Japanese (Parish Leadership Conference) will be held at the Religious House of the Ecumenical Institute in Kobe, (Tel. 078-861-0240) on April 27-29 and May 6-8 and May 20-22. Taking in one of these might be a good preparation of the General Meeting in May. How about you?

STUDY AND HOME LEAVE:

- Bert Silver and Dan Ward will be leaving for home leave on April 22. Both plan to attend a summer course at Boston College before returning to Japan in the Fall.
- Jan Van Hoydonck will be leaving shortly after Easter for a refresher course at the EAPI (East Asian Pastoral Institute) in Manila. This is an intensive six week course covering all the main areas of theology and missiology. Don't let the heat get you, Jan!
- Len Inui has been granted a sabbatical year for study and research. He will be residing at Hikarigaoka. During his absence Wilfred Derudder will assume responsibility for the kindergarten.
- Ed Lowney will be going home soon for emergency home leave. His brother-in-law is serious ill, requiring his presence for awhile in the family. Your prayers are requested for his brother-in-law and family that they may bear these sufferings with courage and patience.

A REMINDER:

- Get your answers to the questionnaire from the Steering Committee back to Dick Bonang by APRIL 20.
- I still have a few copies of the OMI-Personnell-1973. Every house should have received one copy. There are a few extra copies for anyone who wants a personal one. There aren't enough for all, so first come first served!

HAPPY EASTER ! ALLELUIA !



NEWSLETTER

MAY 1974

CONGRATULATIONS to Bro. Masahito Miyamoto who renewed his vows April 1st at the high school spring camp in Imabari. While working at the nursery school in Akaoka, he continues very quietly with Fr. Matsunaga and the Prefectural "Shinto-kai" to help the youth of the area to know and grow in Christ.

REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING:

The provincial team met in Kochi April 15-16. The following is a summary of the main topics discussed.

- Nomination of the Bursar was postponed until the next council meeting to be held in Anan May 25-26th.
- Land Exchange: The team decided in favor of exchanging our Tokushima land for a bigger piece in Naruto with the understanding that more detailed information be sought, and that the decision be open for reconsideration should that become necessary in the course of the negotiations.
- Inflation and a Minimum Wage: The bursar gathered and presented detailed information about the working conditions of our church employees (catechists and cooks). His report shows that the average working day of our employees is 10 hours long, one place even recording 12 hours. Many receive no allowance for travel to and from work, and some have no insurance coverage or benefits.

The situation is admittedly complicated in that the catechists receive an annual allotment from the Propaganda, and many of the cooks are live-in cooks receiving room and board. The information at hand does nevertheless show that many of the present salaries are inadequate to meet the spiraling cost of living. Therefore the following points were decided on as temporary measures pending a more thorough analysis of the situation.

- 1-The local christian communities should be made to realize that the primary responsibility for paying a just wage to church employees is theirs, and that they must begin now to meet this responsibility even at the cost of lowering the maintenance standards of the physical plant.
- 2-The official Minimum Wage of Oblate Church employees is temporarily set between 50,000 and 60,000 yen per month. This is basic salary exclusive of bonus and allowances, ("teate").

A live-in situation is considered equivalent to about 20,000 yen a month. Therefore a live-in cook should be getting about 40,000 yen take-home pay monthly. One who does not live in should be getting somewhere between 50,000 and 60,000 yen take-home pay ("tedori") per month.

3-If even with the help of the local christian community it is impossible to pay this amount, a special allotment should be requested from the provincial bursar to cover the balance.

4-We realize this is a very insufficient approach to a very complex problem. Yet we cannot overlook it or put it off because it is complex. It is hoped that with the cooperation of the local christian communities a reasonable and more adequate solution to this important question of social justice can be worked out.

BETTER WORLD MOVEMENT PARISH PROGRAM:

The Itami parish has just concluded the fifth in a series of Better World Movement programs ("Kirisutokyo Kyodotai Rensei-kai"). A three man team comes in for the weekend and has sessions on Friday and Saturday nights and all day Sunday. The Provincial attended the fifth one at the end of March. It was an interesting and refreshing christian experience. Tokushima area has one scheduled for the summer. It really beats the standard type of "parish retreat". Why don't you see for yourself in Tokushima, and have one next year. You must apply early because the teams are in constant demand.

☞ SUPERIORS' CONFERENCE OF JAPAN held its annual meeting in Tokyo from April 22nd to 24th. The theme "Building Community" was discussed in four groups. The discussions were lively and most interesting. Written reports will be out soon. No earth shaking decisions were taken, yet certain encouraging trends were definitely in evidence. More details when we meet in Kochi later this month.

REMEMBER: -The General Meeting is May 27-28 in Kochi. Even if you can't make it please notify Xave TODAY, since he must know how many are coming in order to make the necessary preparations of lodgings and meals.

-The Ecumenical Institute is still accepting registrations for their May PLC (Parish Leadership Colloquy) May 20-22 in Kobe (Tel. 078-861-0240) or May 13-15 and May 18-19 in Tokyo in Japanese (Tel. 03-702-2798). --The Institute got a good write up in Tosei News 12 April 1974 - well wrth reading.



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The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

To the Directors and Pastors:

May Day 1974
St. Joseph Worker

Re.: Minimum Wage for OMI Workers

Dear Father,

In an age of inflation when workers' unions in their spring offensive recently won wage increases of more than 25,000 yen, we might feel totally helpless and unable to even begin to pay our employees a just and living wage. But this does not permit us to sit in despair and lament. With the help of our local christian communities we should be able to do something.

Without repeating the details you can read in the May Newsletter, you are requested to reassess and adjust, if necessary, the basic salary ("honpō", "kihonkyū") of your cook(s) and/or catechist in accordance with the minimum wage standard set by the Council.

1-Due consideration given to the number of years of employment

a-A live-in employee: 30,000-40,000 yen "tedori" per month plus room and board and insurance allowance.

b-An employee who does not live in: 50,000-60,000 yen "tedori" per month plus insurance and travel allowance.

2-The christian community should be strongly encouraged to gradually assume its responsibility be this only partially and in token form. -- If you feel the need for a member of the provincial team to discuss this with the church "yakuin" or "shinto-kai", it can be arranged.

3-Do not hesitate to request a special allotment from the bursar to cover the balance of what you cannot meet. We don't have immense resources, but maybe we can help for awhile.

4-Please notify the bursar of salary changes, since this affects your severance pay premiums.

This policy does not apply to Yochien teachers at the present time. It is hoped that the School Committee can work out something suitable. Thank you then for your attention and concern.

Fraternally in Christ,

Ronald LaFramboise, O.M.I.
Provincial



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1974

FROM THE PROVINCIAL TEAM: (Anan, May 24-25)

The team met for two days to settle unfinished business relating to the Tokushima-Naruto land deal and the appointment of the provincial bursar. The rest of the meeting centered around discussions of the content of the team's "Statement of Guiding Principles" for the Kochi Meeting. The full text is included as an Appendix to this Newsletter for the benefit of those who could not attend the Kochi meeting.

1) Land Transaction:

After gathering and evaluating all the possible information, and the opinions expressed by many people in the community, the team decided to discontinue all negotiations relating to the selling of our Tokushima land and the buying of a bigger piece in Naruto.

The land in Naruto was found to be smaller than first estimated, - only 1000 tsubo - and triangular in size. The major part of the land is solid rock. Extensive and expensive grading would free about 150 tsubo for use. The seaside would have to be filled in to protect from high seas during the typhoon season. It is now accessible only by private road.

2) Provincial Bursar:

Fr. Robitaille has agreed to accept another term as bursar. Thanks, Len! Approval of the General Council is pending, but we have all reason to believe it will be granted.

-Layman as Assistant Bursar: Proposal.

That a layman be appointed as assistant bursar with the hope that he (or she) might sometime in the future assume the post of bursar. This seems one way of promoting greater involvement of layman in our missionary endeavour, and of fostering new forms of association with the Congregation.

A proposal to this effect was presented at the General Meeting in Kochi. It was unanimously accepted. Consultation with the General Administration will be made about the feasibility of such an appointment. In the meantime you are asked to discuss the matter more in detail in each district especially as to who? and how? this proposal can best be implemented.

ASIAN OBLATE INTER-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE:

The Conference will meet in Colombo, Sri Lanka August 1-10. The agenda for that meeting is presented here for your consideration and suggestions. Most of the documents mentioned therein have been sent to you last year. Any suggestions and additional matters you wish to propose should be in the Provincial's office by the 20th of June at the latest.

Agenda: 1) Continuing Formation

- 2) Review of the document : Asian Mission Strategy - Melbourne Conference of February 1973.
- 3) Follow-up of business decided on in Melbourne
- 4) Oblate Sharing Fund: Policy for application, disbursements, accounting, implementation.
- 5) Finances of the Inter-Provincial Conference: Treasurer.
- 6) Work of the Regional Bursar Representative for the Finance Committee in Rome.
- 7) Activities of the Region: - Seminar on Islam. - Mazenod Retreats. - Seminar on Social Justice. - A Mission Conference?
- 8) MAMI activities in the Region: An Asian Meeting of Directors.
- 9) Asian Training and Reflection Centre: Colombo...the Mobile Team.
- 10) Bangla Desh Mission: Our Mission Delegations: Ambon Mission.
- 11) Exchange of Personnel.

This is the only information available at this time. If you have misplaced the documents on Asian Mission Strategy and Mobile Team, there may be a few extras in the files.

SEMINAR ON BUDDHISM:

Dick Bonang leaves for Sri Lanka, July 1st for a Region sponsored seminar on Buddhism. He will be gathering information and insights in Taiwan, Thailand on the way. We look forward to sharing the results of his research.

GENERAL MEETING - KOCHI

The minutes of the meeting held in Kochi from May 27-28 should be in the mail soon. A special word of thanks goes to the members of the Steering Committee - Dave, Dick, Ange and Ray. We are also very grateful to Xave, our "provision supplier" for the comfortable lodgings and food that was secured through the kindness of the Aishi-kai Sisters. The logistics were so well prepared that all agreed to meet there again in December!

We investigated both the negative and the pastoral aspects of our pastoral rationale and involvement. It was generally felt that we only scratched the surface. More in depth reflection and discussion should continue in each district.

DECEMBER '74 GENERAL MEETING:

Mark your calendars NOW for this most important meeting! It will be in Kochi, December 26-30. Fr. Julien Mercure, OMI, will lead an encounter in better communication. His field is transactional analysis. More detailed information is being prepared and will be in the mail soon. -- It is hoped that as many as possible will attend this gathering. It runs through a weekend, so those who plan to attend start looking TODAY for someone to cover your Sunday Masses.

SCHEDULE OF PROVINCIAL TEAM MEETINGS

An experiment in "Open Council Meetings" will be tried in the coming months. You will find a detailed explanation in the "Statement of Guiding Principles" in the Appendix.

We hope to be able to set the exact dates as much as possible on the 3rd Monday-Tuesday of the month to coincide with your district community day.

The proposed places for the meetings is as follows:
Fukuoka in August - Tokushima in September - Tokyo in October
and Kochi in November.

At those meetings we hope to continue a more in depth discussion of some of the issues raised at the Kochi Meeting, as well as discussing your plans for the future of your district and the future of the Province as a whole.

APPENDIX

"Statement of Guiding Principles"

This session is described on the agenda as "a statement of the guiding principles of the provincial team". It is not then a statement of policy, for such would be quite premature at this time, and furthermore, I am not quite so sure policy making is the main function of the provincial team.

We would simply like to state how we see our place or function in the community; what principles we think should guide us in fulfilling that function; what we see as some of the needs of the Province now, and a few possible ways to begin answering those needs.

FUNCTION:

Without being flippanant, we can best describe the function of the provincial team as one of service to the community. (Const. 116) The role of religious superiors or of administration has often been described as a role of animation. Without getting into a battle of semantics, we feel that "animation" is not an adequate term because it implies the action of an active body on a passive body. Putting soul, or life into something that is dead. We definitely do not think of the Provincial and Consultors as being above or separate from the community, but a part of the community, a unit within the community with the role of working with the community, helping it, facilitating it to discern well the signs of the times and to take seriously the message of the Gospel. (Const. 116 and "Community" p. 8, No. 3) A catalyst!

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Our guiding principle then becomes quite clear: working as a team in the community and for the community and implementing with the community the mandate the General Chapter has given us - the three documents on Missionary Outlook, Community and Structures. These are our mandate. These are the principles that must guide us. We must try ever more urgently to reassess our works and our mission in the light of those three documents. The underlying thought, the nucleus of those three documents seems to be community and communication: corporate thinking, corporate praying and corporate action.

(Appendix-2)

NEEDS:

After having traveled to almost all of our houses and spoken to most everyone, it is possible to list the following needs. You have already expressed them over and over in the two days of this general meeting. They sum up quite well what people are thinking and saying.

- 1) Need for a critical reevaluation of our works in the light of the chapter documents.
- 2) A clearer mission policy and vision. How are we to work today for the future?
- 3) Difficulty in communicating on all levels.
- 4) Lack of teamwork, i.e. group planning and corporate action.
- 5) Need for more intensive continuing education through seminars, study groups and private study.
- 6) Better and more effective use of our manpower.
- 7) More cooperation with Japanese and other foreign missionary groups in other locales according to the needs.
- 8) Greater incorporation of laymen into our work and our community.
- 9) Greater effort on work with and for the poor.

The list could go on and on. But these seem to be the main things that we are concerned about right now. They are certainly the main things we have been talking about during this meeting. If we consider them all very closely they seem to center around three points: communication, reevaluation and group thinking and planning, in just about that order.

TOWARDS A SOLUTION:

The provincial team has no magic solution. We are not quite sure just how to go about solving these problems or how to begin answering these needs, but one thing does seem very clear: a communitarian approach is vital. If anything is going to get done in this Province, it will be the day the community decides to do it. It is very evident from yesterday's sessions that we want to continue growing and developing. We would like

to suggest a few possible ways.

1) Open Provincial Council Meetings:

The provincial team would like to meet on a regular basis, possibly once a month for awhile, rotating the place of the meeting from one district to another. We have agreed to meet for two days, i.e. from noon of one day until noon of the next, or longer if necessary. The first days sessions could be open to anyone in that particular district who would like to attend. As discussed in Tokushima last December, "ad hoc" members from other districts could also be present if the matters up for discussion so required it. A time for closed sessions to discuss certain matters of personnel could be kept on the second day.

We hope that these meetings can take the form of a day of recollection or community day with some form of liturgy or common prayer. The main purpose of this type of meeting is to get as wide a sharing as possible in the decision making process and to strengthen the bonds of community.

2) Personal Questionnaire:

The second thing we propose is a personal questionnaire which we hope will be ready by the summer. By personal, we mean one that asks questions like "Do you like the work you are doing now?" If you don't "What would you like to be doing", etc. Then we would like to follow up this questionnaire with individual interviews with all the respondents. This could well be done when the team is meeting in each district. This is only one more way of getting information, feedback, of trying to involve everyone in everything.

3) Firmly established semi-annual mission meetings:

We are already doing this so to speak. But we suggest that semi-annual meetings be considered as Province policy, as something essential to our very existence as a dynamic living missionary body. We propose that the dates for such general meetings be established once and for all. For example, if we could establish the last weeks of May and December as the official gathering times for mission meetings, then we could build our schedules around those dates, rather than trying to build the dates for the meetings around the different schedules of thirty people. This would also make it possible to line up speakers and experts to help us at these meetings.

(Appendix-4)

For the next general meeting this year we would like to have Fr. Julien Mercure, OMI come to help us learn to communicate better. He is an expert in transactional analysis and his presence was deemed essential to the success of the Continuing Education Program sponsored by the five American Provinces last year in California. A recent letter indicates he is very willing to come.

4) Greater Incorporation of laymen into our work:

In view of the desire expressed quite clearly in yesterday's discussions and of the indications of the acceptability and the desirability of new forms of association with or of belonging to and cooperating with the Congregation we would like to suggest appointing a laymen as Assitant Bursar with the hope that he (or she) might eventually assume all the functions of byrsar. Offhand, you might say that such people as Mr. Kondo, Mr. Kido, Mr. Narui or other such people who have had a long assoçiation with us might well be willing and competent to do this work, which is definitely not related to priestly ordination. We would like to discuss this in detail this morning.

CONCLUSION:

These few ideas are hardly answers to problems, but only a few ways that we can possibly use to make community deeper and stronger and more meaningful, and our mission more effective. In other words, you might describe the function of the provincial team as that of facilitators, of catalysts, of communitizers. It simply means that we have to do a little extra homework.

If the forty odd needs we listed yesterday afternoon as the negative aspects of our pastoral involvement, are indeed what we feel is urgent; if we do feel the need to pray together more, to think together more, to plan together more, then there is no reason and no one to stop us from doing so.

Our mandate is the chapter documents. Their call to continued renewal is urgent. Renewal requires of course much time and especially much patience. Renewal requires personal and collective action on the part of all. ("Community", No. 3, p. 7). "What is expected of us is that we discern well the signs of the times and take seriously the message of the Gospel." (MCom. p. 8). "Community may be interrupted by moments of separation and disharmony, but it can also rise to heights of pardon and reconciliation. This is its normal itinerary and the basis of our hope." ("Com." No. 7, p. 12). "The community as a whole must seek

(Appendix-5)

solutions through prayer, dialogue, discernment of spirits, through a reevaluation of our commitments and a realistic appraisal of our needs and our capacity to meet them." ("Com." No. 12, p. 15-16). "The Spirit will give rise to a diversity of interests, but we must respond to his invitations with liberty, even when the changes suggested are radical." ("Com." No. 12, p. 15).

May Christ-Jesus give us that grace - the grace to be radical!

From the Provincial Team,

Ron, John and Dave.



NEWSLETTER

JULY- AUGUST 1974

APPOINTMENT:

At the request of Bishop Tanaka, Fr. Robitaille has accepted the appointment as pastor at Sanbonmatsu. He will take up his duties there in the beginning of August. His new address will be Church of St. Francis Xavier, Hama-machi, Sanbonmatsu, Ouchi-cho, Okawa-gun, Kagawa-ken (Zip code: 769-26) The telephone number is 08792-5-3871. This is the same number as the Dominican Convent.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Dave will be sending you soon the Questionnaire from the provincial team. Please fill it out as soon as possible and return it to Dave at Hikarigaoka.

PROVINCIAL ABSENT:

Ron will be absent from Japan from June 23rd to August 17th. After a few weeks of home leave he will go to Ceylon for the Asian Inter-Provincial meeting. During that time John Mahoney will handle all ordinary business. If anyone needs logistic support papers for renewal of visa, John has a bundle of them.

TERMITE ATTACK!!

Naruto was just recently attacked by a swarm of winged termites. The house is still standing and "experts" have exterminated the ennemy at the usual exorbitant rates. Believe it or not Anan was also similarly attacked. However, there was not so much there to eat. The moral of the story is that preventive treatment before they get in is much cheaper than extermination. So check your foundation timbers today to see if they have been treated or not.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING.

The provincial team will meet in Fukuoka August 19-20. The main business will be discussing the implementation of the proposal for a lay bursar, and gathering the views of the men in that district for the future of their district and for the Province. Similar meetings will be held in the other districts in the coming months.



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NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1974

APC - COLOMBO:

Ron returned August 15th from an exciting and quick moving two month trip abroad highlighted by a three week stay with his family in Fitchburg, Mass. and two weeks in Sri Lanka for the annual meeting of the APC (Asian Provincials Conference). -- The Minutes of that meeting will be sent to you as soon as they come in. Of more value than the minutes or reports that will be forthcoming was the opportunity to meet with fellow workers from other parts of Asia. The situations they live and work in are varied: - martial law and unrest in the Philippines - an uncertain peace in Laos - repeated natural calamities in Bangladesh - a socialist government courageously struggling to solve its chronic economic problems in Sri Lanka - possible new openings in Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia - increasing Oblate vocations in Thailand and India - visa problems here and there - and the worlds highest rate of inflation in Japan!

Amidst the uncertainties and the questionings there is a spirit of determination to remain fresh and alive, imaginative and open to the proddings of the Spirit. The Asian Region varied as it is, does have that same spirit in common.

"OPEN COUNCIL MEETINGS"

Our first attempt at this type of meeting was held in Hikarigaoka August 19-20. The sessions of the first day were open to all the men in the district. Ron gave a brief (or was it long?) report on the recent APC in Sri Lanka. Then after a discussion of Dick Hanley's resignation and the forthcoming General Chapter we closed the morning with a celebration of the liturgy.

The afternoon session began with a reflection and discussion centered on the text of Mt. 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth". This was a fitting opening for our discussion of such practical issues as the Lay Assistant Bursar, the Itami Building Project, and a brainstorming session on the future direction of the Province.

1-Layman as Assistant Bursar:

-It was generally agreed that this person be competent in that field. Preferably he (or she) should be a christian and someone familiar with the Oblates so that there would be a mutual feeling of trust and openness and also the ability to view financial matters in the light of our missionary vision.

-Rather than wait until the Provincial Team makes the rounds of the other three districts - this will take until November - it was suggested that a request be sent out by mail asking for names of possible competent people in each area. -- Yoroshiku ne! the sooner the better. Any information on this matter should be in by September 20th at the latest.

2-Itami Building Project:

The parish council in Itami has launched a fund raising campaign to raise 50 million yen to repair and enlarge the present Church-Hall-Office facilities. They propose to build a second floor over part of the present church building - v.g. above the present offices, kitchen, meeting room, ossuary and small chapel.

The enlarged area could include 3 medium sized rooms for meetings or classes (capacity for 30 persons each); an ossuary twice the size of the present one, one large meeting room that could also be used for wedding parties (hiroen), a kitchen and toilet facilities. The present ossuary could be turned into an office.

They hope to be able to raise the money by asking for half the sum in donations and the other half in interest free loans payable in 10 years. The borrowed money would be payed back over a ten year period with the profits from bazaars, wedding parties and english classes.

Frs. Williams and Van Hoydonck are asking the Province to donate 3 million yen and also to make a loan of the equivalent sum interest free for 10 years. This matter was discussed at Hikarigaoka and it is still open for your opinions. We hope to discuss this at the next Council meeting in Tokushima in September. Any comments on this should be in no later than September 20th.

3-Brainstorming on the Future Direction of the Province:

In an attempt to follow up the Kochi Meeting of last May we had a brainstorming session on the main areas of concern for the future direction of the Province. Three main areas of concern emerged with a few suggestions for coping with these.

I-Fuller participation in General Meetings in order to foster community consciousness and vision.

How?-Greater imagination in the type of meetings. - Fixed dates for these meetings. - Mutual encouragement to participate in these meetings. - More of these "open council meetings" with the provincial team.

II-Indigenization by stressing Core Communities.

How? -On the spot education: seeing what is already being done.
-More exchange of information through the Provincial Newsletter. - Research and study.

III-Research into new types of involvement and the possible integration of personnel with other dioceses and missionary groups.

How? -Provincial team should contact groups that seem to be interested, v.g. Maryknoll, Scheut, Scarborough.
-Follow up related answers from the personal questionnaire.
-Meeting of our own men who are involved or becoming more involved in other types of work.

I am sure we only scratched the surface in this brief session. Such reflection should continue in each district on a regular basis. This brainstorming session will be a part of the coming meetings in the other districts so please come prepared. In the meantime the above seems to have created a little homework and footwork....

PROCESS SEMINAR:

The dates for the Process Seminar (Transactional Analysis Encounter) proposed for December have been finalized. Ron met with Fr. Julien Mercure, OMI during his world travels this summer. Father Mercure felt that two groups of 10 to 12 people would be better and more interesting than one big group. So the following dates were agreed upon. Group A December 26-30 - this is the original scheduled date - and another group, Group B January 3-7. You are free to sign up for whichever group is more convenient for you. The sessions start on the morning of the first day and end in the evening of the last day. This means travel during the busy holiday period so make your reservations early. Breaking into two groups has the added benefit of making it possible to have someone available for the Sunday Masses. More detailed information on this Seminar is being prepared and should be out shortly....

DE MAZENOD RETREAT:

A De Mazenod Retreat under the direction of Desmond O'Donnell, OMI from Australia will be held in Sri Lanka from 4th to 31st October of this year. There is place for other applicants. If anyone is interested please notify Ron as soon as possible.



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TAKAMATSU DIOCESAN PRIEST'S RETREAT:

For those priests on Shikoku who are interested in a preached retreat, Fr. Shichida (Kagoshima) will preach the priests' retreat this year, September 24-28. It is open to all priests in the diocese. Reservations should be made before the 5th of September.

AVAILABLE:

-Believe it or not, complete and up to date copies of the "Necrologium" have arrived. Anyone interested in a private copy, it will be sent postage free.

-Likewise, Jose DeFruyt has left in Kochi with Ron copies of his answers to the Personal Questionnaire. If you want a copy please write to Ron in Kochi. -- Recent letters from Jose show that he escaped the floods of Bangladesh and is well on his way home. His reflections on his trip through the Third World regions of Asia will make interesting reading when he publishes them.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETINGS:

With the General Chapter coming up in mid-November we would like to make the rounds of each District before then. Therefore a little change in the original schedule was made. As of now, except for Kochi, the following dates and places are agreed upon.

- September 29-30 in Tokushima District
- October 13-14 in Tokyo District
- November 4-5 in Kochi District ??

The first day will be open sessions and all the members of each district are welcome. The schedule will be similar to that of the Fukuoka meeting.

NEWSLETTER:

I feel that this regular monthly bulletin is necessary to keep the lines of communication open. However, it is not possible to invent "news", and "thought control" is no longer in vogue, so keep the news flowing. We will print anything: what you are doing, what you aren't doing, your hopes, your fears, your desires and even your dreams!



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NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1974

GENERAL CHAPTER:

The General Chapter opens Nov. 12th. A recent letter from Dalston Forbes indicates that the first three days will be days of prayer and reflection. Let us not wait until then to start praying. "Pray that the Lord's message may go forward unhindered." 2 Thes. 3:1 May all the delegates go with open minds and open hearts - open to the Spirit, who alone knows what we must do.

BEATIFICATION OF THE FOUNDER:

According to the latest reports the beatification of the founder should take place next year in October. A short biography of Bishop de Mazenod will be published in connection with the beatification. Prepared by Aime Roche, OMI, this biography is an up to date revision of the text published in 1961 at "Edition de Chalet" in the collection "Illustrated Biography", entitled "Eugene de Mazenod". Alfred Hubenig, OMI is doing the translation. If you are interested in reserving a copy, write to Ron by the end of this month.

PARISH WORKSHOP - HIKARIGAOKA:

The parishoners of Hikarigooka church held a one day workshop Sept. 8th to determine the needs of the parish for the near future. The gathering was unusual in that it aimed at incorporating a relatively large number of people in the decision making process. The ten-hour workshop, in which over 35 parishoners participated, was inspired by the Ecumenical Institute sponsored LENS seminar (Living Effectively in the New Society), held in Kyoto in May. Dick Harr and Dave Ullrich both attended the Kyoto seminar and felt that an adapted LENS methodology would be helpful in building a sense of participation in the parish community.

The workshop under the chairmanship of four parishoners included the five following steps.

STEP 1 : "Brainstorming" in a plenary session. All the participants were urged to bring up areas of concern regarding the parish. Over thirty issues were presented at this time. These were recorded under three categories:

- a. economic
- b. political (i.e. the decision making and action-oriented aspects of the parish)
- c. cultural (i.e. spiritual, motivational, educational aspects of the parish)

STEP 2: Reformulation of the above concerns in terms of general problems facing the parish. This was done by three small groups, each taking one of the above categories.

STEP 3: Selection of one particularly urgent problem from each of the three categories. This was done by all the participants in plenary session. The problems considered to be important:

- a. financial independence of the parish
- b. absenteeism among parishoners
- c. making the parish more appealing to Japanese sensibilities

STEP 4: Formulation of five proposals to solve each of the above problems. This was done in small groups.

STEP 5: Final decision in plenary session on which of the five proposals was the most effective solution to the given problem. The solutions decided upon were:

- a. establishment of a financial committee to handle parish books, make suggestions etc.
- b. organization of the parishoners in each of the parish's four districts to make contact with non-attending Catholics
- c. formation of a "kokoro no tsunagari undo" (union of heart movement).

These three proposals were then turned over to the parish council to be refined and put into effect. They are also the current topic of discussion at the weekly "katei shuukai" (home gatherings).

-EVALUATION.

Prior to the workshop there was some reservation about how such a "western" manner of discussion would appeal to the parishoners. The near unanimous sense of accomplishment and satisfaction expressed afterward by the parishoners proved most of the initial doubts to be unfounded.

This method does not of course instantaneously transform a parish into a committed christian community. But the LENS-type procedure does provide a form of group dynamics in which people can orderly pool their opinions, choose several that are the most relevant to the immediate future, and formulate ways to act on them. Anyone interested in further information about this workshop and the thirty proposals can contact Dick or Dave in Hikarigaoka.

ITAMI BUILDING PROJECT:

Concerning the request for a loan and donation for the building project in Itami, the following was decided after extensive verbal and written consultation of the Province:

- Not to grant the requested loan and donation of 6,000,000 yen.
- That the Council is opposed to building at this time.
- That the Province cannot and should not accept at this time the financial liabilities implied in this project.

The main reason for this decision is that we are not sufficiently convinced of the urgent need for expansion at this time. The needs for space do not seem such that they could not be obviated by further use of the existing facilities in the kindergarten and in the rectory. It is also questionable whether or not it is the mission of the Church and of the Oblates to provide wedding reception facilities when such abound in most cities.

It was noted, however, that the last Provincial Administration, in May 1973, approved the exchange of a piece of land near the kindergarten for the piece adjoining the Church. Negotiations with the proprietor of that land should continue, since the acquisition of that land could be useful in the future.

MEETINGS WITH THE PROVINCIAL TEAM:

Meetings were held in Tokushima District and in Tokyo recently according to the format of the August Fukuoka meeting. With the Chapter opening next month, much time was given to discussion of the text on Fundamental Values drafted by the Asian Provincials Conference, as well as to the image of the future Superior General. The image: a man of deep spiritual and theological insight, respectful of tradition yet open to change, on the move but not too much, diplomatic but not stuffy, someone with the qualities of the former one.

In Tokyo there was no time for the "brainstorming" session on the future direction of the Province, but the Tokushima group came up with a variety of points that were grouped under three headings: broadening the base of our apostolic involvements; developing lay leaders; spiritual renewal and development of personnel through continuing education.

DISTRICT COORDINATOR:

Angelo Siani was chosen by the men of Tokushima District to be district coordinator for one year replacing the present district superior, John Mahoney. His role will be mainly one of contact-man between the men of the district and between the district and the provincial team, as well as organizing district gatherings and community days as the need may be.

PROCESS SEMINAR:

Applications for the Process Seminar with Fr. Julien Mercure, OMI have been coming in everyday. Group A (Dec. 26-30) is already full. There are a few places left in Group B (Jan. 3-7). Get your application in today. If there are any more applications for Group A, we will try to make some arrangement, but it is impossible to promise anything.

NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR THE GENERAL HOUSE:

When addressing any sort of mail to the Oblate General House or people residing in any of its three communities, you are asked to use ONLY the following mailing address:

OBLATI DI MARIA IMMACOLATA
C.P. 9061
00100 ROMA-AURELIO
ITALY

This should get you through the Italian mails a few weeks sooner!

PARISH LEADERSHIP COURSE:

The Ecumenical Institute is having a Parish Leadership Course in Japanese Nov. 18-20. The fee including lodgings is 6000 yen. It will be held at the Religious House of the Ecumenical Institute in Kobe. Applications should be addressed to the Institute at 9,3 Ueno Doori, 8-chome, Nada-ku, Kobe 657, or call Bill Schlesinger at (078) 861-0240.



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NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1974

RECENT ASSIGNMENTS:

- Fr. Richard Bonang: from Assktant at Tokushima parish,
to Lecturer at the International Division
of Sophia University, Tokyo
(Effective: January 1975).
- Fr. Raymond Bourgoïn: from Director of the Hoya residence, Tokyo,
to student work at Shirayuri University,
Chofu-shi, Tokyo.
(Effective: November 1st, 1974).
- Fr. John Takaji Iwo: from Assistant at the Itami parish,
to Pastor-Director of Nakajima-cho parish
in Kochi.
(Effective: December 8, 1974).
- Fr. Thomas Maher: from Pastor-Director at Nakajima-cho
parish in Kochi,
to Assistant at Nakajima-cho parish, Kochi.
(Effective: December 8, 1974).
- Fr. David Ullrich: from Assistant at Hikarigaoka parish in
Fukuoka,
to Director of Hoya residence in Tokyo.
(Effective: November 1, 1974).

LECTURER AT SOPHIA UNIVERSITY:

In January, Dick Bonang will take up his post as lecturer at the International Division of Sophia University in Tokyo. This will give Dick the chance to share the fruits of his studies at Harvard University and the many insights of his personal research with the many students of the International Division. He will be leading two courses: "Contemporary Japan" and "Cultural and Political History of Japan".

DISTRICT COORDINATOR FOR KOCHI:

By a unanimous vote Leo Simons was elected district coordinator for the Kochi District at a recent district meeting.

NEW ADDRESS:

While remaining attached to the Hoya community, Ray Bourgoin will live in a small apartment just off the campus of Shirayuri University in Chofu (Tokyo), in an effort to become more involved with the students there. His address: 182 Tokyo-to, Chofu-shi
Midorigaoka, 1-6
Aomori-soo, Dai-3-go-shitsu

There is no phone there, but he can be reached at the Hoya residence on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

OUR MAN IN FLANDERS REPORTS:

Jose DeFruyt having arrived safely in his native land writes: "Contrary to the expectations of many, I must say that there is a demand for missionaries and what they have to say or to show, certainly in Flanders. Today I had to refuse several offers for the month of October. My calendar for October is full with something to do everyday - leading masses, showing slides or giving conferences. I was already interviewed for radio broadcasting and also two articles have been ordered...."

---Don't forget to rest!

DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER?

Can you answer the following questions that were put to Ron recently?

Question 1: "Do the Oblates in Japan feel committed to any geographical area?"

Question 2: "If so, do they feel they are fulfilling that commitment to the best of their ability?"

Put that into your computer. Ron is looking forward to a big stack of mail with the answer to these crucial questions when he returns from the General Chapter!!

FROM RON:

I will be leaving for Rome for the Chapter Saturday, November 9th. I encourage you again to continue praying for the success of this important gathering. During my absence John Mahoney will handle all ordinary business. See you soon....

PREPARATION FOR PROCESS SEMINAR:

The 3 textbooks for the Process Seminar should reach you in a few days. A quick reading of "Born to Win" will familiarize you with the vocabulary and make the seminar more interesting.