



PART II

OBLATES
PRESENTLY
IN JAPAN / KOREA



ORDER OF FIRST OBLATION

09/08/1946	HARR Richard
09/08/1947	VAN HOYDONCK Jan
09/08/1947	TOSA Xavier
09/08/1948	SIMONS Leonard
09/08/1948	SILVER Bertram
09/08/1949	MAHONEY John Kenney
08/15/1952	MAHER Thomas
09/08/1952	WILLIAMS Edward
08/02/1958	BOURGOIN Raymond
09/08/1958	YAMASAKI Michael
09/08/1958	INUI Leonard
09/08/1958	SIANI Angelo
08/15/1959	MAHER William
09/08/1960	IWO John
08/15/1961	NOVOTNY Jerome
09/08/1962	DEELY John
09/08/1964	HAHN Francis
06/24/1972	LAGUIDAO Wenceslao
09/15/1983	BORDO Vincenzo
09/15/1983	CONCARDI Mauro
09/29/1984	ZEVOLA Giovanni
09/08/1985	KAWAGUCHI Leo
09/29/1985	GIORGIANNI Maurizio
09/08/1986	PEIRISPULLE Jude
09/08/1986	ROZAIRO Bradly
03/20/1987	YAGI Nobuhiko
09/08/1989	JEYACHANDRAN James
05/21/1991	DEL ROSARIO Jaime

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF MY LIFE AND WORK IN JAPAN

Richard R. HARR



On arrival to Japan

It was 46 years ago when I received my Obedience for Japan. At the time, I knew little, if anything, about this country, its people, and the challenges that faced the Church. I did know the 8 Oblates who preceded me there, and I looked forward to working with them. Having no knowledge of the language, I had to pre-

pare for a future assignment, but this was cut short after only 6 months of concentrated studies in Tokyo, and I was sent to assume the responsibility of the then newly-built mission of Nakamachi (later named Hikarigaoka) in Fukuoka City. I had to smile a lot those days to make up for what I couldn't understand. In time, my tongue loosened and I could relate to the people under my charge. Those were very happy but trying days, however.

After 2 years there, I was re-assigned to our other Fukuoka mission in Koga for 8 years. Then, it was off to Tokushima-Anan for 2 years after which the authorities sent me back to the Hikarigaoka

Church in Fukuoka City. Since then I've served in Itami City and in Anan City as parish priest. I was assigned to the Aki City parish in 1997.

My dream is to assist my people into an ever-deepening devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Only God will be able to reveal to me whether I have been an effective instrument in this regard. I have always felt to be most fortunate to be an Oblate and to be assigned to this mission work. I hope to spend my remaining years in Japan working for God's glory.



Now

JAPAN 1953 --

Jan Van HOYDONCK

I have written at other times and at other places that I have an unshakable awareness of Providence's uninterrupted guidance throughout my life. And so I became the first non-American Oblate to be accepted as a missionary into the new Oblate Mission in Japan. I arrived on August 21, 1953, not yet fully recovered from a skull fracture, incurred by a tumble with a scooter in Belgium on September 26, 1952.

After having gone through the indispensable time of getting acquainted with the Japanese language I received my first assignment for our Nakajima-cho parish in Kochi City, in July 1955. I



On arrival to Japan

continued there until in 1963 I was appointed to go to our Oblate Seminary in Tokyo, as an assistant to the Superior, Fr. Pat Healy, O.M.I. Although intended to be of longer duration, after one year I was changed again, since Archbishop Paul Y. Taguchi of Osaka wanted me as a teacher in his newly established Diocesan Junior College. That assignment continued for 17 years. At the same time I was assistant pastor in our Itami City Parish, where I resided and from where I commuted to the Junior College, which over the years advanced to College, with my own position going from Lecturer to full Professor. I used the opportunity and the time I had to take a Degree of Master of Arts in English Linguistics at the Osaka State University in Toyonaka City.

In 1975 I received a request to become the chaplain for the English speaking foreign Catholic community in the city of Kobe. These were mainly agents of foreign firms and their families, and the turnover of members of the community was large. I

continued teaching at the Catholic College, dividing my stay between Kobe and Itami, until in 1981 I was appointed pastor at our parish in Fukuoka City. I had a hard time becoming adapted to leading a large parish. I asked to be relieved and was transferred to Tokushima City.

Three years later I was again asked to come to Kobe, this time to be the Catholic Port Chaplain, in which capacity I worked until the Summer of 1989 when I was sent to the town of Ikeda, at the western border of Tokushima Prefecture. At this writing I am still there, and if my health holds out I shall happily continue to stay there as in a center from which I can radiate in service of those who might need my help.



Now

NATURALIZATION

Xavier Yoshikazu TOSA



On arrival to Japan

I was born in Flanders (Belgium) in 1927 and registered at the municipal office under the name of Xavier Delporte. I entered the Oblate Congregation when I was 18 years old. I came to Japan in 1955, 28 years young and with a lot of romantic hopes and dreams. After 2 years of language study in Tokyo, I was sent to Aki city in Kochi Prefecture. Until the present I

have never been assigned outside this Prefecture. So when I became a naturalized citizen in 1978, I took the name "TOSA" (the old name of Kochi). While in Aki (at about 30 years of age) I attended the local Junior and Senior High Schools for 4 years and tried to study Japanese, Social Science and a few other things with the young teenagers, sitting at the same little desks. It was my first real experience of Japanese society just like it was. I tried to learn things Japanese from the inside, not by reading about Japan. I should have taken all the subjects, even mathematics!

When I was changed to the town of Akaoka after 9 years, I heard that the Prefectural Reformatory School was not far away. I offered my services. They were accepted. From then till now I have been teaching English to so called 'delinquents'. Besides the classes, there are a lot of other opportunities (summer camps, picnics, sports events etc.) to witness christian values among the students and teachers. Working at the Reform School

has deeply influenced my growth as a priest and missionary in Japanese society. Working with 'delinquents' and their teachers, has shown me dark and - at the same time - bright sides of our society. About 30 years ago, the teachers were as much 'volunteers' (a word that didn't exist yet) as I was. I realized that "love your neighbour" wasn't a monopoly of the Catholic Church. I experienced that God was already working in Japanese society before 'I' (The Missionary!) came to Kochi Prefecture.

This growth enabled me to get more involved in the Justice and Peace Movement. For me, the Movement is not a club or a society of activists in the universal Church, it is the Gospel itself. I chose two Chinese characters of 'Justice' and 'Peace' as Japanese Christian name. It's pronounced Yoshikazu. So my full Japanese name is Yoshikazu Tosa.

Water and time flow away but time cannot be hardened to ice or halted by a dam. Time cannot be possessed ... still I wish it were 'yesterday once more'.



Now



JAPAN!

Leonard SIMONS



On arrival to Japan

Japan! That's what was written on my obedience when I finished the scholasticate. It took some time before I could reconcile myself with the idea of going to Japan. The superior of the scholasticate was of the opinion that the best place for me to go would be Zaire. My reaction was that I wouldn't be able to do much with a toolbox in Japan. I was lucky to spend another year at the Catholic University of Louvain and was able to follow some extra courses in psychology, English and Eastern History.

In the evening of Aug. 15, 1955, the Suez Maru arrived in Yokohama. From the ship we could see fireworks. The next day around noon we were allowed to leave the ship. Because the ship had arrived one day early there was nobody to meet me. Luckily I had the address of the National Catholic Committee. A certain Mr. Ryokichi Mukai, a sculptor, who had been studying in Paris and spoke a few words of French got me a taxi and told the driver where to go. When I arrived there I met my former high-school teacher Fr. Verwilghen, a Scheut father.

I spent my first Christmas in Tokushima with Fr. Patrick Brady. In the house we had plenty of fresh air even without opening the windows and because there was no heat in the house it was warmer outside.

After two years in Tokyo I went to Kochi City's Enoguchi Church. There I was told that all the problems were solved and I should be careful not to cause

any new problems, whatever that meant. I was assigned to care for the Legion of Mary, the choir and the altar boys. I also had to visit about six TB Sanatoriums. One thing I was not allowed to do was to try and teach catechism. In July of 1962, I took off for the town of Awa-Ikeda. The rectory of the church was less than 40 square meters and looked very much like a barn. The church had no windows and no floor and the lines of the property were not clearly visible. With an old army jeep we got from Tokushima, Gerard Stevens and I roamed the mountain areas.

In Sept. 1964 back to Enoguchi. Then the big shuffle of July 1966, brought me to Koga. My first assignment to a kindergarten. Various things happened in 1968 and I landed in Akaoka in March of 1969. I was told that this parish had more than one hundred people so on the first Sunday when I saw about 15 people I was waiting for the others but was told that this was all.

In Dec. of 1971, a group of people working in Social Welfare was started and in March of 1973 the Kochi Volunteer Group was established. The next year the first Volunteer course was held at the Seibo Kindergarten Hall. In June of 1975, the Volunteer Bureau was opened in a small room on the second floor of the Seibo Kindergarten. It was transferred to Enoguchi Church in 1980.

In July of 1975 I was asked by the Provincial to go with him to Koga City to help out in the controversial problem that had arisen in the Koga Kindergarten, controversial, because emotions and legal matters got all mixed up. By March of 1978 I was back in Akaoka.

When Fr. Cirilo Orrade, a Burgos Missionary in charge of the Emmaus group left for Spain in 1980, I took it over and continued it for two more years. But because of too many other commitments we closed the doors on March 31, 1982. As soon as I came back from Koga I was asked by a group of parents to have a study group on education. That's how Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) started in 1980. At the moment we are holding our 49th session. In 1985 we came together with a group of people to talk about an 'emergency' telephone program and that is how 'Kokoro no Daiaru' (Dial a Heart) was started on May 5th 1986.

In July 1989 we did over the old day-nursery building in



Now

Akaoka to start a shelter for troubled women, which was opened that same year on Dec. 8th. Even before Aonami no Ie (House of the Blue Wave) was inaugurated we had had several girls and some boys stay with us for various reasons and for various periods of time. We have been able to help several unwed pregnant women. Of the six children that were born here, four have been adopted and two of the children are

being raised by their mothers. Two more women who are pregnant haven't decided what to do yet.

Some other things I've been involved in are English at the Koga school for nurses from 1967 until 1971, Kochi Technical High School from 1980 till 1990, Tosa Rehabilitation College from 1993 until 1995.

NARUTO AND I

Bertram N. SILVER



On arrival to Japan

1948! That was the year that I finished my Novitiate at Ipswich and went to Washington to begin studying at the Oblate College. When I arrived there Father Gill was packing his bags to start his trip to Japan to open the Japanese Mission. In some way I feel it was the beginning of my own Missionary vocation to Japan.

When I was two years away from Priesthood Father Hunt gave John Mahoney, Dan Ward, Bill Denzel and I permission to go to Georgetown

University to study Japanese. During these two years the only thing I could think of was would I be given permission to go.

After ordination I was assigned to Japan. That September I began Japanese Language classes in Tokyo. Later I found myself at the Oblate Mission of Itami. Ignorance is bliss! That year went by in bliss and ignorance.

Then to Tokushima in Shikoku as the first curate under Pat Brady. During that year the mission of Naruto was going to start. I was going there as the first director. Little did I know that I would be spending over thirty years in the Mission of Naruto.

Naruto was once a city that was probably seventy percent taken up with the production of salt. These salt fields were later converted to housing developments. The remainder of the land of Naruto is basically farming: sweet potatoes, renkon, daikon, vegetables.

The educational facilities of the city are excellent. At present Naruto has a Government University that has drawn teachers and students not only from all over Japan but from abroad as well. Otsuka Pharmaceutical Company is the largest firm in the city employing top-class workers from all over Japan. The only other large "business" is probably the

"Naruto Boat Races".

The "parish" of Naruto is at present on the outskirts of town. Previously it was in the center of the city. The beginnings of the community here started with Mr. Sueho Tsuda coming here during the war from Tokyo. He was the only Christian here. Due to his efforts a small group was formed, mostly of young people interested in art. (Ed: Cf item on Br. Tsuda) They were able to use the home of a Mr. Omura. The Naruto Family began. Some became baptized and a Mission Station was begun. From Mr. Omura's home to the City Hall, to a room in a private school, to the first Catholic kindergarten and rectory in the center of town. At the present location there is now a small chapel that the Catholics can call "their own".

Many of the first Catholics underwent severe personal persecutions for their choice in following Christ. Even though this mentality has changed in the area there is what could be considered "indifference" to Christianity. For the people of Naruto, Buddhism is the "only" religion. Other religions are now "tolerated". There are only three other very small non-catholic church communities in Naruto.

One of the greatest joys of living with my Christians in Naruto has been being present to them in their difficulties and joys.

At one time the parish was made up of Narutoites! Now, this has changed and there are many "outsiders" in the community. This has been a good challenge to them. At present we have about eight Peruvians, and a Filipino family. There are also several Koreans and Filipinos from the Naruto University in the community.

The Naruto community has always been made up of a good number of men, unusual in the make-up of the church of Japan. We are blessed with two Japanese Oblates from the parish, Fathers Len Inui and John Iwo and also three young men have "tried" the Oblate life. One of them is now a special eucharistic minister. That God has called these men to his service is one of my joys. For some strange reason we have always had an abundance of young boys as



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ministers at the Eucharist.

As a missionary to Naruto I have been convinced of the need of a "base of operation" for missionary work. Personally, I find it in the "parish". From this point and in conjunction with the Oblate community I have worked with the Oblate charism of "bringing the faith to those who do not have it and

of forming christian community". Now we say we don't bring the faith we help others find it with them - whatever!

Even though we have a small community (40 on Sundays) I am happy to say that they are cooperative in the prefecture and in the Diocese. They have adapted well to the changes in society and in the church. I am indebted to the many Oblates who have lived with me and helped me through many difficult years. Also without the help of the Xaverian Sisters and the Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of St. Joseph I would not have been able to cover as many bases as I have.

The parish community has been understanding in my taking on other apostolates, university teaching, Lion's Club activities, English teaching, an official translator for the Prefectural Police and the Tokushima Court House and mostly the work in our Kindergarten.

After fifty years work, Naruto still remains Missionary.

The challenges are unbelievable and each new one is a joy and a sorrow. But isn't that what our Oblate Life is!



S AINT EUGENE

John Kenney MAHONEY

The Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was Canonized on December 3, 1995 by Pope John Paul II. The Founder is now Saint Eugene. I was present in Saint Peter's when the Holy Father declared that Eugene De Mazenod is a Saint for the Universal Church.

This is no doubt a most significant event in my life. I was one of a group of 29 from Japan who made a Pilgrimage to Rome to be present at this historic and solemn occasion. The first event on the Program was a Fiesta of Youth which was held in the Paul VI Hall on December 2. The Hall has a capacity of six thousand. Every seat was filled. The front rows were occupied by 2000 enthusiastic youth from all over the world. (The Oblates are working in 68 countries). They had come to celebrate St. Eugene's work with the young people of Marseille and Aix-en-Provence. It was evident from the wonderful musical extravaganza they presented that they believe St. Eugene is a model for youth and for those working with youth today.

The Canonization Ceremony was held on Dec. 3. Our group had very good seats. We could see and hear all of the beautiful ceremony. Others were not so fortunate as there were over ten thousand in St. Peter's that morning. As an Oblate of Mary Immaculate it was a thrilling and challenging moment when I heard Pope John Paul proclaim, "We discern and declare that Blessed Eugene is a Saint of the Church".



Saint EUGENE DE MAZENOD (founder of the Oblates)



On December fourth the Oblates gathered at St Paul's Outside the Wall for a Mass of Thanksgiving. This was another thrilling experience. Over eight hundred Oblates from all parts of the world offered Mass together. The entrance procession took more than twenty minutes. After the Mass, supper was served at the Oblate General House. Needless to say it was not a 'sit-down-dinner'. The Italian pastry was excellent. I made a second trip to the Pastry Table. During the evening I met many Oblates that I had not seen in years. There were so many that there was no time for long conversations but the joy of being an Oblate of Mary Immaculate was evident in each and every face and smile.

Due to the General Strike in Paris our travel plans were somewhat changed. We traveled by bus from Rome to Assisi. After a short time there we continued by bus to Marseille. The next morning we went to Aix-en-Provence. St Eugene was born in Aix as were the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It was in Aix that five Fathers joined Father De Mazenod to form the first Oblate Community. Our tour continued in the town of Aix where many places have great significance to the Oblates.

In the afternoon we returned to Marseille. Our first stop was at Notre Dame de la Garde. This church which was built by Bishop De Mazenod overlooks the Marseille harbor. There is a statue of Our Lady who looks over those who travel to or from this harbor. In the early days Oblates were missioned to many parts of the world from this Church.

We arrived in Lourdes the evening of December 7. We had time to visit the Grotto where the Blessed Mother appeared to Bernadette Soubirous. Mary asked this poor young girl to have a shrine built in

her honor at the sight of the small spring. Today four million pilgrims a year come to visit this holy ground. They come to seek healing of many kinds. All who come leave with some blessing or grace although it may not be the one they sought.

December 8 is the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a feast day of the Church which has very special meaning for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It was my joy and privilege to be the main Celebrant at Mass on this day at the Lourdes Grotto. You were in my prayers at that Mass. In the afternoon I went into the Lourdes Bath. (It was cold!!) I asked Mary to pray for and protect you who are always in my heart.



Now

These were days in which my vocation as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate was renewed. These were days in which I recalled the words of St. Eugene, "they must strive to be Saints." This, for me, is the challenge of St. Eugene's Canonization.



ALL OVER THE PLACE

Thomas MAHER



On arrival to Japan

Except for Awa-Ikeda and Anan I have been assigned to or substituted in all our parishes at one time or another. My longest assignment was to the Nakajima-cho Catholic Church in Kochi City where I was for over 25 years, first as a practicing alcoholic pastor and then as assistant (?) or in residence, it wasn't really clear. I taught part time in

Kochi Technical College, a national school, for 16 years and in West High, a Provincial High School for 23 years, from both of which I have retired. I began working at the Kochi Prison about 25 years ago. It is a voluntary service which has expanded from Catholic chaplain to special instructor (English) to special teacher (lectures on addiction). I guess that it was because of this I received an award from the Prime Minister. (Ransho)

A little over a year ago, I accepted the assignment as pastor of the Nakamura Church which covers the large scenic territory of Hata-gun. Besides the Japanese Catholics (few in number), we have 19 Filipina married to Japanese in the parish. The late Fr. Stevens OMI located these and lovingly cared for them, lest they lose their Catholic faith.

The job here includes shopping, cooking and laundry.

The turning point in my life was my stay at Guest House in 1976, a treatment center for priests, brothers and now sisters in Rochester, Minnesota. This as well as the disease of alcoholism was a special gift of God. It has opened the doors for me to many mental hospitals (and the prison) where I can share my experience, strength and hope with many. My own self help group is in Kochi where I attend meetings twice a week.

How do I feel? Young. Despite the fact that a little boy pointed to my pot yesterday and asked, "what's in there?" As for hair, well. ... But I feel young at heart and ready to go, I get my new car next Friday: Honda Integra SJ = Sedan Joyful!



Now

C HANGE, LOTS OF IT!

Edward WILLIAMS



On arrival to Japan

To condense forty years into one small page is a daunting task. Where to start? The beginning I suppose. 1958, September 17, 10 A.M., the place, Haneda Airport in Tokyo. From the airport we, Fr. Tom Maher and I, along with Fr. Dave Barton and Fr. Joe Hofmans who had come to meet us were in the place where the Oblates were staying in

Tokyo, a residence on the grounds of the national Catholic Committee in the city.

We said Mass that day, individually, in Latin, facing the wall, without song. Forty years later the distance traveled in Liturgy has been immense. Tomorrow morning the Mass here will be concelebrated as we will have visiting priests, in Japanese, facing the congregation, and sung from the initial Sign of the Cross to the final sending forth with hymns before and after.

After two years of language at the Franciscan Language School in Roppongi, Tokyo, I was privileged to be able to have a Japanese teacher come to the church three times a week for about seven years. But even with that preparation, I as well as many others, read my sermons through those first years, sermons which had been prepared by the Central Committee and written in Roman letters.

All of us were in black clerical clothes in those days. Nowadays few of us ever wear them. In those early

days we taught 'catechism' almost exclusively. Of late years almost everywhere 'Bible' has come to great prominence.

We Oblates were all young and practically all two to a mission, full of vitality and high hopes; the high hopes remain, but, after forty years the wealth of experience has vastly expanded while the level of vitality has considerably lessened; and we are mostly one missionary to each place with all the benefits and drawbacks of that situation.

Five Popes have graced the See of Peter, Vatican II has come and with it the new breeze that summoned many of the changes enumerated above.

Personally, a series of appointments have taken me through many of our missions, Naruto, Hikarigaoka in Fukuoka, Itami, Nakajimacho in Kochi, Tokushima. Each place brought wonderful people into my life, wonderful memories, and of course equally great sorrow and loss each time I was called to another mission. Looking back, the joys outweigh the sorrows by a large margin.

Looking forward, the young Italians, the young Filipinos, the young Sri Lankan Oblates who are now on the scene, the few seminarians we have, the several hopefuls that are considering to join us, the increase in the number of Christians in our missions, their rightful participation in so many facets of 'Church' promise an even more wonderful future in the new millennium for the Church in Japan as well as for the Oblates who are a part of it.

I'm glad I came and having another chance I'd do it all again.

"And now that I'm gray, O lord forsake me not." Ps 71/18.



Now



M Y LIFE IN JAPAN

Raymond BOURGOIN

In late 1960, when I was studying Philosophy in Rome, Bishop Fulton J Sheen gave a long discourse in which he emphasized that a true Christianity minus its Western frills would emerge only once the philosophies of Asia and Africa had been encountered and integrated. I wanted to become part of this movement, thus I turned to the East and Japan. Rather than bringing Christ to this country, I wanted to discover Christ as he appeared here, and help others do the same. More than speaking I wanted to listen. Those were my dreams as I arrived in Japan in 1961.



On arrival to Japan

As a scholastic, I was greatly disappointed. I thought that some of the groundwork had been done in this direction and would be reflected in the study of theology in Japan ... but I found here a totally Western Theology. The same was true about the way Religious Life was lived in the OMI Seminary.

After finishing my initial formation, I spent a year in a parish and was soon thrown fully unprepared into Formation, before having started to bridge East and West.

For health reasons I was later limited to teaching French, English and Religion at the College, High School and Junior High School levels as well as being on the staff of an orphanage. This actually was a blessing in disguise, as I was able to rub elbows on a more permanent basis with so-called 'non-christians'. Through these experiences I was able to see with my own eyes and hear with my own heart the Christ present among the ordinary people. This also helped make me more human, more free to relate with all kinds of people especially the young.

My involvement with Marriage Encounter and Choice led me to share my feelings in this area with committed lay people. They understood me very well and have been a source of strength to me.

Now I have been asked once again to take part in the ministry of Formation. While introducing our young men to religious life, I also want to listen to

them and discover Christ within them, so that their form of 'religious life' will eventually have an 'oriental balance' to the 'western pattern' we have developed.

Having had the opportunity to translate some of the founder's letters, I saw through them his concern for the same thing, discovering Christ in those around him. The Christ he found in people helped complete the Christ he found within himself. Had he been in an Asian context I am sure the Christ within him would have matured even more.

What I want to accomplish with my time remaining in this life? Continue on the path I have been on, living and learning the "width and breadth", the "height and depth" of Christ as he appears in my brothers and sisters with an eye especially to the oriental dimensions and to the 'non-christians' and bring them to a similar awareness.

On this path I have found peace till now and I believe and trust I will find peace in the future. I cannot be at peace with people unless I find peace within myself and that is where the original thrust I received in Rome is leading me. Thanks be to God!



Now



A PLACE FOR ME

Michael YAMASAKI



At ordination

I originally wanted to do youth work, but this dream was only partially realized when I taught at Taisei High School in Fukuoka City and worked at a home for children for two years each.

The first impression I had in the Province was that I wasn't really needed here, because teaching English seemed to be the main work at the time. But, after the Koga kindergarten problem, the service I was able to render to the Oblates helped me recover confidence in the Oblates as well as see that the parishioners also had confidence in us.

There are no 'ifs' in my dictionary, so I don't look back, but my future dream is, since I'm too old to start anew, I want to relate Jesus to the non-christian parents of the kindergarten children.



Now

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Leonard Morio INUI

As we celebrate 50 years of Oblate missionary activity in Japan, I, as a member of this mission, want to thank God who gave us all this. And along with the Lord Jesus who lives in the hearts of all people, I want to thank our founding fathers, those who followed them and our benefactors by expressing my esteem for them for taking part in spreading the peace of the kingdom.

The Lord Jesus, filled with the mercy of God the Father, carried the burden of his brothers before his Father. This was the way that the Father used to show love for humanity. This mercy which was shown to us through Christ's Passover mystery, Saint Eugene resurrected for the poor and abandoned of his society in the 19th century. In Japan, unlike France, this did not happen during a revolution, but after a war, and therefore I would imagine that there were many difficulties. Now we have reached a new milestone and I pray that evangelization will go on growing.

Till now, I have spent most of my life here in Kyushu. In the Koga mission I put all my heart and

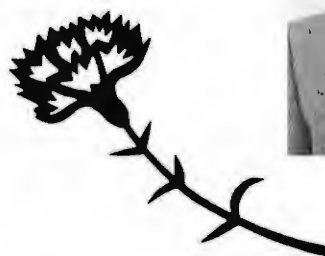


As a seminarian

soul in Montessori education especially in its practice. My reason for this is that I would like to instill in children, while they are still young, the notion of living a life of gratitude for receiving life from God. This is done through eliciting in them the natural growth of the life we were blessed with. I hope that these children will be brought up listening to the word of God in a natural way as expressed in the Bible. I also hope that the environment in which these children grow becomes healthier. I am confident that God will give us this power through the children themselves.



Now



50th ANNIVERSARY HISTORY

Angelo SIANI



On arrival to Japan

In 1953, I joined the Mission Club at Bishop Fallon High School in Buffalo, New York. We had information about all the Oblate missions and I became very interested in Asia. Four years later, I entered the Novitiate in Tewksbury Mass, and with two great classmates like Michael Yamasaki and Len Inui, I knew that it was

Japan for me.

I volunteered for Japan as a scholastic in 1960 but did not receive an Obedience for Japan until after my ordination. I arrived in Japan Sept. 16, 1965. My classmate Don O'Brien and I were greeted with a typhoon, a 'decoration' cake (bought by my classmate Dick Bonang) and two earthquakes during that first night! I began to wonder if I came to the right place.

My first assignment was to our mission in Naruto where I was co-pastor with Bertram Silver for 11 years. My work included a mission station in Itano, a chaplaincy to the TB patients at the Banzai Sanatorium and the teaching of English at Seibo Kindergarten, adult English at the Church, Tokushima University, Shikoku Women's College and a few factories. I enjoyed my years in Naruto.

In 1979 I became pastor of the Nakajimacho mission in

Kochi and after two years became Provincial. I then served as Novice Director, was a member of the staff at the House of Studies in Nagoya and became Provincial again.

On a snowy day this past January, a strange sight caught my attention. Outside my window was a little green parakeet. It was trying to stay out of the icy wind and at the same time was trying to insert itself into a flock of black birds. But he was the wrong color. They were black and sleek. He was round and green and his beak was the wrong shape. I thought for sure he was not going to last a day. You can imagine my surprise when two weeks later there he was again chirping outside my window with the same flock of black birds!

There are times I feel like that little green parakeet as I work here in Japan. My nose is too big and my skin is the wrong color. But despite that I feel accepted and am very happy here. I can't say I've had many successes. I've come to believe that what is important is to be faithful and be here until God decides to act.

At Fr. Len Robitaille's funeral Bishop Fukahori remarked "He died among us". Cardinal Shiranayagi when speaking to missionaries said "stay with us until the end". I remember the words of Fr. Robitaille quoting some Jesuit missionary. He said, "the missionary's bones must rot in the country he worked in, to make up for all the things he couldn't do in his life time". I hope to have that grace.



Now



JAPANESE JOURNEY

William MAHER



On arrival to Japan

Looking back at my 36 yrs. in Japan from this vantage point I remember seven different places each with its own happy memories but at the same time there were many bumpy roads along the way. From the first shock of another language and a new culture, starting from square one in your middle twenties, to the theology in three broken

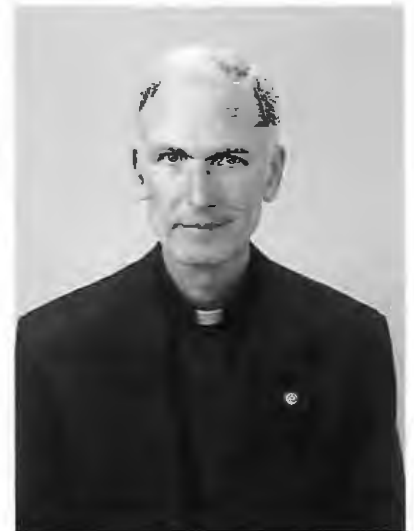
languages Latin, Japanese and English and the introduction into the ministry without what I thought were the necessary tools. Now it all gives you a good laugh. But if I had that time to do over again I think I'd do the theology in the States, get ordained, and then start the full language course and ministry.

Thinking of each place individually, surely my 17 years in the small mission of Nakamura City starting a Church and the challenges entailed in that stand out the most but the 8 years in Tokushima City were also a giant step in my journey of faith. In Nakamura City the first seven years were spent in a 10 straw mat church and pure Japanese living conditions, including going to the public bath if you wanted a good cleansing. And then another 10 years walking with that small community in their new church or should we say, house plus a small chapel.

The medium sized Church of Tokushima with its many pastoral opportunities and challenges was a complete change from what I was used to but those years are full of great memories too.

And now the parish of Koga City, being on the Island of Kyushu is a new setting and a new challenge, but I ask the Lord who sent me here to let me attain whatever goal he has in mind for me in this community. May we as a community bring His Good News of Salvation to all in the Koga Parish.

I have to ask for a lot of forgiveness and thank a lot of people for their patience and gigantic sacrifices of putting up with a pastor such as I, in all the places I've been. But after all is said and done I don't think I'd want to change any of it now. The Lord has been wonderful to me so far and I can only ask him to continue to use me in the way he wants and continue to help me grow to whatever goal he has for me.



Now

LIFE HISTORY

John the Baptist Takaji IWO

I was born in Naruto City on Sept 6, 1930. The 2nd World War broke out in 1942 followed by the Atomic bombings of Hiroshima (Aug 6, 1945) and Nagasaki (Aug 9, 1945). The War ended on Aug 15 and a new generation had its beginnings.

By May 3, 1947 Japan had a new Constitution, which also marked a new beginning. It was on the close heels of that that the first group of Oblates arrived November 29, 1948. On Aug 15 the following year I received baptism at the hands of Fr Leonard Robitaille and 2 years later I



As a seminarian

went to the Prenovitiate program in Aki.

After a few years as a brother I went to the Sulpician Seminary in Fukuoka in April 1955, then to the Novitiate in Essex, NY, the Scholasticate in Washington, DC and on to the Major Seminary in Tokyo.

Having been ordained at the hands of Bishop Tanaka in the Tokushima parish on June 14, 1964, I went to Suzano, Sao Paulo, Brasil the following year. In Suzano, out of a population of 30,000, 10,000 were of Japanese ancestry. My main assignment was toward the Japanese immigrants. In October 1969 I was assigned to the parish in Cidade Dutra, Sao Paulo. I returned to Japan on December 8, 1972 and was assigned to Itami. Later on, I was assigned to the Nakajimacho parish in Kochi in 1974. Four years later I went to Aki as pastor and principal of

the Kindergarten. I was there for 19 years. When I first went, there were times when about 10 people gathered for Sunday Mass. In Muroto, it was 12, and in Yanase 4. But now the children have grown and left for the big cities, and the elderly have passed away. So naturally, numbers went down. Part of the work in Aki is the Kindergarten. Sundays were spent with Church work and weekdays with the children at the Kindergarten. Aki was a long cry from the Brasil days when everyday was spent doing priestly work. In Brasil, I had been busy with Masses, baptisms, communion calls, anointing the sick, weddings, funerals.

After 2 years in a larger parish, Itami, I am now assigned to a parish belonging to the Bishop in Fukuoka City. This is primarily parish work. I want to thank God who protected me throughout all these years.



Now

PRO LIFE MOVEMENT

Jerome NOVOTNY



On arrival to Japan

I arrived to Japan in the Tokyo Olympic year, on September 15, 1964. After studying Japanese for 1 year I went on to Theology at Sophia University from where 4 years later I graduated. From there I went directly to Kochi and labored as a worker priest for a full year.

After that I have been with the young people at the university for the last 29 years. When I received grateful words from a university student for helping her to decide not to have an abortion, I decided then and there, to get involved in the Pro Life Movement and set things up in 1983.

The movement is dedicated to preserving life from the moment of conception to natural death. Since Japan accepts

Abortion and Euthanasia, I would like, in a peaceful way, through education, keep on dedicating myself everyday and spread the news. I began a Pro Life Newsletter in October 1987.

The main thrust of my work in Pro Life is putting out a monthly newsletter. This involves, first of all, gathering articles. When I have some from abroad, I put them in more easily understood English and then send them to any of 10 translators who put them into Japanese.

Recently I have been getting a few articles in

Japanese. The bishops also contribute with their insights. Archbishop Kaname Shimamoto of Nagasaki sent me an article (The Gospel of Life) for the Newsletter and now I am sending it out on Internet throughout the world.

Especially Bishop Satoshi Fukahori of Takamatsu has been very cooperative and has giving me advice so that I feel very encouraged.

I send, monthly, copies of the newsletter to Churches, Convents, Catholic Schools and anybody who wants to receive it. Every other month on a rotating basis I send it to all the Gynecology Institutes, Public Middle and High Schools. In all I send out a total of 5000 copies.

At the Pro life Office I have a few volunteers, like 83 year old Mr Komatsu who has been with me since the beginning. Putting stamps and labels on envelopes, I have the help of Ms Michiko Oishi and Ms Tomiko Ikeuchi. All three say they have found a second career after retiring from their original work. Once a month, after Sunday Mass, I get the help of the Christians at the Church in order to stuff the envelopes.

Ms Shigeko Ooka runs the office and does the editing of the Newsletter. She also puts all the Gynecology Institutes and Schools into the computer for me. She also attends, once a month, the Kochi Research Association on Sex Education and expresses, when needed, the outlook of the Pro Life people. When need be, she also gives lectures at various places.

As far as Pro Life materials are concerned, in May 1994 we put out a small booklet on the first 10 months of a Child. These are being used for sex edu-

cation classes and marriage courses. The video 'The Silent Scream' is also very popular. In the computer, we have many other pamphlets and books we would like to put out, but we are strapped with finances.

In the future, we would like to add a counseling service for women who have had abortions and we would like to tackle the problems of the aged.

With everybody, I want to dedicate my life to the Japan Pro Life Movement as a means of evangelization.



Now (with Pro Life Staff)

G ERARD

John Kevin DEELY



On arrival to Japan

In the wake of Gerard's passing, this is rather difficult for me to write, right now. Still stunned by his death, I often recall how he would tease me, saying: Jack, when are you coming to the mission ... when are you coming to Shikoku to do some authentic missionary work? And, immediately after jesting with me, Gerry would proceed to

ask with keen interest about my work here in Tokyo. I regret now that I didn't express the same interest in his work, as well as not having shared with him in greater depth my experiences ... the blunders and the blue ribbons. Gerry, who was always ready to fight the establishment on its attitude towards the marginalized, often advised me to make sure that my co-workers and I work with and not for the disabled during those 17 years at the Vocational Training Center for the Disabled and with not for the deaf during these last 14 years ... always suggesting that I disturb the undisturbed among the establishment, be it the Center or the College for the Deaf or Sophia University or even the Church, with its hesitancy to accept the deaf christian as one who can enhance the

faith of the Church. I would like to dedicate my contribution to this pamphlet honoring our 50th Anniversary in Japan to Gerard and re-dedicate myself to disturbing the undisturbed.



Now



JOURNEY

Francis J HAHN



On arrival to Japan

I was born and raised in Buffalo, N.Y. during World War II. Dad was the only one of 6 brothers not to participate in the war, so there was a lot of prejudice against Japan in my family. When I said I wanted to go to 'Japan' it was a bone of contention that I chose 'that' country. I arrived Sept. 16th 1967 and six days later celebrated my 24th birthday. I studied Japanese at Waseda University with many South East Asians during the Vietnam War protests, and many classes were canceled. All, but I, spoke 2 or 3 languages and made great progress, but I've never become discouraged easily. I just continued on ignorantly, enjoying it all. But when time came for theology studies, in Japanese, reality hit. I'm proof God chooses the weak to confound the mighty. Even now I'm still confounding those who know me. I came to convert Japan, with no idea of what this meant, nor a hint of the history of salvation God had wrought here. I didn't realize, that to participate in such a marvelous work of God one must first be evangelized oneself. Baptized as a child, a product of Church schools, having taken final vows, it never occurred to me that I had a long way to go for my own conversion. But again God graciously put me in touch with reality. I found myself amongst a people who were equal to or better than those I left.

My first years as a priest were spent teaching English and 'pre-evangelizing' but I found that no one was interested in what I was 'selling', and I don't mean English! I also realized I wasn't sure of what I was 'selling', if it were a philosophy or a life vision, then the Japanese aren't interested in abstracts; if a 'morality', then they're already quite

moral. It was during this 'crisis', of who I am and why I'm here, that once again God was kind. I attended a 'neo-catechetical' seminar, I thought for the Catholics, but after starting a 'process' to help them discover their faith-reality, (Are our words and deeds one ?), I saw that before one can witness to "Christ" you have to let Him touch your own being. I saw that my 'words and deeds' were not one.

I mouthed belief in God, but in fact believed in 'money, my way and me'. Ever since, I've been trying to let Christ, through the scriptures, liturgy, and a concrete community, change my heart. Only then will I have 'what' Japan needs; His love and peace, something I've known all along, but am just now beginning to accept. I came to convert Japan but instead find it is God's instrument to evangelize me. The true 'Never Ending Story' is God's Love for all peoples in Jesus Christ.

Since ordination, I helped in Takamatsu, 3 years; was a Pastor-principal in Akaoka-Aki 2 years; and in Anan 8 years; a priest with a neo-catechetical team 3 years; and pastor in Koga 9 years. My great hope is to help as many as possible to know His 'Love and Forgiveness' as much or more than I have.



Now



PERSONAL HISTORY

Wenceslao LAGUIDAO

It was at the reception after my ordination on March 27, 1976 that I was told by the Provincial of the Philippine Province that I was going to Japan. I received my letter of obedience from Rome and arrived in Japan on October 25, 1976. After 2 years of language study, I was assigned to Kochi City where at one time there were 5 Oblates taking care of 50-100 Sunday church-goers. Coming from the Philippines where we count by the thousands I easily got bored during my first few years.

Then I was assigned to Hikarigaoka Church in Fukuoka City, a vibrant parish. Although I was alone for many years, it was there that I had very enriching years in the parish ministry.

Some time around the mid-80's, the presence of female Filipina entertainers started to become noticeable especially in the different churches all over the country. People started to refer problems to me and before I knew it, I was already involved in the work to help Filipino entertainers. I was in Manila for vacation sometime in 1986 when I happened to meet the Filipino bishop who was in charge of the commission on migration. He asked me if I would be willing to be the chaplain for Filipinos in Japan. I hesitantly agreed but the official confirmation of my appointment as chaplain from the Bishops' conference of Japan took a while. Since the work of chaplain required my presence at various places, sometimes without prior notice, I was freed from my work as pastor. The Vice Province also decided that it was time to turn over the parish I was assigned to to the diocese. Problems related to Filipina entertainers multiplied by leaps and bounds. Church and civic groups mushroomed all over the country trying to help the Filipina entertainers and I worked with many of these groups. I also worked as an unofficial liaison between these groups and the Philippine government. On various occasions, I met with high ranking Philippine officials, including then President Corazon Aquino, to discuss the plight of Filipina entertainers in Japan.

When I left the Philippines in 1976, I had not envisioned that I would be working for Filipinos in a different setting. I enjoyed my years as a pastor of a Japanese parish but my being assigned chaplain for Filipinos was a complete turn-around, something that I really never expected to happen. Had I stayed in the Philippines, most likely I would be assigned to one of the parishes taking care of thousands of parishioners. Being a Filipino, I thought I knew what being a Filipino is until I met many of them in Japan.



On arrival to Japan

I have learned a lot from them. They have pulled me down from my comfortable life in the ideal world to the stark realities in the life of foreigners in a country that looks down on people from poor countries.

God has used the phenomenon of migration in the past to spread the Faith as in the case of the migration of Italians, Poles, Irish, etc. There are close to 6 million Filipino migrant workers scattered all over the world. I hope that this is God's way of spreading the Good News through his people in the Diaspora like he has done in the past. Although my work deals with people's problems most of the time, one consolation is in being a part of God's plan.

Many Filipinos will live in Japan for good and they will be a force to reckon with in the Church. They are slowly changing the face of the Church of Japan, together with many who come from the Latin-American countries. I feel some sort of excitement thinking about the features of the Japanese Church of the future with the presence of many peoples of different cultures. For sure, it will be different from what we have now.

Even our Vice Province is becoming more multicultural especially with the arrival of new members from Sri Lanka and Italy. I foresee that the Vice Province will branch out into more diversified forms of ministry in the future. Old age is one reality we face but we shouldn't worry. New blood will come if young people see our work as something worth continuing, something worth investing in. If young people are not interested in what we're doing, perhaps, we're not doing enough to attract them... or it may be God's way of telling us that the methods we employ are already outdated. Our younger members should look into the vast possibilities that are open to this mission without being conditioned by models that the founding members have created. The mission is God's and we are only his servants.



Now

M ISSIONARY

Vincenzo BORDO

Vincenzo arrived in Korea with Mauro CONCARDI on May 12, 1990. The first few years were spent in the study of the language and immersion in the culture in order to better understand the Society and the Church in which he found himself. He then spent some time in pastoral work in parishes in the Suwon diocese where he had been invited by the Bishop. This was also part of his adaptation to his new environment while helping the local Church.

Now involved everyday in a soup kitchen he offered the following reflections:

Many times I have doubted my method of service. I am conscious of the fact that my passionate encounter with men and women of my time has led me to leave the sacred precincts of the temple with its dogmatic security and holy customs to enter the house of the common people where I have found the face of a daily God: a face of people who are preoccupied by jobs that don't exist, a face of joy for a long-awaited son, a face of sympathy for a joker seen among friends.

Maybe for a priest this type of life looks too much through the eyes of the common people rather than through God's eyes. This was my dilemma.

But then you, my friends, affirmed me and said to me that my experience leads me to hear you as you are, near God in whom you believe. You told me to move ahead on this road. To continue to go forward with you, walking with you. You were pleased with this image of the Church I had been explaining to you. This gave me confidence.

I spoke about my mission to you, my friends, that it did not consist in administering a parish, giving grand sermons, but rather simply wearing an apron every day, in true fidelity, and putting myself at the table of the poor in the soup kitchen where I cook rice, prepare vegetables and wash dishes. When I related this to you and saw your eyes swell with tears, I realized that my insignificant ministry had meaning in the Church.

These warm tears full of esteem and sincere admiration, these were like balm on my fatigued and tired soul.

When I showed videos of my work in Korea, many times there was a lump in my throat. These were not just pictures, they were the faces of my brothers and sisters with whom I work, with whom I

share my existence, dreams, ideals. They are people who have received me, loved me and helped me rid myself of what is superfluous, taught me to be more true and authentic. They took me by the hand and have initiated me to the depth of their ancient culture, to the great refinement which is the beauty of the Orient. ... Thanks to sharing my pictures with you I have understood anew the beauty of mission.

In this way, after 10 years of priestly and missionary life I have decided to start anew toward the mission: today I say my daily "yes". Not a "yes"

which is chronologically "new", that is one founded on the same enthusiasm, the great energy, the strong security of a certain time but a "yes" in the ontological sense because although full of compromises and infidelities, immersed in a thousand perplexities, full of risks and fear it is founded on Christ and Christ alone. It is not a new "yes" but a "yes" renewed because anchored in Jesus, my faithful and merciful Lord. A God throbbing in the midst of this humanity and whom I encounter through many ways of existence. So I want to say "yes" to my presence among the

poor because they are loved by the Lord. I want to say "yes" to real human relationship which goes beyond cultural and racial barriers. I want to say "yes" which may be full of fragility and risks because completely immersed in the world of today. I want to say "yes" to suffering and renunciation because I am conscious that it has made me mature and my life is really regenerated when I suffer with the Lord on the cross of daily life. I want to say "yes" full of hope because I believe in God who can do all and that one day amid the great storm God will guide his disciples by saying: "Why do you fear, I am with you?".



T H A N K S G I V I N G

Mauro CONCARDI



On arrival to Korea

I was born in Milan, Italy. I joined the Oblates in 1981 and in 1988 I was ordained priest. After finishing my studies I was assigned to Korea where I arrived on May 12, 1990. This date not only marks my arrival in Korea but also my entrance in the Oblate Family in Japan. In fact, the newborn Oblate Mission of Korea was assigned from its beginnings to be part of the Vice Province of Japan. And I can assure you that this has been a grace since.

When I arrived in Korea I did not find Oblates there. Vincenzo and I were sent to open a new mission, to bring our Oblate Charism to the Korean Church. We did not have a house. We had only the very few things we were able to put in our suitcases. Everything was so new for us coming from the western world. We had to learn a difficult new language. We had to look around to find a way to implement the Oblate Charism in the Korean Church and in Korean society. And all the people we knew were so far away.

But we did find new Oblates ready to help us, to share with us, to journey with us. They were the Oblates working in Japan. I still remember the first time I was able to go over to Japan for our annual retreat. It was in August 1990. The retreat was held at our house in Kochi. We arrived a few days before, so we were able to tour a few Oblate places with then Provincial, Fr. John Mahoney: Akaoka, Aki, Tokushima, Anan, Naruto and then back to Kochi where most of the Oblates in Japan had gathered. And on our way back we spent a few days in Itami too. Since then, many times I was able to spend some precious and happy times with our Oblates in Japan and visit other Oblate places too. I was lucky enough to see the work they do, the people they serve and the difficulties they face. And I have enjoyed staying with them, listening to their stories (the stories of the Japanese Province fused with their own personal stories) while sharing a meal or a drink, sometimes until late, very late in the night in the quiet of a retreat house or in the family atmosphere of one of our rec-halls. Many of the Ob-

lates of Japan have been able to come and see us in Korea too. But, more than anything else, they were discretely at our side when a new step needed to be taken (be it the renting of an apartment, a new house, a pastoral challenge, a personal difficulty...). They have been there with their prayers, with their words of encouragement, with their material help. I see the love they have for all of us in Korea.

Sometimes people ask me why I became a missionary, why I went to Korea. I always answer, at least in my heart, that to be Christian means to love every single person we meet, to tell them that God is Love. Where, is not that important... and this probably gives us the freedom, the courage to leave our own countries behind and take off for a new country. Yes, sometimes it is difficult but the support from other Oblates does make the difference. For me, among those Oblates there are all the Oblates of Japan.

This is why the mission of Korea is fully part of the history of the Oblates in Japan. The mission of Korea is a new flower blossoming from the life of the mission of Japan.



Now

EMMAUS

Giovanni ZEVOLA

Giovanni arrived in Korea September 4, 1991 a year and a half after the first two Oblate missionaries to Korea. He is involved especially with the migrant workers. Let's listen to him as he speaks about his work.

Many people passing by look at our office entrance where they can read EMMAUS. They wonder what this word means. I can see their faces through the window and sometimes they ask me straight out, "Father, what is this Emmaus?" They tell me that they can't find this word in the English dictionary!

What's the reason for a worker's counseling office with such a name? I am sure that many of the Christians are familiar with the passage of the Gospel where it says that the risen Jesus walked with two people who were going back to their own village, called Emmaus. There are a number of reasons why I chose that name.

- The two people are walking from one place to another; they are migrants like the thousands who are here in Korea.

- The two people after following Jesus in whom they put all their hope, are now disappointed; with the death of Jesus, their hope is also dead. Now they are sad and disillusioned. If we consider the situation of the migrant workers: didn't they come here with high hopes trying to solve their problems and help out their families as well? And what is the reality? Completely different. One where disappointment is present everywhere (salaries, accidents, fears...)

How did Jesus approach these two people: By saying: "Here I am, I am the Savior ... trust me"? No! He himself became a migrant, walking with them, standing by their side, first listening to them. So it's only by understanding the worker's situation that little by little we can discover Jesus' saving

presence.

EMMAUS: walking with migrant people and understanding their situation above all express our approach. We not only work for them, but walk with them. We don't give answers before carefully listening to their questions; it's by discovering in us a companion that they will come to discover what it means to be a Christian. The great majority of the people we meet through the Emmaus office are non-Christians, what a great chance for us to come to know a different, but more realistic face of the suffering Christ.

In a few words, Emmaus simply is to try to follow the example of Jesus who "for our sake made himself poor though he was rich, so that we might become rich by his poverty". (II Cor, 8:9).



OBLATE EXPERIENCE

Leo Satoshi KAWAGUCHI



At ordination

I was born in Amakusa Kumamoto Prefecture on April 1, 1960. I entered the Oblate Novitiate in Sept. 1984 in Kochi City. I was ordained to the priesthood in March of 1993.

The older Oblates often talk about former times or former Oblates. This father did this or had this type of personality. Sometimes they talk about

their failings or failures or other things. When it's a group that are about the same age their stories usually fit in with each other. But unfortunately since I'm like a small chicken just hatched and haven't had the same experience I find it hard to fit into the conversation. However in these next 50 years my name will come up too.

In 1994 while spending a week at the Columban Provincial House in Australia, I met a Columban father whose experience was the opposite of mine. He was born in a place where the Oblates first worked in Australia but didn't enter the Oblates he went to the Columbans. I was born in a parish staffed by the Columbans and entered the OMs.

Because of the love of God I am what I am today. I'm happy that I'm an Oblate. The Province

wants me to take charge of the Formation program. All the various types of works are important but I want, with the help of the Lord, to make this my main work.

In the next 50 years of Oblate History in Japan I will be much more involved, but right now I want to celebrate the first 50 with everyone while preparing for the next 50.



Now



DISCOVERING KOREA

Maurizio GIORGIANNI

I don't know why, but since I was a child the eastern part of the world attracted me. For sure I didn't intend to be a missionary but the fact is that in May 1992 I received the first obedience with the destination Korea. On January 5th 1993 I arrived in Seoul as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate ready to celebrate my 30th birthday in Korea.

The mission of Korea started in 1990 and I was happy to go there also because I knew the other 3 Oblates living there. Of course I arrived with many dreams and desires, but as normal the reality was a little bit different. Since the mission was just founded each one of us has suffered failures and disillusion.

After a few days of my arrival I started language school. To learn and study the language was my main task for almost 2 years. That time was interesting but sometimes discouraging. I had little chance to meet the Korean people because of my poor Korean and that was the time when my dreams seemed to fall down. I thought the east was the place of calm, meditation, kindness, but I realized that Korean people work 14 hours a day having only 3 or 4 days of vacation a year. I saw people running on the street, young people stressed out because of studying. I thought I could speak Korean fluently after 2 years and I feel I am still a beginner. A time of hunger, and loneliness came into my life that I never felt before.

Discovering Korea has been a journey of discovering myself and my reality. I think that was important and I am grateful to God and to Korea for that step, a long two years step. The 2nd step was to find a place to live and how to help the Church in Korea. That was a personal and community struggle. 3 months after I was in Korea we had to move, looking for an other place to live. After a 3 month search, finally we bought a house in December of 1993. I had never really experienced homelessness, now I know what it means to have a place where you can live and what it is like to have one.

We had to start this mission and find our place in this church which meant a lot of trying various experiences in parishes, with groups, in poorer areas, bearing in our hearts a lot of anxiety and questions. Finally we settled on some pastoral activities: a soup-kitchen for poor people, pastoral work with foreign workers, with the sick in a hospital, and with the youth through meetings. God gave us the gift of some young people who wanted to experience community life with us. One of them is actually studying in the seminary .

While I was studying, since I didn't have school on Saturdays or Sundays, I used to go to a parish where an other Oblate was working. I started saying my first masses in Korean for the children and helping during other masses. Then I spent a few



months working in our soup-kitchen, and again helping in a parish during the weekend. That was my approach to the church and to the people in Korea.

When language school was over it was suggested that I take care of a group of handicapped people and to help some sisters in a center for the blind. So I am now working there as animator. I also felt the need to do something for the youth so disoriented in Korea, so I prepared meetings for them and went to visit them in a parish and at a University. I try to approach them with respect and gradually I try to listen before I do anything. At the beginning I felt I couldn't reach the people because of the language, but the more I live with them, and the more I listen to them, to their sufferings, problems and reactions, the more I carry them in my heart, and loving and caring for them is now natural. Now I feel that I have some positive relations and my person is accepted.

During this time of searching I felt like an unemployed person looking for a job, and also like an illiterate guy since I couldn't read, write or talk, but everything has been a grace of God for me to make my heart poor first of all, so that I could stay and work for the poor. This is a grace I received and my humanity and understanding has grown because of these experiences.

So after learning the reality of the Korean people, and "falling in love" with them I started dreaming again. I discovered that we all need dreams to face reality. The mission in Korea is still at the initial stage, and we are settling on some projects, but my "discovering Korea" is not finished yet. I still have a lot to learn from the people but I guess I've found the secret of being a missionary: to love the Korean people for what they are, with all their good and bad traits. It is a grace of God to go on this "Journey", and I hope you will accompany me with your prayers.

MY LIFE IN JAPAN

Jude Canisius PEIRISPULLE

It is a great memorable thing for each one of us to look back into the past. As Oblates, we are commemorating our 50 years of existence as a Mission. We have come a long way. There were sweet memories, sad moments but all of these have contributed in keeping the ball rolling with Christ's message.

As a new bud in this mission, I also would like to speak about the road that led me here. I was ordained in August 1992 and was immediately given an Obedience to a parish in Sri Lanka (Trincomalee). It is said that one cannot forget one's first love. This is true, because I also cannot forget the sweet memories of my life in that parish.

At first I had been a bit disappointed because I had different expectations for my life as a priest. But that disappointment turned into great expectations as I started working with those poor peasants. The life was hard and difficult. It was not really easy to live in the midst of bombing, shelling and shooting day and night, as war was raging on in that part of Sri Lanka.

The satisfaction, the happiness that I had in sharing life with those people, in listening to their problems, is difficult to express in this one page.

Then, not even 2 months had passed when I got a new letter of Obedience from Father General. I was going to Japan! It was a shock for me, because I had just started my life in the parish. But I had 2 years to get ready to go there. It was like a tug of



war for me to get ready, as I was getting involved more and more in the parish work and besides I was asked to teach religion in the school and be in charge of the catechetical work in that district. I was up to my neck in the apostolate!

Even as I was getting ready to go to Japan, I had no vision, no single idea about this mission. I was constantly asking questions in my letters about what the Oblates were doing in that country. However, something was going on in my mind that the Oblates must be working with the poor, the marginalized in difficult areas, since our motto says "Oblati Parati".

Having this picture in my mind, I arrived in Japan in September 1994. After seeing the real situation, my whole image about Japan has changed. "Where are the poor? With whom am I going to work?" were some of the questions I had. These questions remained only for a short period. After experiencing the set up, I found that even though the Japanese are rich materially, they are poor in one way or another. Some people are lost in the crowd. I slowly began to understand that things are different from Sri Lanka. On the other hand, I still keep asking myself the question "What is my special calling?"

I have already completed four years in Japan. My two years of Language Studies are very much useful in the context of parish ministry. Whatever I have learned in the classroom and in the House of Studies, I now put into practice. It is not so easy as learning. It is difficult, full of challenges. It demands lots of hard work. But work in the parish is interesting. It gives me a better chance to go into the hearts of the people. Even though I had two years of parish experience in Sri Lanka, the work here, in the church, is different. But the experiences I had, has a great influence and gives me support. As I walk together with my Oblate bretheren I hope I will be able to bring Christ to the people.

O Lord, make me and mold me as a sign of your Peace!



MY OMI EXPERIENCE

Joseph Bradly ROZAIRO



After having been ordained in August 1992, I was given the opportunity to minister as a hospital chaplain for two years in Colombo. In my experience I found that the ministry of "caring for the sick" to be very much in tune with what might be identified as Oblate ministry -- reaching out to those

most in need. This ministry is precisely in terms of offering services of healing, counselling, consoling and administration of the sacraments, particularly Holy Communion and Anointing of the Sick.

The work of the hospital chaplain is mainly a ministry of presence. To be precise, it is a ministry of conversation, of mutual exchange of ideas and feelings both verbally and non-verbally. Therefore, by its very nature it demands both active silence and sensible speaking.

I often met with patients at their level of immediate distress seeking to comfort them. At a meaningful and deep conversation I was confronted with family, economic, faith and moral problems. Therefore I could see a diversity of functions that a chaplain could engage in.

Once I completed a mutual dialogue, I could

engage in the pastoral care of that person. In such a case, I found that I had to go beyond the patients' immediate illness in order to respect their values, aspirations, hopes and disappointments.

It is not so much to remove suffering but to help patients to find a deeper meaning in their life. Therefore, to some extent, through personal presence I could make God's redemptive love more real to the "sufferer." It is at this point that I found the difference between a chaplain and the other medical personnel.

Thinking from the point of view of the patients in the hospital, I would say that the patients, in general, highly value and appreciate the services of the chaplain. Therefore I feel that it is necessary to minister to the sick. Working with the ill is not an easy task. Although I went in for this ministry with much eagerness, the smell of the hospital, the sight of blood and suffering made my work unpleasant at the beginning. But once I got accustomed to the place, I began to love the work and I had an enriching, encouraging and interesting experience.

The two years of my ministry came to an end in 1994. It was time for me to leave for Japan. In September of that year I arrived in Japan with Jude Peirisulle. The next month I started a 2 year language course at the YWCA in Nagoya City. This has kept me busy. Apart from language, I also got a chance to study Japanese History and Japanese Society at Nanzan University. I found these to be very interesting.

After my language study I left for my first mission station - Koga City. Going to a parish was exciting because for the first time in my priestly life I was assigned to a parish. Anyway, I started the ministry happily.

In April 1996, I got an opportunity to work in the Tokushima Parish for 4 months. Going from Kyushu to Shikoku itself was an experience. Parish ministry in Tokushima helped me feel the importance of parish life to some extent.

I am sure all that I studied and continue to study will help my future ministry in Japan.



M Y JOURNEY

Dominic Nobuhiko YAGI

I'm sure October 7th, 1984 was a Sunday. Looking back on things now I'm convinced that was the day things started. That was also the Feast of the Holy Rosary. At that time I was working at a Tokushima Prefecture day care center for the mentally handicapped. That day because of my work I was to go to a children's orphanage to attend their sports day. But when I woke up I hurt all over and had a temperature of 37.5 degrees. I gave up going to the sports day and stayed home to recover. I thought I'd get better in a day but one week later I still hadn't improved and at some times my temperature went up to nearly 40 degrees. It took 3 weeks to bring my temperature down to normal. During that time when I was going to the university hospital, they said my liver had something wrong with it, so I quit work to recover at home. Up till then I was very busy but at that time I had a chance to read and think leisurely.

During that time I felt that the Lord was calling me to something special, and I started thinking of a vocation to the religious life. For about 2 years I went to live at the Akaoka Church with Fr. Leonard Simons and helped out at the Volunteer Bureau and was involved in many facets of social work.

At that time among those many different works I also came into contact with Hakuaien, an orphanage, and met many wonderful children. In that period of less than two years I had and still have many happy



At first vows

grace-filled memories.

Gradually my call to a religious vocation deepened, and on March 20th 1987, I took my first vows. After that I attended Nanzan University to prepare myself to be an Oblate Brother. This study included preparation for Sunday school teaching, sign language, and a lot of contact with hearing-impaired people. I helped at the Nagoya Diocesan Charities, and while in Nagoya I was exposed to a lot of works connected with social projects.

On Aug. 4th, 1991, my birthday, I pronounced my final vows as an Oblate. The night before I remember I couldn't sleep, but anyway that day was the start of a new phase of my journey. That year in September I went abroad on an 8 month study trip. I visited Oblate houses and works in Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong. I returned the following year in May.

From May of that year till 1997 I was stationed at the Akaoka Church, and helped out at the Volunteer Bureau. Now my center of activities is in the Nakajimacho parish. I'm the Vocation Director and a member of the formation committee. I'm also helping at Hakuaien, and I am in charge of the Diocesan program for youth and various other projects. But I'm often doubtful if I'm really giving enough time and energy to any of these many works. I can only say that I have been able to do all this with a great feeling of joy and that I regard it as a big grace.

There are various events involved in my vocation but one major one was certainly Oct. 7th, 1984, the Feast of the Holy Rosary. I'm very fond of the rosary as a form of prayer. Even now on my way to and from work I pray the rosary. I feel very strongly that Mary is very tenderly watching over me in all that I do, and I'm very proud to be a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, men dedicated to Mary and offering their lives to her, as gifts for her Son. I want to be able to say with a happy and bright face to the young people I meet: this road that I've taken, the vocation of an Oblate Brother, is really a wonderful way to live one's life.



Now

S TARTING OFF

James JEYACHANDRAN

I am James Jeyachandran from Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is to the south of India but I come from the northern part of it. I was born in Jaffna on September 17, 1976. We speak Tamil in that area.

I was brought up in an atmosphere of Hinduism. My mother became Catholic when she married my Father. I am the next to last of a family of 7 children, 6 of whom are boys. After studying in town run primary and middle schools I started to feel a call to some type of religious life.

After the last exams I told this to my parents. Except for my mother everyone in the family was against my idea. However, receiving direction and advice from an Oblate, in 1983 I entered the minor seminary. During this whole period I spent a lot of time discerning my vocation so that I would walk the right road for myself.

After finishing studies of philosophy in 1988, I entered novitiate. Much time was spent on determining the charism of the founder and still discerning my call in life. I finally made perpetual vows in 1992.



Then it came time to prepare for ordination. I went to India to experience the Anram method of prayer. Then I was ordained on January 15, 1994. My first obedience from the Superior General was to mission in Korea. It was a very sudden decision and

at first I was at a loss and somewhat shocked, but I received God's great support and decided to do what I was being called to do.

Before actually coming to Korea, I spent 2 years of pastoral experience, one as parish priest and one on the preaching mission band. I finally arrived to Korea April 29, 1996. When I arrived at Kimpo Airport, the sight of my brother Oblates waiting for me was a source of great strength and reassurance.

The last few years have been experiencing being a child again. I speak as a child and am slowly getting used to the food. In order to understand the Korean Language and Culture I must go to school. Soon however I will start making my contribution to the Church and Society in Korea. There are still difficult days and I count on the prayers of everyone in order to have the strength to overcome them.



MY PART IN GOD'S MISSION

Jaime "Jimmy" de Guzman DEL ROSARIO

I consider the foreign missions as God's call for me within the same religious vocation. I first thought of going to the foreign missions when I was a novice. My apostolic experiences of the people's deep faith made me concerned for other places where such faith is not present yet, like in non-christian countries. I talked to my spriritual director regarding this. He encouraged me to continue to seek God's guidance on this in my prayer.

Though I had no particular country in mind yet, I felt this vocation stronger again as a theology student. My superior asked what particular country I was considering. I first said Argentina, because its Hispanic culture and language are very close to the Filipino. Yet, I still kept myself open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As I was about to be ordained a deacon, there was a fervent call from the Oblates in Japan for more missionaries. The Superior General was also encouraging Asians to take care of neighboring Asian countries. This led my Philippine Provincial to consult with me whether I might consider Japan instead of Argentina.

I readily accepted the challenge, as I heard about the need for more missionaries here. Because it was a fellow Asian country with very few Christians, I felt the call more urgent. My translation-thesis of 'Redemptoris Missio' for an MA in Theology at that time also influenced my response to come here. The Pope himself was concerned with the missions in Asia during his visit to the Philippines for World Youth Day in Janauary 1995. Because Asia is predominantly non-christian, there is a great call for mission here.

Prior to my coming to Japan, I experienced be-

ing a deacon at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Caloocan City for six months. Also for 3 months as a newly ordained priest, I continued ministering at the parish. The people participating in the sacraments, and the apostolic work to be done, were just immense in the Philippines. I felt inspired to share my rich faith experience with a missionary area, like Japan.

My initial impression of the Japanese people, before coming here, was that they were very diligent at studies. I thought that education could be one area where I could contribute to our mission in Japan. I was a college teacher of Philosophy at the University

of the Philippines, for one and a half years, prior to my novitiate. I could also share my learnings from my thesis for the MA degree in Philosophy on Ecology, with the highly-industrialized Japanese people.

After coming to Japan on January 8th, 1996, my first task was to study the Japanese language. At first, the Chinese characters looked all the same to me. But, eventually they had meaning for me. They are a means of expressing the Japanese people's experiences. They are also a missionary's means of expressing God's love for them.

Day by day, I continue to discover the Japanese people's good qualities more, as gentle mannered and kind. I know that God is with them. We missionaries, religious and lay alike (such as migrant workers), are visible witnesses to God's presence among them.

I envision a Japanese society fully serving the most needy, here and globally. My part is to cooperate in God's mission for them.

