

JAPAN VICE PROVINCE

KOREA MISSION

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

OBLATES IN JAPAN

IMMENSE HOPE PROJECT

Input/Facilitator

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Munakata

Fukuoka

March 27-30, 2001

~~Munakata Meeting~~ (PREPARATORY PHASE)



2001

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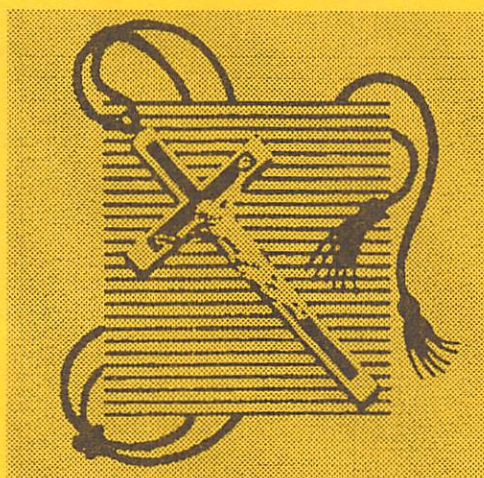
A Compilation of the

*Answers
to
Questionnaire*

(For PRIVATE CIRCULATION Only)

Provincial Congress

March 27 - 30, 2001
Passionist Retreat House, Fukuoka



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Vice Province of Japan/Korea
2001

FOREWORD

In preparation for the Provincial Congress scheduled for March 27 to 30, 2001, the preparation committee, composed of the Provincial Council and the District Superiors, and in consultation with Fr. Eugene KING, OMI, Vicar General and Facilitator of the Congress, has decided to send out a questionnaire to every member of the Vice Province.

This booklet is a compilation of the answers to the questionnaire. Out of the possible 28 responses, answers from 26 respondents were received.

Responses were received through electronic mail or through traditional methods in handwritten or typewritten form. Those who affixed their names in the original manuscripts have their names appear on every contribution in this compilation. Consequently, contributions without names affixed to them have been left as they are, i.e., anonymous. To keep the originality of the answers, they have also been left unedited, hence the occasional mistakes can be noticed here and there.

As mentioned in the cover and because of the very personal nature of some the responses, this compilation is "For Private Circulation Only" and may not be used outside of the members of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Vice Province of Japan and Korea.

*For greater participation in the life and mission
of the Province,
the Provincial in Council will:
- according to needs and possibilities,
organize a congress or a similar gathering of the Province,
at least once during his term of office,
in order to promote a common vision
and determine common principles for mission.
(Constitution 108)*

Q1 *Describe, in ten lines or less, what the mission of the Oblates in Japan /Korea today is for you?*

- ◊ I have a feeling that we should insert ourselves in the "sense" of the Church as a whole. Over a number of years now the Church insists on "option for the poor", "inculturation" and "dialogue" and these have become the key notions governing discussions about mission. It has been observed that though these 3 are all important everywhere, the emphasis on 'option for the poor' will apply especially to South America, 'inculturation' to Africa and 'dialogue' to Asia. In Japan we are part of the Asian reality. For this reason, I believe, that dialogue with Buddhism in its Japanese expression and Shintoism are a sine qua non for our work in Japan. We cannot keep on overlooking, as we have, these realities and keep working as if we were on an island away from the mainstream of the whole country. Undoubtedly there are lines of convergence in these religious heritages and Christianity. Also the vocabulary we use in the Christian message are foreign to the people. If we are inserted in there concepts which are expressed in their culture and religious expressions, we will be better understood and our message will become clearer. Otherwise we continue to knock on deaf ears and we preach to a culture rich in its own heritage which can't understand our message as we don't understand theirs. Our mission calls for a mutual evangelization of religious heritages. Dialogue with the culture, with the religions, with people. In our haste to teach we forget to listen. (Ray)
- ◊ For me, not so much to establish the Church and its structures, not to found an Oblate Congregation, but to tell and show the people what and who Christ is and what human values are. Japan is not like Europe in a post Christian era. We were never in a Christian era. The Church for the Japanese never was the system that dictated the ethical norms. For long centuries to come, nothing will change. For a religion is closely connected with the local culture and how things stand now, the Japanese feel (a few exceptions not counted) that Christianity is somehow alien to their culture. To be good and witness the values of Christ is how I see the mission of the Oblates in Japan. (Xave)
- ◊ I think the OMI Mission in Japan today is to serve people who are marginalized. So, what's new? The question is whether or not we are actually serving the marginalized or only those who fit our definition of marginalized. Of course, a Congress like this is always an occasion to re-assess or re-evaluate what we are doing in order to make sure that we haven't veered from that mission-vision or haven't rendered the true meaning of "marginalized" meaningless. (Jack)
- ◊ For me the mission of the Oblates today is to work establish the church here in Japan. Work to build a church that will cater to the needs of all people, especially the 'poor with many faces' (example: homeless, migrant workers, the handicapped etc.) (Bradly)
- ◊ The mission of the Oblate in Japan is to be of service to the poor- with their many faces. People of all levels are one main interest, both young and old. The minimum service is to be a good influence and if Christ can be shown there, this is the main service. (Dick)
- ◊ To proclaim the gospel, the Good News, of our Lord Jesus Christ to all peoples, especially the most abandoned = those who have never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ and those who do not know of God's love for them as revealed by the death and resurrection his beloved Son for them. To do this in the context of a community of men dedicated to this purpose in communion with the church, the Holy Father and Bishops we are missioned to serve. (Fran)
- ◊ It's a different kind of mission that it's often difficult to be understood not being in the traditional frame of mission: people from a richer country sent to help people in a poor country. Nevertheless mission is essentially evangelization, and Japan needs and asks for this presence. (Mauro)

- ◊ The aim of Mission is, always has been, and always will be the establishing of God's kingdom, everywhere on earth. The means to obtain that goal vary according to the areas, circumstances and living conditions of the people to evangelize. (Jan)
- ◊ I myself do not understand what the mission is. To answer this question I had to ask myself what the mission has been, what should be and what is? Since I worked here only few years I have no clear picture about the mission and it has been the question I have been asking. One thing is clear we are doing many things in many ways. There are some common feelings but I think we need more understanding among ourselves. (Jude)
- ◊ Ministry to the unborn and related life issues, there are crucial issues that face us today. Abortions, aids, bioethics, birth control, when life begins, population concerns, post-abortion healing, cloning, etc. In short, to search out the poorest in society (poorest=the voiceless) and center our energy and money in to those areas. (Jerry)
- ◊ The mission in Japan is to foster the growth of Christian Communities. It also encourage the growth of Kingdom values where ever they are found , whether it be in our schools or other places of ministry. (Ange)
- ◊ It is a mission that is awaiting transformation, be it in missionary thrust, in its personnel and its day to day living of the call of Christ to live and spread the Word. Although the mission has remained small in number during the past 50 years, there are clear signs of hope, expressed in the small number of young people who want to join us as Oblates, our brotherly concern for one another, our financial stability, etc. The problem of aging has to be addressed properly. Our commitment to the few dioceses where we work, particularly Takamatsu, has to be evaluated in the light of recent problems and developments.
- ◊ I think in Japan as well in Korea the mission is a help to the local Church in his primary needs (parish, catechesis, formation of laity...) and to foster the missionary dimension of that church especially through the work for the marginalized, the work in the education field and for justice and peace. (Maurizio)
- ◊ The mission is to strengthen the faith of the Japanese Christians and to bring the message of Christ to the non-Christians in any way that is possible according to the charism of each Oblate on the mission. (Bert)
- ◊ As far as I know the Church in Korea is established very well. It means sacramentally, the Church is functioning with quite a lot of diocesan priest. I feel according to the charism of the founder, we have to stress more and more our presence among the poor with many faces. (homeless, destitute foreign workers and the sick) These are the groups less touched by the sacramental church in Korea.
- ◊ to awaken or reawaken the faith in the people to whom I'm sent and help them discover "who Christ is." To proclaim the Word of God which finds fulfillment in the celebration of the sacraments and the service of others. Form lay apostles, help them develop their talents and charisms. Try to proclaim the Word in language easily understood. In confession, reflect the understanding, patience and compassion of the Saviour. Seek new ways for the Word to reach people's hearts. Work toward changing all that causes oppression and poverty, by action on behalf of justice and peace. Strive to instill a genuine devotion to the Immaculate Virgin who prefigures God's final victory over all evil. (Bill)
- ◊ a parochial work responding to the necessity of the Church.
- ◊ it is a live witness of the Gospel of the church, which is seen by the people, either positively or critically. This is an encouraging deal for the church because it shows the strong hope or expectation in the church's Mission. I do say the Holy Spirit is working always among the people. This we should be aware more in our daily life. Thus, the mission of Oblates in Japan

is for me "the port or harbor of my ministry."

- ◇ Activity. Activity. Activity, for the poor with their many faces.
- ◇ since in Korea the Church is functioning very well with a lot of priests I feel, in accordance with our carisma, that we should stress more and more our presence among the poor with many faces (sick, foreign workers, homeless.) and those groups less touched by the sacramental church (cc1.5) (Vincenzo)
- ◇ It is a challenging mission. Rightly, the Church in Japan has been described as a "third world" church in a "first world" country. So in this given situation the Oblates are striving to be missionaries facing the challenges of secularism, modernity, economically stable, commercially competitive country and in a lack religionless or religious-nessless country. (most of them belonging to the category of no religion). At this given situation the Oblates need to try in an innovative ministries too.
- ◇ Our mission is to live Christ Jesus Crucified, in apostolic community among the most abandoned.; We do this in the Church by claiming the Word with daring, humility and trust as prophets of the new world. Cf. CC Chap 1 Mission.
- ◇ a challenge to be faced. Until now there is no much plan about what to do next, in which direction to move. community life is a big issue.
- ◇ Evangelization of an almost entirely non-christian society, from individuals to structures (Eddie)
- ◇ 世界有数の経済的に豊かな国に日本はなっているが、同時に家庭においても、社会でもまた個人的にも様々な困難を経験している。そしてそこから生きる道、回復する方法を人々は求めている。そのような状況にあってオブレート会の仕事の一つは心身の回復と心の傷のいやし、そして生きる意味と希望をこの国に暮らす人々に示すことである。そのためにはよく相手に伝わるようにその方法を工夫することが大事である。伝えることと伝わることは別ものである。伝えるという方は相手にそのメッセージが届かなかった場合、それは相手の責任と選択と考える。しかし、メッセージが相手に届くようにしていなければ、それはメッセージを発した方に問題がある。だから福音が伝わる技術を高める必要がある。(Leo K.)
- ◇ 会員は、オブレート会の精神に沿って、よく頑張っているが、チームワークがなく、個人プレーがあるように思う。そのためか大きなプロジェクトはない。みんなで祈る、黙想する機会が少ない。(Nobuhiko)

Q2 *How does that mission flow from and express the charism of the Founder and Congregation?*

- ◊ Dialogue helps us be even closer to the people, their values, their aspirations, their culture, their religion as we are called to be in our CCRR. Even the Founder, for his times, was for our being close to the people. We see this in his letters addressed especially to the missionaries in the burgeoning missions of his time as well as his wanting to visit every family before preaching missions in Provence. These ideas are all part of his charism, the Congregation's charism unfolds as we understand his charism in a new situation. (Ray)
- ◊ As family the Oblates have a special spirit. The relationship among the Oblates is not similar to other institutions. But too much emphasis on Oblate "charisma"(or any other institution's charisma), never will give the Japanese Church its own character, its own charisma. In Japan, all missionaries work according to their own character given by birth and according to their education at home. I never reflect on my work to see if it is according to the charisma of the Founder. The word "charisma" is nowadays easily used, it's in vogue. Who can give a definition, description of the Founder's charisma? (in ten lines) The Founder saw people in need and he went to them. (Xave)
- ◊ Well, if we are actually serving the really "marginalized" then I think it's obvious that the mission flows from the "charism" of the Founder and the Congregation. (Jack)
- ◊ Coming together as Oblates or being together as brothers of the same congregation is very important to establish the church here in Japan. I chose Religious Life, because of 'Community'. Therefore, I very strongly believe that our living together and working together will help build the church of Japan. (Bradly)
- ◊ Along with the Founder, we Oblates can commune with the pain and help them to a life hope and love. (Dick)
- ◊ It is the mission and the charism of the Founder. (Fran)
- ◊ He preach the Gospel among people who have not yet received it and help them see their own values in its light.(C5) In Japan we pursue first evangelization: to bring the Gospel light and values. It is what Paul VI called the evangelization of culture. (Mauro)
- ◊ Const. 2 of our CCRR states that "Cooperating with the Saviour and imitating his example, we commit ourselves principally to evangelizing the poor". As far as I can see and understand that is the way the Oblates live and operate in Japan (and Korea), adapted to the tasks that are entrusted to them. (Jan)
- ◊ Japanese province is a peculiar province. We are from different provinces, different countries, speak different languages but still by the name of Oblates we try to find a common ground. being different can be difficult but still the charism of the founder keeps us together. (Jude)
- ◊ The rule book states it very clearly: The Oblate must strive to bring all people especially the poor- to full conciousness of their dignity as human beings. They must try to here and make heard the clamour of the voiceless action for justice is an integral part of their work, trying to chage all that is a cause of oppression and poverty. In this way, Oblates share in creating a society which recognises the dignity of the human person from its beginning to its very end. (Jerry)
- ◊ In as much as my ministry is mostly with nonchristians, it expresses the charism of the Founder in "preaching the Gospel to those who have not heard it". This "preaching" is sometimes merely one of "presence" as in the Lions Club. (Ange)

- ◇ Consciously or unconsciously, there is the drive to search for the very poor and their many faces where we work.
- ◇ The help for the local church and the local priests in their spiritual life I think was one of the concerns of our Founder at his time. The care and the work for the poor, the work for justice and peace, and the evangelization of the poor is our charism. In situations like Japan and Korea where we work in "special ministry" or with people that don't show particular interest for the catholic Church or for religion (because their traditions are stronger or they see the Church as a foreign element) I think that evangelization means to spread the values of the gospel (love for justice, truth, life) through the education to those values. Our task is to evangelize the poor, which means to put people in contact with gospel's value in many ways. (Maurizio)
- ◇ To seek out the poor and to be with them - is, to my way of thinking, one aspect of the Founder's charism and it is the thrust that the Congregation is taking at this time in the History of the Church. The mission of the Oblates in Japan of strengthening faith and bringing faith seems to be geared towards the poor of Japan. (Bert)
- ◇ 1. Working with homeless (running soup kitchen). 2. Office for foreign workers. 3. Hospital chaplaincy.
- ◇ These are taken from the rule. 5, 7, R7f, R7g, 8, R9, R10 (Bill)
- ◇ mostly parochial work, vocation and formation and to help immigrants and school work for youth, etc.
- ◇ The charism of the Founder has been carried out by some members, by means of working among people, especially among little or poor people, seeking their needs, spiritual or mystical in the contemporary society. This is clear when we work for the cause of "peace and justice."
- ◇ It doesn't. I think that in the mind of the Founder, the community would be the base from which various activities would be carried out. At present each individual Oblate interprets his work as "Oblate."
- ◇ In Korea at the present, the evangelization of the poor, seems to me, express well by the apostolate with the hospital, foreign workers and homeless. (Vincenzo)
- ◇ The mission in Japan is exactly challenged as that of the mission in France during the Founder's time itself. As the Founder was trying to re-evangelize the affluent French people (in every way possible), the mission in Japan-Korea seem to continue in the same line. Being challenged by many things as I mentioned above and calling us for 're-evangelizing' the people, specially their 'faith.'
- ◇ This is the mission of the Founder and the Congregation.
- ◇ There are several good activities which have to come under some plan, it seems that due to some past events we are not able to share at the level of charism. Individuals are very good, but little cooperation.
- ◇ He always seemed to want the re-evangelization of France and extended this desire to the whole world. (Eddie)

- ◇ 創立者はミサの時、そこに参列している貧しい人々、一般民衆がわかる言葉を使った。優雅なフランス語の用法ではなく、今日神の言葉を必要としている人々にわかりやすい内容と表現ですることの大切さを私たちに残している。-SIMPLICITY IN PREACHING-1818年 私たちオプレート会の使命は福音宣教であるが、今、目の前にいる人々が求めている神の言葉を伝えるようにしているだろうか。たとえば、世界的企業であるトヨタは同じ車をアメリカ ヨーロッパと日本に売り込む時、同じ方法を取っているだろうか。同じCMを作るだろうか。もちろん、違う表現と強調点を使う。しかし、同じ物を売る。私たちオプレート会はある意味で多国籍企業みたいな組織である。福音という製品を売るにはその国の文化と人々のものの考え方を深く理解することが肝要だとおもわれる。私たちは福音を伝えることは熱心であるが、時々人々が理解しない場合、それを相手の責任としているのではないだろうか。(Leo K.)
- ◇ 各会員が与えられた場所で、もっとも見捨てられた人をよく世話している。しかし使徒的共同体としての力は弱い。(Nobuhiko)

Q3 *How does what you are and do express the charism of the Founder and Congregation?*

- ◊ With the Founder's insistence on Community, Apostolic Community as well as the Congregation's insistence on this through the CCRR as well as the document produced by the 1992 Chapter it is clear that BEING is just as important as DOING when it comes to evangelization. In this mission I see a lot of DOING good things, but I often wonder about our BEING as a community. How powerful a tool when people see a body moving as one! And continuation of works, if done as a community is also guaranteed. The experience of God, fraternal charity and apostolic zeal are all important elements, not one against the other. So our BEING includes our community prayer life, sharing on ALL levels, common planning for mission and recreating together. Coming together for the annual retreat or our Spring meeting is not sufficient. It has to be a way of life not just something apart from life which we "suffer through" twice a year. With this we will express the charism to which we supposedly ascribed to by becoming Oblate. (Ray)
- ◊ St. Eugene had a personal mystical experience and it was his beginning to care and work for the people. He did it according to his given talents. But he tried to imitate Christ and the apostles. And that is what I try to do. I am more concerned about the charisma of Jesus than of any other religious leader. In the beginning the OMI Congregation in Japan started as a group of priests for pastoral work in parishes only. For 75% it still is so now. I try to be among the people, go and work where they are. And I do it my way. I refuse to live under the same big roof with the other Oblates and make our own foreign like society. I officially refused to become a parish pastor (I help out if necessary). I work in schools, "pagan" schools not in mission schools. If that express the charisma of the Founder, I don't know. I don't worry much about that. Follow Christ according to the gospels, and you follow St. Eugene. (Xave)
- ◊ I think my work with the deaf is work with the marginalized. The deaf people of Japan, while certainly not economically poor, have been marginalized to a great degree by the Church as well as society. While there have been **token efforts** to reach out to the deaf by both Church and society, they are just that "**token**" efforts (usually aimed at serving the hard-of-hearing or the later-deafened, but excluding the **born-deaf**). Now, how does **what I am** express the charism of the Founder and the Congregation? Well, I think I identify with the deaf, which they seem to appreciate. But, even if they do not appreciate such, that is no big problem. I have tried to learn and, of course, use the "patois" --- in this case, **the language of the born deaf person** (which is the hardest of the three sign systems). That constant effort has made me conscious of the need to remain simple --- in approach, in my attitude and in my explanations --- and, to remain always aware of the other person's need to understand and be understood. (Jack)
- ◊ For me, how do I live my life as an Oblate is very important. I come from a poor country to a rich country like Japan. I try my best not to forget my beginnings, and this helps me live a simple life. Our Founder worked for the poor. Here in Japan, there are poor people (example: the homeless). Whenever possible I go to help these (homeless) most in need. I see this as one of the ways to live the charism of our Founder. (Bradly)
- ◊ I personally feel inadequate yet in the mingling with the people who live within any of our OMI facilities. Language is a major barrier for me. My willingness, I believe, has been an influence of sorts. (Dick)
- ◊ In as much as I am faithful to seeking out those abandoned to themselves and their own selfishness, and open to all who come to me, and in as much as I try to point a different way to them, namely the way Jesus pointed to by Word and Deed, when I do this by both word and (or) life style-action, I'm fulfilling this mission. (Fran)

- ◊ Living in the countryside presents quite different aspects from those encountered in urban areas. The people are much more attached to their traditional way of living; living in close communities, where everyone knows everybody there is a much stronger fear of doing anything out of the ordinary. On top of that, Shikoku being considered the stronghold of Buddhism in Japan (?), influx of new "movements" is very strongly slowed down. The exodus of younger people to more industrialized parts of Japan (Honshu) holds back the development of the Christian presence on this island (which has the smallest diocese - in number - of Japan). With no established contact point (e.g. a kindergarten), and because of my age, the only contact is from person to person, and almost all aged people, who are not seeking for conversion. So, my main apostolate is "representing the Church". (Jan)
- ◊ What you do you are and what you are you do. When I hear the word mission I always think of doing something. All these time I thought and still think, as an Oblate, as a priest, if I don't do something I am not satisfied. But I begin to thing more than doing 1. My presence, my availability is important 2. Help the other to take the responsibility, help the other to find his/her identity which helps me to find mine. (Jude)
- ◊ 1. My entire life, time, energy and money is spent on making the voice of the voiceless heard through Pro Life movement (publishing 8 page News letter sent to all parishes, bishops, hospitals, high schools, junior high schools, individuals, doctors nurses and laymen ect) 2. Website life issue net continues my entire work involvement not to mention the 2-3 hours of counselling, e mail letters that must be sent everyday. Check the message board for worldwide OMI participation. 3. The Japanese website should be ready by January. (Jerry)
- ◊ Being a foreigner gives me a certain presence as a missionary. What I do, is a little more difficult to explain. I am in the education of little children. Establishing the Montessori educational system (which is founded on Christian values) fits in with "planting the seeds of Christianity. The kindergarten also gives an opportunity to contact hundreds of parents who would otherwise never have contact with Christianity. (Ange)
- ◊ (a tough question to answer) If I were given a choice between a work that has not been explored, has bias towards the poor and a comfortable, established work, I will opt for the first. I think the Founder would have done the same during his time. Am I fulfilling this in what I am and do at present? I am struggling. I believe there is always room for improvement. There is the constant uncomfortable feeling that my lifestyle and work do not express the charism of the Founder.
- ◊ What I am it is a try to be close to the people and to be an example of a different kind of priest. In preaching try to be simple and to help the people to put into practice the Gospel. In Korea and Japan also priests are not very close to the people and very formal in relation. To welcome people in our community, to be available for them, the simplicity of lifestyle helps me and us to be close to the simple people as a friend and not to go far from the poor. Everybody feels can visit us and "disturb us" and feels understood in their struggling. What I do it is to transmit and educate to those values the young in the formation house where I live. Our relation and friendship to the Korean priest it is a support for them also spiritually and a witness of simple lifestyle. (Maurizio)
- ◊ I am an Oblate religious/priest present in Japan doing what I can in my own way to be with the poor and bring them the message of our Lord. (Bert)
- ◊ I'm here in Korea only for five years. After spending two years of language studies, I started to work with the sick people. In a way I could feel the presence of suffering Jesus in these sick people.
- ◊ I'm an Oblate of Mary Immac. working in the Parish of Koga. I do this openly and directly proclaiming the word, sermons, courses, private instructions and counseling. It's my whole

life trying to bring about that profound liberation in my own heart and in the hearts of the people to whom I've been sent by evangelical ways which seem to be appropriate at this given place and time. (Bill)

- ◇ In the parish, to pay attention to the poor, old people, widows, teach catechism, bible and other instructions and to visit sick persons, fix marriage, give retreat.
- ◇ It is done by dealing daily with teachers and children at the kindergarten and with parents for their seeking sound attitude toward their children. This work for the first formation period for the parents does give a valuable exposition of God's creation work in the family. The creation work in the child gives a special peace in their heart which is very important field where faith formation can take its root in them. "Little one and the poor" hear the Gospel first.
- ◇ John 15, 5 "I am the vine you are the branches. Whoever remains in Me, with Me in him, bears fruit in plenty, for cut off from Me you can do nothing." When I meditate and pray, what I am after that flows into what I do.
- ◇ I'm spending all of my time with homeless and street children and for them I'm running a CENTER FOR URBAN POOR, which help me to live according to the spirit of the Founder. (Vincenzo)
- ◇ As I'm a new missionary and a language student in Korea, I find in my limited knowledge about both in Japan and in Korea as well, the problems are quite similar and needs different outlook. Accordingly now I'm trying to conceive a ministry that is suitable for this people, of course keeping in mind the charism of the Founder and the expectation of the congregation.
- ◇ I am 75. I have Parkinson's disease and also take medication for depression and anxiety. This has limited my capacity somewhat. I suppose I am in the category of those CC refers to as members in distress. This is an encouraging CC as it states that I contribute greatly to the coming of God's Kingdom. I am blessed to live in an apostolic community where my need for community is more than satisfied. It is in this Oblate atmosphere that I try to contribute to the coming of God's Kingdom. My main way of expressing the charism of our Founder, of participating in our Oblate Mission is by devoting a good part of each day in prayer. I am able to help by participating in the activities of the Naruto Christian Community and the Kindergarten. At times when the Oblates of Tokushima District have been away from their parishes I have covered for them.
- ◇ For Korea, we will come up with a distinct evaluation which will take from November up to March.
- ◇ 一つは同じオブレート会士同士の親しさと気軽さ、そして人間的温かさで互いに接している安心感です。(Leo K.)
- ◇ 自分が属している共同体を大事にし、その共同体内の兄弟的な交わりが宣教となるよう努めたい。そこから日本の中の最も貧しい人々はだれかをよく見極め、その人々とともに歩んでいきたい。(Nobuhiko)

Q4 *How do the ministries of the Province foster evangelizing and serving the poor?*

- ◊ (I take the question to mean Province as Province since the question uses "of the province" and not "in the Province", and we also find the subsequent question which would include those ministries "in the Province", since it refers to our individual ministries.) At one time, after the war, some of our works answered a need for education of the young. Working in the geographically poor areas of Japan was meaningful. At this point in time I wonder if we are daring enough to face other challenges, as a group. We talk of the poor with their many faces, but we continue, as a Province (not necessarily on an individual basis) to put our energy where it was then. Areas must not be just geographical. You can have the area of the youth, the area of the worker, the area of the handicap etc. Are we really searching for the poor in those areas and answering those needs. Or are we so set in our ways of the past? Kindergartens may be a welcome source of income, but is income the major criterion in order to determine our ministry? The ministries of the Province, I believe, are those where the Oblates as a group are committed to keeping up ministries, replacing the men involved. In our case we have but 3. Parishes (pastors are replaced), Kindergartens (Principals are replaced) and a newly accepted project Aonami (Lei has been promised we will continue the work). Other works, though laudable, will most probably die with the Oblate doing it now. Cfr. Gerry Stevens work with the Filipinas as a case in point. Where does Jack Deely's work with the deaf end up when he can't continue? These are just a couple of examples among many. Some say we should not be in large cities. Why not, if that is where the poor with their many faces are? (Ray)
- ◊ In big cities we have marginal people like homeless people. We have a discriminated 'cast' among the Japanese people. In big cities again, we have many foreigners, unsure about their stay in the country. We can call them "poor". Ordinary people in Japan work well and live well. They are not poor in the biblical sense of the word. But now, "poor" is everybody: 'the poor with the many faces'. (This is a sentence made to please all Oblates). There doesn't exist one official ministry for the biblical poor in the Japanese OMI Province. (Except one, maybe). A few Oblates try it on their own. (delinquent youth, blind people). The province allows them to do it. But there is no official endorsement. (Xave)
- ◊ I presume that we are all engaged in a **mission-oriented apostolate**, whereby we at least animate and encourage the people we serve to **go and serve those who are marginalized**, that is, if we ourselves are not personally involved with the **marginalized** (as usually defined). How other OMIs actually animate and encourage people to do so, I don't know. But, I think it's a safe presumption on my part to assume that they do. (Jack)
- ◊ We, as Oblates are trying our best to do something for the people of Japan. Our ministries (kindergarten, prison, migrant workers, parish etc.) in one way or other foster evangelizing and serving the poor. For example, the kindergarten ministry gives an opportunity for kids to come to church and catechism classes. Some graduates of kindergarten choose church for their wedding. (Bradly)
- ◊ The ministries of this Province are many and varied. I've counted 6 different areas where we're served the poor not least of which are our 6 kindergartens caring for approximately 800 children and their families. (Dick)
- ◊ In as much as the Parishes strive to be catechetical centers of gospel witness, by loving and forgiving and serving each other and all who they encounter, both physically and spiritually; and in as far as the kindergartens foster a vision and atmosphere of respect for God, others and all creation, and try and to instill in each child a sense of the God given value and dignity of his person and of all others; in as much as all our social outreach and apostolic works seek to free people from oppressive structures, and fundamentally from the oppression of sin, the

centering upon the self as the source and goal of all meaning, then we are fostering and serving and evangelizing as we should. Only the truly poor will be interested. All the others will be too busy doing their thing. (Fran)

- ◊ I do not know how to address questions number 3 and 4. It seems to me that they are referring to the situation in Japan and it's not involved in any practical ministry there. One question: how can we include Korea in our congress? (Mauro)
- ◊ Materially "poor" or destitute I don't think we have in our areas, and where they are the Oblates working there certainly take care of those they can reach. Spiritually poor, i.e. those who do not know Christ and their salvation, is practically everyone we meet (outside of our Christians, and even then). So every contact with any of us as missionaries is in the line of our charism. (Jan)
- ◊ Each member is doing something. But I think I need to be evangelized before I do that to others. It can be same to each member. Are we not trying to get ourselves satisfied doing something. Here we have to ask the question whether my work has some impact on others or made them disturbed. (Jude)
- ◊ Every man must answer this question for himself. I presume each Oblate in Japan believes he is evangelizing and serving the poor, otherwise why would he be doing the work he's doing. (Jerry)
- ◊ If by evangelizing the poor is meant "those who do not know Christ" then we are all working with the poor. A few of our numbers do work more directly with the poor and marginalized i.e. the deaf, orphans and prisoners and justice and peace to mention a few. (Ange)
- ◊ (another tough question) To answer this question fairly, I think we have the basic commitment to foster evangelizing and serving the poor. Are we as a Province actively involved in this commitment? Not actively but perhaps "passively." A lot can be done. We are dragging our feet and always find reasons such as age, language, culture to water-down the meaning of "poor."
- ◊ I think I answered that in the question n.2. cf: "The help for the local church and the local priests in their spiritual life..." (Maurizio)
- ◊ The ministries of the Province (and they are many faced) foster evangelizing in an effective way even though results are not apparent. I will not go into depth on the meaning of evangelizing. Do the ministries "serve the poor"? If one of the meanings of "serve" could be "help" them - then I feel that the ministries do help them - in various ways that are evident to me. (Bert)
- ◊ Sometimes it is a big question mark (?) for me to understand the mission and the evangelization of the poor.
- ◊ In Japan I think that the interpretation of the word poor has to be taken in the sense of those who have not heard the "Word" yet and therefore do not know Christ as their personal savior. In this sense all our ministries are fostering evangelization and serving the poor. But there is always the need for review and renewal. How could they be improved upon. Possibly some added or dropped or turned over to others who have the charism needed for that ministry. (Bill)
- ◊ there is no special.
- ◊ There is no way but to follow the footsteps of our risen Savior, who has been so considerate that nobody was excluded from his human fellowship. Negatively looking, we must overcome

by throwing out any prejudice, and positively we must follow Him who took the same stanza as the people were.

- ◇ "The poor with their many faces," includes everyone. All the ministries of the province in some way foster evangelization and serving the poor.
- ◇ See up. (Vincenzo)
- ◇ Though I may not be able to speak much about Japan, I may share about Korea at least. I find that the mission is very ideal one both for the Province and for the congregation as the missionaries try to concentrate in the fields of the poor, migrant workers, sick, etc. Anchoring the intention of the Founder- the poor with their many faces... uncared or marginalized migrant workers (human right), underscored sick people (poor) are taken care. As for Japan, Justice and Peace ministry, work for the migrant workers, Pro-life movement are towards serving the poor in their many faces other than the parish ministry and the kindergartens.
- ◇ Question presumes that the ministries foster evangelizing and serving the poor. I believe they do. The how is the question. In parish ministry the Christian Community is encouraged to cooperate in the work of conversion and to care for the needs of the poor. As to our other ministries it would be helpful to hear from those in each ministry to tell how their ministry fosters evangelizing and serving the poor. That will be one of my three questions.
- ◇ In Japan we are simply covering the places, the young Oblates seem to adjust to the status quo. A lack of initiative. The parishes and kindergartens are good, but a need of evaluation is a must, considering the situation of aging personnel.
- ◇ 日本において貧しい人とは誰のことだろうか。私は下記の三点を考えたい。自殺者の増加である。カトリックでは伝統的に自殺を禁じる教えがあるがここ日本においては近年自殺者が増加している。1999年は3万1413人が自殺している1998年は3万1734人であった。この傾向が10年間続けば、30万人都市そのまま減びることを意味する。ここには未遂者は含まれていない。また、この数の背後には残された家族、子供はその自殺者の数倍に上るであろう。日本の自殺者数は世界でハンガリーに次ぐ世界二位である。その原因はまだはっきりわかっていない。しかし、日本特有の社会構造、文化、精神構造があると思われる。ある調査によれば、一人暮らしの老人より、三世代一緒にいる老人の方が自殺率は高い。なぜか、それは病気なり高齢となり家族から介護を受け続けることに「私はなんの役にもたたない、家族に迷惑をかけている」その圧力は相当なものとなり、自殺へと向かうのは日本だけだろうか。私はこの自殺者と残された家族、友人たちを貧しい人と考える。オペレート会の福音宣教の相手である。次に、墮胎・妊娠中絶の増加である。胎児もまたその決断を迫られた女性たちも貧しい人とかんがえる。統計上年間妊娠中絶届けは33万人前後であるが、実際は軽く100万人を越えるであろう。法律上、犯罪にならないことと、神様の前での悪とは別であり、中絶を経験した女性も精神的な痛手を引きずっていきっていく。この社会状況にたいして、私たちオペレートは福音の立場から宣教とケアをすることが急務ではないだろうか。ご存知のように一人の会士は胎児の生命を守る運動をしているが、それはオペレート会日本管区方針とのつながりは疑問である。最後に、spiritual な痛みを抱え、苦しみ、希望を探している人たち、病人、若者、全ての人たちも貧しい人たちだと考える。この三つの貧しい人たちへ私たちはイエスの福音を示し、奉仕することが肝要だと考えます。
(Leo K.)
- ◇ 小教区内での精神的に障害のある人々へのアプローチ、モンテッソーリ教育、種々の活動の中で (Nobuhiko)

Q5 *How does your own ministry foster evangelizing the poor in the Japanese (Korean)society?*

- ◊ (Because of health reasons I was forced to spend some years in Tokyo, either teaching the youth at various levels in schools since the diocese could not offer me anything other, or working at an orphanage and being with the kids). Otherwise most of my work since coming to Japan has been in the area of formation and finances. Hopefully the area of my concerns, given to me as assignments, help in the formation of the young OMI to turn their eyes toward finding those new poor and help in keeping the group viable for ministry to the poor. I now find myself in a full time job as provincial treasurer and I must keep repeating to myself that I am contributing to the mission by doing necessary work that frees others to do the other types of apostolic work. Without that conviction it can be a dry work with no fulfillment whatsoever. Other and above that, what time I can devote in helping the young understand the charism of the Founder or the Congregation by necessary translations is a plus for the group, I believe, as it helps the young come to grips with the OMI charism. (Ray)
- ◊ I would change the word 'poor' for 'people'. I have worked in an institute for delinquents for 30 years. But I didn't baptize one (not even one of the other teachers) In parishes, in church run educational institutions etc, it is possible to make statistics. I get signs back that I in fact influence for instance my students, but I cannot explain "how". Sometimes they tell me that I am a very 'human' priest or a very "human" teacher. I am always myself no matter where I am, or who is in front of me. I never wear a mask. But this doesn't answer you question. (Xave)
- ◊ (cf. answer to question #2:). Furthermore, I am in the fortunate position of being able to encourage university students to become involved in serving others. Additionally, with the number of signed lectures that I am asked to give annually by deaf associations and related groups, I am also able to encourage adults (as opposed to students) to serve others (specifically the deaf, the physically and mentally disabled, and others). I am not so disillusioned as to think that a signed lecture by me is going to change those people's lives, but -- it is an occasion to lead people to think about those who are less fortunate than themselves, and hope that it triggers something in them to follow up on the inspiration of the moment or whatever. With the university students, it's a different situation because there is daily interaction -- more occasions to animate, encourage and follow through on moments of inspiration, etc. (Jack)
- ◊ I am in a parish. There are people who come to see me. Some come to share their problems or difficulties with me. Some others come to see me in order to get some material help. I also come across people (including the non-Catholics) who are "poor in spirit". They want someone to listen to their problems. I try my best to help them in whatever way possible. Some who are sick (psychologically or mentally) also come to Church. They make Church as their place of refuge. There are some, who look for God or Bible specially when they are in trouble. For them this gives an opportunity to come to church and to do some Bible study. I have a busy schedule in the parish. But there are times I feel that my availability to people becomes a 'must'. (Bradly)
- ◊ Here in Aki we have a kindergarten with a long tradition. This means has proven its worth, not in numbers of Baptism, but in a good influence, help for people wouldn't have this relationship otherwise. (Dick)
- ◊ If you mean by community the group of Oblates in my district, then basically the only way we do this is by being supportive and caring to each other, As a community we don't do anything significant. As individuals there is much good work being done in the schools, parishes and witnessing generally in society. (Fran)

- ◊ My first ministry is the formation of Oblate candidates: it is to prepare the future of the Congregation, Church and society: not only for Korea, but also for elsewhere in the world. (Mauro)
- ◊ See 3. (Living in the countryside...) (Jan)
- ◊ Here we have to understand the word poor. I think it is not celebrating mass but give time for the people who cry for help. For me Kochi is fine place for that. But I always think whether I have given enough of that. (Jude)
- ◊ The news letter with its Catholic teaching on various life issues (abortion, homosexuality, birth control, post abortion healing, bioethics, death and dignity etc) could be of tremendous service to the Japanese-Korean community, but this can only be done with the cooperation of the local priest and parish. (Jerry)
- ◊ By fostering the growth of values in children to take their responsible place in society. (Ange)
- ◊ What I do individually has meaning only when seen from the perspective of the whole.
- ◊ My ministry is at the moment in the formation house and in a parish. For what I can understand there is a spiritual poverty in the Korean church. Despite the big number the Catholic Church is spiritually poor. Faith is at a superficial level. Explaining the gospel in a very simple way and bring the people to put into practice it is a way to help this poverty. The involvements we have with the marginalized from the society (immigrants and unemployed) are a sign that speaks about the dignity and the attention for those people from the church and challenge the society. (Maurizio)
- ◊ At present my ministry: "pastor" of an extremely small mission parish (average number of Sunday - fifteen), "director" of a kindergarten with seventy children coming. I am also Director of the Board of our six kindergartens. These, you could say, are what my mission should mainly be concerned with. Over and above these works I am Assistant Director of a group of translators for the Prefectural Police Department. Also I am actively involved in the city with the Lion's Club (membership for over thirty years - a paying member not the chaplain). In the mission parish an attempt is made at making each christian a "caring missionary" to the poor in this area - Anan, Tokushima. Working in the school is contact with seventy children, their parents, and the local educational institutes. Without being "director" I would be limited in contacts to just the few christians. My notion of the poor - those who have no knowledge of Christ. After forty seven years in Japan I have not changed my outlook on this aspect of the "poor". For we do not have physically poor in Japan. (Bert)
- ◊ I'm working in a hospital which helps the needs of the most abandoned people. Even though there are many big hospitals which serve the rich I have volunteered to work in a poor hospital.
- ◊ again its my interpretation of the word poor. I'm working in a parish set up, but I'm trying to make that parish an instrument of evangelization. I do that by trying my best at developing christians who base their lives on the Scriptures and encouraging participation in the various courses, "inori" (prayer) groups and other projects going on in the parish. They help with the Kirisutokyo Kooza (catechism). Help a bit in a soup kitchen. Collect clothes for the poor. Take part in volunteer works. I hope to get involved in prison work again. A lot of this is a real struggle because of what I see as various groups having been formed and looking out for their own plans. (Bill)
- ◊ to teach catechism, teach bible, etc.

- ◇ Through preschool formation work I do it by and through study-research and observation of human formation, directing all empirical works toward a best integrated entrusting spontaneous ability of children, rendering all fruits to their efforts, etc. This approach is used also on parents and teachers.
- ◇ My ministry: parish work, prison work, work with self help groups, etc. Can the results of this ministry be measured? I am sure it fosters evangelizing the poor in Japanese society.
- ◇ See up. (Vincenzo)
- ◇ My ministry is going to the school to learn language. Other than that, when I enter into conversation with my classmates, schoolmates, teachers, friends I try to explain to them what is the charism of the Oblates and the works we do. As some of them get interested in the conversation, opt to do volunteer service in the Oblate concerns.
- ◇ My ministry of prayer has as its primary purpose the ministries of the Oblates in Japan and Korea.
- ◇ cf Korea evaluation.
- ◇ I'm in a place where the poor come for help. (Eddie)
- ◇ これは問い4の回答と重なるが、私は養成機関ではたらく時、ともに共同体を築く人たちの心と霊の健康と傷からの回復のために働きたい。また、黙想会、研修会で出会う人たちが日々の奉仕活動を生き生きできるようなお手伝いをしていきたい。さらに高校で生徒に教える立場を与えられていることに感謝し、彼女たちに心のケアと生きる意味を考える機会を提供していきたい。(Leo K.)
- ◇ 自分が大事でないと思っている人々や自分の存在価値を認めていない人々を大事にする。そのような人々に出会っていく。人々の話をよく聴く。社会の中の人々の叫びや苦しみに敏感でいるようにする。聖書をもう一度勉強し直し、そこでのメッセージをつかみ、大事なことを心に留めておくだけでなく、実際に行動に移す。(Nobuhiko)

Q6 *How does the leadership (Provincial level, district level) and community structures (Provincial, district, local) facilitate the mission?*

- ◇ That is a difficult question. We have had provincials who duplicated American way of doing. We have had provincials who were good but too "NICE" towards the members, and so were rather weak as a leader. The present provincial is the first non-American in 50 years! What is past is past, but scars are left. In many difficult cases the provincial is powerless. Our biggest problem in Japan is the impossibility to communicate, to debate a problem and to come to a consent. In one word: character problem. (Xave)
- ◇ Since we are such a small group, instead of commenting on this question of leadership as it is presented in the Questionnaire, I think it would be more beneficial to look at it in the following way: Because we have **only a very small pool of human resources** from which to select our leaders, I think the responsibility for the Province must be shared and shouldered by each member of the Province to a much greater degree than in a numerically larger Province. I would be the first to admit that I have been remiss in shouldering my share of the responsibility, but I was recently reminded by a fellow Oblate of what our responsibility to each other (and, therefore, to the District and to the Province) is. Never mind the so-called "Provincial, District and Local leadership" — do **we**, for example, ever really take the time to think responsibly about what other members of the Province are doing? As for a more relevant answer to the question concerning **Community Structures**, I'd say they're fine. And if we don't take advantage of the opportunities that they provide, then it's our own fault and we have no right to complain. (Jack)
- ◇ The only thing I've seen on the provincial level that is concrete, is encouraging the pooling of finances on the district level, and fostering a sense of sharing surplus with each other and making us talk and plan together financially. But this is a major step forward; The district level is paralyzed by the age, sedentariness of the men, and the real different schedules that exist when there is or is not a kindergarten to work with. (Fran)
- ◇ (collective answer to all Q under No. 6): Our community is small and has not many members and there is a distance between communities. We are becoming older. We must think of it and our health.

6.1 *Strengths?*

6.1.a. *Leadership*

- ◇ (Provincial Level): Except for the first couple of provincials who were strong personalities who dictated to us, most of the provincials, for some reason or another (uncertainties after Vatican II, no formation in leadership, not keeping close bonds with all the men) mostly acted as provincials only when crisis management was needed. (District Level): Districts are just starting to have a structure or form with which in time there may be community. There are district superiors (at least in name), some form of district treasurers are taking place, but there is yet no district council which could help the superior animate the district. A young superior with no experience needs this as a support to be able to lead. Otherwise he's only a pipeline with no animation role. Leadership, of course, can only function when the rest of the community feels the need for that leadership. When they are self-satisfied in their little castle, no amount of leadership will do. (Ray)
- ◇ I think, that the Provincial administration is opened to the needs of the Province and it's members at present. I personally feel that for leadership (Provincial and district) to bear fruit, "openness" is very important. (Bradly)
- ◇ most cooperative and willing to understand. (Dick)

- ◇ Leadership it's willing to delegate and leaves responsibility for the work totally in the hands of those in charge. (Fran)
- ◇ Being a religious group, leadership helps us to hear God's voice among the many voices around us. It gives support. It helps to reflect and search for UNITY and build a COMMUN MISSION. (Mauro)
- ◇ At least it gives a chance to put things in order. (Jude)
- ◇ Calls community meetings of the province for sharing and growth. (Leadership District): Calls meeting and days for community sharing. (Ange)
- ◇ The atmosphere is not constricting and encourages new and pioneering ideas.
- ◇ Promoting the particular gifts (or charism), talents of each member. Keeping personal relation and dialogue with each member. Promoting personal growth through ongoing formation programs, studies and preparing the person for the particular task (formation, superiors, particular ministries) (Maurizio)
- ◇ The provincial team is a well balanced group of OMs and reflects most of the aspects of our mission work in Japan/Korea. (Bert)
- ◇ a very inconspicuous approach left very much in the hands of various committees. (Bill)
- ◇ to pick up and show contemporal aim in order 1.2.3... (in priority) and encourage every member to integrate their efforts to it and its minister.
- ◇ newsletters, visits
- ◇ leadership is to push forward the mission of the congregation and not to keep up the status quo. However, the leadership is a strength to keep everyone together.
- ◇ The Provincial is called to the service of authority and animation of the Community (CC100, 101). I believe that the Prov. Administration realizes their mission and are trying to meet its demands. The district community gathers monthly for prayer, planning and recreation. At these gatherings joint projects are discussed. It is also a time of sharing in the best use of the computers and other concerns of the men in the district. The District Superior is very active in the group.
- ◇ a person who looks for personal contacts among the Oblates.
- ◇ Fine. (Eddie)
- ◇ Provincial level: 日本管区は人数が少ないので春と夏に年二回一堂に集まることができる。事前の準備をして、全員が集まる機会に管区長は指導力を発揮しやすい。District: 地区レベルは更に人数が少ないので、ゆっくり話しをして聞いて具体的な方向へ進むことができる。伊丹地区は名古屋、東京と都市部での活動なので同じ状況が見られ問題も理解できる。月一度の集まりは交流と意見交換のために有効である。地区長と管区長が同じ場所に住んでいるので決定と行動がスムーズに進む。 (Leo K.)
- ◇ Provincial level: よく仕えている、変化していこうという雰囲気がある。district level: よく受け入れている、困難をよく乗り越えている。 (Nobuhiko)

6.1.b. Community Structures

- ◊ (Provincial level): The structures are there. The meetings take place. How much filters to the rest of the Province is a question mark. (District level): The structures aren't fully developed. Some meetings take place where people don't know how to share, but only argue. (Local level): Most guys live alone, therefore almost non-existent. (Ray)
- ◊ The districts of our Province have their monthly meetings. I think, practically all the districts make it a point to meet regularly. (Bradly)
- ◊ They are not always what they can be there is a type of vacuum here. (Dick)
- ◊ They are weak, to non-existent, and there is almost no common prayer life, and community life is at the whim of the individual superior, and the schedules of the men. (Fran)
- ◊ They witness God's Love and Life (the Trinity Community). They give support and help us to support each other. They reduce cost (it costs less to live together than having houses, cooks for each single Oblates). (Mauro)
- ◊ Help us to face the challenge. (Jude)
- ◊ The formation of different committees to aid in the smooth running of the province. Weekly gatherings, the promotion of friendship among the members. The office of district treasurer seems to offer an area which promotes sharing of ideas. (Ange)
- ◊ Still very loose. It is like a computer program that can be lost anytime. We still have to "back up" our structures with personal commitment, etc. We ask ourselves whether we are just creating structures for the sake of creating them or are we really committed to them.
- ◊ Regular meetings that help mutual information about the apostolate. Help to live a life of prayer and spiritual growing. It gives support at the apostolate level and to stand in times of trial or personal difficulties and loneliness. It gives you balance in decisions. (Maurizio)
- ◊ The committees that are established for the mission are suitable for our needs. What with so few men it is difficult to have too many committees. The Districts. Again so few men in a few areas makes it difficult to have community gatherings (retreats, recreation, etc) (Bert)
- ◊ more or less the members of our mission are the same age we always try to keep up to our community life. Sometimes we follow the same life pattern that we learn from our formative period.
- ◊ good on paper (Bill)
- ◊ unity or integrity of personal life with reality by prayer and activities, so that His guide be in our work.
- ◊ financial only.
- ◊ mission, community organizations are doing well. (Vincenzo)
- ◊ By regular community meetings and evaluation each community is trying to improve the quality.
- ◊ The District Community is an important structure for the Oblates in Japan today especially for those in the district who live alone. For these it gives an opportunity to talk with the men in the district on matters concerning the District as well as the opportunity to enjoy one and others company. And of course to have the chance to participate in the liturgy and community prayer is most helpful.

- ◇ Community structures are too vague to be considered communities. But at least there is something, good spirit.
- ◇ Retreat days work well for those able to attend. (Eddie)
- ◇ Provincial 管区長は各地区の集まりに出席するしているので管区長を中心にして、かつ各地区の独自性が保たれている。district 他の地区の状況は分からないが、伊丹地区では地区長の配慮と管区長の協力により、他の場所からくる私にはいいミッションセンターの役割を果たしている。local 一つの小教区と養成の家だけに会士はいる。電話で状況を連絡しあったり、私が小教区の会士を訪問する。地区の集まりに出席する場合は、同じ車で移動するので、その時間も交流の時間となる。 (Leo K.)
- ◇ Provincial level: 和やかな雰囲気がある: district level: 定期的に集まっている。 (Nobuhiko)

6.2 Weaknesses?

6.2.a Leadership

- ◇ I guess I addressed these as I was trying to talk about strengths!!! No use repeating. (Ray)
- ◇ Since each one has his own schedule it is not very easy to get all the members for the meeting(This is not same with all the districts). It is very important for each member to co-operate with his district superior. (Bradly)
- ◇ I feel at times that is a little too permissiveness given. (Dick)
- ◇ There should be a balance between respect for the singles and ability to challenge and help the singles to grow or change when needed. (Mauro)
- ◇ Has no meaning. Sometime difficult to understand. (Jude)
- ◇ Lack of clear direction. (Ange)
- ◇ We have very few choices because of our small number. Limited knowledge of the local church and situation.
- ◇ Sometimes the Leader doesn't know how to rule a community or a Province because of lack of preparation and formation in that matter. There is no clear knowledge about the competency in practical matters (because there is no directory). Personal relation and dialogue is a little weak. Have a more clear knowledge from where to start and where to go in running a province, a mission or a community respecting and knowing the personal and community needs. (Maurizio)
- ◇ Distances between our missions makes it difficult for the Provincial to visit all of the missions regularly. At times, I would like to feel more encouragement from the provincial and his team. (Bert)
- ◇ Sometimes we don't see any vision in our mission, it means we have lack of leadership to push the community to follow the footsteps of the Founder.
- ◇ Too inconspicuous at times. NB: however at one point in my experience or case too much meddling causing a lot of trouble. (Bill)

- ◇ Don't hide our weakness or loneliness under some traditional theory or custom; instead be open and be enlightened by the poor or little people.
- ◇ Don't make waves.
- ◇ There isn't a common project for the mission, everyone goes for his own way. (Vincenzo)
- ◇ In a small mission there seems to be too many superiors (50%).
- ◇ On the Provincial level there seems to be a tendency of not facing problems in the hope the problem will go away.
- ◇ No planning.
- ◇ Financial structures are overly complicated as far as I am concerned unnecessary for such a small group. (Eddie)
- ◇ 年齢からくる作用として移動、変化を望まない会士が多いのではないかと。また新しい考えを取り入れることも時間を要する。このために管区長が指導力を発揮してもそれに応える会士と行動を始める意識は少ないと思われる。都市部と地方ではたらく会士はおのずと問題が異なる。また日本と韓国とは教会の姿と社会・文化は背景が異なる。このため管区長の対応も二つの国では異なる。district level 東京、名古屋、伊丹が一つの地区を形成しているが、月一度の集まりに参加できない人、参加したくない人がいる。6人のうち毎回4人だけの集まりである。参加しない理由として距離の問題、地区意識、人間関係のもつれなどが考えられる。(Leo K.)
- ◇ Provincial level: 耳をよく傾けること、決断力、仕えること。district level: 協力者が必要、意見の相違がよく目立つ。(Nobuhiko)

6.2.b. Community Structures

- ◇ In our Province not all the members live in community. Since some do not like/believe in community life or "living together" it is not easy to convince them. This is a weak point. (Bradly)
- ◇ these can easily turn into a social gathering. (Dick)
- ◇ A retreat for half a day once a month and lunch together one or two other times and a telephone. (Fran)
- ◇ Being an Apostolic Community, on the local level the challenge is to remain open to the people outside. For those living alone: lack of openness to the fact that some places and work could be taken care of by living in a local community. That could give more support to the single oblate, be more effective and a sign of God's life and love (namely sign of life on the model of the Community of the Trinity). With the aging of the Province, living together and taking care of more ministries, parishes, places will allow us to continue serving all those people. (Mauro)
- ◇ Since I am the youngest in this district I find it difficult. (Jude)
- ◇ Loose, lack of commitment from members.

- ◇ The "structure" sometimes can hide the personal relations (being together for lunch, community prayers but not in "sharing the faith", the vision, the dreams). Sometimes community is seen as a value for the mission, the apostolate but not as a value in itself. Because of a lack of sharing in personal life matter community structure becomes a burden and it grows the desire to be more out than in as to escape. Could mortify personal skills or talents and not help to express the person for what he really is for scare to be judge. (Maurizio)
- ◇ When committies are planning on meating it would be nice to know what the agenda is - sometimes suggestions from non-members could be valuable. But it is not done. (Bert)
- ◇ We need of lack of personal.
- ◇ not really approaching anywhere near the ideal. Don't get too close! (Bill)
- ◇ to overcome lack of spirit of oblation (=offering up one's works)
- ◇ Description of this in the Superior General's letter to young Oblates: "2 or 3 who lived in a house prayed lauds together and had their meals in common. The rest was a lot of activity."
- ◇ We need more personal and strength the vocation apostolate. Formation should involve an international presence instead of one country cultural presence. (Vincenzo)
- ◇ Still the quality of the community has not improved. Meetings alone will now help. Also we need quality living together.
- ◇ On the District Level, the monthly day could be better structured.
- ◇ too vague.
- ◇ 韓国で働く会士と日本で働く会士の共通事業がないこと。どうしても別々の共同体となっている。将来には共同の養成機関は有効かもしれない。日本国内でも出身管区の違いがそのまま現在まで続いている。また教育を受けた神学と関心事の違いもそのまま続いて、はっきりとした日本管区の特徴を作れないでいる。district 伊丹地区では月一度の集まりに参加できない人、参加しない人がいる。それでも参加していない人への配慮は忘れている。local 現在は二箇所二人だけである。それぞれ単独で生活している。来年は神学生たちが戻るので共同体形成も変わるだろう。しかし小教区担当司祭は神学生の支援を過大に要求する傾向があり、養成担当者はいかに訓練と学生の休息のバランスをとるかに注意する必要がある。(Leo K.)
- ◇ Provincial level: 会議だけが中心、団結力: district level: 会議だけが中心、個性が強い (Nobuhiko)

6.3 One way of improving?

- ◇ Living together in one house and working out of there. (Fran)

6.3.a. Leadership

- ◇ (Provincial level): Not just having meetings of the council when there is business. The BEING aspect of our exchange is also important. That the provincial spend more time roving around, seeing the guys in their work, being able to prod them to higher levels both in the COMMUNITY as well as APOSTOLIC aspects. For this some training in leadership is probably

needed. That the provincial meet periodically, as suggested in our CCRR, with the superiors of districts to come up with common visions in leadership. The same could be said of meeting with district councils and treasurers. (District level): What was said above applies here. For community to improve there has to be study, exchange between the provincial and the district groupings. (Ray)

- ◊ District superiors need some kind of orientation. I think they need some training to function as district superiors. Some leadership program may help them function better. (Bradly)
- ◊ issues, trends in Japan can be a big heap and productive. (Dick)
- ◊ Giving the leaders a clear sense of what's expected of them and the men as well, as they can only lead in as far as the men are willing to be led. Removing from positions of authority and decision making, persons who are not willing to foster a new community sense of life style and who insist on living alone. (Fran)
- ◊ From the leader side: dialogue. From the member of the community side: faith in who the leaders represent us. Then, both sides should have faith and dialogue. (Mauro)
- ◊ Respect the other. (Jude)
- ◊ Leadership a clear program of direction for growth. (Ange)
- ◊ -Make it more participative. change the idea of leadership as mere dispensing of permission, etc.
- ◊ A Directory for province, mission... could help the leader to know and to do better his service. Build personal relation through more frequent visit to the place where the members live, spending time with them. (Maurizio)
- ◊ Notify the members of the province of the items that will be dealt with in Provincial council meetings. (Bert)
- ◊ We need constant touch from our respective authorities to make us feel appreciated and encouraged. And also we need someone to visit and show us the way to go about with our work.
- ◊ Communication on a deeper level (Bill)
- ◊ To be sensitive for any needs of others (of spiritual or temporal good.)
- ◊ Should encourage 6.3.b
- ◊ We need to have a change inside of the community because some people are doing the same job for a long time. (Vincenzo)
- ◊ Reduce the leadership (number of Superiors).
- ◊ More active participation in of the Provincial in the District Meetings. Perhaps once each quarter.
- ◊ more visiting the different Oblates or communities.

- ◇ Leadership: Pro'l level: 現在の宣教状況を各自が共通に理解し、オブレート会のこれからの方針とビジョンを絞っていく。 District level: 地区特有の状況に合わせて共通の事業を決定し相互に助けがら持続して行く。 Community Structures: Prov'l. level: 管区長と顧問そして各地区長が一緒になって意見交換する機会を春の会議と夏の黙想会の時開催してはどうだろうか。 District level: 時々二つの地区の集まりを合同で行う。地区によって抱える問題とアイデアが異なるのでいい分かち合いの時となる。 Local level: 来年は5人か6人のlocal communityになるので小教区との連帯と中立を確保していきたい。(Leo K.)
- ◇ Provincial level: 人の話をよく聴く。 district level: 協力者をつける (Nobuhiko)

6.3.b. Community Structures

- ◇ (Provincial level): Using the present structures and those suggested in the CCRF would be sufficient as a start. No need to create something new. Just use what we have. (District level): Same as the above. (Local level): As said above, almost non existent. (Ray)
- ◇ If each member feels the 'need for community' then I think we can find ways and means of improving community structures. If not, it is not possible. (Bradly)
- ◇ same as 6.3.a (Dick)
- ◇ Living together in one house and working out of there. (Fran)
- ◇ We need to reflect on and consider if the young oblates in the Province are happy and willing to spend their lives alone (we can not impose on them our community). We should start building a structure that will help them to live community life and at the same time allow them to carry on the ministries and commitments we have. We can live together and continue to serve the people we are serving. The way can be different. (Mauro)
- ◇ should feel the need. (Jude)
- ◇ The fostering of more local communities of two or more Oblates. (Ange)
- ◇ Make goals clearer and ask members to really own them.
- ◇ Stressing more authentic the personal inter relation than the "being together under the same roof" (which is also important). Time for fraternity and releasing from the stress. Having a common program (even not too much details) for the year, how to spend together some particular time of our religious oblate life and to built friendship among us. (Maurizio)
- ◇ More involvement of the whole mission in matters that are discussed and decided upon in the missions committees. (Bert)
- ◇ Mixture of more nationalities will be encouraged. May be good to have an old member Oblate too.
- ◇ Communication on a deeper level (Bill)
- ◇ -Superior General's letter to young Oblates, faith sharing, silent prayer, on-going reflection on mission and common planning. More leisure time spent together.
- ◇ More dialogue in the process of discernment.

- ◇ The community structures have to be built on mutual respect and understanding.
- ◇ Keep trying to improve the District Meeting and structure in order to have stronger participation.
- ◇ Having people living together, as possible.
- ◇ Provincial level: レクリエーションを取り入れる. district level: お互いによく聴き合う.
(Nobuhiko)

Q7 *List down THREE questions that you think should be added to the list:*

Q1:

- ◇ Are we ready, as a Province, to divest ourselves of traditional works, in order to seek out the poor and their many faces, no matter where they are? Are we ready to re-found our mission in order to re-find our charism? (Ray)
- ◇ Working for justice and peace, how is that realized in your apostolate? How do the parish priests get the parishioners involved in society, and what do they do to make them aware of social problems. (Xave)
- ◇ How can we convince the General Administration to understand that we (Korea-Japan) should remain an **Independent unit**? (Jack)
- ◇ Does our Province have a vision? (Bradly)
- ◇ Do we really want to change or believe that any change is necessary or possible Do we really have a common sense of what our mission is, what the church is, and who we are? (Fran)
- ◇ How can Japan contribute to and "feel" Korea more? (Mauro)
- ◇ Are we satisfied with the ministries we are doing? (Jude)
- ◇ How can we reorganize our communities so that men are not living alone but in Apostolic Community as the General suggested when he was in Japan last year? (Ange)
- ◇ IF as a missionary group in this country, we will disband in one year's time, what are the three things that you want accomplished?
- ◇ In the apostolate you are doing do you feel supported by your community, province or you feel isolated? (Maurizio)
- ◇ What will be the future of our mission?
- ◇ What are we actually involved in? (Bill)
- ◇ Why is there a common sense religious life as non-productive life on the line of money?
- ◇ The first Oblates came to Japan in 1948 at the repeated request of the Holy See. After complaining that no other missionary institute was willing to enter this poor area. (I interpret this as meaning Tokushima and Kochi prefectures.) In reality, this statement no longer applies to us. (Q) What is the reason NOW: Why are the Oblates in Japan?
- ◇ What is our future plan for North Korea?
- ◇ Cooperation of the individual Oblates in the Province.
- ◇ How does each of our ministries foster evangelization and serving the poor?
- ◇ Is it possible to evolve good opportunities of work retirement, etc. for our older members? (Eddie)
- ◇ 韓国と日本との共通養成プログラム (Leo K.)

- ◇ あなたにとって、この豊かな日本で貧しい人とは誰で、私たちは彼らに何ができるか。

(Nobuhiko)

Q2:

- ◇ Are we ready, as individuals, to do the same wherever it leads us? Even into unknown areas? Or do we hold dearly to our present way of doing things and present works? (Ray)
- ◇ Does the mission need a common project in Japan or outside Japan? (It might be a temporarily project.) (Xave)
- ◇ Will we be able to provide for the elder members of the OMI community? We're getting older (an understatement, I know) and I presume that we all intend to be buried here in Japan ... but, before we shuffle off, how does the Province plan to provide the bare minimum of care. None of us expects a retirement plan, but --- where do we go without being a burden to another when, God forbid, we become partially or completely incapacitated? (Jack)
- ◇ As Oblates how can we answer to the needs of present situation? (Bradly)
- ◇ What do you think this Congress is for? (Fran)
- ◇ How can Korea contribute to and "feel" Japan more? (Mauro)
- ◇ What is our call today? (Jude)
- ◇ IF a young person comes to you and is interested in the Oblates, what is the most important reason you will tell him why he should join the Oblates?
- ◇ Is it your personal religious life enriched by the work you do or you feel emptied? (Maurizio)
- ◇ Should we as Oblates be involved in these ministries (cf above) (Bill)
- ◇ Community is constantly stressed in documents from Rome. I present this concrete question to each of us or do we continue with beautiful words but no concrete action. (Q) Allowing a year (but no more, maybe less) to arrange my schedule, am I willing to spend time (two days once every two weeks or two days a month) in an Oblate community in sharing not about apostolic activities but faith sharing, silent prayer, ongoing reflections on mission and common planning as well as leisure time spent together? (Letter to Young Oblates)
- ◇ The accountability of each individual Oblate.
- ◇ How can District Community be improved?
- ◇ Is it possible to consider during formation the sorts of formation required for international members of companies - English? Adaptation? (Eddie)
- ◇ 高松教区内の動きとオブレート会の方針 (Leo K.)
- ◇ 日本人に受け入れられるような宣教や典礼は具体的にどのようなものか。(Nobuhiko)

Q3:

- ◇ Are we convinced of the witness aspect of COMMUNITY, as opposed to our own little (or big) efforts at witnessing alone? Do we want to commit ourselves to developing this aspect of our Oblate-ness? (Ray)

- ◇ Community in Japan is not living in the same house. How are we then in community with each other? (PS: I don't worry about the future of the OMI Congregation. I can see that one day we will have a fusion among missionaries congregations.) (Xave)
- ◇ Are we each other's cheerleader? Instead of citing leadership qualities (e.g., one who has stated a vision of what the Province or District can be and has a plan to achieve that vision; one who is tolerant of others; one who is visible and available to all; one who is a team builder; and one who takes initiative, etc.) -- instead of citing those qualities and evaluating our LEADERS according to such hackneyed standards, maybe this one question is enough: **are we each other's cheerleader?** We should be each other's cheerleader in the most **overt** ways -- to be a support, to provide psychological and physical support to another OMI in his service of others. (Jack)
- ◇ Are we going to re-evaluate some of the existing ministries? (Bradly)
- ◇ What do you want to see accomplished therein (Fran)
- ◇ How to express in a concrete way that reciprocal contribute to and feeling for between Japan and Korea? (Mauro)
- ◇ Do we have enough people, if the number is small what can we do with that small number? (Jude)
- ◇ Ten years from now, what do you think will be the main involvement of Vice Province?
- ◇ Do you feel the mission of Korea well integrated in the Japanese province? Considering the difference between the mission in Korea and in Japan what could be done to work more together and have a closer "mission vision" and closer collaboration not only on the financial matter but also in mutual support and mutual growth where there is not only a receiving but also a giving. I just add an observation (may be wrong): As a general impression the questions don't touch the personal religious life but more the apostolate and the work we do. Maybe some question on personal spiritual life prayer life, health, and personal growth, how each one work out on those matters could be useful, because they are also related with the mission we do and the "style" we give to the mission. (Maurizio)
- ◇ If so, can we do our ministries better? If not, can we be open enough to find others who can do them? eg, pre-school education (cf above) (Bill)
- ◇ Considering our age differences, nationality differences, province of origin, isn't an honest discussion of R91 necessary? R91a: The local community is a place of fraternal charity and apostolic zeal. This comprises the following elements: attention to its members, helping each one develop his strengths and gifts; support in moments of weakness, trial and disappointment; commitment and accountability for each other and to each other; sharing of life, prayer, mission and material goods; hospitality, as an expression of our family spirit; involvement with the local Church; collaboration with the laity.
- ◇ Does the community life make any sense to the Oblates in the Province? What is the quality of the community life?
- ◇ How long can the Province expect to continue to serve when 10 (?) of the members are 70 and over. How will we prepare for the future or is it too late?
- ◇ 日本管区から海外宣教へ (Leo K.)
- ◇ 召命を増やすために、何をしなければならないか。 (Nobuhiko)



Prayer for Guidance

Father,
pour out on us
the Spirit of courage and truth,
as we gather
for our Provincial Congress.

Help us to strive
with all our heart
to know what is pleasing to you.

Give us a *clear vision,*
a *new insight*
and a *fresh understanding*
of the task you have set before us
as we face the challenges of the new
millennium.

Grant us a *deeper commitment*
in our missionary vocation;
a *greater love for the poor*
to whom we are sent,
and a *daring spirit*
as an apostolic band
in our work of evangelization.

Lord, help us to know your will
and make us *determined* to do it.

With Mary Immaculate, our Mother,
and **St. Eugene,** our Founder,
unite us to yourself in the bond of love
and keep us faithful to all that is true.

We ask this through Jesus
our Saviour and Brother. **Amen.**



Superior Generalis

Missionariorum Oblatorum B.M.V. Immaculatae

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September 21, 2000

To Oblate Major Superiors

On the restructuring of Vice-Provinces

Fraternal greetings in the name of the whole General Council. May this Jubilee Year renew the life of all our Oblate communities.

As you know, the 1998 General Chapter made some adjustments to the organizational structures of the Congregation. Among other things it introduced new criteria for the constitution of a Province, and discontinued the category of "Vice Province". The new status of the existing 23 Vice Provinces is the subject of this letter.

The Decree promulgating the revised Third Part of the Constitutions and Rules, published in August 1999, states that the new Constitutions and Rules would be applicable as of February 17, 2000. It nevertheless declared that "as regards the already existing Vice-Provinces, the present status would be respected until such time as adequate consultation had been made among the respective groups with a view to determining their new status".

The implementation of the revised section of the CC&RR and the consultation concerning the future of the Vice Provinces calls us all to reflect on the vital question: How can organizational structures, at all levels, better support and serve the Oblate mission? This reflection can be a moment of grace for the whole Congregation.

During its last Plenary Session, the General Council decided, as a first step, to formally invite the existing Vice-Provinces to reflect upon their future, involving both individual Oblates and the local communities. In order to facilitate reflection and discernment, attached are some canonical considerations and possible scenarios¹. This letter is being sent to all the Major Superiors to ensure that all receive the same information. Some other Units (Provinces and Delegations) will be concerned directly by the change of the status of the Vice Provinces. These changes will also affect the life of the different Regions.

I therefore invite the Provincials of the Vice Provinces to let me know the result of their consultation and their eventual negotiations, as well as their concrete recommendations, **at the latest before the Plenary Session of the General Council to be held in May 2001**. After receiving these results, the Superior General in Council will envisage the next steps of this process which will eventually lead to some decisions, taken always in consultation with all the parties involved.

At the **Intercapitular Meeting of October 2001**, in Mexico, the General Council will present a progress report to the Major Superiors.

Together with the members of the General Council, I am available to those concerned to provide further clarification or help. May the Holy Spirit be with you in your reflection and your sharing.

Fraternally in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

Fr. Wilhelm Steckling
Wilhelm Steckling, OMI
Superior General

¹Other guidelines have already been requested by some Units and will follow.

On the restructuring of Vice-Provinces

1. Here are some scenarios which can be envisaged for the future of existing Vice Provinces:

- a) a Vice Province fulfills the conditions to become a Province, and becomes one; or
- b) an existing Vice Province is united with another existing Vice Province or Delegation, and together they become a Province; or
- c) an existing Vice Province conserves its relative autonomy and becomes a Delegation: normally, a **Provincial Delegation**, attached to a sponsoring Province; or exceptionally it becomes a **General Delegation** (see CC 110 ff.).

2. Conditions for the constitution of a Province according to C 97 and R 97a:

- a) a sense of identity born of history, geography, culture, common mission, common experience, etc.;
- b) sufficient personnel (about 40 members - see R 98b);
- c) adequate leadership potential to provide competent superiors, treasurers, formators, animators, etc.
- d) adequate programs already in place for vocations, formation, pastoral work, etc.
- e) long-term financial stability (autonomy concerning revenues, responsible management of temporal goods, etc.)
- f) ability to communicate in a common language, with due respect for eventual cultural diversity.

3. In instances when a Vice Province cannot become a Province, but must be constituted as a Provincial Delegation, attention should be given to the following points:

- a) that the sponsoring Province be able, if necessary, to ensure the means to maintain and develop the Delegation, specially as regards personnel and finances;
- b) that there be an affinity between the sponsoring Province and the Delegation with regard to outlook and missionary planning (cf. C 115);
- c) that there be a realistic cultural compatibility between the two administrative units;

4. The change in status of the Vice Province concerns also the other Oblate units of the Region to which it belongs; it is desirable that the question be examined also at the regional level in order to keep the Major Superiors informed and to enhance reflection and sharing of suggestions.

Oblates of Mary Immaculate - Vice Province of Japan/Korea
PROVINCIAL CONGRESS
March 27- 30, 2001

SCHEDULE

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
March 27, 28 and 29



7:30	Morning Praise
8:00	Breakfast
9:15	Opening Liturgy (Tuesday only)
	SESSION
10:30	Break
10:45 - 11:45	SESSION
12:00	Lunch
2:30 - 3:30	SESSION
3:30 - 3:50	Break
3:50 - 5:00	SESSION
5:15	Eucharist
6:00	Supper

Friday
March 30

7:00	Morning Praise and Eucharist
9:15	Business Meeting
	Provincial
	Treasurer
	Animation Committee
10:00	FINAL SESSION
11:30	Lunch

Group I (Lobby 2nd floor)

Mauro
Jack
Jerry
Nobu
Jude
Ken-ichi

Group II (Lobby 1st floor)

Maurizio
Eddie
Tom
Xave
Bradly
Akio

Group III (Foyer-Entrance)

Giovanni
Ange
Ray
Leo
John I

Group IV (Main Meeting Room)

Vincenzo
John K M
Dick
Lei
Varam
Bert

Group V (In front of Elevator - 2nd floor)

Wency
Bill
Jan
Fran
James

Oblates of Mary Immaculate - Vice Province of Japan/Korea
PROVINCIAL CONGRESS
March 27 - 30, 2001

REVISED
SCHEDULE

Tuesday and Wednesday
March 27 and 28

7:30	Morning Praise
8:00	Breakfast
9:15	Opening Liturgy SESSION
10:30	Break
10:45-11:45	SESSION
12:00	Lunch
2:30	SESSION
3:30	Break
3:50 - 5:00	SESSION
5:15	EUCHARIST
6:00	Supper



Thursday
March 29

Same as Tuesday and Wednesday except:

7:30AM	Morning Praise
5:15PM	Jubilarians' Mass
6:00	Jubilarians' Dinner

Friday
March 30

7:00	Morning Praise and Eucharist
9:15	Business Meeting Provincial Bursar Animation Committee
10:00	FINAL SESSION
11:30	Lunch

2001 Spring Meeting

Opening Prayer



Opening hymn: Be Not Afraid (Ver.1)

Let us Pray...

Come Spirit, Who from the dawn of creation hovered over the void as Giver and Breath of Life.

Come now, be with us...to change our chaos into Your new order,

....to lead your Church into Your new creation,

....to guide us in serving Your work of the new evangelization.

Come and Open our hearts, minds, and eyes to Your Presence in "our past" on this mission of Japan, and to Your active Presence in our midst here and now.

COME fill us with an Immense Hope of Your being ever Present to renew our future.

Help us also to be open to Your work, in the past, present, future, and in all of Your creation, in all cultures, and especially here in Japan.

Help us to discern Your Will in these new and challenging times.

Help us to stand on the watchtower, with Isaiah, saying:

'Oh my Lord, I stand constantly by day, and at my posts through all the watches of the night.' (And help us to be) Ready To cry out: "HERE HE COMES NOW!" (Isa. 21:8~9)

Oh Mary, Women of the Spirit and Mother of HOPE, intercede for us, your sons, that we too may be open to the Spirit's work with in us, and be able to embrace God's action within us with your totalAMEN!

1st Reading:

"I will stand my guard post and station myself upon the rampart, to keep watch and to SEE what he will SAY to me, what answer he will give to my complaints. And then the Lord said write down the vision clearly upon the tablets so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint! If it delays, WAIT FOR IT! I will surely come, it will NOT be late!" (Hab. 2:1-3)

May we each know more fully that: *"They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles wings; they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint."* (Isa. 40:31)

Hymn: Be not Afraid (ver. 2)

Reflection...Prayer:

Lord you call us to keep watch to *See* what you *Say*, in other words to read the 'signs of the times' and then to witness with our lives to Your answer to our "Pleas". Send forth Your Holy Spirit on those gathered here at this meeting that we may truly answer your *call*. Hear our complaints and help us to record "Your Vision" in the tablets of our hearts, so that all can read readily Your Will, by *seeing* it incarnate in our lives. Help us, the sons of St. Eugene, to be for our time what he was for his, a sign of your unconditional love for all but especially the "most abandoned". Let your strength renew us so that we to can soar with eagles wings, not growing weary in doing your work in this world. We ask this in His Name. Amen

2nd Reading:

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ to which we have gained access [by faith] to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in *HOPE* of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, endurance proven character, and proven character, *HOPE*. *HOPE* never disappoints, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." (Rm. 5:1~5)

Hymn: Be not Afraid (ver. 3)

Reflection...Prayer:

Spirit and giver of Life, our *HOPE* is founded in the faith we have in Christ's Love for us, and in the Peace that His forgiveness of our sins implants in our hearts. We too can only boast in our weakness, in the *immense hope* that Your Glory will shine therein. Your church stands afflicted by trials from within and from without. We, like those in the times of Isaiah and Eugene, are confronted with a new "exile" from the hearts of your children in Europe, America and many parts of the world. Often because of our sins, the church's voice stands unheeded when she calls out prophetically for the creation of a new world of peace and justice. Her cries go ignored by the "movers" of this world, as they march forward with their new age agenda, which is often in contradiction to Your plan as revealed to Moses and perfected by Jesus on the cross. In the midst of this exile, help us to embrace a new *HOPE* founded in You and Your Word. Let our faith in His coming strengthen us to give our lives in witness to your love for all, especially the powerless and weak. Let us not be afraid of this exile, but fill us with a longing for Your coming and for that of Your Promised Kingdom, where all will be made One in your Divine Love! Amen.

3rd Reading:

"I consider the sufferings of this present age are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed to us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the One who subjected it, in *HOPE* that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in *HOPE* we were saved. Now Hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we *HOPE* for what we do not see then we wait with endurance." (Rm. 8:18~25)

Hymn: Maranatha (ver.2+3)

Prayer....Reflection:

Lord, we too groan as we await Your Coming. We groan under the weight of our waning years, under the seeming futility of our years of labor and from the fact of not seeing many young men willing to join our ranks. We groan under the weight of uncertainty about our future, and where it will lead us. We recall your words to Peter: "When you were younger you used to dress yourself and go where you willed, but when you grow older you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go! The Lord said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God", *and still we recall in Hope your words to him*, "Follow Me". (Jn. 21:18-19) We groan in uncertainty as how to respond to the new world of science and technology, which seemingly wants to take over Your creative process, and redesign or "improve" upon it, with out any reference to You. How do we help the family to resist the pressures to abdicate its role as the child's primary nurturer, and not allow the 'specialists' to determine the environment and the values that shape their future? How do we point to the centrality of the *spiritual* in a world blinded by the *material*?

Lord there are so many more issues and challenges that fill our minds and hearts. What is Your Will for us, and what is our prophetic role here in Japan, Korea and Asia? Teach us Lord, as You taught your disciples, to Pray in great Hope for the insight to respond as You Will. Amen

4th Reading:

"Sweet HOPE, you have ever brought me happiness, and been dear to me for bringing me to see in God a ravishing perfection which made me love Him with a delicious abandon, so often have I preached YOU to my brothers to encourage them to serve God, to stiffen them to love, more than fear Him, sweet HOPE have you abandoned me? What will become of me if you do not sustain my faith, and temper what it teaches me of the rigors of my God's Justice. Come back to me, come back, and be forever my faithful companion in the exacting scrutiny I am going to carry out on my numberless infidelities, in the reflections of which I am going to give myself during this retreat on the sacred duties of my state, of the awesome functions

entrusted to me, the terrible account that the Sovereign Judge will call for of my stewardship. Lord make to shine on me a ray of your celestial light so that I might know myself as I am in your sight; inspire my soul with the feelings it should be imbued with at the sight of my sins; grant me, I beg you, through the infinite merits of your Passion, through your Precious Blood poured out for me, through the intercession of your most holy Mother, grant me the compunction to convert and change me; may your grace revivify in me the gifts you allotted me and that I have not made good use of like a faithful servant, May I leave this retreat filled with a new vigor, firmly resolved not merely to do good, but to do all the good that is permitted to me to do. My God, remember your mercies, for you are my God, and I am your poor servant (Ps115: 16)" (Letters of the Founder: "Spiritual Writings"# 15 p.171)

Hymn: O God, You Search Me (vers. 1-3)

PrayerReflection:

Lord we too like Eugene are here to reflect on who we are and what we are, our weaknesses and our gifts. We too ask you to help us see ourselves as You see us, and help our scrutiny(Congress) be as exacting and Spirit filled as his, so that we will be aware of our "duties" and the "stewardship" you have entrusted to us in this day and age. Grant to us the "sons of St. Eugene, the compunction to convert and change and may you grace revivify us to make us faithful servants of You and your Divine Plan, resolving not merely to do good, but that we too might be able to do all that is permitted to us. With St. Eugene we beg you to remember your Mercies, for you are Our God and we are your servants, in Christ and Mary Immaculate. Amen

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Towards an Immense Hope

Tuesday, March 27th /Second Session

V-PJ3.1

1. Name three signs of hope that your Oblate eyes recognize in the world and society of Japan and Korea at this time.

2. Name three signs of hope that your Oblate eyes see in the Church of Japan and Korea at this time.

3. Name three signs of hope that your Oblate eyes see in the Vice-Province of Japan and/or Mission of Korea at this time.

Provincial Congress, Tuesday, March 28th, 10.30 a.m.

1. List all the groups/communities that you belong, let off the handbrake and be wild. You can revise you list, but make it as exhaustive as possible

- stand back and contemplate, and sing a litany of praise to God for all these communities or groups that contribute in various ways to the fabric of your experience

2. Check off the most life-giving of these communities and prioritize them

- Are any of these communities death dealing rather than life-giving
- list them

3. Check off any instances of Oblate community than appears in your list.

- List three life-giving traits of Oblate community, be experiential

a)

b)

c)

- List any death dealing traits of your experience of Oblate community.

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Thursday 29th March/Second Session

Towards a Vision/Mission Statement

1. Recall an experience, of an Oblate or an Oblate community, who *for you* manifests the Oblate mission (in practice) lived out at its best.

Write down the story of that experience is as much detail as you can.

2. Name one to three assumptions about God, or Christ, or Church, or World, or Mission, or People that are manifest in the experience you have described.

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3. Name one to three values which are manifest in the experience which you described

In a few words describe or clarify each value.

4. Name one to three traits of leadership/organization which are manifest in the experience which you described

In a few words describe or clarify each trait.