



The process of giving up the self (which is related to the phenomenon of love, as will be discussed in the next section of this book) is for most of us a gradual process which we get into by a series of fits and starts. One form of temporary giving up of the self deserves special mention because its practice is an absolute requirement for significant learning during adulthood, and therefore for significant growth of the human spirit. I am referring to a subtype of the discipline of balancing which I call "bracketing." Bracketing is essentially the act of balancing the need for stability and assertion of the self with the need for new knowledge and greater understanding by temporarily giving up one's self—putting one's self aside, so to speak—so as to make room for the incorporation of new material into the self. This discipline has been well described by the theologian Sam Keen in *To a Dancing God*:

The second step requires that I go beyond the idiosyncratic and egocentric perception of immediate experience. Mature awareness is possible only when I have digested and compensated for the biases and prejudices that are the residue of my personal history. Awareness of what presents itself to me involves a double movement of attention: silencing the familiar and welcoming the strange. Each time I approach a strange object, person, or event, I have a tendency to let my present needs, past experience, or expectations for the future determine what I will see. If I am to appreciate the uniqueness of any datum, I must be sufficiently aware of my preconceived ideas and characteristic emotional distortions to bracket them long enough to welcome strangeness and novelty into my perceptual world. This discipline of bracketing, compensating, or silencing requires sophisticated self-knowledge and courageous honesty. Yet, without this discipline each present moment is only the repetition of something already seen or experienced. In order for genuine novelty to emerge, for the unique presence of things, persons, or events to take root in me, I must undergo a decentralization of the ego.\*



## Vice Province of Japan/Korea

### Provincial Congress 2001 (Selected texts from chapter documents)



MTW - Missionaries In Today's World, General Chapter 1986; WAC = Witnessing As Apostolic Community, General Chapter 1992; EPM = Evangelizing the Poor At the Dawn of the Third Millennium, General Chapter 1998.

## **I THE BASIS AND OUR SOURCE OF HOPE:**

(EPM 3) God loves the world (cf Jn 3:16); Christ saves it; the Holy Spirit lives in it. In the heart of the world the presence of the Kingdom of God becomes a reality through the Church. The Spirit of God teaches us to love this world. So how could it be an alien place to us?

(MTW 40) Our awareness of our limitations does not prevent us from preaching to this oft-divided world a message of reconciliation grounded in the saving power of the risen Christ (C.4). This power allows us, after the example of our Founder, to dare everything in order to lead people, "especially the poor," to a full awareness of "their dignity as human beings and as sons and daughters of God" (C.8). This same power is the **basis for the hope** which we want to bring to the world.

(WAC 5 *passim*)... there is, almost everywhere, the sincere search for God..... In the cry of today's poor we perceive the groans of birth rather than the moans of death. Christ is being born anew in a flawed world. Are we capable of serving this promise of hope?

(EPM 8) If God continues to believe in women and men, how can we despair of them? Humanity, stands tall, alive, free, at peace within itself, at peace with creation, and somehow at rights with God. These are the people in our neighborhoods, cities and towns; everywhere giving us evidence that God still believes in us.

As witnesses to, and prophets of, God's love, we want to be **men of hope**, reflecting the attitude of a God who never abandons his people. As our constitutions so aptly put it: "*Members of a prophetic Church... we announce the liberating presence of Jesus Christ and the new world born of his resurrection.*" (C.9)

Hence the challenge is to work with thousands of women and men towards something that might well be called solidarity on a global scale. This Chapter, even as it asks us to take stock of both the real pain that so often marks humanity today and of our limits, also brings to life in us an **immense hope**.

## **II ON COMMUNITY**

(WAC 7) Therefore we choose community as a way whereby we are continuously evangelized and can be witnesses of the Good News in this graced moment of today's world. Recognizing that what we dream alone will remain always just a dream, but what we dream with others can become reality, we acknowledge the limits of the individual and the fruitfulness of community. We can be effective evangelizers only to the extent that our compassion is collective, that we give ourselves to the world not as a coalition of free lance ministers, but as a united missionary corps. To seek to achieve quality in our community life and in our being, with each other as Oblates, first of all, as well as with all persons of good will: that is the first task of our evangelizing activity.

(WAC 8) It is not primarily for its own sake, then, that our common life exists: it is flesh for the life of the world. The community we create together around Jesus Christ is the banquet

table to which we invite mankind. In a prophetic way it challenges the individualism found in today's society and the arbitrary use of power that is responsible for the plight of so many poor people. At the same time our community life offers **grounds for hope** to this world which is struggling to overcome its disintegration and fragmentation. Like Christ's gentle invitation to his banquet, our community life speaks with the meekness of an authority that invites but never imposes or coerces.

(WAC 9) We can build such apostolic communities only if we again choose as our centre the person of Jesus Christ, "who was chaste and poor and who redeemed mankind by his obedience" (C.12)....

(WAC 10) The community of the apostles around the person of Jesus is the model for our life together. The person of Jesus Christ unites us in charity and obedience; this enables us to live again the communion of life and the common mission in his Spirit that the Twelve Apostles shared with him (C. 3)....

(EPM 12) The Oblates work as a community, and in common with many others who proclaim the Gospel. The first place where dialogue is necessary is among ourselves, in our own community, where we evangelize one another...

(MTW 109) Oblate community is an essential dimension of our vocation. The report of the young Oblates to the Chapter reminds us of that again. Community life is not only necessary for the mission, it is itself mission and at the same time it is a qualitative sign of the mission of the whole Church.

When we considered the Oblate life as it is being presently lived, four issues appeared to merit special attention:

(MTW 110 *passim*) The link between mission and community... Today, many of our ministries are individualized. The link between community and mission is less evident. Thus, the community is in danger of losing its vigor and the mission its support.

(MTW 115) ... Theological reflection and lived experience show how the community is missionary; it is a gift from God, it is a sign of the Spirit's power to transform hearts and to inspire a form of social life in conformity with the gospel. In this way it becomes a message to today's world. Theological reflection also shows that mission is communitarian: it does not belong to individuals but is a mission within the Church, which prolongs the mission of Christ. Thus it is the community which sends, and the mission is received in obedience and guaranteed by perseverance. The missionary is responsible to his community and to his superiors and it is with the community that he gives thanks.

(MTW 123) The context of our society and the demands of our mission cause us to affirm more than ever the importance of community life in relation to mission, based upon the inspiration of the Founder and expressed in the Constitutions and Rules.

(EPM 29) .... community embraces the full span of missionary life. For the young Oblates, it will be the place, the family, that welcomes their generosity and creativity; for the aged Oblates it will be the setting for their contemplation and their ministry of simple presence; for those Oblates living and ministering in the strength and health of their middle years, it will be what keeps them falling into sterile activism; and for those passing through those crises that inevitably attack our lives, it will provide a support and a safeguard for fidelity tempered by trial.

(EPM 30) By our living in fraternal community we give witness to the world that a communion of life is possible .... Our lives of sharing, graciousness, and our discernment in community contest the ways of individualism, of arbitrary power, or domination, and gives this world a **reason to hope**.

(EPM 31) We encourage you therefore to esteem and cultivate the great gift of community. In it, we are given a foretaste of the life of heaven, God's life....

(EPM 32) The quality of community depends very much on the qualities of its members and particularly on the superior who is called to animate it...

### **III ON MISSION**

(EPM 9) "*Woe to me if I do not evangelize!*" (1 Cor. 9, 16)

Through his Word, Jesus Christ, God wishes to reveal himself to the world as its Saviour. We are called to cooperate with Him in this endeavor of love. We have heard this call and are sent to announce the Good News to the most abandoned....

(EPM 12) .... It is the Church who evangelizes, and sends us forth on mission. We enter the ongoing dialogue between Church and world. We want that dialogue to be open and confident, knowing full well that our word is less credible when the wider ecclesial community and our own are perceived in a negative way...

(EPM 15) "*He has sent me to evangelize the poor.*" (Luke 4, 18). To evangelize is to announce the Good News of God's reign, a reign of justice, love, and peace. Our experience in mission teaches us that our evangelizing, must be integral: that is, that we proclaim explicitly Jesus Christ, that our lives witness to what we preach, that we be really involved in the transformation of the world. (Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 22, 31, 42) Our evangelizing flows from all that we are, and what we say and do. Evangelization is as much a question of **being** the Good News as of **speaking** the Good News.

(EPM 16) ... Evangelizing the poor requires not only our presence in hospital caring for the injured but also tackling the causes of suffering at their very source.

(EPM 17) The urgency of the mission should make us daring in opening new ways of evangelization. In the Preface of our Rules, our Founder states: "*We must spare no effort to extend the Saviour's empire.*" Let neither faint hearts nor fear hold us back. Let us have no fear to find new means to answer new needs.

We need to have confidence both in the One who calls us and in our Oblate vocation. The Oblate charism is still alive.

(MTW 101) We recommend that each Province establish missionary priorities keeping in mind our Oblate charism and local needs. These priorities, accompanied by precise criteria, will help us to make decisions about the apostolate and will make it possible for us to explain these choices to others.

(MTW 107) We recommend that each Oblate submit his apostolic projects to the discernment of his community so as to receive fraternal support. We shall give special support to Oblates who are in danger or are suffering persecution because of their fidelity to the Gospel.



**Vice Province of Japan**  
**Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate**  
**Data and Projections**



These tables were generated at the request of Fr. Wency Laguidao to be used as part of the resources for the congress of the OMI Japanese Vice Province in March, 2001.

The tables are based on information available: name, nationality, year of birth, year of arrival in the mission, and current pastoral involvement. As of November, 2000 there are a total of 28 Oblates in the Japanese Vice Province. Six of them are assigned to the Mission of Korea and the other 22 are assigned in Japan.

Table 1 below indicates the mix of national backgrounds of the missionaries. More than a third are Americans and the rest come from 6 other countries.

**Table 1**

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>(Pct)</b>
Belgium	3	(11 %)
India	1	(4 %)
Italy	4	(14 %)
Japan	5	(18 %)
Philippines	1	(4 %)
Sri Lanka	3	(11 %)
U.S.A.	11	(39 %)

Table 2 shows that almost half of the missionaries are involved in parish work, some of whom have other involvements in addition to their parish work. A third of the members minister in various other ways.

**Table 2**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>(Pct)</b>
Administration	2	(7 %)
Formation	2	(7 %)
Kindergarten	2	(7 %)
Parish only	8	(29 %)
Parish and Other	5	(18 %)
Other	9	(32 %)

The tables that follow below are simple 5-year interval projections based on the assumption that there will be no additional members of the Japanese Vice Province in the next 10 years, i.e., until 2011. This assumption is, of course, unrealistic. But it is proposed as a tool

for future planning.

The Japanese Vice Province, like most of the Congregation, is aging. Unless new members join the Province, the average age will like something below.

**Table 3**  
**Projected Average Age**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Age</u>
2001	57
2006	62
2011	67

Another way of looking at Table 3 is to divide the Vice Province membership into age groups and project how these subgroups will change in the next 10 years given the assumption of no new members within that period.

**Table 4**  
**Projected Age Groupings**

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2011</u>
30-39	7	2	0
40-49	3	8	7
50-59	2	1	3
60-69	6	5	2
70-79	10	8	6
80 and older	0	4	10

Table 5 below is an attempt to estimate, again on the assumption of no new members in the next 10 years, how many will still be active in ministry. For this purpose, we define/assume that the criteria for "active in ministry" simply as "below 80 years old". The assumption, again, could be unrealistic because there are a number of Oblates in their 80s around the world who are still active in some form of ministry.

**Table 5**  
**Projected Active in Ministry**

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. Active</u>
2001	28
2006	24
2011	18

Prepared by:  
Fr. Jose R. Arong, OMI  
February 24, 2001

TRUST

602

Verse 1

# Be Not Afraid

1. You shall cross the bar-ren des-ert, but you

1. shall not die of thirst. You shall wan-der far in

1. safe-ty though you do not know the way. You shall

1. speak your words in for-eign lands and all will un-der-stand.

1. You shall see the face of God and live.

Refrain

Be not a-fraid. I go be-fore you al-ways. Come, fol-low

me, and I will give you rest.

Verse 2

2. If you pass through rag-ing wa-ters in the sea, you shall not

2. drown. If you walk a-mid the burn-ing flames,

TRUST

2. you shall not be harmed. If you stand be-fore the

2. pow'r of hell and death is at your side,

2. know that I am with you through it all. to Refrain

Verse 3

3. Bless-ed are your poor, for the king-dom shall be theirs.

3. Blest are you that weep and mourn, for one day you shall laugh.

3. And if wick-ed tongues in-sult and hate you all be-cause of

3. me, bless-ed, bless-ed are you! to Refrain

Text: Based on Isaiah 43:2-3, Luke 6:20ff; Bob Dufford, SJ, b. 1943.  
Music: Bob Dufford, SJ.  
Text and music © 1975, 1978, Robert J. Dufford, SJ, and New Dawn Music.





## Maranatha

Refrain *F#*

Come, O Lord, and set us free.

Ma - ra - na - tha.

Verses

1. Des - ert and dry land will grow green in praise;  
 2. Strength - en the hearts of the fear - ful and weak;  
 3. We have been wait - ing and long - ing for light;  
 4. Give us a star in the sky day and night;  
 5. Shep - herd of Is - ra - el, rise and shine forth;  
 6. Lord, make us turn to you, show us your face;  
 7. My be - ing shouts out the great - ness of God.  
 8. God who is might - y did great things for me;  
 9. My ears are o - pen to what God pro - claims;  
 10. Kind - ness and truth shall meet when the Lord comes.

1. clay will re - joice with full bloom.  
 2. be strong; fear not, God is near.  
 3. watch - ing for signs of the Lord.  
 4. sign of your prom - ise to save.  
 5. rouse up your pow - er to save.  
 6. We shall be saved by your sight.  
 7. My soul finds joy in my Lord.  
 8. Ho - ly his name for all time.  
 9. "Peace," to his peo - ple on earth.  
 10. Jus - tice and peace shall em - brace.

1. Show - ers of flow - ers giv'n birth in dead earth; in  
 2. Corn - ing in pow - er and loos - ing our bonds;  
 3. "Prom - ised of a - ges," "Mes - si - ah to come,"  
 4. O - ver the moun - tains we fol - low its light,  
 5. Look down up - on us; take care of this vine:  
 6. You are the pot - ter and we are the clay.  
 7. Choos - ing the low - ly to serve in his name,  
 8. Sure is his mer - cy from age - to age  
 9. To those who fear him, sal - va - tion is near.  
 10. Truth shall come spring - ing from out of the earth.

ADVENT

to Refrain

Do #7

Re - di -

RE

1. col - ors they the ech - o his song.  
 2. set - ting us, the cap - ti - ves free.  
 3. hear - ing for the we beg you: "Come,  
 4. hop - ing for the sign of your life.  
 5. care are the work of your hand.  
 6. We he is my sav - ior, my Lord.  
 7. on those who call him their God.  
 8. His glo - ry lives in our land.  
 9. Jus - tice will rain from a -  
 10. bove.

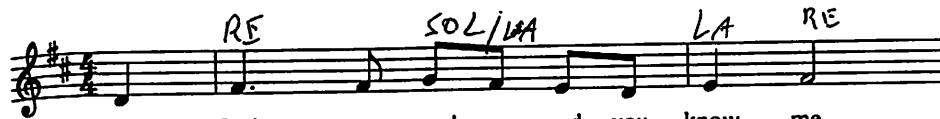
Text: Isaiah 36, Romans 13, James 5; Tim Schoenbachler, b. 1952.

Music: Tim Schoenbachler.

Text and music © 1979, OCP Publications.



## O God, You Search Me



1. O God, you search me and you know me.
2. You know my rest - ing and my ris - ing.
3. Be - fore a word is on my tongue, Lord,
4. Al - though your Spir - it is up - on me,
5. For you cre - at - ed me and shaped me,



1. All my thoughts lie o - pen to your gaze.
2. You dis - cern my pur - pose from a - far,
3. You have known its mean - ing through and through.
4. Still I search for shel - ter from your light.
5. Gave me life with - in my moth - er's womb.



1. When I walk or lie down you are be - fore me:
2. And with love ev - er - last - ing you be - siege me:
3. You are with me be - yond my un - der - stand - ing:
4. There is no - where on earth I can es - cape you:
5. For the won - der of who I am, I praise you:

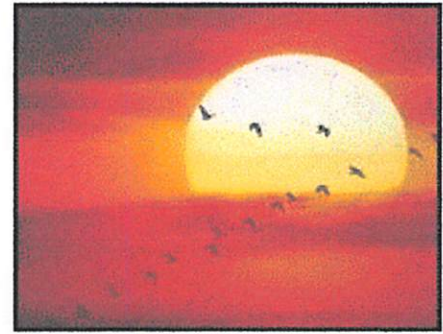


1. Ev - er the mak - er and keep - er of my days.
2. In ev - 'ry mo - ment of life or death, you are.
3. God of my pres - ent, my past and fu - ture, too.
4. E - ven the dark - ness is ra - diant in your sight.
5. Safe in your hands, all cre - a - tion is made new.

## Amazing Geese!

In the fall when you see geese heading south for the winter flying along in the "V" formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

People who are part of a team and share a common direction get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are travelling on the trust of one another and lift each other up along the way.



Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go through it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the power of the flock.

If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation and share information with those who are headed the same way that we are going.

When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose takes over. It pays to share leadership and take turns doing hard jobs.

The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep their speed.

Words of support and inspiration help energize those on the front line, helping them to keep pace in spite of the day-to-day pressures and fatigue. It is important that our honking be encouraging. Otherwise it's just – well honking!



Finally, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by a gunshot and falls out, two geese fall out of the formation and follow the injured one down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly or until he is dead, and then they launch out with another formation to catch up with their group.

When one of us is down, it's up to the others to stand by us in our time of trouble. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other when things get rough. We will stay in formation with those headed where we want to go.



The next time you see a formation of geese, remember...

**IT IS A REWARD, A CHALLENGE AND A PRIVILEGE to be a contributing member of TEAM.**