

JAPAN VICE PROVINCE

MISSION CONGRESS

DISCERNMENT CONGRESS / MISSION VISION

Input/Facilitator

James Sullivan, OMI



Kochi

October 17-21, 1983

PREPARATORY PHASE



1983



The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

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17 August 1983



Dear Fellow Oblates,

As a preparation for our meeting to be held in October, Fr. Jim Sullivan has sent us the following questions to reflect on personally and in groups. For the group discussions, I ask the District coordinators to make up a schedule and to please keep minutes on your sharing.

The principal question is: . . .

What do you see or feel are the major concerns in the Vice-Province around .

- a) Personal growth
- b) Community
- c) Mission

Fraternally in Jesus and Mary,

Ang. Ford

SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

Sharing of where one is at, of one's thoughts and of one's feelings does not have to be hidden nor defended. These should be accepted with respect. If they are not ideal or what we might like them to be - in ourselves or others - we can recognise this and maybe acknowledge our readiness to grow.

FEELINGS are usually best expressed by "I feel..... followed by and adjective or adverb. While we have no direct control over our feelings, they often do indicate our attitude towards something. We are not generally responsible for our feelings and so others' feelings and our own should be accepted rather than attacked or defended.

POSITIVE CRITICAL SUGGESTIONS for ourselves or for Oblates in general will necessarily emerge, but negative criticism of ourselves or of others should be avoided.

WHILE SHARING.

Don't HIDE behind words like 'we', 'us', 'they'. Share your own experience as much as you can.

Don't PREACH to yourself or others by words like 'should', 'ought' or 'must'.

Don't RUSH your thinking or your talking. Good sharing takes time and long pauses.

Don't APOLOGISE for your experiences; they are yours. Like the colour of your eyes, you do not cause them, nor can you control them entirely.

WHILE LISTENING:

Don't CONDEMN other's experiences, feelings and opinions as these are very personal and should be accepted with respect.

Don't PROBE, by asking what might embarrass. But *do ask questions* which indicate that you are interested and concerned. Silence is usually very ambiguous.

Don't FIX IT, by giving out advice too quickly. Make sure you have found it before you think about fixing it. Hear before you try to help.

Don't INTERRUPT SILENCE when the person sharing is thinking slowly: give them plenty of time between sentences. Good sharing takes time.

L.J.C. et M.I.

São Paulo, Brazil. 29 September 1983

NINETEENTH LETTER OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO THE OBLATES



Dear Fellow Oblates,

I am writing you this letter from São Paulo in Latin America. The General Council has been here for three weeks, spending that of September 12 - 17 with the Provincials and delegates from the various territories of this Region.

The commitment of the Oblates in Latin America

On the whole, the commitment of the Oblates in Latin America is very strong. Though their number is small -- there are about 330 in 12 different countries -- their influence is nevertheless considerable. This is certainly due to the clarity and radical character of their option, an option for the poor and for the life of the poor. It is due to their being close to the people: they have learned to listen to the people, to respect their inner values and aspirations, and to accompany them in their just struggle for a more human way of life. It is also due to the one major inspiration animating them, an inspiration which in great part finds its source in liberation theology.

During this week, I had the pleasure of seeing Oblates from different countries who are well integrated into the milieu in which they are working. I was especially happy to see young Latin American Oblates involved with us in the evangelization of their people. What was only a hope a few years ago is becoming a marvellous reality: in Latin America, God is sending us vocations. I was most glad to hear the testimony of Christian laity who are working with us and place great confidence in us: persons who are simple and sincere, filled with hope and faith, who want and actually do accomplish things for the complete liberation of their people.

A rich value for the Congregation

The apostolic commitment and simplicity of life lived by our fellow Oblates in Latin America bring a special enrichment to the Congregation. I rejoice at this and, as Superior General, strongly encourage them to continue their work and their search.

Among their number we find some specialists in economics and in certain socio-political issues. This is a privileged possession. I am convinced however -- and this applies to each and every Region -- that the Oblates must invest more in serious reflection. The challenges of today's mission require that we have in our ranks some men of thought, men of research oriented toward missionary action, and this in different fields: missiology, Sacred Scripture, dogmatic and moral theology, sociology and anthropology, economics.

The needed complementarity

Dialogue and complementarity in the dialogue between these men of thought and the men in the field is absolutely necessary if we are to achieve a view that is more complete and true to reality. This is all the more important because our missionary options to a great extent are based on such a foundation.

I think now, among other things, of the socio-political analysis that could be made of concrete situations or of the theological outlook that animates our activity. For example, I very much realize what a source of strength for missionary action liberation theology is, and what a potent force it can be for a Congregation like ours, dedicated as it is to the evangelization of the poor. At the same time, I am also aware that this theology has its limitations, that it considers revealed mysteries from a particular viewpoint and needs to be completed if we do not want to deprive people of the full mystery of God and of themselves. For that matter, this is true of all systems of thought: dialogue with others is indispensable for all of them.

Regions in the Congregation

During this session, I reflected a great deal on the Congregation, its future, the development of the Regions.

More and more the Regions will be different from each other, will take on their own character and personality. Such a development is normal: it promotes the growth of the Institute as a whole and of each of its parts. To achieve this, dialogue between the Regions must intensify and deepen in the measure that regional identities emerge. Otherwise, "regionalization" may lead to isolationism and becoming closed in on oneself.

A universal and international character is a great source of strength for an apostolic corps such as we are. The Congregation, therefore, no matter how incarnate she may be in a given region or country or culture, must remain open to the world at large, and her members must remain capable of sharing, in communion and in dialogue, our common values, common spirit and common spirituality.

This is a challenge the Congregation will have to take up in the years ahead.

Our greatest challenge

That, however, is not our greatest challenge. Evangelization remains the greatest challenge for each one of us and for all the Oblates as a whole, the full liberation of the poorest and the most abandoned: to help these people discover who Jesus Christ is and to possess fully the salvation and life he brings to mankind.

I conclude with the reflection made by a fellow Oblate on the General Council. Seeing the great misery and deep distress of the poor in Latin America he remarked: "To expect heaven on earth is an illusion; but to tolerate hell on earth is not Christian. We are called to work with the poor to make this world much less like hell and a little more like heaven."

The Oblates in Latin America are working toward this goal. Their fellow Oblates in other parts of the world, also engaged in the same work, support and encourage them.

Fraternally yours in our Lord and Mary Immaculate,

Fernand Jetté, O.M.I.
Superior General

MEETING



1983

DISCERNMENT CONGRESS

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY OCT. 16 8:30 P.M.

OPENING SESSION

OCT. 17 - 21



MORNING SCHEDULE

7:40	MORNING PRAYER
8:00	BREAKFAST
8:45	WORK SESSION
10:00	COFFEE BREAK
10:20	WORK SESSION
11:30	EUCCHARIST
12:30	LUNCH

AFTERNOON SCHEDULE

2:30	WORK SESSION
3:30	COFFEE BREAK
3:50	WORK SESSION
5:40	END OF WORK SESSION
5:45	SUPPER
7:20	WORK SESSION
8:20	NIGHT PRAYER
8:30	FREE

PROGRAM - DISCERNMENT MEETING

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
MORNING	CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS LIFE ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE GROWTH AND CHANGE IN COMMUNITY AND MISSION	SHARING OUR OBLATE EXPERIENCE	PERSONAL AND GROUP REFLECTION ON ELEMENTS OF A MISSION STATEMENT	CRITERIA FOR MISSION	DISCUSSION ON SUGGESTIONS EVALUATION
AFTERNOON	COMMUNICATION IN COMMUNITY COMMUNITY REFLECTION PROCESS	REFLECTION ON OUR CONSTITUTIONS AND RULES AROUND MISSION	FORMULATION OF MISSION STATEMENT	SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT STEP	FINAL CONCLUSIONS
EVENING	DISCERNMENT	ELEMENTS OF A MISSION STATEMENT	ACCEPTANCE OF MISSION STATEMENT		



CHART 1.1

COMPLETE LIST OF VALUES IN 30 TEXT

PART I : MISSION		PHASE I : MISSION				PHASE II		PHASE III		PHASE IV	
PHASE I		A (PRIMARY)		B (PRIMARY)		A (PRIMARY)		B (PRIMARY)		A (PRIMARY)	
A (PRIMARY)	B (PRIMARY)	JESUS/CRUCIFIED		COMMUNITY/MISSION WORK/LABOR		Equality/Liberation Jesus/Relationship/ Personal Call Service/Vocation/ Mission		CONSTRUCTION/NEW ORDER HUMAN DIGNITY JESUS/IMITATION		Jesus/Intimacy/Union JESUS/ IDENTIFICATION/ GLOBAL VISION	
	B (MEANS)	CROSS POOR/DIVERSITY POOR/MOST ABANDONED		ADMINISTRATION/ CONTROL COMMUNICATIONS GOSPEL/PREACHING HIERARCHY/PROPRIETY/ ORDER JESUS/UNITY LOYALTY/RESPECT MARY/MINISTRY MEMBERSHIP/ INSTITUTION MISSION/COMMON MISSION/FAITHFULNESS CHARISM RESPONSIBILITY		Adaptability/ Flexibility Compassion Decision/Initiation Discernment/ Personal Evaluation/ Self System Generosity/Service Gospel/Liberation Limitation/ Celebration Sharing/Listening/ Trust		ACCOUNTABILITY/ MU- TUAL RESPONSIBILITY COOPERATION/ COLLABORATION DISCERNMENT/COMMONAL ITY FIDELITY/RISK JESUS/INTIMACY JUSTICE PIONEERING/INNOVA- TION/PROGRESS PLURIFORMITY SUBSIDIARITY UNITY/DIVERSITY		Interdependence JUSTICE/GLOBAL ECONOMICS MARY/TRANSCENDENCE WORD	
A (MEANS)	B (MEANS)	Care/Nurture Mary/Mother Tradition		A (MEANS)		A (MEANS)		B (MEANS)		A (MEANS)	
	B (MEANS)										



Group Meetings



Group I

Tom Maher
Ed Williams
Fran Hahn
John Iwo
Len Inui
Ange Siani
Dick Bonang

Group II

Leo Simons
Wency Laguidao
Dick Harr
Jerry Novotny
Ray Bourgoin
Jan Van Hoydonck
Mike Yamazaki

Group III

Bert Silver
Bill Maher
Tosa Yoshikazu
Jack Deely
Gerard Stevens
John Mahoney

Kochi 1983

PROGRAM
MONDAY - OCTOBER 17



7:40	Morning Prayer
8:00	Breakfast
8:45	Context and Elements of Religious Life
10:00	Coffee Break
10:20	Growth and Change in Community and Mission
11:30	Eucharist
12:30	Lunch
2:30	Communication in Community
3:30	Coffee Break
3:50	Community Reflection Process
5:30	Rest
5:45	Supper
7:20	Discernment
8:20	Night Prayer
8:30	Free

PROCESS OF COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT

(CC & RR: C 26, R 18, C 72, C 81)

INSTRUCTION SHEET

(NOTA BENE: We organize and present this instrument as a help to those Oblate Communities who desire to use Community discernment for their important decisions. However, we wish to make it clear that the process of Community discernment cannot be totally understood from a simple reading of an instrument like this. It would seem necessary for a community to invite someone who understands and has experience in the discernment Process to help explain and guide the community through their first experiences of discernment.)

- OBJECTIVE:
1. Give a community a process for putting the above CC & RR into practice.
 2. Help a community to understand the exigencies and process of community discernment.
 3. Give the steps of this process.

WHO: Oblate communities, local, district and Provincial

TIME: Time for a discernment cannot be predetermined. It will depend on the complexity of the questions, the number of people involved. Also the discernment may be done by several groups and levels of authority which will require more time.

MATERIAL: Bible, CC & RR, the necessary information as will be explained below:

PROCESS FOR UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS DISCERNMENT AND THE STEPS INVOLVED

1. Read and reflect on Sheet A - Discernment Use P 7 individually.
2. Discuss in groups (if number of participants demand this). The content, ideas etc of sheet A.
3. Plenary Session for clarifications.
4. Read individually Sheet B - Requisites for Discernment.
5. Follow Steps 2 and 3 above.
6. Read individually Sheet C - The Process
7. Follow Steps 2 and 3 above.

This Process should be followed by a Community before using the Process of Sheet C in a Community Discernment.

SHEET A

DISCERNMENT

Spiritual discernment opens a person, or a group, to the paschal mystery in his life because discernment is not necessarily knowing what to do, or being prudent in one's decision-making; it is rather following the call of God. This at times implies not really seeing everything clearly, but at the same time being sure that one has found the Lord, and thus, found also his call. Discernment gives second place to all other considerations and seeks above all to know God's will which is contained in his call to a person or groups; This is the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price for which everything else is sold: security, control, human prudence, clear knowledge,...

Discernment does not only mean reaching a good decision based on God's will, but the best decision possible, that is, the best possible act of love of God and neighbor. This is what God really wants! Furthermore, it is choosing between several goods; between several good choices. Choosing between good and bad should not require discernment. So the answer to the problem is which is the best possible choice; where is God to be found; what does God expect of us.

Discernment, then, implies being very open and sensitive to God's motions in us and among us. Discernment means discernment of spirits. The word "spirits" stands for all interior motions or movements that a person can have and feel facing the options. These movements can be inclinations, desires, passions, emotions, impulses, sentiments, motives, such as aversion, joy, sadness, anger, worry, fear, suspicions, ideas insinuations, attractions, repugnance, ... Each person must ask the Lord in prayer for interior freedom so as not to be guided by the motions produced by the evil spirit, nor by his own spirit, but rather by the good spirit; by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.

To recognize the movements of the Spirit of Christ in us and in others and not be confused by other spirits, prayer is absolutely necessary. It is also necessary if one is to recognize his workings in events of everyday life and in others. For this to happen, one has to pray. Prayer is absolutely essential to discernment; it has to be present before, during and after spiritual discernment. Prayer makes you aware of God's presence; prayer gives you interior freedom. If you do not pray, you cannot discern either.

If we are to discern, it is also important to know who we are; what one's identify before God is, for God will call us according to what we are; according to what he expects of us, and according to how he has called us in the past. God is terribly consistent in this, even though we must rediscover the novelty of the Gospel each time. For a religious congregation, its identify, the consistent element, is its charism. Knowledge and unity around one's charism is essential..This communion of the members is a prerequisite for discernment; it is the springboard for any process of discernment, and it should determine the outcome since the group has to be faithful to God's call to BE AND DO (cf. Instrument CHAR 1).

This is our point of departure, and our point of arrival is recognition of God's call in one of the choices. Just as we have recognized his call in the past and been invaded with his peace, again the gift of his presence should invade us upon making the right choice for us as Oblates, even if it is a difficult or repugnant one.

But before one can know what God is calling an individual or a group to today, all pertinent circumstances and data must be accounted for and examined. Nothing must be overlooked or rejected beforehand. We must take history seriously and answer questions posed by society for events are the existential word of God; they are the signs of the times. Any technique that helps weigh all the evidence is welcome as long as the driving force of finding God and his will is never out of sight.

All the time that this takes up must be invested. Time spent especially listening to one another is most valuable. The Holy Spirit will manifest himself through those who have been asking for his wisdom in prayer. The most striking new evidence will be found in this mutual listening.

Discernment is a process that takes time and requires the involvement and cooperation of everyone. Communication at all levels is required. Spiritual discernment takes for granted the good will of everyone. Humility and serenity, openness and honesty on everyone's part is required and presupposed because we are searching together in freedom and trust; all are indifferent to everything except God's will. Politiking and campaigning for a certain outcome is contradictory to the discernment process. It also presupposes the acceptance of the final option on everyone's part and even an enthusiastic promotion of this option as Oblates responding to a new situation in the Spirit of Christ and our Oblate spirit.

Spiritual discernment is an experiential process that prayerfully considers new experiences of God in present-day history in the light of the Gospel and previous experiences of God, especially the founding inspiration, and hear God calling us anew as he did in the past. Discernment is the process by which we examine in the light of our faith, love and hope the nature of the spiritual moods we experience to see if those movements take us to a better service of God and our brothers and sisters or mislead us from this goal. It is the process by which we continually recreate ourselves as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

A religious community that adopts a genuine discernment process in making important decisions will deepen its communion and commitment. Moved by the Spirit it will be following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus as did the apostles and so many evangelical laborers. An attitude of discernment is a basic Christian attitude and should be always functioning and dependant on new evidence, both interior and exterior,

which are God's exigences through new needs in his Church for the building of the Kingdom. To live as christians, therefore, means to live in communion with the Spirit of God; to be animated by the Spirit of Christ. Our "yes" to the Holy Spirit and his inspirations has to be renewed repeatedly as long as we are still in the desert of life and have not given our definitive "yes" to God which will be our pasch to his glorious presence.

PREREQUISITES FOR DISCERNMENT

- I** Spiritual Discernment is a vital continuous process, an attitude of the person, which enables him to ask the QUESTION
What should I do in order to respond to the WORD OF GOD in THIS SITUATION here and now.

Spiritual Identity	REVEALED	EXISTENTIAL	DECISION to be made
Vocation	Christ	Signs of times	All possible Situation information
Charism	Sacred Script.	Reality	Place
PRAYER	Living Tradition of Church	Soc.Pol.Econ. Cult.Relig.	Research Consult Persons Communication Time
(self-consciousness)	(consciousness of God)	(Historical consciousness)	(critical consciousness)

- II BASIC ATTITUDES:** Openness - Faith - Generosity - Obedience.
Life of authentic prayer - true Spiritual Freedom - dominant fundamental desire to do only what will unite me more to God - operational attitudes of Jesus Christ.

III PREREQUISITES FOR COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT:

1. Communion
2. Common Expression and sharing of the Communion
3. Common Commitment.

IV MOMENTS OF DISCERNMENT:

1. Direct Inspiration of the Holy Spirit
2. Felt Knowledge - based on the deep perceived feelings
3. Weight of reasons together with felt.knowledge

V VERIFICATION OF DISCERNMENT:

1. Fruits of the Spirit...deep peace... Joy
2. Results

- VI BASIC PRINCIPLE** - Community Discernment is the placing in common the results of the discernment of each individual. There can be no community discernment if each individual is not prayerfully discerning.

VII THE PRESUPPOSITIONS:

- 1) That all the possible evidence has been gathered
- 2) That there has been sufficient preliminary discussion to clarify the evidence.
- 3) That individually, each person participating in the deliberation has prayed in private to discern (in view of evidence) his reaction for or against the community decision.

SHEET C

THE PROCESS

(These are the steps to be followed
in the Process of Deliberation that
is used to come to a decision)

1. PRAYER: Begin the meeting with the Prayer for interior freedom - OR 4
2. Present the question to be decided clearly stated in the form of a hypothetical decision. E.G. "We will sell this property. Thus the answer can be YES or NO or alternative Y.
Give all the information necessary to decide.
3. Each one takes the time in prayer to think of all the reasons AGAINST the decision. Time - 1 hour.
4. Group Meeting. Each one will give the Reasons and Feelings AGAINST the Decision.
5. Private Prayer and Reflection - each one reflects, in prayer, over all the reasons presented AGAINST the Decision. Examine one's innermost feelings about each reason Against. See what is the source of the validity of the reason. Is it a real valid reason against the decision. 1 hour.
6. Private reflection - each one thinks of all the reasons IN FAVOR of the decision. 1 Hour.
7. Group meeting. Each one will give his reasons and feelings IN FAVOR of the Decision.
8. Repeat Steps 5 but now about reason IN FAVOR - 1 hour. Compare - reasons and feelings AGAINST and IN FAVOR of the Decision. Each makes his own decision now based on his discernment.
9. Group Meeting - each one expresses his decision FOR or AGAINST the Decision to be made or some other simple clear terms for his decision. It may happen that at the end of this decision unanimity is reached. If so go to Step 16. If not, proceed to Step 10.

- 2 -

10. Private reflective prayer. Examine the "Pros" and "Cons" with their respective reasons. Weigh again your own reasons. Be open to all the alternatives. Be open to change your own decision if you are so lead by your innermost feelings and new reasons.
11. Group meeting - each one expresses his decision for or Against. State any new reasons for either decision. If unanimity is not obtained proceed with Step 12.
12. Private Prayer - 1/2 hour
 - a period of community prayer - 1/2 hour
 - (Note if necessary - continue on another day - thus giving time for more prayer and reflection about the reasons)
13. Group meeting - Open Discussion
 - (Note - this is not a debate to convince each other it is a discussion to clarify reasons and/or consequences for either option)
 - Read all reasons aloud.
 - Anyone may speak for or against
 - Any reason may be refuted
 - BUT - there should be no repetition of reasons or refutation. The discussion will continue until there is nothing new to be said.
14. Private reflective Prayer - repeat Step 10 - 30 minutes
15. Group meeting - simple expression by each one of his decision.

If there is unanimity the decision has been reached.

(Note: By "unanimity" here is not meant that necessarily there were no votes against the result. It means that even those against what the greater majority voted in in favor of accept the result in peace and agree to support it as a community decision)

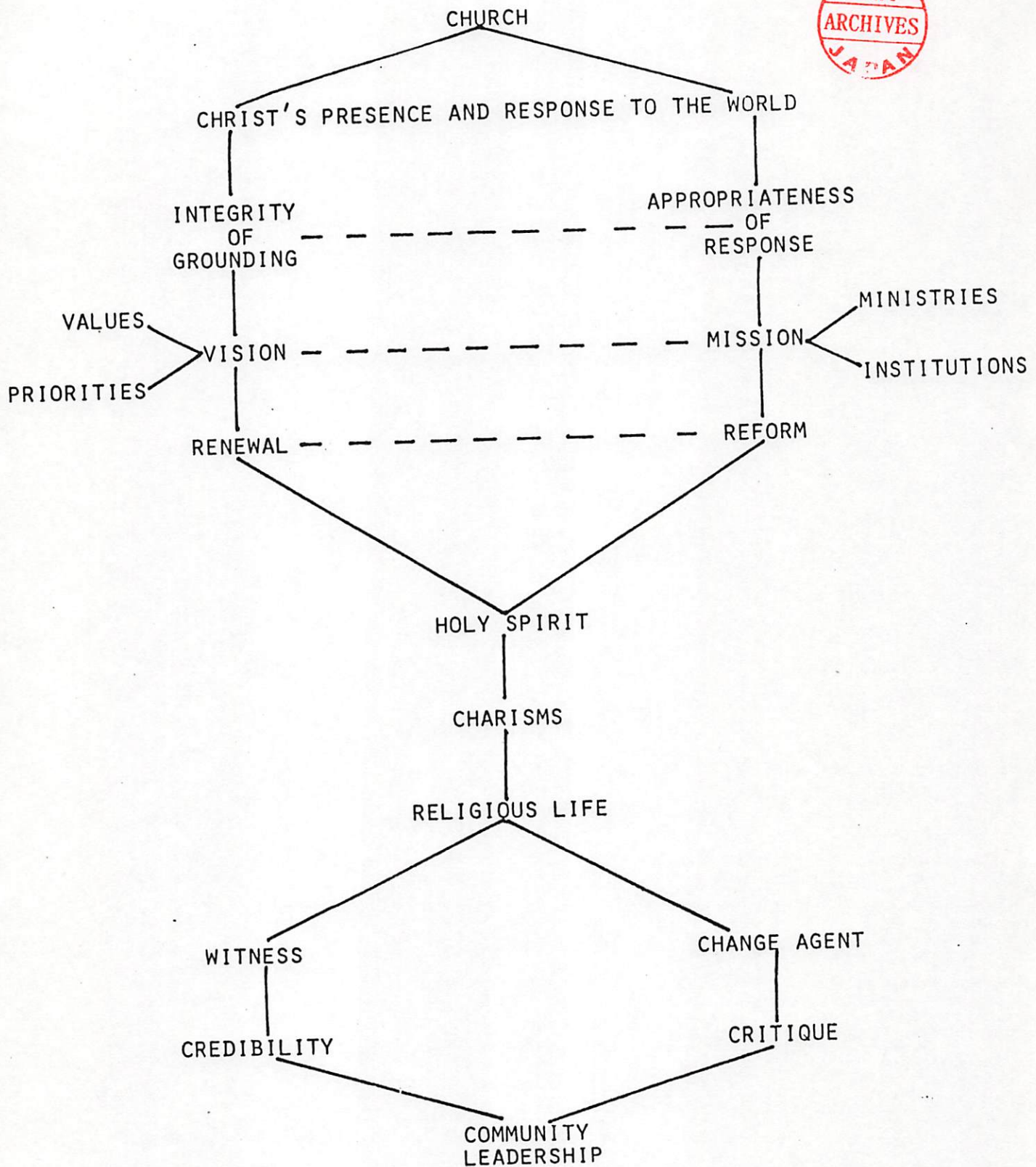
If there is no unanimity in the sense explained above, it means that the question is not ready to be decided by discernment.

If the decision is not urgent it can be delayed. If it is urgent it should be decided by a predetermined policy of decision-making: Majority vote, 2/3 majority, superior with or without council or even an "Adhoc" committee.

- 3 -

16. When the deliberation has resulted in a decision which is confirmed in the deep felt by the members and the Renewal Charity reigning in the group, it is offered to the Father in a prayer of Thanksgiving when there has been no decision the prayer of Thanksgiving for the meeting should be joined to a prayer for more enlightenment regarding the question.

DIALECTIC OF CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS LIFE



PROCESS OF A COMMUNITY REFLECTION



I) What it is

The Process of Community Reflection is based on the ideas found in 1 Corinthians, 12. For this reason, this type of reunion can become a life style, a normal way of always meeting. It is a process that seeks a unity of the people themselves, especially of people and groups that already form a group among themselves. Besides this, the Process of Community Reflection is a useful instrument for Community renewal.

II) Why use it

Nowadays, there is seen a change in the way of exercising authority. This change has been brought about by Vatican II. It is really a call to dialogue and corresponsibility. It is also an answer to the signs of the times. The Process of Reflection is a system to obtain shared responsibility. It focuses more on collegiality and subsidiarity, that is, the authority of the person and the community, and less of the superiority, that is, of the office or position. This process favors the integration of differences; it permits unity in diversity. Besides this, there can be seen in the differences of the individual members, a greater richness and source of power.

Through this process a mutual understanding and corporate consent for community options can be reached, since they are the result of the participation of all and of values that all consider important, with everything done in a climate of prayer, and personal and community reflection.

III) Personal requisites for participation in the process

- A) Personal presence in a high degree.
- B) Respect and deference for others in a high degree.
- C) Openness and willingness to be influenced.
- D) Willingness and capacity to listen.
- E) Acceptance of the fact that no one knows all the truth about any given subject.

III) cont:

- F) Be "Poor in Spirit" that is, not to enter into the process with an intransigent position or defending personal interests. In other words, to empty ones self and be open.
- G) Acceptance of a dynamic concept of the Church, of its Mission and of community, instead of a stagnant concept.
- H) The practice of christian virtues, especially of reverence, love, patience, obedience, simplicity and confidence.
- I) Acceptance of certain values that are strong, common and basic.

IV) Expected Results

- A) A shared outlook and acceptance of a common mission.
- B) Mutual support, while trying to accomplish the common mission.
- C) Decisions which represent the aspirations and ideas of all the members.
- D) Arrival at "informative" decisions (in the deepest philosophical sense) that is, taking into consideration the life experience of each member plus empirical data.
- E) A union in faith and love among its members with the result of a greater knowledge and understanding one with another.
- F) A growing willingness to call and be called to a greater faithfulness and a greater accountability.

V) How to use it

- A) At first, the group meets to have a community prayer stemming from the Word of God.
- B) Afterwards, there should be sufficient time for reflection about the topic discussed. This reflection takes as a starting point the values which are strong, basic and common to the group, that in some way have been identified and explained and taken from the actual experience of the members.

- C) A simple, open and sincere sharing, without being interrupted or questioned, although necessary explanations should be made for the correct interpretation of what is being said; it is the experience of each one.
- D) Community listening - to listen to what we are saying as a group, through each individual, that is, what is common between us.
- E) Create, clarify and examine options. Here every type of possible option is accepted so that the best possible selection is made for the next step. In this way there will be verified the existence of a consensus, or the need of a process of discernment both complete and in-dept.

NB: If it is necessary or useful, you may also use techniques such as "Process for Solving Problems" (P 8) or "Reunion to arrive at a Decision" (P 9) within this Process of Community Reflection.

- F) Make an option. Up to this point decision and dialogue are used. From here, the option and decision include the concrete action. It is recommended that the principle of collegiality be remembered and respected here.
- G) The option taken should be evaluated. Determine the criterion to be used for evaluation, as well as when it should be evaluated.

VI) When to use it

This process can be used by teams, councils, local and regional communities, provincial congresses, so as to listen to all in important decisions to be taken. It may also be used within a process of discernment.

RESUME OF STEPS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. prayer; | 4. community listening; |
| 2. reflection; | 5. create, clarify, examine options; |
| 3. simple sharing; | 6. option - decision; 7. evaluation. |

MY OBLATE EXPERIENCE



TIME: 45 minutes.

Instructions: Place yourself in the presence of God and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit. Recall an experience in your life as an Oblate, that stands out because of its Oblateness: That is recall some occasion in your life in the community or in your apostolate when you felt most oblate, an occasion, when you felt that you were really being and doing, what you are called to be and do as an oblate.

Perhaps at that moment, you did not pay attention to that oblateness, but now that you recall it, you see that that's the way it was. Place yourself again in that moment. What were the facts, what happened? Remember it well. Relive it. What were you really doing; not only the actions and words, but the deep religious response behind these actions and words.

What were your feelings? Which were the elements of the Oblate Charism which were more evident? Total consecration, following of Christ, evangelical counsels. Fraternal and apostolic community, evangelization, the most abandoned Mary?

NOTES

1. Your Feelings.
2. Values behind these Feelings.
3. Elements of the Charism.

REFLECTION ON MISSION IN THE OMI CONSTITUTIONS & RULES.



Instructions: I. Personal Reflections

Prayerfully study the section of the Constitutions on MISSION
(Part I, Chapter I, Articles I-IO & Rules I-IO)
Also study Constitution articles II, I2, 20, 37.

Note down the elements and/or qualities that should be present in
the MISSION OF AN OBLATE COMMUNITY.

II. Group Sharing. -

In the groups, each one reads his list.
Write down the different elements on newsprint.
Come to a consensus on the list for the whole group.

AN OPENING PRAYER



(for a congress, retreat, meeting, etc.)

Celebrant: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us unite our voices in song, praying the Lord to assist us.

Hymn: To the Holy Spirit

Reading I: Phillipians 1, 3-11

I thank my God whenever I think of you, and everytime I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes. It is only natural that I should feel like this towards you all, since you have shared the privileges which have been mine: both my chains and my work defending and establishing the gospel. You have a permanent place in my heart, and God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognize what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, you have called us to participate in the mission of your son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. This call unites us as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

We are gathered together in apostolic communities completely consecrated to you as we have expressed through our profession of vows. We want to work with your son and to imitate his example; we want to commit ourselves primarily in the task of evangelizing the poor.

Father, you have called us together here, so that as brothers we can spend this time in prayer, in reflection, in sharing and listening in order to discern and make decisions regarding our life and mission. Send us your Spirit so that we may be open to hear any call which you may give us. Father, help each of us, examine his detachment and interior freedom.

Grant us unity Lord, as brothers, as Oblates, as a province.

We need to be guided by your light. We are now going to light this candle as a reminder of your presence among us during (*), in which we have come together in your name. And while we receive your light, we ask you to burn away any obstacles to freedom that may exist within us and among us.

(*) here mention the occasion: "this retreat;" "this congress;"
"this meeting."

(In each small group, or individually, a candle is lit from the Paschal Candle. One member of each group, or every member makes a petition for light, a cure, or a grace which he wishes to receive from the meeting).

PRAYERS OF PETITION - (Spontaneous Prayers for Freedom or for the hoped-for outcomes of the meeting.)

SUGGESTED PETITIONS

1. Lord, help each one of us and all of us together during this week (day) as we become aware in what way we are not totally free, radically open to you, Lord, truly poor of spirit.
2. Show us, Lord, the roots of our lack of freedom. Is it my selfishness, self-centeredness, fear, prejudice? Do I have fixed ideas, opinions, some ideology, prejudices that I refuse to change or even to examine? Help us to see with clarity and to be healed.
3. Free us, Lord, so that we may be truly freed. Open our hearts and minds so that we may be entirely open to any desire of yours.
4. Teach us, Lord, enlighten us about our fears and doubts. To whom do I refuse to listen? Of whom am I afraid? Who fears me? Whom do I threaten? Who threatens me? Send me your spirit, Lord, so that he may cast out all fear.
5. Mary, our Mother, always open to the spirit, totally consecrated to the person and to the mission of the Saviour, open our hearts during this week (day). You received Christ to share him with the whole world; help us this week (day) to seek together his will, to extend his pardon, to ask him for the strength to serve him better.
6. Spirit of God, grant us true detachment. Heal our lack of freedom. Give us light and strength to choose only what will help the service of God. During these days, faced with various options, allow us to be motivated only by that love which "comes from above," the love of God.

Hymn:

Reading of the Gospel: Joh 17: 17-23

Hymn of Thanksgiving

PRAYER CEREMONY ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Hymn

Reading: 1 Cor. 12: 4-27



There are different gifts but the same spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the power to express knowledge. Through the Spirit one receives faith; by the same Spirit another is given the gift of healing and still another miraculous powers. Prophecy is given to one; to another power to distinguish one spirit from another. One receives the gift of tongues, another that of interpreting the tongues. But it is one and the same Spirit who produces all these gifts, distributing them to each as he wills.

The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body; and so it is with Christ. It was in one Spirit that all of us, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, were baptized into one body. All of us have been given to drink of the one Spirit. Now the body is not one member, it is many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," would it then no longer belong to the body? If the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body? If the body were all eye, what would happen to our hearing? If it were all ear, what would happen to our smelling? As it is, God has set each member of the body in the place he wanted it to be. If all the members were alike, where would the body be? There are, indeed, many different members, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," any more than the head can say to the feet, "I do not need you." Even those members of the body which seem less important are in fact indispensable. We honor the members we consider less honorable by clothing them with greater care, thus bestowing on the less presentable propriety which the more presentable already have. God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to the lowly members, that there may be no dissension in the body, but that all the members may be concerned for one another. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members share its joy.

You then are the body of Christ. Every one of you is a member of it.

Silence:

Brief Reflection

- a sharing of the Biblical word, have some spontaneous prayer drawn from your reflection. (Cf. Prayer 6)

Psalm 133 (132): Fraternal Life
David's Song of the Conquest.

All:

How good and how pleasant it is,
when brothers live in unity.
It is like precious oil upon the head,
running down upon the beard,
running down upon Aaron's beard,
upon the collar of his robes.
It is like the dew of Hermon which falls
on the heights of Zion.
For there the Lord gives his blessing, life forever.

Leader: Reading of Constitution 37

We fulfill our mission in and through the community to which we belong. Our communities, therefore, are apostolic in character.

The Founder left us a legacy: "Among yourselves practice charity, charity, charity - and, outside, zeal for the salvation of souls." In fidelity to that testament, each member's zeal is sustained by the bonds of fraternal charity.

By growing in unity of heart and mind, we bear witness before the world that Jesus lives in our midst and unites us in order to send us out to proclaim God's reign.

HYMN: The Prayer of Saint Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to
be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved as to love; for it is in
giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are
pardoned and it is in dying that we are born to eternal
life.

Criteria as presented by the Groups from Congress (Kochi 1983)

GROUP #1

1. All works should be undertaken with the awareness of witnessing and, at least, some hope that proclamation by word may, someday, be possible.
2. Simplicity of life-style.
3. Our Christian communities should be characterized by the highest possible level of commitment, apostolicity, and, all of the other elements implied in the term 'Christian Community' - prophetic communities for the Church in Japan.
4. Every Oblate in Japan should cultivate a deep relation with the Oblate community where his apostolate is heard, tested, and supported.
5. A genuine sensitivity to the troubles of people in need should characterize our service.



GROUP #2

1. Within a given apostolate to seek out and respond to those who need it most.
2. Recognize the lay people as co-workers.
3. Willingness to learn from people, and understand culture.
4. Communal prayer is most important for gaining wisdom and strength of Our Lord.
5. That all works in their variety be a sign of unity.
6. May Mary's openness to the Spirit be a sign to us in all of our endeavors.
7. As prophets in the new world, we stand up against injustice.

GROUP #3

1. That the work be geared to the most abandoned.
2. That the work meet the urgent needs of the Japanese Church and society.
3. That the work foster Kingdom values, especially justice.
4. That the work be prophetic.
5. That the work have as its ultimate goal the possibility of forming Christian Communities.
6. That the work be subject to discernment on local, district, or provincial level . . .

Kochi 1983



TOKYO'S PROPOSED LIST OF CRITERIA:

4. Our work will be subject to discernment on the local, district, or provincial level.
5. Within our apostolates, we will seek out and gear our work to the most abandoned.
6. We will recognize lay people as co-workers.
7. We will always cultivate an open and respectful attitude toward the Japanese and their culture.
8. Our communities will value communal prayer.
10. As prophets, we will stand up against injustice and will work to foster Kingdom Values in order to transform society.

CRITERIA

1. We will undertake all works with the awareness of witnessing to Christ's presence in his people and with the hope that proclamation of the Word may be possible in the future. We will keep in mind the urgent needs of the Japanese Church and society and work towards forming Christian communities as our ultimate goal. (Suggestion: that we use active voice, rather than passive in our formulation.) I also included Nos. 11 and 12 in No. 1.
2. "That we will guard against temptation...." this is not clear at all to me.
.... "That we will not, by our lifestyles, incite envy...."
I don't think this should be included.
3. How about being "leaven" in the society where we live, rather than "prophetic" whose meaning is always elusive.
4. (Formulation is good enough)
5. The expression "troubled people" is too vague, does it mean the mentally disturbed?
The word "most abandoned" can be mentioned in No. 1 and should be clearly defined, the way we defined the expression during our Congress, namely, the "most abandoned" in Japan are those who are still deprived of the message of Christ.
6. The lay people are our co-workers in the Proclamation of the Word and the Building of the Kingdom. We will work with them in the spirit of reciprocity; sharing with them our views and learning from them in their roles in the Church.
7. (Formulation, okay)
8. (Formulation, okay)
9. (Formulation, okay)
10. Standing up against injustice, while a gospel value, was certainly not the main preoccupation during the Congress.

10. There should be a better way of expressing this item.

We will keep in mind that we are called to be prophets in the society where we live; called forth to transform it and to stand up against issues of injustice that hinder the building of the Kingdom.

Proposed list of Criteria:

1. That the ministry be prayerfully discerned on a personal, district and provincial level.
2. That our ministries fulfill an urgent need of the Church and the Kingdom of God.
3. That the ministry witness to and/or proclaim Jesus Christ and His Kingdom to the most abandoned.
4. To assure relevant witness that the men be given opportunity for on-going formation.
5. That the ministry does not deprive the Oblate involved in it of the care, concern and companionship of his Oblate Community, (the base and support of our apostolic mission.)

(For Information only)

- The following were matters brought to the meeting but because of time were not formulated into criteria or thoroughly discussed or decided upon. They are included here merely as information.
- a. We will find our service among the alienated, socially, economically, religiously or psychologically.
 - b. Our communities will determine times for communal prayer.
 - c. To keep before our mind our complete dependence on Christ-poor in spirit- each one will avoid those things which destroy that dependence.
 - d. Our primary work in Japan is parish work; and other works are secondary.
 - e. Life style criteria - We must intend to live in an Oblate house and make community life; if one lives in the same area, even if he does special apostolate, except special cases.
 - f. We are in Japan to form Christian Communities, all our works in some way contribute to that goal.

1. That we only take undeveloped missions or works.
2. That we return our established parishes to the Bishops.
3. That we limit our ministries to the Diocese of Takamatsu.
4. That we put new efforts as a Province into the evangelization of Tokushima and Kochi Prefectures.
5. That we make the renewal of our apostolic religious communities a top priority.
6. That our life style be geared to the lower middle class Japanese way of living.
7. That our surpluses be used to help the poor of Japan or other countries.
8. That we initiate an all out effort through prayer and promotion at building a Japanese Oblate Community.



Criteria for evaluating our ministries and for establishing priorities in the light of our Vision- Mission Statement.

1. That the ministry witness to and/or proclaim Jesus Christ and His Kingdom to the most abandoned.
2. That the ministry fulfill an urgent need of the Church and the Kingdom of God.
3. That the ministry does not deprive the Oblate involved in it of an enriching participation in his Oblate community. (the base and support of our apostolic mission)
4. That the ministry be prayerfully discerned on a personal, district and provincial level to be what the Spirit is calling us to here and now. (cf. Process of Community Discernment)
5. That the ministry afford the man involved ample opportunity for on-going formation.
6. That the ministry cultivates an open and respectful attitude toward the Japanese and their culture.
7. That in accepting new ministries the diocese of Takamatsu be given preference.
8. That the ministry recognize lay people as co-workers.
9. That the ministry have as it's ultimate aim the forming of Christian Communities to work for the building of the Kingdom.
10. That the ministry be approached with a simplicity of life style that gives witness to our Kingdom Values.
11. That ministries fostering the Kingdom Values of justice and peace be given preference.

Proposed Working-List of Criteria



1. All works should be undertaken with the awareness of witnessing, and, at least, some hope that proclamation by word may, someday, be possible, ie that all our work have as its ultimate goal the possibility of forming Christian Communities.
2. That our life-style contest the world's false absolutes of money, power, and exploitation :
 - that we live the poverty and availability of Jesus as radically as possible (Lk. 9: 57-62)
 - That we will guard against the temptation to spread more and more of our resources on ourselves and our institutions. (Orange pamphlet on Community, pages 12-13)
 - That we will not, by our life-styles, excite envy and jealousy. (Orange pamphlet on Community, pages 12-13)
 - That our goods will be properly used along the lines of our missionary thrust. (Orange pamphlet on Community, page 19).
3. Our Christian communities should be characterized by the highest possible level of commitment, apostolicity, and, of all the other elements implied in the term Christian Community - prophetic communities for the Church in Japan. (Perhaps further explicitation of 'prophetic communities is needed).
4. Every Oblate in Japan should cultivate a deep relation with the Oblate Community where his apostolate is heard, tested, and supported and his work be subject to discernment on the local, district, or provincial level.
5. In our communities, we will attend to the needs of troubled people and we will gear our work to the most abandoned.
6. We will recognize lay people as co-workers.
7. We will always cultivate an open and respectful attitude toward the people among whom we live, as well as toward the values imbedded in their culture.
8. Our communities will determine the time for communal prayer, whereby the community will turn itself 'collectively' towards the Lord to seek his guidance, sing His praises, implore His forgiveness, and to ask for the strength to continue in His service.
9. The works of the Province, in their variety, should be a sign of unity. We believe with Paul that we are never alone - that we are always of a team (Col. 14: 10-14) continuing the mission of the 'servant' Christ by responding to the needs of people.
- 10 As prophets in the new world, we will stand up against injustice and work to foster Kingdom values, especially justice.
- 11 Our work should meet the urgent needs of the Japanese Church and society.
- 12 That we be prophetic in order to transform society.

EVALUATION OF DISCERNMENT CONGRESS

Positive points of this meeting:



- Jim's rich experience in directing groups.
- The interplay between work reflection and prayer.
- Producing a Vision-Mission Statement proves that we have a lot of things in common.
- Felt unity of purpose strengthened.
- Opportunity to listen to my Oblate brothers in a way that was not offered up to now.
- A reborn hope in our Vice Province.
- Met province's members on a deep level
- experienced community in action, prayer, work, recreation.
- Experienced a taste of discernment.
- Made me realize I have been too protective of my turf.
- A chance to be together.
- Saw a growth in attitude toward Japanese culture- not just imitating but tasting - respect.
- An occasion to be open to the Spirit as He was talking to me through my brothers.
- house and hospitality were a wonderful advance over using hotels or retreat houses.
- The process which led to our Vision-Mission Statement & criteria, namely, individual as well as group prayer and reflection, and discussion helped me better to understand myself and other members of my group.
- having a non-member of our group - a third party - was a great boon (enlightening/ enhancing of vision.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Follow up with a meeting on criteria
- evaluation of prayer, community (dynamics of)
- Methodology: continue to seek help from Jim as to best way to plan things here.
- Need outside facilitator
- need more plenary sessions
- Time of Congress - March 1984
- Time of congress: will bitch but will come.
- Time of Congress- when all can come.
- Place: Kochi good
Kochi, utilize the facilities we have
Kochi, but with some improvements (Will do as time and finances permit)
- make a definite schedule
- some time for physical relaxation
- when we set up criteria take into account criteria we formulated in Naruto 1968 & Mefu 1971.
- seek unity not uniformity
- open each session with a prayer
- would prefer a general meeting of this kind once a year.

Xavier

Sermon / End of Koeln Meeting
1983



My brother Oblates of Japan,

The first thing which struck me when I visited your province many years ago and which continues to strike me in each of my subsequent visits, is the unambiguous COMMITMENT OF EACH MAN to Japan, to the reality of life and culture in the country. Perhaps the culture with its obvious differences from the West, demands this. The narrowing of your options usually sharpens your perception and your commitment in any situation. So it seems to be that an expatriate priest either gets into or out of Japan quickly enough. Your choice has clearly been to get in. In the best Paulian sense, you have each become "all things to all men" in this country. This is a great grace.

The good you have accomplished - like so much good - cannot be measured accurately, but three realities must surely be looked at:

- a. Your lives of prayer cannot but have had their lasting effects known only to God. No prayer is ever unheard and surely your missionary prayer backed by your missionary lives have been very effective. "How much more will not your Father give....you ask"(Lk. III).
- b. The parish communities you have established and which you sustain, with their well conducted liturgies, their scripturally instructed people and their invitation classes to the pagans are evidence of the real good continually being accomplished by God's grace. (Mt 18.20) "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I..."
- c. Your special works with the little children meeting God for the first time, with the students seeking him in later years, with prisoners and the physically and emotionally handicapped, ~~and~~ with the 'outcasts', have a goodness that is not always obvious but it is surely there. To these people you "have come that they may have life and have it to the full". (Jn 10.10)

You come from VARIED BACKGROUNDS and for this very reason, your presence together with a shared vision and mutual acceptance - however imperfect these may be - is a miracle. It can be sustained and continue to grow as you grow in faith and love, in "a faith that makes its presence felt through love" (Ga 5.6)

The level of your camaraderie is high; you clearly enjoy one another's company when you come together. Nor is the level of your communion shallow, but it surely has more growing to do.... "that they may be one as we are one" (Jn 17.22)

As evidenced by the presence, partial presence and absence of men at this Congress, a few Oblates in your province have marginalized themselves in varying degrees. Some of these appear to be moving back inwards and maybe some are moving in the other direction.

Continue to invite all to full participation but do not allow those who choose to be on the margin, limit the level of your human and faith communion.

Your STATEMENT enshrines all this. Writing things can be waste of time in this age of what is called the 'paper-war', but even apart from the cooperative effort in putting your statement and criteria together and apart from its value in being able to make you accountable to one another in the future, it carries and expresses shared values.

Shared values are more important today when individualism, isolationism, maverick and even manic behaviour are increasing in our society and ~~even~~ in the church. From all of these come disunity and eventual disintegration which are not notably christian experiences.

Your statement of shared values, calls, challenges and strengthens you for a new start; it is thus a significant achievement, a great grace. You are "united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind" (Ph.2.2)

THE FUTURE.

It is now a classic catholic joke to say that we are in the age of 'salvation by seminar' and that priests will spend their purgatory at congresses.

But in these times of rapid change, let us recall that rapid renewal is likewise called for. Personal survival today means continuous self-renewal. And longtime-living for any group calls for lasting and deep adaptation to its environment. For us Christians, this environment is God's living Word to which we must listen and respond. Thus, the value# of coming together in prayer and reflective sharing...."Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I...." (Mt 18.20)

Congresses like this one can be lifegiving events or last minute death-rattles, depending on what we do with their findings.

Listening to you and observing your life as Oblates in Japan, I think I see this ~~###~~ Congress as a lifegiving event in so far as you have decided to continue growing as^a/faith-sharing supportive community## which will be a sign stimulating the local church and attracting young Japanese men to join you on your journey.

Desmond O'Donnell omi.

LIST OF VALUES

MOST ABANDONED

INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNAL COMMITMENT

INTERDEPENDENCY AMONG OMI & PEOPLE



JUSTICE & PEACE

LAY PARTICIPATION

PROPHECY

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

DEVOTION TO MARY

CHRIST IMITATION

WITH, CALLED BY, SENT, IN & THRU

OMI COMMUNITY

WITNESS

INCULTURATION

CO-RESPONSIBILITY & COLLEGIABILITY

CHARITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

CHALLENGE

POSITIVE POVERTY

OPENNESS

TOTAL OBLATION

OPENNESS TO THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

LIBERATION

BROTHERHOOD

AVAILABILITY

HUMILITY

TRUST

ECUMENISM

DISCERNMENT

LOYALTY TO CHURCH

POOR

ZEAL

RESPONDING TO URGENT NEEDS

WAKEN & REAWAKEN FAITH

COLLABORATION

FOLLOW-UP PHASE



1983



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25 October 1983



Dear

I'd like once again to thank you for coming to our meeting on Discernment.

John, Jack and I met with Jim on October 21 and 22. Among the many topics we discussed was, where should the Province move to - What is the next best step after the Congress? We felt that we could not let all the excellent work that you have done be lost and therefore have come up with two things:

1. A pamphlet on the elements of our Statement, such as the one produced in Mexico.

and

2. A congress in the spring (march 1984) on Criteria.

We will have suggestions on these two topics in your hands by November 15.

As for the dates of the Congress, could you please let me know what dates would be best? If you can, please let me know by the end of this month.

In Jesus and Mary,

Angelo Siani

Angelo Siani, O.M.I.

P.S. Enclosed is a summary of the "Evaluation of Discernment Congress.

Tokushima-ken
December 5th, 1983



Reflection on "The proposed working list of
criteria."

Monday, the regular retreat day was the occasion for the Tokushima reflection. The day was divided into two sessions. The morning one began at 9:45 with midday prayer.

From 10-11AM. there ensued a rereading of the list and a general discussion on just what the term "criteria" implies. This hour proved to be very basic but nothing concrete in terms of rewording or accepting criteria was accomplished.

From 2:00P.M.* 3:45 P.M.

The general discussion continued. Here most agreed that No.1 on the list was too general and obvious in tone to be a viable criteria. No attempt was made to reword it into something more acceptable.

2. After much common reflection it was decided that 'criteria #2' might better be worded as follows:

"So that our Oblate communities witness to Jesus Christ we show a simplicity of life style by being accountable in financial matters on the personal, local and provincial levels.

#3. After a general discussion we felt #3 should read along the following lines:

In order to insure that the "christian communities" entrusted to the Oblates of Japan might be more 'prophetic', and more in line with the call of Vatican II we will:

- 1.) -do all we can to foster and promote the various 'ministries' within the church both on the parish and diocesan levels. (Deaconite, lector, catechist etc.)
- 2.) -welcome and seek out 'co-operators' to work with us on this mission either on a temporary or permanent basis.

It was then proposed that we move on to #8 on the list.

3. After much discussion we came to the conclusion that this criteria should read as follows;

That there be accountability for our apostolic activities to community (local and provincial) on a regular and concrete basis.

We then realised that we had no time left to consider the remaining criteria on the list. Fr. Gerard Stevens then asked that the following two proposals be considered as criteria:

- 1.) That the Oblates of Japan accept no new work outside of Shikoku.
- 2.) That each Oblate 'district' have a monthly retreat day.

The meeting was closed with a prayer.



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20 December 1983



Dear Fellow Oblates:

At this time of special Joy and Hope, John K. Mahoney, Jack Deely and I send our Christmas greetings to you and assure you of a special remembrance in our prayers during the entire Christmas Season. May you all rejoice in Emmanuel, "God with us", and may you receive all the graces you need to fulfill your Mission. Merry Christmas to you all and a very Happy New Year.

I am very happy to relate that on December 13, 1983, Fr. General and the General Council approved the Japanese translation of the CC. and RR. Many thanks to Ray and his collaborators for their efforts and the excellent results. Father General wrote, "Please God it will prove to be a source of life for many generations of Japanese Oblates in the years to come!"

Please find enclosed in this letter, the work done on criteria in the districts. (The work done in Tokushima will be sent to you by Fran Hahn). The next task we ask of you is that you study: 1) the Vision/Mission Statement and
2) the criteria suggested by the different districts and to find the common elements and word them in the form of criteria.

So that our work will be unified, please stick to "criteria" as defined by Fr. Jim Sullivan.

"Criteria = a norm on which a judgement can be made.
Criteria for mission = an area of concern - a matter for
serious consideration by the group."

Your reformulated criteria should be completed and sent to
the provincial council by January 15, 1984.

+

As regards the second project, ie "A Manuel on the Elements
of the Vision/Mission Statement", we realize you all have busy
schedules and you might need more time, so we ask that your
work on the Manuel be completed and sent to the council by
February 29, 1984.

On January 3 & 4, 1984, the provincial council will be
meeting in Naruto. The main business is financial requests
and the budget for 1984. However, if you have any other
matters you would like to present to the council, please refer
it to me, John Mahoney or Jack Deely.

In Jesus and Mary Immaculate,

Ange Siani, O.M.I.

John K. Mahoney, O.M.I.

John Deely, O.M.I.

I will be spending Dec. 23 28 in the Fukuoka Area.

Ange Siani

Sheet A



Questions about the reception of the Constitutions and Rules. Please answer the following and send your reply to Rome by February 17, 1984. The reports will be printed and distributed to all at the Intercapitular meeting. In answering these questions, please take into consideration your Province's delegation(s) and mission(s). Thank you.

1. When were the new Constitutions and Rules received by the members of your Province and Provincial Delegation(s)?
2. What steps have been taken to present the text, to make it known, to "interiorize" it? Please bring to the April meeting any material you have used.
3. What would you say has been the general response of the Oblates of your Province to the text?
4. What further help would you like from the General Administration or from others in order to make the new text a dominant influence in the life and mission of your Province?

Sheet B

Questions about Oblate mission. In reflecting on these questions and in the oral regional report at the Intercapital Session, please take into account the delegation(s) and the mission(s) of your Province, as well as the Province itself. No written report need be sent to Rome.

You are invited to reflect on the following points:

1. The dominant values and the major trends in the society in which your Province works. You might want to check your personal reflections with lay people and develop a response which is more than impressionistic or intuitive.
 2. The situation of the Church in this society.
 3. The poor in this society: as a Province, how do you perceive their needs ?
 4. The work of the Oblates: to what extent would you judge that the commitments of your Province are an evangelizing response to the needs of the poor ?
-