



OMI INFORMATION

JAPAN

Provincial Newsletter of the OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
Vice Province of Japan

SPRING 1998



H A P P Y E A S T E R



NEWS

JOLO, PHILIPPINES

On February 17, the Installation Ceremony for Bishop Angelito Lampon, OMI was held at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral in Jolo. The new Bishop was greeted by a church filled with the faithful, 15 Bishops and 80 priests. The beautiful Liturgy and Filipino hymns which filled the church was a real sign of the strong faith of the people in a land where a scant 3000 Catholics try to exist in peace among 50,000 Muslims.

Congratulation to Bishop Lampon from all in the Japanese Vice Province.

ASSIGNMENTS

Jaime del Rosario, OMI is assigned to The House of Studies in Nagoya for a period of one year. He has also been asked to help in the Zendana Parish.

Raymond Bourgoïn, OMI is assigned to the Provincial Office in Kochi.

Angelo Siani, OMI is assigned to the mission in Naruto as Pastor and Principal of the Kindergarten.

John K. Mahoney, OMI is assigned to the mission in Naruto where he will be engaged in a reduced ministry.

MISSION EXPERIENCE

This year two Filipino Scholastics, Herberto C. Villas and Howard P. Tatel, will be joining our Formation Community in Nagoya.

Herberto and Howard will study Japanese before having an indepth experience of mission in Japan.

A warm welcome Herberto and Howard from all your Oblate brothers in Japan.

SPRING MEETING 1998

The Spring Meeting March 23 AM to 25 noon, will be conducted by Fr. Chris O'LEARY and Alfons KEUTER, General Treasurer.

Congratulations
to
The Most Reverend Francis George, O. M. I.
Archbishop of Chicago
Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church

May God grant you holiness, wisdom and
strength to carry out your vocation.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate
of
Japan and Korea.

Dear Brother Oblates,

In a few months, I will be ending my ministry as Provincial. My deepest feeling is one of thanks, thanks for the honor of knowing and serving you and thanks for the opportunity of participating in the Oblate World on an international level. I felt both privileged and humbled by my experience as a Visitor in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. It afforded me the opportunity to know and to hear the ideas and feelings of so many Oblates on a deep and intimate level.

I am grateful for the good that has happened in the Province and thank you for the mutual support in difficult times. I have learned that this ministry of leadership is really one of love. I quote from a letter of Fr. Barry Wood, OMI, Provincial of Natal Province South Africa. What he writes captures better what I wish to say, "Finally it is a matter of love. If I have one piece of advice, I'd simply pray for the grace to love your brothers. The gift God gives does not make problems go away, but it does usher us into the presence of God's love. We stand with our Lord, surveying the world of our community: the fervent and the weak, the quick and the shy, the boastful and the withdrawn, the leader and the follower - and God invites us to cherish, not what should be but what is. I believe that this is the real grace of office, the gift to become, with all its messiness and risk, a more loving person."

I also thank the Provincial Council and the Treasurer for their help and support over the past six years.

Fraternally in Jesus Christ & Mary Immaculate,

Angelo Siani

Angelo Siani, OMI
Provincial

CHURCH REMITS EXCOMMUNICATION OF FR. TISSA BALASURIYA

VATICAN CITY, JAN 17, 1998 (VIS) - The Holy See Press Office announced today that, "on January 15, 1998, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in the presence of Archbishop Nicholas Marcus Fernando, the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Osvaldo Padilla and Fr. Marcello Zago, superior general of the O.M.I. (Oblates of Mary Immaculate), the act of reconciliation with the Catholic Church by Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, O.M.I., took place."

Also made public was the "Decree of Reconciliation" from the archbishop of Colombo. Further relative documentation will be published on January 22 in "The Messenger," the archdiocesan publication.

Following is the entire text of that decree, published in English:

"I, Nicholas Marcus Fernando, archbishop of Colombo, in the presence of His Excellency, Most Rev. Osvaldo Padilla, Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka, and Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka, today, January 15, 1998 in the Chapel of my residence, received the Profession of Faith from Father Tissa Balasuriya, O.M.I. He used the profession of faith authored by Pope Paul VI in place of the formula prepared for him by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, asserting that both express the same faith of the Church.

"At the same ceremony, Fr. Balasuriya presented me with a Statement of Reconciliation, dated and signed by him. This statement is to be published in the national Catholic newspaper. In this statement he regrets the harm caused by his book, 'Mary and Human Liberation', and by the subsequent events. He also expressed his Catholic faith and recognized the authority of the Magisterium exercised at both the local and universal levels in regard to his writings.

"Concerning the future, Fr. Balasuriya agrees to submit his writing regarding faith and morals to the imprimatur of both the diocesan and religious ordinaries. He also promises to abstain from any declaration that is in contradiction to this reconciliation.

"Since all the conditions indicated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for the reconciliation are now implemented, and with the authorization of the said Congregation, I hereby declare the remission of the excommunication which Fr. Tissa Balasuriya incurred according to the Notification of the same Congregation issued in Rome on January 2, 1997.

"In view of this renewed communion with the Church we rejoice in the Lord and with our brother Tissa Balasuriya, we look forward to a fruitful ministry in the service of the people of God."

OP/RECONCILIATION BALASURIYA/SRI LANKA VIS 980119 (420)

From: Wency Laguidao

よろしくお願ひします

Coming home from Tokyo last February 10 after a long and tedious meeting with the bishops' commission where I sit as a member, I found the message from Fr. Daniel Corijn waiting for me on my answering machine informing me that the General Council which was in session has appointed me the next Provincial of the Vice Province of Japan. The announcement did not come as a complete surprise since Fr. Corijn was here for consultations not too long ago but still there was fear and anxiety that came with it. I immediately called up Ange to break the news and he asked me "How do you feel about it?" and all I could answer was "I don't know." I could only find solace in God's word to Jeremiah when he tried to run away from God's call: "Do not be afraid... for I am with you!" With the General Chapter in the offing and all the preparations going on to usher the third millenium and the Jubilee Year, we can look forward to a busy future ahead of us. This is the time when the casual greeting, よろしくお願ひします takes on a special meaning. With humility, I stand as a younger brother to many of you and an elder brother to the rest asking for your full support and cooperation in continuing all the good things that have been started in the Vice Province and keep searching how we can be of best service to the local Church. Let us move on in the Light of the Lord as religious missionaries called to serve the poor.

And More Meetings...

I should be on my way home from Manila and Colombo when this issue of the newsletter comes out. I am attending the bi-annual Filipino Chaplains' meeting in Manila, March 1-7 (the last one was held in Rome). I have been asked to be a panelist during the discussion on Intermarriages and Family Reunification. Migration has taken its toll on the Filipino Family. Broken homes, single parenting, family separation, etc. are realities that migration has brought along and have driven many migrants and their families to sheer desperation. Philippines is a nation which has an estimated 4M migrant workers working abroad. If the average Filipino family is composed of 5 members then there are about 20M Filipinos affected by migration. Remittances amount to some-US\$7B a year.

Two other Oblates are attending this meeting: Giovanni Zevola who has been ministering to Filipino workers in Korea and Joe Arong who has been appointed liaison between Philippine and U.S. bishops in matters concerning Filipino immigrants in the U.S. He is based in San Francisco. This meeting is sponsored by the bishops' conference of the Philippines to bring together as many chaplains as possible and share experiences and pastoral approaches. It is an interesting meeting where we hear about the condition of Filipino migrant workers all over the world. During the last meeting, a sister told her story about Filipina maids who work taking care of rich people's villas on the French Riviera. One maid told the sister: "Come and visit me. I have 26 empty rooms for you and my boss is away 6 months a year!" In most parts of the Middle East, chaplains have to go incognito and religious gatherings are forbidden, while in other oil-rich states, the government even built churches for christians. From Manila, I am going to Colombo, Sri Lanka to attend the Asia-Oceania Provincials/Superiors meeting (as an observer) with Ange.

Some Cyber News

Wait, don't go away! Even if you are not plugged in to the Internet, this is something for you. Did you know that there are Oblate websites produced by Oblates around the world where you and your friends and relatives back home can visit or surf? When you write to your friends or relatives (especially if you know that they are in the Internet) why don't you give them popular Oblate websites? Or, you can give these websites to young people who might be interested in joining the Oblates. The websites will help you remember (or save you the embarassment of not knowing) facts and figures about the Oblates. Here's a couple of them:

<http://www.oblates.com>

(This site has a nice colored picture of the Founder, a letter from the General, general information about the Oblates and information according to 6 Oblate regions.)

<http://www.omiobcom.com>

(This website started only this month and still under construction for the rest of the year. This is a product of the meeting in San Antonio last year. Gives background on the congregation, posts Gen Administration publications and even has a "chat room." CLICK IT!)

CELEBRATING CHRIST'S FAITHFUL LOVE

by Fr. Jimmy del Rosario, OMI

I remember a line from a popular song in the Philippines: "We are the reason that He gave His life." Indeed, Christ's offer of Himself to us is what our Lenten and Easter celebrations are all about.

I find it timely that this year of the Holy Spirit is also our Golden Jubilee Year of Oblate presence in the Vice-Province. Pages of history can be written of the toils and pains the Oblates have gone through until today. Lest we forget, it was the Holy Spirit who kept us on.

It was the same Spirit who strengthened the faith of St. Francis Xavier four-hundred and forty-nine years ago to introduce Christ to the Japanese people. The Holy Spirit also enabled the twenty-six martyrs to remain in their faith in Christ until their gruesome crucifixion, four-hundred and one years ago. Korea's martyrs Andrew Kim and companions were also filled by the Holy Spirit, offering their lives until the end.

The same zeal continues to be poured on us by the Holy Spirit. Like Christ, we are challenged to fulfill the Father's will. He remained faithful to His mission for us. Eventhough we falter in faith and zeal at certain times, Christ's faithful love remains in us.

We cannot measure the success of the mission in any quantifiable way. Christ's faithful love is simply experienced by the people we are with. We celebrate not our human achievements. Rather, we celebrate Christ's faithful love ever present in humanity, through us Oblates or in spite of us.

Let us celebrate Christ's faithful love.

Hope this finds you all well. I came to Kochi for our album committee meeting which was the day after Christmas. I had arrived prior to that to finish some final preparations for the meeting. Secondly, Jude PEIRISPULLE had asked me to fill in for him, especially as regards the liturgical functions at Nakajimacho till March 22, as Nobuhiko YAGI's partner in the parish.

Once I was here about 3 weeks and realized I had so much room in order to do my work as provincial treasurer and other things I have to do, and on occasion help out. I asked Ange SIANI if this could be a permanent assignment. He also agreed that there were many plusses in favor of the move, but added we could discuss it at the next provincial council meeting. We did this February 7, the Council agreed and Ange gave me my obedience for the Provincial Residence, dated February 14 which I received February 16. So now I am officially a member of the Kochi Community and love it.

I've been able to catch up somewhat on the financial work. Also, a lot has been done on the album for the 50th Anniversary. The committee asked Jerry NOVOTNY to help it as well as share his expertise in the laying out of articles etc. He warmly said yes and has been a tremendous asset.

Besides writing articles (The Life of St Eugene) for the Zendana Newsletter which Ron LA FRAMBOISE had started and the Christians asked me to continue after Ron left for Rome, and trying to finish off my series for the MAMI Newsletter (I had 3 to go, and I finished 1 for the July edition). I'm trying to get enough exercise and rest.

Because of duties here, and having to go to Rome for the annual GFC Meeting, the actual moving down will be in late May right before the CPA goes over the books here in Kochi! I am returning to Nagoya around March 29 to try and clear and clean out my former room and get things packed at least enough for Satoshi KAWAGUCHI to move into it. Then I leave for Tokyo April 5 and for the States and Rome April 6.

I should be back May 20 when I will transfer the Banks and Post Office accounts, make the necessary arrangements for VISA Card deductions, and whatever else has to be done before moving.

I want to thank Jimmy del ROSARIO publicly for taking the English Masses the whole month of January here. It was a great help. Also thanks to the Nagoya Community for being patient with me these last 4 years.

Ray

It's been a long time since you've heard from Aki. We're still in operation, you know.

This rectory and kindergarten has so much history in it that I can see and feel the years of missionary zeal expended over the 47 years of its life. I've been renovating here and there, and with a sense of pride, I think the place looks pretty good.

'Come over and see us sometime' (Mae West).

There is now a Fax Machine installed here. It's the same number as the rectory telephone number-- 08873-5-2310.

HAPPY EASTER!!!

Dick Harr, OMI

Feb. 24, 1998.

Dear Brother Oblates,

Greetings from Notre Dame de Lumières where I am making my three-week retreat in total silence! I just received the Christmas '97 edition of OMI Information. It went to Buffalo by boat, sat at my aunt's for 3 weeks, and then she sent it to Aix from where it was forwarded this way. I read about Jack's "signing" classes at the Junior College and his innovative 3 hour liturgy. The founder St. Eugene would be proud - "leave nothing undared" he said -. I read Jerry's long piece on the "culture of death" exposed on the Internet for those who would "tune in", and was moved by his love for these "Holy Innocents". Learned, with great joy, about Xave's exhibition of lino prints and recognised Bruges, having seen the real thing with José De Fruyt this past Summer. I read Len Inui's poetic greeting in Japanese and English and thought "It's so true to form and to his heart". Felt Jude's "pain" at missing a Christmas at home, and for Jan as he struggles with "faxes" and those who Fax, as well as with a scattered flock. I know Bill Maher's pain and shock - culture and otherwise -, and would imagine it even more so for John Iwo, from Aki to Itami.

One can't comment on each article but it was good to read a bit about everyone, to taste a little the joys and struggles of this past year.

I, too, like Jack Deely, will be absent from the Spring Meeting. We go here till April 2nd. In fact I'll miss the closing Mass and ceremony as I have to leave Marseilles at 6.40 a.m. to make connections in Amsterdam to catch the plane to Kansai, so I'll arrive before the bewitching hour of midnight April 3rd, when my re-entry permit runs out and I'd lose my visa.

I won't say anything here about the year. It's been too great and too much has happened that I'll write you a report separately - and spare Jan the editing trauma -, but I do wish to thank you for this opportunity, and pledge my cooperation to you and Wency - our new provincial - as we head into the new millennium.

Have a glorious celebration of Christ's Paschal Victory.

Fran

伊丹に来てから間もなく一年になろうとしている。大阪教区は阪神淡路大震災後、「新生」運動を推進している。新生運動を要約すると、
1. 谷間に置かれた人々の心を生きる。2. 交わりの教会。3. 共同責任を担い合い協働する教会。4. 聖霊の導きを識別しながら、共に歩む教会。
5. 司祭、修道者との協力を重視しながら信徒の役割と責任を全面に出す教会を目指しています。この5つの中で特に交わりと協働が強調されている。大阪教区は11地区に分けられています。伊丹教会は阪神地区に属し9小教区からなっています。仁川教会と伊丹教会が修道会に属する教会です。地区間の交わりと協力が推し進められています。阪神地区は各教会に司祭がいますが、他地区では段々と司祭のいない教会が出来ています。これらに対処するために、司祭間の交流と協同司牧が推進されている。
春の総会でお会いしましょう。

御復活祭おめでとうございます。

硫黄神父

Once again many greetings from Seoul. After reading the last Newsletter, I cut off the "Editor's Repeated Request" with the deadline for the March Newsletter contributions and pasted it on the wall in front of my desk. I was simply tired to forget about it. So, this time no excuses: Jan's kind request has been looking at me every time I've entered my room. Now, since I haven't forgotten to send my contribution, the real problem is ... what to write to all of you.

You know what? It's true that the Gospel has to be lived before than preached. And to live it is much more difficult than to preach it to people. Simple like that. On February 2, as every first Monday of the month, we had our day of recollection. James introduced the day saying few words on the passage of the Gospel of Luke (4:14-21) where Jesus after reading Isaiah says: "This text is being fulfilled today". James asked us: "Can we say that the Gospel is fulfilled in us today? Reading the words of Jesus can we say that they are fulfilled in us in this very moment?" Tough questions. "Love one another": can I say that these words are fulfilled in me? And what about: "Love your enemy"? And if I take the beautiful Hymn of Love of St. Paul (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13) are those words alive in me? "I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned, but if I have no love, this does me no good. Love is patient and kind... not jealous or ill-mannered or selfish or irritable... love never gives up". Few days before I was preparing my homily on this text of Isaiah quoted by Jesus in the Gospel: "He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and the blind new sight...". I thought how easily, when I read these words, I think: "Where should I stop? Should I go to the White House and protest for all the poor? Should I go out and fight for all the oppressed people?" But then I realized that the starting question should be: "From where should I start?" And the only answer is: "From me". I am the blind, the captive of my egoism, the poor (lacking the true love for my neighbor). Only if I become a free, loving man I can free others and bring them the true Love of Jesus.

Recently the Mayor of Palermo (Sicily) has said: "It is not so important to create new things; it will be enough to make new (to re-new) the things that already exist... starting from ourselves". Please, pray that I might become a new man.

Ciao! MAURO.

From Xavier:

Dear Friends,

Kochi Enoguchi Church and the Oblates have parted from Francis Xavier Narui. We knew him simply as "Narui-san". It was February 20, a little before noon. He had been in the Red Cross Hospital for months and there was little possibility to recovering well enough to go back to his room in the rectory. There had been talks to look for a facility, a home where he could get good treatment. Wednesday the 11th, his food went in the bronchus and choked him. His heart stopped for one hour. The doctors could revitalize him, but he had to stay on the breathing machine.

All Oblates knew Narui-san very well. He was "the right hand" for many Oblates for long years. After the war, he came back from Soviet captivity (Siberia) with malaria and tuberculosis. From that time on he started to climb his Golgotha. It was a long road. Narui-san got baptized by Fr. Barrett in Nakamachi Church (Kyushu). Then he moved to Shinhonmachi (now called Enoguchi) Church on the island of Shikoku. Close to 40 years he has given his talents to the Christians and the OMI priests of this parish. At one time he asked if he could enter the OMI Congregation to become a Brother. But canon law and the OMI rules at that time considered his heavy illness to be an obstacle for acceptance. However he continued working as before, even when later Fr. Matsunaga, a diocesan priest, became pastor of that parish. A few years ago, the bishop appointed a new pastor replacing Fr. Matsunaga. It was a difficult time for Narui-san. The new pastor is a member of the Neo Catechumenate Way. Theology, life vision, scripture interpretation and working method were too different. On one of my visits to his hospital bed, he confided in a low and gentle voice: 「あわない」 "awanai". This means: "we don't see eye to eye; we don't agree..."

The Priest and the Christians gave him a very nice funeral. Plenty of flowers. Narui-san had one younger sister. She had come from Nara city to see her brother when he was still on the breathing machine. She came back for the funeral. They resemble each other well. They hadn't met since Narui-san had come to Kochi. That's about 37 years ago.

Fr. Provincial gave his approval to bury Narui-san next to the Oblates in the catholic cemetery here in Kochi.

CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

March

23 Bill MAHER

April

1 Satoshi Leo KAWAGUCHI
17 John DEELY
22 Wency LAGUIDAO

May

29 Thomas MAHER

June

24 Giovanni ZEVOLA

ORDINATIONS

March

19 Ray Bourgoin
27 Wency LAGUIDAO
29 Satoshi Leo KAWAGUCHI

April

4 Jerome NOVOTNY
11 John DEELY
25 Vincenzo BORDO
26 William MAHER
29 Francis HAHN

May

26 Thomas MAHER
30 John MAHONEY
30 Bertram SILVER
31 Angelo SIANI

June

2 Richard HARR
7 Edward WILLIAMS
14 John IWO
14 Leonard INUI
24 Mike YAMAZAKI

ANNIVERSARY of the DEATH of our MISSION's FOUNDING FATHERS

12 April Robert GILL

PRAYERS

are always in order for a wide variety of intentions. This time special prayers are requested for

-NARUI-san who died on February 20 last. See Xave's note on preceding page.
-Gerard STEVENS, OMI at the second anniversary of his death (May 10).
-deceased relatives and friends.

Also for all those dear to us who for reason of age or illness or other needs count on our prayers.

And, in closing:

JOYFUL AND HAPPY EASTER TO ALL!

Counting on your contributions for the Summer edition, by June 10, and many thanks for your kind cooperation.

Jan



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

PROVINCE of JAPAN

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Letter 98.01

May 29, 1998

Dear Brother Oblates,

Greetings of Peace to each and everyone. I certainly feel like an aspiring singer trying to sing before an audience for the first time, hoping to hit the right notes.

Together with this letter are: copies of articles from The TABLET on the **Asian Synod** and the collation of "**Key Areas of Concern**" that we ourselves came up with as answers to the Guide Questions that led us to a reflection on 1) Mission 2) Oblate Apostolic Community 3) On Anything Else during the last Spring Meeting facilitated by Chris O'LEARY. Please take time to go through them and especially to "relive" the background by which those reflections were shared by individuals. "Youth," "Laity," "Vocations," "Common Project," "Directory," "Quality of Communication/Relationships," "Inculturation" (a big theme in the Asian Synod) are among our major concerns. There is no harm in including these topics in our coming District Meetings.

Many of us have expressed that it was a good meeting. You have given enough materials for the new Provincial Administration to start with. We have heard from you and we (the new Provincial Administration) will try to sort out what you have told us according to long range and short range goals. Please remember that "**THE VICE PROVINCE IS YOU,**" and not just the Provincial Administration. YOU are indispensable in the achievement of our goals, no matter how small. We only make statements that we can really and fully OWN, otherwise it is wiser not to make them at all.

Leadership can be maintenance and/or visionary. But it should be the interplay of both. The Provincial Administration and the Vice Province as a whole can be bogged down with just the maintenance aspect of leadership, eg, assignments, home-leave, finances, building, etc. We definitely need a common vision, a "Dream," or a "Promise" (as powerfully played in the movie Titanic) that will lead us through the Third Millennium. We want to tell the Youth of today, especially those who may be interested in joining us about the Vision, the Dream, the Promise that Eugene De Mazenod has shared with those who have followed his footsteps. Personally, I feel that we have LOST something, I don't know what, along the way. I hope I don't sound very pessimistic but that same feeling was expressed by some of us during the meeting. "If some people substitute other commitments for an Oblate affair, Why?" "We used to have a common project, we need one now to unite us," "We need to go back to having a book (Directory) to guide us..." etc.

Retreat: I will miss this year's retreat (not the first time). The retreat master is Fr. Benoit Garceau, OMI, former Provincial of St. Joseph Province, Canada. I think the Liturgy of our retreat and other meetings can be streamlined a little bit. I have asked Brad ROZAIRO to practice how to accompany us in our hymns with a portable keyboard. He will also look for some easy-to-sing English songs for the benefit of our Korean brothers. If some of you have short refrains in Singhala, Flemish, Italian or Tagalog that can be easily learned and sung, we can start compiling our own collection of hymns. This should bring out the international flavor of our group. You will also be asked by the Liturgist to take one of the daily masses. Please give the group a short reflection (not more than 5 minutes) on the reading or anything that strikes you. Preparation should not distract you if you are told early enough. Sharing on the faith-level is something that we feel shy doing.

Time of Beginning and Ending of the Retreat: These have become problematic for people in the Kochi District because of the reduced number of flights between Kochi and Fukuoka. I suggest that we do not officially start the retreat until the afternoon of the 1st Day (Monday). Others who can make it on Sunday night should come in the usual time and wait for others coming from inconvenient places. But we have to make definite plans early enough to notify the retreat house regarding meal arrangements. The Ending Time of the Retreat also becomes a problem. Will the Kochi people leave early Friday to catch the plane, cutting short the time of retreat or are they willing to leave the following day (Saturday)? Please discuss these during your next District Meeting.

Fraternaly in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

Kenji M



SPRING MEETING, MARCH 1998

Provincial Congress Doc. 98.01

(Please retain for future reference)

Facilitator: Fr. Chris O'Leary, OMI (Philippines)

Number of Oblates present: 22 (including facilitator)



THE QUESTIONS THAT WE ASKED OURSELVES:

- ♦ WHAT IS THE SPIRIT SAYING AND DOING NOW IN THE MISSION OF JAPAN AND KOREA?
- ♦ WHAT DO WE WANT TO SAY TO THE NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION WITH REGARD TO
 - 1) MISSION
 - 2) OBLATE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY
 - 3) ON ANYTHING ELSE?

1 **PROCESS:** We spent sometime to answer the questions above. We prioritized our answers, numbering them 1 -3 in the order of importance and below is a collation of our answers. In addition to our answers, we gave a possible theme for the next Provincial Congress added to the answers below. The same answers may appear more than once and are being repeated intentionally in the collation to show how we answered identical questions.

COLLATION OF ANSWERS (WHAT WE WROTE ON PIECES OF PAPER WITH OUR NAME):

-Policies for the Province; new situation of the mission including the laity (Asianization - end of era of European and American missionaries and Asians taking positions of responsibility); parish ministry- canonical boundary in contrast to personal boundary; specialized ministry; directory of policies for the Province; new situation of the mission- Asianization; parish ministry- personal parishes (itinerant missionary); awareness of problems of ageing; youth, include whole gamut of things, appealing to youth (formation), responding to delinquency; common project to help unify members by being centered - does not mean all have to contribute equally, but at least have something to do with it; laity: cooperative level, interdependence level - give and take with laity; vocations; parish ministry, consider taking new parishes; consider date of general meeting; study Japanese laws on religious corporation; youth; poor; vocation; a directory which speaks of policies of the Province re finances, ongoing formation, sabbatical; training of new members to take up specialized ministry which are already being done; new ways of recruitment for increase of vocation in Japan and Korea; specialized ministries; directory/ policies on religious life, formation, vocation; specialized ministry - poor; communication - visiting Oblates; vocation ministry; specialized ministry; vocation ministry; common project; parish ministry - renewal program; kindergarten apostolate; vocation ministry (relocation of house of formation); vocations; blending of parish ministry with specialized ministry; laity; parish ministry - still has a place; common project; directory; common project; stimulate community life; vocation; directory to help stimulate community on local and district levels; awareness - how the "new" can work with the "experienced" in the Province; youth; oblate work not directly connected with pastoral/sacramental work, eg, welfare institution, Pro Life Movement, not one-man project; not only territorial parishes but personal parish, etc.

SUGGESTED CONGRESS THEME:

- Inculturation - Acculturation
- Specialized Ministries and Parish Ministry in the context of a new situation in the mission and in the Asian context.
- Common Project for the Province
- Common Project
- Who are the most abandoned in our particular country
- Directory/ Policies for the Province

(Congress Themes, cont'd.)

- OMI General Chapter of 1998 and AsianSynod of Bishops (1998) how will they affect our mission?

- Asian Synod of Bishops
- Who are the poor in our mission?
- Laity
- Youth
- Outcome of Asian Synod of Bishops
- Globalization and Post OMI Chapter
- New Situation of Mission: Asianization - Globalization - Laity

2

PROCESS: We gathered in a General Assembly after personal reflection to answer the guide questions. We had a short but meaningful sharing and the following are:

THE ANSWERS TO THE SAME GUIDE QUESTIONS AS THEY WERE PRESENTED ORALLY DURING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

ON MISSION:

- That the Korean Mission be represented separately in the Provincial Council (adding one representative from Korea to the present number of councilors). This was to be given priority.
- "My lifestyle counts a lot in my mission." Americans and Europeans are more easily accepted.
- Asianization of the Vice Province - the end of an era of European and American missionaries.
- Should we offer our services to other dioceses that may need us other than Takamatsu?
- who are the most abandoned? Let us go out to serve them.

ON OBLATE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY (OAC):

- We need input from somebody outside the district on certain topics.
- Strengthen district meetings.
- There is lack of communication regarding work, family, etc. "Lot of things about people." eg, balloting done in secrecy.
- Regarding Provincial Meetings: have proper agenda and send agenda to districts to be talked about.
- From a Korean member: we need help in terms of personnel eg, somebody from Japan living in Korea for a few months. Will help strengthen community.
- need for a common project on district level (like the Language School in Kochi in the past where many Oblates came to help).
- Finance Directory that will include guidelines for hiring/firing.
- problems of ageing in the Vice Province. Get appropriate time to start meeting in consideration of those coming from inconvenient places.
- visit by the Provincial is important- quality of relationships, not merely staying together.
- need for deeper physical presence in various Oblate gatherings.
- need for recreation - Oblates visiting fellow Oblates.
- need for fundamental restructuring of our finances.
- continue to exert effort in area of formation. People in formation coming for experience - laudable.
- Oblate community gives me my physical needs but doesn't fulfill my spiritual needs, instead I find it in a non-christian community. How do we respond to this? "Removal of masks" toward an honest, genuine communication.

3

PROCESS: The facilitator summarized what had been expressed during the assembly and the following is the summary: (Again, they are answers to the same guide questions above)

KEY AREAS OF CONCERN: THE FOLLOWING IS THE SUMMARY OF WHAT WE WANT THE NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION TO WORK ON.

ON MISSION:

- 1) Asianization - Globalization
- 2) Parish Ministry - still has a place, there are needy parishes.
 - link with other ministries.
 - Canonical and personal parishes (personal has no geographical boundary)
 - need of renewal for Oblates in parish ministry.
- 3) Specialized Ministry - (we are in search of an appropriate word to name this ministry)
 - special works
 - kindergarten
 - youth ministry
 - youth
- 4) Vocation Ministry - needs to be addressed. There should be an understanding of the values and concerns of the young people today.
- 5) Laity in our mission

Others: Animation and Renewal
Discernment on the Korean mission by the Provincial and General Administration.

ON THE OBLATE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY (OAC):

- 1) Stimulate OAC on local and district meetings. Fidelity to OMI meetings and events.
- 2) Awareness of Systems - Structures - Scheduling:
 - situation of ageing Oblates.
 - situation of new Oblates
 - situation of Oblates in Korea
- 3) Communication:
 - qualitative communication
 - life - person - mission
 - removal of masks
 - visiting, helping and listening to each other
 - sharing of personnel, eg, older Oblates to Korea?
 - venues of support - recreation - fun
 - agenda for Provincial Council be shared to all.
- 4) Directory/ Policies for the Province
 - covers all areas of life and mission of the Province.
 - districts to coordinate apostolate and finances.
- 5) Common Project that will involve many Oblates

COUNCILOR FROM KOREAN MISSION: Does the Superior of mission becomes automatically the Councilor? Members of Korean mission agreed that same person hold the two positions. Voting whether to: (Option A) retain number of councilors of 3 including one from Korea or (Option B) make number of councilors 4 (3 from Japan 1 from Korea). Option B prevailed. Voting: Option A = 5 Option B = 14

ADDENDUM: Regarding the NEOCATECHUMENATE

4 PROCESS: The Facilitator asked the group: What do you think should be the Oblate response, reaction, position with regard to the Neo-Catechumenate Movement. What are the facts as we know them. What are our experiences of them? Is it possible for us to make a position in an hour? The following are the observations presented especially by those who have had direct contact with the members of the group:

THE FOLLOWING ARE WHAT WERE SAID:

- What should be the response of the Oblates? N.B. Dominicans in Ehime and Spain Mission in Kagawa came out openly denouncing the movement.
- they are increasing in number in Shikoku. Are other religious groups being pushed out?
- they are taking over parishes.
- we should not allow Neo Catechumenate in parishes entrusted to Oblates. Their charism doesn't agree with ours. They are against inculturation and Justice and Peace issues.
- not allow them in our parishes.
- not to allow their seminarians in Oblate houses since they can go to parishes entrusted to them.
- it is cultic, centered on a guru-type leader.
- they don't understand or refuse to understand Japanese culture.
- there is zeal in the group but they refuse to learn from the country they are coming to.
- they bring a package which they want to impose on people.
- "We are THE way," they want a separate liturgy, their own music, etc.
- as a young Oblate who just finished language school, I was lost in the presence of a seminarian living in the same house.
- we should not encourage them in our parishes.
- "They were trying to recruit me and I was afraid."
- if they come in contact with our seminarians, they will invite them to join their group.
- they are a danger!
- they can only work through parish structure - in and through.

THE GROUP WAS ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING POSITIVE THAT ANYONE COULD SAY: NONE.

The process was just a surfacing of reactions, experiences and although we fall short of making a common stand as a Province, WE SAY NO TO THEM BECAUSE THEIR WAY IS NOT OUR APPROACH OF DOING THINGS AS OBLATES AND NOT OUR WAY OF LIFE.

5 OTHER MATTERS: Scheduling of future meetings: We will take into consideration the Sunday schedule of those in parish ministry, the inconvenient train/plane schedules of certain places in scheduling the starting time of our meetings (Spring Meeting and Retreat).

It was deemed doubtful whether we will be ready for a Provincial Congress in the Spring of 1999 considering that there are events of great importance between now and next Spring, particularly, 1) The Asian Synod of Bishops; 2) The OMI General Chapter; and 3) 50th Year Japanese Mission celebrations in December. It was suggested that we take what will come out from the Synod and the Chapter as materials for our Provincial Congress.

In the meantime, we can trace back the presence of God in our works during the past 50 years in gratitude and celebration. Where do we see the hands of God working in the Japanese mission during the past 50 years? Do we recognize him in our works? Where did we succeed? Where did we fail? Perhaps, these are the questions we should ask as we prepare to celebrate the 50th year of God's grace in the Oblate Japanese mission.



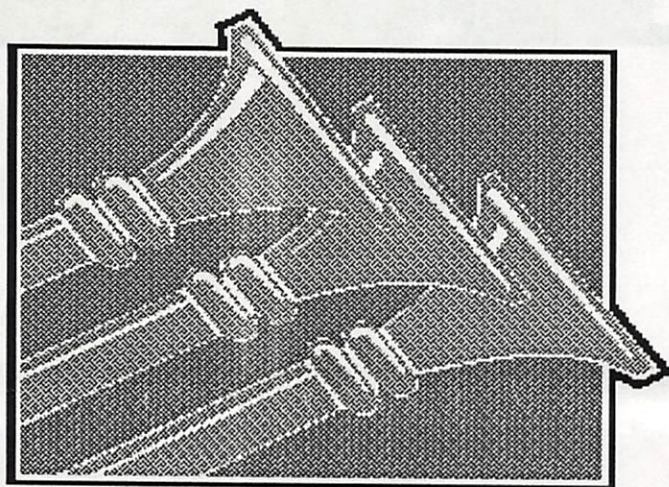
OMI INFORMATION

JAPAN

Provincial Newsletter of the OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
Vice Province of Japan

SUMMER 1998





ALLELUIA

The Vice Province of Japan Joins the

Entire Oblate World In

Thanking God For the Consecration of

Archbishop Marcello Zago, O.M.I.

As Titular Archbishop of Roselle

And His Appointment As Secretary of the Congregation

For the Evangelization of Peoples

From the Provincial Desk:

Wency Laguidao, OMI

It may sound repetitious, but for the sake of those who were not able to attend the Installation Ceremony in Kochi last May 29, I would like to reiterate my personal gratitude to Ange SIANI for the many years of selfless service that he has given to the Vice Province, 12 years all together. The same goes to those who served with him in his council over the years. The new Provincial Administration is committed to continuing and following up all the good things that have been started by the past administration. The Installation Ceremony was simple but meaningful. The "festive dinner" after the Installation promised by Ange was executed by the Kochi District led by Jude PEIRISPULLE, a very gracious host indeed. Thank you very much.

The new Provincial Administration had its first meeting on May 30th in Kochi, taking advantage of everybody's presence. First on the agenda was the confirmation of the appointment of Ray BOURGOIN as Provincial Bursar. Ray will also serve as secretary of the council.

For the record: It was May 18th when I got the call from Fr. Daniel CORIJN, Vicar General, informing us of the General Administration's choice of Provincial Councilors for Japan. They are, as everyone already knows, Leo KAWAGUCHI, Jack DEELY, Xave TOSA Yoshikazu and Maurizio GIORGIANNI, in the order of seniority, ie, when the Provincial is away, Leo Kawaguchi takes over, and so on.

District Superiors will continue to serve until their terms expire: Tokushima: Bert SILVER; Kochi: Jude PEIRISPULLE and Korea: Maurizio GIORGIANNI. There is a need to restructure the composition of our districts. We ask you to start discussing this matter in your district meetings.

While waiting to be officially installed, I made a few visits to a few places and enjoyed them a lot. I was with the Korean community for most part of the Holy Week. It was a learning-experience to see what each one is doing in Korea. I spent Easter in Nakamura with Tom MAHER. It was a beautiful Easter celebration. About 20 Filipinas living in the area came, three of them pregnant and one already in the hospital with labor pains! What does it mean for Tom? Four more new members in the next few months. From Nakamura, I went to Kochi and met almost everyone in the district who had just finished celebrating Easter. I also made a quick visit to Fukuoka to see Brad ROZAIRO in Yoshizuka.

PROVINCIAL ADDRESS and TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

The Provincial Office has moved to Itami which is also the official address of the religious corporation. If you imagine the house in Itami, the old entrance that led to the main road running parallel to the rectory and which was not used for years, has been converted into the Provincial office. The wall of the adjoining room was torn down adding more office space. If still you can't imagine how it looks like, please come and see.

Some housekeeping rules: for Provincial business, please refrain from calling the Itami Parish (0727-72-2487). Use the Provincial line which is 0727-83-9634. Provincial fax number will remain the same as Itami parish, for the time being, which is 0727-85-8671. I am still trying to avail of ISDN service that will handle telephone, fax, internet all in one line. Therefore, everything will go to the same number (83-9634) and should guarantee confidentiality. I will let you know once it is set up.

I have two e-mail addresses: wencylag@ta2.so-net.or.jp and Omijapan@aol.com. Feel free to give the two addresses to others. E-mail is a very inexpensive way of instant communication these days. To give you an idea, a page of document (A4 size) sent to Rome by fax costs about 300 yen. With e-mail, it is the cost of a local call (10yen). Thanks to multi-media, we can be just a keyboard away from anyone in the world who is on the Internet.

FRESH START FOR ITAMI

Brad ROZAIRO and Jimmy DEL ROSARIO have been assigned to Itami parish. Brad has been taking care of Yoshizuka parish in Fukuoka and has made good impression among the people during the short time that he was there. Jimmy just finished his language studies and was taking care of Zendana Parish until the arrival of Eddie WILLIAMS. We wish the two young Oblates and Eddie Good Luck! In the meantime, John IWO moves to Yoshizuka and Mike YAMASAKI remains as Principal of the Itami kindergarten. Changes will take effect the end of June. The house in Itami used to be a place where Oblates came and stayed in the past. Ironically, vast improvements in travel has changed all that but we would like to bring back the old hospitality of Itami if we can. We will try to do some improvements as funds would allow us to make the house a little more visitor-friendly. Everyone is most welcome to come and stop-by or stay a couple of days. "We'll add water to the soup," as the saying goes!

FORMATION HOUSE IN KOREA

It should be common knowledge by now that the Korean community has been looking for a second property that will serve as House of Formation. Mauro and Maurizio who form the formation team in Korea presented to the council their final proposal to buy a piece of land where a formation house can be built. The council listened, deliberated and approved the proposal. When Ray was in Rome for the Financial Committee meeting in May, he did some inquiry as to how we can finance the project. No final deal has been made yet and we will let you know when something more definite takes shape. A paper on "Personnel" for the Korean mission was also presented by Maurizio.

GENERAL CHAPTER

The General Chapter will start on September 1st and end on October 1st. We ask everyone to "join" the Chapter through prayer. There is fear and anxiety as we approach the Third Millenium. What are the challenges that we face as a missionary religious group. The coming Chapter should help us arrive at some guidelines. But it can also end up with a lot of verbiage about the same topic that ironically divides the congregation: the "Poor." Let us pray for openness, sincerity and honesty among the capitulants and the whole congregation. Here in Japan, we are faced with new challenges that shake up the very foundations that our founding fathers built 50 years ago. "Are we still needed in Shikoku?" "Should we go to other places?" "What will happen to Oblate-held parishes, kindergartens?" "What will be our source of supporting ourselves if we start giving up our present commitments and moving into what are called 'specialized ministries'?" Please send in your reflections on the *Instrumentum Laboris*.

PROVINCIALS, SUPERIORS AND BISHOPS' MEETING

A joint meeting of the Provincials (men and women), Superior Generals and Bishops was held in Funabashi, Chiba last May 26-28. The joint meeting is held every four years. A study was made of the history of the Church of Japan from the time of Francis Xavier to the present highlighting important events. The colourful history of the Church of Japan includes the persecution of christians, martyrdom, Meiji restoration, WWII with the ambivalent role that the Church played, then on to the present. What I found striking was the part that records the arrival of European and American-based religious groups after WWII when Japan was suffering from the ravages of war. The foreign-based religious groups came and set-up institutions such as hospitals, schools, nursing homes, kindergartens, etc., heavily funded with money from abroad and Japan was very poor then. Times have changed. During the group discussions, it was worth noting that the Oblates in Japan are going through a similar experience as the other religious groups. Some groups feel trapped within the institutions that they have built. Others feel that they have to go away from institutions to re-discover their charism. There are groups that barely make it to stay afloat. One religious superior was humble enough to tell everybody that somebody paid his dues so he could attend the meeting...

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Provincial Council has also made a revamp of the different Standing Committees:

FORMATION: Leader: Leo KAWAGUCHI; Members: Ange SIANI, Bill MAHER, Nobuhiko YAGI and Mauro CONCARDI (Resource Persons: X. Tosa, J. Deely, R. Bourgoïn). **FINANCE:** Leader: Ray BOURGOIN, Mbrs: Len INUI, Mauro CONCARDI, Jude PEIRISPULLE and Nobuhiko YAGI. **CONTRACTS (Ad Hoc):** Temporary Leader: Ange SIANI, Mbrs: Bert SILVER, Eddie WILLIAMS and John IWO. **MAMI:** Director: Leo KAWAGUCHI, Mbr: Ray BOURGOIN. **VOCATION DIRECTOR:** N. YAGI, Ass't: J. Peirispulle. **ONGOING FORMATION AND PASTORAL COMMITTEES:** *Raison d'être* of these committees is being redefined and Jack DEELY will make the proposed changes.

50th ANNIVERSARY

Eddie WILLIAMS has sent invitations to all Oblates and former Oblates who once worked in Japan and to Oblates related to us (eg, Provincial of Sri Lanka, etc.). It is too early to issue a list of who are coming and who are not but we will update you once we get confirmations. We have heard from Frs. Pat HEALY (NY), Charlie BANKS (Texas) and Archbishop ZAGO. Leo KAWAGUCHI is in charge of local invitations.

VARIA

Next Provincial Council Meeting: March, 27 in Kochi. Top on the agenda is the fiscal year's financial report. We ask your patience while the Provincial Council is trying to get organized. You have given us enough materials for work during the last Spring Meeting and we will slowly go through them. Jack DEELY and Jerry NOVOTNY are working on Oblate homepage or websites where people can visit and know what is going on in the Vice Province and about individual Oblates (Jack, did you say there will be a picture of each one of us in the Internet?)

Search for an Honorary Oblate: It was proposed that we consider awarding an Honorary Oblate Award to a person/persons during our 50th Year Celebration. This is our way of giving back what we have received during the past 50 years. "An honorary Oblate is a person who is associated with the Congregation so as to share in all the spiritual benefits of membership. It is the highest mark of esteem that we can bestow on a non-Oblate." (115) "A person proposed should be distinguished by years of devoted service to the Congregation and its mission in the Church." "Life of the person proposed should give evidence of personal identification with the ideals and goals of the congregation." (116) Administrative Directory.

Books! Books! Anyone? Eddie WILLIAMS has a very fine library that he says he is more than willing to share with everybody (His only request is for the books to be returned to him after reading). "If I paid 20 bucks for a book, sharing it with somebody cuts the price in half and so on..." says Eddie. We will try to devise a system of circulating Eddie's books and perhaps ask Eddie to draw up a short list at a time (probably with a one-liner review) which we can pass around during district meetings. If someone would like to share about a good book he has read it should break the monotony of our district meetings.

Sick List: (We want to keep this list as short as possible.) JK MAHONEY is recovering well, according to Ange who keeps in touch with him. Mike YAMASAKI will be in the hospital for a while to make his sugar-count go down. Lei SIMONS has a recurrence of an infection he contacted while in a hospital in Kyoto years ago and will require another surgery. Get well soon, all of you. Let us remember them in our daily prayers.

Correction: In the collation of answers of the Spring Meeting (March, 98), it read: "end of era of European and American missionaries..." (pp1&2). It should be: End of era of European and American vocations... My apology. Although I edit my text many times, it will still happen that I will make mistakes especially when beating a deadline. If you find your name (now and in the future) in the wrong place or find a mistake or notice an omission, please don't panic! Call my attention and corrections will be made but there will be no assurance that mistakes will not occur again.

Travels? Well, it will take another page so I will just skip making a list. Those of you who will be on the road in the next months, have a safe trip and come back refreshed.

ADDENDA

Korea: On June 10 we received a fax from the General Council in Rome informing us of the decision of the council to shelve the plan to buy a second house in Korea. Several reasons were given and the General Council is of the opinion that the project can wait in favor of other prospects in the congregation that are more urgent. The Provincial will go to Korea to talk to the community about "other options".

Donation: A generous donation was received from Mr. Dave BARTON, former Oblate who once worked in Japan, through the Eastern American Province. Dave requests our prayers for his son Paul, a college student when he died in 1994. He also donated an amount to be spent for a memorial for the late Narui san for whom, even now, he is filled with gratitude and admiration.

ON-GOING FORMATION ON AFFECTIVE LIFE

We, the Oblates in the early stages of the ministry or the mission gathered for on-going formation from March 25th noon time to March 27th noon time, in Fukuoka. Our chosen theme this year was Affective Life. Fr. Ward Biddle of the Passionists from Tokyo was our facilitator for the sharings and some in-put.

We were given the chance to ventilate our present feelings on our apostolic situations. It was very relieving for us to realize that our emotions are morally neutral. It is but normal for all humans to have feelings. It was freeing to express them. We were likewise enriched by the deep insights drawn by our facilitator from our very feelings themselves. We have come to grips with our experiences as religious through the naturally important dimension of our very own emotions.

This gathering will hopefully bear fruit in our being more sensitive to the sufferings and joys as well of the poor we evangelize.

As part of our growth in affective life, we also spent the two nights playing bowling and watching a video together.

The Mass and meals together were more emotionally meaningful, with God's love really felt in our Oblate Community itself. We came back to our apostolates nourished as persons so that we can nourish the people as well.

We plan to have our next On-going Formation gathering in Yufuin, near Fukuoka, after our Oblate Retreat in September 1999. It is a place with a relaxing and beautiful natural scenery. We also planned to have John Deely to be our facilitator. We also wish to invite Jerry Novotny to give us some inspiring personal sharing. This is the same way as we were blessed with Mike's presence last year. We have more than a year to reflect on and choose a timely theme for the next gathering. We are looking forward to a more enriching religious life ahead, for the sake of the poor. May God bless our plans.

Reported by Jimmy del Rosario, OMI

Hello Everybody,

It was a wet Spring. El Nino is blamed. The low atmospheric pressure seems to influence my breathing. But then again some rainy days, I feel nothing of the low pressure...

In the last OMI Newsletter, I mentioned that my teaching career at the Reform School had come to an end. I was approached again but this time to help out in some club activities. They offered me a (wood) print class. To make linocuts and to teach how to cut linos are two different things. Anyway, I am back at the Reform School as an "Art Teacher"!!!

Next Autumn for the first time in the history of the Japanese Catholic Church, the National Justice and Peace Committee will hold its All Japan Meeting on Shikoku, in Matsuyama. Later I intend to send you some dates and information in English. I don't think it's necessary to quote the Pope and the OMI documents to remind you of our involvement and that of the parishes in this event.

Some of you already know that I have become an E-MAIL fan. Here is my address:

name: Tosa Yoshikazu

e-mail address: < xytosa@ps.inforyoma.or.jp >

I am expecting a lot of love letters. I open my box every night...

The same former students of Seibo Gakuen, who organized the lino print exposition at the NHK Gallery last year, are thinking of opening another exposition this autumn in Aki City. Aki is the place where I "met" Japan when I was 27 years old...

Have a good summertime!

Xave Yoshikazu TOSA omi

From Mauro:

May 3rd was Vocation Sunday. Worldwide. Few days before Maurizio and I had agreed to invite some young people from the Parish Maurizio has been serving for more than a year. "Come and spend few hours with us!" The night before Vocation Sunday (was that a Saturday night?!?) I prepared some Spaghetti sauce for the lunch we had thought to offer them while Maurizio, after the evening Mass in the parish, went to buy something needed for the following day. Then I waited for Maurizio to come back. He arrived at 9:30 PM. We seated down to see in details the program of the next day meeting but we were really tired. Anyway, we agreed to show them some slides on St. Eugene and we went to bed. I got up the next morning with only one thing in my mind: to love Maurizio in every single act during that day. Before leaving for the morning Mass Maurizio had left a note on the board asking me a favor: to make a phone call for something we were supposed to do the next day. I did it knowing that that was a concrete way to love Maurizio. I cleaned the basement of our house, prepared the slides and other few things. Then, seated at the table of our kitchen, I took some time to ... pray. At 10:30 sharp Maurizio arrived with the young people. We went down to the basement: everything was ready including the guitar to play few songs in order to ... break the ice. Personally I was a little nervous: what to do with them in the next 4 hours? But, surprise! They started, asking questions right away. Again I tried to love Maurizio paying attention to every words he was saying. We removed the big Oblates Map from the wall (the one prepared on the occasion of the Canonization) and, seated on the floor around the map, we talked and talked. Maurizio explained this, I added that. The dialogue became more personal when we told them about our vocation, how we heard the voice of God calling us. I showed them my Oblate Cross and everybody went "ooh!". We explained them that Vocation Sunday is for everybody because everyone has to discover what God is asking him or her. We also told them that we had a dream: to have a house where young people could come and stay in order to discover the beautiful plan God had on them. The role of the house: the new commandment of Jesus, love one another. I peeked at my watch: it was already 12 o'clock. No need to break any ice: the ice was melted and only fresh waters were surrounding us. Looking around I saw the faces full of joy of those young people. A quick suggestion: "let's live the next few hours loving each other". Then we prepared lunch (a good pasta and hot tok-pu-ki). After lunch we had time for a guitar duet: Maurizio and me! The slides: may be next time. Everybody looked really happy. I daresay no body wanted to leave the basement. For me the miracle Jesus promised us 2000 years ago was still a reality: "For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them". Now, to try to love each other isn't the best way to be united in His name? I was sure Maurizio had this in his heart and I tried my best to love him. The presence of Jesus among people that love each other: this is what we can offer to the people. And Jesus has always had a special attraction to young people.

From Seoul, MAURO.

From Fran HAHN:

-9-

It was good to get to see some of the men in Kochi this past May 29th, after a year's absence. Much has happened since the March meeting, which I missed; several personal changes which seem to have caught many by surprise, yours truly among them. I fully expected to head off to Nagoya as my new "Nineveh", but it was not to be. Instead I spent a full month with Ed, before 'taking over' here, learning how to plant flowers and sundry other things. Then after many tears and much wailing and gnashing of teeth on the part of all we sent him off in the belly of a whale driven by Sadaichi-san, actually a 4-ton truck, and I was on my own and very lonely. (actually Ed returned the next day for 10 more days of 'farewell' but like Jonah he eventually went where he was sent and much more positively too.) Ed's presence is very large, inspite of his new trimness, and his absence leaves a large vacuum. I'm still afraid to pull flowers, the weeds even look pretty here, but I can water and have the various (grass) cutters down. Inagaki-san, since his retirement, has taken over as our uekiya and he does most of the real work but I pretend I'm helping. Bill and Ed over the past 17 years have gotten the people very well organized so I have little to do, and we have sisters who do the office things, and Ogawa-san who cooks and runs the place from behind the curtain, so there are times when I wonder if I'm really needed, but then occasionally something happens that I feel useful for. The prison work is a first and it is really rewarding; I'm not sure how it is for the men, a truly captive audience, (one would feel guilty taking advantage of them, you realize you're not there for you own personal gratification) you just try to be of service to them. I'm sure I get much more from being with them than they'll get from me but so far we both seem to enjoy each other.

Speaking of 'moves', the "Little Sister of Jesus" have decided to begin a new mission here in Tokushima City, and have already rented an apartment in one of the Dowa areas, where they hope to give witness in their own unique manner. I hope to be of help in anyway I can, and am looking forward to having new cooperators in the field.

With the advent of our new provincial and his council, one can't help feel that something is happening as we close in on a new millenium, and every time you turn on the TV the assault on the traditional Judeo-Christian value system goes for-ward, abortion, assisted suicide, homosexual 'marriage', and a whole host of new age agenda, supposedly centered on the concept of human rights and personal freedom, are really setting out the challenge for the church to make a truly christian response. The new team will have their work cut out, in helping the church in Japan; and the Oblates in the world contribute meaningfully to this responsemy prayers and pledge of support for them. Am looking forward to my second retreat in August; after one of 21 days of absolute silence, this one should be a piece of cake.

名古屋共同体の近況

修学院 LEO KAWAGUCHI

兄弟の皆さんへ、

1月にJOHN MAHONEY が治療のため帰国して以来、名古屋共同体内は引っ越し作業の連続でした。私たちの総長代理 Fr.Daniel Coriji が名古屋に到着した朝、John にさようならと言わなければなりませんでした。もうもどらないかもしれないと思えたので、つらい気持ちのさようならでした。膳棚(zen-dana)の信者さんたちに次の日曜日、ミサのはじめに「マホニ神父さんが急に帰国しました」、と報告しその理由を説明しました。信者さんたちも驚き、なんの挨拶もできなかったことを残念がっていました。毎日曜日、ミサの中で John のために祈り、病院へ皆さんで Fax でメッセージを送りました。すぐ John から返事がきたので全員喜びました。

二人の志願者、古川健一(Furukawa Ken-ichi)と亜紀夫(Horiuchi Akio)は好成績で試験を終え、召命キャンプの下準備をし、アルバイトをして春休みを過ごしました。フィリピン管区の二人の神学生 Brs.Herberto C.Villas and Howard P.Tatel が名古屋に来るといううれしい知らせがありましたので、彼らのために部屋の準備が必要になってきました。現在までのところ、彼らの在留許可がまだです。オウム事件といくつか法律改正の影響でしょうか、宗教活動にかんしての審査は慎重みたいです。フィリピンで働いている私の友達は彼らに会い、シスターたちと一緒に日本語の特別コースに参加したとのことです。部屋の準備はできています、二人が早く日本に到着できますように!

5月の連休を利用して、Eddie、健一、亜紀夫、そして私4人で長野県にあるイエスの小さい姉妹会の家に二泊三日の遠足に行きました。標高1000メートルのところにある広くて結構年期が入ってある農家に泊まりました。シスターたちの祈りの姿、労働、ユーモアにすっかり気に入り、楽しく、印象深い滞在でした。

5月21日は私たちの創立者の祝日ですが、名古屋では前夜祭をしました。パーティー、パーティー! オタワ愛徳修道女会のシスターたち、私たちのコックさんである高島さんと愛犬メグちゃん、アメリカから帰る途中のRay、オタワと修学院共通の恩人のかたたちが参加してくださいました。

1月から5月末までの間、John, Jaime, Angelo, Rayが引っ越し、荷物と部屋の変更がありました。そしてEddie を迎え、二人のフィリピンからの神学生を待っているのが現在の名古屋共同体です。養成の仕事は管区全員にかかわることがらです。兄弟の皆さん、これからも養成のための支援と協力をお願いします。

There are hardly ever newsworthy events to report from Aki. This time, though, there is the news that I will be home in Nebraska-Colorado- Indiana for 2-months vacation. I leave on the very day of Wency's installation as our brand new Provincial. I'm really looking forward to reclaim strength, get some rest. Will be back at the end of July.

Xave has volunteered to offer Mass here each Sunday in my absence for which I am most grateful. On the average there are 4-6 parishioners who make it to Mass. For so few, originally I had thought to send them to Akaaka for Lei's solemn rites.

In the Kindergarten, I've started a Scripture group. At present, there are only 2 attending, but there are indications that a few more will start coming. There is also an english group of 10 Mothers coming.

John Iwo escorted 25 Itami parishioners to Shikoku on May 18-20. We enjoyed welcoming them here. The weather was a gift.

Dick Harr, OMI

News from Hoya 保谷便り

Here it is the 10th of June and I almost forgot about the Newsletter completely! So, with just an hour or two before the deadline, I will limit the news to one item.

The Ongoing Formation Committee is not dead, as I had so erroneously misdiagnosed at the Fukuoka Meeting last year. Apparently, it was only in a coma...and I am happy to report that it is presently being resuscitated! Further word will be sent to you as the rehabilitation progresses!

Enjoy!

Jack

6月の10日になってしまいましたが、実は、ニュースレターのことを完全に忘れていたんですよ。ですから、締切間近になってしまったので、ニュースを一つに絞ろうと思います。

そのニュースとは、我々の生涯養成委員会はなくなってしまったのではなくて、少しの間、作動停止していたというだけで、うれしいことに、現在再構築しているということです。これから、再建していくに当たって随時報告させて頂きます。

楽しくやんなはれ!

ジャック

BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:

June

24 Giovanni ZEVOLA

July

4 Mauro CONCARDI

23 Jimmy DEL ROSARIO

31 Lei SIMONS

August

4 Nobuhiko YAGI

23 Ange SIANI

31 Bert SILVER

September

6 John IWO

17 Jude PEIRISPULLE

17 James JEYACHANDRAN

20 John MAHONEY

22 Fran HAHN

ORDINATIONS

Happy Anniversary to:

June

24 Mike YAMASAKI

July

1 Jan VAN HOYDONCK

5 Lei SIMONS

August

22 Jude PEIRISPULLE

22 Bradly ROZAIRO

22 Shirantha PERERA

September

8 Giovanni ZEVOLA

23 Jimmy DEL ROSARIO

Perpetual Vows

August

4 Nobuhiko YAGI

GOLDEN JUBILEE of Religious Vows

September 8 Bertram SILVER and Leonard SIMONS

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

July

3 Timothy MULVEY

23 Sueho TSUDA

September

4 Daniel WARD

PRAYER INTENTIONS

See the Provincial's recommendations.

CLOSING WORD

Many thanks to all for your cooperation, in writing or otherwise; with my best wishes for a pleasant Summer, and an invitation for your contributions for the next issue of the Newsletter, to be in by September 10.

Since most of the copies of the Newsletter go abroad could the contributors of Japanese texts also provide an English equivalent of it, so people who do not know Japanese can enjoy your production?

And may I again emphasize that the use of a dictionary is not a luxury? An occasional mistake (if it is not in an inaccessible spot) I can correct, but I don't have the time to retype the whole text, so, some misspellings remain.

And...Faxes rarely come through undamaged. Could you send your article(s) by mail, preferably unfolded?

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Jan, O.M.I.



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

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July 15, 1998



Dear Brother Oblates,

The Dog Days of Summer are here! This letter is to update you on a few things that came up during the Provincial Council meeting last June 27 in Kochi PLUS a few other important matters since the next newsletter is not coming out until September:

Among the things discussed during the Provincial Meeting that you should know are:

1. **FINANCIAL REPORT** for the Fiscal Year (April 97-March 98): Ray Bourgoin gave a very thorough report on the financial situation of the Vice Province. Changes in the provisions of Religious Corporation law have kept Ray busy updating our financial system to make them in keeping with the new provisions of the religious corporation law.
2. **FORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT**: Leo Kawaguchi reported to the Council on what transpired during the Formation Committee Mtg. held in Nagoya. Our two aspirants, Kenichi Furukawa and Akio Horiuchi will take two years off from their studies at Nanzan University for their Novitiate year(s). It has been suggested that they take one full-year of canonical novitiate and another year for pastoral exposure and language study. Bro. Nobuhiko Yagi is a popular choice to be Novice Master and Aki is suggested as an ideal place for the novitiate. Filipino scholastics: I received a call from Manila informing us that Heriberto Villas ("Gerry," 34 yrs. old) and Howard Tatel ("Howard," 28 yrs. old) have been granted their three-year visa to come to Japan. They are arriving in Nagoya on either July 26 in time for the Summer Camp in Kochi.
3. **50TH YEAR CELEBRATION**. The Nakajimacho parishioners are entrusted with the burden of hosting the celebration. We have sent invitations to Oblates abroad who once worked in the mission and to all Oblates who are related to us in various ways. Local invitations are still being prepared. In addition to the list, former Oblates living in Japan and abroad are being invited since they too are part of our 50 years history. I have sent letters of invitation to those whose addresses are known. We hope that our 50th year will not only be for merrymaking but for thanksgiving, renewal and reconciliation. Suggested time to start the anniversary Mass is 11:00 AM (November 23rd). Those who plan to come in groups from the different parishes should start making plans since our hosts will need the approximate number of people attending. Those who need rooms for the night should coordinate with Ray. The anniversary album is in the finishing stages of being edited.
4. **"WHERE WE HAVE BEEN," "WHERE WE ARE," "WHERE WE WANT TO GO."** Before I leave for the General Chapter, I hope to be able to send you a *guide* which you can use personally or during districts meetings to help us reflect on our past, affirm our present and lead us to the future. We would like to harness the blessings of the 50th Year Celebration and make them as our starting point for an on-going reflection on our mission, hence, "Where we have been, where we are and where we want to go."
5. **HONORARY OBLATE**. During the past two Provincial Council meetings, it was decided that the highest Oblate award that can be given to a non-Oblate (Honorary Oblate) be awarded to Mr. Takayoshi KONDO of Aki. While we realize that in our 50 years history, we are deeply indebted to so many people, as a group or individually, to give the award to all of them is just impossible. The Provincial Council thinks that Mr. Kondo can represent all the generous people who have helped the Oblates in various ways. Mr. Kondo is one among the many who have stood by us. His dedication to the Oblates and many others like him should be an inspiration to all of us. Recommendations to give Mr. Kondo the Honorary Oblate Award will be made to the Superior General.
6. **PARTITIONING OF DISTRICTS**. New (?) partitioning of districts is being proposed:

TOKUSHIMA DISTRICT will be composed of Anan, Tokushima, Naruto and Ikeda; KOCHI DISTRICT will be composed of Kochi, Akaoka, Aki and Nakamura; FUKUOKA DISTRICT will be composed of Koga and Yoshizuka (plus Provincial whenever he is available); ITAMI DISTRICT will be composed of Itami, Nagoya and Tokyo and KOREA DISTRICT.

7. KOREAN MISSION. Our mission in Korea is still going through the "pangs of childbirth" as its members struggle to find their rightful place in the Korean Church and society. Situation has not been easy for the members since the inception of the mission and its being separated by physical distance from the main part of the Vice Province is showing its adverse effects on the members of the mission. We want to give them our wholehearted encouragement and spiritual support. I personally like to encourage them with the words of St. Paul: *My brothers, you were called as you know, to liberty; but be careful, or this liberty will provide an opening for self-indulgence. Serve one another, rather, in works of love, since the whole of the Law is summarised in a single command: Love your brother as yourself. If you go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, you had better watch or you will destroy the whole community. (Gal5:13-15) Carry each others burdens and fulfill the Law of Christ (6:2).* There are hopeful signs in the interest on the Oblates shown by a few young men. One seminarian will be back from military duty early next year. Since the request to buy land has been turned down by Rome, the possibility of renting two extra large apartments is being explored by the formation team. The members of the mission are also unanimous in asking the Provincial Council about the possibility of asking one or two new Oblates from another Province in the region to join the mission. I will personally look into this when I meet with other Provincials during the Chapter. While writing this letter, I talked to Vincenzo on the phone who said that he just lost his job at the soup kitchen. A group of Korean sisters are taking over.

8. ONGOING FORMATION COMMITTEE: More labor pains! But let's leave it to Jack Deely who is in charge of seeing it get off the ground.

9. OTHERS: Lei Simons had a successful operation to remove stones from his bladder in Hokkaido last July 6th. He started walking the day after the operation. Leo Kawaguchi was at his bedside before and after the operation since I was in Manila. A fax from JK Mahoney informed us that Ed Lowney had one leg amputated but is doing well. I'm sure that it will not stop him from coming to our 50th Anniversary. Your prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of Francis Hassett, former Oblate and former Provincial of Eastern U.S. who died of cancer last June.

CONGRATULATIONS once again to Bert Silver on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his vows. There are two celebrations waiting for Bert: in Lowell on August 30 (with Ange Siani preaching) and another one in Tewksbury on September 6th.

CHANGE OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS: Provincial Bursar (Ray) Tel: 0888-73-7536/
Fax 0888-73-7532. Nakajimacho Fax 0888-72-3653.

UNDER SEPARATE COVER: "Synod for Asia" (in Japanese). I will inquire if we can get the original texts in English.

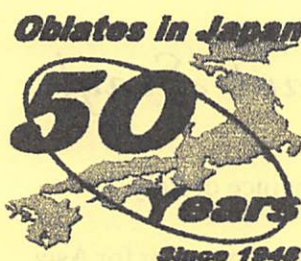
SUMMER CAMP: Free OMI T-Shirts and matching baseball caps for those who will come! Limited number of XXL size available.

SPRING MEETING, 1999: Suggested names for input persons: Hank Mattimore (on Lay Associates) and Archbishop Orly Quevedo (on the impact of Globalization).

Next Council meeting: Sometime during or after the Summer Camp in Kochi. We hope to be able to make some concrete plans for the 50th Year celebration before everyone takes off for their summer break.


Fraternally in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

Wency On
Wency Laguidao, OMI
Provincial



50th Anniversary

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| November 19 | ARRIVAL - 1st batch of guests
from abroad |
| November 21 | ARRIVAL - 2nd batch of guests
from abroad |
| November 22 | Sunday |
| 4:00PM | Arrival of guests in Kochi
HOLY HOUR - Chapel,
Nakajimacho Rectory
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Benediction |
| 5:00 | HAPPY HOUR
Nakajimacho Rectory |
| 6:00 | DINNER
Nakajimacho Rectory |
| November 23 | Monday |
| 10:00AM | Arrival for Anniversary Mass |
| 10:45 | Cello mini-concert while guests arrive |
| 11:00AM | 50th ANNIVERSARY MASS
(Pls. Bring your own Alb and Stole)
Speeches, Honorary Oblate Award, etc.
RECEPTION |
| 4:00PM | Departure for Cemetery (Gomen) |
| 5:00 | Happy Hour - Rectory |
| 6:00 | Buffet dinner at Nakajima. Rectory
for those remaining. |
| November 24 | Tuesday |
| 9:00AM | Formation Committee Meeting with
Fr. Bill Sheehan - Nakajima. Rectory |
| | DEPARTURES |



Welcome and Have a Pleasant Stay!

Fr. Angelo Daddio, OMI - Provincial, Province of Italy

Fr. Philippih Jesunesan, OMI - Regional Councilor for Asia

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Kellen - U.S.A.

Fr. Mark Kemseke, OMI - Bursar, Belgium-North Province

Fr. Ron LaFramboise, OMI - OMI Information, Rome

Mr. Hank Mattimore - U.S.A.

Mr. Bill McLaughlin - U.S.A.

Fr. Arthur Obin, OMI - Provincial, Northern U.S.A. Province

Fr. Chris O'Leary, OMI - Superior, Scholasticate, Philippines

Fr. Bernard Quintus, OMI - Provincial, Sri Lanka Province

Mr. Jack Quinn - U.S.A.

Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI - Provincial, Eastern U.S.A.

Fr. Dave Ullrich, OMI - Provincial, Western U.S.A.

N.B.

Fr. Ed LOWNEY, OMI was scheduled to come but he needs more time to recuperate from his operation.

Central U.S.A. is the only Province which has sent men to Japan that will not be represented during the celebration but **Fr. Dave KALERT, OMI**, Provincial (and Provincial-elect of U.S.A. Province to be inaugurated on February 10, 1998) has sent the following message:

I extend special congratulations and the assurance of prayer to all of you! This is a tremendous moment when you and all of your brother Oblates around the world can give thanks for the many blessings you have shared over these 50 years. You can be extremely proud of your accomplishments!

From **Fr. Jose DE FRUYT, OMI** (Belgium) I received a letter of encouragement that included the following lines for everybody:

Jan sends me faithfully OMI Information Japan, which I immediately upon arrival devour as faithfully... from the news I see my absence will be richly compensated. Greet them all for me please CONGRATULATIONS for the 50th Year Anniversary of the Founding of the Mission (I look forward to see the Souvenir Album being made!).



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

PROVINCE of JAPAN

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August 18, 1998

Dear Brother Oblates,

I hope you are surviving the remaining summer heat. If things go well, I should be able to mail this letter before I head off to Rome for the General Chapter.

The 1998 General Chapter: The main theme of the General Chapter of 1998 is Evangelization of the Poor at the Dawn of the Third Millenium. The Chapter should set the direction that the congregation will take during the next few years. We had a foretaste of what will be discussed with the "Instrumentum Laboris" which, I'm sure, everyone had the time to gloss over. The Superior General will give the report on The State of the Congregation. On **September 16**, a new Superior General will be elected. The regional councillors will be elected on **September 22-23**, etc. Revision of the third part of our CCRR is another major task of the Chapter. If you remember, we were asked to send in our answers regarding the proposed changes of part three of the CCRR. The Chapter runs from September 1 to October 1. As I see the month-long schedule, only Sundays are totally free. It looks like as if it will be a very busy month in the Eternal City.

Please pray that the General Chapter will give us new Light in the Vice Province especially as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the mission.

WELCOME!! To our two new members, Filipino scholastics Gerry VILLAS and Howard TATEL. They had their baptism of fire with the summer camp a few days after they arrived in Nagoya. The two will not start language studies until October so they will have the time to visit the different houses before they start burning the midnight candle.

JOB WELL DONE!! To the organizers of the 14th Oblate Summer Camp led by seminarians Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA and under the direction of Nobuhiko YAGI and Leo KAWAGUCHI. Thank you to all of you who stayed all the time or came to give moral support.

THE SICK AND CONVALESCING: Tom MAHER did not bother to call an ambulance but instead drove himself to the hospital in extreme abdominal pain. "Please do something!" was all he could tell the nurses on duty. Nothing to worry about at the moment but he is still under observation for duodenal ulcer. Get well soon, Tom, and may they spare you the knife! Lei SIMONS is back in circulation after his "vacation" in Hokkaido. He continues to receive treatment at a nearby hospital. When I went to Hokkaido to talk to his doctor, the doctor told me to tell Lei, and I put it in writing: "Tell him to slow down!" **OMISSION:** I failed to mention that Lei is also celebrating the 50th year of his First Profession this year. Congratulations, Lei and get well fast!

GODSPEED! To Nobuhiko YAGI who left on August 13 (By way of SFO and LAX) and Giovanni ZEVOLA who left on August 11 (he'll spend time with his mother in Naples till Aug. 30), both for the U.S.. Nobu will follow the IRF course in St. Louis and Giovanni will take Psychology courses at a school near Washington, DC. Both of them will be away for about a year. **THANK YOU** to Nobuhiko for his latest production of computer graphics: the tasteful 50th Anniversay poster with an Oblate, armed with a cross, facing the horizon of the Third Millenium (interpretation is mine). Nobuhiko's address in the U.S. (I still have to find out Giovanni's):

Notre Dame Hall, 3753 West Pine, PO Box 56907, St. Louis, MO 63156-0907

AVAILABLE: "Statistics of the Catholic Church in Japan 1997" (English and Japanese), CBCJ. I will try to obtain copies of this for everyone. Also: English summaries of the speeches made by the Japanese bishops during the Synod on Asia. And, Updated list of Priests, Religious, Deacons



in Japan (sisters not included), for private circulation only. This has been put together by the Association of Major Religious Superiors. Since the material is voluminous, I will only keep one set at the Provincial Office.

FROM THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL: The Provincial Council had a short meeting while the Vocation Camp was in progress in Kochi last August 6th. Among the things discussed and approved was to propose to give the Honorary Oblate Award to Mr. Akihiko KIDO of Nakajimacho Parish also, along with Mr. Takayoshi Kondo of Aki. It was in consideration of comments from some of you that by awarding these two faithful cooperators of the Oblates with the Honorary Oblate Award, we will be giving honor to all the generous people, past and present, who have walked with us in our 50 years history. The two of them will be recommended to the Superior General for the recognition. The next Provincial Council Meeting is scheduled for October 17, in Itami.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN. WHERE WE ARE. WHERE WE WANT TO GO. (An Ongoing Reflection On the Oblates' Apostolic Presence In the Church of Japan On the Occasion of the 50th Year Anniversary of the Founding of the Mission.) I propose that we take this simple guide as spiritual preparation for our coming 50th Anniversary celebration. We want our celebration to be our stepping stone to the future and the future starts from where we are at this very moment. The *millenium bug* that everyone is talking about will not affect humans the way it is expected to affect computers, we can be sure of that. There will be no automatic change in us when the clock strikes to usher the year 2000. But the invitation is there for us to accept or to reject the challenge and promise of the future. The General Chapter will give us guidelines but nothing will move in the whole congregation or the Vice Province if individuals are not ready for a change. Why do we have to change? Because there is already a "radical social transformation" (*Instrumentum Laboris*) that has made our workplace so different from what it was 50 years ago.

Where is the Spirit leading the Congregation in the eve of the Third Millenium? Where is the Spirit leading the Vice Province in the face of all the social ills and material affluence that surround us? What are our strengths and where are our weaknesses as a group and as individual Oblates?

Some of us feel the weight of our years while a few have been slowed down by health problems. This is God's ways of telling us that the work is His and we are just His cooperators. The young Oblates who have joined in the recent years are here to continue the work that have started with our founding fathers. We have to continue to strive to seek out more young people to join us so that the dream that Eugene De Mazenod envisioned will continue.

In my conversations with some of you, I have been enriched by your thoughts which I want to mention here: "We are all conditioned by the kind of families we come from, the training we received, the culture to which we were born..." If I may add my own comments: "May we learn how to make our differences complement each other for the sake of the Kingdom." One of you told me: "A few of us come from dysfunctional families and that is one reason that some find it very difficult to trust people." My own comment: I have known people who come from broken families but were great contributors to community life. It can't be helped that, in other occasions, pessimistic attitude towards the future would come out from somewhere but my attitude remains, there is only one option left for us, **TO MOVE FORWARD!**

TO THE DISTRICT SUPERIORS: Please go over the text of "Where...where... where" and lead your own District to a reflection on our past, present and future. The instructions are simple enough and if you want to add a few other ways that will lead to the same results, please feel free to do so. When I come back from the General Chapter, I will just be happy to attend the meetings of the different Districts.

LOOKING AHEAD... Spring Meeting in 1999 is scheduled for March 22 (night) - 26 (noon). Archbishop Orly Quevedo (Cotabato, Philippines) and Hank Mattimore (USA) have accepted the invitation to give us input.

Wency Laguidao, OMI



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Vice Province of Japan

**Where We Have Been
Where We Are
Where We Want To Go**



An Ongoing Reflection on the Oblates' Apostolic Presence In the Church of Japan
On the Occasion of the 50th Year Anniversary of the Founding of the Mission

I Where We Have Been

1.1 A Journey To Our Own Past:

As the Vice Province of Japan celebrates its 50th Year of mission, we feel it opportune to look back at our own history, tracing back our own footsteps, and re-living the moments when we were younger, full of enthusiasm and vigor. As we journey to our past, we will find people who are no longer with us, either because they have joined their Maker or because of different circumstances have gone back to their home Province or have left the Oblates. But those of us who have stood forth through thick and thin might also want to stop and think and marvel at the wonder of still being here!

We can also try to re-live the different moments in our short history through past events that were either joyful or sad, important or petty, big or small, significant or insignificant. Although many of us were not around at the inception of the mission, we can try to imagine the fear and anxiety that accompanied our founding fathers when they first came. For example, when they made their first call on the Bishop of Osaka and there was only one *hibachi* (coal heater) to heat the entire bishops' house, how cold must it had been!

1.2 The Hands of God In Our History

Our celebration should be in the spirit of Thanksgiving. We are but instruments of God's plan and nothing else. There is nothing we can claim as our accomplishment on our own. Whatever gains we can talk of are God's and his Church. As we look back, we will remember faces and events. There are faces and events that we fondly recall as well as faces and events that we faintly remember or those that we want buried into oblivion.

When everything would have been said about the efforts of the Oblates, when the flowers will have withered and the wine consumed and all the guests will have gone home, what would we be left with? Just bills to be paid? We hope not!

Where do we see the hands of God in our 50 years of history as a group entrusted with His mission? An honest reflection will lead us to the marvels of His work. In Shikoku, we may not be able to talk of huge numbers and massive structures, but we can surely pinpoint where the fingerprints of God are in the modest accomplishments of Oblates, may they be in far flung towns of Aki or Nakamura or the suburban parish of Itami or Koga.

As we celebrate our 50 years, let us "look for the fingerprints of God" in the mission. We will not need the magnifying lens of a detective to find them. We will give thanks to Him for the works he has accomplished through the Oblates. We will celebrate the fact that God was with us in our 50 years of history and pray that he will accompany us as we enter the Third Millennium.

Some helpful texts for reflection:

- ◇ Call of Abraham: "Go to a land that I will show you" (Gn 12) - fear, uncertainty, anxiety that accompanied Abraham.
- ◇ Missioning of the disciples: "Go and preach the Good News..." (Mt 28:19)
- ◇ CC&RR: Foreword and Preface
- ◇ 50th Anniversary Album
- ◇ Add other texts you find appropriate, including pictures of years

1.3 Our Plan of Action

1.3.1 FOR THE DISTRICTS:

- ◇ Ask an "elder" member of the district to recall and relate the early days of the Oblates in Japan. This will be most profitable for the new and later members of the Vice Province. The elder should remember the earliest days he can recall. Who were the Oblates then? What were the significant events? What were the challenges? How did the Oblates respond to the challenges? Where did we succeed? Where did we fail?
- ◇ WHERE AND HOW DO WE SEE THE HANDS OF GOD IN OUR HISTORY?
-Try to enumerate them.
- ◇ Ask each one to relate to the group what made him come to Japan.
- ◇ PRAY for the repose of the soul of those who died: Frs. R. Gill, D. Ward, L. Robitaille, G. Stevens, etc. PRAY for those who have left the mission/Oblates.

1.3.2 PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- ◇ WHERE DO I SEE THE HANDS OF GOD IN MY OWN HISTORY?
-Try to recall as many instances as you can.

1.3.3 GOAL:

The purpose of this exercise is to find God in our history as a Vice Province as we celebrate our 50th year. It is in knowing our history that we can have a meaningful celebration. We want to AFFIRM each other. We want to say to each other: "YES, after 50 years, what you are doing is truly Oblate." "YES, what you are doing is still meaningful." "YES, you were part of the past 50 years and will still be in the next 50."

1.3.4 TIMETABLE

District Meeting during the months of OCTOBER and NOVEMBER should be ideal for this.

Psalm Prayer

(For Group and Individual Reflection)

Read and reflect on PSALM 90

Lord, you have been our refuge age after age... To you, a thousand years are a single day,
a yesterday now over, an hour in the night.... You brush men away like waking dreams,
they are like grass sprouting and flowering in the morning,
withered and dry before dusk... Our days dwindle under your wrath,
our lives are over in a breath
Our life lasts for seventy years, eighty with good health...

II Where We Are

III Where We Want To Go

1.1 The next step or steps are preparation for a PROVINCIAL CONGRESS. We will look at WHERE WE ARE and discern WHERE WE WANT TO GO from here. This will call for an honest evaluation of our involvements. We keep in mind that "there is no ministry that is foreign to us..." (RR2) but at the same time recognize, in the words of *Instrumentum Laboris*, that we face a radical social transformation that demands a change in ourselves in order to respond to the demands of the Gospel and the crying needs of the poor. (No. 6)

1.2 WHERE DO WE STAND AS A MISSIONARY GROUP IN JAPAN? What are the challenges that face us? How do we respond to those challenges? How do those challenges differ from the challenges faced by our founding fathers 50 years ago?

1.3 CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE MISSION: This is another way of saying that there is an "Asianization" of the mission. What are the implications? What does it mean really to be "Asian?" Are our Asians no more than western-trained/ oriented Asians? What is the new role of non-Asians in the mission?

1.4 POST-CHAPTER VICE PROVINCE: What will be the demands on us of the General Chapter of 1998?

1.5 SPRING MEETING, 1998: Please refer to the "Collation".

1.5.1 MISSION: Asianization, Parish Ministry, Specialized Ministry, Vocation, Laity.

1.5.2 OBLATE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY:

Importance of Oblate Meetings, Quality of Our Communication, Directory of Policies for the Vice Province, Common Project.

1.6 TIMETABLE: DECEMBER, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY.

Preparation by Districts for the SPRING MEETING of 1999.

Provincial can go around to report on the General Chapter to the different Districts.

SPRING MEETING, 1999: March 22 (Monday-night) to March 26 (Friday-noon)

INPUT will be given by Mr. Hank Mattimore on OBLATE LAY ASSOCIATES and Archbishop ORLY QUEVEDO, OMI who will talk on the Effects of GLOBALIZATION. (Both input speakers have been confirmed)

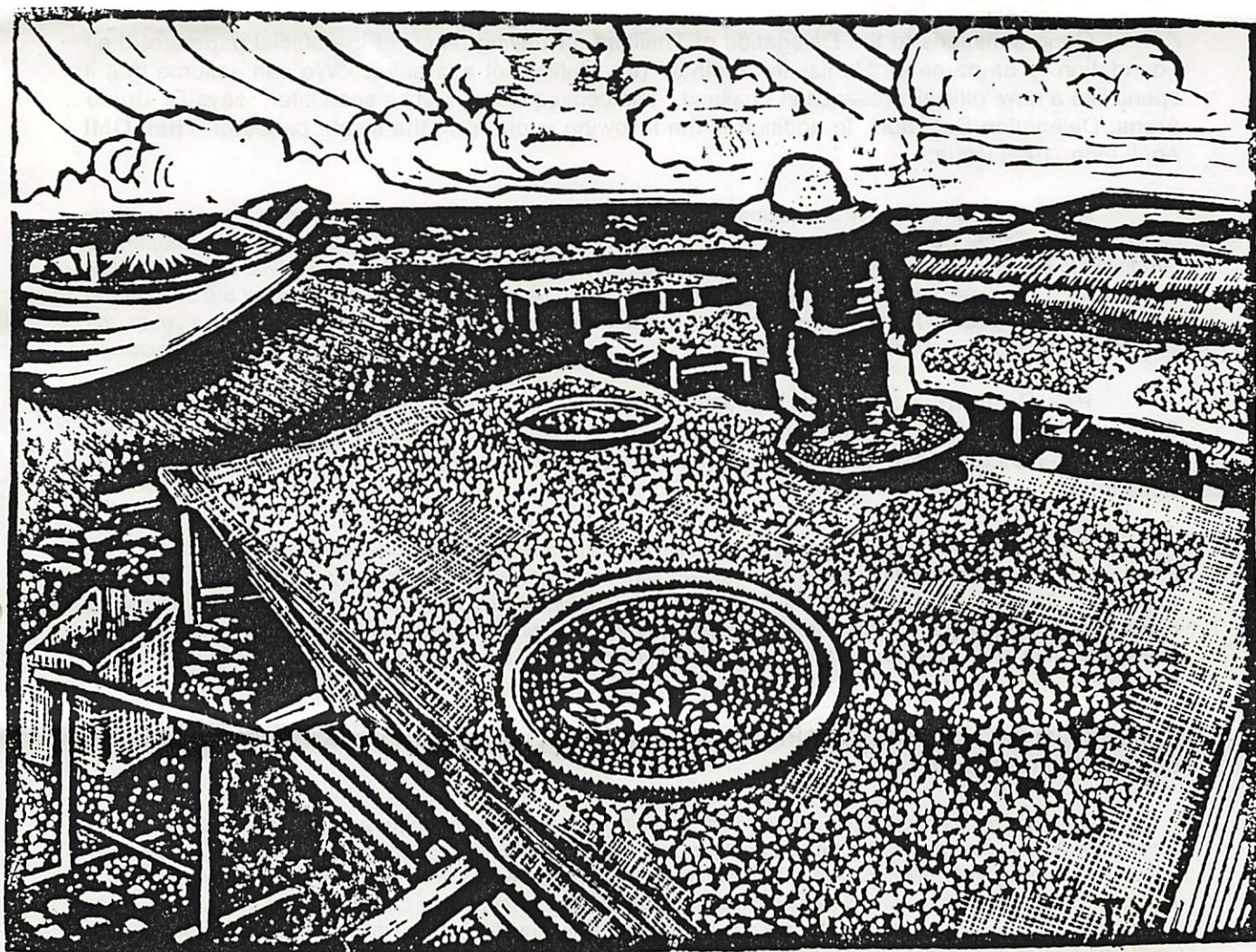


OMI INFORMATION

JAPAN

Provincial Newsletter of the OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
Vice Province of Japan

AUTUMN 1998



From the Provincial Desk:

Wency Laguidao, OMI

If Jan sticks to his schedule, this issue of the newsletter will be out just about the time when the General Chapter is starting to wind up. The new Superior General will have been named. Since I am writing this more than a month before the deadline, I would like to share with you the treasure of thoughts that have come through the Provincial mail. One of the joys of being a Provincial is to receive newsletters and letters from all over the Oblate world. I would like to share with you some of those treasures in the form of articles or simply news or letters that I have encountered in the mail:

As we seek to en flesh the reality of Apostolic Community on a local or district level, our challenge is to develop the kinds of structures that will truly support and empower Oblate life and mission under the leadership of the local or District Superior/Director. We are being invited first of all, to develop a climate of trust among ourselves. Trust is essential within community if growth and development are to take place. Without a growing capacity to choose to trust one another, we will never be free to share our life together in any meaningful way, nor will we be motivated to develop a missionary plan of action that is truly collaborative. (by Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI, **Eastern US Newsletter**, June 1998)

Congratulations to the Delegation of Thailand for having received the official papers of their Foundation. The name is "Munlanithi Anothai," (translation not available). "We can assume that it opens like a new 'official' presence in Thailand. The consequences will be seen later," says Fr. Bruno Arens, Delegation Superior. In addition is the following quote from the inside pages of **Thai OMI** April-June, 1998 issue:

Here in Thailand we have mountains of trash. The sites are not big enough to receive all the refuse of the cities. Even villages now have their trash site. New sites have to be found. In some places, people are struggling to bar them in their territories, but most of the time, they have to accept "the law of necessity," the "law of progress."... Besides the trash the municipalities collect, you have the trash which is spread out all over the place: the human trash. The preparatory texts of the General Chapter make long lists of them: the youth, the women, the aged, the disenfranchised... We may say that we find all of them here in Thailand: not one is missing..

Pak Bulletin is the simple but tastefully layed-out newsletter of the Pakistan Delegation. It's Superior, Fr. Victor Gnanapragasam told me during the meeting in Sri Lanka last March: "Wency, you were just preparing to leave for Japan the last time I saw you, 23 years ago." From the July issue of **Pak Bulletin**:

In spite of the chaotic events the pastoral life in Quetta Parish goes on unabated. On April 30, 1998 the Principal of St. Francis' Grammar School and two staff members were abducted by a Member of Provincial Assembly. They were released after a few hours... The death of Bishop John Joseph in Faisalabad had its repercussions in Quetta too. The Christians wanted to protest against the Blasphemy Law in a big way... Similar to the aftermath of an earthquake one could still feel the tremors of Quetta problems from time to time... but life goes on...

From the **Northern US Province Newsletter**, July-August issue, I found the following quote from an article by Hank Mattimore:

As the Oblates begin their second year of their domestic lay missionary program, the door is open to other Catholic couples (as well as single people) to join the Oblates in serving the poor and disadvantaged of our society. According to Fr. Ullrich there are at least two other couples with children who are considering applying to be lay missionaries. There are currently ministry opportunities in Florida and California with another site in the Lowell, MA area expected to be open in the coming year. Oblate Lay Missionaries make a two year commitment to work with Oblate priests or brothers in their mission to the poor. Lay missionaries are provided with food, lodging, health insurance and a modest stipend.

BORN (acronym for Bharath Oblate Regional News) is the newsletter of the OMI Indian Delegation. It rejoices in the reappointment of Fr. Anthony Jeevaratnam as Delegation Superior. Congratulations, Fr. Jeeva!

From COSMIC (July issue) newsletter of the Australian Province, Pat Moroney expresses his delight in the inroads being made by the Delegation of China:

One of the most pleasant surprises that I received on my recent visit to our Delegation of China was to discover that one of our most traditional ministries as de Mazenod Oblates, that of Mission and Retreat Preaching, has finally been practised in mainland China... In May of this year Fr. Chai was invited by the Rector of the Minor Seminary in the city of Lo-ho ... to preach a two day retreat to thirty minor seminarians... In many respects the invitation from the priests to preach in the diocese is an acknowledgment of the great work done by Fr Chai in recent years in many parts of Northern China, his own birthplace.

From the OMI Philippines Newsletter, June-July issue:

O God! Send us fools, those who commit themselves totally, those who forget themselves, those who love in more than words, those who truly give their lives until the end. Give us fools proud and fiery, men capable of making the leap to insecurity, to the surprises and uncertainties of poverty... part of the Poem dedicated by Fr. Cyril Canning to Fr. Ben Leandicho on the occasion of the later's 50th Year of religious profession.

Many Oblates have written to wish me well on my appointment as Provincial. I take this opportunity to thank them all and I would like to quote parts of some of the letters that I received:

I assure you of my prayer and support... Fr. Marcello Zago, Rome ... Best wishes on your appointment...Fr. Tom Singer, Saint Paul, MN, U.S.A.

By now I would expect that you have taken up the reigns of office and are engrossed in the joys and sorrows of being Provincial. Congratulations once again and this is just a brief note to wish you every blessing and success in the years ahead. Sometimes I feel that the bigger Provinces are easier to cope with than the smaller ones with fewer personnel... In wishing you well in your new role I am well aware that you face special problems with regard to having very few personnel and also an ageing Province. You also have the joy as well as the problems of a delegation. In that respect we are in similar boats. Hopefully you will receive some young Oblates from the Asian region and possibly even one or two from Poland. Anyway, I extend to you my best wishes.... from Fr. Pat Moroney, Provincial of Australia and President of AORC.

Congratulations... you may not be seeing it a very felicitous occasion, but I do want to assure you of my best wishes... Ange has done a lot in his 12 years, I don't wish you as many!... You can build on that, and with new young blood, both native and foreign, I feel the future is bright... Fr. Ron LaFramboise, Rome.

Fr. Philippiiah Jesunesan, Provincial of Jaffna, sends a friendly reminder: *Fr. James Jeyachandran who is missioned in Korea, belongs to your Province, and I trust you will take good care of him.*

Among the many responses to the invitations to our 50th Anniversary that we sent out are the following:

... I would love to come to Kochi for the celebration, though I did little to be remembered... I am now 81 and would prefer not to travel alone, just in case, I shall gather up some of my old photographs and either bring them or send them to you... Bill McLaughlin (former Oblate) West Virginia, USA.

After so many years, it doesn't seem at all strange to be writing to you. Although I'm sure that the smiling face I hold in my memory has probably gathered a few wrinkles by now. Mine has wrinkles galore, much, much thinner hair and a lot less of it... Faxed letter to Ray Bourgoin from Bob Kellen (former Oblate) NC, U.S.A.

I shall make every effort to attend... Fr. Pat Healy, OMI

I love to be with you on this grace-filled occasion. However, I'm no longer your General Councillor. I'm just a poor Bishop of Jolo. My wings have been clipped! Bishop Lito Lampon, Jolo, Philippines

I'm trying to line up my trip to Japan... Are Ichinose-san et al planning to come to Kochi? Fr. Dave Ullrich, Provincial, Western US via e-mail.

From Mauro:

The Beginnings of the On-going Formation Program For the Young Oblates in the Japanese Province

The Korean Mission was opened as part of the Japanese Province in May 1990. Within two years four Italian Oblates were sent to this new mission. They were all young, in their late twenties or early thirties. In the mean time, Japan had two young Japanese Oblates after almost 30 years! Not only. Two young Oblates from Sri-Lanka were sent as missionaries to Japan in September 1994. After many years the Japanese Province had among his members eight young Oblates to bring new life to the Province.

The Province had to address to this presence: as everywhere else in the Congregation young Oblates need time and proper space. They feel the need to be together, discuss about their own problems, and have some fun.

The first step was the visit of Fr. Marcello Zago (Superior General) to Korea and Japan. The whole Province gathered for the annual retreat in Fukuoka and the General Father was the preacher. The young Oblates met informally with Fr. Zago one night. That was the occasion for some sharing among them. At the end of the retreat the young Oblates stayed together for two extra days. They took a trip to Nagasaki and visited the city. That was the kick off of the on-going program for the young Oblates in the Japanese Province. Vincenzo, Giovanni, Maurizio, Mauro (from Korea) Yagi, Bradly and Jude (from Japan) were present.

The following year, 1995, the young Oblates gathered for three days in Fukuoka. It was right before the annual retreat in September. An American Jesuit from the Sophia University in Tokyo was the input person. The chosen theme was Spiritual Direction. Probably, the best part of the gathering was the sharing held one night. Every body shared with simplicity his life in the mission, his difficulties, and his pains. They felt that that was what they were looking for: a place where they could share with others. In fact the inputs on Spiritual Direction, though very good, were not what they were looking for. More than intellectual stuff they felt the need for a space where they could share. They also enjoyed the time they spent together bowling or going to see a soccer match downtown Fukuoka. It was decided to move in that direction and to hold the next meeting in Korea. Present to the meeting were: Giovanni, Vincenzo, Mauro, Maurizio (from Korea) and Leo, Yagi, Bradly, Jude (from Japan).

Maurizio and Mauro were put in charge of the preparation of the following year meeting in Korea. Based on the experience of the previous meeting, they suggested to the group to have moments of sharing but with a capable and experienced person present. That person could help them to understand the joy, the difficulties and the pain of the missionary life. Fr. Cotter, a Columban Irish priest with many years of experience in Korea, was chosen and invited to steer the gathering.

By Mauro Concardi, OMI.
November 30, 1997
Seoul - Korea

From Bill:

I feel like, since I just met most of you at the retreat, this isn't so necessary, but I thoroughly enjoyed getting together again and getting away from the normal routine at Koga. Now I'm enjoying the company of Jimmy, Jerry and Howard.

I found the retreat excellent and Benoit's ability to give well constructed, meaningful conferences in one half hour time frames was great. Makes you want to put more time in on your own sermon preparation! The three short questions at the end helped focus the meditation after the talks and I'll take his one quote to the grave with me, "Fathers love these people because anything else is BS!"

It's been good to get back into the regular schedule after the vacation and the 3 catechetical courses and 2 prayer groups are started again. The group of leaders that we've been training seems to be progressing well and the children's education program is promising too. The children really enjoyed the summer camp and word has it that the pastor didn't want to leave the swimming pool because he liked the water slide so much. A 60 year old kid!

At the Sept. parish council meeting we studied the Japanese bishops' talks at the Asian Synod and I was surprised at how well everyone got into the sharing as well as the fact that a lot of them took reading material home for further study.

I'm praying for the Chapter and by the time this comes out we should know our new leadership and some of the paths the Spirit is leading us on by the work of the Chapter. May he give us all the grace to travel them in the next 50 years. See you at the 50th celebration.

Bill

From Xave:

Dear Friends

Since I don't have any classes at the Reform School (Junior High school level) I could attend the annual retreat. It was almost a custom NOT to attend the retreats. The classes at the universities begin on October the 1st only. At the retreat house we had still hot summer weather. Half of the number of the Oblates attending the spiritual lectures wore their shorts. There was a time that we were wrapped in a long cassock with our big Oblate cross at the side...In the trees around the house, the cicadas sang away their September hymns. They don't change their habits.

While many Oblates are busy preparing the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the OMI in Japan, I am helping the Japanese Bishop Conference with their annual "All Japan Meeting of the Justice and Peace Council". This will be held in Matsuyama on Shikoku from the 9th untill the 11th of October. I am sure there will be other Oblates beside myself. My sincere hope is that the gathering will contribute to the awareness of our evangelical mission in society as Christians and as Oblates.

Before going to the retreat house, I visited Fr. John Iwoo in his new parish of Yoshizuka (Fukuoka city). That is very near the Fukuoka airport. Under the steaming broad daylight sun, the Christians were cleaning the compound around church and rectory. John was doing his part. He also showed the beautiful outstation, about 30 minutes(?) from the main parish. In fact it seems to me that he has two parishes to serve. His flock seem to be of the "working" people, not from the bourgeoisie. The church is surrounded by many small factories. John had only one "big" complaint: no big supermarket nearby...

The Kochi Prefectural Education Board has asked me to become a member of their preparatory council on Human Rights. In two years time a paper has to be made on Human Rights Education. This is for the 50th anniversary of the

United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. If anyone among you can give me some ideas or information, or where to get ideas and information about human rights education, I would be very pleased and grateful. I have the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights, but how to educate people in Japan to be aware of other persons' rights, doesn't seem easy. All seem to know their rights, but not many people are conscious of their obligation towards others' rights.

My health isn't doing bad. During the retreat days, many of the Oblates heard my breathing. I have trouble breathing out. So I don't get enough good air coming in...I myself I don't hear my breathing anymore. People around me worry more than I do. The most difficult time for me, was climbing the last stairs in Kokura station to catch the bullet train. I had to pull myself up with both hands, using the side ramp...but I made it!!!

Xave Yoshikazu Tosa omi

From Jan:

With the intention of listing our new General Administration I have delayed the closing of this Fall Newsletter for a couple of days.

WELCOME to our new SUPERIOR GENERAL

Father Guillermo STECKLING

and to

THE NEW GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

With our prayers for the Lord's blessings upon everyone of them and upon the whole Congregation and upon everyone they work with and work for.

Eagerly waiting to become acquainted!

Jan

News from Hoya

保谷便り

Actually I wrote this before attending the Retreat in Fukuoka, so much of it will probably be "old" news since we, hopefully, will have done some sharing and updating in the evenings during the Retreat!

In August, I had the pleasure of taking 6 hearing teachers of the deaf to 2 American schools for the deaf and 4 colleges that offer programs for the deaf. While in D.C., I was also able to steal away for an afternoon to visit the home office of the International Catholic Deaf Association which will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary next June.

The American Sign Language Class at Sophia which started this past April has been a real treat to teach. Absolutely amazing how the students, who were notorious for skipping other classes, haven't missed or even been late for the ASL Class. Twice a month, I invite deaf Japanese who can sign in ASL to the class and it's proven to be an invaluable experience for the students. First of all, most of them had never met a deaf person before, so it's been a real eye opener for them to learn about the lives of deaf people. Moreover, they find it not only challenging but very rewarding to be able to communicate with these deaf friends of mine without using their voices!

The Bible Course at Junshin University has finally turned into a great class. What I didn't do last year and should've done was to ask the students to come to class with questions that they have about God, the Bible, Christianity, faith etc. It's made a world of difference. They actually fax me in advance to ask if I would discuss such and such in the next class. I've kept a record of the questions that they've asked and will gladly make copies for anyone who may be interested. Their questions are a great hint as to how some young people view such subjects as God, the Bible (and its interpretation), Christianity, religion, religious life, faith, life, death etc.

On the 27th of September, we will have the first baptism of a deaf adult in quite some time. Of course, it doesn't surprise me that there has been such a dry spell between baptisms! Deaf people who feel drawn to Christianity tend to gravitate to the Protestant Sects where there are many ministers who are deaf themselves.

With that, I think I'll bring this note to a close.

Take care. Enjoy!

Jack

保谷便り

実はこれは福岡で開催された黙想会に行く前に作った文章なのです。だから、内容は古いニュースかもしれません。何故かと言いますと、黙想会の期間中は毎晩情報交換をしましたので、これを皆さんが読む頃には新しい情報ではなくなっている可能性もあるからです。さて、8月に豊学校で教えている健聴の先生6人をアメリカの豊学校2校、豊学生の為のプログラムを提供する大学4校に連れて行きました。良い収穫を得た旅でした。ワシントンに居る間に国際カトリック豊連盟の本部に行くチャンスもありました。その豊連盟も今創立50周年記念大会の準備をしている所でした（うちの50周年記念大会の準備委員会もどんなに大変か、分かるような気がしました）

今年の4月から上智で始まったアメリカの手話の講義は、とてもやりがいがあります。講義を良く休む事で有名な学生でさえ、この講義は一度も遅刻も欠席もせず、こちらとしてはびっくり仰天でした。月に2回、アメリカの手話が出来る日本人のろうあ者の方に来て頂いて交流会を開いたりしています。それは学生にとっては、滅多にない貴重な経験であるようです。何故なら学生のほとんどがろうあ者に会った事もなく、ろう者自身から彼らの体験談は、目を見張るような事であるからです。なお、学生にとって、声がなくてもコミュニケーションするという事は、ただ魅力的で興味をそそるという事だけではなく、やり甲斐のある勉強のひとつとしてとらえられているようです。

純心で開かれた聖書の講義については、実は私は去年の時点では教えるのが嫌だったのです。けれどやっとやり甲斐を見つけました。最近では授業の前に学生に、神や聖書、キリスト教の信仰などについての質問を考えて貰い、FAXで知らせて貰うという事をするようになりました。学生の方から自発的に質問をして貰うか貰わないかというのは雲泥の差で、それによって学生の方から興味を持って貰えるようになったのです。彼らの作って来た質問があるので、興味のある方がいましたら、コピーしてお送りします。

9月27日に久しぶりに大人のろう者の洗礼式があります。前ろう者の方の洗礼式が開かれてから5年のブランクがありますが、このブランクの長さは珍しいことではありません。クリスチャンに興味があるろう者はほとんどがプロテスタントの方の派に入ってしまうのです。何故ならろうの牧師さんがいらっしゃるからなのです。

さて、ずいぶん長くなってしまいましたのでこの辺で終わりにします。楽しくやんなはれ！

ジャック

BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:

October

5 Ken'ichi FURUKAWA
10 Jan VAN HOYDONCK
13 Akio HORIUCHI
27 Xave TOSA
30 Bradley ROZAIRO

November

16 Howard TATEL

December

24 Mike YAMAZAKI

ORDINATIONS

Happy anniversary to:

October

1 Mauro CONCARDI
19 Maurizio GIORGIANNI

December

WELCOME !!

A warm welcome to our Philippine fellow-Oblates, Sc. Br. Heriberto "Jerry" C. VILLAS and Sc. Br. Howard P. TATEL.
May you feel 'at home' soon!

In your PRAYERS are recommended:

-- All those that have been recommended before; also our recently hospitalized fellow-Oblates, who - thanks be to God - are convalescing at their respective abodes; our other ailing and convalescent fellow-Oblates, relatives, friends and benefactors, and all who have asked for or count on our prayers.

Front Cover

The illustration on the front page is a linocut made by T(osa) Y(oshikazu). It represents the drying of small fish on the beach in Aki, between the church and the ocean.

NEXT ISSUE !!!

With my thanks to the contributors of this issue and looking forward to your contributions for the coming Christmas-New Year's issue of the Newsletter, may I ask the contributors (Everyone, I hope!) to have their messages in by December 10 ? And again, many thanks in advance!

50th Anniversary Thanksgiving Mass

Nakajima-cho, Kochi

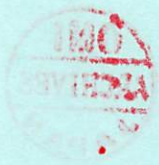
November 23, 1998, 11:00 AM



50th Anniversary Update

We are happy to announce that the following guests from abroad have expressed their intention to attend our celebration (as of October 22) alphabetical:

1. Fr. Angelo Daddio, OMI
Provincial, Province of Italy (confirmed)
2. Fr. Philippiiah Jesunesan, OMI
Regional Councilor for Asia (confirmed)
3. Mr. and Mrs. Bob Kellen
U.S.A. (confirmed)
4. Fr. Mark Kemseke, OMI
Bursar, Belgium-North (waiting confirmation)
5. Fr. Ron LaFramboise, OMI
Rome (confirmed)
6. Fr. Ed Lowney, OMI
U.S.A. (confirmed)
7. Mr. Hank Mattimore
U.S.A. (confirmed)
8. Mr. Bill McLaughlin
U.S.A. (confirmed)
9. Fr. Arthur Obin, OMI
Provincial, Northern U.S.A. (waiting confirmation)
10. Fr. Chris O'Leary, OMI
Superior, Scholasticate, Manila, Philippines (confirmed)
11. Fr. Bernard Quintus, OMI
Provincial, Sri Lanka (Confirmed)
12. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Quinn
U.S.A. (confirmed)
13. Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI
Provincial, Eastern U.S.A. (confirmed)
14. Fr. Dave Ullrich, OMI
Provincial, Western U.S.A. (confirmed)



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ALPHABETICALLY

We are happy to announce that the following series from almost half a century ago are now available in a new edition.

1. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

2. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

3. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

4. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

5. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

6. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

7. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

8. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

9. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

10. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

11. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

12. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

13. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)

14. In Angelo (1960) (continued)
Provincial, Province of Italy (continued)



More from the Mailbox....

Before I left for Rome, I found the articles attached from the newsletters of the Central and the Southern Provinces of the United States.

*The first article is about the election of **Father David Kalert, OMI** of the Central Province as the first Provincial of the conglomerated United States Province which is scheduled to be inaugurated on February 17, 1999.*

*The second article is by Father Charlie Banks, OMI, Provincial of the Southern U.S. Province entitled **QUO VADIS?***

I find this article apropos to our preparation for the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Vice Province.

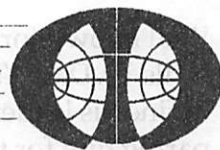
The same question is posed to us as we celebrate our 50th...

Quo vadis?

Wency Laguidao, OMI



Logo has been "pirated" from the poster prepared by the 50th Anniversary Preparation Committee.



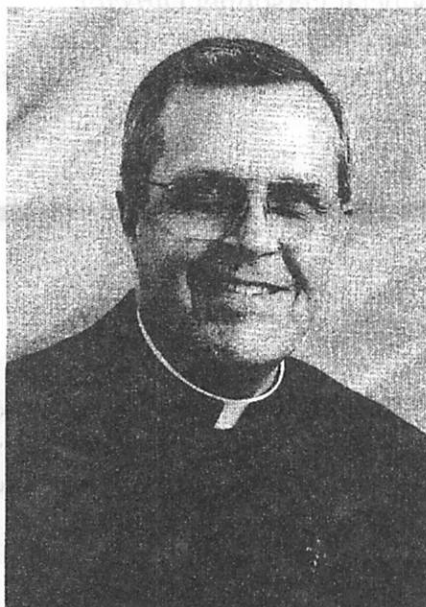
David Kalert, OMI

Provincial of the new United States Province

On the Feast of St. Eugene de Mazenod, May 21, 1998, members of the General Council in Rome selected Fr. David Kalert, OMI, as the first Provincial of the new United States Province.

The General Council also appointed Charles Banks, David Ullrich and Henry Lemoncelli as councillors-at-large. This administrative team will be installed on February 10, 1999, in Washington, DC, with celebrations in the six geographical areas. The new province will be officially inaugurated on February 17, 1999. The offices of the new province will be located in Washington, DC.

This spring, the five candidates for U.S. Provincial traveled far and talked at length with Oblates in the six geographical areas about their visions for the new province.



David Kalert, OMI

Capture the vision

In his presentations, Fr. Kalert described his hope that the leader-

ship for the new province would help keep alive the missionary vision and the sense of where the Oblates are going.

He also talked about his desire that the new province be very inclusive. "It is important," he stated, "that all participate since all are needed to carry out our ministry."

He expressed "hope for real apostolic communities, that we develop the idea of what it means to be missionary where we are, and know when it is time to move on."

He explained, "We have always said that, but we need to find a way to be together where the dynamic between community and mission can be richer and more fulfilling."



Background

Well known for his administrative skills, Fr. David's background helps define his leadership abilities, preparing him for the new position of U.S. Provincial. (See "Ministries" below.)

As the current president of the Oblate Conference of the U.S. (OCUS), Fr. David has been deeply involved with the planning for the restructuring and has worked closely with

men from all the provinces in addressing issues of concern to all.

A message from Rome

The General Council in Rome made the following statement announcing the appointment of the new U.S. team:

"We congratulate those who were called to the service of authority, and we thank them for accepting to

carry it out. May St. Eugene guide them in their animation and may he accompany all of you in your first efforts as a new province under his patronage."

Prayers and best wishes

The assurance of prayers are with Fr. David and the administrative team as they venture into a new tomorrow and prepare for the next millenium as one province.■

Ministries

1965-69: Instructor, St. Henry's Prep Seminary
1969-70: Lewis College, MA Degree, Northern Illinois University
1970-73: Dean of Students/Teacher, St. Henry's Prep Seminary
1973-79: Vocation Director
1980-81: Superior, St. Henry's Prep Seminary
1981-87: Provincial Personnel Director
1987-93: Missionary Association Director
1993 - Present: Provincial, Central U.S. Province

NOTICE:

AREA CODE CHANGE FOR ST. PAUL

Effective July 12, 1998, the 651 area code will replace 612 in St. Paul, MN. There will be a six-month transition period when both area codes can be used. On January 10, 1999, the new area code 651 will be mandatory.

Oblate numbers affected, both office and personal, include:

- Provincial Office
- Oblate Residence "104"
- St. Casimir's
- St. Mary's

Please note these changes in your records. Thank you.■

QUO VADIS?

Article by Charles Banks, OMI

Legends tend to have different versions. One such account has to do with St. Peter fleeing Rome. It was during the first persecution of the Church after the event of Pentecost. While trying to escape, St. Peter received a vision of Jesus who posed the question, "Quo vadis?" – (Where are you going?). Peter ended up returning to Rome where he continued his leadership until he was martyred.

The deeper our love for a person, the keener will be the attention we direct toward that individual. Any criticism of the person will be pronounced, especially if we detect harmful and dangerous flaws. The same kind of personal solitude can be directed toward an entire family or group, such as a religious community. Today one could ask the question of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the United States, "QUO VADIS?"

Ever since the days of the II Vatican Council and our 1966 General Chapter, the Oblates in the US – and other areas of the world, too – have felt their foundation shake. Much of this "shake up" has been good and even replete with positive developments and surprises. One of the first results flowing from the spirit and letter of these world-wide gatherings in Rome was the establishment of a central novitiate in Godfrey, IL. Today it is sponsored by the five US Oblate Provinces. Our membership was also introduced to corporate or processed decision making. Each of our provinces has likewise relinquished a sizeable number of once-thought-to-be "sacred" ministerial sites in order to accept new ones elsewhere. Missions staffed by Oblates from the US have opened in places like Puerto Rico and Zambia. To the surprise of many, since 1985 three American-born Oblates have been ordained as bishops and named – a first in history – as heads of US dioceses. These scattered statistics "scratch the surface" and provide a sampling of shifting trends in our collective life as a missionary religious community in this land.

QUO VADIS?

On the downside, we Oblates – like many other religious communities in our land – have been in numerical decline since the late sixties. In a series of judgment calls, we can be

rather safe in stating that values from the US secular culture have penetrated our lives. Individualism has more than once identified a member's insistent choice of a ministry. Our external image as religious has been blurred. Formerly, all of us in final vows were readily recognized by our distinctive cross, cincture and cassock. Signs and symbols are important in any period of history. The worst aspects of "personalism" have watered down or done away with customs and practices that once shaped our religious "culture" and esprit de corps. A few members of the laity have even been heard whispering that we Oblates have lost our sense of piety – in the best sense of that word.

It is useless to pine for the so-called "good old days" of the past. To dream with our back to the future is probably a sin of mistrust in the Lord. Yet, if we are going to survive and move into the future, will we not need to once again gain a new sense of focus for our communal life and ministries? Have we allowed individualism to re-shape us as "a jack of all trades and a master of none"?

If we don't know what we are about, we will most likely continue to experience problems and flounder along the way. It seems to me we may have somehow side-stepped the basic, foundational truth that Oblates are first and foremost consecrated, men religious. Because of that freely embraced public commitment, we are necessarily meant to be different from other people. Our style of life will have its own set of accepted rules and boundaries. Our vision for mission and ministry has been handed down to us in the charism – the appeal and personal magic – left to us by St. Eugene De Mazenod, OMI.

QUO VADIS?

Focused missionary activity and apostolic community life were two specific marks of identity St. Eugene bequeathed to his Oblates.

Missionary activity during the time of DeMazenod meant proclaiming the Gospel to the poor by means of parish missions, involving members with associations of youth, and providing pastoral care for the imprisoned. Sending missionaries to the ends of the then known earth later became his passion.

Without hesitation we can state the Lord has blessed us Oblates and our missionary efforts. We are found today outside the US in close to sixty

countries. But sometimes we allow ourselves to remain too long entrenched in ministries that dull our missionary touch. We can also end up becoming quasi-diocesan clergy which in turn waters down our religious charism.

Staffing parishes – often in remote, isolated areas and/or ethnic communities – has been the “crown jewel” of ministry for many Oblates in the US. Caring for a parish has been a favorite way of serving the poor. However, quite often this ministry places an Oblate alone in an assignment. Because many Oblates living and working by themselves are over-stretched in their commitments, they sometimes become disconnected from community life and support. Isolation does little for community living.

St. Eugene insisted on apostolic communities for his Oblates. He wrote volumes spelling out what he expected from his missionary priests and brothers. By his own example St. Eugene underlined the need for some expression of communal prayer or religious “exercises” in communities. Up until the II Vatican Council most Oblate communities had a private chapel and a schedule for daily times of communal, recited prayer. Then, in the excitement and exuberance that captivated much of the Church following the Second Vatican II Council, something happened. With little or no discernment, many of the former tried-and-tested forms of community prayer were abandoned (sometimes good reasons did stand behind such actions, especially when certain prayer “exercises” from another era no longer spoke the language of contemporary religious). Community chapels or oratories were frequently vacated. Some Oblates said they would prefer to pray, for example, with the laity in the parish church. Together they could take advantage of texts using the newly introduced vernacular prayers. Unfortunately, few of the discarded “exercises” that once punctuated Oblate life were replaced. Neither did the set time for prayer with the laity last long in many places.

Thus, a certain spiritual void in community life reared an ugly head. Today the importance of community prayer is regaining ground with many Oblates. If we Oblates are going to recapture the focus and spirit of St. Eugene, there will be the need to be comfortable with the supernatural in both external ministry and internal community life. This is the only way to be authentically true to the charism of St.

Eugene. It is also the way to end any suspicion that we Oblates may have lost our sense of the divine.

QUO VADIS?

On February 17, 1999, the Oblates in this land will regroup themselves in the new United States Province. Oblates one by one may want to ask themselves the question, “Quo vadis – Where are you going with this new endeavor?”

Individualism and exaggerated personalism will find little welcome in the new Province. On the other hand, generosity, flexibility and adaptability will be some of the needed attitudes of mind and heart of each Oblate.

Faith and Divine Providence tell us there is a reason for everything in life. Perhaps the slowing down of new vocational recruits entering communities like the Oblates has happened so the laity can catch up in taking their place in ministry. Maybe the Lord is pruning our number so that as religious we may become more authentic witnesses – similar to gospel leaven and salt. Just as only a little of these two ingredients is needed in preparing food, so too big numbers of religious are not necessary to bring the flavor of their charism to the Church. To bring the flavor of the Oblate charism into the time ahead, it would seem we will need to regain the focus and spirit of our Founder. That may be the key to our future.

Food for thought!

QUO VADIS?



November 14, 1998



Dear Brother Oblates,

A few days from now, we will be gathered in Kochi to give thanks to God for the 50 years that He has given us. We give Him thanks for accompanying us in this mission that originated from Him. We give Him thanks for the countless blessings he has bestowed on us through the peoples and events that have been part of the 50 years history of this mission. As we close a chapter of the mission, we start another one with the inspiration that our founding fathers had when they started 50 years ago. They started with only the bare essentials 50 years ago and though we are blessed with the advances of technology in our times, we certainly face tougher challenges than our founding fathers at the initial stages. Although we do not have marble cathedrals to boast about after 50 years, we can boast of how God has been with us even in the dreary life of a very small mission without the large numbers of conversions nor massive structures to talk of. Let us recall the words of Saint Paul: "If anyone wants to boast, let him boast of the Lord." (II Cor 10:17)

In the document for reflection that I sent earlier, namely, "**Where We Have Been. Where We Are. Where We Want To Go.**" (August, 1998) we asked ourselves: "Where do we see the hands of God in our 50 years of history as a group entrusted with His mission? An honest reflection will lead us to the marvels of His work."

Many of us are perusing the pages of the Anniversary Album at this time. The stories we tell about the early days, the tales told by people whose lives have been touched by Oblates in various ways, the pictures that have been resurrected from our old albums all tell of God's love for us. They are "God's fingerprints" in our 50 years history, the "marvels of His work."

I would like to take this occasion to thank the committee that prepared the album composed of Bill, Jan and Ray. May this album help us to understand where we are and serve us our guide to chart our future. Together, let us thank the Preparatory Committee of the Nakajimacho Parish which has spent months of preparing for this event.

Two of our faithful cooperators, **Mr. Takayoshi KONDO** and **Mr. Akihiko KIDO** will receive the Honorary Oblate Award during the ceremony on the 23rd. They will represent the many people who have dedicated their lives to the Oblate spirit in ways big and small, both in the past and the present. Words will not suffice to express our thanks to all of them. May God repay them for all their sacrifices for the mission.

We welcome all our guests especially those coming from abroad, starting with the Provincials (or representatives) of Provinces who have sent men to this mission (Eastern USA, Northern USA, Belgium-North, Sri Lanka, Jaffna, Italy, the Philippines), Oblates and former Oblates who were once part of this mission. We welcome **Fr. Philippiah JESUNESAN** who is making his first official trip as the Regional Councilor for Asia and will be representing the Superior General and the General Administration. Let us hope that they all have a pleasant visit.

See you in Kochi on the 23rd!

In the spirit of Saint Eugene De Mazenod,

Wency Laguidao, OMI



The 33rd General Chapter (1998)

Some Personal Notes
by

Wency Laguidao, OMI



rome was not all pasta!

On September 1, 1998, 113 delegates from across the Oblate world were gathered at the General House of the La Salle Brothers along Via Aurelia in Rome, familiar site for General Chapters in the past, to start the month-long meeting which has come down in the history of the congregation as the **General Chapter of 1998** or **33rd General Chapter**. The sprawling property of the brothers provided for an excellent venue for serious discussions, reflection and prayer that unfolded day after day for one full month. R & R were limited to hurried trips out of town on weekends or dining out on occasions just to break the monotony of the Chapter. But for some people, a month of pasta was basta, excuse the pun!

blessed with many talented oblates

The work done by the Precapitular Commission headed by Fr. Roland Jacques (France) prepared the delegates well as to what was expected during the Chapter. There were copious materials sent by postal or electronic mail before the Chapter to prepare the delegates for the great event. The **Instrumentum Laboris** was a product of that commission. During the Chapter itself, the very efficient Secretariat, headed by Fr. Peter Galloway (South Africa) and assisted by scholastics from the international and Italian scholasticates, kept us well posted of the ongoing proceedings and took care of our daily needs. There were mountains of materials made available to the voracious readers. For the more simple-minded ones, the schedule of the day which told of what to do and where to go was more than enough. The Steering Committee guided us through the daily schedule, leaving no stones unturned while seeing to it that no munity occurred because of a burdensome schedule. The Chapter Directory was followed very religiously. A layman's knowledge of parliamentary procedures was necessary in order not to be cited for being out of order. On matters that dealt with Canon Law, very precise language was used and tedious procedures were followed. The presence of Fr. Frank Morrissey, (St. Paul U, Ottawa) a world-renowned canonist made a big difference since the General Chapter is the highest decision-making body of the congregation and the decisions made there will have binding effects not only for the congregation but for the entire Church. Three major languages were used, French, English and Spanish with a few interventions made in Polish or German. Professional simultaneous translation was available and the excellent service easily broke the barriers of language. Seasoned moderators shifted from one language to another and tried to accomodate as many interventions from the floor as possible. It was smooth sailing all the way with just some signs of fatigue in the faces of a few capitulants but nothing in comparison to the privilege of being at the last Chapter of the millenium and the first since the canonization of the Founder.

first general chapter into cyberspace

It was also noted that it was the first Chapter where fax machines, e-mail, internet were used. The Chapter even had a webpage that could be visited for information and texts of documents, speeches, etc. (<http://www.omibom.org/chapter/chapter.html>) However, it was also admitted that as far as communications media were concerned, facilities were insufficient to the needs of the participants. The use of laptops by delegates was something new to the Chapter. The telephone system at the brothers could not accomodate the needs of people who were logging

into the internet at the same time. Others who were making phone calls to home at the same time even added to the near collapse of an old telephone system (Who said that the words "old" and "ancient" are redundant when you are in Rome?). But one could also ask: What did people do before the advent of all these modern conveniences?

invoking the holy spirit

Superior General for 12 years, Archbishop Marcello Zago, who became the secretary of the influential Curia for Evangelization of Peoples (Propaganda Fide), led the capitulants in invoking the Holy Spirit during the eucharist to mark the opening of the 1998 General Chapter. From the main chapel, the capitulants made a solemn procession to the Chapter Hall where all the deliberations during the Chapter would be made. The Chapter was officially declared open in accordance with the provisions in the Chapter Directory.

the first few days of the chapter

The report of Archbishop Zago on the state of the congregation was well-received. Resounding applause and standing ovation followed the delivery of his speech covering 12 years of administration under him. By now, many of us would have already read this report. It is a good report which enumerates the accomplishments and weaknesses of the congregation and the challenges that face us at the dawn of the Third Millennium. Major events of the past 12 years were: the fall of communism in eastern Europe leading to the (re)opening of several Oblate missions and the canonization of the Founder. The report also cites major setbacks faced such as the Balasuriya affair. Time for personal reflection and group discussion on the report followed allowing capitulants to raise questions or clarify points.

The report of the General Treasurer, Fr. Alfons Keuter, was also well-received. The Chapter acknowledged the financial stability that has been achieved due to restructuring of finances especially on the province level initiated by the Finance Committee. The Board of Directors of O.I.P. (Oblate Investment Pool) were also at hand to answer questions and receive suggestions regarding Oblate investments.

reports from the six regions

Each President of the six Oblate regions (Canada, U.S.A., Latin America, Asia-Oceania, Africa and Europe) gave his report on the state of his particular region. Underlying currents in all the reports are missionary zeal, a thirst for authentic Oblate community and spirituality and healthy signs of anxiety as we face the Third Millennium. Formation is also a major concern in all the regions.

we are mere earthen vessels

At least two regions reported a deep and painful experience of **vulnerability**. We are no longer the "men of God" on a pedestal and even our personal lives are no longer free from the scrutiny of the very people we have been sent to minister. The legal suits hurled against Oblates in many parts of the world have made us realize that we can be the source of misery and suffering of the people to whom we are supposed to bring the Love of God. Through this painful experience of being brought to answer for the sexual misconduct committed by our own brothers, both living and dead, both in the past and in the present, we have come to realize not only of our own vulnerability but also to accept the painful fact that we have wounded people through irresponsible actions. Lawyers have found a goldmine in bringing religious congregations to court for accusations that are either legitimate or simply motivated by greed. Many Provinces are just so paralyzed because of the number of legal suits brought against them. One Province has as many as 400 cases brought against it. Attending to these legal suits can be a fulltime job for the

Provincial. Large sums of money, which could have been spent in evangelization, are being wasted in legal battles that seem like endless tunnel that does not see the promise of light at the end.

lay associates

Lay associates of Oblates from different Provinces came during the opening days of the Chapter to express their unity with the congregation. These are very committed men and women who have dedicated their lives to the Oblate charism. The Chapter, while in agreement regarding the importance of the role of the laity in evangelization, fell short of a binding commitment to integrate them into our work. With regard to the lay associates, the Chapter was cautious in mentioning them in our Constitutions and Rules for fear that any inappropriate actions on their part will lead to more legal suits against the Oblates.

work on the third part of constitutions and rules

After the preliminaries, the capitulants buckled down to work on the Part 3 of the CC&RR. Revision of the parts that are obligatory in nature was easy. Some parts which have direct bearing on our life as Oblates took painstaking efforts to be finally revised. There were no heated discussions but nobody wanted rules just for the sake of having rules and to make rules that will be meaningful for an Oblate to attain the fullness of his vocation prevailed.

Since it will take sometime before the revised text of Part 3 of the CC&RR to come out, I will just mention here the revised parts which have direct effect on us. I have a copy of the provisional text (59 pages) and I will make one copy for each district. There is no need to multiply copies for everyone since the final copy is in the process of being printed. Please remember that the category "Vice Province" does not exist anymore, thus:

C75 The Congregation has four levels of organization: local, provincial, regional and general. While the aim of the regional level is coordination and collaboration in a given geographical area, the other three levels are governmental....

C76.... The Provinces, Delegations and Missions together make up the Congregation....

Under what category does the "Vice Province of Japan" fall? Are we automatically elevated to become a "Province"? Or, are we downgraded into a "Delegation"? C99 and R100b of the revised text say:

C99 Normally, a Province has attained and is able to maintain a satisfactory level of self-sufficiency. This entails sufficient personnel, suitable vocation and formation programmes, as well as a long-range financial stability.

R 100b Normally, a Province should have some forty members in order to assure a proper functioning and stability. If the number falls significantly below forty, the Superior General will initiate a dialogue with the Province leadership in order to address the situation and provide for the future.

The move to make the office of the Provincial extended to four years proved to be unpopular within the Congregation and among the capitulants, most of whom were Provincials. Three years with a possibility of reappointment are enough, as far as Provincials are concerned and for the rest: six years are enough to put up with one guy. This was the simple argument that thrashed the proposal.

Stress on the importance of the local community, whether house or district, has been the preoccupation of the General Chapter of 1992 especially in its document Witnessing As Apostolic

Community.

The 33rd General Chapter did not fall short in affirming the importance of local communities. Local communities are at the service of individuals. Individual Oblates have the right to belong to a local community but at the same time should be accountable to it. The following rule has been added to emphasize the importance of local community:

R94d Living together in community has, from the time of the Founder, been our ideal. Because of the mission, major superiors can allow an Oblate to live alone. In this case the Oblate will make every effort to participate intensely in the life of the district community or of the house to which he is attached. The situation of Oblates living alone is to be considered as temporary.

a process called "murmuratio"

First introduced during the Chapter in 1986, I was told, "murmuratio" as the word suggests is simply buzzing-around. The process was to prepare the capitulants for the election of the new Superior General. Each one was given a piece of paper with 15 minute slots for the whole day. One is to look for persons to talk to and compare notes, 15 minutes for each person. Everyone took the process seriously. We all felt that the Holy Spirit was working through us. One capitulant told me, "I get goose bumps, as if the Holy Spirit is right beside me." We were convinced that we had a candidate and when we cast our votes, we were unanimous in picking the man in the person of **Fr. Guillermo Steckling**. I couldn't help but notice how people openly cried when Guillermo finally got the two-thirds majority votes he needed, 76. In keeping with the provisions of the Chapter Directory, the new Superior General was immediately installed and started his term right after the balloting.

the role of the cross in the life of an oblate

During the Thanksgiving Mass the following day after he was elected, Fr. Steckling emphasized the role of the Cross in our life as Oblates. Holding his own Oblate cross to stress his point, he said that all of us carry our cross. Some of us are called to carry heavier cross than others. It is when we have made the Cross as part of our life as Oblates that we are united with Christ, in his suffering and in his glory.

When Fr. Steckling noticed that his name was top on the list after the straw voting, he asked to be given time to tell the group about his health. "I have cancer. Although I have been cured, the doctors told me that I should not ignore the possibility that it can still come back," were his honest words. But why did the capitulants vote for him? Everything happened in the realm of faith. The process of murmuratio contributed much. Almost everyone was able to compare notes with another person. We talked about having a Superior General who might not be able to travel much but if we give him a good council then he need not do everything by himself, etc. Regarding his health? It is not really our task to speculate what will happen. That is God's work, not ours. Let us leave what is beyond our control to God, was the attitude of many.

evangelizing the poor at the dawn of the third millenium

After we elected the rest of the members of the General Administration, we got back to discussing the main theme of the General Chapter which is Evangelizing the Poor At the Dawn of the Third Millenium. We divided ourselves into regional groups and analyzed the main them, drawing from it its major components, some of which were: evangelization, evangelizer, formation, the poor, inculturation, the laity, etc. Each one was asked to sign up for a group among the the major components of the theme. Group discussions divided by the components of

the major theme followed. The results of the discussions on the components of the major theme were reported and discussed in the plenary assembly. They were to be the materials also from which the drafting committee of a letter/statement from the 33 General Chapter to the whole congregation is being composed. We expect that this letter/statement will be in the mail in the very near future.

the various portfolios

Members of the past General Administration holding different portfolio, e.g. Formation, Mission and Laity, Justice and Peace, Mass Media, etc., made their reports to the General Chapter during the last week. The General Norms for Formation and Vade Mecum for Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation received well-deserved commendations from the capitulants.

the poor with their many faces

At the main hall of the General Chapter, in front of all the capitulants, were large pictures of the "the poor with their many faces." They stared at us during the whole month, as if telling the capitulants, "Is it us you have been talking about?"

It was when we started to analyze the main theme that we realized the vastness of the area it covers. When we started discussing it, we realized further the unbridgeable gap that exists between us in our perception of who "the poor" really is. Time was running short. Although there was no heated debate on the poor at the Chapter floor, it doesn't mean that there was less concern for the poor in this Chapter.

In fact, no amount of discussions would have brought us to an agreement as to who the poor in our midst really are. This was evident when the topic **Globalization** was brought up. Capitulants from Asia particularly, could only mention the negative effects of Globalization in the region. It is seen as a sweeping force that will wipe out the poor in Asia. Those who come from the more affluent regions just could not understand why the negative aspects of globalization should be singled-out. At one point, capitulants from the Third World were even accused of coming to the Chapter with an agenda of their own. One motion, however, which united the capitulants in their stand to be on the side of the poor is to agree that we cooperate in any worldwide effort for the remission of debts of poor nations on the event of the Great Jubilee.

varia

Papal Audience - what greeted us during the Papal Audience in Castel Gandolfo was a very sick Pope. Everyone felt sorry that we had to force him to come out and meet us. But despite his failing health, he managed to joke with his visitors and the short audience was not without the aura of holiness that pervades with his presence.

Gratitude - In behalf of the Vice Province, I thanked Archbishop Marcello Zago for everything that he and his council have done for us during their 12 year term.

I express my personal thanks to Fr. Daniel Corijn, former Vical General, who will take assignment in South Africa after spending sometime in Louvain, Belgium. We recall that Fr. Corijn had to take over some posts that were left vacant, including that of the Superior General and he even came for the consultation for Provincial when the Asian Regional Councilor became a bishop. Through example, he taught me the real meaning of **desponibilité**, from that of simple availability to a total surrender for the sake of the Kingdom. It is a lifetime vocation to live its real meaning.



Christmas 1998

As we journey through the next 50 years in the mission, may we find the God-made-man in the midst of our everyday life.

A blessed Christmas to all and a New Year filled with blessings from the Lord.

Nancy Laguidao, OMI



From the Provincial Desk:

AFTER THE CELEBRATIONS...

Even the weather looked as if it was ordered from above! Those of us who had been busy with the preparations for our 50th anniversary must feel relieved that everything is over and that everything went well as planned. There are so many people to acknowledge but there is always the danger of omission when we start enumerating their names.

However, special mention should be given to the Kochi District through Jude PEIRISPULLE and Ray BOURGOIN who led the parishioners in the preparations to give a meaningful tribute to the Oblates. The anniversary album was an instant bestseller ("I can't put it down," somebody said. "Proud to be an Oblate!" said another.). Preparations took more than three years but everything was well worth it. If you remember, the preparations started with the term of office of Ange SIANI.

Ms. Akiko OKADA could have gone on for an hour, or even more, as she related her experiences with the Oblates. I'm sure many in the crowd had their own stories to tell about the Oblates and the early days of the mission. Bishop Joseph FUKAHORI hit the nail on the head when he prefaced his talk with "Japan, when it was poor, that was when the Oblates started..." The irony is that most of the joyous moments of the mission were during the times when the country was poor... "Remember the ice cream from the American base, the meat loaf, the ham, etc.?" There is also fun in reminiscing what people went through: "Remember the times when superiors were tyrants and the subjects had their way of getting what they wanted anyway?"

The presence of Provincials, or their representatives, from the Provinces who have sent men to this mission was an expression of moral support. The presence, too, of Oblates and former Oblates who were once members of the mission had its own significance that added meaning to the celebrations. Our short visit to the cemetery (despite the disappointment of some for not being notified about the change of time) was our way of expressing that our ties go beyond death...

To all of you who took good care of the guests, the Itami District led by Bradly ROZAIRO and members of Tokushima and Kochi districts, and especially to those who had to sleep on the floor because they gave up their beds for the guests, thank you for the sacrifices. Ange SIANI and Fran HAHN took care of the overflow from Itami. Jerry NOVOTNY had to share his quarters with one of the guests. Tokushima and Naruto houses even organized Thanksgiving dinners for our guests on the 24th. Leo KAWAGUCHI was the most reliable driver all the way. Even the Dominican Sisters of Itami had to make room for many of the guests passing through.

And to everybody, you certainly did your share even by just being there. To those who made our daily breakfast and did the dishes and took care of the happy hours or drove the guests to and from the airport, etc. etc. Thank you. Thank you.

We were even able to put some guests to work: Bill SHEEHAN (Eastern USA) willingly obliged to give a short input on the evaluation of candidates in formation during the joint meeting of the

Formation Committee and the Provincial Council on November 24th. Chris O'LEARY met with the our two Filipino scholastics for an informal evaluation of their life in Nagoya so far. Ron LAFRAMBOISE visited the House of Studies in Nagoya and briefed our Japanese seminarians on some developments in the congregation especially after the 33rd General Chapter.

Now that we have visited and celebrated our past, we have to start charting the FUTURE for ourselves and for those who will continue after us.

Look forward to the January 1999 issue of OMI INFORMATION (Rome) for the news on our 50th anniversary celebrations.

FORMATION NEWS

After several deliberations, the Provincial Council upon the recommendation of the Formation Committee has decided to ask the Province of Australia to accept our two seminarians, Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA to its novitiate program. It was also strongly proposed that their future novice master accompany them during their sojourn in Australia.

Fr. Patrick MORONEY, Provincial of Australia is welcoming our candidates with "wide open arms" together with the staff of St. Mary's Seminary in Sydney composed of Frs. John MAHER, Paul GWYNNE and Marks EDWARDS. St. Mary's have been accepting candidates from places like Thailand, China, Indonesia, etc. in keeping with the mutual cooperation on formation and other areas being encouraged in the AORC region. With the seasoned staff of St. Mary's, we know that our candidates will get the very best and will find themselves a home with the Australian Oblates. We certainly feel very grateful, to say the least, to the Australian Province for their generosity in sharing their with us their valuable formation resources.

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Financial Report

50th Anniversary



INCOME

From Christians (sent by mail or from "uketsuke" on the day of celebration)	1,205,000
Ake No Hoshi (from the 9 yochiens)	500,000
Kochi ken Shinto Kai	30,000
Convents (From convents and non-OMI parishes)	670,000
Churches (From OMI parishes)	1,105,625
Offerings (During Anniversary Mass)	198,840
From Dave Barton	3,000,000
From U.S. Central Prov.	500,000
From U.S. Eastern Prov.	2,000,000
TOTAL INCOME	<u>9,209,465</u>

EXPENSES

Office	116,055
Invitations	123,590
Food	1,032,806
Travel	624,250
Album	1,393,350
Hotels	240,523
Shipping	72,239
Varia c/o Mr. Kido	80,148
Miscellaneous	32,886
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>3,715,847</u>

N.B.

- From the gift of US\$30,000 from Dave Barton and \$20,000 from the Eastern U.S. Province, (total of \$50,000) US\$40,000 has been paid back to Eastern U.S. Province for medical expenses. Therefore: remaining money is YEN 1,493,618.
- Mr. Narui's memorial money (YEN 500,000) and cemetery plot (YEN 500,000), a total of YEN 1,000,000 is not reflected in the above report.
- Gifts from Mr. Barton, U.S. Central and Eastern Provinces are in U.S. \$: 100yen=1\$.
- Expenses above are based on item-by-item report of Ray: Office=mailing, etc.; Mr. Kido=parking lot, etc., Miscellaneous: food for preparation committee, etc.



OMI INFORMATION

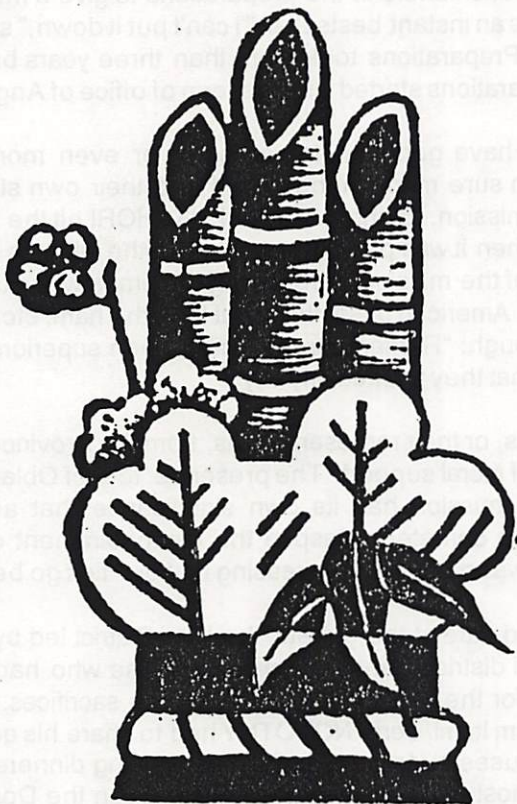
JAPAN

Provincial Newsletter of the OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
Vice Province of Japan

CHRISTMAS 1998



B L E S S E D C H R I S T M A S



H A P P Y N E W Y E A R



Christmas 1998

As we journey through the next 50 years in the mission, may we find the God-made-man in the midst of our everyday life.

A blessed Christmas to all and a New Year filled with blessings from the Lord.

Nancy Laguidao, OMI

From the Provincial Desk:

AFTER THE CELEBRATIONS...

Even the weather looked as if it was ordered from above! Those of us who had been busy with the preparations for our 50th anniversary must feel relieved that everything is over and that everything went well as planned. There are so many people to acknowledge but there is always the danger of omission when we start enumerating their names.

However, special mention should be given to the Kochi District through Jude PEIRISPULLE and Ray BOURGOIN who led the parishioners in the preparations to give a meaningful tribute to the Oblates. The anniversary album was an instant bestseller ("I can't put it down," somebody said. "Proud to be an Oblate!" said another.). Preparations took more than three years but everything was well worth it. If you remember, the preparations started with the term of office of Ange SIANI.

Ms. Akiko OKADA could have gone on for an hour, or even more, as she related her experiences with the Oblates. I'm sure many in the crowd had their own stories to tell about the Oblates and the early days of the mission. Bishop Joseph FUKAHORI hit the nail on the head when he prefaced his talk with "Japan, when it was poor, that was when the Oblates started..." The irony is that most of the joyous moments of the mission were during the times when the country was poor... "Remember the ice cream from the American base, the meat loaf, the ham, etc.?" There is also fun in reminiscing what people went through: "Remember the times when superiors were tyrants and the subjects had their way of getting what they wanted anyway?"

The presence of Provincials, or their representatives, from the Provinces who have sent men to this mission was an expression of moral support. The presence, too, of Oblates and former Oblates who were once members of the mission had its own significance that added meaning to the celebrations. Our short visit to the cemetery (despite the disappointment of some for not being notified about the change of time) was our way of expressing that our ties go beyond death...

To all of you who took good care of the guests, the Itami District led by Bradly ROZAIRO and members of Tokushima and Kochi districts, and especially to those who had to sleep on the floor because they gave up their beds for the guests, thank you for the sacrifices. Ange SIANI and Fran HAHN took care of the overflow from Itami. Jerry NOVOTNY had to share his quarters with one of the guests. Tokushima and Naruto houses even organized Thanksgiving dinners for our guests on the 24th. Leo KAWAGUCHI was the most reliable driver all the way. Even the Dominican Sisters of Itami had to make room for many of the guests passing through.

And to everybody, you certainly did your share even by just being there. To those who made our daily breakfast and did the dishes and took care of the happy hours or drove the guests to and from the airport, etc. etc. Thank you. Thank you.

We were even able to put some guests to work: Bill SHEEHAN (Eastern USA) willingly obliged to give a short input on the evaluation of candidates in formation during the joint meeting of the

Formation Committee and the Provincial Council on November 24th. Chris O'LEARY met with our two Filipino scholastics for an informal evaluation of their life in Nagoya so far. Ron LAFRAMBOISE visited the House of Studies in Nagoya and briefed our Japanese seminarians on some developments in the congregation especially after the 33rd General Chapter.

Now that we have visited and celebrated our past, we have to start charting the FUTURE for ourselves and for those who will continue after us.

Look forward to the January 1999 issue of OMI INFORMATION (Rome) for the news on our 50th anniversary celebrations.

FORMATION NEWS

After several deliberations, the Provincial Council upon the recommendation of the Formation Committee has decided to ask the Province of Australia to accept our two seminarians, Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA to its novitiate program. It was also strongly proposed that their future novice master accompany them during their sojourn in Australia.

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Another Christmas

Another Christmas is close at hand. Time has flown so fast without our knowledge, everybody has grown older by another year. There are many major events we can recall which happened during this year here at Nakajimacho.

In April Jude PEIRISPULLE came back after his successful three months vacation to continue his work and met with two funerals. Ray BOURGOIN and YAGI Nobuhiko were running the show in spite of their own work. Ray not only came down to help at Nakajimacho but he also found this place to be more spacious to do his treasurer's work. So he moved his SEKI (Residence) down to Nakajimacho.

When Angelo SIANI was in Sri Lanka he told Jude that 'the installation of the new provincial (Wency LAGUIDAO) is supposed to take place at Nakajimacho. Please get ready.' That was another big event that took place here, which was followed by a grand supper.

Right after filling in for Jude, Ray left for Rome and the annual General Finance Committee meeting. On his return to Japan he moved his luggage from Nagoya to Kochi.

August 13th there were many people at the Airport to say good bye to Nobu. Many people were asking Jude how he would manage without Nobu. To tell you the truth Jude himself did not know how. But many people in various ways helped him and supported him so he was able to keep smiling.

The 50th anniversary was another major event. We can comment on that in various different ways, but what is important is the feeling that everybody had and the experience that everybody went through on this celebration. It was not just a celebration but it was something that will echo in each one's heart. It was our celebration. Prior to the celebration the printer came here often to finish off the anniversary album which is now in your hands.

When Nobu came back for the celebration he looked like a starved person. He said he lost 4kgs. But with the celebration and with Miss Munemoto's food he gained those 4kgs within a week. He is looking forward to go back to America at the beginning of January and try to get more slim.

Now again it is Christmas. Will it be different from others? One thing is certain: this Christmas is also going to be a busy but wonderful one.

*The universal peace He came to bring us is yet a dream,
a vision of the nations.....
but the star of Bethlehem still shines its promise
into the hopeful hearts of generations.....*

wish you a very happy Christmas and a joyful New year

Kochi, Nakajimacho community
Ray, Nobu, Jude.

Dear Friends ,

I wish you all "A Blessed Christmas Season" and "A Prosperous New Year"!

The national Justice and Peace Committee held its 3 days annual congress in Matsuyama last October. It is the first time in its history that the congress was held on the island of Shikoku, where a big number of Oblates are working. Judging from numbers, it was successful. More than 300 Christians attended. Some of the input speakers were Buddhist, Protestant or just "good people". The bishop of Takamatsu diocese attended three days. However, looking at the same numbers, it was a failure. The churches of Matsuyama city and its prefecture are administered by the Dominican Fathers. Not one attended even one day of the three days congress. Tokushima and Kochi Prefectures are administered by the Oblate Fathers. Only one OMI from Shikoku or working outside Shikoku attended. Of the three days one was a Sunday, so H.Mass had to be said. I heard of only one OMI who tried to send one of his Christians. Among the more than 300 Christians attending, there were only about 10 from Oblate parishes. This congress could have been a good opportunity to educate our Catholics to become Christians. My "Happy New Year" letter seems rather a "Sorrowful" announcement, but that is part of our communication, I guess.

While composing my sincere wishes, I have to be careful how I move around.

There is a big crack in one of my ribs. That will be healed, I hope , by Christmas. How did it happen? That is the problem I worry about. It happened without any accident or me running against something or somebody. It cracked of itself. That is another sign of aging, I suppose.

I decided not to ride my motorbike anymore. Jude is interested in inheriting it. 30 years on the bike in rain and heat...and without a single accident! I must admit I have paid a few tickets for speeding.. Well, my bike is another "memory of the past".

I am attaching a letter written in Japanese, in which I try to explain my thoughts about "charity" and " involvement in Justice and Peace activities". That letter will be published in the official J&P Bulletin of January.

Sincerely

Xavier Tbsa Yoshikazu

JP 通信 1999 年
正義と平和協議会全国集会 四国

プロローグ:

1998 年の正義と平和協議会全国集会が初めて四国で行われましたが、無事に終わったそうです。わたしはこの集会の最高責任者であると言われましたが、そうは感じませんでした。とにかく、「このような事件が再び起こらないように。。。』という決まり文句を言う必要はなかったようです。

1. 正義と平和協議会は信心会ではない

小教区のレベルではいろいろな「会」があります。たとえば、ロザリオ会、レジオマリア会、青年会、などがあります。信者として自由に会員になってもならなくてもいいのです。正義と平和協議会の活動を行うために、四国では「会員」を募集しません。わたしの考えによって、正義と平和協議会は趣味のクラブではありませんが、福音（イエスの呼び声）に答えることです。

主キリストに従う信者は当然社会と関わり合いをもって、社会と共に、社会のために働きます。。当然！しかし、社会のための活動はいろいろあります。その多くの活動の中から一つか二つを、自分の時間や才能によって、選ぶことが出来ます。正平協はいろいろな活動を提供します。

2. 福祉活動か正平協活動か

43 年前私はカルカットで Mother Teresa に会いました。私は Mother Teresa によってヒンズー教の寺の巡礼者の建物にあった、死を待つ人の広間に案内されました。その時 M. Teresa はまだ有名ではありませんでした。27 歳の私は実はちょっと怖かったですが、大変感動しました。私の宣教師のヴィジョン (vision) に大きく影響しました。

M.Teresa が不正な社会、不正な法律を直すような活動をしないで、独裁の大統領に直接に会っても黙っていたという批判がありました。M.Teresa は政治家達に圧力をかけないことを認めました。その仕事を私たちに任せました。正平協活動と福祉活動の両者は隣人愛の実現した形です。両者の運動は互いを補い合います。両者とも「行為における愛」、「活動であらわす愛」、「love in action」は M.Teresa の好きな言葉です。

社会福祉の活動と正平協活動のあいだにいつもきれいに線を引く事は出来ません。両者の活動は時々部分的に重なることがあります。

次のたとえばいかがでしょうか。交通の激しい交差点には事故が多く起きます。

死者とけが人が毎日出るところです。通りかかっているあなたはすぐ救急車を呼んだり、けが人の世話をしたりします。もう一つのこと出来ます。すなわち、この交差点に交通信号を設けるように運動や署名を集めて、市役所に圧力をかけることです。

3. カトリックかクリスチャンか

人は生まれてくると、プロテスタントか、仏教徒か、カトリックか無神論者です。洗礼によって「カトリック信者」になります。0歳の赤ちゃんは幼児洗礼によって「カトリック」です。今、日本カトリック教会の信者の数（統計）はおおよそ500,000名だそうです。それは500,000人の「クリスチャン」がいるということではありません。クリスチャンになるためにはまず個人的な決心が必要で、何らの形で信仰を表現しなければなりません。信仰が見える形で表さなければなりません。私はクリスチャンであると言う事ではなく、私はクリスチャンになりつつあると言わなければなりません。使徒言行録 9,2「。。。それは、この道に従うものを見つけ出したら。。。」。正平協はこのような道を提供します。正義と平和協議会が毎年違ったところで集会を開くことは地元の（カトリック）「信者」がクリスチャンになるように育てることが目的である。。。と私は思います。

クリスチャンにならなくて、カトリックであることだけでいることは可能です。自分がカトリックであると思う人は色々な権利を持つと思います。例えば、教会のお葬式、病気の時にご聖体を持ってくることなど。。。。

4. 聖霊に耳を。。。

黙示録 2,7「耳ある者は、“霊”が諸教会に告げることを聞くがよい。」

聖霊は何を告げますか。「お前の弟の血が土の中から私に向かって叫んでいる」（創世紀 4,10）

伝統や習慣の奴隷になってはなりません。神の霊はまず現実を通して、具体的な様子を通して話してくれます。クリスチャンはそれに耳を傾けます。私達が住んでいる世界には、2000年前の聖書にはない状況があります。正義と平和協議会はここで「予言者」の役を果たして、現実を分析しなければなりません。

もちろん、ここには祈りが必要です。。。正平協は21世紀のために適当な祈りを教えるが良い。

境界のないクリスチャン！

土佐義和

Greetings from Kochi!

Jerry Novotny, omi

* CHINA SAYS FORCED ABORTION REPORTS DISTORTED * TEACHER FIRED FOR PRAYER AFTER STUDENT DIED * ONE THIRD OF PROSTITUTES IN INDIA ARE CHILDREN * Court Declares Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Unconstitutional * OREGON MAY COVER ASSISTED SUICIDES FOR POOR * BOYS STUMBLE ON BOXES STUFFED WITH 54 FETUSES * IMF, WORLD BANK, UN ACCUSED OF PROMOTING ABORTION * OREGON TO PAY FOR ASSISTED SUICIDE * SEVENTY PERCENT OF PREGNANCIES IN RUSSIA END IN ABORTION, SAYS REPORT * NUMBER OF US ABORTIONS RISING

And the list continues growing longer as I glance over the Internet this morning, searching for ideas for the next Newsletter and this Christmas message. Some 2.5 million abortions were performed in Russia this year, with seven pregnancies in 10 ending in abortions. According to the ministry's statistics, every tenth abortion is performed on women under 19 and more than 2,000 on girls under 14. Two women in three suffer from health complications as a result of the abortions.

This same message echoes from every country and corner of the planet: adults using and destroying children, the unwanted and weakest members of society. On this slippery slope, we also see active euthanasia and outright killings (Kevorkian) of elderly, sick people: "The Economic Unwants."

What the American people witnessed last week on the CBS "60 Minutes" program was not an act of compassion. It was a prime time murder. It was wrong and someone should say so. It showed a video tape of Kevorkian administering a fetal dosage which killed an elderly, sick person. This was shown on a major broadcasting network, in view of small children and senior citizens.

One elderly person who saw the program commented, "There's no question that we must do everything we can to improve medical care for those who are terminally ill and those who are in excruciating pain. But we must not give up on people who are suffering, and we must not let them give up on themselves. We have the science and the technology to help people relieve pain. The question is: Do we have the love and compassion to stand by people who feel that they're all alone?"

Society considers "Euthanasia and Abortion" as progress in the field of medicine. Do these acts not turn doctors from healers into killers? Does not euthanasia encourage the elderly to believe that they are obstacles, not human beings? In Japan alone, does not 343,024 child-abortions seem like we are retracting to a former period of barbarism?

Christ comes again this year, as he does every year, to see how far man has progressed on his journey to the Father. Unfortunately this year, respect for the Dignity of Human Life has not improved. It's unbelievable what methods man has come up with to inflict pain before killing a tiny child, the most recent being partial-birth abortions-- giving birth to the body of a baby and leaving the head inside of the mother's body. A screwdriver-type of instrument is then stuck into the brain to kill the child. The head is pulled out and the act is called an abortion. Vatican II strongly condemned such crimes against human life--"Whatever is opposed to life itself such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, prostitution, the selling of children....." and the list goes on. The Council said that these acts poison society.....that they are a dishonor to man himself and to the Messiah who comes again. This Christmas He is coming into a very disturbing state of affairs; just watching CNN News for one evening supports this.

The big question: "Why does he continue to put up with this 'culture of death', a term coined by the present Pope?" In Sacred Scripture, John answers by saying that He comes to give us "life", maybe what Paul II means when he uses the words "Culture of Life". It is in this "life" and only on

this level of "life" that all aspects and stages of human life (from its very beginning until its very end) achieve their full meaning.

The Introduction to the encyclical "Gospel of Life" states that at the dawn of salvation, it is the birth of a child which is proclaimed as joyful news: "I bring you good news of a great joy....." The source of this "great joy" is the birth of the Savior; but Christmas also reveals the full meaning of every human birth, and the joy which accompanies the birth of the Messiah is thus seen to be the foundation and fulfillment of joy at every child born into the world.

With that I'd like to wish each Oblate working in Japan a beautiful and joyous Christmas. I sign off with a brief Christmas Joy that occurred on July 18th and was printed on the Internet (subs@cwnews.com), Nov. 29th.

Baby born 18 weeks early beats the odds, comes home

Shel'be Pruitt, dressed in newborn's clothes, was nestled in her mother's lap Saturday, only hours home from the hospital.

The requisite baby things were posted around the spotless Berwyn apartment: a bassinet, a baby swing, a video camera. But Shel'be is no newborn.

Born 18 weeks premature on July 18, her time in the womb is close to that of a baby who holds a Guinness Book record for the shortest human gestation.

The road home has been a long one, marked by operations, setbacks and prayer. And it's not over. Shel'be will require frequent trips to Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, where she is under the care of nine doctors. She breathes oxygen through a machine and is fed infant formula through a tube in her nose.

But she breathes, stretches, cries and wets like a typical baby--a far cry from the morning of July 18 when medical officials told Steven and Shaunte'ri Pruitt that their newborn likely would die before the day was done.

"I didn't have time to whimper or cry," Shaunte'ri Pruitt, 21, said. "All I had time to do was learn how to take care of her. Because I knew she [would live]."

Pruitt said she was barely five months pregnant when she began to feel ill. She gave birth the next day. The baby's skin, still in the process of forming, was thin and transparent.

"You could see the spot where her heart was," said her mother, Minnie Tomorrow. "You could see the spots where the lungs were." "They had really told me not to be hopeful," Pruitt said. "Her skin was like gelatin. There were a lot of people who said she wasn't going to make it."

Babies born at less than 22 weeks rarely survive. Shel'be was born at 22 weeks, putting her among the most premature babies to survive childbirth. A Canadian infant was born 128 days early in 1987, earning a spot in the record books as the world's most premature baby. The infant weighed 1 pound, 6 ounces. The U.S. record is held by a 17-ounce San Diego baby born in 18 weeks in 1989.

During her months in the hospital, Shel'be had four surgeries, including an operation to install a metal clamp to hold open a duct in her heart, Pruitt said. Another operation installed a catheter that drains fluid from her head. She also had repeated blood transfusions.

About 10 days after the baby's original due date of Nov. 18, Shel'be weighs six pounds. Pruitt said doctors told her Shel'be likely will recover substantially. Pruitt is prepared to spend the next years at home as Shel'be grows. Her husband works two jobs to support the family, Pruitt said.

We've been looking forward to bringing her home for so long," she said.

May the Christ Child bless each of us now and during the coming year!

My Christmas prayer

Bert, OMI

Lord, you know that I am growing older. Keep me from becoming too talkative, and particularly keep me from falling into the tiresome habit of expressing an opinion on every subject.

Release me from the craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details. Give me wings to get to the point.

Give me grace, dear Lord, to listen to others describe their aches and pains. Help me endure the boredom with patience and keep my lips sealed, for my own aches and pains are increasing in number and intensity, and the pleasure of discussing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that, occasionally, I might be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not wish to be a saint (saints are too hard to live with), but a sour old person is the work of the devil.

Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not pushy; independent, yet able to accept with graciousness favors that others wish to bestow on me.

Free me of the notion that simply because I have lived a long time, I am wiser than those who have not lived so long.

If I do not approve of some of the changes that have taken place in recent years, give me the wisdom to keep my mouth shut.

Lord, know that when the end comes, I would like to have a friend or two left. (*Author unknown*)

I appreciate your prayers for my brother Ron who underwent cancer surgery and ended up with one kidney. He is recovering well in his new condo in Florida with his wife Stacia!

From Lei:

I wish everybody a holy Christmas-season and a Happy New Year, good health and the guidance of the Holy Spirit all during the year.

In November last year, during the general meeting of the telephone service *Kokoro no daiaru* (Dial from the heart), it was decided to start *Life Line* in Kochi Prefecture. Immediately a small group was selected to make the necessary preparations. First point on the program was to find people to set up and run *Life Line* Telephone Service. On May 7 the first meeting was held. One of the itemd decided was to invite Mr. Yukio Sato, one of the directors of the federation of *Life Line Japan*, to give a conference about the origin, meaning and work of the *Life Line* Telephone Service. On September 12 about 130 people attended the conference. As a result of the conference and some advertising in the newspapers over 50 people informed about becoming a volunteer. Now we are hoping that a good number of them will send in their application and start the one year training course on January 16. After almost 13 years of *Kokoro no daiaru*, *Life Line* will be inaugurated on February 1, and become the 48th center of the service in Japan.

From Howard and Jerry:

At Home Soon !!!

Our gratitude to all the members of this province for the warm welcome we received. We will remember you in our oraison especially this Christmas. The 50th Anniversary Celebration, the retreat, and several other gatherings, attest to the spirit of the founder lived by the province. Surely, it won't take us long to be at home.

From Bradley:

Greetings of Peace and Joy from Itami!

It has been about five months since I came to Itami. Life has been good for me so far. Trusting that the future, too, will be blessed I go forward.

I believe that we all feel in our heart an intimate joy during the feast and time of Christmas, a joy, one would say, somewhat different from the joy we experience on other feast days. Even people not belonging to our faith seem to realize that something very special is being commemorated on this feast. Therefore, as we celebrate Christmas let us share this joy with each other. Last year for me the joy was doubled, because I was with my family for Christmas. This year I will be celebrating Christmas with a new family, namely Itami! May the Infant Jesus bring joy to each of us.

Brad.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

クリスマスと新年のおよろこびを申し上げます。

MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY
NEW YEAR.

オブレート会来日50周年式典も盛大に行なわれました。記念誌を編集された方々、又、式典を準備された方々、当日、運営にあたられた方々、ご苦労さまでした。私も1949年にRobitaille神父様から洗礼を受けてから来年は50周年になります。この時からオブレート会とのかかわりが出来ました。オブレート会来日の翌年のことでした。そして、2年後 安芸修練院に入り、江の口教会、サン スルピス大神学校、エセックス、ワシントン、上智大学を経て、1964年徳島教会で田中英吉司教様から司祭叙階式を受け、赤岡教会、スザノ教会、シダデドットラ教会を経て、1972年10月、帰国し、伊丹、中島町、安芸、再度、伊丹教会を経て、吉塚と南粕屋教会の司牧にあたっています。この様に太平洋をまたいで宣教に従事することが出来たのも、オブレート会司祭と
なっていたからだと思います。
来る年もオブレート会員としての自覚をもって、司牧と宣教に従事したいと思っています。
神様が新しい年も私達を守って下さいますように。

1998年12月

JOHN. IWO

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR,

I hope this Christmas and New Years is a time of great blessings for everyone. The fond memories of the 50th celebration still linger in my mind and the joy of meeting so many again. I have to make a Christmas confession however. Although I was the chairman of the 50th Album Committee I have to admit that Ray did most of the work. And I might add an excellent job at that. I collected the individuals' articles and with mainly the help of Sr. Miyamoto of Tokushima translated them into either Japanese or English (this was for the Oblates of Japans' articles). Jan worked on the history and Ray virtually did all the rest. So thank you Ray and Jan.

It promises to be another busy Christmas here in Koga with the 3:00 Candle Service for the non-Christians, and 7:00 Mass followed by a party in the Yochien Hall, and an 11:00 Mass for our mid-night Mass. On the 25th we will only have one Mass at 9:30. On the 31st we will have a Holy Hour from 11:00 to 12:00 and Mass from 12:00 mid-night. Again your all in our prayers at Christmas please keep me in yours.

Bill

From Jimmy:

"Our Daily Bread"

In Itami we are preparing to celebrate the Christmas Season meaningfully. The prime value of the Eucharist in transforming people's hearts and society continues to be felt, as we celebrate it with the people. Japanese society is hungry for the Bread that truly satisfies -- CHRIST.

Just like the shepherds who first paid homage to the new-born Savior, I bend my knees before Him praying: "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread."

May we share our bread of life with one another and the people we evangelize. Christ, our Good Shepherd, shared His own Life with the most abandoned.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone.

Jimmy del Rosario, O.M.I.

From Vincenzo:

In Kochi, on the 23rd of November, 1998, the Oblates celebrated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Missionary Oblates in Japan (November 29, 1948). The next day, November 24, 1998, the Oblates in Korea, belonging to the same Vice-Province, officially started a soup kitchen for street people in Sung Nam.

From the very beginning in Korea (1990), the Oblates have been engaged in the apostolate for poor people, but now, with this new work, they are getting even deeper involved. The main reason for this option is the bad economic situation that started in the country last year, and which caused many people to lose their jobs (8% unemployment), and the related benefits. Problems such as divorces, abandoned children, alcoholic abuses etc. show a sharp increase, and the number of street people is rising fast.

In this situation the Oblates feel it as a call from St. Eugene to be more dedicated to the poorest.

What at first in Sung nam City was an occasional involvement has become, from November 24 on, a "Center" with an office and a soup kitchen that serves 150 meals a day, a shelter for street people, and a free dispensary for the sick. But, while trying to help these people in their primary needs: food, rest, medicine, clothing, we try through a series of counseling sessions (with lawyers, on social welfare, education, job-seeking), to give them an opportunity to start a new life.

For the time being we work from a small prefabricated building, located near the bus terminal of the city. The work is run by volunteers, and supported solely by the charity of the Catholics. But I wish it to become a big center of hope for the street people of the city. For this I dare put my trust in you for material and spiritual support.

Can we see in this charitable apostolate with the poor a fruit of many prayers of the Oblates on the golden jubilee of the Vice Province of Japan?

Vincenzo

Dec 5, 1998. From somewhere in Korea...

I used to write "Many Greetings from Seoul". Well, I guess that time has gone. This is the last time I'm writing to you all from Seoul, the Capital City of Korea. In few days, December 21 to be exact, Maurizio and I will be moving into a new house: a 195-square-meter apartment located in Anyang, a city between Seoul and Suwon.

It was decided a year ago that our formation program in Korea had to be moved into a different place. Many things have happened in that regard during the last year. If they were all written down one by one, I suppose that a book could not hold all of them! First the project of buying a piece of land and building a formation house followed by months spent looking for suitable pieces of land. Then, when that project turn out to be impossible, the search for two apartments on the same floor: it was just impossible (actually the real estate agent thought we were crazy for the simple fact that we had only thought something like that!). So we started looking for two apartments located ... at least in the same building even though on different floors. We almost rented two of them: one on the 15th floor and the other one on the 25th floor (!?!), but at the end the deal was impossible. Then we were able to find two apartments one on the 4th and the other on 13th floor... but two hours before signing the contract one of the owners changed his mind and we ended up with only one apartment. Since the apartment was big enough to accommodate our project (at least to start it in a decent way!), we decided to rent it. To be honest with you I'm quite happy with what we've found. Maurizio and I felt the "hand of God" setting things in that direction. And this is what makes me happy: I guess we tried to listen to His voice. Anyway, as we always say, life should precede structures. The good news is that three young students should join Maurizio and me next March to fill this apartment. (By the way, do get stuck with numbers when dealing with vocations... and pray that they will double soon!)

Now, do not panic. As soon as I have the new address in English and our new fax and telephone numbers I'll let you know so that you might keep in touch with us and send all your moral support. Anyway, my e-mail (mauro@uriel.net) and Maurizio's (margi@uriel.net) will not change.

Please, pray that what we are going to celebrate in few days, the coming of Jesus among us, may be true daily in our new community. That by loving each other, Jesus might be born time and time again among us so that people coming to visit our small community might find Jesus among us and experience the same joy of the shepherds who went to the crib: they found Jesus and they were overjoyed.

From somewhere in the middle of the way between Seoul and Anyang City, I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy "brand-New" Year. With my prayers, of course.

Ciao, Mauro.

Dear Brother Oblates,

When I was home for vacation last summer, I was greeted with a friendly hug at Holy Angel's by George Knab. "Welcome back to Frontline Ministry" he said. Sounded interesting, but I can't say the term meant much to me at the time.

A few weeks later, I returned to our Mission in Naruto where a little problem developed between me and our kindergarten teachers. I had hired a teacher that our present staff would not accept.

I was soon to learn how serious the situation was when a group of the PTA demanded a "powwow" with me! At the meeting, I was taken down a peg or two!

When I recovered from the hurt, there came a feeling of anger and then, I must admit a desire for revenge! The meaning of "Frontline Ministry" began to take on some meaning for me.

One of my spiritual directors in the Scholasticate taught me that "God speaks to us through the events in our lives, especially the unpleasant ones. "It is a time for spiritual growth", he said.

What I experienced was that as I began to forgive there came a feeling of peace. The problem, although not overcome, wasn't as time consuming. The teachers and I can now approach Christmas with a feeling of peace.

And that's the way it is at "Frontline Ministry, Naruto, December 8, 1998.

At Christmas, I wish you all the peace of Christ. I pray that the Lord will fill all of us with His Grace, that we may achieve the unachievable, to love as He loved.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Ange, Snd.

From Jan:

Joining in with all who extend their best wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year in the preceding lines, and those who intended to do so but did not get around it, I also pray that Our Lord's richest blessings be upon you and all your beloved throughout the New Year 1999, "the Year of the Father". May we, with his grace, get to see God more as Father, and grow deeper into filial love towards God. And may it be in all aspects a HAPPY AND BLESSED YEAR.

BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:

December

24 Mike YAMASAKI

January

2 Ed WILLIAMS
22 Ray BOURGOIN
29 Dick HARR

February

13 Maurizio GIORGANNI
15 Len INUI
21 Vincenzo BORDO

March

1 Jerry NOVOTNY
20 Jerry VILLAS
23 Bill MAHER

ORDINATIONS

Happy Anniversary to:

15 James JEYACHANDRAN

February

22 Xave Yoshikazu TOSA

March

19 Ray BOURGOIN
27 Wency LAGUIDAO
29 Leo KAWAGUCHI

ANNIVERSARY of the DEATH of our MISSION's FOUNDING FATHERS

2 February Charles McBENNETT

12 March Leonard ROBITAILLE

PRAYERS

remain in order for the intentions that have been brought to your attention before, our deceased near of kin, our ailing or/and aging beloved, all those that count on our prayers out of gratitude or of justice.

EVER VALID REMINDERS

Check - expiration date of Visa, Alien Registration, Driver's License, Health Insurance Certificate, Reduction Certificates for the Aged, etc.

Editor's Repeated Request

The next issue is scheduled for March 21. Could I prevail on you to have your texts in by March 10, and may I again implore ALL of you to reread and CORRECT your texts so that I am not obliged to retype AND correct them? May I also ask you to leave a margin of at least one inch from the top and bottom (A4 size pages, please!), and the width of the text no more than 17 cm. (6³/₄ in.)? Please, also avoid wide spaces between lines, or jumping a line between paragraphs. May I once again ask NOT to send articles by Fax, or even to include Thermal paper in an envelope? By being handled in the mail they get easily smudged.