



OMI INFORMATION

JAPAN

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

March 1991

My brother Oblates,

In the Newsletter of September 1990 I wrote of the call of the Holy Father for a Decade of Evangelization.

On December 7, 1990 Pope John Paul issued his encyclical letter "Redemptoris Missio". This letter of course is addressed to the entire church but I feel it is a special call to the Oblate Missionaries working in Japan.

It is most appropriate to reflect on this document at this Easter Season. The Message of the Resurrection is the Message of Salvation

"By raising Jesus from the dead, God conquered death, and in Jesus he definitively inaugurated his kingdom. During his earthly life, Jesus was the prophet of the kingdom; after his passion, resurrection and ascension into heaven, he shares in God's power and dominion over the world. (cf. Mt. 28:18; Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:18-21). The resurrection gives a universal scope to Christ's message, his actions, and his whole mission. The disciples recognize that the kingdom is already present in the person of Jesus and is slowly being established within man and the world through a mysterious connection with him." (Redemptoris Missio #16)

In the 8th Chapter of this encyclical the Holy Father writes of Missionary Spirituality. I feel that during the Easter Season, and also as a preparation for the Feast of Pentecost, we could all profit by reflecting on our own missionary spirituality.

"This spirituality is expressed first of all by a life of complete docility to the Spirit. It commits us to being molded from within by the Spirit, so that we may become ever more like Christ."

"An essential characteristic of missionary spirituality is intimate communion with Christ. We cannot understand or carry out the mission unless we refer it to Christ as the one who was sent to evangelize."

"The missionary is required to "renounce himself and everything that up to this point he considered as his own, and to make himself everything to everyone."

"Missionary spirituality is also marked by apostolic charity, the Charity of Christ, who came "to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn. 11:52), of the good shepherd who knows his sheep, who searches them out, and offers his life for them." (cf. Jn. 10)

"The missionary is urged on by "zeal for souls," a zeal inspired by Christ's own charity which takes the form of concern, tenderness, compassion, openness, availability and interest in peoples problems."

"The missionary is a person of charity. In order to proclaim to all his brothers and sisters that they are loved by God and are capable of loving, he must show love toward all, giving his life for his neighbor."

"Finally, like Christ he must love the church; "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). This love, even to the point, of giving one's life, is the focal point for him. Only a profound love for the church can sustain missionary zeal."

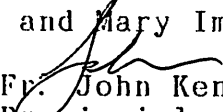
THE TRUE MISSIONARY IS A SAINT is the title of the concluding section of Chapter 8.

"The call to mission derives, of its nature from the call to holiness. A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to holiness. "Holiness must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation in the church."

I would like to conclude this by the words of Pope John Paul in the final paragraph of his introduction. They are words of hope and of challenge. Words that I feel are most appropriate for the conclusion of this Easter reflection

"God is opening before the church the horizons of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I sense that the moment has come to commit all the church's energies to a new evangelization, and to the mission *ad gentes*. No believer in Christ, no institution of the church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."

Fraternally in Jesus Christ, and Mary Immaculate,


Fr. John Kenney Mahoney, O. M. I.
Provincial, Japan.

JUBILARIANS

This year we have three Jubilarians. Jan Van Hoydonck is celebrating forty years of priesthood. Jan was originally a member of the Northern Belgium Province

The two other Jubilarians are celebrating 25 years of priesthood. They are both from the States. Ray Bourgoin came to Japan from the Northern Province (St John the Baptist) and Bill Maher from the from the Central Province.

At the time of our Annual Spring Meeting we were able to be together with our brother Oblates to celebrate this happy event. Each day of the meeting one of the Fathers was the main celebrant at our community Mass. The following are some of the thoughts they shared with us on this occasions.

With the fortieth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood drawing near I have been requested to put in writing a few thought on my forty years as a priest.

Ever since the days of the remarkable ways by which God has led me to be a priest in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate I have had a very strong awareness of the workings of His Divine Providence.

When I became ordained after my third year of theology I was eagerly looking forward to the day a year or so later that I hoped to be sent to our Japanese mission. It was a hard nut for me to crack when upon my graduation from the seminary I was appointed to be a teacher in my home province of Northern Belgium. My dream of becoming a missionary in Japan seemed forever shattered. Yet, a year later I was in Japan, even if I had to go through a traffic accident with a fracture of my skull to make it there. To me this was a new sign of the guidance of God's Providence.

This same sentiment has been alive in me up to the present and, I firmly believe, the same Divine Providence has led me to my job as a university professor, pastor of a foreigners' parish in Kobe, studies and practice as a chiropractor, Catholic harbor chaplain at the port of Kobe, and now pastor of a large area with almost no Catholic faithful. In all those situations my conviction has been: God has a purpose in having me here. The question that remains is: What is that purpose that he has with me here? And do I respond to His expectations? I can only respond to that as best I know. The answers I will hopefully get when, as I hope, the Lord in His mercy grants me to be in His presence in heaven. Until the coming of that day I keep marveling at the movements of His Providence.

Jan Van Hoydonck, O. M. I.

Reflections on 25 years of Priesthood:

When I was ordained I had printed in the back of my commemorative ordination card the text: "and there are other sheep which are not of this fold, those also I must gather in".

Little did I realize at that time that I was that "other sheep"! These last 25 years have been a series of conversions. I had to learn how to grow and I was evangelized and saved and gathered in by many people.

There have been many incidents and people who helped save this "sheep". Of course my religious family, the OMI's have been a constant influence. Through the OMI constantly searching for authenticity in living the Gospel, we've come up with many documents which have not remained dead letters with me. I would like to thank the OMI's for their constant prodding toward Gospel perfection.

But besides the OMI's I owe a good many things to a lot of people. Some of these people have been followers of Christ (I think here of the parishoners I have known, and the members of the Marriage Encounter and Choice movements) and others have been people who do not profess to be followers of Christ (I think here of the people from the schools I've taught at as well as the orphans). They all helped me to grow in my thoughts about ministry.

Many times as priests we presuppose that WE are the central figures in the Kingdom's Work of the Lord, but I have learned that THE PEOPLE OF GOD are central. We do not involve the laity in OUR work, but we find the means whereby both WE and the LAITY get involved in the Lord's work. Working with couples in Marriage Encounter and with the youth in the Choice program I realized this very deeply. This "sheep" is being saved from his nearsighted view.

I also learned that the struggle for a full human life is not confined to the Christian community. We are also members of the wider community, the good of which we are called to promote, protect and serve. If we take our journey to liberation (our exodus) with due awareness and seriousness, then we cannot afford to be an inward-looking Church. Working with the orphans and students I came to that conclusion. This "sheep" is being saved from a narrow vision of his role.

What has been a grace-filled experience has been to take part in the Marriage Encounter and Choice Programs. In these it is very clear that the Priest is a partner in the whole enterprise. He may be an encouraging partner, a supportive partner, at times even an animating partner. On the other hand he also is encouraged, supported and animated. We can see how the whole Church ought to be. There is a mutual integration, a mutual evangelisation. This "sheep" is being saved without his knowing it.

These people have helped me realize and understand this. I want to thank them all, all those groups mentioned above as well as the parish I have been in, the various schools I have been involved with, though I can't enumerate them here.

And of course I want to thank God for looking after this "sheep" by strewn in my path all those people and events in my life and by showing me that I can't do it alone. May this same God bless you all!

Ray

My 25th

25 years a priest!! That sounds like a long time but I feel I'm too young for this and besides I'm so busy lately I really haven't had time to think about it. Looking back on it though there have been some great times, some good times, some fair times, some not so good times, and some down right bad times. I'm happy and thankful for them all and that's the best anyone could hope for.

The years of growing up in the minor seminary. The doubts, hardships and joys of the Novitiate. Three wonderful years of Major Seminary in Pine Hills and the "kuro" of learning Japanese. Theology in Japan, the first parishes, Hikarigaoka in Fukuoka, 8 more months in Tokyo, (for a total of 5 years and 8 month). 6 months in Aki, 18 years in Nakamura (my second home), and now two and a half years in Tokushima. Yes, I can truly say I'm thankful for it all.

In all this time the Lord has blessed me with many friends and relationships, my parents, family, relatives, and friends and not the least of these are the fellows I've had the privilege of working with in Japan for the last 27 years, (both the living and the dead). To you all a big thank you. To all, including the Lord, a request for pardon where it is needed.

Now lets get on with the second ? years.

This section on our Jubilarians is concluded with an excerpt from an Ordination sermon preached by Archbishop Denis Hurley.

....And Now:

you are awaiting another transformation,
a transformation into priests of Christ
sharing in the mission and power given to the
apostles by Jesus,
handed down by them through the bishops of the Church.
This power and mission will soon be yours,
intensifying your responsibility for the word in all
its forms
for worship in all its varieties,
witness in all its demands.
With the priesthood of Jesus there comes to you
the grace of headship, of leadership,
the grace of the Good Shepherd,
the grace of serving,
of humble service to the community.
It is for the community that you are being ordained,
that the presence of Christ may grow in the community,
that the community of believers may grow in human
society.
You have much to offer the community.

REPORT ON AGING AND RETIRING

Ange Siani, O.M.I.

In February of this year the Provincial sent an inquiry on aging and retirement to ten religious congregations of men. The following is a summary of the questionnaire:

1. Do you have a retirement age?

-Three groups do not have a retirement age.

-One has a retirement age of 70 but the missionary may remain in a parish if he is able.

-Another group has a retirement of 65 for those who desire it. After 70 the provincial consults with the man re his health etc. and asks if he wants to continue work or retire.

-In another group they may retire but most continue to work.

2. Do you have a home for retired Fathers?

-Five said they have some special rooms or plan to build them.

-The others have not retirement home.

3. Do the men have the option to return to the home province?

-All the groups give this option but only one said that all of their men return to the home province.

Inspired by the questionnaire, one of the Columban Fathers organized a seminar on retirement. He invited Bro. Dismus a Christian Brother from Florida for the input. Brother stressed the necessity of personal planning for retirement. Acceptance of limitations; a willingness to give up the seat of power for the seat of wisdom. To stop defining ones worth by the work one is doing and to see the value of "being". Retirement calls for a new way of serving and therefore the a retired missionary should be able to pick a new ministry, one in which he will be able to use his talents. Aging also gives a new opportunity to grow spiritually. Age is a gift from God-a time of prayer-a time of union with God. Be that as it may, it would be unrealistic to think these men who have been active all their lives will find complete fulfillment just praying in their rooms. They need and must have community and opportunities for sharing. They need and must have other interests. Brother suggested that every religious should take up something new each year. The elderly must remain interested in life and not just sit around and wait for the end but to contribute for they have so much to give to the community.

In the evening we had another session. Half the Fathers attending fell asleep including the guest speaker! The Columban Provincial tried to keep those who were awake on the subject but after 45 minutes we said a short prayer and put on a video tape. Since I was in a seat with a poor view of the screen, I changed to another chair. In about two minutes the door opened and the Father looked directly where I was sitting...I was in his chair! I

offered it to him but he said he had things to do and left. In two minutes he was back and this time without a word I gave him the chair and took another. A few minutes passed and in came another gent. "Looking for your seat John?"...I waited three polite minutes and then went to bed! Hummm, a vision of the future?!

Attached to this report is a retirement reflection sheet, some points for reflection and two views of aging.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NAGOYA COMMUNITY

On March 20 Brother Dominic Yagi Nobuhiko renewed his Vows.

On March 21 Brother Leo Kawaguchi Satoshi received his Bachelors Degree in Sacred Theology as well as has his Bachelor of Arts Degree. He was also honored with the Presidents Award for Outstanding Scholastic Achievement.

Congratulations Brother Yagi and Brother Kawaguchi.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Birthdays

April

1 Leo Kawaguchi
17 Gerard Stevens
17 Jack Deely
22 Wency Laguidao

May

29 Tom Maher

July

4 Mauro Concardi

Ordinations

April

4 Jerry Novotny
11 Jack Deely
25 Vincenzo Bordo
26 Bill Maher
29 Fran Hahn

May

30 John Mahoney
30 Tom Maher
30 Bert Silver
31 Angelo Siani

June

2 Dick Harr
7 Ed Williams
14 John Iwo
14 Len Inui
24 Mike Yamasaki

July

1 Jan Van Hoydonck
5 Leo Simons

DAYS OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

From

May 21 Feast of Blessed Eugene DeMaznod

To

May 29 Feast of Blessed Joseph Gerard

ANNUAL RETREAT SEPTEMBER 2 - 6

You will find the minutes and the decisions of the Province concerning the Kindergarden Apostolate in this Newsletter. Special thanks to Jack Deely and Ray Bourgoine who prepared this bi-lingual presentation.

RETIREMENT REFLECTIONS

It becomes imperative that we do more than just talk about retirement. Individually, we must formulate some concepts that we will carry into action in our lives. For your own personal observation, confront yourself with the following, and ask yourself where you stand on the concept of retirement.

RETIREMENT -- WHAT IT MEANS TO ME.

1. Am I facing retirement realistically as a natural phase of my life?
2. Have I a definite plan for my retirement years?
3. Am I looking forward to my later years as a precious gift?
4. Am I preparing for a second ministry?
5. Am I planning to keep in touch with congregational affairs?
6. Am I planning to keep in touch with the Civic Community?
7. Am I preparing to make the last years the best in my life?

MENTAL HEALTH

1. Am I looking to the future with hope?
2. Am I trying to adapt to changes in ideas and ways of doing things?
3. Am I keeping my mind active by reading and study?
4. Am I keeping a neat appearance and surroundings orderly?
5. Am I interested in the affairs of those about me (without being nosey)?
6. Do I reach out to my brothers and people about me?
7. What am I doing on my own to learn more about retirement?

PHYSICAL HEALTH

1. Do I get a physical examination annually even though I feel well?
2. Did I have my eyes examined this year?
3. Did I try to prevent serious illness by being alert to early symptoms?
4. Do I watch my diet to keep weight under control?
5. Do I take some type of exercise on a daily basis?
6. Am I still smoking?
7. Do I avoid excess consumption of alcohol and various medications?

NEW APOSTOLATES

1. Am I searching out new ways to be of service?
2. Am I studying CHRIST as an example of service?
3. Have I looked into means of continuing some form of ministry?
4. Am I convinced that I can be of service any place if I am alert to opportunities?

TIME -- HOW CAN I BEST UTILIZE IT.

1. Am I learning a new hobby, pursuing some new interests?
2. Am I planning to take any courses to challenge my intellect?
3. Are there some charitable works that I can follow up on in retirement?
4. Am I planning to give more time to reading and meditating on the Scriptures?
5. Am I making some definite plans to improve and deepen my prayer life?

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. The timelessness of God.
2. God created - youth and old age.
3. God created us as individuals.
4. Vocation - what is my vocation as an older person?
5. Salvation united with the virtue of hope.

TWO VIEWS OF AGING

Aging can be a problem, therefore

↓
I deny it.

↓
I consider it an unfair blow of nature,
unique to me.

↓
I become bitter, angry, cynical.

↓
I complain more than I praise.

Aging can be a possibility, therefore

↓
I realistically accept it.

↓
I embrace the things I cannot change.

↓
I am grateful for who I am.

↓
I praise and affirm more than I
complain.

VICE PROVINCE OF JAPAN
SPRING MISSION MEETING
KINDERGARTEN APOSTOLATE
日本管区が関係する幼稚園の使徒職的識別の会議
3/5-7/91

The Provincial formally opened the meeting, and introduced the Moderator, Fr. Abella. Fr. Abella suggested that we use the first session to re-familiarize ourselves with the conference materials. It was agreed that we do so.

管区長が開会の言葉に続いて、進行役アベイヤ神父を紹介した。アベイヤ師は、より良い準備の意味で資料を読みなおしたらどうだろうと提案をし、一同はこれに賛成した。

After we reviewed the conference materials in private, the Moderator proceeded to explain the KJ Method which would be used to help determine the focus of our attention.

資料を読み直した後、司会者はKJ方式を説明した。KJ方式とは、決断を下すのに、何を話すべきか、どういうところに焦点をしなければならないかという課題を選出するための方法である。

We were divided into 3 groups and asked to put on paper 3 areas which we thought should be discussed in order to facilitate the discernment process. The proposed topics for discussion were then further refined and categorized in the following way:

全参加者を3グループに分けて、各員が3枚の紙片に話題にして欲しい課題を1つずつ記し、グループ毎にそれらをカテゴリー的にまとめて、討議の話題をしぼったところ、次の3つになった。

A-1) In this society where things are considered more important than people, and where bonds within the family have somewhat deteriorated, we can challenge modern social concerns through this apostolate by insuring the healthy growth of children. We must not forget that the educational setting for the young is an occasion for gospel centered human development.

-2) For that reason, in order to pass on to the people with whom we work, the value of the timely mission that we have, we must show them in practice what we preach in theory. That is, in this society early education will have no meaning unless we make early education a special sign.

-3) Especially because of that concern, now is the time to think of the practical possibilities before us.

A-1) 人間を土台にして物事を考えることが薄れてきたが現代社会の中で、また、家族の絆も薄れてきた現代において、幼児の健全な成長を守る考え方を通して — 現代の社会問題へのチャレンジができる。育児の現場を福音的人間形成の場に活かせることを忘れてはならない。

-2) そのため、共に働く人々に特別な時代的使命のあることを伝え、実践を見せなければならぬ。つまり、こういう社会の中で記しとなる幼児教育の場をつくらなければ、意味がない。

-3) だからこそ、今、実際の可能性をよく考えるべきである。

B-1) On the theoretical level, it is impossible to say that the kindergarten apostolate is not in agreement with the OMI charisma. In reality, for

the past 40 years our brother OMI have lived out this charisma in this concrete apostolate. However, while taking the changes of modern society into account, we should compare the personnel, energy and time we are presently dedicating to this apostolate of the kindergartens with the personnel, energy and time we should be devoting to other apostolic needs. Therein lies the problem.

-2) We must rethink this apostolate--in the light of urgent needs.

We must replan--without negating the importance of this apostolate, we must clarify our proper relationship to it.

-3) To what degree do we want to commit ourselves, as a group, to the School Corporation?

-4) Various interpretations of the expression 'most abandoned' surfaced.

B-1)一般論としてカリスマに合わないということは言えない。実際に、40年にわたってこの使徒職に関わった兄弟がOMIのカリスマを生きてきたわけである。が、問題は社会情勢の変化を見て、この時点で私たちが幼稚園の使徒職にそそいでいる人材、力、時間などは、他の必要とされている宣教活動にそそいでいるものと較べたらどうか、というところにある。だから、どうすればいいかを考えている。

-2)考え直すこと — もっと緊急なニーズがある。

工夫すること — こういふような大切なことを無にしないでもっと適切な関わり方を考えてみる。

-3)OMIとしての学校法人へのcommitmentはどの位をしたいか。

-4)「見捨てられた人々」という表現の解釈の違いが出た。

C-1) There is a value in kindergarten apostolate, but when considering the here and now, as missionaries we must rethink its urgency.

-2) When considering our relation with the local society, we must consider the importance of this apostolate and the missionary meaning therein.

-3) We must think of our responsibility toward society, and our responsibility vis-a-vis the School Corporation.

-4) Do we have the will to train personnel for the administration of the kindergartens?

C-1)価値があるが、今ここで、宣教師としてこの緊急性を見直してみるべきである。

-2)地域社会とのつながりを考えたときに、その大事さ、そこに宣教的な意味がある。

-3)社会に対する責任、学校法人に対する責任において考える必要がある。

-4)人材の養成に力を入れるつもりであるか。

After two days of discernment, while recognizing the value of involvement in early education in modern Japan, we took a long hard look at the present status of the Province and agreed upon the following:

1. We Oblates will not be able to be involved in Kindergarten Apostolate as we have been in the past. Notably, the Oblates will no longer be able to provide personnel to 「Ake no Hoshi Gakuen」 and for its kindergartens in the same way as we did in the past.

2. In keeping with the above matters agreed upon at this meeting, the representatives of the Oblates and 「Ake no Hoshi Gakuen」 will meet to discuss their future relationship and make every effort to draw up soon (within two years) a detailed plan for the same.

This plan will be presented to the Vice-Province for its consideration.

合意

私たちはこの2日間にわたって幼稚園の使徒職について識別を行いました。その中で現代日本社会において幼児教育にたずさわる使徒職の価値を認めながらも、オブレート会の日本管区の現実から考えて、次の合意に達した。

1. オブレート会は、これから幼稚園の使徒職には今までのように取り組むことが出来ない。

特に、オブレート会は学校法人「暁の星学園」に対して、またその学校法人のもとで運営されている幼稚園に対して会員の派遣は、これまでのようには出来ない。

2. オブレート会と「暁の星学園」のこれからの関係については、それぞれの代表者がこの集まりの合意にもとづいて話し合い、早急に（2年間の内に）具体的なプランを立てるように努力する。

新しいプランが出来た時点で皆に示し、改めて検討する。



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JAPAN

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

July 1991

The following is a report from Yoshikazu X. Tosa our Justice and Peace man.

A Visit to the Philippines

I took a two week trip to the Philippines around Easter. This was my first encounter with this neighboring country. There wasn't any international meeting or the like; I just wanted to be exposed (a little!) to the reality of the Philippines. Two weeks doesn't give me any authority to judge or even to write about this complex country. Even now, after a few months back home, I still have mixed feelings, not digested impressions. I didn't go as a tourist, (I didn't see the presidential palace...however it was on my schedule.) not even to "study", but to see things one reads about. However one meets many people of good will and almost everybody wants to explain...and so one gets a little confused because the explanations differ from person to person. Sometimes I thought that in the Philippines, just as in Japan, there doesn't exist a common vision on mission, church or parish.

I wanted to be exposed to two things: the Philippines' Catholicism and poverty. I stayed most of the time in and around Manila. Being connected with the Justice and Peace Committee, I was very interested in the gap between the rich and the poor. One doesn't have to walk long or far to see slum and squatter areas. A social worker of Our Lady of Grace parish took me to some areas like "Smokey Mountain" and the slums located in the parish boundaries. I was able to visit some of those cottages and meet the people living in them. The second OMI parish in Manila, Our Lady of Lourdes, is in the middle of a squatter area. I didn't time my visit here very well--a busy Holy Saturday!! I just met one priest for half an hour, but I walked a few blocks. I felt bad taking pictures of those people in misery. I had met one OMI of that parish on Holy Thursday in the "Urban Poor Forum"; that is a procession (?) or demonstration of the poor of Manila asking for employment, housing. etc. I walked with them but I wonder if it was out of curiosity or of solidarity.

I also visited a small home for street children. About twenty children, most of them of grammar school age, stay there temporarily. It fulfills an immediate need. Social helpers look for their parents and try to arrange the return of the street children. Caritas Manila and Our Lady of Grace parish operate this institution. However it seems that Caritas Manila is going to withdraw its financial support from this work.

My second exposure was the Philippines' religiosity. The people certainly are "religious". As in (al)most all countries (except Catholicism in Japan) it is a very popular faith. Western people are apt to label the devotions not rooted in European culture "superstition". Some of those devotions can mean the survival of the faith in all possible social and political circumstances. For instance, the chanting of the whole passion during Holy Week in the neighborhoods; it is not only chanting, it is "proclaiming". Even if all the priests in the Philippines should disappear, the proclaiming of the death and resurrection of Christ will continue. There might be a need to integrate these devotions into the official liturgy, but it is also possible that popular religion might become the basis, the foundation of a new and proper Philippine liturgy. Last year in Sri Lanka, for the first time, I heard very intellectual priests speak about the necessity to value highly popular devotions. To keep the Roman Liturgy as it is and add to that the popular devotions and prayers, doesn't seem to me to be the ideal solution; not adding of popular devotions but integration. In Japan we do not seem to have such a problem. Our liturgy and prayers are a verbal translation of the Latin. We are more "Roman" than the Catholics in Rome. Of course, one wonders how the translation becomes a real prayer, from the heart.

On Good Friday, I went with the "foreigners" of Radio Veritas International to the city of San Fernando to see the "flagelatio" and the "crucifixio". To describe these scenes would make the newsletter too long. Go and see it for yourself, but you have to go as a tourist because in San Fernando I wasn't exposed to popular religion, but rather to a spectacle.

Last year I had a look at Colombo (Sri Lanka) and this year at Manila. One sees a lot of misery, poverty and dirt. In contrast, Japan seems prosperous, well-ordered and clean. One cannot help but wondering why such a difference. At the same time, one wants to help, to do something; not just giving money or old clothes. It should be a "help" that enables the people over there to help themselves. Not a "help" that makes them only a "receiver". I think that the kind of help that looks more like occasional alms, might keep the status quo. The OMI Fathers I have met over there don't live in slums. Thank

God! But still there are projects that need help.

And here one wonders and ponders why this country as a whole doesn't get out of its misery. Is the answer corruption, or lack of identity, or the national character, or the international monetary system or...? I know that some OMI Fathers of Japan send gifts to poor countries. The Japanese Vice-Province donated \$5000 to the OMI of Bangladesh (probably for cyclone disaster relief). These are gestures of good will. I don't think ^{that} that is the most genuine cooperation in our present society. I would call that a small plaster on a big wound. Besides those occasional alms, we who live in a very affluent society should have an on-going assistance program. I think that is possible for us here in Japan with our parishes (although small) and kindergartens. People in developing countries must build and liberate their own country, but we can create a possibility for that. We are not going to change the system in Sri Lanka or the Philippines or any place else. I'm only speaking of assisting them in their genuine effort to liberate rich and poor. It is not for us in Japan to clear the air of Manila or to collect the garbage there, but we can show solidarity with them by an on-going assistance program. This would be a more genuine involvement from our side.

Am I right or wrong? Is it possible or not? Why not speak about it together? And the Provincials of Asia also should discuss such ways of inter-Regional cooperation.

Post Scriptum:

I took a short trip to Cotabato,--too short. I have good memories of the Fathers and the delicious fruit, and especially of my overnight trip to Pikit. However with the kidnapping of Fr. Caroff, O.M.I. I was asked not to walk around alone.

I would like to close this report by thanking the Oblates of the Philippines for their many kindnesses to me.

Yoshikazu X. Tosa

My brother Oblates,

In his report on his trip to the Philippines Xave has written the following sentence. "Besides those occasional alms, we who live in a very affluent society should have an on-going assistance program".

I think this sentence expresses a two-fold type of assistance that we can offer to those suffering from want and poverty in the other Provinces of the Asia/Oceania Region. There are occasions when sudden calamity strikes

in the form of volcanos, cyclones and other such catastrophes. At these times it has been a custom of the Japan Vice-Province to try to be of assistance with emergency relief help. The letters of appreciation recieved on these occasions attest to the fact that this type of emergency aid is most greatly appreciated.

In his report Xave is calling for another type of help that as a Province we have not provided. That is an on-going assistance program. I say we have not provided this assistance as a Province ^{although} because some of our parishes have been making regular contributions to more needy Provinces for some time.

Perhaps it is time to inaugurate this type of assistance on an organized basis. I feel that this second type of assistance could well be provided by the people in our parishes, kindergartens and other apostolic ministries. This would be a vice-Province-wide endeavor. This one project involving all these different Oblate-related groups should help to develop a strong spirit of unity as we work together for Peace and Justice in Asia,

I am sure it will be good for the recipients to know that they will be receiving support and help on a regular basis. This way the directors of whatever project is selected can include that sum in their budgetary planning.

It will also be a source of encouragement to the direct recipients of help, the suffering poor. The knowledge that the people of Japan are interested and concerned for them and want to help them to improve there lot will give them added courage to fight against the evils that are often the causes of poverty, illness, broken homes etc.

It is also important for us Oblates here in Japan to fullfill our role as missionaries to the poor by teaching our people ~~of the~~ their obligations to care for their brothers. This will be an excellent opportunity to speak not only to the Christians in our parishes but also to all the non-christians in our kindergartens as well as those we reach in our other apostolic ministries. An opportunity in a concrete way to make them all more aware of there obligation to work for the poor and suffering in our neighboring countries of Asia.

I would like to second Xave's suggestion that we talk about this. As a start I would like to request the District Coordinators to put this topic on the agenda of the next meeting.

Fraternally in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate,

John Kenney Mahoney, O. M. I., Provincial

NEWS FROM OUR PARISHES

NARUTO

Naruto was once a city that was probably seventy percent taken up with the production of salt. These salt fields ^{divided} ~~separated~~ the city into small pockets of densely populated neighborhoods. With the change of methods in the production of salt these familiar salt fields were filled in to produce available land for housing developments. The remainder of the land of Naruto is basically farm land; sweet potatoes, renkon, Japanese radish, and vegetables.

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

In order to obtain city status many of the outlying rural areas were convinced to become incorporated into the town of Naruto. Several years ago a bridge was built joining the Island of Shikoku and Naruto to the next island, Awaji. It was hoped this would open up this area economically and tourist-wise. Neither of these side effects has taken place.

The "parish" of Naruto is at present on the outskirts of town. Previously it was in the center of the city. The community began when Brother Tsuda came here from Tokyo during the war. He was the only Christian here. Due to his efforts a small group was formed, mostly, of young people interested in art. As Brother (He was not a Brother then) was an artist he painted with them, drank with them, and talked with them. He was befriended by Fr. Tanaka (who became the first Bishop of our Island). First they were able to use the home of a Mr. Omura. The Naruto Family began. Some were baptized and a Mission Station was started. From Omura's home, to the city hall, to a room in a private school, to the first Catholic kindergarten and rectory in the center of town. At our present location there is now a small chapel that the Catholics can call "their own".

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

One of the great joys of living with my christians in Naruto has been being present to them in their difficulties and joys. Many who have been in Naruto have made note of the fact that the Naruto people are non-communicative. I would have to agree that that seems to be the case. "Seems" because after being with them for a long period of time I realize they are probably more open than people in other areas of Japan. I don't know whether the word "keikaishin" (cautious) would aptly apply! In the beginning this was extremely difficult to understand and accept on the part of a missionary working with his christians. I have become used to this with the christians and the people of Naruto. Maybe I have become "non-communicative" as a result.

At one time the parish was made up of Narutoites! Now, this has changed and there are many "outsiders" in the community. This has been a good challenge to the old timers. The Naruto community has always been made up of a good number of men, unusual in the make up of the Church in Japan. We are blessed with two Japanese Oblates from the parish, two young men have "tried" the Oblate life. One of them is now a special Eucharistic Minister. Another young man from the parish is going into his second year in the Trappist Monastery in Hokkaido. That God has called these young men to his service is one of my joys. For some strange reason we have always had an abundance of young boys as minister at the Eucharist.

As a missionary to Naruto I have been convinced of the need of a "base of operation" for missionary work - this personally I find in the "parish". From this point and in conjunction with the Oblate community I have worked with the Oblate charism of "bringing the faith to those who do not have it and of forming Christian communities". Now we say we do not bring the faith; we help others find it within them. Whatever!

Even though we have a small community (forty on Sundays). I am happy to say that they are cooperative with the other churches in the Prefecture and with the Diocese. They have adopted well to the changes in society and in the church. I am indebted to the many Oblates who have lived with me and helped me through many difficult years. Also without the help of the Xaverian Sisters and the Sisters of Notre Dame I would not have been able to cover as many bases as I have. Without the help of a wonderful catechist, Mr Nishikawa, whose service was lent by Ed Williams we wouldn't have the Scripture Community that is still gathering every week, ^{already for} ~~after~~ four years. This is one of my support groups. Another is our small prayer group that meets for weekly Eucharist, Rosary and Night Prayer.

The christian community has been understanding of my taking

on other apostolates. University teaching, Lion's Club activities, English teaching, and mostly the work in our kindergarten.

Work in Naruto still remains - Missionary. The Challenges are unbelievable and each new one is a joy and a sorrow. But isn't that what our Oblate Life is?

Bert Silver, O.M.I.

ZENDANA

In February of this year, the Oblates assumed the pastoral and spiritual duties of St. Paul's parish located in Zendana, Nagoya. The parish church is six kilometers from our House of Studies.

The parish was built by the Society of the Divine Word Fathers twenty-eight years ago. Presently there are 300 people on the books. The average attendance at Sunday Mass is about 50.

As you know the Oblates have agreed to be available to the people at all times but we actually live there only on Saturdays and Sundays. We have begun two Bible classes. One is taught by me and the other by Bro. Kawaguchi. Brother is also in charge of the parish records and helps in the Sunday Children's Program. Fr. Ron LaFramboise also helps in the pastoral care of the parishioners.

The parish council and other groups are extremely well organized. The Liturgies are usually well prepared. We also have a parish newsletter and Ron has just started a series on the Life of the Founder.

The Oblates are well accepted by the people and some have also said they feel they are part of the Oblate family.

Ange Siani

NEWS ITEMS

KOREA: On May 21 Fr. Giovanni Zevola received his Obedience to the Korean Mission. Giovanni will arrive in Seoul in September. Welcome Giovanni! May you have many happy and fruitful missionary years in Korea.

VISITORS: July is visitors month. Fr. James FitzPatrick, Postulator General, will arrive on July 11. Frs. George Kirwin and Jerry Flater, Provincial and Bursar of the Eastern U.S. Province ~~will~~ are expected on July 15.

NEW BISHOP: Fr. Okada Takeo has been appointed Bishop of Urawa Diocese. You may recall that Fr. Okada has agreed to be the input person for our March Meeting. I hope he will still be able to be with us in March.

INTERNATIONAL PRO-LIFE CONGRESS IN JAPAN

by Jerry Novotny, OMI

The second World Pro-Life Congress was held in Tokyo, Japan April 25-27, 1991. The conference was sponsored by the International Right to Life Federation and Japanese pro-life groups. Representatives attended from Australia, Bangladesh, Chile, Columbia, Italy, Egypt, Iceland, England, Hong Kong, Norway, Peru, Iceland, India, Philippines, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Thailand, Uruguay, Nepal, Nigeria, France, Japan and the U.S.

Two Oblates from Japan also attended the Pro-Life Congress: Tosa Yoshikazu, Diocesan Director of Justice and Peace, and Jerry Novotny, Executive Director of Pro-Life Movement Japan.

The three-day congress was a tremendous success: (1) a teaching address was given by Dr and Mrs Willke (Jack and Barbara) on foetal development, a slide presentation demonstrating how to teach the basics; (2) a PUBLIC PROCLAMATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN CHILD, in both English and Japanese, was finalized and verbally signed by all those present; (3) the 2nd annual Award for Life was presented by the President of International Right to Life Federation, Dr. J.C. WILLKE, M.D. to Dr Noboru Kikuta, a Japanese gynecologist.

Suffering from advanced cancer, Dr. Kikuta came to the meeting to receive the honor and was presented with a bouquet of flowers from a little Japanese girl. The doctor had arranged for her adoption four years ago. Dr Kikuta was instrumental in changing and humanizing the adoption laws in Japan. His financial generosity enabled the Japanese pro-lifers combined with the International Right to Life Federation to make this meeting in Japan an outstanding success.

In Japan, abortion is extremely common, averaging between 4000 to 6000 baby-killings a day. Since this is the prime method of birth control and the laws strongly protect it, most Japanese refuse to think about the issue. Over 68% of all abortions are performed on married women between the ages of 28 and 44.

Dr Willke made a very interesting observation in an interview during the meeting. Quote: "A Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.1 babies per woman, averaged through her reproductive lifespan, is the number of babies needed to maintain a stable population. Japan's TFR this year is 1.57. Because their birth rate is way under replacement level, the nation is beginning to age and the number of young people is diminishing rapidly. The members of the Japanese Diet are becoming extremely worried about this, and the negative economic impact it will have on their nation. The government must take a long look at what is needed to increase the birth rate. The fact of limiting abortion is only too obvious."

Regarding the RU486 pill, the Congress adopted the following resolution on April 26: "We ask for the withdrawal of the abortion pill RU486 from the market. This deadly drug is produced and distributed by the French pharmaceutical company Roussel-Uclaf, the parent company of which is the German firm Hoechst.

This drug is not a contraceptive. It kills a developing baby after his/her heart has begun to beat. Moreover, it is dangerous for women, can kill them, and cause severe foetal deformity in surviving babies."

On April 27th, 1991, the following DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN CHILD was unanimously passed:

INTRODUCTION: Because each individual human being has an inherent dignity and unique value from the moment of conception/fertilization until natural death, the parties to this Declaration publicly agree to the following six articles:

ARTICLE 1: We affirm the scientific fact that every unborn child is a human being at each stage of his/her development from conception/fertilization;

ARTICLE 2: We shall respect the rights set forth in the present Declaration without discrimination on the basis of race, age, sex, nationality, religion, socio-economic origin or degree of perfection or for any other reason;

ARTICLE 3: We affirm that the unborn child has the same fundamental rights as all other human beings, including the right to life, as stated in the United Nations 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. We demand that these rights be recognized by statutory legislation;

ARTICLE 4: We recognize that every unborn child has the right to a healthy gestational environment which must include the right to adequate ante-natal care for the mother and support for the parents;

ARTICLE 5: We affirm that an unborn child shall have the right not to be subject to scientific, medical or non-medical experiments or uses from the time of conception/fertilization onwards, unless such experimentation or use would benefit the unborn child directly;

ARTICLE 6: We shall strive to promote education regarding the scientific facts of fetal development and other related issues. We shall also strive to improve the social, economic and legal conditions which make it difficult for women to bear and raise their children;

CONCLUSION : Now therefore, the parties to the present Declaration urge all international bodies, governments, organizations and all people of good will to ratify and implement the Articles contained herein.

On the 26th, an interesting address was also given by Cardinal A. Trujillo, president of the pontifical council for the family, on "How the Catholic Church supports and protects life and what is planned for the future."

For the Japanese pro-lifers, the work is just beginning. Our objective is to achieve recognition for the fundamental right to life of all human beings from conception/fertilization to natural death. The methods we use are fourfold: (1) EDUCATION -- at local, national and international levels; (2) CARING -- for all human beings regardless of age, race, sex, or level of physical or mental capacity; (3) LEGAL EFFORT -- to ensure that the wider community takes its responsibilities towards the weakest members of society seriously; (4) POLITICAL -- to ensure the passage of pro-life legislation and the defeat or repeal of pro-abortion, infanticide and euthanasia laws and proposals.

OBLATES VOCATIONS WEEK

The parishioners and friends of the Oblates in Japan were most cooperative in our prayer campaign for Oblate Vocations. A spiritual bouquet form was distributed at all the Masses. The people were asked to offer prayers each day between May 21 and May 29. About 1000 forms were distributed.

The prayers offered during Oblate Vocations Week in Japan were as follows:

Masses.....	482
Communions.....	600
Rosarys.....	2228
Lord's Prayer.....	5049
Hail Mary.....	6503
Litanies.....	1218
Prayer for Vocations...	2607
Sacrifices.....	954

DATES TO REMEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

July 31	Leo Simons	October 7	Ron LaFramboise
		10	Jan Van Hoydonck
August 4	Nobuhiko Yagi	28	Xave Yoshikazu Tosa
23	Angelo Siani		
31	Bert Silver		

ORDINATIONS

September 6	John Iwo	October 10	Mauro Concardi
20	John Mahoney	28	Gerard Stevens
22	Francis Hahn		

BROTHER YAGI'S PERPETUAL OBLATION August 4th 3P.M. Kochi, Nakajima-cho.

ANNUAL OBLATE RETREAT September 2-6 Passionist Retreat House, Fukuoka.



OMI INFORMATION

JAPAN

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

September 1991

My brother Oblates,

In July we had visitors from Rome; Fr. Jim FitzPatrick, Postulator General, and from the Eastern American Province; Fr. George Kirwin, Provincial and Fr. Gerry Flater, Provincial Treasurer. Though only here a short time they were able to visit many of our Oblates houses. They also had a brief introduction to the culture of Kyoto and were able to visit a few of Shikoku's 88 Temples.

We were very happy to have these Oblates visit us and hope that more will be able to come our way. When you read George Kirwin's letter you will realize what these visits can do to increase inter-Province awareness.

On August 1 about 15 middle and highschool boys arrived in Kochi for the Oblate Vocation Camp. It was a great success. The high point was Brother Yagi's Perpetual Vow Mass. Ed Williams has written about this.

This summer a number of the Fathers were on home leave. Three to celebrate their Ordination Jubilees and a few on their regular home leave. As a result I have been covering on weekends in our different parishes. Of course all of these are one man parishes.

For the last ten years I have been living in Kochi where there have always been two or three Oblates. At one period the Novices were with us so we had a rather large community. The experience this summer has made me realize that I have been blessed. I have become very aware that a number of our men must feel rather alone at times. Whether it is watching T.V or saying Evening Prayer it is always better when you have someone to share it with. My thanks to you men who are living alone, in our small and very small rural parishes.

Hope one and all had an enjoyable summer.

Fraternally in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate,

Fr. John Kenney Mahoney, O.M.I.
Provincial, Japan

GEORGE KIRWIN ON HIS VISIT TO THREE ASIAN MISSION
Taken from the Eastern American Province Newsletter

July 1991

Having just returned from our trip to the Philippines, Hong Kong and Japan, I wish to share some reflections with you about my experience of these missions.

First of all, I am grateful to the Province for making it possible for me to visit these missions. It was a privilege and a joy to see the places whose names were so familiar but whose history, past and present, was so miniscule in my awareness: Grace Park, Jolo, Cotabato, Kidapawan, Midsayap, Itami, Kyoto, Nagoya, Kochi, Naruto, Anan, Aki, Tokushima, Tokyo.

Secondly, I am particularly grateful to the men whom we visited, who received us with open arms and treated us royally. They are too numerous to mention and I might forget one. The humbling part was to realize that they were saying thanks to the Province through us, thanks for the men of the past and present, the pioneers and the present-day missionaries who gave of their wealth (their lives, their energies, their talents, their spirituality) to help to enrich the people of these missions.

The image I bring with me from this visit is that of tens of thousands of people, some of whom have been touched in a very clear way by the gospel message brought by our men, through their preaching and especially through their educational ministry; many of whom, though good people, have not yet received the light of Christian faith though they have been touched, at times deeply, by the kindness and the loving concern of our men. That contrast exists both in the Philippines and in Japan / Hong Kong. I was surprised by the strength of the Muslim presence in the Philippines and the consequent challenges that brings to our missionaries. In that respect I would think that the missionary task is similar in the Philippines and Japan / Hong Kong. On the other hand, one certainly experiences the difference between incredible numbers of Catholics attending Mass in the Philippines and the handful one sees in Japan and Hong Kong. That certainly is one of the great consolations for those who minister in the Philippines and one of the greatest challenges to our men in Japan and Hong Kong. Yet what I experienced as the sharpest contrast between these countries was the poverty and the wealth. I would say that the poverty we saw in the Philippines was comparable to what I saw in Brazil last year. The favelas of Sao Paulo are no worse than the slums of Manila and the pitiable condition of those who "live" in the garbage dumps of "Smokey Mountain" on the edge of Manila. Japan and Hong Kong on the contrary, are thriving economically. Strikingly, in both of these

situations we met wonderful people, people who are trying to live by the gospel. We met two women in Japan, two blood sisters, who had been successful in their earlier careers and who were now dedicated to taking care of battered women. We met catechists who have devoted their lives to the Church in terms of teaching and fostering the faith, especially among youth. In the Philippines the story was much the same: men and women who have responded to initiatives taken by our men to provide health care, education and religious training for thousands of people.

The spirit among the men was typically Oblate. They extended wonderful fraternal hospitality to us and showed great respect for each other even when there were disagreements as to approaches to ministry etc. I come away greatly edified by the genuine desire of the men to meet the varying needs of their people. I come away with a strong feeling of pride because of all that they have done to make the Church a reality in the midst of cultures vastly different from their own. I come away with gratitude for the grace of God which has sustained the missionary efforts of "ordinary men" like ourselves. I feel that they shall stimulate me to trust more than before in the power of God's love in the world.

KOREA

I am happy to welcome the newest member to our Province. Fr Giovanni Zevola, formerly a member of the Italian Province, has been assigned to the Korean Mission. Giovanni is 29 years old. He was ordained last year on September 8. He studied at the International Scholasticate. His field of study was Biblical Theology. Before his ordination Giovanni had two years of pastoral training in the Philippines. Welcome to the Province, Giovanni.

At the end of the April Vincenzo Bordo and Mauro Concardi went to Italy for R and R. Vincenzo returned in June for the summer course which he has just completed. He has started helping out on Sundays in parishes in the Suwon Diocese. Mauro remained in Italy for an On-going Formation Program. He has also participated in a number of youth camps. Mauro and Giovanni will arrive in Seoul on September 5.

Our Korean Missionaries have been living at the Franciscan Monastery in Seoul. Now, the Franciscans need the rooms so we must find our own living quarters. This is going to be an expensive proposition. Even to rent will involve a sum of about \$70,000 due to the renting system in Korea.

Kindly remember the Korean Missionaries. Also pray that we find a suitable place for the first Oblate House in Korea.

P e r p e t u a l P r o f e s s i o n
o f
B r o t h e r D o m i n i c N o b u h i k o Y a g i
S u n d a y , A u g u s t 4 t h 1 9 9 1
K o c h i , N a k a j i m a c h o C a t h o l i c C h u r c h

The weather was very hot but otherwise rather reasonable on this Sunday afternoon. People filled the church, about 150 people from various parts of Japan. Young people made up a very noticeably proportion of the congregation. The Oblate camp for vocations was in session at the time so these middle and high school boys all lent a hand in the affair. They were the readers at the Mass, the acolytes, the attendants at the reception desk in the church entry, a remarkable presence in a church where young people are rather few.

In spite of the fact that it was a Sunday afternoon a rather large number of priests were in attendance. Father John Mahoney, (our Provincial), was the principal celebrant along with the following Oblates, Fathers Tom Maher, William Maher, John Iwo, Leonard Inui, Yoshikazu Tosa, Ron Laframbois, Le¹ Simons and Ed Williams. Father Yooji Matsunaga, Diocesan Pastor of the other Kochi parish, and a young Dominican Deacon, Masashi Tanaka, also concelebrated.

The Mass, the vow ceremonies, the final remarks were all 'signed' (given in sign language). People well versed in this technique 'signed' the Mass and Brother Yagi himself signed his own final remarks. According to Brother Yagi this is the first time Mass has been 'signed' in this diocese.

After this a reception was held at a nearby hotel, the Sansuien, where all had a wonderful fe^{ce}, especially the young people present.

Several people who attended this celebration made it a point to tell us how deeply they were impressed by everything. The young people seem to have been the most impressed of all. It was a memorable occasion for the Oblates, Brother Yagi, his family, and for all who joined us on that day.

FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS APOSTOLATE

Report submitted by Wency Laguidao

Purpose and Objective of Work: Pastoral care of Filipinos through cooperation with individuals, groups, (catholic and non-catholic), parishes, and institutions in their activities of responding to the growing needs of the Filipinos living and working in Japan. My work is done mainly through the general objectives of the Association for Solidarity With Migrant and Foreign Workers under the Commission for International Cooperation.

Nature and Scope of Work: It must be noted that chaplaincy to Filipinos is a very recent apostolate in Japan. Considering that an overwhelming number of Filipino nationals are here on overstayed-visa, planning out an appropriate apostolate for them has always been difficult. Most of my time and work are spent responding to their immediate needs and problems. Filipinos in Japan can be divided into three groups.

1) Workers: those in the entertainment business; unskilled labor; skilled labor; trainees; seamen; etc.

2) Married to Japanese: those who came to marry a Japanese and those who got married with a Japanese while working in Japan.

3) Others: those who don't fall under 1 & 2. Recently, many Filipinos come to Japan to visit relatives.

Main Activities of 1990:

1) Participation in the planning and carrying-out of the year's activities of the Association for Solidarity With Migrant Workers

2) Handling of labor-related problems. Workers who are brought to Japan under "trainees visa" but actually are made to work without the workers' benefits have increased sharply recently. I was involved in two big cases last year involving workers with "trainees visa". I was able to work closely with members of various support groups. Each problem is carefully analyzed and studied before concrete actions are taken. Privacy and personal interest of the workers involved in the problem are held in priority. Meeting of the members of the network formed were held almost weekly.

3) Handling problems related to life in Japan. I handled several cases of Filipinos married to Japanese. Cultural differences and conflict in expectations on both parties are the usual cause of marital problems.

4) Sacramental functions. I made several trips to different parishes with large concentrations of Filipinos to celebrate mass or to give a day of recollection. There were many baptisms, a few weddings and 3 funerals of Filipinos during the past year. When in Osaka, I help out with masses in Kitahama and Tamatsukuri.

5) Adoption of children. I have helped in the process of adoption of children born to Filipinos. Reasons for wanting the child to be adopted were: inability to take care of the child who is usually born out of wedlock and desire of the mother to continue working hence could not take care of the child. Proper legal procedure must be followed in the adoption of a Filipino child. I have worked with the International Social Services (ISS), the only organization authorized by the Philippine Government to process adoption papers of its nationals and the Missionaries of Mary (Kami no ai Senhkyookai).

6) Cooperation with government and non-government organizations. Philippine Embassy in Tokyo and Consulate in Kobe refer some problems to me and vice versa. I work closely with ALS (Arusu no Kai) in Nagoya and learn from their handling of many cases involving foreigners. I try to be of service to the other organizations helping Filipinos.

7) Trips to Manila. I made 3 trips to Manila in 1990: to deliver large amounts of workmen's compensation money (rosai), to deliver remains of 2 Filipinos who died and upon invitation to give talks by Radio Veritas-Japanese Broadcast. Whenever in Manila, I try to make contact with Filipinos whose cases I handled in the past and also update organizations in Manila who link with us in helping Filipinos like the Center for Overseas Workers (COW) and STOP (Stop Trafficking of Filipinos).

8) Others. Telephone counselling is common, either directly from the person or from a third party. Recording of important events and problems is also a work that I consider very important hence I try to do it faithfully. Cooperation with planning and actual conducting of AISA-Yokohama in November of 1990 was another big activity of the year.

Main Problems and Difficulties encountered:

1) Absence of medical and health insurance. 90% of the Filipinos in Japan have overstayed their visa so they are denied health insurance benefits. This has become a very serious problem. In cases of death, the bereaved family back in the Philippines is usually forced to agree to have the body of the deceased cremated here to avoid tremendous expense in transporting remains. Employers

usually shun responsibilities in the cases of sickness and death of a Filipino worker.

2) Labor-related problems. Since 90% of Filipinos in Japan are workers without proper visa, they remain vulnerable to exploitation and deception by their employers and brokers. Recently, those who enter with some form of contract are even more exploited than those without working visa. For example, an illegal working Filipino can earn 3-4 times what an entertainer or a trainee earns in a month. Not all of those with some kind of contract papers are entered into some form of health insurance by their employers.

3) Problems with Filipinos. Cases of exploitation of Filipinos by Filipinos are increasing. Many Filipinos are acting as unscrupulous labor brokers now.

4) Family problems of Filipinos married to Japanese are many and varied. Differences in culture are a main cause of marital conflict. Likewise, those who come to work and have left families in the Philippines are faced with loneliness that drives them to neglect their families back home. Some of them get involved in crime.

5) Discrimination. This is a cause of suffering for many of them at the work place, in the society where they live and even when they live together with their in-laws.

Plan of activity for 1991: Continuation of activities mentioned above with particular emphasis on cooperation with the activities of network organizations helping foreign migrant workers,

Conclusion: As expected the revised immigration law which took effect in June, 1990 has not improved the conditions of the foreign migrant workers. Important facts and figures regarding the foreign migrant workers were thoroughly discussed during AISA-Yokohama.

As far as the Church is concerned the number of Filipinos coming to Church is something that cannot be ignored anymore especially that most of them will live in Japan permanently. For example, some small churches in Shikoku have more Filipino than Japanese Catholics.

Meanwhile, the economic and political situation of the Philippines only turned for the worse at the outbreak of the Gulf War. For millions of Filipino workers "dekasegi" is the only means to survive and Japan remains the most attractive place to go.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Birthdays

September

6 John Iwo
20 John Mahoney
22 Fran Hahn

October

7 Ron LaFramboise
10 Jan Van Hoydonck
27 Xave Yoshikazu Tosa

December

24 Mike Yamasaki

Ordinations

September

8 Giovanni Zevolta

October

10 Mauro Concardi
28 Gerard Stevens

Brother Yagi will depart for his stay in Australia on September 3rd. He will there for six months. Bon Voyage, Nobuhiko! You will be in our prayers.

The Asia/Oceania Regional Conference will meet in Melbourne from September 23-27. The theme of the meeting will be, "Leadership as Evangelizers in a Secular Society". I will leave for Australia on September 13. Before that I will go Seoul for a few days after the Retreat to look into a new location for the Oblates. After the meeting in Melbourne I will spend some time in Australia then visit the Oblates in New Zealand and Tahiti. I plan to return to Osaka by way of Honolulu. I will spend about ten days there with the Hawaii branch of the Mahoney family. I will return to Osaka on November 5. Mike Yamasaki will be acting Provincial during my absence. Incidentally if you need Visa Renewal Forms please inform me before September 12.

J. K. M.

Gerry Novotny's father is doing quite well. I spoke to Mrs. Novotny this morning. She sends the family's thanks for your prayers. Gerry and the family request your continued prayers.

You are also asked to remember in your prayers Bro. Leo Kawaguchi's uncle Fr. Yasuyori Kawaguchi who died on August 19.

Report on Secularization in Japan for the 1991
Asia/Oceania Regional Conference:

Submitted by Fr. John Kenney Mahoney. O. M. I.

In order to discuss the challenges of secularization in Japan it is first necessary to consider Japan's religious situation. To do this I am using "Japanese Religiosity" by Fr. Joseph Spae, CICM

"Japan's religious situation is, in fact nothing else than her religious experience, so subtle, variegated and elusive that no one can capture it in an adequate verbal expression but must observe it through a haze of convergent probabilities". (Spae p. 5)

"..one might suppose , there is a "Church-less" Buddhism and Shintooism, undoubtedly because Japanese religiosity considers religious affiliation to be of a social and hereditary, rather than of a strictly religious nature which would involve personal, committed attitudes" . (Spae p. 12)

"Religion in general, is then easily seen as spiritual culture. It does not primarily rest upon creed. Even when taken seriously, it does not call for an individual binding ethic". (Spae 33)

"What then is Japanese religion?"

"What follows is a Christian reflection upon this question and upon and eventual answer. To Nitobe Inazo, famous convert and author we owe this interesting description of "Japanese religion":

The definition of religion that appeals most to my undoctrinal mind is the one given by Emperor Meiji, who has put it in a poem of thirty-one syllables - "To commune with a god, invisible to eyes of flesh, is faith of the heart of man". Not a mental discovery of the existence of the Divine but the feeling of His presence. Here again as on many occasions, it shows the realistic character of our race. The faith of the Japanese is not an intellectual assent. It is the settled consciousness of attainment. It is not analyzing God or His garments. It is grasping something - maybe the hem of His garment, or the latchet of His shoe... The Japanese conception of religion is clear in experience, but vague in theory. It begins in instinct, gains volume by sentiment, and grows in strength by emotion. The race feels deep down in its consciousness that sublunary existence is not the whole of life... This belief is so ingrained in us that it has become a mental habit which asks for no demonstration, a subconscious faith which no materialism can destroy". (Spae p. 37)

For a further development of Japanese religiosity as well as a bit of historical background of the religions of Japan I will quote from, "The Japanese Mind", edited by Charles A. Moore.

"There are many religions in Japan. Various different religions are flourishing side by side, such as Shintoo, Buddhism, Christianity and others.

Among them, Shinto is an age-old native religion of the Japanese people. It originated in Japan and has grown along with the development of her culture. Buddhism came from India by way of China. The transmission of Buddhism to Japan was in the middle of the sixth century. It spread all over Japan and also penetrated the Japanese culture. Christianity entered Japan once, briefly, in the fifteenth century. Present-day Christianity, including both Catholic and Protestant, is the second entrance, which was about one hundred years ago. Beside these there are many independent religions which have been founded by individual spiritual leaders. Some of them are Sectarian Shintoo, and there are still other new religions. New Religions are abundant. Within a span of a decade of post-war Japan, statistics say that about six hundred religions came into being.

The variety of religions is broad and extensive in Japan. but, excepting Christianity, most of them share a common general characteristic. This seems to be rooted in the basic empirical trait of Japanese culture.

The common concern of all these religions is the internal problems of man. Their main focus is on immediate experience. How to remove worries and anxieties from man's mind is their main task. Various devices are suggested for that purpose. They generally try to remold man's mind. This constitutes the central part of religious activities". op. cit. p. 112 (Article: Some Japanese Cultural Traits and Religions by Kichimoto Hideo)

What is the relationship of religion with the daily economic, and social life of the nation? To answer this question I will quote from another article in Charles Moore's book.

"It is a problem worthy of study why several decades ago the Japanese alone among the many Asian countries came to be most advanced in adopting modern civilization. In respect to this, it is necessary to point out the emphasis on social activities as one of the features of the Japanese way of thinking.

The phenomenalistic way of thinking that asserts reality itself to be emergent and in flux has been traditionally

conspicuous among Japanese. This emergent and fluid way of thinking is compatible with the inclination of thinking that emphasizes a particular human nexus, which is another way of thinking that is traditionally conspicuous among the Japanese. These two factors are combined to bring emphasis upon activities within a concrete human nexus.

It is a well known fact that primitive Shintooism was closely connected with agricultural rituals in agrarian villages, and that Shintooist gods have been symbolized, and still are, as gods of production.

Coming into contact with foreign cultures and becoming acquainted with Chinese philosophies and religions, the Japanese adopted and absorbed Confucianism in particular, which teaches the way of conduct appropriate to a concrete human nexus. The views of Lao Tsu and Chuang Tsu are inclined to a life of seclusion in which one escapes from a particular human nexus and seeks tranquility in oneself in solitude. Such was not to the taste of the Japanese at large. In contrast, Confucianisms, and not Taoism, principally determines the rules of conduct according to a system of human relationships.

In the case of Buddhism, however, certain problems arose. Buddhism declared itself to be a teaching of otherworldliness. The central figures of Buddhist orders were monks and nuns, who were not allowed to be involved in any economic or worldly activities.

Meanwhile, the topographical characteristics of Japan, vastly different from India, required men to serve humanity within a specific human nexus. The doctrine of early Buddhism is not compatible with such requirements. So, it came about that early Buddhism and traditional conservative Bhuddism which inherited the former teachings, were despised and rejected under the name of "Hinayana" (literally, Lesser Vehicle), whereas Mahayana Buddhism was particularly favored and adopted. Some schools of Mahayana Buddhism, if not all, advocated the finding of absolute truth within secular life. In accepting Buddhism, the Japanese selected in particular that form which had such characteristics. And even in accepting those doctrines which were originally devoid of such nature, they deliberately bestowed such character upon them.

The emphasis on the human nexus ran parallel to the stress upon all the productive services of men.

Respect for labor in professional life resulted in high esteem for things produced as fruits of labor. Reverence for food stuff is expecially manifest.

The fact that Japan alone was rapid in the progress of

modernization in the years just before World War II, while other Asian countries were generally slow in this process, may be attributed partly to the emphasis laid by the Japanese upon practical activities within the human nexus". (The Japanese Mind; Moore. Legal, Political and Economic Thought; Nakamura Hajime p. 157 ff.)

It would seem from this that there has always been a very close connection between the religious activity of the Japanese and their daily life. As one Oblate said Japan has always been secularized. Or perhaps more accurately the religion of Japan is primarily inclined toward the secular.

Perhaps a reflection on the Shintoo and Japanese ethnocentrism will make this clearer.

"The amazing scholar Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801)...lauded the unerring instinct for proper conduct which he claimed was possessed by the Japanese people by virtue of their direct genealogical kinship with the great divinities of the Shintoo pantheon. He called on his compatriots to manifest unswerving and unquestioning fealty to their divinely descended imperial sovereigns. He wrote of Japan as the native land of the Heaven-Shining Goddess (Amaterasu Oomi-kami) who casts her light over all countries in the four seas. Thus our country is the source and fountain head of all other countries, and in all matters excels all others". (Moore: Japanese Ethnocentrism; Sakamaki Shunzoo p. 28)

"The notion of Japanese superiority is most boldly expressed in the concept of the Divine Nation. We find the following statement by Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354) a Shintooist writer. "Our great Nippon is a Divine Nation. Our Divine ancestors founded it; the Sun Goddess let her descendents reign over it for a long time. This is unique to Our Nation; no other nation has the like of it. This is the reason our nation is called 'Divine Nation!'"

This concept of Divine Nation was adopted by some Buddhists, such as Nichiren, and Zen masters". (Moore: Legal, Political, and Economic Thought; Nakamura Hajime p. 153)

"The framework of limited social nexus wherein the Japanese feel at ease has bred that island mentality, sectionalism, and nationalism which, throughout their history, have been seen as a defense against the inroads of foreign ideologies. But there runs a determination parallel to it: that of being second to no other nation. This ambition has been well served by an unerring intuition which studiously imported from abroad only those elements contributing to the growth of the nation". (Spae op.cit. p. 78)

I will conclude this section with the Matsushita Electric Company's Workers Song.

For the building of a new Japan,
Let's put our strength and minds together,
Doing our best to promote production,
Sending our goods to the people of the world,
Endlessly and continuously,
Like water gushing from a fountain.
Grow industry grow, grow, grow!
Harmony and sincerity,
Matsushita Electric!

(The Emerging Japanese Superstate
Herman Kahn p. 217)

It is my hope that this long praenotanda will be helpful in giving some understanding of the situation in which the Oblate Missionary in Japan is working. Before discussing the challenges that modern Japanese society presents to him it might be helpful to include these definitions.

"Secularization is a gradual, historical process by which intellectual, social, and political activities, formerly exercised by religion, are withdrawn from its control".

(Spae op. cit. p. 53)

"Secularization of Japan is thoroughly ambiguous as far as Christian values are concerned. One discerns at its core a demythologizing and rationalizing of religious customs historically belonging to Shintoo and Buddhism."

(Spae op. cit. p. 54)

"The Japanese word for secularization is sezokuka. In itself this word has no religious connotation. It means vulgarity, cheapening, and profanation of any traditional value "

(op.cit. footnote 22)

In order to learn the thinking of the Oblates in Japan on the matter of secularization I sent them a questionnaire.

Written responses were received from the following: Ray Bourgoin, Jack Deely, Fran Hahn, Wency Laguidao, Bert Silver, Gerry Stevens and Xave Tosa. (Reported in that order) I had the opportunity to speak to others on this topic so they did not feel the need to respond in writing. Others did not respond because no definition of secularization was given with the questionnaire

The responses in writing are as follows:

Question #1. How does secularization challenge your life as an Oblate?

1. -challenge to rethink my theology and biblical concepts

in order to "de-mythologize" myself before I can help others (christian and non-christian) to understand the role of religion within secularization or of secularization within religion.

With secularization, which includes advances in science, which in turn includes the human science of psychology, religious life has become more human (which does not mean less divine) because it helped destroy certain "myths" of our relationship with God and each other. This has greatly benefited us, me included. What is truly human is truly divine. An understanding of this makes my relations with others a greater challenge. It gives my religious vows a new meaning, adds a new dimension.

If we believe that God is everywhere that is good and that aspects of secularization can be good; my challenge is to see God in those secularizations, adore God there. Like we can adore God in trees, in nature, we can adore God in technologies, and good secularization. Also to praise God there and not compartmentalize by separating life from life of prayer. The two become one when the person experiencing both makes them one. Hence to live a life of prayer can be to live period.

2. It challenges me to re-think all that I have been taught about God, Christ, Church, Scripture, Liturgy, Truths, etc.--to remove myself from a mind set that had made all of the above so distant and aloof to me--to re-educate myself (and others) to the essence of Christ;(divested of all the excess trappings that we have attributed to Christ) and in order to do this, I am challenged to de-mythologize so called "accepted" teaching concepts to present the Good News in a language this is intelligible to myself and the people I work with.

3. Japan is a highly secularized society where only the practical and the rational are accepted. God and religion are accepted to the degree that they help one cope with the pressures of life to produce and conform. If they interfere or cause tension they must go. Technology, science, and the great god of effort and stick-to-it-tiveness are all that is needed and man can answer any question and solve any problem. Money, success, power, and security are the gods of everyday life and the government will solve any problem so don't rock the boat.

4. Secularization has made me rethink my priorities my spirituality and my life as an Oblate--it has taught me especially that I am an Oblate for something and not for myself. That something is the Church making itself meaningful in the world

5. Positive: Secularization challenges me to keep "in touch" with available mass-communication material to

inform myself of the reality of secularization in religious life and in the Church. At present I receive monthly religious and secular publications from the United States. At times I find some of the material informative and challenging. Unfortunately, my reading ability in Japanese is not at a level where I am able to do the same study in Japanese. Many aspects of Oblate religious life and approaches to evangelization have changed dramatically as a result of secularization.

Negative: Secularization has drawn many in religious life to choose an evangelization approach that "seemingly" has produced a division in community-style living. An over abundance of material things become a block in making our personal commitments to people (within religious life and outside of religious life) effective.

6. Just how much secularization affects my missionary life I don't know myself, but I have become aware of some "evaluation" standards affecting my judgements: e.g. people in general consider our life "useless" (economically or socially). I don't work for a salary, don't raise a family (egoist), the church work has no (visible) results. Often I subconsciously feel I have to "justify" the apostolic activities: are they worth it? It's more useful to be an English teacher, or the director of a kindergarten--to justify your living in Japan. Only the care for the Filipinas living and working here seems to be appreciated as a religious and humanitarian help to those brides and entertainers.

But "just being a missionary" seems to be of "questionable" value. Maybe that is how the true prophets of the Old Testament felt about their mission and their lives ... (e.g. Jeremia Amos) ...

7. Searching for a more adapted "community" life style. where apostolate, engagement, and responsibility come first.

Question #2. How does secularization challenge Christians with whom you are working?

1. It should challenge them in the same way (cf answer to first question by #1) but I'm unaware if they are aware of that. So one of my challenges would be to make them so aware and do something about it.

2. with the advances of technology the person and the personal touch have been relegated to secondary importance. (dehumanizing of the teaching profession, taking communication out of the classroom.

3. It completely permeates their mentality and their value system. So much so that God is pushed out to the fringes

of their thinking to be recalled on Sundays when convenient at certain times in life when they want His attention. Birth, marriage, sickness and death but He shouldn't interfere too much with our daily lives as we've got to survive, and its really the tangible things we can rely on. The Church is challenged to show what faith in a God who always reveals self in history and is always present in our lives implies.

4. It has helped them rethink their christian life, too. More than anything else, secularization has taught them that they are not christians in a vacuum but people with a mission in society.

5. Positive: Secularization has helped to bring the Japanese Christians out of a "ghetto" mentality into one that is open to the society that they are a part of. There are signs that the christians are beginning to see their own role in the church and take steps to be "cooperators" rather than "helpers". Mass communication has been a positive help in making christians see themselves as part of the "world wide" family of christianity.

Negative: In Japan the christians are affected by the desire to belong rather than be responsible for their own choices. This is seen in their "following" their neighbors choice of special teachers, schools, neighborhood activities, civic activities, and current fads to the detriment of their commitment to the christian community.

6. The competitive society seems to have priority in their value system. (Education, jobs, salary etc.) The church (Sunday Mass etc.) seems to come only second or third. However a few committed Catholics put their faith first. Some Filipinas are really edifying Catholics and set good examples for the Japanese. Other Filipinas adapt themselves too easily to the secular standards of the Japanese. Faith and courage are needed to persevere as a Christian in the country side. (more than in the cities because of anonymity)

7. In Japan we always have had "secularized" society. Years ago, our missionary aim was to make small "ghettos" (of course nobody used that word) in society.

Question #3. How does secularization challenge the non-christians with whom you are working?

1. (cf. answers to first and second questins by #1) Again I'm not even sure they realize that we are in a secularized society. My challenge however would be to help them get rid of their "false sacredness" all the while keeping the true meaning of the sacred and mystery

of life

2. No answer

3. Japanese have been secularized for centuries. They have always valued the practical. What helps one to function in this life, which is the only one we can be sure of and can account for, and count on, and therefore is everything, this is what they will utilize. Their nation, and the values passed to them from the ancients are to be honored, but here too, only in as much the rule doesn't inhibit the moment. Nothing is absolute, all is relative and relevant to the here and now.

4. I think it makes them aware of their responsibility, together with the rest of humanity to take care of their planet and to be responsible in the society to which they belong.

5. Positive: A greater thrust is taking place in Japan on the part of non-Christians to be accepted by the world because of their actions to be international. The Japanese have become "self-supporting" and are becoming internationally concerned about the material welfare of other nations. Within Japan and on the local level the economic change in their lives has had positive effects on their concern for social challenges: volunteer work for the physically disabled, the elderly, concern for anti-pollutants and pollution control.

Negative: Over-concern for finances has produced an increase in the number of abortions. Availability of modern conveniences has led to many problems; for example, over use of TV games by children has had an adverse effect on health, "keeping up with the Jones" has lead many families to fall into debt. Modern values are -wealth-health- and status.

6. Religion seems to be a relic of the past, and many maintain only some superstitious customs and religious duties (e.g. funerals) which do not involve personal faith-commitment. Face, money, leisure and sex seem to rate as more important values. However when people want to talk about their real problems, they seem to trust the church most of all.

7. No answer.

During a discussion with the members of the Council the following points were made in reference to the effects of secularization on Japanese society and religion.

It has brought about a money crisis in the missions due to the fluctuation of the monetary exchange rate. As a result purchasing power of the dollar is greatly depleted.

Whereas \$30,000 was sufficient to support a mission or work ten years ago today \$100,000 is needed.

The technical advances, (Word Processor, Computer, FAX, etc.) in Japanese society have given the Church excellent means of rapid communication and mass communication. At the same time the influence of the affluent society and the rapid increase of such machines on the Japan scene can lead one to think they are indispensable. There is the challenge to the Oblates to try to use these technological advances for the good of the Church and society.

A plus in the development of world wide communication is that the Japanese people are more and more aware of the plight of many in the third world. There seems to be an increase of altruistic and humanitarian involvement among the Japanese. Here we Oblates are challenged to encourage this mentality and to actively cooperate with the various agencies and groups involved in this work.

The values in present day Japanese society are education, money and health. These are considered more important than God or religion. In Japan there is the great need to work, to produce. The company is more important than the worker, or his family. As a result the value of the human person as well as the value of human life has been lost. One result of this mentality is a high suicide rate in Japan. This loss of respect for life is also reflected most strongly in the high abortion rate. The Church and the Oblates are challenged to preach on human dignity and the value of human life.

In Japanese society today things and possessions have become important. The desire for luxury cars, jewelry and travel in Japanese society in general; but especially among the young has markedly increased. As a result marriage is often postponed. In the case of marriage children are not a prime desire; enjoying the good life is, as a result the birth rate has dropped to 1.53. In one generation the population is expected to decrease by 25%. Surely this situation calls the Oblates to live more carefully the vow of poverty.

The work ethic of the Japanese has also changed. Today's young do not want to be involved in work that is dirty, dangerous or difficult. This has resulted in the need of importing laborers from third world countries to do this work. Although necessary to the Japanese economy these people are often not given legal status by the Japanese government. This is the cause of great suffering and maltreatment. Here too, is a challenge to the Oblates for surely these people are the poor of Japan.

The fast pace of modern life and the high cost of housing has created another difficult situation. The nuclear

family has increased. There is little room or time for the aged. As a result they are left to languish, often medically sedated in hospital beds, usually just waiting to die. These aged people are also calling to the Oblates for help.

There is one further group that has suffered because of the lifestyle in Japanese society. Those who cannot bear the pressure of life. Young people for whom "Examination Hell" is just too much, company employees for whom the pressure to produce or the need to conform to the group is beyond endurance. These are the victims of modern Japanese society--the psychologically unbalanced who come to our doors everyday. Another challenge to the Oblates, another challenge to our love for the poor.

Whether all of these things are the result of secularization or simply of Japanese society; I do not know. But I know that this is the way of life for many in Japan. I know that this is the milieu in which the Oblates in Japan are called to work and in which they are working with the hope that by bringing the message of Christ to these people they too will know what it is to have life and to have it to the full.....

Traditional Japan ignored, British scholars say

LONDON (Kyodo) A number of British academics are calling for revival of university studies in traditional aspects of Japanese society and culture, saying the overwhelming emphasis on contemporary Japan is giving Britons a distorted and confused picture of the country.

The academics accept that the explosion in British demand for Japanese studies is motivated largely by a desire to do business with Japan or get a job with the growing number of Japanese companies establishing manufacturing and service operations here.

But they feel the knowledge gained in existing courses will not create much genuine understanding between people of the two countries and will leave a gap in scholars' understanding of modern-day Japan.

William Beasley, one of Britain's most distinguished scholars of Japanese history, cited as examples the need to

understand the traditions that fostered 19th- and 20th-century Japanese nationalism and the fact that contemporary Japanese capitalism has its roots in the Tokugawa economy of 1600 to 1868.

Beasley, professor emeritus in history at London University, wrote in an academic journal: "Japanese voters are moved by a number of considerations deriving from social relationships which are not all modern in nature.

"Japanese consumers, we are told, have distinctive preferences which, in some cases at least, relate to pre-modern habits and design.

"Religious practices, im-

ported from China many centuries ago, remain a significant part of everyday life. Analyzing such phenomena requires several kinds of knowledge, of which one is knowledge of premodern Japan."

This argument was supported by T. H. Barrett, a history lecturer at the London School of Oriental and African Studies, who said unless Britons are prepared to study Japanese history critically, they will have "no means of gauging how notions of heritage and tradition are functioning in modern society"

and will be "obliged to swallow whatever modern myth is in vogue."

Graham Healey, head of Oriental Studies at Sheffield University, said that for a long time a split existed between modern and traditional Japanese studies.

"That's rather changed as the first postwar generation of teachers of Japanese studies have retired and have been replaced in most cases by people specializing in modern rather than ancient or classical studies. Now it's all modern history, modern society," he said.

The Japan Times
August 20, 1991



L. J. C. et M. I.

Superior Generalis O.M.I.

C P 9061, 00100 Roma - Aurelio, Italia

Letter to the Congregation (Christmas 1991)

150 years of Oblate presence in Canada

Dear Fellow Oblates,

The feasts of the Christmas season remind us of Christianity's beginnings and renew our family spirit. Within this context I would like to recall a special Oblate event - the 150th anniversary of our arrival in Canada. This was a turning point in Oblate history, one that has left its mark on our missionary family. It is fitting that the whole Congregation should unite with the Canadian Oblates in giving thanks to the Lord.

The Congregation's development in Canada

The first six Oblates' arrival in Montreal on December 2, 1841, is an important event for the entire Institute. In Canada our confreres have richly expressed their charism. They carried forward the work of deepening the faith through parish missions - a ministry for which they were founded; they opened themselves to the mission *ad gentes* - it became their major commitment within the Church; they dedicated themselves to the formation of clergy - proposed by the Founder as a secondary aim; they founded and served diocesan churches in communion with the bishops - whose men they aspired to be; they responded to many urgent missionary needs by opening schools and promoting the laity, setting up radio stations and publishing houses, as well as initiating programs - like the marriage preparation courses now well known on all continents.

During this century and a half, a thousand foreign Oblates - mostly Europeans - carried out their mission in Canada. On the other hand the Congregation has been enriched by more than four thousand Canadians, about half of whom became priests and twelve hundred, Brothers. From the French-speaking province of Quebec alone came 2,600 Oblates; of these a thousand have worked in the western and northern missions of the country and over four hundred have gone to countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The Oblates have extended their missionary activity across the whole of Canada. They are still almost the only clergy in eight northern dioceses governed by Oblate bishops. They have founded thirteen dioceses, have worked in almost all of the existing ones, and have given the Church thirty bishops, of whom fourteen are still living. They have plied their apostolate among all the native and immigrant peoples. Besides ministering in French, English and the

many Amerindian languages, one Province devoted itself to serving German immigrants, another continues ministering to Poles while others serve immigrants from Asia, Latin America and Italy. Their apostolate has always been very diversified: parishes and mission stations, primary schools, colleges and universities, centres of lay formation and seminaries, seasonal pilgrimages and a national marian shrine, parish missions and retreat houses, etc.

Their missionary spirit, not confined to the boundaries of their vast country, made Lesotho one of the most prosperous missions in Africa. It brought the Oblate presence to the United States, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and seconded the missions in Cameroon, Chad, South Africa, Laos, Mexico, Haiti, Tahiti, Bangladesh.

Many Canadian Oblates have greatly influenced the Congregation; among them we note two Superiors General - Father Leo Deschâtelets (1947-1972) and Father Fernand Jetté (1974-1986). They launched a bilingual review for Oblate studies, first named *Études Oblates* and now called *Vie Oblate Life*. The university they direct has produced writers and scholars, also publications specializing in the various fields of theology, missiology and canon law. The Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate would not be what it is without the contribution of the Canadian Provinces.

Preferential option for Native peoples

In the panorama of the universal Church the Oblates are especially known for their missions in Northern Canada, where missionaries have shared the difficult existence of Amerindians and Inuit.

They devoted themselves to evangelizing these peoples and, in a commitment to human service, they became promoters of their modern education. Forty-nine of the eighty residential schools were their responsibility. Providing the basic necessities for one of these schools was an enormous undertaking: food provisioning alone meant fishing and preserving thousands of fish for the daily nourishing of human beings and of dogs. Without the work of missionary Brothers it would have been impossible to build and operate the schools or to carry on other works. The missions of the North were a heroic enterprise.

These missionaries contributed to the preservation and development of various Native cultures, also in opening them to modern content. Oblates founded two reviews in the Indian language, published six newspapers in various Indian tongues and one in Inuit. One of these, in a kind of shorthand devised by Father Jean-Marie Lejeune, was understood by a great number of tribes in British Columbia; another was printed according to a methodic syllabary invented by Father Gabriel Morice, two more were done in syllabic characters.

We have on record 304 manuscripts in Indian and Eskimo; of these 141 are dictionaries in 27 Indian languages and 74 are grammars in 19 different languages. Among these manuscripts are many liturgical lectionaries, collections of hymns and prayers in eleven tongues. There are 226 printed works in Indian and Inuit. Catechisms composed by Oblates number 34 in some ten Indian languages and four in Eskimo. Many of them are not mere translations but reveal an effort to achieve a noteworthy adaptation. The missionaries of the North have contributed to maintaining Amerindian languages and cultures; they showed in this way their love for the Native peoples to whom they were bringing the Gospel.

Prophetism and Founder's gratitude

Eugene de Mazenod had foreseen that Canada would be an immense field for the Congregation's zeal. In his letter of obedience of 29 September 1841 he wrote: "Here is a road that leads afar and a field more vast that unfolds; a gateway is wide open to us: we are now being sent not only to those who are close and who are brothers in the faith but to others far afield and outside the faith."

For his remaining twenty years Blessed Eugene closely followed the development of his sons' missionary activity in Canada. He clear sightedly encouraged foundations that were to become important, as in Ottawa; he encouraged and admired the way his sons reached out to Native peoples in the most remote and impenetrable regions.

Toward the end of his life he wrote to Father Honorat on October 9, 1857, after reading the Canadian Province's report: "How many times, as I read it, did I interrupt myself to give thanks to God for the blessings he is pouring out on the ministry of our Fathers throughout the whole extent of your immense Province." As we contemplate this salvation history, we too should thank the Lord who chose us to be his missionaries and collaborators.

For us Christians, however, there is no thanksgiving for the Lord's gifts and the works we have accomplished through his grace, without at the same time acknowledging our limitations and failures. In this spirit the Canadian Provincials have asked forgiveness from the Amerindian peoples for insufficient respect of their cultures, especially in the residential schools of the past. All of us should likewise be always ready to ask for forgiveness, first of all from the Lord whose co-workers we are and from all those with whom and for whom we work. This Gospel requirement invites us constantly to evaluate, change and renew our lifestyle and the manner of our missionary commitment. Indeed, conversion is a requisite of fidelity and growth. This however does not mean denying or belittling the good that has been accomplished and the dedication to Christ and to one's brothers.

Lessons of history and present challenges

Our history in Canada has underscored certain values of the Oblate charism, especially those of courage in adversity and creativity in responding to urgent situations. There was often a daring that left nothing untried.

At the present time the Canadian Region, like other parts of the Congregation, is experiencing a period of trial. The hale and hearty are aging and decreasing in number while vocations are becoming rare. On the other hand missionary needs remain and in some respects are on the increase.

As we face this situation our vocation invites us not to close in upon ourselves, not to lose faith in ourselves. We must know how to launch out into the deep, that is, to allow ourselves to be soundly shaken up by the missionary needs of today's world, to search for suitable ways of responding thereto, according to available forces and possible assets. Like in the Founder's time we need to be daring, in Canada as elsewhere. Animated by this spirit, along with the cooperation of different Provinces, we have in the past five years dared to begin working in

six new countries: Guatemala, Nigeria, Korea, Venezuela, Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine. And we are preparing to go to Botswana and Angola.

If Eugene de Mazenod had wanted to respond only to the needs of his own land, the Congregation today would probably be struggling along in Provence only. Missionary spirit grows when we open ourselves up to new horizons. As missionaries we should always be available to open new paths and face the new groups of people to whom we are to proclaim the Good News. And all of us can collaborate, even those limited by sickness and old age. Provinces with financial means but few vocations can help others that are expanding. The Oblate mission is fulfilled in interdependence.

At the same time we need to root ourselves ever more in Christ, the dynamic centre of our vocation. So it is necessary to renew ourselves in terms of our motivation, to adopt a life-style in accord with our religious consecration, to commit ourselves to becoming truly apostolic men. We can then be sure of the Lord's presence and blessings, blessings that shall become tangible according to his will.

We must not consider it an evil if in time it could be said of the Congregation in Canada and other parts of the world what the Founder wrote to Father Tempier on August 22, 1817: "... a small one, to be sure, but that will always be powerful as long as she is holy." What counts above all else is not the number but the quality of our men.

Christmas wishes

Christmas is drawing near and it reminds us that the Lord loves us, that we can always start out again with new impetus because he is forever present among us. In this year of preparing for the Chapter, I propose for your reflection what the Founder wrote in his mission letter to the Oblates in Canada:

"Endeavour with all your strength to respond to this holy vocation... As for me, I give thanks to God each time I think of you in all my prayers, imploring him with joy for you because of your communion in the Gospel; confident also that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion... The benevolent protection of Mary Immaculate will be with you."

Marcello Zago, O.M.I.
Superior General

Rome, December 2, 1991

- ASIA / OCEANIA REGIONAL MEETING -

GENERAL TIMETABLE.

Monday : Speaking on Reports (already circulated).

Tuesday : Secular Society.
Input and response - Fr. D. O'Donnell, O.M.I.

Wednesday : Evangelization.
Input and response - Fr. C. Prowse - Lecturer in Moral
Theology, Diocesan Seminary.

Thursday : Qualities of a Leader.
Leadership in the Evangelization of a Secular Society.
Input and response - Fr. L. Lampon, O.M.I.

Friday : Business meeting.
Evening : Diaconate Ordination.

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MISSIONARY OBLATES
OF MARY IMMACULATE
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL
TEL: (03) 882-1604



PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

649 BURKE ROAD
P.O. BOX 384
CAMBERWELL 3124
AUSTRALIA

THE ASIA/OCEANIA MAJOR SUPERIORS MEETING

23rd - 27th SEPTEMBER 1991

CAMBERWELL - AUSTRALIA

Attending:

Father John Sherman.....Vice Prov: of Australia (President).
" Lito Lampon.....Province of Philippines (Vice-Pres).
" John Mahoney.....Vice Province of Japan.
" Camillus Fernando.....Province of Sri Lanka.
" P.P. Fernando.....Vice Province of Jaffna.
" Kevin Casey.....Delegation of Java-Indonesia.
" Ambrose Antonisamy.....Delegation of India.
" Shelton Perera.....Delegation of Pakistan.
" Angelo Martyn.....Delegation of Bangladesh (Rep.).
" Pierre Chevroulet.....Delegation of Thailand.
" Natalino Belingheri.....Delegation of Samarinda-Indonesia.
" Stan Sun.....Delegation of China.
" Patrice Morel.....Mission of Tahiti.

" Des O'Donnell.....General Councillor for Region.
" Paul Gwynne.....Animator.
" Don Hughes.....)
Brother Michael Twigg.....) Secretariate.
" Brendan Toohey.....)

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Superior Generalis O.M.I.
C. P. 9061, 00100 Roma - Aurelio, Italia

LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL
TO THE MEETING OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF THE ASIA-OCEANIA REGION

Dear Father Sherman and Major Superiors of the Region,

Greetings and best wishes to the meeting of Major Superiors of the Asia-Oceania Region.

This meeting follows on the one held at Bangalore in India in February 1989 where I was present with the members of the General Council. In the meantime the Region has been working to achieve greater cooperation. There have been regional meetings on formation, on mission, on economics. Our presence in Korea has been initiated; the Hong Kong situation has been strengthened and its juridical status and name have been changed. In the different Provinces and Delegations our commitments have been invigorated and consolidated. I wish to emphasize in particular the efforts being made for vocations and formation, making the future look promising. I wish to express my admiration and my thanks for your dedication. To the Provincials of Sri Lanka and Jaffna, and through them to the Oblates of both Provinces, I express my sympathy in their suffering and in that of your people afflicted by the war in the North of the island.

No doubt you are looking to the future in order to render the Oblate presence ever more effective in the continent towards which Pope John Paul II, in his recent missionary encyclical Redemptoris Missio, drew the attention of the whole Church. Cooperation within the Region, in the sub regions and, even more so, within the same countries as for example in Indonesia, is of the greatest importance.

Within one year we shall be right into the Chapter. The letter concerning the election of delegates has already been forwarded to you. In October you will also receive that of the pre-Capitular commission on the theme of the Chapter and the survey of various aspects of the life and mission of the Congregation. A preliminary exchange of ideas on these matters could be useful.

Here in Rome the Congress on Social Communications is drawing to a close and during the month of October, we shall have the Plenary Session of the General Council and the meeting of the pre-Capitular commission simultaneously.

My heartfelt thanks to all of you and especially to Fr. Sherman and the Australian Province who are hosts to your meeting. Be assured of my prayers and best wishes.

Fraternally in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

September 23, 1991

Fr. Marcello Zago
Marcello Zago, OMI
Superior General

PROMINENT ELEMENTS IN THE FIRST DAY'S REPORTS

Although the 13 reports were characterised by predictable diversity, the following 12 points emerged as areas of common interest & concern:

- * the question of the relationship between **Christianity and other religions** especially the contrast between the traditional animist faiths which are relatively open to the gospel and the major world religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) which are more impervious (eg. veneer Moslems in Indonesia; Thai identity and Buddhism; the bias of Islamic law in Pakistan)
- * a tendency to move away from the various Western forms of Christianity typical of the colonial period towards a more genuine **Asian Christianity** rooted in the local culture and history (eg. the Portuguese, Dutch and British "Christs" in Sri Lanka; the Spanish and American layers of Christianity in the Philippines)
- * an awareness of the powerful influence of **economic pressures** on people which affect lifestyles & behaviour; this is true of the first world (eg. the 'company' factor in Japan; moral void in Australian business) and the third world (widespread lack of basic material needs)
- * the importance of **political forces** which affect everyday life and the Church's work (eg. the violent conflict in Sri Lanka, especially Jaffna; the Indonesian constitution which protects the Christian minority from Islamic dominance)
- * the continuing search for **vocations** with its various degrees of success (eg. the contrast between the encouraging signs in Indonesia and the apparent difficulties in Hong Kong and Japan)
- * an acknowledgment of the **mutual support and interchange of personnel** between the Asia-Oceania Provinces and Delegations (eg. Sri Lankan Oblates working in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh; Thai students in Philippines and Australia; the question of further personnel support for Tahiti?)
- * an increasing realisation of the need for **quality witness by the clergy** to ensure the credibility of the gospel (eg. the lifestyle of clergy; the vow of poverty in impoverished societies; the dangers of 'caste mentality' among religious and clergy in India)
- * an openness towards **new mission possibilities** in the region (eg. greater access to Laos given a post-communist Soviet Union; greater involvement in Tahiti; inroads into mainland China from Hong Kong)
- * the importance of **authentic community** in both large Provinces and smaller delegations (eg. the challenge to Australia to go beyond mere fraternity towards genuine apostolic community; the priority given in Bangladesh and Samarinda to regular meetings transport difficulties)
- * the vital role of **education** as part of our mission which pertains to both ends of society (eg. at the top it was noted that many political & community leaders were educated in Catholic schools; at lower levels, education is one of the greatest gifts we can offer to help them rise from the depths of poverty)
- * the first signs of **disillusionment with traditional Christianity**, particularly amongst the young; there is a challenge to ensure the relevance of the Church for a generation which sees salvation not merely at the level of the individual soul but as salvation of society manifested in political, economic and social structures
- * the beginnings of the inevitable emergence of **modern technology** and its impact on peoples' lives; this can both positive (eg. providing better communications, improving literacy levels, material prosperity) and negative (underlying materialist & hedonist philosophy, lack of real security in fluctuating modern economies, loss of traditional values & customs)

- SOME COMMENTS ON SECULARIZATION FROM THE GROUPS -

GROUP 1 - INDIAN REGION :

Modernity has activated greed and increased poverty in the Region. Thus the dominant experience is frustration among the masses.

The need for evangelizing the people - Christian and non Christian - with Kingdom values is the priority. Opposed to this is the tendency towards a very private religion and governments encouraging many non-Kingdom attitudes.

The Church and the Oblates need to deepen their already active option for the poor but most of all the whole Church and us Oblates are challenged to a simpler lifestyle and a deeper life of prayer.

GROUP 11 - PHILIPPINES, THAILAND & INDONESIA.

Despite growing secularization, religion still has a real influence. Yet, most people feel intense frustration as modernity pushes desires through advertising and encourages consumerism.

Family breakdowns are increasing everywhere.

Effective ecumenism is very difficult with a majority religion which suspects our motives.

The hopeful sign is the official Church's gradual option for the poor and the conviction that Eastern religiousness will not capitulate to secularism as easily as the West seems to be doing.

GROUP 111 - JAPAN, CHINA, AUSTRALIA & TAHITI.

Secularization demands that we Religious lead people in a discernment about the good and evil aspects of it and that we also be prophetic in encouraging those who seem to be going on the right path.

The value of small communities was stressed where people support one another to offset consumerism and to encourage being and prayer over mere doing.

The incidence of family breakdown is increasing.

Suicide among young people, as a sign of frustration is a growing concern.

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CHRIS PROWSE on EVANGELISATION

The talk was based on his experience of Australian society. Understandably, this differs from other countries and cultures but certain general trends and principles could be adapted to each situation.

Strategy

There is a horizontal (others & I) and vertical (God & I) dimension to human life. These cannot be divorced or separated but must be held together. In the West we tend to separate culture and religion but this is unwise. The East seems to link the two much more naturally and effectively.

Based on the series of Roman documents (Ad Gentes; Evangelii Nuntiandi; Redemptoris Missio), the person of Jesus Christ is our "strategy" and not some abstract ideal or axiom. These documents mention 3 types of Christian mission:

- a. to non-Christians (ad gentes)
- b. within the established Christian community
- c. to the non-practising Christians (re-evangelisation)

Often we ignore the last two, but as people leave the established Church, one must ask what do they replace it with?

The challenge

There are a number of points we should consider.

i. How do you speak of God to an adult world? (D. Bonhoeffer)

MacQuarrie speaks of 4 tests which our preaching must pass if we are to be effective evangelisers today. They are:

- a. reasonableness (people today are more educated and informed and will not accept a gospel which is not credible and based on sound reason)
- b. contemporary (this does not mean that we follow the latest fads and vogues but that we are definitely relevant; we need to be aware of the language, the mood, the concerns of today's world)
- c. comprehensive (our message must pertain to the whole person and not just some part or aspect; it must be a wholistic worldview akin to a symphony)
- d. "on the way" (human existence is historical and dynamic; it is not cyclic but linear; hence, we no longer espouse a presumptuous monopoly of truth but admit that we walk with humankind towards whole truth; there is something provisional about our strategies and we must be willing to adapt to changing times)

ii. People today say "religion - yes; God - no" (J.B. Metz)

This contrasts with the 1960s where people tended to say "Jesus - yes; Church - no". People are attracted to new "religions" (sects; zodiac; reincarnation; soul transmigration; New Age movement) but are unhappy with the traditional concept of "God". What questions are such sects and movements answering for them? Why isn't Christianity providing the answers?

iii. What is the meaning of life?

There are a number of symptoms appearing in Australia which reflect a loss of the meaning and purpose of human life.

The suicide rate is reaching alarming levels in Australia (many of these concern girlfriend-boyfriend relationships). This is a serious malaise in our Western society. The Catholic Enquiry Centre published a profile of Australia in the early 80s which pointed out the depersonalization and secularization of our nation.

Today many media "gurus" command widespread popularity and authority and people seem to passively follow their opinion. People tend to confuse "is" with "ought" ie. if everyone is doing something then it is morally acceptable (eg. de facto relationships, abortion). Often the moral response lags behind the emotional.

Boris Becker is quoted as saying: "I sometimes wonder if I have experienced too much". Surely Christianity can offer the depth of meaning that many people have lost in the modern world. Part of the answer may be from the 3rd world.

The situation in the 3rd world is undoubtedly different to the first world. It is not very useful importing the Liberation Theology of South America into Australia. The issues are different and thus the solutions will be different. The 3rd world seems to be asking: does the gospel have anything to say to us to help us in our desperate situation? How do you tell "scarcely human" people of God's love (Gutierrez). The developing world may have something to offer the first world ie. the small basic communities (the movement from macro to micro). There seems to be a rediscovery of the personal in an impersonal world. We "gossip the gospel". It is also a matter of discovering the poor as "evangelising agents" ie. not the recipients only, but the ones who empower. We need to balance 'orthodoxy' (getting things right) with 'orthopraxis' (making things right).

iii. Our responses

Cardinal Suenens has suggested that 'sociological Christianity' is dead in the West (ie. an inherited Christianity automatically passed on from parent to children). No longer is Christianity a necessary part of the cultural package that the new generation inherits. People are less likely to be a Christian today because their parents were Christian or they were born into it. The children of sound Catholic parents are walking away from the faith in large numbers in Australia. "God has no grandchildren, only children".

The family unit is still an important factor, the prime factor in moral training and in evangelisation. However, there is enormous competition from the mass media and the peer group.

You cannot presume that the Christians in our churches on Sunday are fully evangelised. We must ensure that part of our sermons are kerygmatic and not catechetical.

One of the great instruments for evangelisation is the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) which is a gradual process involving the Christian community and not just the priest.

EVANGELISATION

I. SALIENT POINTS FROM THE PLENARY

- * An **"inherited Christianity"** (sociological Christianity) is dying in the West, ie. the children of good Christian families are not necessarily Christian themselves. Is this phenomenon occurring in our particular context regarding Christianity or the other major religions of those societies?
- * The Pope frequently uses the language of **"the dignity of the human person"** in his talks and homilies. This concept is basic to most religions in the developing world and humanist movements in the first world. Do we use such language as part of our evangelising strategy?
- * **Religious fundamentalism** and fanaticism is prevalent in many societies (East and West) and such groups are often attractive and successful to an extent. Can we learn anything from their methods of evangelising and how are we dealing with the inroads they are making?
- * The great religions of Asia possess a mystical element which stresses contemplation and reflection whilst the modern Western person is said to be in drastic need of time for slowing down and reflecting more deeply on life. Are we fully utilising the great mystical tradition within our Christian heritage in our attempts to evangelise?
- * Most of our Asian-Oceanian Oblates work in countries where Christians are a **small minority**. Are there ways in which Oblates in predominantly Christian nations of the region (eg. Philippines, Australia) can assist them?

II. MAIN POINTS FROM THE GROUP SHARING

- * The meaning of **'evangelisation'** was raised in the sense that it may not necessarily result in baptism and conversion to the Christian Church. It may be preferable to see it as instilling **'Kingdom values'** into people and society by promoting the human good. Christianity has no monopoly on such values which can be found in other religions. However, it must be admitted that certain values in other religious faiths are not compatible with the Christian worldview eg. the Islamic acceptance of revenge, corruption and lying for advancement.
- * There is often a flawed concept of Christianity among Christians themselves which indicates the need for **re-evangelisation**. For example, an overly legalistic understanding of Christianity which does not have Jesus Christ at the centre (the Decalogue tends to be central for Thai Christians who also overemphasise the divinity of Christ; Tahitians are preoccupied with 'taboo'; the institutional Church appears triumphalist in India).
- * Although the term **'pre-evangelisation'** may be misleading, the importance of contact with non-Christians as the first stage in evangelisation was reiterated. For example, Oblates in Hong Kong visit the homes of Christians and non-Christians.
- * A number of strategies for evangelisation were also mentioned. These included: vibrant and contemporary **liturgy**; the personal renewal of **clergy and religious** who are often seen as 'out of touch' with ordinary experience; the value of **schools** as a means of evangelisation (Hong Kong); the creative use of **modern technology** to evangelize; making **OMI houses** and facilities available for groups and spiritual direction; the use of **small groups** to create a more personal, intimate faith environment; the emergence of **secular institutes** as a new form of religious commitment.

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP.

1. Personal sharing as a Provincial.

- (a) Administration (head) Animation (heart).
 - Management by objective - unifying, harmonizing
 - (M.B.D.)
 - Decision making - affirming
 - policies - loving
- (b) Co-responsibility / Principle of subsidiarity.
 (Provincial Congress, Committees, Councils)

2. Qualities of Leadership:

- (a) Presence: Knowing / loving
- (b) Person of dialogue: open, able to listen.
- (c) Discerning: - prayerful, positive regard/respect for personal charism
 - able to read the sign of the time
 - assign change-agents in key position & support
- (d) Compassionate
- (e) Prophetic

3. Style of Leadership:

- participative - - - - - autocratic
- evocative - - - - - banking method
- team leadership - - - - - one man
- (not laissez-fair)
- emerging - - - - - traditional
- working with - - - - - working for
- community oriented - - - - - group oriented (clique)

4. Vatican 11 Ecclesiology

- (a) Communion of community of disciples (People of God)
 - disciples of faith
 - B E C
 - communion of 'equals' (Baptism)
 - empowerment of the laity (subject not object)
- (b) Companion in a Pilgrimage
 - 'Kasama' / companion
 - pilgrimage
 - solidarity / dialogue
- (c) Servant
 - wounded world - - compassion
 - reconciling / healing
- (d) Prophetic
 - liberating / justice

5. Spirituality of Christian Leadership : Paschal spirituality.

- (a) initial call (personal conversion). Spirituality is born here.
- (b) unfolding, maturation, fruition of a spirit-filled life is Christian Leadership.
 - Cross is inevitable
 - Resurrection : little growth / fuller life
- (c) Man of hope - Holiness.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS FROM EACH PROVINCE/DELEGATION LEADER

At the opening of the meeting, John Sherman pointed out that the overall aim was two-fold:

- i. to increase our awareness of the various dimensions of secularisation especially from the perspective of our role as evangelising leaders
- ii. to distill from the discussion certain points or resolutions that were particularly relevant to our own situations ("to take something back to our missions").

At the conclusion of the first 4 days, each participant was asked to comment on what they had gained from the experience.

Fr. Kevin Casey - Java, Indonesia

The people with whom we work and live will be increasingly influenced by modernity. To make sure that the Gospel we preach be answering their questions we will seek for an inculturation in which Jesus will continue to be fully incarnated, known and loved as *"the way, the truth and the life"*.

The pace of change and the effect on people is so fast and far reaching that we as leaders will be lost or left far behind, if we do not get special help. Fortunately the Spirit has been promised *"who will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you"* [Jn 14:26]. In the rush of *doing good* we will choose to *slow down*, seek "silence" so that we will be continually guided and taught by the Spirit.

Fr. Pierre Chevroulet - Thailand

- [1] The development of the Oblate Missions in Asia over the last 25 years:
Camberwell, September, 1966 - Five Superiors in seven countries.
Camberwell, September, 1991 - Thirteen Superiors in twelve countries.
- [2] Despite the variety of the situations, there was a large consensus about what should be the response of the Oblate Community to the needs of the people of Asia today - be it through our own life of prayer, sinful lifestyle, proximity with the poor....
- [3] A kind of reasonable optimism concerning the future of our mission in Asia (China, India, Indonesia, Laos...)

Fr. Patrice Morel - Tahiti

I have not the impression that I have learned any new ideas - probably on account of my bad knowledge of English, But I think that I have acquired a greater conviction than before.

- [1] I must be attentive to the problem of the secularisation and secularism in the context where I live and to be anxious in preparing the Christians to face it.
- [2] The centre, the kernel of evangelisation is the person of Christ.

Fr. Shelton Perera - Pakistan

After having gone through four days of study, discussion, sharing and reflection on secularisation, evangelisation and leadership, I am now deeply convinced that the following elements need immediate attention.

- [1] As the credibility of our Pastors and Church leaders at this point in time is at a very

low ebb, we as Oblates should become real holy men, men of prayer and adopt more simple lifestyles in our places of work.

- [2] We need to be more Prophetic in our apostolate by evangelising and purifying certain cultural elements (PAK) that are not necessarily human or Christian (revenge, cheating etc.)
- [3] I need to visit the Oblates in the missions more frequently and to be more sensitive to their personal and pastoral needs.

Fr. Stan Sun - China

This meeting, I feel, has brought members of the region in a much closer relationship. We have come to a better understanding of each others problems by fraternal and friendly sharing.

I feel I have benefited greatly from the three major talks. The "*New Language*", the "*New Approach*" brought out during the talks would be invaluable assets for future evangelisation in the secularised society and the "*right type*" of leadership would certainly help a community move and prosper.

Fr. Angelo Martyn - Bangladesh

The Oblates in Bangladesh need to be critically aware of secularisation. They will sustain Kingdom values among themselves, the Christians and affirm them in the Non-Christian Religions. In their efforts to make the poor non-Christians better they will not lose the opportunity to proclaim salvation which is at the centre of the Good News. Correct leadership will have the task of implementing this.

Fr. John Mahoney - Japan

The day on secularisation deepened my understanding on just what secularisation is - especially an awareness that it is not all negative.

The day on evangelisation made me more aware of the need to be sure I am speaking to the people of today's world.

The day on leadership made me sure of my responsibility to lead myself and others to face the challenge of secularisation.

Finally I feel a deep awareness that secularised society calls me to strive to live a truly missionary Oblate way of life,

Fr. Ambrose Antonisamy - India

[1] Secularisation:

Problem: Our frustrating experience due to poverty (material and spiritual), social injustice and corruption.

Resolution: To fight against these evils, encourage our men in the missions to form lay leaders, conduct awareness programs and to insist on formal and non-formal education to people without discrimination of caste and creed.

[2] **Evangelisation:**

Problems: Majority of the people live under the poverty line and 56% of the population are illiterate. The image of the Church to non-Christians appears to be rich, powerful and authoritative. The life of priest is not edifying to the non-Christians.

Resolution: For our Priests - We need to be re-evangelised first to stand as a witness to Christian values (adopt a simple life-style). Work for the common good without discrimination of caste and creed. Be firm to stand for justice and peace and make people aware of their rights and dignities.

[3] **Leadership:**

Resolution: To increase the bond of unity among the members. To widen the communication among the members. To insist on regular community and personal prayer. To continue the visitation to the members of the delegation.

Fr. P.P. Fernando - Jaffna

I received the impetus to go forward with the following convictions:

- [1] Secularisation need not be the threat to me. Even if it is a challenge it can be met with the strength of human values.
- [2] Evangelisation, be it among Christians or non. Christian, begins with respect for the human person and his dignity. This disposes one towards opening oneself to Christ in whom the divine and the human merge perfectly. *"Fully human, Fully Alive"*.
- [3] It is the quality of my personal life that should be at its best for me to be a leader. *"Justice and Peace"*, the need in our troubled Province demands this as a condition for its establishment, without counting the cost.

Fr. Camillus Fernando - Sri Lanka

Today the world is fast changing, thus the change of values. The influence from the fast changing external world affects our local situation. The people are exposed to advanced technology which comes from outside. Since these came from outside instead of coming from within according to the local needs, these can be bad aspects more than good aspects.

We have to create an awareness among ourselves to work for the real values with the help of the new technology.

The leadership should be mainly to work with a team spirit in search for the right values with concrete priorities towards valuable common goals.

Fr. Lito Lampon - Philippines

1st day: Reporting by Province/Delegation showed the variety of work the Oblates are involved in a vast Asia-Oceania territory. Feature of the work: Surrounded by great religion, massive poverty or faced with advanced modernity and secularism.

2nd Day: Focussed on secularism, its language and negative effects. Oblate Missions are affected in varying degrees there is an awareness of it among the Oblates but what they are doing seems to be a drop in the bucket in the avalanche of secularism. Feeling of being "caught" in it, yet it heightens the desire to be more prayerful and to live a simple life-style.

- 3rd Day: Evangelisation in a secular society seems to take on the meaning of a search for the meaning of life. In a less developed country with plenty of animists and other Asian religions, it means conversion (animists) and dialoguing and penetrating these great religions.
- 4th Day: Leadership: Stress on participative leadership and a desire to improve communication with the men through visitation, community get togethers. Desire to be sign-value through personal and communitarian witness thus being more prophetic. Dialogue with great religions.

Fr. Natalino Belingheri - Samarinda, Indonesia

In this meeting once again I feel helped in becoming more aware of the daily changes in the modern world: advanced technology, Modernisation which brings confusion. There is no need to be afraid or to shut ones eyes. Neither is it good if we view the whole phenomenon as a drama of which I am no part. I am in the middle of it. I am a secular man who needs to be re-evangelised, I need salvation, liberation.

One criteria for me regarding the answer to the world's need for salvation is how far I allow myself to be saved by Christ, living with challenges, in a Christian community and an Oblate Community. It will only occur with conversion, love of God and neighbour and selfless service.

Fr. John Sherman - Australia

The reflection deepened my awareness not so much of the negative aspects of a secular society but of the benefits which challenge the church to be authentic in its evangelisation of the modern person.

To me the two poles of this growth are contact with the living mystery of the person of Jesus through contemplation and the service of others especially those "in need".

In the exercise of leadership I am called to be authentic in my search for Jesus and to empower and be present to others especially my brother Oblates, as through their own search for meaning in today's society they in turn provide hope and faith-filled growth for others as individuals and as members of a community centred on Jesus.

MINUTES OF THE A.O.R.C. MEETING

CAMBERWELL, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

FRIDAY 27th SEPTEMBER, 1991.

1. All leaders or their representatives were present with the exception of SINTANG, INDONESIA.

FR. J. SHERMAN, PRESIDENT, opened the meeting with a renewed welcome. These meetings forge the bond of unity in the Region as well as helping leaders to get to know each other.

2. (a) NOMINATIONS FOR THE "GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FINANCE COMMITTEE" :

FR. V. MC GILLICUDDY (Australia) was nominated.

The Committee expressed its thanks to Fr. Nestor Factora (Philippine Islands) for his work over the past years.

- (b) NOMINATION FOR THE "GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FORMATION COMMITTEE":

FR. ANGELO SIANI (Japan) was nominated.

The Committee thanked Fr. Clement Waidyasekara (Pakistan) for his work on this "Formation Committee".

- (c) NOMINATION FOR "GENERAL ADMINISTRATION JUSTICE AND PEACE" COMMITTEE:

FR. OSWALD FIRTH (Sri Lanka) was nominated.

FR. BEATO TARIMAN (Philippines) was thanked for his work with this group.

- (d) Some discussion was held about the future of the "Mission", "Justice and Peace" and "Formation" Committees.

The "Formation Committee" seems to have worked well and regularly over the years. There have been problems with the other Committees.

Concerning the "Justice and Peace", discussion surfaced many reasons due to different conditions and restrictions in each country.

The meeting favoured the continued nomination of a "Justice and Peace" man for the Region.

This Regional representative may put a proposal for a meeting and a topic to the A.O.R.C. Each leader was encouraged to be more conscious of "Justice and Peace" issues and to pass on their concern to their members.

Concerning the "Mission Committee", it was decided to use the A.O.R.C. itself as the "Mission Committee" and to nominate a representative for any meeting.

3. GENERAL COUNCILLOR:

FR. O'DONNELL spoke on the position of General Councillor and the qualities needed.

Some names were suggested for the election at the coming Chapter. Some discussion was held also about names for the position of Assistant Generals'.

4. FINANCIAL COMPETENCY DOCUMENT was tabled. No problems had occurred concerning it.

5. FINANCIAL AUTONOMY DOCUMENT issued from Rome to initiate dialogue within the Congregation that will lead to the General Chapter was discussed. The questionnaire attached to the document should be returned to the General Treasurer by December 31, 1991. The document is important for many of our Delegations in our Asian Region. It is important that all Chapter delegates be very familiar with the document.

Further clarification was sought from the General Treasurer about the distinction between Capital Sharing and Oblate Common Reserve (i.e. 7B & C).

The Asian Region strongly supports the thrust of the document.

6. THE VOCATION OF OBLATE BROTHERS AND THEIR FORMATION.

INDIA SUB-REGION was successful in the past with brothers but the formation was questionable. The formation of brothers has been changed. No longer is a brother thought of as one who cannot be a priest. Sri Lanka, India, Jaffna and Pakistan have a small number of brothers. Four brothers from Sri Lanka have become Diocesan priests.

PAKISTAN has three brothers from Sri Lanka - one younger, two older brothers. One of the latter was in charge of the Juniorate, the other is in charge of a hostel in a parish. It seems that the Delegation will not be receiving local vocations -- the local brothers of other congregations have not been successful.

INDIA has one in final vows, one novice and one aspirant.

JAPAN has one brother who recently pronounced Final Vows and is in Australia for English Language study. He has had some Theological and Scripture studies and will work in Social Welfare.

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS have ten brothers - four of these are recent recruits. There is no difference in recruiting priests and brothers. They choose before novitiate, and there is a formation period for brothers.

THAILAND has a brother, a teacher for 17 years and a member of the formation team.

A meeting of the Major Superiors proposed the following Brother nominations for the General Chapter from our Region:

1st Choice: Br Joseph Fernando, India

2nd Choice: Br Bernard Wirth, Thailand

7. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

JAFFNA has a Mission staff of eight Oblates (4 full time, 4 part time). At present they are revising their method of giving retreats.

TAHITI has two Fathers engaged part time in retreat work.

PHILIPPINE Congress recommended the work be implemented if personnel is available.

SRI LANKA has a Mission Band of 13. Demand is great.

INDIA has 3 or 4 men part time.

JAVA is seriously thinking of a preaching band.

AUSTRALIA has an interest with 2 young Oblates going to South Africa in 1992 to preach missions.

8. THE NATURE OF OUR SUB-REGION.

The meeting re-asserted the need for sub-Regions and decided on TWO sub-Regions:-

INDIA Colombo, Jaffna, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh.

FAR EAST Philippine Islands, Japan, Australia, Java, Thailand, Sintang, Samarinda, Tahiti.

9. THE PROVINCIAL OF THE REGION will act as an executive of A.O.R.C. and meet in one of the Delegations (if possible)

in the year when the full A.O.R.C. does not meet.

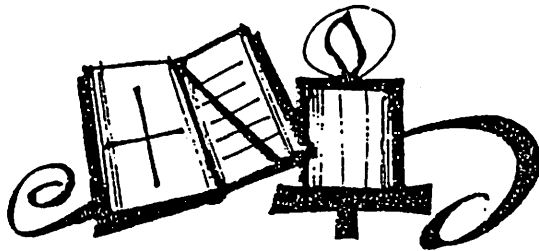
10. THE EXCHANGE OF PERSONNEL in the Region in the spirit of true Oblate fraternal unity is very important especially in the teaching of English which is so important in the training of priests. It also contributes to the realization of our international character by sharing work experiences in different mission fields. It is important that this exchange begins even during the formation time.
11. LAY WORKERS/VOLUNTEERS. If there are openings in your country please speak to Fr. Sherman, the President. He often has enquiries.

12. FUNDING OF THE A.O.R.C.

Funding was discussed. No action is needed at present. Each event / conference can be considered as it arises.

13. BURSARS' TRAINING CONFERENCE - MANILA, 1991.

Organised at the request of the Treasurer General. The meeting involved a Management Consultancy Firm with the Treasurer General giving Spiritual Input at a daily homily and practical input at some special sessions. It was a hardworking, profitable conference which will help greatly to



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ensure a uniform method of financial reporting. Perhaps the Conference tried to do too much in such a short time. The A.O.R.C. thanks the Philippines for their organisation and hospitality. The Region is open to a follow-up session after the Chapter if needed.

14. PROPOSAL FOR A.O.R.C. INTERNATIONAL SEMINARY.

As a Region we should be conscious of the on-going formation opportunities available in the Region. There is an openness to allow Oblate students to go to other Provinces for a short time. The A.O.R.C. would like the Formator's meeting to discuss the matter further.

15. VOCATIONS WEEK: MAY 21-29

Many areas had special events or devotions. Distribution of prayer cards / bookmarks with an Oblate thrust; offering of Masses, Rosaries, prayers etc.; production of Gerard leaflet; youth camps at that time; a vocations camp of 18 young students for 8 days used as a selection camp for the Juniorate; a prayer and Oblate crusade in our Colleges. These are many examples of activities during the week.

16. KOREA

The Oblate mission began in May, 1990. Three young Italian Oblates are there studying the language. There are many apostolates available - mission preaching, youth work, preparation for future work in North Korea. The young Oblates

are beginning to say public Masses in Korean without yet preaching.

17. GATHERING OF OBLATES FOR A RETREAT

This year (1991) the Japanese retreat was in English. This happens every second year. John Chai (Hong Kong) attended. Such retreats may be another useful means of coming together.

18. CHAPTER PREPARATION FOR A.O.R.C.

Daily memorare has been requested by Fr General but further documentation will arrive for the Chapter.

19. A.O.R.C. REPORT TO THE CHAPTER

Will be processed as needed.

20. A.O.R.C. NAMES FOR CURIA AND CHAPTER SERVICES IN ROME

When requested, please heed the request but ensure that men are suitable and without major problems.

21. A.O.R.C. FORMATORS AT AIX (MAY 12th-JUNE 6th, 1992)

Attention is drawn to this important course which is especially for formators.

22. TAHITI

The A.O.R.C. suggests that the General Administration look closely at the Oblate situation in Tahiti before putting too much pressure on the Oblates there to establish an

indigenous personnel.

23.ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Fr John Sherman O.M.I.

Vice-President: Fr Lito Lampon O.M.I.

24.FR DESMOND O'DONNELL O.M.I. was thanked by the A.O.R.C. for his twelve years of outstanding service as Regional Assistant. Fr O'Donnell responded.

25.NEXT MEETING OF A.O.R.C.

Sri Lanka - 1993. (Possibly early October)

Proposed Meeting of Provincials (Executive):

Hong Kong, 13-14th Feb, 1992

27.FR LITO LAMPON O.M.I., on behalf of the A.O.R.C., thanked Fr John Sherman, the Australian Vice-Province, the House Staff and the Secretariate.



MISSIONARY OBLATES
OF MARY IMMACULATE

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

TEL: (03) 882-1604



PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

649 BURKE ROAD

P.O. BOX 384

CAMBERWELL 3124

AUSTRALIA

25th September, 1991.

Very Rev. Marcello Zago, O.M.I.,
Superior General,
Oblati di Maria Immacolata,
Casa Generalizia, C.P. 9061,
00100 Roma-Aurelio. ITALY.

Dear Father Superior General,

We the Major Superiors of the Asia/Oceania Region send you our prayerful greetings and wishes on the occasion of our gathering in Melbourne, where we are prayerfully reflecting and sharing our apostolic experiences and also discussing the topic on evangelizing the modern person. We are very grateful to you for remembering us on this occasion and for expressing your concern through the message sent to us at the beginning of our session.

This fraternal gathering has brought home to each one of us the need for greater co-operation in the Asia/Oceania Regional level and thereby to discover new ways and means of evangelizing the modern mass in the secular society. This is no doubt a tremendous challenge to every Oblate of the Region. In our group sharings and evaluation, it became clear that our future efforts in the field of evangelization will certainly have to be based on the life prayer and simple life style and ecumenical approach to other Religions and also the need to be true witnesses by our missionary context.

We hope and pray that you will continue to support us by your fraternal prayers and continual concern for our Missions.

Wishing you all the best and assuring you of our prayers.

We remain,

Yours fraternally always.

Philip
Ambrose Antwisanyani
Angie Mervin
Shelton
John Thomas
St. Mary's
Stanley
John P. Sherman
John P. Conroy
John P. Sherman
John P. Sherman

PRESENT STATE OF THE CONGREGATION.

Introduction : This is an inhouse document of the General Administration which was shared by Fr. D. O'Donnell, O.M.I. with the Leaders of the Asia/Oceania Conference.

IN ITS OVERALL SITUATION

1. The Congregation exists in and is being shaped by a variety of cultures and socio-political situations as well as disparate economic conditions.
2. All sectors of the Congregation are being profoundly challenged by modernity and its resulting secularism and fundamentalism.
3. Our missionary presence is incarnated in significantly different ecclesial situations throughout the Congregation and we find diverging ecclesiologies within our membership.
4. The Congregation is present in many places where the struggle for justice and peace is being lived out and where we are called to take a stance.
5. Echoes of the conservative/liberal tension on the increase in the world and in the church can be heard in the Congregation.
6. As a Congregation, we are moving through an important time of transition and doing so in a positive way.

IN SOME OF ITS CHALLENGES

7. Generally speaking, there seems to be a desire for a renewed sense of oblate identity, one that is more clearly missionary.
8. We are moving into new geographical areas, sometimes in significantly new ways.
9. In some sectors of the Congregation, we are moving through an important stage of indigenization, a stage that brings its own unique kind of tension and requires careful planning.
10. In other sectors of the Congregation, we find an increasing number of aging oblates, many in need of programs to help make of their senior years a time of grace and continued missionary significance.
11. In some areas of the Congregation we are experiencing a reduction of personnel and retrenchement in ministries, while in other areas we are in a time of full expansion.

12. There are signs of increasing interest in and growing desire for apostolic community as a source of support for our life and mission.
13. In certain areas of the Congregation, there is increased self-confidence resulting in a greater willingness to foster new oblate vocations.
14. There is a growing will to associate more lay persons with our oblate life and mission.
15. The values of inter-dependence and collaboration, of co-responsibility and mutual accountability are frequently espoused in community statements and seem to be influencing a number of new projects.
16. We also find individualism in many parts of the Congregation, one that militates against an effective common mission.

IN SOME OF ITS NEEDS

17. There is an often expressed need for the articulation of a missionary spirituality we can all share as Oblates.
18. There is a need to challenge life styles that are inappropriate for missionaries.
19. Along with the present emphasis on personal, community and pastoral development, there is a need to give a greater oblate missionary thrust to initial formation programs.
20. There is a need to study and understand the continuing departures, particularly those occurring during post-novitiate formation.
21. There is a need to select and prepare more formators.
22. There is a need to develop more specifically oblate programs of ongoing formation and promote them effectively.
23. There is a need in some sectors of the Congregation, for resources, structures and skills to support greater financial autonomy.
24. The present moment in the life of the Congregation calls for a collaborative style of leadership that is challenging, yet supportive.

RELIGIOUS LIFE HOSPITALISED:

When Religious Life, who had been plump and rosy in the sixties, suddenly began to lose weight, she was admitted to the General Catholic Clinic for observation and diagnosis. At first she was visited assiduously by the Schools Board, the Hospital Trust, the Renewal Movement and other clients.

'Get better!' they cried, 'How can we manage without you?' 'She was perfectly well yesterday', commented the Clergy.

'Pull yourself together', admonished CUF. 'No, renew yourself', directed Perfectae Caritatis. 'Re-imagine yourself', said Dr Schneiders. 'Refound yourself', said Dr Arbuckle. 'Reshape yourself', said Dr Cada. 'Reweave yourself', said Dr Leddy. 'Well, re-something!' they shouted in chorus.

But Religious Life still declined, so the Major Superiors called in the Specialists.

'She's outgrown her strength', declared the Paediatrician, 'She needs rest, vitamins and plenty of good Pope-John fresh air.' 'On the contrary', objected the Geriatrician, 'She's outlived her time, it's even too late for a mid-life crisis. Let her die in peace.' 'But she's only fifteen hundred, and the Church goes on forever,' interjected the Acupuncturist, 'All she needs is a little needling in the right places.' Religious Life closed her eyes and groaned. 'Quick! Mouth-to-mouth sharing!' called the ENT.

The Anaesthetist, however, recommended mantric meditation, the Naturopath some creationism, the Plastic Surgeon a face-lift and the Radiologist a dose of structural analysis.

'Look at those rashes,' observed the Dermatologist, 'She's allergic to patriarchy and hierarchy.' 'The Right eye has tunnel-vision', stated the Ophthalmist, 'and the Left eye sees double.' 'No, it's what she's been eating, explained the Dietician, 'All Boff and Brueggemann. Too much Taizé. Not enough Aquinas and A' Kempis.'

When Religious Life lost consciousness, the Scientists were called in.

'It's only culture-shock', decided the Sociologist, 'She's lost her identity somewhere.' 'Yes', agreed the Therapist, 'but she's coming to terms with her novitiate traumas. What about an enneagram, or a course of Myers-Briggs?' 'She's been neglecting her journalling,' muttered Progoff. 'Let me massage her self-esteem,' urged the Psychiatrist. 'Let me clobber her ego', cried the Chiropractor. Religious Life was now in a coma.

At last, in the nineties, the Family Doctor was allowed in.

'I myself brought her into the world in the sixth century', He said gently, 'so I know her whole history, past and future. Begone, all of you! She is not dead, only sleeping.'

And they laughed Him to scorn.

MARGARET D'ATH, RSCJ



OMI INFORMATION

JAPAN

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



A BLESSED CHRISTMAS
1991

A GRACE FILLED 1992

December 1991

My brother Oblates,

Once again it is time for the Christmas Newsletter. A time when we join together in wishing each one in Japan and Korea as well as our fellow Oblate throughout the world the joy and blessing of Christ on the anniversary of His Birth. We rejoice in the knowledge we have of the love of the Father for each one of us, a love that He confirmed by sending His only Son to redeem us. While we rejoice in this great testimony of the love of the Father we also feel regret that so many among whom we live and work do not know the meaning and joy of Christ and His Birth. It is for this reason that Christmas is a most fitting time for we Oblates to renew our commitment "to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned. To preach the gospel among peoples who have not yet received it and help them see their own values in its light. Where the church is already established, our commitment is to those it touches least". (C.5)

In our Newsletter greetings we also include our wishes and prayers for the New Year. It is my wish that each one of us may be a missionary in today's world during 1992. That by our words and actions we may make the message of the gospel relevant to those to whom we are sent. It is my prayer that the Oblate event of 1992-The Chapter-will strengthen the bond of unity between all Oblates. That it will touch the heart of all Oblates giving us strength and courage to be men set apart for the Gospel, men ready to leave everything to be disciples of Jesus". (C.2)

Fraternally in Jesus Christ and ~~Mary Immaculate~~,

Fr. John Kenney Mahoney, O.M.I.
Provincial, Japan

Visit to Oblate Korean Mission

Bert and Ange

Nov. 12-15, 1991

Ange and I left on Tuesday morning on a JAL flight to Seoul. Arrived there after an hour and a half.

We were met at the Airport by Vincenzo and Giovanni. Took a taxi to the Fransiscan Monastery in Seoul where we had lunch.

By the time we finished Mauro came back from the University and we sat down to discuss what the purpose of our trip was and what we hoped to accomplish in the few days we had there. First on our agenda was to try to get an idea of what type of living quarters there were considering.

We took the subway from downtown Seoul to the station of Shindorim. About a half hour. From there it was about a ten minute walk to where the large apartment house complex was. Near there we consulted with a Realestate Agent. We were not able to see the inside of the apartments but the agent showed us floor plans of two types of apartments that will be available. The floor space for one apartment was extremely small so we discussed the possibility of two adjoining apartments. The price for these would come to about a deposit of one hundred and thirty one thousand dollars in "won" for one year rent. The money is deposited in the name of the Agent and the same sum is returned after the year. The rental is the interest on the sum deposited. This fact was verified by other religious groups and Koreans who were asked about the "custom". It was mentioned that it is urgent to have the funds deposited as soon as possible. Within a week or two the Oblates will approach the Agent for a firm request. Once the apartments are available the deposit has to be made immediately. When the contract is to be signed they will have the help of the legal department of the Archdiocese of Seoul. The location of the apartments is excellent for commuting to the Jesuit University, Sogang University. From the apartment to the University it will take about thirty minutes. That evening we spent some time

talking with the Dominicans who are boarding at the Fransiscans about Religious Corporation problems and other matters.

Wednesday. Nov. 13.

The Oblates went off to the University and returned around one thirty. In the morning Ange and I were able to get in a little sight seeing of the historic spots in the immediate area.

That afternoon we were interested in talking with the people at Citibank about deposits from abroad, etc.

At present there is no difficulty in receiving money into their account from abroad. There is no limit. The interest rate is very good there. Can vary on annual deposits from 16 to 18 percent. The interest is taxable. 20.05 for personal accounts and even for Religious Corporations it is 20.00. It was thought that there might be some difficulty in withdrawing funds soon after a deposit is made but the bank guarantees that this is not so. There doesn't seem to be much value in having a dollar account. In the future the Oblates plan on staying with Citibank for long term deposits and to open an account in a nearby Korean Bank for ordinary banking purposes. The accounts are in the name of Vincenzo and Mauro but even Giovanni can withdraw with the use of their "seal" (which is not registered).

In the evening we decided to make a quick visit to the Columban Fathers and talk with their treasurer about finances. He and the former Superior of the Columbans were very kind to us and we spent a few hours with them. The information that they gave us was informative not only with regard finances but about the church in Korea (its joys and sorrows). Much of what they said was not new to the Oblates in Korea.

They mentioned the difficulties of starting a Religious Corporation. The superior has to be Korean, with a certain number of members. Land, building, and finances have to be recorded.

Nov. 13, Wednesday.

In the morning, while the three Oblates were at school, Ange and I were able to get to visit two Martyrs' Shrines to pray for the success of the Oblate Mission in Korea.

That afternoon we decided on sitting down together and discussing notes that we had. First - we were interested in compiling the information that would be sent to Rome on our return. This was mainly concerning their immediate financial requests. Then there was a discussion on suggestions that have been made for the finances of the Korean Oblate Mission. The Oblates of Korea are in agreement that the finances and petitions should go through the Oblate Vice Province of Japan. They discussed their short range plans for Korea and their long range plans. More on this should come from them and from the Provincial in Japan. Impressions: the language is most difficult and they are doing their utmost to learn it well - the challenge for religious congregations in Korea is quite difficult but not insurmountable - the presence of religious in Korea is most important - patience is important in establishing a religious corporation. We wish them well and await news of their efforts in Korea.

Nov. 15 Friday

Two years ago when John and I went to the Eucharistic Congress in Seoul we were befriended by a very kind Korean woman who provided us with transportation - when transportation was impossible. This was after the Holy Father's Holy Hour with the clergy. I lost her address but before going to Korea this time, luckily, it appeared. Vincenzo called her and I was able to express my thanks to her - two years late - in Japanese. She was so pleased that she came to the Fransiscans in the morning to visit Ange and I. A pleasant surprise before returning to Japan. I was also able to get in touch with another Korean Caholic, a University Professor, who was in Naruto for two years. Both Ange and I were more than impressed with the kindness of the Koreans that we met in our short time there. We know that

this kindness will be encouraging for the Oblates working in Korea - now and in the future

The flight back to Japan was a quiet one for Ange and I - I was thinking about the challenges of the Oblates for the Korean Mission.

I am sure the Fathers will appreciate hearing from us.

Vincenzo Bordo, O.M.I. Do not have the new address.
Mauro Concardi, O.M.I. Will send it as soon as I receive it
Giovanni Zevola, O.M.I. receive it (JKM)

In closing I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Bert Silver

SEOUL

We take this Christmas as an opportunity to greet each one of you and also as an opportunity to further develop our friendship as Oblates working with the same spirit for the evangelization of the poor.

We are now three here in Korea: Vincenzo and Mauro started in May 1990 and Giovanni just arrived last September, but all of us are in the same situation: struggling with the Korean language and this is a "business" which will last at least two years at the school and after...

Our small community is only a beginning, that is not only our hope but the hope of others as well. We're trying our best always believing that the present situation must be considered in God's plan for the way to be missionary, even though, our days are mostly spent attending Korean language classes.

This coming Christmas is something special, because it is the first Christmas that the three of us are spending together far from home, and also because like Mary and Joseph we are looking for... a house where we can live next year. Surely these things make us part of the crib.

Thanks to the generosity of other Oblates we have already received the necessary funds, and we are going to rent a small apartment near the University.

We pray for all of you, that our attitude can be like that of Mary who "received Christ in order to share him with all the world".

Fraternally in Jesus and Mary Immaculate,

Vincenzo, Mauro, Giovanni

P. S. It's true that our apartment will be small, but not too small... you are always welcome.

KOGA

I'm probably late with this letter but I'll try. It has been a busy and blessed year for me. Among the many events: my trip home, being with Ray for his twenty fifth (we meet in the States since we can't get together here), seeing my family; especially my aunt after her forth bout with Cancer, etc. All were very meaningful to me.

After my return to Japan two Spanish families came to Koga. They will live here and if God allows spend their lives as missionaries to Japan. This is really something prophetic in the Church, not only are lay people awakening to their responsibility to witness, but even some to leave all and as a family to give witness in the world. The Holy Father constantly talks on the significance and importance of the christian family and a christian marriage. Marriage is a unique calling with values of its own. Only the married can witness to those values. The celibate can speak about marriage, sex, abortion, birth control etc., but these people witness by their lives the values they know to be true. (These people = all christian families)

At a time when the world centers its thought on the Holy Family and their call from God to be open to the "impossible" and to be able to "move" for the sake of the Kingdom; let us pray that each of us, in our own situation, have the freedom and faith to follow Christ when he "calls" and "points".

May Christ grant good health to Lei and to Fr. Jeronimo O.P. who is seriously ill, and all the infirm and give to each one the courage and hope to endure His will.

In closing I send my wishes for a blessed Christmas and a grace filled 1992 to each one. I look forward to our Spring Meeting in Kochi when I will be able to greet each one of my brother Oblates.

Fran Hahn

A Blessed and Merry Christmas to you! May the mercy and love of God, the Father, be sought by the world which has been experiencing new and hard changes this hear.

The highlight of this year for me was my participation in the 21st International Montessori Congress which was held in Nara, the old capitol of Japan, from July 24-27. There were 1170 Montessorians ; 265 were from 15 different countries. I was one of the two moderators of the last symposium on "suggestions for promoting Montessori Education". Among the panelists were Renilde Montessori a grand-daughter of M.M., Margaret Stephenson of Washington, D.C., Jean Miller from Milwaukee, Charlene Trochta from Texas, etc.

I was deeply impressed by the clear expressions of well studied thought on Montessori Education delivered by three 'disciples' who are 80-90 years old. Their spiritual freshness is the blessing they have received from their loving and scientific care for pre-school age children.

Len Inui

NAKAMURA

Another year has almost gone. Time went so fast, especially during the rainy summer with its many typhoons, that I feel surprised at how little I was able to achieve. And yet, there is enough to do.

Apart from the Japanese Christians, there are also at least eleven Filipina brides, married to Japanese men; and there are rumors of two more brides not yet found. As we get no information from their home parishes or state officials, it is up to us to go and find them, often relying on hearsay.

When you happen to meet such couples, their joy at seeing a priest makes you forget your past troubles. In most cases, the language, religious difference (or rather indifference) and strange and remote environment cause quite some culture shock and accumulated stress, without their having anyone to talk to in an understandable language.

The apparent joy of the bride at meeting a priest after a long interval, makes the Japanese husband and his family forget their usual uneasiness with foreigners and you are accepted (politely). Gradually you also get really welcomed as a trustworthy counselor in times of need and stress. So much the more, as we have experience concerning extension of visa, application for re-entry permits and other legal affairs.

A few weeks ago I accidentally (or rather by Divine Providence) knocked on a wrong door in an apartment. The door was opened by a young Filipina bride who had about given up finding any token of a Catholic presence in her town. Lack of time on both sides made a long chat impossible, but I promised to be back some other day. Distances (+/- 4 hours travel one way) doesn't allow for regular visits, especially because of many other commitments (e.g. Peace and Justice work), and the vast area we are supposed to serve. Moreover, the age of 61 and a weak heart do not make mountain trips easier.

I wish each and all of you a most blessed Christmas and a very happy 1992, and still many years of good health to carry on in the Lord's vineyard.

KOCHI

"For all that has been - Thanks! For all that shall be -
Yes!" Dag Hammarskjold

Merry Christmas Happy New Year.

Tom Maher

Another year drawing to a close. It has been a good year for us here. Our retreat days, the various meetings we held, the Sunday night dinners; all brought many of you here. To all of you who spent the time and money required to come, share with us, thanks. It is very much appreciated. We all hope you will find the means to come again. Got a new altar and some chairs for the house chapel. It looks much better now. In the church we had eight adult baptisms in 1991 and will have celebrated 103 weddings by year's end. Between six and seven thousand non-Christians attended these weddings most of them setting foot inside a Christian Church for the first time. This seems, at least to me, a notable opening to those around us.

GOD BLESS ALL THE OBLATES
IN JAPAN AND KOREA
WITH GOOD HEALTH AND HOLINESS
THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON
AND THROUGH THE YEAR AHEAD.

ED WILLIAMS

O.M.I.

Best wishes for Christmas and New Year!

It was rather an ordinary year for me. However, my trip to the Philippines was challenging and inspiring. It gave me a lot of things to think about.

Classes as usual at Kochi University. There I have 13 students, of whom 12 come faithfully. Also about the first year students at Kochi Rehabilitation College I can't complain. I enjoy my classes. At the Reformatory School we started with 5 students, now we have about 25. However they aren't eager to study...The ESS students of Kochi Women's University didn't win the first prize in the all Shikoku English Drama Contest...again second prize! But they did very well in the All Japan English Speech

Contest: they took first prize. This is the first time in history.

I'm in excellent health. Every week one hour of gymnastics in a training center (mixed!). Food and wine don't taste bad..

Hope we meet in 1992 on happy occasions. Yoshikazu X. Tosa

Wishing each one of you and all in your care every blessing for the Christmas season and for the coming year of grace.

Jerry Novotny

AKAOKA

May the Christ Child bring you peace and joy, holiness and wholeness all during the new year

Thanks very much to everybody for your prayers during my hospitalization

Lei Simons

AKI

November 8, 1991 was the day of the Fortieth Anniversary of the foundation of Aki. Our school, Umi no Hoshi Kindergarten celebrated it on November 2, 6 P.M. at the Hotel Tamai.

Over sixty people attended the banquet. Among the guests were the Mayor of Aki City and the Chief of the Educational Department of Aki. As an opening song we sang "Mariasama no Kokoro" (Mary's Heart), the festivities ended with the singing of "Ave Maris Stella" which is our school song as well as "Mata Au Hi Made" (Until We Meet Again). There was a wonderful family spirit during the banquet and one and all went home happy and satisfied.

We issued a memorial book entitled "40 Nen no Ayumi" (A Journey of 40 Years). If you would like to receive a copy, please let me know.

Next year we will have a new Provincial. I want to say many, many thanks to John K. Mahoney and pray for the new Provincial.

May Christ, Immanuel, bless all of us.

John Iwo

ANAN

Greetings and best wishes from Anan. As we close out this

year, I personally have many graces to be thankful for, not the least of which are my Oblate brothers. Thanks one and all for your support and friendship.

Dick Harr

IKEDA

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay!
And may the New Year, too, bring blessings every day!

I would have liked to be able to tell you that all of Ikeda has by now joined the Church, but that is not the case. So far that does not seem to have been God's plan. As for changes among the parishioners there has been a small increase; a lady has come with her husband to live in the neighboring town. He has retired from the Patent Bureau in Tokyo. Another couple have moved in from the Philippines. A sad loss has been the sudden death of the husband of one of our Filipinas. He was killed in a work-accident. He was a very good person and might have joined the Church shortly.

My terrain of activities stretches the length and breadth of Shikoku, and even beyond. That takes me out of the house quite a bit, and therefore, if you plan to stop by (and you are all most welcome to do so, even to stay over) it would be safe to make a phone call a few days ahead so as not to find the house locked.

I am looking forward to an occasion in the New Year of meeting everyone, even if not all at the same time, or the in same place. May it be a fruitful year for everyone.

Jan Van Hoydonck

TOKUSHIMA

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Well I'm in the jail house again. I have been spending a lot of time here lately helping translate for a foreign dancer who has been arrested here recently. Luckily, Bert is doing this too or I wouldn't be able to get anything done. This is a bad time of the year to have added work.

I hope this finds everyone well. It's too bad we can't connect more often. If anyone is near Tokushima please drop in and stay as long as you can.

The life-size crib is all set up on the lawn and this Sunday the statues go into it. This Sunday is also general cleaning and Christmas decorating time so we should be great from 15th till Christmas. Things promise to be busy as usual at Christmas. I'm hoping for a break

after Christmas or New Years.

You will all be remembered in a special way in my prayers and Masses at Christmas. I hope that whatever you are doing for the spread of His Kingdom is meeting with the blessings of the Lord and I hope you are happy and fulfilled doing it. Please keep me, and all here in Tokushima in your prayers.

Bill Maher

ITAMI

Merry Christmas

Quid novi sub sole!

Nothing extraordinary has happened this year, except for the fact that we had four funerals in two weeks during November. Leaking in the church roof has stopped. I climbed up behind the ceiling and encountered three obstacles in the way to the spot where it was leaking. There was an air conditioner duct about a foot wide and a foot high to step over. And then there were two walls coming down from the roof leaving a mere 20 inch space. I managed to slide over the ducts somehow and crawled on my belly through the narrow space under the walls. I made one mistake my foot went through one of the ceiling tiles. I'm ashamed of myself everytime I see the black grinning hole in the ceiling. Anyway the mixture of polluted rainwater and the dust clogged the crevice in the roof.

I guess that is all I can write now. I hope that next year will be a wonderful year for you.

Mike Yamasaki

Christmas means going to various places for retreats and Masses and, of course, parties for Filipinos. When everything is over, I hope to find some time for myself to meditate on the Birth of Our Lord. A Blessed Christmas to each one of you.

Wency Laguidao

NAGOYA

A Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

As I put the finishing touches on my M.A. dissertation, I look forward to a quiet holiday season. "Yes, finally finished!" Free copies on demand, but be ready to read. It is twice as long as my original IRF St Louis project paper. Now 130 pages! Thanks to Fr. Nemeshegyi's patient guidance it is better and definitely more "scholarly".

Ron LaFramboise

February will mark our first year in Zendana Church! As well as being of service to this small community, I think it has been a plus for the formation program. Bro Leo has done a great job with the Sunday School and Bible class.

We have one catechumen. This month at the request of the people here, I have begun two English classes.

A big plus to our team effort was having Fr. Tosa here for our Advent retreat. At my Bible class on Thursday, they were still discussing "metanoia" and it's meaning in their lives.

The Peace of Christ be with you in this Christmas Season and in the New Year

Ange Siani

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

God became man. This is the source of the world's hope.

Leo Kawaguchi

TOKYO

MERRY CHRISTMAS and A MOST BLESSED NEW YEAR

During this Christmas Season I want to thank everyone who contributed in some way to make my 25th anniversary of ordination something memorable.

On March 3, the christians of Enoguchi parish, on March 5 the OMI gathered for their annual meeting in Kochi, on March 19, the Sisters of CHRIST THE KING who run the orphanage, on April 29, the couples of MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER and the youth of CHOICE, on August 4, my FAMILY and FRIENDS in the USA, and finally on September 20, the Sisters of JUNSHIN who run the Junior College, High School and Junior High School where I spend a few days a week, were all meaningful celebrations, each in its own way.

I am also thankful for the time I was able to spend with my parents. Please pray for them, and that Dad's senility will not be too big a burden on Mom. May the Prince of Peace lighten our and their burdens!

Ray Bourgoin

Greetings from Tsukuba

As always, I hope this finds everyone in good health. And, as always, I confess that I have once again succeeded

in testing the editor's patience by sending in this contribution to the Newsletter at the last minute. Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow, right?

Quickly then, I'd simply like to wish everyone a Holy and Merry Christmas-and-continued good or better health in the New Year.

And, without taking up too much space. I'd also like to share the following with you--some information on a major event of '91 and on plans for '92.

The 11th World Congress of the Deaf, held in early July saw the invasion of Tokyo by 7000 deaf people and supporters (representing 68 countries). In addition to working for the PR Section of the Congress, I was asked to make a presentation at the Session on "The Spiritual Care of the Deaf". For my topic, I selected "Deaf People Enriching the Life of the Church" a topic I hope to develop even further at next year's International Catholic Deaf Association Workshop (July)...and...at the Japanese National Catholic Deaf Association's Congress (October)

God's Blessings on you, your work and the people you serve! Enjoy the Holidays!

Jack Deely

AUSTRALIA

I have been very busy studying English every day at Monash University. I live at Mazenod College and drive to school each day.

It will be the first time I experience Christmas in the summer. During the Christmas vacation I will be working with the "Rosies" a group of youthful volunteers who try to help the young people who come to the Gold Coast during the vacation to drink, drug and party.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Nobuhiko Yagi

DATES TO REMEMBER

Birthday

JANUARY

2 Ed Williams
22 Ray Bourgoin
29 Dick Harr

FEBRUARY

15 Len Inui
21 Vincenzo Bordo
29 Jerry Novotny

Ordination

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

22 Xave Tosa

MARCH

19 Ray Bourgoin
27 Ronald Framboise
27 Wency Laguidao

MARCH
23 Bill Maher

APRIL
4 Jerry Novotny
11 Jack Deely

APRIL
1 Leo Kawaguchi

DATES TO MARK IN YOUR APPOINTMENT BOOK

MARCH 24-26 SPRING MISSION MEETING
LUMEN 2000 - EVANGELIZATION IN JAPAN
Place: Kochi, Nakajima-cho
Animator: Bishop Okada Takeo

AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 4 ANNUAL OBLATE RETREAT
Place: Fukuoka Passionist Retreat House
Director: to be annouced

皆さん、お元気ですか。私は、元気に頑張っています。相変わらずニュースレターの締切りギリギリで、編集長にとってはいい迷惑の存在で申し訳ないです。私は今日中にやらなければならないことを、つい明日に延ばしてしまう性格なのです。

私の関わった91年の大きな行事と、来年の計画を簡単に紹介させていただきます。91年は、第11回世界聾者会議が開催されました。7月のはじめ、参加者は7000人の聴障者とその協力者が会議本部に集まり、交流を深めました。私は、会議の広報部の仕事をしました。「精神的ケア」という分科会もあり、トピックとして「教会を豊かにする聴覚障害者」というテーマについて話しました。92年は、7月に国際カトリック聾信者ワークショップ、更に10月に日本全国カトリック聾信者会議が予定されています。計画として、この2つの会議を中心に、今年のテーマ「教会を豊かにする聴覚障害者」について、もう少し考え、練り直していくつもりです。

最後に、意義のあるクリスマスになるよう、そして、皆さんが健康に新しい年を迎えられるよう、祈っています。

ディーリ

御降誕祭おめでとうございます。

ことしは世界中で大きな事件や変動がありました。イエスさまの誕生をとうして示された天の父 神様の愛が全ての人々に慕われる機会となりますように祈ります。

今年の思い出になり、一番研修費を使ったのが、去る七月下旬の第21回国際モンテッソーリ世界大会でした。古都奈良に1170人が集まりましたが、270人近くが外国の人でした。4日間の最後の日の午後3時間のシンポジウムを司会で手伝いましたが、80歳をずっと越えたバキスタン人、インド人、アメリカ人の3人の講義や発表が明快で思考が正確なのは感嘆しました。どの人も幼児の総合的な人格形成を助けながら成長し続ける平和な若さに満ちていました。でも、モンテッソーリ教育の場が高価で大衆には手の届かないものになっている国もあって握手しかねたものでした。どうかイエスさまにみる人間らしさが乳幼児期から積み重ねられて育ちますように！

今年一年、いろいろと有り難うございました。シモンズ神父様も元気になって、みんな よい新年をお迎えになられますように！

レオナルド・乾 盛 夫