



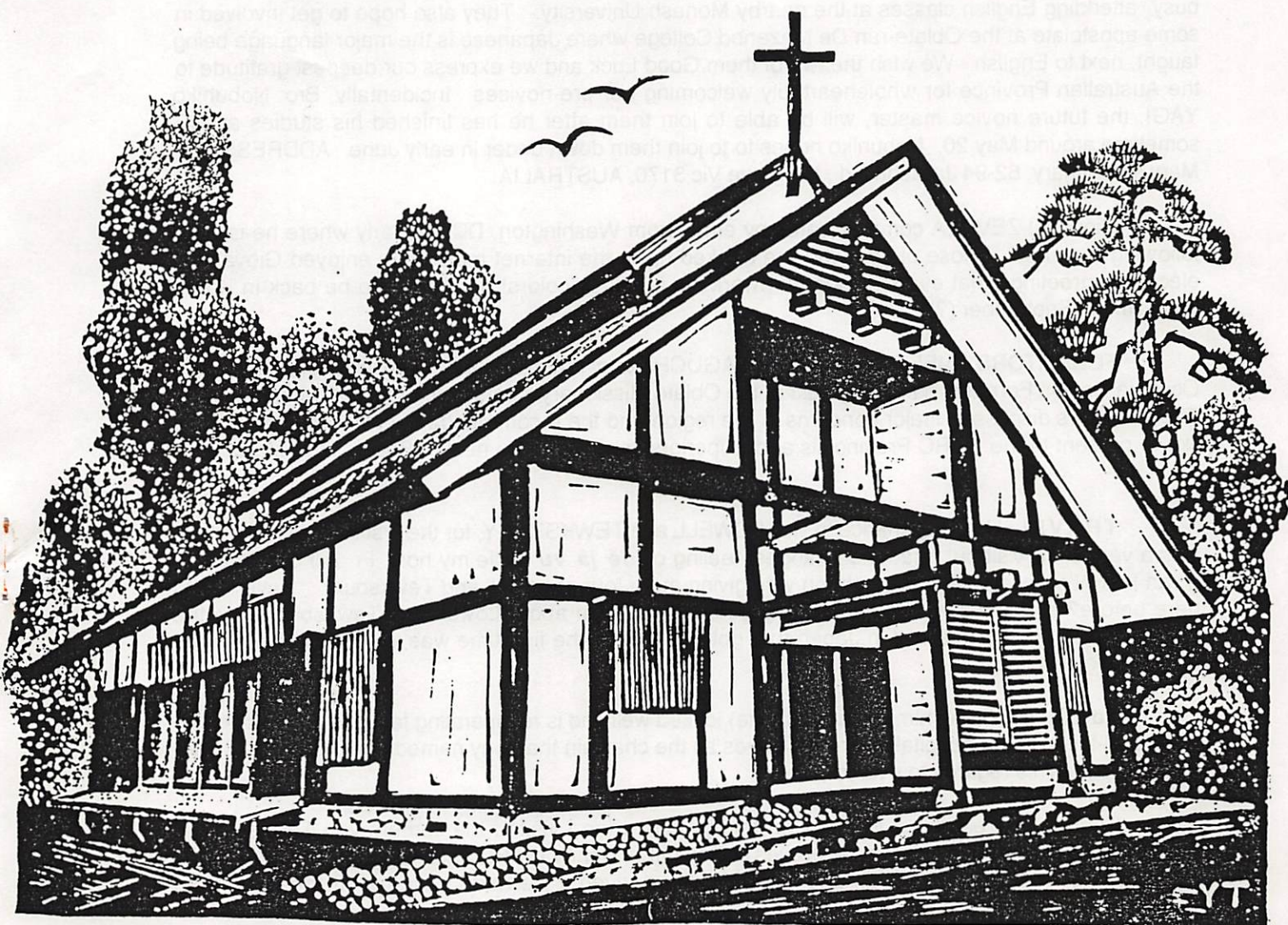
# OMI INFORMATION

## JAPAN

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

SPRING 1999

H A P P Y E A S T E R



## *From the Provincial's Desk:*

**WELCOME**, Archbishop Orlando QUEVEDO, OMI, Archbishop of Cotabato, Philippines and Hank MATTIMORE, input speakers for our **1999 Spring Meeting**. We thank both of them for making the sacrifice to come and lead us to some discussion and reflection on two timely topics: **Church and Globalization** and **Oblate Lay Associates**. Both of them need no lengthy introduction. Hank Mattimore was here for our 50th celebration last November and Archbishop Quevedo is known to many of you from Washington days. He taught me Psychology in college, before I entered the seminary. He took over from Archbishop Phil SMITH, OMI as Archbishop of Cotabato last September 8th. Incidentally, for those of you who might have known him, Bishop George DION, OMI, one of the pioneers of the Oblate mission in the Philippines died of lingering illness last February 12th. Along with the legendary Oblate, the late Archbishop Gerard MONGEAU, OMI, Bishop Dion built schools, radio stations, parishes and even co-founded a religious congregation of sisters. Another Oblate who used to be in the Philippines who died recently is Fr. Joe MILFORD. I remember him as the priest who came to our home at 4 in the morning to give my mother the last rites.

Sometime during the Spring Meeting, we will honor our jubilarian this year, John Kenney MAHONEY who is celebrating the **50th Anniversary of Vows**. Congratulations, John!

**OFF TO AUSTRALIA** are our two pre-novices, Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA. They left last February 14th from Kansai after a series of farewell parties in Nagoya and Itami. They have called up twice to say that they are slowly getting settled and their novice master, Fr. Mark EDWARDS communicates by email regularly. They have joined the community at St. Mary's Seminary and are now busy attending English classes at the nearby Monash University. They also hope to get involved in some apostolate at the Oblate-run De Mazenod College where Japanese is the major language being taught, next to English. We wish the two of them Good Luck and we express our deepest gratitude to the Australian Province for wholeheartedly welcoming our pre-novices. Incidentally, Bro. Nobuhiko YAGI, the future novice master, will be able to join them after he has finished his studies at IRF sometime around May 20. Nobuhiko hopes to join them down under in early June. ADDRESS: St. Mary's Seminary, 62-94 Jackson Rd., Mulgrave Vic 3170, AUSTRALIA.

Giovanni ZEVOLA communicates by email from Washington, DC regularly where he is busy following a course. Those of you who are hooked up to the internet must have enjoyed Giovanni's electronic greetings that even included fireworks in fabulous colors! He hopes to be back in Korea sometime in September (?).

**FORMATORS' MEETING:** Leo KAWAGUCHI and Mauro CONCARDI attended the Asia-Oceania Region Formator's Meeting held at the Oblate Missionary Center in Manila last January 25-30. The formators discussed major concerns in the region and the recommendations that the body would like to present to the AORC Provincials and Superiors' meeting to be held in Bangkok on March 8 to 11.

**TRAVEL:** I had the chance to visit LOWELL and TEWKSBURY, for the first time, last month. It was a very short visit but I had the strangest feeling of *déjà vu* while my host, Fr. Bill O'DONNELL (Fran HAHN's classmate in highschool) was giving me a tour of Lowell and Tewksbury. "Have I been here before?" I think it was because I have heard so much about Lowell and Tewksbury from the Oblates in the Philippines and in Japan that going there for the first time was like having been there many times in the past.

Ed LOWNEY (met him for the first time) looked well and is recuperating fast and is able to drive. He is well-loved in the hospital where he serves as the chaplain that they named one of the parks after him. He sends his regards to everyone.

There was fresh layer of snow on the ground when I visited the cemetery in Tewksbury. I wanted to make sure that I visited the graves of Bob GILL, Danny WARD, etc. I found all of them, fallen Oblates who were once in Japan and the Philippines, even if we had to scrape off the snow from



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM WENCY

#### AORC Elects New President

The Asia-Oceania Regional Conference, during its annual meeting held in Bangkok, March 8-11, 1999, elected Wency LAGUIDAO as its new President for the next three years.

Wency succeeds Fr. Pat MORONEY (Provincial - Australia). The conference also chose Melbourne, Australia, as the venue of its meeting in March 2000.

AORC is an organization of some thirteen units of Oblate Provinces, Delegations and Missions in the Asia-Oceania region. Its function is purely consultative and promotes cooperation on different areas within the region.

"Congratulations and Godspeed, Wency!"

tombstone to tombstone, to find the names of great Oblate missionaries (and I say this without fear of exaggeration since I am a very product of the missionary zeal of Oblates in the Philippines).... I said to myself, what prayers can I offer for them who made great sacrifices to the once very poor missions of Japan and the Philippines? Instead, I found myself asking them to send us some of the "very traditional zeal for the salvation of souls" of the past, hard to come by these days. Compared to the massive structures that some of them built in their lifetime, their resting place is a simple open space dotted with identical stones that a weary traveller like me might stumble and be reminded of how God used them as His instruments in proclaiming His Word and building His kingdom here on earth. Rest in God's Peace, great missionaries!!!

Lowell is definitely an Oblate town built by Irish immigrants. There is an Oblate church (with the upper church and the lower church, to cope with the numbers in the past, I was told) or an Oblate residence anywhere you turn. "Are there no other congregations in town?" I asked my host. "They don't dare!" was the quick answer that came back! Fr. Jim SULLIVAN who is in the retirement home sends his regards to everyone. Also met Fr. John SAVAGE who fondly recalls his Oblate friends in Japan, and Frs. Tom REDDY of Oblate World and Pat HOLLYWOOD, the bursar of the former Eastern U.S. Province.

We send our **PRAYERS** and **CONGRATULATIONS** to the newly inaugurated U.S.A. Province under the leadership of Fr. David KALERT, Provincial. The new Province is a product of years of restructuring. The new Provincial Administration will be based in Washington and Area Superiors have been named to administer newly defined areas.

**AORC MEETING:** The annual meeting of Provincials and Superiors of Delegations and Missions in the Asia-Oceania Region was held in Bangkok, March 8-11. The Superior General and the Asia-Oceania Councillor attended the meeting. The meeting this year was previously scheduled to be held in Indonesia but the very unstable political and economic situation in that country called for the change of venue. Our prayers go to the Oblates in Indonesia who are in the midst of the very serious turmoil that has continued for months in that populous and culturally diverse nation.

The proposed **FINANCIAL DIRECTORY** (Administration of Temporal Goods) will be explained by Ray BOURGOIN during the Spring Meeting. Ray has worked on it for quite sometime now taking the financial directories of Provinces in Canada as models. We hope that the financial directory will help us draft our Provincial Directory which is very much encouraged by the General Administration.

The **PROVINCIAL COUNCIL** meets regularly, at an average of one meeting every two months. We never run out of things to talk about and I am happy at the openness, cooperation and the dedication being shown by each member. We also have an efficient secretary who reminds us when we go off the track at times. When we started as a group, the General Administration reminded us that the Provincial Council's task is not only to meet and discuss about the mission. It must also find time to PRAY together and RECREATE together (also for the sake of the mission). I must admit that we still have to learn the interplay between work, prayer and recreation together as a group.

**Where We Have been. Where We Are. Where We Want To Go.** Are we done with this enormous task yet? Not at all! During the Spring Meeting, we have asked some of you to make presentations about the different ministries that we are involved in. It is an effort to situate ourselves, locate ourselves as to WHERE WE ARE. The purpose is for us to, in the words of St. Paul, "affirm the brethren" in whatever work he is doing.

**Evangelizing the Poor at the Dawn of the Third Millenium, Letter of the 1998 General Chapter to the Oblates.** I am sure that all of us have received a copy of this document. My suggestion is that we use this document as a material for reflection during our district meetings. Leo Kawaguchi is working on the Japanese translation.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Meeting in Fukuoka, March 22-26.

*Wency Laguidao, OMI*

Dear Friends,

Spring! This is the end and the beginning of the School Year. In between I should have a quiet time. But that is not so. There are other "gatherings".

In Kochi we organized a study session about the International Debt Relief. The main speaker was Ms Kitazawa Yoko from IMF. We scheduled four sessions in four different places. The attendance was not a success. But we have hopes that our collecting of signatures will influence the Prime Minister of Japan. Japan is the only country in the world not yet showing signs of willingness to consider the problem.

I took a three days trip to Korea. I don't know if our four Oblates enjoyed my stay with them, but I certainly enjoyed them in their Korean environment. It was colder than in Kochi. James walked me through an icy snowstorm...I stayed in both houses. The original house is very well restored. The new apartment is big if you compare it with the size of a Japanese apartment. Personnel observation: four adults might do. but 5 adults might run against each other.

Then, there was the annual meeting of the local persons in charge of the Japan Justice and Peace Committee. This was held in Nagoya and so that was a good occasion to meet the Oblates at the seminary. It just happened that it was the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination and they had prepared a delicious evening meal. Nagoya is a good place to go when you have an anniversary...

Teaching apostolate for the new school year? The Kochi University hired me again for one more year. The Rehabilitation College is still looking for two teachers to replace me: one for English and one for French. Am I irreplaceable? (That is not what we were told when they tried to make good religious out of us.) But when I am writing these sentences I have no answer yet.

At the Reform School, I had a lino print club. (In Japan they use wood or rubber.) But the inner circumstances at the school have changed so much that I decided to stop it. It gave me too much stress.

My asthma cannot be cured. It can be controlled. Steroids have many more side effects than the doctor told me in the beginning. "Moon face" and "balloon belly" are the minor problems. The skin gets very thin; it doesn't protect the small veins under the skin. The calcium flows away from the bones. I easily get cracks in my ribs. Diabetes too can be a bad effect. Up till now, no signs of that yet.

My last piece of information: Two of my five sisters are coming to Japan, arriving on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April! And it isn't an April fool. Hoping the floor can bear the weight!

Xave Y. TOSA omi

Editor's note: The front cover represents the Kochi Shinhonmachi Catholic Church.

From John IWO

## YOSHIZUKA CHURCH

The Catholic Church at Yoshizuka is about 2 kilometers North of Hakata Station in Fukuoka City. The location of the church can not be called a nice area, but the property is quite large. From what I heard, the original foundation was in the fields, from where the airplanes could be seen coming in and going out, and where on a rainy day the water rose knee-high. It was an area of laborers and Koreans, of endless strife and fighting. The head of the district, who had graduated from a Catholic school, implored the bishop to open a Catholic day nursery in the area. And so the Yoshizuka Catholic Day Nursery and a church were built. The Day Nursery was entrusted to the Eucharistic Missionaries of the Most Holy Trinity (Mexican), and the Scarborough Fathers (Canadian) were charged with the construction of the church. Over the years the aspect of the area has completely changed: apartment buildings, high class mansions flooded the place. Near the church also a 10 floor mansion was erected, giving you a feeling of being crushed; the church got completely lost. Some years ago the Scarborough priest died; after him several priests have served the church, until in February 1998 the Oblates took charge.

- 1) Area The parish comprises: Hakata-ku, with Hakata Station, part of Higashi-ku, and Kasuya-gun, all together a large territory. Its population: Hakata City 1,322,648 , Hakata Ward 174,981 , Higashi Ward 266,091 inhabitants. In Kasuya-gun there is a Mission Station in Shime Town, dependent on Yoshizuka Church, going by the name of South Kasuya Church and comprising the territories of Shime Town and Umi Town. Being at the other side of the airport it is about 8 kilometers away. Yoshizuka has many printing shops. Kasuya is largely a town of coal mines, and has many immigrants from the Goto Islands.
  - 2) People The faithful of the church are largely composed of laborers, small income earners, business failures, free-traders, families with a dissolute member, and a small number of salaried workers. The atmosphere of the church has changed from what it was before. The faithful who have come from the Goto Islands are descendants of the Kirishtan and strongly hold on to their faith and keep aloof from the others.
  - 3) Church life At Yoshizuka: Mass on Saturday (7:30 p.m.) and Sunday (10 a.m.) On 2nd and 4th Sundays at 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Grammar School and Middle School children, led by the Sisters and two parishioners. Has about 40 attendants. On the second Sunday the Mass is a children's Mass with Bible talk. On Tuesday there is Church History, on Thursday the 100 weeks Bible Study, on Saturday afternoon Saturday school for non-baptized children.
- Parishioners activities: Church finances, upkeep, credit union, celebrations, after-Mass udon (noodles). This is mainly in the hands of the elderly.
- Mass attendance, Saturday and Sunday together, around 150.

South Kasuya Church: Mass on Sunday at 8 a.m., attendance  $\pm$  60.

On 3rd Sundays Children's Mass and Bible talk. On 2nd and 4th Sundays after Mass Sunday School. Plans for the same for Junior and Senior High School Students on the 1st Sunday. Wednesday afternoon Church History and Catechism.

Parishioners activities: Church finances, upkeep, celebrations. There is a ladies' organization. There is positive cooperation with the activities of the diocese.

## 硫黄神文

吉塚教会は博多駅の北、約2キロメートルにあり、教会のロケーションは良い所にあるとは言えないが、敷地は十分ある。聞くところによると、創立当初は田畑のなかで、飛行機の発着が見られたとのこと、又、雨の日は膝まで水が溜まるような所であったとのこと。労働者と韓国人の多い地区で、喧嘩や争いが絶えない所で、地区長がカトリック学校を出ていたので、司教様にカトリックの保育所を作ってくれるように懇願し、カトリック吉塚保育園と教会が建てられることになった。保育園は三位一体の聖体宣教修道女会が引き受け、スカボロ会が教会建設にあたった。時は経て、近年区画整理もなく、アパートや高層マンションが乱立するところとなり、教会の隣にも10階建てのマンションが建てられ、圧迫されるような感じを受け、全く目立たないものとなった。数年前スカボロ会の司祭が死に、その後は、幾人もの司祭が交代で教会奉仕をしてきた。そして、1998年2月からオブレート会が受け持つことになった。

- 1) 地域 博多駅を含む博多区と東区の一部と粕屋郡の広い範囲である。博多市の全人口は1322648人、博多区は174981人、東区は266091人である。粕屋郡には巡回教会として、南粕屋教会が志免町と宇美町の境にある。飛行場の反対側で約8キロメートルある。吉塚は印刷工場が多い。粕屋はもともと、炭坑の町であり、五島から来ている人が多い。
- 2) 人々 労働者、低所得者が多く、事業に失敗した人、自由業者、放蕩者を持つ家族などと、サラリーマンの少ない労働者の教会である。今までの教会と雰囲気が違う。五島からの信者はキリシタンの子孫であり、堅く信仰を守る人と離れている人がある。
- 3) 宗教活動 吉塚教会・・・土曜日 19時30分、日曜日 10時ミサ  
第二、第四日曜日 9時15分、小中学生の日曜学校  
シスターと二人の信徒が指導。約40人。第二日曜日  
子供のミサと聖書の話。火曜日、教会史、木曜日、  
聖書百週間。土曜日午後、土曜学校、未受洗者の子供  
信徒の活動 教会会計、営繕、共助組合、お祝い行事、ミサ後の  
うどん。高齢者が主体でやっている。  
ミサ出席者 土、日で約150人  
南粕屋・・・日曜日 8時・ミサ 約60名出席  
第三日曜日、子供のミサと聖書の話。第二、第四  
日曜日ミサ後日曜学校。第一日曜日、中高生予定。  
水曜日午後、教会史と教理の勉強。  
信徒の活動 教会会計、営繕、お祝い行事、婦人会組織があり、  
教区の行事や活動に積極的に参加。

From Australia Akio and Kenichi sent us their first communication in English.

Thank you, men!

I have been in Australia for three weeks. But I cannot understand spoken English yet. My vocabulary is still limited and Australians speak quickly. I am studying English at Monash University. I expected that there would be few Japanese students there. But there are lots of Japanese. One half of the students are Japanese.

There are three Fathers and six brothers at St Mary's Seminary. Everyone is very cheerful and funny. Thanks to them I am getting along pleasantly. But I remember Japan sometimes, so I suddenly feel lonely.

Please pray for me, and I pray for you too, thank you.

Akio Horiuchi

Still I cannot get used to studying English. English is difficult for me as I was weak in English from the old days. I have a hard time in English study. Every night I do three hours of homework. But I can hold out because Oblate community gives me friendship and encouragement.

Yesterday I went to Philip Island with Peter's family. (Peter is an Oblate student from Sweden). This place is beautiful. I could see the southern Cross and a lot of stars. I saw many penguins walking. It was exciting.

Thanks God. That's all. Kenichi

From John K. Mahoney:

*GROW OLD ALONG WITH ME!*

*THE BEST IS YET TO BE,*

*THE LAST OF LIFE FOR WHICH THE*

*FIRST WAS MADE.*

*OUR TIMES ARE IN HIS HAND*

*WHO SAITH, 'A WHOLE I PLANNED;*

*YOUTH BUT SHOWS THE HALF.*

*TRUST GOD; SEE ALL, NOR BE AFRAID."*

*ROBERT BRUNNING.*



From Jan:

### DISPOSED FOR CONVERSION

With his Bull "Incarnationis Mysterium" , given in Rome on November 29, 1998, the Holy Father gives the opening and closing dates of the Jubilee Year and an elaborate description of the history and the meaning of the Jubilee Year. In the course of his explanation the Pope says (c.9): "Another distinctive sign, and one familiar to the faithful. is the *indulgence*, which is one of the constitutive elements of the Jubilee."

In the weekly of the Flemish dioceses, nr.3 of January 20,1999 I found an interview of Peter Vande Vyvere, one of its reporters, with Fr. Jean Kockerols, professor at the francophone major seminary of the Archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussels, on Indulgences. I thought it enlightening and useful, and wish to share it, in a translation from the Dutch original.

- *What is the real meaning of indulgences?*

The meaning of indulgence cannot be detached from the sacrament of reconciliation. Confession provides the forgiveness of sins and the remission of guilt. But the wound that has been caused by sin, that which has been touched in yourself and in your relations, remains. The cure of this brokenness takes time. And it is not in the first place due to your own efforts. It is not mainly the result of the act of love or of faith you made yourself in order to gain that indulgence. The complete healing, so the Church teaches, is in first instance the result of Christ's own love and faith, and that of the saints, who walked in His footsteps. Indeed, an indulgence puts a Christian in touch with this "treasure of grace" of the Church.

- *What is the origin of the doctrine on indulgences?*

That also is connected with the history of the sacrament of reconciliation. During a first period, in the first centuries of the Church, the sinner who asks to be reconciled is for some time separated from the community. After that period of conversion he is again accepted into the community and reconciled. From the seventh century on the reconciliation takes place at the moment itself when the penitent asks forgiveness: the time of conversion *follows*. The 'penalty' that is attached to that period of conversion is 'tariffed': for every sin a specified penalty. In a third phase of the Church's history that specified penalty can be replaced by something 'strong', but within a limited time: make a pilgrimage, perform one or other act of charity. This way of doing becomes theologically justified by stating that: all the love that has been realized by Christ and the saints compensates for the limitation of your 'penalty'. This then is the theological background of the indulgence doctrine.

- *Why does the question of the indulgences create so many misunderstandings?*

In the first place because in the course of time the indulgences have been detached from love and faith. In the fifteenth century they even were for sale. Luther protested against that. In the nineteenth and still in the twentieth century 'figured indulgences' became the practice. For instance an indulgence of '300 days' could be gained. But the awareness was no longer present that this period of time looked back to the old custom of doing something for some time as a 'penalty'. Indulgences were in danger of becoming a kind of automatism or bookkeeping. In 1968 Pope Paul VI did away with that practice of 'figured indulgences'. But the principle of indulgences is still alive.

- *And so are the misconceptions...*

In his bull the Pope (John Paul II) rightly states that indulgences are not per se tied to a pilgrimage: e.g. by not smoking or drinking for a day you can gain an indulgence. Of course, picking that little sentence out of the bull makes it sound ridiculous. The purpose fits in with the whole - and that must be kept in mind - viz. the Jubilee as a common awakening to our past, as a time of working at reconciliation and conversion, and the pilgrimage as a physical expression of that spirit. Feast together: for Christians that means celebrating the Eucharist. We receive the sacrament of reconciliation by which our debt is forgiven. And we perform acts of love... to which the indulgence presents us the possibility. But we must stress that this healing does not

happens in the first place by performing mechanically the things proposed here by the Pope, but rather by partaking in all that Christ, and the saints in His tracks, have done and still do as acts of love and faith.

- *What, then, is the actuality of that question of indulgences?*

It can make us conscious that in the Church (and in the whole world) we are very solidary, primarily solidary with the faults of our brothers and sisters. Therefore, we must, as Church, ask forgiveness for what our forebears have done wrong. But we are also solidary in a positive sense: we also 'profit' from what our forebears and our fellow men and women have done and still do. The 'community of saints' (not only St Francis e.a...) is the theological base of the indulgences. In that we are embedded.

Secondly: the word *indulgence* points at tolerance, obligingness, at the forbearance and obligingness of God. We do not buy forgiveness. But the indulgences show that God takes our desire for conversion serious and that everything we do has a place in God's heart. God freely commits himself to involve man in the salvation of the world.

Thirdly: the question of indulgences together with all the rest of that bull is an invitation to make something of it, of that Jubilee year. I think that the celebration of such a Jubilee is a forceful inspiration, that, if it were not celebrated together, as Church, much would be missed.

Finally: The most important aspect is not what is "indulged", but what is left: the good you do for your own conversion and the love you show to your brothers and sisters. The key question is not whether you are for or against indulgences, but whether you are willing to become converted.

PETER VANDE VYVERE

#### INDULGENCES IN PRACTICE

*Joined to the papal bull 'Incarnationis Mysterium', there is a decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary outlining the concrete conditions to obtain an indulgence. Without forgetting the deepest meaning of the indulgence (reconciliation and conversion, solidarity with the 'community of saints' and the conviction that God takes seriously our craving for forgiveness) we here give a summary.*

The first requirement is the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation (after which for a certain length of time ONE indulgence per day can be obtained) and the assistance at the Holy Eucharist (which assistance must take place on the day itself of the indulgence-practice). At both those moments the Christian faithful demonstrates his oneness with the Church in the form of a prayer for the intentions of the Pope. Some further acts of charity and penance serve as the expression of an authentic conversion of the heart, the result of the encounter with Christ in the sacraments.

The faithful can obtain a Jubilee indulgence by making a pilgrimage to one of the great basilicas of Rome (St Peter, St Paul-outside-the-walls, St John-in-Lateran, Santa Maria Maggiore), when they assist at a liturgical celebration, an adoration of the Holy Eucharist or make a meditation, and close with an Our Father, a Creed and a Hail Mary. At some four other locations in Rome an indulgence can be gained at the same conditions. In the Holy Land the same can be done in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Nativity and the Basilica of the Annunciation. In the dioceses around the world also an indulgence can be obtained at the same conditions by a pilgrimage to the cathedral or some other churches appointed by the local bishop.

The decree remarks that an indulgence can be gained as well by acts that express the spirit of penance of the Jubilee. E.g. abstain for a whole day of all superfluous consumption, such as smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages, by a donation to the poor, sustaining religious or social works, take a serious engagement for society in one's free time, etc. P.V.V.

## CELEBRATIONS

### BIRTHDAYS

#### March

23 Bill MAHER

#### April

1 Satoshi Leo KAWAGUCHI  
17 John DEELY  
22 Wency LAGUIDAO

#### May

29 Thomas MAHER

#### June

24 Giovanni ZEVOLA

### ORDINATIONS

#### March

19 Ray Bourgoin  
27 Wency LAGUIDAO  
29 Satoshi Leo KAWAGUCHI

#### April

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

#### May

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

#### June

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

### ANNIVERSARY of the DEATH of our MISSION's FOUNDING FATHERS

12 April Robert GILL

### PRAYERS

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

- Bishop George DION, OMI, who died in Cotabato on February 12 this year (see Wency's letter in this issue). Also mentioned by Wency is
- Joe MILFORD, OMI, who died in ~~the~~ West Palm Beach, Florida. Joe has been a missionary in the Philippines and while there he came to preach our retreat in 1957. In my history notes I find this entry: July 6, 1957: Arrival of Fr. Joseph MILFORD, OMI, pastor of the Oblate parish at Grace Park Manila, to preach the retreat of the Oblates in Japan. From July 8-15 at Koga, from July 18-25 at Aki.
- Gerard STEVENS, OMI at the third anniversary of his death (May 10).
- deceased relatives and friends.

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

And, in closing:

**JOYFUL AND HAPPY EASTER TO ALL!**

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

Jan



# Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

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January 12, 1999

Dear Brother Oblates,

**Happy New Year!** May our Faith, Hope and Love be renewed so that we will be able to serve God and His people more through our different ministries this year.

It was good to meet many of you during the annual Christmas Party in Kochi. Almost everyone was there and it was encouraging to notice that many from distant places made the sacrifice to be present. Our gratitude once again to our enduring host, Jude.

Before the Christmas Party in Kochi, the Provincial Council met for the last time in 1998 and I would like to report to you a few things that are of interest:

1) The creation of: OBLATE CATECHIST ONGOING TRAINING FUND (カテキスタ養成資金). Ray made the financial report on the 50th anniversary (please see separate page). The generosity of the people enabled us to pay all the expenses incurred. After deducting all the expenses we incurred and medical debts we owed the Eastern U.S. Province, there is a total of YEN 1,493,618 remaining.

Dave Barton gave another \$5,000 which he wants to be used for anything that will serve as a memory of the late Mr. Narui. Enokuchi Parish also gave YEN500,000 for the cemetery plot where Mr. Narui is buried since he is buried at the Oblate plot.

The Provincial Council has decided to put all the remaining money that we received as gifts during our 50th anniversary (YEN 1,493,618) including the money received for the memory of the late Mr. Narui and his cemetery plot (YEN 1,000,000) the total of YEN **2,493,618** into the Oblate Catechist Ongoing Training Fund. The money will be invested in the OIP and we will use the interest from this to finance small ongoing formation projects for catechists working with the Oblates.

Aside from the monetary gifts we received, there were also beautiful letters of thanks from those who were invited to come and from those who received a copy of the album. Cardinal Shirayanagi, Bishop Matsunaga of Fukuoka, Bishop Tanaka - former Bishop of Kyoto were very impressed of the anniversary album. B. Quintus wrote a beautiful letter of thanks along with R. LaFramboise, A. Obin, D. Ullrich, H. Mattimore, B. McLaughlin, etc.

2) REMISSION OF DEBT OF POOR NATIONS. During the 33rd General Chapter, the delegates from both the rich and poor nations have unanimously agreed to make a concerted effort in the whole congregation to actively participate in various movements working for the remission of debts of poor nations. Here in Japan, there is a movement organized by the Protestants, Catholics and NGOs headed by Cardinal Shirayanagi soliciting signatures. Xave has sent out the blank forms for the signature campaign. We ask everyone to participate. Please follow the simple instructions written in the forms so that your efforts will not be wasted. In Kochi, they have invited an expert to give them a talk on the harsh realities that the people in poor nations have to go through because of the debts that have become impossible to pay.

3) COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS We have a Committee On Contracts that is in charge of drawing up written agreements with the Dioceses where we work. Bishop Fukahori called my attention during the 50th celebration regarding our contract with the Diocese of Takamatsu. Our commitment to the Diocese of Takamatsu and all the other dioceses where we are cooperators cannot be measured with a piece of paper (contract) but we have to have some legal instrument to lean on. The General Administration is also encouraging the drawing up of written contracts with the dioceses where Oblates serve.

I think that on the occasion of our 50th anniversary, we should re-commit ourselves to the Japanese Church, starting with the Diocese of Takamatsu where many of us are working. I will meet with Bishop Fukahori on January 18th together with Ange and Bert, members of the Committee On Contracts, mainly to relay to the bishop our commitment as Oblates to the Diocese of Takamatsu. A report will be made on contracts during the Spring Meeting in March.

4) MORE FORMATION NEWS! While writing this letter, a fax came in from Rome confirming the appointment of Brother Nobuhiko YAGI as Novice Master. The rescript from the General Council says:

*The Superior General with the unanimous approval of the Council in the Ordinary Session of January 2, 1999, confirm the naming of Brother Nobuhiko Yagi as Novice Master... Since the Novice Master is not the local superior of an established house, no indult is required for this appointment... Also, Brother Yagi must be able to count on the direct support of an Oblate priest to assure the availability of the Sacraments.*

We welcome the news with great joy and we have to assure Nobuhiko that he will not be doing the job alone. Incidentally, he will not finish his course at St. Louis until May 20. He hopes to join our two pre-novices in Australia around the first week in June this year. The communication from Rome also included the approval of the reopening of our Novitiate in Aki. I have talked to Dick HARR previously about this and he is very open to the idea of making the Aki rectory the Novitiate House. In fact, he has gone out shopping for new pillows already!

It is a WAITING GAME for Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA as they await the arrival of the necessary papers from Australia that will entitle them to a visa. Once the papers arrive, they can have their passports stamped at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo. Fr. Mark EDWARDS, Master of Novices at St. Mary's Seminary, Australia, is following up on the necessary papers and is in constant contact with us through e-mail. Tentative departure date for Akio and Kenichi has been set for February 14 from Kansai. They want to be there for the Vow Day on the 17th.

6.) AONAMI NO IE: The Provincial Council was unanimous in its decision to assure Lei SIMONS that we will take the responsibility of continuing the *Aonami No Ie* (Home for Battered Women) should he become incapacitated to continue the work. Lei has also transferred to the Oblates the authority to administer the funds for the different works that he is involved in, Volunter Bureau, Kokoro No Dial. These funds will be invested with the OIP and the interests will be used to continue Lei's work. We will hear more from Lei during the Spring Meeting in March.

7.) SPRING MEETING: Jack DEELY and the members of the Ongoing Formation Committee are working hard to make the details of the schedule of our Spring Meeting. Archbishop Orly QUEVEDO who will develop the topic Church and Globalization and Hank MATTIMORE Oblate Lay Associates are all set to come. Again, thanks to e-mail, communicating with them has been less cumbersome.

We have asked some of you to share with us where we stand on certain areas such as, Finances, Formation, Kindergartens, Parishes, etc. This is a continuation of the reflection that we started before our 50th Anniversary: *Where We Have Been. Where We Are. Where We Want to Go.* Just be simple and brief in your presentations.

PRAYERS are requested for Ron LaFramboise's step-mother who died on December 21st. Also for the fast recovery of our sick relatives and friends. Bert Silver's brother underwent a major surgery last year and needs our continued prayers.

Faternally in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

*Wency Laguidao, OMI*



# Financial Report

## 50th Anniversary

### INCOME

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

### EXPENSES

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

### N.B.

-From the gift of US\$30,000 from Dave Barton and \$20,000 from the Eastern U.S. Province, (total of \$50,000) US\$40,000 has been paid back to Eastern U.S. Province for medical expenses. Therefore: remaining money is YEN 1,493,618.

-Mr. Narui's memorial money (YEN 500,000) and cemetery plot (YEN 500,000), a total of YEN 1,000,000 is not reflected in the above report.

-Gifts from Mr. Barton, U.S. Central and Eastern Provinces are in U.S. \$: 100yen=1\$.

-Expenses above are based on item-by-item report of Ray: Office=mailing, etc.; Mr. Kido=parking lot, etc., Miscellaneous: food for preparation committee, etc.

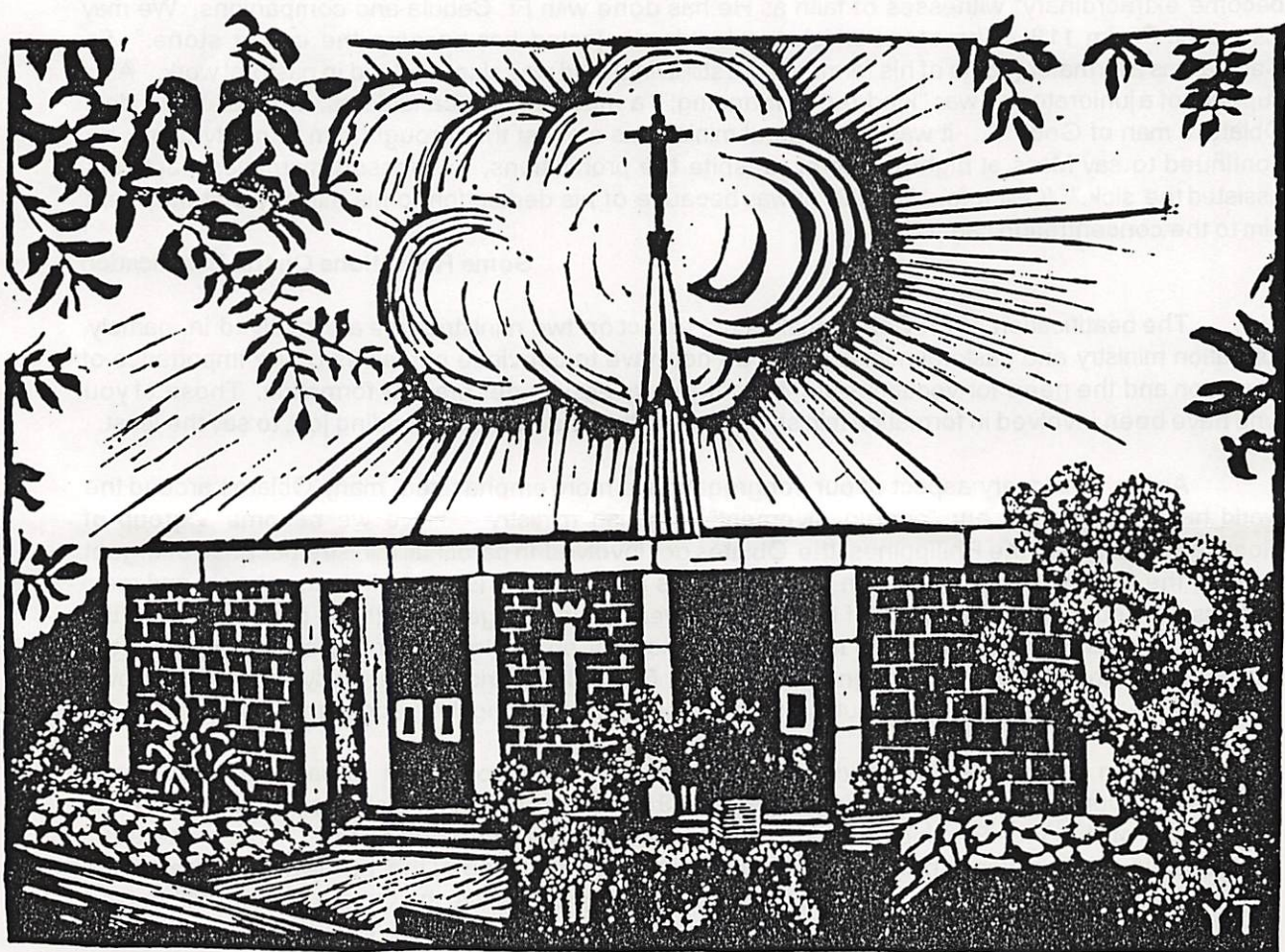


# OMI INFORMATION

## JAPAN

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

SUMMER 1999



*From the Provincial's Desk:*

The 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Japanese mission has touched off similar celebrations in places founded after the first Oblates arrived in Japan. Itami Parish celebrated its 50th last April 29th, a national holiday (cf article by Jan VAN HOYDONCK). Bradly ROSAIRO, who is the present pastor, led the parishioners through the long and tedious preparations, and to use a trite expression, "they did not leave any stone unturned." Congratulations! The Itami kindergarten, too, will celebrate its 50th year in November according to Mike YAMASAKI, director. Simple celebration is being planned.

#### THE BEATIFICATION OF FATHER JOSEF CEBULA

In his letter to the whole congregation (OMI Information, April 1999), the Superior General, Fr. Guillermo STECKLING has invited all of us to reflect on the martyrdom of one of our own, a polish Oblate, Father Josef CEBULA, who will be beatified by Pope John Paul II with 106 other Polish martyrs on June 12. "This is another moment of celebration for the Congregation!" Father General exclaims as he shares his joy with every Oblate.

While thousands upon thousands of refugees continue to flee from ethnic cleansing and the NATO bombings in Kosovo, not very far from there, similar tragedy has happened more than 50 years ago when the Nazis herded off men, women and children to die in concentration camps. Fr. Cebula was one of them.

Father Cebula led an ordinary life. Sometimes, God takes the "ordinary" and elevates them to become "extraordinary" witnesses of faith as He has done with Fr. Cebula and companions. We may also recall Psalm 118: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone." Fr. Cebula was a formator (some of his formandi are still living) and was also involved in pastoral work. As a superior of a juniorate, he was "kind but demanding;" "a model for the candidates, a model of the ideal Oblate, a man of God." "... it was his pastoral ministry as a priest that brought him to martyrdom... he continued to say Mass at night in secret, despite the prohibitions, he blessed marriages, baptized, assisted the sick." (OMI Info., Apr.'99) It was because of his dedication to his ministry that they sent him to the concentration camp.

#### Some Reflections On the Beatification

The beatification of Fr. Cebula makes us reflect on two ministries we are involved in, namely, formation ministry and pastoral ministry. We do not have to convince ourselves of the importance of formation and the need for vocations but it is not always easy to get men for formation. Those of you who have been involved in formation ministry will agree that it is a very demanding job, to say the least.

As the missionary aspect of our congregation is more emphasized, many Oblates around the world have questioned our "over-involvement" in parish ministry. "Have we become a group of diocesan priests?" In the Philippines, the Oblates got involved in parochial ministry because of urgent need of the time when the first batch of missionaries arrived in the islands. In fact, schools and radio stations (also not original ministries of the Oblates) were opened together with the parishes. Now, the younger Oblates would like to go to ministries that have been neglected for years like ministry to the tribal Filipinos, to the Muslims, foreign missions, etc. Big Oblate parishes are slowly being turned over to the diocesan clergy and not without the pain and confusion among the people involved.

Here in Japan, we have had some evaluation of our involvement in parish ministry, albeit superficially. During our Spring Meeting in March 1998, we affirmed that parishes **still has a place** in the ministry of the Vice Province and in many of the parishes entrusted to the Oblates where the christian community is very small, we cannot underestimate the value of the **ministry of presence** by the Oblates assigned there. In Korea, our men are struggling to live the Oblate charism without the benefits of an established parish. There are advantages and disadvantages in not having parishes as in the case of Korea and the challenges are great.



Blessed Josef Cebula was involved in both formation ministry and pastoral ministry. It was not the numbers of the people he ministered to that matter. It was the **quality of his presence** that mattered most. We can learn a lot from him.

#### **SPRING MEETING OF 1999 (March 21-26)**

Mr. Hank MATTIMORE and Archbishop Orly QUEVEDO, OMI guided us through discussions on two vast topics: Oblate Lay Associates and Church and Globalization. Hank Mattimore who is actually involved in the formation of Oblate Lay associates in the U.S. presented different modules that can be adapted in Japan. Archbishop Quevedo familiarized us with the complexities of globalization, how we ourselves have been "globalized" in our thinking, etc.

#### **WHERE WE HAVE BEEN, WHERE WE ARE...**

Also, during the meeting, we were able to look at ourselves through the different reports by people who were asked to make them. We have heard the reports from the different ministries and committees: Parish ministry was reported by Bradly ROSAIRO and Jude Peirisulle; the Korean Mission was reported by Mauro CONCARDI, Vincenzo BORDO and James JEYANCHANDRAN; the Kochi Volunteer Bureau by Lei SIMONS; Formation Committee by Leo KAWAGUCHI; Committee on CONTRACTS by Ange SIANI; Kindergartens by Bert SILVER and Finance Committee by Ray BOURGOIN. Time constraints did not allow us to look at all of the Oblate works such as: Justice and Peace ministry, ministry to the deaf and hard of hearing, education, prison ministry, Pro Life and Right of the Unborn, ministry to migrants, substance and drug dependency ministry, Choice and Family Life, healing ministry, ministry with the youth, preaching retreats, etc. (I am sure it is not possible to enumerate all the works that we are involved in.)

Our purpose in asking people to make the reports was to **AFFIRM** our support for what the men are doing in the various fields of involvement. At this point in time, in the history of the Japanese Church, this is **WHERE WE ARE** as Oblates.

#### **ON ZENDANA PARISH**

The Provincial Council, during its emergency meeting last April 29th, has agreed in principle to accept Zendana Parish, IF it is entrusted to the care of the Oblates. Zendana Parish still officially belongs to the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). However, the SVD Provincial has expressed that they will no longer be able to take care of the place and will hand over the parish back to the bishop after the approval of their General Administration has been sought.

There is a need for us to draw up guidelines for accepting parishes and the Provincial Council is well aware of this. Zendana was an "abandoned" parish without a resident priest until the Oblates found it. Eddie Williams, pastor of Zendana Parish, is putting up a new decorative fence, not to keep the people out, but to make the place inviting for people in the neighborhood.

#### **FORMATION NEWS**

We welcome back Bro. Nobuhiko YAGI from the U.S. Bro. Yagi is very satisfied with the course that he took at IRF (Institute for Religious Formation) in Saint Louis. He came back last May 15 to be at the side of his dying grandmother. He is now preparing to leave again for Melbourne, Australia to join the staff at Saint Mary's Seminary where our two pre-novices, Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA are spending their pre-novitiate year. Nobbie hopes to be able to leave for Australia in early June. Incidentally, Jerry VILLAS and Howard TATEL renewed their vows at private ceremony last May 5th. They are presently having the firsthand experience of Japanese family life through a homestay program. Both of them seem to be enjoying their homestay.

Preparation for this year's **SUMMER CAMP** is underway. It will be held in Koga from August 9 to 11. The theme of this year's camp is: **Thanks for Life**. The preparation committee has come up with this theme because it is observed that there is disregard for the gift of life among young people these days as manifested in the various problems involving young people that we see in the news everyday. It is hoped that participants of the camp will have the chance to reflect on the important theme despite the summer heat!

#### **AN AUXILLIARY BISHOP FOR OSAKA ARCHDIOCESE**

The Archdiocese of Osaka will get its first auxilliary bishop in the person of Fr. Michael MATSUURA Goro (46 years old). He will be consecrated bishop on July 17th, 2PM at the Tamatsukuri Cathedral with Archbishop Leo IKENAGA Jun as ordaining prelate. Bishop-elect Matsuura is a diocesan priest who has been very active in the spiritual rebuilding of the archdiocese after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. He is also actively involved in helping needy foreign migrant workers. I have worked with him on a number of cases involving Filipinos in Japan. We welcome the news with great joy.

#### **FEAST OF ST. EUGENE DE MAZENOD**

The Itami District gathered in Zendana Parish to celebrate the Feast of the Founder last May 21st. The bishop of Nagoya, Bishop Augustine NOMURA Junichi graced the affair together with a few parishioners. It is our task now to let people know about the feast of our Founder starting in the different dioceses where we work and hopefully see the name of De Mazenod being included in the Japanese Ordo in the future.

#### **FROM THE REGION**

Philippine Province has a new Provincial in the person of Fr. Federico LABAGLAY, my classmate at the scholasticate. "Peding," as he is called, takes over from Phil ESTRELLA who has been Provincial since 1992. The new Provincial was installed last May 21st.

#### **THE POWER OF PRAYER**

Only God knows how many people have asked us to pray for them or for certain intentions. Sometimes, I am tempted to tell them: "Why don't you make the prayer yourselves. Perhaps God will listen to your prayers better than He would listen to mine." Let us remember in our prayers our sick or aging relatives. There are many of them that come to mind! We particularly remember Ed and Pat ZIMMERMAN, Bill and Tom Maher's sister and brother-in-law. Ed suffered a stroke a few years ago that left him paralyzed and Pat has cared for him since then.

#### **REMINDER TO THE DISTRICTS**

Please remember to give your suggestions as to what topic you want to be discussed during our Spring Meeting in March 2000. If you can come up with a name for the input speaker, so much the better. Please submit your suggestions to the Provincial before the next Provincial Council Meeting on June 26th in Itami.

#### **WELCOME BACK..... HAVE A PLEASANT TRIP!**

Many will be on the road during the summer months and some are already away when this newsletter comes out. Welcome back to those coming back and to those who will be going... "Enjoy your trip!"

God bless!

*Wency Laguidao, OMI*



From the J & P Committee Desk  
Debt Relief-Jubilee 2000

After having put time and energy in an effort to collect signatures for the International Debt Relief campaign, one might wonder where we stand.

Japan collected more than 200,000 signatures. I think that is below the expected number. I don't know the numbers of the OMI parishes and kindergartens, but the Kochi district got over 2500 signatures.

The aim of Jubilee 2000 is the cancellation of unpayable debts, no later than the year 2000. Officials of the G8(7) don't seem to take the year 2000 seriously. However the debt has been an unpayable burden on the poorest countries for more than 20 years now. For instance, Africans are now poorer than they were 30 years ago.

According to an e-mail from the Jubilee 2000 Coalition United Kingdom, it looks increasingly likely that the Cologne G8 (June 20) will provide very little in terms of new debt relief.

Happier news comes from Canada. The Canadian government has promised to cancel debts unilaterally, should the G8 fail to come to an agreement. They are already discussing a post-Cologne strategy. Japan (like France) is worried about (theoretical) cost, and will veto anything that will increase the cost.

From the G8 leaders there is a lot of rhetoric, but they offer very little to the poor. Almost all of the additional debt to be cancelled is debt that poor countries are already not paying. The G8 will provide little new money for health and education. Few additional children will go to school because of what the G8 does at Cologne. Proposals of new debt relief have proved to be hot air; few people will gain clean water or better sanitation because of the G8.

The unpayable debt of the poorest countries must be cancelled in the Jubilee year. Better to put things right, in time. Better for justice to be done, now. The Pope, too, prays for that intention.

May 30, 1999

Xave Y. Tbsa omi



Note: On the day after this report was sent the e-mail message from the Jubilee 2000 Campaign gave the number of received signatures in Japan as 450,000. Shortly thereafter the number was upped to 492,720, and the hope was expressed of reaching 500,000 which by now must have been surpassed. Xave.

Dear Friends.

The last OMI Spring Meeting is history. I didn't hear many reactions about either of the two topics. Maybe some of us are still trying to digest the talks. Others might just have put the ideas in their files together with the printed notes. When the OMI Newsletter gets on your desk, the rainy season will have colored the skies gray. I am not looking forward to wet days. I breathe much better when skies are blue and dry.

The visit of my two younger sisters ended with a little accident. Monika slipped on a wet pavement in Nara. And her 90 kilos went to the ground like a sack of sand. An ambulance had to bring her to a hospital. Photos showed a shoulder fraction. Next day in Kochi we went to an orthopedist. No operation was immediately needed, so she returned to Belgium via Canada as scheduled. However in Toronto, Air France refused to take her to Paris. KLM took her to Amsterdam. Finally after waiting one month, I received a letter from her, written by a friend's hand. She moves around but the arm still needs rehabilitation. She has also what we call "a family help", who cooks, cleans, irons etc. I like to thank all Oblates who helped to make their visit a "happy" one.

Lately I have been making a few Sunday sermons. While Tom Maher was absent I went to Nakamura for the Sunday services. Nakamura is a multicultural church. I wouldn't say that Shikoku Island has become a multicultural society. Where there are foreigners in the church, the priests try to help their foreign flock, so they feel at home in the church. As an onlooker I admire the Oblates trying to attend to the needs of the foreign Catholics. However reflecting about a multicultural church, I can't help having some doubts. Liturgy is something that grows out of the local culture. African liturgy is a good example of it (and so are some churches in India). According to the nature of the soil, the same plants have different colors ...In Japan the liturgy never took Japanese forms or colors. ( Even now, most of the prayers are translations from the Latin, although of late there is a positive effort to update some prayers. ) Only the ancestor cult was taken into consideration when building charnel houses in or around the churches. We didn't promote devotions except the rosary. But our attitude towards foreign Christians, especially Philippines, is different. I have witnessed very devotional and popular parishes in Sri Lanka. It made me reflect on my views about devotions in the church. But liturgy and devotions are two different things.

From John Iwo:

#### A SHORT VISIT TO SEOUL

I got a new passport last april. I did not have one for 10 years. And I went to Seoul with Bill Maher from May 10th to May 13th, by Asian Airlines.

The plane was delayed for a few hours and arrived at Seoul Airport at about 5 p.m. From there we took the bus to The International Continental Hotel.

Vincenzo came to pick us up and brought us to the Oblate House. We arrived at it around 7 p.m.

The next morning Mass was attended by 12 women. At 9 a.m. Mauro arrived to take us to Swon. He led us to the cathedral and to the castle wall of Swon. In the evening we went to the apartment where we met 2 Korean seminarians.

On the 12th James guided us to the Lotte World Folk Museum. In the afternoon James took us to the church where he hears confession on Sunday. The first floor is a salon and study room, the second floor is a big church. From there, we went to see Vincenzo's work area. I found it very impressive.

I read the Church statistics: The Myondon-church has 32,000 Catholics. Most parishes have from 6000 to 7000 Catholics. According to the 1998 statistics the Diocese of Seoul has 1,253,392 Catholics. That is 10% of the population of Seoul. South Korea has 14 dioceses, and the Catholics number 3,676,211. That is 7.9% of the total population of South Korea. I also saw many Protestant churches. I had the feeling of having come to a Christian country.

I have a great interest now in the Church of Korea.

Many thanks to Vincenzo, Maurizio, Mauro and James.

John Iwo, O.M.I.

In Japan there exists one culture: the Japanese culture. To think that it is possible to integrate another culture while keeping one's own, is utopian. The problem is not that there are foreigners in Japan, the problem is that there are minorities in Japan and in some churches big(?) majorities. Christianity couldn't make a breakthrough in the Japanese society. According to my experience, one of the reasons is that we presented Christ and his message wrapped in foreign "clothes". Trying to please all Catholic foreigners might result in discrimination of the "original" Japanese. They have their rights, too. I have witnessed that the scripture readings of the Mass are read in Japanese and in English. A very good try. But then again, why not in Tagalog when the foreigners are all from the Philippines?

I could go on and try to express some of my thoughts about the children of those international marriages. They grow up and are educated in a completely Japanese cultural environment. They don't pray in their mother's tongue... Thinking of the future church, we are preparing a big problem. One possible suggestion is of not baptizing the babies of those marriages... ("Oh Xave! How do you dare say such a thing!") or to organize religious education in remote mountainous villages. Maybe this is a possibility to engage lay apostles for one or two years. We tried to reflect on that point in the last Spring Meeting.

As a member of the ongoing education committee, I suggest reading the book "Born of a Woman", by John S. Spong. Eddy Williams lent it to me, warning me for some of the conclusions. However, I don't know what conclusions he had in mind. It is certainly a good book to become aware of midrash in the bible.

This letter is only a means of communication, so if someone would like to continue exchanging ideas about the foreigners in the Japanese church, it might be fruitful... And the paper of the News letter would be put to good use.

I have no plans for trips outside Japan this year. If you need a replacement for the Sunday services, I would gladly help. No difficult sermons, I promise. However I promised Jan already to take some Sundays in August and September.

Xave Yoshikazu Tosa omi

## FIRST OBLATE-FOUNDED PARISH IN JAPAN CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

In the Codex Historicus of the early days of the Oblates in Japan, written and kept by the first Superior, Fr. Robert J. Gill, OMI, there is an entry in the middle of 1949, that reads:

*Parish accepted in Itami. Ground breaking on last Sunday of July 1949. Present were: Frs. George Donellan, Aloysius Bertrand, Joseph Dunne -- U.S. Army Chaplains, -- and Frs. Fennell and Dundan, Australian missionaries, and others.*

*Mass every Sunday at Mr. Okada's house (former mayor of Itami).*

A later entry relates:

*Jan. 25, 1950. Dedication of buildings in Itami by Bp. Taguchi. Sermon for the occasion by Fr. Kobayashi, Vic. gen. of Osaka diocese.*

So, April 29 of this year 1999 was chosen as the day to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this parish. As a national holiday in Japan, and the onset of a "week" of holidays, it was the best day possible for getting the most people possible to join in the festivities.

From all over the country the Oblates gathered on the previous day for a happy get-together, around a festive dinner table.

On the 29th the festivities started with a solemn Eucharistic Celebration. It was presided by the Archbishop, Jun Leo Ikenaga, who was assisted by all the Oblates and by a large number of priests, religious and diocesan, of the surrounding parishes, and by a packed church of faithful, most, of course, of the Itami Parish, but many also of parishes around and of other Oblate parishes, even far away. The large contingent of Sisters from several Congregations in and outside of Itami should be mentioned.

After Mass a function followed, in the church, opened by the Archbishop who spoke a few words of congratulation and appreciation for the work done during the past 50 years, and gave an exhortation for the years to come. This was followed by a musical intermezzo, mainly on recorder, with violin or guitar or organ accompaniment. The performers were members of the parish. It got a warm applause. Then came a historical retrospective of the events around the foundation of the parish, by Ms. Akiko Okada. She is the daughter of the Mr. Okada at whose house the Sunday Masses were held before the Oblate place was built. Having been in the middle of it, even from before the start, she knows all the details. I found it quite interesting to hear her tell about the other homes where Mass had been celebrated, and the priest(s) who had been in charge of it. With so many things to recall it took her quite some time to get through her story; interesting though it was, people became somewhat restive after such a long time sitting at the same place.

There was a short interval for allowing those in charge to get the place ready for the festive meal. Because of the large number of people present there was no other place large enough, and so, with permission, the sanctuary of the church was screened off, and the nave used as the dining room. Again, because of the large crowd, instead of place settings the food was served self-service style. That gave everyone also a chance to move around and meet acquaintances, e.g. priests that got re-assigned, or friends that had moved to other areas.

It was a beautiful day, perfectly prepared, performed without a hitch, thanks also to the beautiful weather that day and, of course, to the organizers. A day that will happily be remembered for a long time.

Jan Van Hoydonck, O.M.I.

The illustration on the front page represents the church of Itami, built in 1966. The linocut is made by Fr. Yoshikazu TOSA, O.M.I.



*Bro. Nobuhiko Yagi, OMI*

*I was able to safely return to Japan from the Institute of Religious Formation course in St. Louis on May 15.*

*Two days after my return my grandmother passed away. I was therefore able to participate in the wake and funeral services for my favorite grandmother.*

*Among the many graces I received during the IRF program I would mention the following. First of all, the courses on formation were out of this world, especially the ones dealing with leadership. Besides courses on formation we also had some on scripture. I really appreciated the one on the Beatitudes. As part of community building where both men and women participate we had a weekly dance session which I enjoyed very much. However the most important grace of all was that I had time to reflect on myself and was able to discover new dimensions of my personality which also help me to encounter and evaluate others.*

*I am now on my way to Australia to join our two novices who will start their canonical noviciate in Aki early next year. At that time the cooperation of the other members of the province will greatly be appreciated, especially when called upon to share in their fields of expertise. Of course I expect your support through prayer also.*

*Union in prayer*

## BIRTHDAYS

### Happy Birthday to:

June

24 Giovanni ZEVOLA

July

4 Mauro CONCARDI

23 Jimmy DEL ROSARIO

31 Lei SIMONS

August

4 Nobuhiko YAGI

23 Ange SIANI

31 Bert SILVER

September

6 John IWO

17 Jude PEIRISPULLE

17 James JEYACHANDRAN

20 John MAHONEY

22 Fran HAHN

## ORDINATIONS

### Happy Anniversary to:

June

24 Mike YAMASAKI

July

1 Jan VAN HOYDONCK

5 Lei SIMONS

August

22 Jude PEIRISPULLE

22 Bradly ROZAIRO

September

8 Giovanni ZEVOLA

23 Jimmy DEL ROSARIO

## Perpetual Vows

August

4 Nobuhiko YAGI

### GOLDEN JUBILEE of Religious Vows

September 8 Richard HARR and John K. MAHONEY

## DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

July

3 Timothy MULVEY

23 Sueho TSUDA

September

4 Daniel WARD

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

See the Provincial's recommendations. Prayers are also requested for the repose of the soul of Tom and Bill Maher's brother-in-law, Edwin Zimmerman, the husband of Pat(ricia) Maher, 71 years of age, who died on June 10 after a long illness; the Lord's support is also requested for the family.

With our sincere Christian sympathy to Tom and Bill and the family.

## CLOSING WORD

Many thanks to all for your cooperation, in writing or otherwise; with my best wishes for a pleasant Summer. Since I will not be around in September there will be no issue of this Newsletter then. The next issue I plan to be the one for Christmas and New Year.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Jan, O.M.I.