



Far East Star

Spring 2020



From the Desk of the Delegation Superior...

Brad Rozairo, OMI

Dear Brothers,

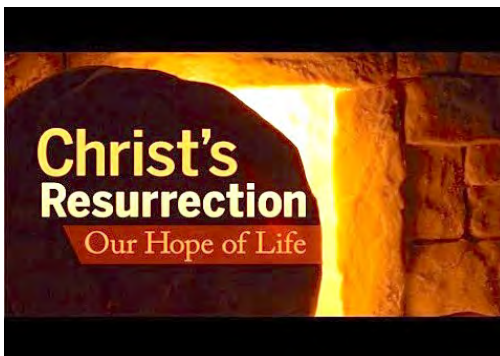
For many in Japan Cherry Blossoms are a symbol of hope and renewal. There is a belief that when cherry blossoms are in full bloom, the future will also be present full of possibilities and hopes. I remember after the tsunami in the Tohoku region, out of the rubble a Cherry tree was in full bloom bringing Hope to the people of that region.



With the current pandemic of the COVID-19, people throughout the world continue to ask as to how can they find hope and encouragement in a time of uncertainty. This global pandemic has created anxiety and fear in us. Right now, we are sailing in uncharted waters, but I am sure our ship has a desired destination in mind. We believe that as far as God remains in full and complete control of our ship there is Hope. It is a journey of Hope that will find a way through this crisis, just as the Cross was not the end.

At the end of last month Pope Francis presided over an extraordinary moment of prayer in the Vatican, with a Urbi et Orbi blessing and a plenary indulgence to call for an end to the COVID -19 epidemic. Here is a quote from his Meditation.

"The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his



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cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: HE IS RISEN and is living by our side”.

Have a meaningful Easter.

Pastoral work with the Migrants

Maurizio Giorgianni, OMI

Jesus said, “Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give” (Mt.10, 8). This is one of the experiences the migrants and myself had many times. Ministering with the migrants has always been a grace and a gift for me. During the last months, we had many opportunities where the migrants were not just receiving but also giving. In January, the explosion of Tahal volcano in the Philippines hit also our community of migrants in Korea. Some members of the community I serve reported that their families were living in that area. Therefore, we decided to send some help (goods and money) from our community. It was not much but I was surprised by the response and also the gratitude from the Filipino people when they received help.

Another similar experience we had was on January 24, it was the new Lunar Year, and I organized retreat with a group of 28 Filipinos. We prayed and meditated on our relationship with God



and between ourselves. We shared especially about accepting each other in spite of the differences. After the mass of the new lunar year on the 25th in the afternoon, we went to do voluntary work at Anna's house, soup kitchen for street people in Songnam. Also in that occasion, I saw the joy of the Filipino migrants in serving and helping the street people. The Filipinos told me that they would like to go and do some voluntary work more often but it is not easy because of their work time. To give and to share, is always an experience that enriches our life as individuals and



as a community. I see that the migrants through those experiences are able to reflect on their lives and receive strength to go on without escaping the hardships.



The Corona Virus has also hit Korea and the migrant's community. Even though it is impossible to have community activity, the personal care continues, especially for the sick migrants in the hospital. It is true: *"Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap."* (Lk. 6, 38).

We wish you all a Happy Easter!

第一回 アジア・オセアニア地区 オブレート会ブラザー会議

ブラザー八木信彦

2019年11月19日(火)～25日(月)、アジアオセアニア地区オブレート会ブラザー会議、フィリピンのケソン市にあるオブレート会黙想の家で行われました。参加者は22名(フィリピン7名、インドネシア6名、スリランカ5名[コロンボ管区3名、ジャフナ管区2名]、ベトナム2名、日本1名、中国1名)でした。

約一週間の会議の中で行われたことは主に三つ、①お互いのことや現状を知る(詳しい自己紹介、それぞれの宣教体験、ブラザーの養成プログラム)、②お話し(ブラザーとしてのオブレートライフ、ブラザーのアイデンティティと宣教、General Committee of Oblate Brothersについて)と分かち合い、③マニラ市内のオブレート会宣教地(教会、学校、神学校、管区長館)訪問、でした。



期間中、すべてのプログラムの中で、不思議な意味のある幸せ、帰属感と安堵感、そしてありのままの自分でいられる解放感を感じ、大きな恵みと力強い励ましを頂きました。また、アジアにいるブラザーたちとの出会いを通して、謙遜と奉仕の大切さを再確認したように思います。この機会を与えてくださった神さまとオブレート会に感謝の気持ちでいっぱいです。



次回アジアオセアニア地区オブレート会ブラザー会議は、実現するかどうかもまだ不透明ですが、2022年、インドネシアで開催される予定です。

THE FIRST AORC-OMI BROTHERS' CONFERENCE

Br. Nobuhiko Yagi, OMI

From November 19-25, 2019, the first AORC-OMI Brothers' Conference was held at the OMI Retreat House in Quezon city in the Philippines. There were 22 participants (Philippines 7, Indonesia 6, Sri-Lanka 5 [Colombo 3, Jaffna 2], Vietnam 2, Japan 1, Hong Kong 1).

The Weekly meeting began with ① A detailed self-introduction of each participant getting to know each other. Following this, we had a sharing on our mission experience and a discussion on a formation program for Brothers. ② There were also inputs on the Oblate life of a brother, his identity and mission, and on the General Committee for Oblate Brothers. ③ We made use of this

time to visit the Oblate mission parish, a school, scholasticate and an Oblate Residence in Metropolitan Manila.

My participation in this conference brought me great joy and happiness and a sense of belonging. Within me there was this feeling of freedom that you can be yourself and experience God's grace and receive encouragement. The meeting of Oblate Brothers was an occasion to reaffirm the importance of humility and service. I am grateful to God and the Oblates for giving me this opportunity. We hope that our next meeting will be held in Indonesia in 2022.



Pro-Lifers as Modern Disciples – The India Experience Part 1

Jerry Novotny OMI

As I look out the window this morning, the world seems to have a surreal appearance. The feeling I sense in Japan is a quiet calmness before the storm hits. The effect of the Coronavirus pandemic will eventually touch all of us in some way. Hopefully, the world will come to realize the need “to work together” and “to put God back into society.” Without this, life will only continue to get worse.

The 22nd Asia-Pacific Conference on Faith, Life and Family, a biannual Pro-Life Congress, which was held in Kerala, India, January 17-22. Over 600 participants came from 18 countries, with 80 international delegates and the remainder from India.



left to right: **600+ Delegates, daily Mass, Young People**

India has one of the highest abortion rates in the world. The alarming 15.6 million Indian abortions put the country on a par with communist China and its forced abortion policy. Fully one-third of all babies conceived are killed before they see the light of day. Like other countries, sex has become just another pleasurable pastime leading to many social problems as seen in ASPAC 2020.

The Congress theme focused on “I have set before you, life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.” (Deut 30:19). The Pro-Life delegates base their resolve on the experience of Christ's early disciples. If you recall, Jesus got angry with them because they were hindering the children from coming to Him. Jesus said, “Let the children come to me” (Matt 19:14). Meditating on this experience, Pro-Lifers realize the importance of

working for the welfare of neglected children, in particular, the unborn who are being killed at an alarming pace.

Pope Francis states that all baptized are “agents of evangelization.” In *Evangelium Gaudium* he strongly reiterates, “Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenceless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this.”

Related topics discussed at ASPAC 2020 ranged from preventing abortion (56 million each year) to post-abortion ministry, from the perils of pornography (destroying relationships, marriages and families) to Sexuality, from Euthanasia – (ridding society of unproductive people, the elderly, the terminally sick) to Gender Identity, from responsible parenthood to the Dignity of Life.

We were blessed to meet experts who preached the gospel of life based on scientific principles. In addition, we were also inspired by the lives of those who proclaimed the culture of life through their real-life testimonies. It was encouraging to see hundreds of Asian delegates gathered to-



St. John Paul II, pray for us

gether motivated by the same Christian values to protect life.

The ASPAC Congress strength the resolve of the delegates to continue their work as pro-life missionaries for the unborn. As John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* points out, let us all “respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life!” The Pope’s words are even more powerful today because he now can intercede for us, petition God for us.

NB: Part 2 of this article will be published in the next newsletter.

Helping the Poor in the midst of the COVID – 19 Pandemic

Vincenzo Bordo OMI



“Anna’s House” in South Korea is an indoor soup kitchen which provides food for the homeless, and functions as a shelter for the runaway teenagers as well. With the outbreak of the coronavirus, Fr. Vincenzo OMI was at a crossroad whether to shut down the shelter or not. In his update sent to us in February 2020 he shares some of his thoughts with us...

It is easy to close gyms... without sports you can live. It is easy to forbid concerts... without music life goes on. It is easy to close churches, so much so you can pray at home, BUT can you close down a Canteen that serves 550 meals a day for the most-neediest especially when, for 70% of them, that is the only meal they can afford to eat? It wasn’t easy to make a decision.

Having had a meeting with the civil authorities we decided to close the facility but came up with a good compromise.



We decided to go for 'lunch boxes'! This solution, while involving a more serious economic effort and a more exhausting physical work has allowed us not to put public health at risk, and above all not to abandon our beloved street friends. All this was possible because of the availability of our wonderful volunteers. Many thanks to them and also to the generosity of our benefactors.

2020 Asia-Oceania Regional Conference (AORC) in Sri Lanka

Brad Rozairo OMI

The annual meeting of the Major Superiors of our region was held at 'Sangamam' (meaning 'Meeting-Point') in Jaffna, Sri Lanka from March 2 ~ 6. The theme of the Conference was "*Challenges of Intercultural Formation in the Asian Context*". Our resource person was Fr. S. M. Selvaratnam OMI.



Welcome dance

The formation to priesthood and consecrated life in its present form is heavily focused on acquiring information, knowledge and learning of skills and not adequately directed to a dynamic process of self-transformation. Therefore, it's time to rethink about the present formation program.

Apart from the talks, reports and discussions, we also had time for prayer, sharing, recreation and some sightseeing. Thanks to the Provincial of Jaffna and the Oblates of the Province of Jaffna for their hospitality and kindness.



Celebration of the Eucharist



Conference



Visit to the Pre-Novitiate community



AORC family



With the Scholastics

All units were represented except South Korea, as Korea had imparted travel restrictions due to the coronavirus outbreak.