

Far East Star

OMI Japan Korea Newsletter

Sep.2013-Feb.2014 No. 3



名もななく
貧しく
美しく

Beauty in Sign Language

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The next Newsletter will be published in March 2014, if you have any suggestions or recommendations, please forward them to the communication team.

Do not fail to visit our website at <http://www.omijapankorea.net>

Summer Festivals in Japan



**Awa
Odori**



**Bon
Odori**

Summer Festivals in Korea



Mud Festival



South Korea Hanbok Festival

Mission Vision: Our Vision places strong emphasis on the following points: (1) A strong witnessing presence, (2) Listening to the heart and pulse of society, and (3) Seeking out especially the marginalized: Migrants, Youth, Social Problems and Advocacy.



Living the Word by

Fr. Rohan Silva, OMI

My dear Brother Oblates,

I am happy to join you in praising and thanking the Lord for the abundant blessings He has showered upon each one of you personally and upon the Delegation. Given the situation in which you live and serve, you are constantly invited to approach your Mission with creativity in order to make your message appealing and meaningful to your hearers.

Let me share with you an inspiring anecdote:

Three people were discussing some recent translations of the Bible. One said, "I like the New American Version. It is so much clearer than the older versions, and is so much easier to read." The second said, "I like the Jerusalem Bible. It's not only clearer, but it's more poetic, which makes it more suitable for us in prayer." The third said, "I like my mother's translation best of all. She translated the Bible into actions, which makes it so much easier to apply it to daily life." This little anecdote gives us enough food for thought.

What is most important is to live the Word. Give the Word flesh through our action. This is the hardest challenge both to the messengers of the Word and to the hearers of the Word. This challenge could be met only if we have Love in our lives.

You and I write a new page of the gospel each day by the things that we do and the words that we say. People read what we write through our lives. We may be the only gospel some people will ever read; they may never buy the books. So the challenge before us is enormous.

Let us support and strengthen one another to face this challenge collectively and become true and credible witnesses to 'word made flesh' wherever we are.

God Bless you and your mission.

Fr. Rohan Silva OMI

Provincial

Delegation Superior:

Dear Brother Oblates,

We are grateful to the Saint Eugene Province of India for its generosity in sending us two of its newly ordained priests, Steve ROSARIO and John SELVARAJ. They will be attending classes at the YWCA in Nagoya and stay at the SVD Seminary.



I would also like to thank the out-going members of the Delegation Council (Jack DEELY and Nobu YAGI) for their services and welcome two new members (Iru RAJ and Hiran JAYAWARDENA) to form a new council. Brad ROZAIRO stays on for 3 more years. Maurizio Giorgianni remains the Superior of the mission in Korea.

I also thank all of you for the three more years that you have given me. The work ahead of us is overwhelming. Although we continue to get new members from abroad, the need to cultivate local vocations cannot be overemphasized. Moreover, if we are getting new members from other units, what kind of missionary work do we envision for them here in Japan? Is it just to "fill the gap" in our present commitments and responding to the pastoral needs of the dioceses where we serve? There is a constant call for us to sharpen our vision and search for the real meaning of what it is to be an Oblate missionary in the present Church.

The letter of the Superior General concerning the 200th Anniversary of the Congregation is being published again here (I sent the same letter last May 20th) to help us discern our mission in the years to come.

Wency Laguidao omi

Mission Superior of Korea:

Greetings from South Korea.

I hope each one is having a good summer. Weather wise in Korea as always is raining and hot.

Life here is going Okay with us. Last May 21st we celebrated the feast of Saint Eugene with all our benefactors. This time it was special because we had the diaconal ordination of Br. Samuel Hong. At the end of this year Br. Samuel will be ordained Priest and the number of Korean Oblates will be equal to that of "foreign" Oblates here in Korea! It is a grace from God and at the same time a challenge to all of us.



Since the beginning of this year, in our monthly meetings we have started evaluating on our presence in Korea. Evaluation sometimes could be boring or someone could even think useless, but it is a time to look at the past and thank God for the good things we have achieved, and hoping for the best we move towards future while keeping to our identity, missionary charism and spirit.

Evaluation also calls us to come out of our "comfortable" way of doing things in order to share and to listen to one another more deeply. I think that will help us have a common vision and a common spirit, even though in many cases, we have to minister "alone". This is what we are experiencing together.

Therefore, I humbly request your prayers so that we may be strengthened and encouraged to continue the work for God's people. May your union with us in spirit also help us start well the preparation for the "Oblate triennium" which we will begin soon.

In prayer for each one's need,

Maurizio Giorgianni, omi

Dear Brother Oblates,

Blessings on the feast of our Founder, Saint Eugene de Mazenod! As we celebrate the life of this charismatic man who dedicated himself to Jesus, to the Church and to the poor, I ask God to grace us with a profound personal and community conversion as called for by the 35th General Chapter of 2010. Our work at the recent Interchapter broke open new depth and significance around the Call to Conversion and we recognized it as a prophetic, transformational call, leading to greater missionary availability and renewed commitment to religious life.

It was during the Interchapter that the Central Government proposed a special “Oblate Triennium,” a three year period, **“To fan the flame of Oblate life and mission in anticipation of the 36th General Chapter and the 200th Anniversary of the Congregation.”** This was welcomed by the Provincials and Superiors present. We have committed ourselves: to foster the ongoing work of the Spirit in us for a profound personal and community

conversion; to prepare for the 36th General Chapter of 2016; and to create a revitalized spirit among us as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Missionaries of Provence.



The Oblate Triennium is made of two pillars to help us respond to the Spirit’s call to conversion. The first pillar is sharing our faith in community. This is not discussion or debate about ideas, but an invitation to conversations on the level of faith; opportunities to enrich

each other by witnessing our experience of God; faith–story telling to deepen our communion with one another; and occasions to talk about what really matters. The second pillar of the Oblate Triennium is to express conversion through concrete gestures creatively discerned and owned by each Oblate, local community, Unit and Region. These practical actions may be small or large, significant and transforming, personal and communitarian signs of conversion: recycling refuse; doing Oraison together each day; leaving good ministries for a new ministry that is closer to the poor; simplifying our lifestyle; etc.

The themes for each year of the Oblate Triennium are the following:

Year I: 8 December 2013 to 7 December 2014

“A New Heart”: Life in Apostolic Community

Year II: 8 December 2014 to 7 December 2015

“A New Spirit”: Formation

Year III: 8 December 2015 to 25 January 2017

“A New Mission”

The Oblate Triennium will begin this year on December 8th. The themes for each year are taken from the Calls to Conversion. Each year a series of 24 reflection encounters will be available to help animate the sharing of our faith in communities once or twice a month, as decided by the local community. The Word of God will be the basis for these encounters along with Oblate texts. At the Inter-chapter we had some time for faith sharing and it was a deep and rich experience. Individual Oblates, communities and Units will decide on concrete gestures of conversion according to their situations. These signs are an invitation to move from sharing faith (hearers of the Word) to practicing faith (doers of the Word). It would be enriching to share these gestures of conversion with

the entire Congregation.

A new edition of the Constitutions and Rules was given to each Oblate in a prayerful celebration during the Inter-chapter: "Do this and live." I have invited each Major Superior to animate similar celebrations throughout the Units to help us, under the grace of the Spirit, to come in touch with this privileged expression of our charism. I ask that in these months before December 8th, we do a prayerful reading of our CCRR, individually and in community, praying to the Spirit to renew our desire to live the Oblate charism more faithfully. (The celebration for giving the CCRR is available in three languages for use throughout the Congregation).

I would like to thank all the Major Superiors for their commitment to the Oblate Triennium. Let us dedicate this kairos event to Mary Immaculate and Saint Eugene in order **"To fan the flame of Oblate life and mission in anticipation of the 36th General Chapter and the 200th Anniversary of the Congregation."** I wish you a happy Feast of St. Eugene!

Your brother Oblate in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate,

May 21, 2013

Fr. Louis Lougen, O.M.I.



**Superior General carries the
Founder's Cross**



Blessing With Founder's Cross

FEATURE ARTICLE

SIGN LANGUAGE AND ME

BY Jack Deely, OMI

About 35 yrs. ago, I started learning Japanese Sign Language and one day as I was leaving the university, I passed by St. Ignatius Church here in Tokyo and spotted a notice on the bulletin board saying that a group of Deaf Catholics meet every Saturday evening. So the following Saturday, I stopped by to see what was going on. When the people found out I was a priest who could sign in Japanese, they latched onto me...and that was the start of years of **Signed Masses**, **Signed Retreats**, **Signed Bible Studies** and yes **Signed Confessions**. In fact, The Catholic Newspaper described our first **Signed Mass**, as the first ever Signed Mass in Japan. I find that hard to believe but that's the way the Mass was "billed". The following picture of those who attended that Mass was featured in the article.



Afterwards, I soon became involved with the International Catholic Deaf Association (ICDA) and on acquiring some fluency in American Sign Language, I began taking Deaf Japanese Catholics to ICDA conferences. I had already surveyed the 800 parishes of Japan to inquire about Deaf Catholics, so after I translated the by-laws and other documents of the ICDA into Japanese, we formed local associations of Deaf Japanese Catholics in Tokyo, Nagoya,

Osaka, Hiroshima and Hokkaido which eventually led to establishing a National Association of Deaf Japanese Catholics and our own Chapter of the ICDA in the 1980s. Shortly afterwards, I quit The National College for the Deaf (where I had been involved in its beginnings), and a few years later I distanced myself from The National Association of Deaf Catholics for similar reasons...reasons based on a principle I had learned during my 17 years at The Vocational Training Center for the Disabled.



Mr Kanoya, a leader even when just a young trainee at The Center, is explaining here that very principle; namely, that "the situation of the disabled will continue at a snail's pace if we are not allowed to **participate in the decision-making process** that directly affects us". Much to his credit, 25 years later he not only helped to spearhead the evacuation of disabled victims of The Tohoku Disaster but also participated in the government's **decision-making process** of re-evaluating emergency strategies concerning the disabled in natural disasters...just as my DEAF friend Mr. Sano did.

Mr. Sano was not only instrumental in evacuating deaf people from areas hit with high levels of radiation after



the Fukushima Fiasco but was also very much a **part of the decision-making process** in assuring that the deaf would be kept informed of developments.



Being deaf himself, he knew the concerns and fears of deaf people over the nuclear radiation threat and helped organize "town-hall" meetings for just that purpose, namely --- to alleviate such fears and concerns.

In conclusion, as difficult as I made it for you to follow, I believe the life of the Church would be "enriched" by *the born deaf* if they were given a similar forum/opportunity in which to share their *faith-insights* just as Mr. Kanoya and Mr. Sano impacted **the way those in authority** will re-evaluate present strategies to minimize the effects of natural disasters on the disabled. Thus far, the emphasis has been on guaranteeing deaf people *access* to information. However, that is only *partial* participation in society/in the Church. *Full* participation implies a guarantee to express oneself, to share one's ideas and opinions, etc. With that, we may rediscover what has been proven time and time again to be true throughout history --that **the Church is always enriched by the insights of the marginalized**. That sounds terribly familiar!!! OMI CRRR, is it? Blessings to you and the people you serve.



A DAY TOGETHER

By

Nokrek Sebastian Shitol, OMI

May 26, 2013 was the day we celebrated the 6th “World People’s Day.” It was the Pyeongtaek Migrant center which arranged this program together with Pyeongtaek city hall. It was a day where almost fourteen nations gathered together.

Keeping the theme “A Day Together” people gathered to commemorate this day. More than four hundred people from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Russia, Pakistan, Philippines, Mongolia and Myanmar who are working in that city were present for the occasion. These people are mostly workers in different factories in South Korea and others are from multi-cultural families. Those gathered exhibited their respective culture by wearing their traditional dress and delicious food. The Pyeongtaek city hall extended their helping hand to hold this program. This became an occasion for both foreigners and locals meet and greet each other. There were hundreds of Koreans from different social welfare centers and students from different universities who came to help us as volunteers to make the program a success.

It was a day where all the foreigners, while keeping all their problems and difficulties aside, came to be cheerful, happy and to be together. The city Mayor assured again in his speech his helping hand to all the foreign workers and also requested them to work hard and be enthusiastic. “The future dream of the companies in South Korea depends on you all” he added. I, in my short speech quoting from the song of Michael Jackson, “You are not alone” said, “You all are surrounded by many people and helped by many. Today for us the life example is the City Mayer who is present with his co-workers here with us. When we are faced with problems and difficulties it is the different social welfare centers run by the city hall that help

us. Let us not think that we are alone but together, and let us not think that we are excluded but included. Today is the day to thank and express our gratitude to all the people who helped us and supported us in our journey.”

All the people stood up and expressed their thankfulness and gratitude by giving their big hands to all the supporters and helpers. The people who gathered for the program enjoyed the day by meeting people from various countries, and of course the variety of food that was served.



Secrecy Abounds in Japanese Society

Japan has a unique ability to present its good side not only to the ordinary Japanese but also to the world community. Human Life topics - HIV/AIDS, Child abuse, Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, Pornography - pertaining to Japanese society seldom appear in the national news.

Working with Pro Life current issues for many years now, I believe that the newest serious problem facing Asian people, including Japan, is the epidemic of Sex Trafficking. Computers display books, magazines and articles regard the suffering this epidemic brings to people in Asia, in Africa, even in the United States. Have you ever read about sex trafficking in Japan? Ask the ordinary Japanese person? Most likely the answer will be a definite "No". Not the Japanese people they would reply, it is something outsiders would do. But Japan is a destination, source, and transit country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Japanese organized crime syndicates (the Yakuza) are believed to play a significant role in trafficking in Japan, both directly and indirectly.

Let's take a closer look at Japan's underground secret. Only eight years ago, the Trafficking in Persons Report clearly stated that “Japan could do much more to protect its thousands of victims of sexual slavery.” Wow! Japan was placed on the "Watch List" because the government was issuing "entertainer" visas from the Philippines to Japan.

"Entertainer" is a general word. The specific meaning for Japan is 'Hostessing'. This term is unfamiliar to many Asian cultures. Many people erroneously presume that hostessing includes the provision of sexual services. Intellectually, 'hostessing' involves conversation, pouring drinks, lighting cigarettes but NO physical contact or sexual service. Practically speaking, many Philippine women do this and in addition they are also forced into sex work which includes stripping and prostitution.



This has become a process used by traffickers to enslave thousands of Philippine women in Japan, in fact, the number peaked to 82,741 eight years ago. Being placed in the limelight, the government tightened the issuance of visas with the status of residence of “entertainer”. And the number has gradually decreased.

However, three years ago, the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons stated that [while the number of victims entering the country with the status of residence of “entertainer” has decreased considerably, it has also been suggested that cases of trafficking in persons have become more sophisticated and invisible. For example, there have been cases where brokers and others bring women into the country by arranging false marriages so that the victims may enter the country with the status of residence of “spouse or child of Japanese national” which has no limitations on their work during their stay.]

You guessed it! The number of marriages between Japanese men and Filipino women increased drastically. Today with over 100,000 illegal migrants living in Japan, it is difficult to get an accurate number. With the details of Japan’s sex industry hidden underground, a fact-finding project was started by a Japanese researcher, but soon terminated by the government when uncovered facts began to appear at the UN. Japanese government managed to save face in the international community.

Facing a dilemma: when Osaka Prefecture government states that there has never been a recorded instance of sex trafficking in Osaka, this places tremendous burden on illegal migrants. These victims are reluctant to seek help from those who enforce the law. The victims are anxious about the safety of their relatives in their home countries as they are often threatened that their escape would endanger their families; they suffer from isolation having nobody speaking their mother tongue in shelters, severe financial pressure, as well as health issues such as pregnancy and risk of STIs and AIDS.



A majority of these young women come to Japan and work to provide money to their families in their home countries. Promised a good job, they suddenly find themselves in a dilemma. If they are seen as trafficked victims, they will be deported immediately to their home countries. Since most of these women provide money to support poor families back home, they tend to do whatever they can to stay in Japan, even if it means 'sticking it out' in an abusive marriage.

On the other hand, identifying victims is difficult as lines are blurred all along the sex work spectrum. How many women are held in slavery, how many are hidden in the underground of Japan's sex industry and looking for an opportunity to escape is near impossible to calculate.

One practical solution would be to work closely with sex workers to find out who the true victims of trafficking are and ensure that they do not remain lost and invisible in Japan's illusive entertainment industry, but are safe and free to pursue the meaningful work they desire, to provide a better livelihood for themselves and their families back home.

Although this article only touches on the Philippine women living in Japan, female migrant workers from China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and other Asian countries are sometimes subjected to conditions of forced labor. While not as widespread as sex trafficking, labor trafficking is believed to take place in construction, factory work, and domestic servitude situations. There is a long list of reported abuses including debt bondage, restrictions on movement, unpaid wages and overtime, fraud, and contracting workers out to different employers. But this is another secret for another article / or why not an article on Japan's best-kept secret yet: being an international hub for the production and trafficking of child pornography.

God Bless.



COMMITTING ONESELF TO THE POOREST

BY

VINCENZO BORDO, OMI



Park Gil is not only rich but also a wonderful person. One day, after I had spent a lovely evening with his amazing family, before leaving, he asked me:

“What do you think is the greatest need of the street people?”

My answer was immediate: “Work!”

“And what could you do to resolve that problem?”

“Nothing. I am only a poor priest and furthermore, I don’t have the money to do anything.”

“And if I helped you financially?”

“Nothing just the same, because I have no experience in that line.”

And so I left this fine person who has a big heart and a special sensitivity for the poor and those who suffer.

A few days later, a well-dressed man came to the soup kitchen and asked me: “I want to speak with you. Do you have some time to spare?” We sat down in the office and he began: “I have a small factory that makes shopping bags. I know that here there are so many people without a job and who live on the streets. If you want to give a new outlook to these brethren, I can offer my expertise and some hard work.”

After the conversation, my soul was full of mixed feelings. On the one hand, I was happy because I saw an opportunity to provide a living for my needy friends and on the other, I felt stymied and depressed because of the complexity of the project: rent a place to establish ourselves, buy machines for the work, look for a competent person to whom to entrust the realization of this project...I felt shivers of fear.

Despite these conflicts that bothered me, I called my staff together and we discussed this dream. At the end of the meeting, everyone was excited about being able to provide jobs for the poor. I still remained very bewildered, both because of the substantial cost of the operation and because of the enormous responsibility that we would have to face. I telephoned Park Gil and presented the idea. He, along with some friends, restated his willingness to help us financially. Putting 15 people to work also involves a great legal responsibility. Among the Catholics of the parish, I knew a man who is a labor consultant for the government. I called to get some clarification on this.

We made an appointment for the next day. I met him in his office and explained the situation. After listening to me attentively, he said: “From the legal point of view, and because of the trade unions, there are risks. But I can help you. It is not a simple situation.” When I heard these words I interrupted him and sharply told him: “No, I’m not going to touch this.” (To tell the truth, I had a lot of fear, because a few months back a former employee had sued me in a labor dispute and I had to spend a lot of money and suffered much humiliation. I still feel deeply wounded by that experience.)

“Father,” he said again, “You are a priest, and like Jesus you are called to give your life for the flock that was entrusted to you. A mercenary, who does not own the sheep, can run away; but you cannot. It is important for the people who are living on the streets to find work. You are called to be a Good Shepherd that can give his life for his sheep, the same way Jesus did for us. Don’t worry, I will stand with you and help you with all the official paperwork. You just have to be aware that you may encounter problems. On the other hand, what you can give to these disadvantaged people is huge. Do not be faint-hearted. Don’t hold back.”

Those words moved me to tears and at that moment I decided to go through with actualizing the project. In fact, I am deeply convinced that being a priest is not an honor but a burden: that is, with a heart filled with mercy, to meet the needs of those who are abandoned and suffering. It is not choosing a safe and secure sheep-pen but it is to choose paths of life that are difficult to traverse in order to find the lost and frightened sheep in this pitiless society. Being a priest is not a vow to devote oneself to a life of idyllic perfection but a commitment to empty oneself so that we can be filled with the tears of our brothers and sisters. It is not a theoretical promise to a mysterious and distant God, but rather the substantial committing of oneself to those in the poorest circumstances, as Jesus did throughout his life.

The days that followed were a tumultuous series of meetings with our collaborators to clearly define the project; with our benefactors to figure out the economic cost; with the homeless to assess their willingness to work. There were sleepless nights. Starting was not easy, but now, for the past few months, our small factory is a reality that produces thousands of shopping bags and employs 15 homeless people who have a place to sleep at Anna's House, hot meals and a job. It is nice to see these people, who had been on the street begging a couple of coins to buy alcohol are now here from morning to night working hard and with a new dignity.

It is time for all those who have wealth and who praise themselves for being followers of Jesus (and maybe even of the Church itself) to make this money available to those less fortunate who have suffered the trials of life in these times of great economic difficulty. It is not the time to think only about capitalistic profit but about sharing joy together and also sharing what God's benevolent providence has bestowed abundantly over many years of life. Wealth is the Father's gift to be shared with our brothers and sisters.

Our modest shop does not produce a large return to be divided among the various stakeholders. (To tell the truth, it leaves us with a small monthly debit.) Yet it produces hope, it creates work and it gives our brothers on the streets the prospect of a new life, a new dignity and a better future.



Japanese Society according to my perspective

By

Jude Peirispulle, OMI

Communication team asked me to write an article on Japanese society. I remember, nearly 20 years ago, I followed a course on Japanese society at Nanzan University. As one adapts and takes daily activities as ordinary, one begins to think more seriously when asked to write an article on Japan's society. Many different views begin to appear as one thinks of Japan and its people.

Since I came to Japan 19 years ago, I see little change has taken place in this society compared to other societies. It does not mean that there is a drawback in this society or there is no development at all. One can see this country achieved its climax some time back, especially during the economic boom, which led to a drawback in the economy and a drop in some of Japan's traditional values which were treasured for many years. A trend in which the world's eye that was formerly on Japan has changed to China, India and even Brazil.

I remember the paper I wrote for my thesis at Nanzan University: "Will the Japanese Society change in the future, what will happen to its economy, will there be any change in their value system, how much of an effect will this have on Religion."



Now I realize that the changes which have taken place have moved the people to develop a need to find the image of God. It may not be the religious image of God as we know it, but more of a serious awareness of the meaning of life, trying to learn by observing how others live, since many people focus on the foundations of their lives. If you notice in daily TV programs there is little to learn, just a lot of junk, yet recently I noticed with all the junk programs a few meaningful educational programs are appearing that focus on life and human values.

I am in a way proud to write this article focusing on the Japanese society because it has given me a chance to step back and take another look. As I come from another country, the tendency is to put your country, society and culture first. I am sure that many in my situation will agree with me if I say that we have many things to learn from this developed society which cannot be compared to any other country or society in Asia - cleanliness, honesty, friendliness, kindness – human qualities we experience every day. Are these not the same values that we, as missionaries, are trying to teach? Rather than teaching I think the emphasis should be placed on learning how to hand this down these good qualities to future generations.



Comparing to 20 years ago, I see Japan is opening in many areas. To mention a few areas, I see more and more Japanese going out of the country not as tourist but as professionals to help poor countries. At the same time I also see there are many foreigners receiving the opportunity to work in this country. The Japanese government is giving a chance to outsiders to work as Trainees, nurses and in other IT fields. I also see many changes in migration rules. Some even have received refugee visas which were not possible a few years ago. Economic development in China and Korea has created Japan as tourist spot, resulting in many tourists from these countries. It is not just the development in these countries but also the Japanese government easing immigration laws allowing many to visit Japan.

There are many more areas we can focus on, but I would like to limit it to these few areas. These are my personal experiences and views of Japan. Maybe somebody else coming from another society may have different views.

Finally, I thank the communication team for giving me the opportunity to write this article. I wish them much success in making our Delegation Newsletter a source for sharing our thoughts and involvements here in Japan and Korea.



Archbishop Oscar Romero

The guarantee of one's prayer is not in saying a lot of words. The guarantee of one's petition is very easy to know: How do I treat the poor? Because that is where God is. The degree to which you approach them, and the love with which you approach them, or the scorn with which you approach them--that is how you approach your God. What you do to them, you do to God. The way you look at them is the way you look at God. --February 5, 1978

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

ORDINATIONS: SAINT EUGENE PROVINCE of INDIA

By Wency Laguidao

Committed to serving the poorest of the poor in a vast country with a staggering population of 1.2B (second to China), the St. Eugene Province of India continues to grow as it witnessed the priestly ordination of seven more priests last May 29 held at the beautiful Church of Saint Patrick on St. Thomas Mount not very far from the Provincialate in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. (Two others were ordained separately making the total number of ordinandi to 9 this year alone) Most Rev. A. Neethânathan, DD, Bishop of Chingleput, who, incidentally was a former Oblate seminarian was the ordaining prelate. A lively ordination sung mass in Tamil lasted for about two and a half hours. Many Oblates came to attend, some of them had to bear a two-night travel by train.



(With Japan-bound Steve and John before they were ordained.)

The Province of India (better known as Saint Eugene Province of India) is a relatively young unit that was started by Sri Lankan Oblates in 1968. It was a Delegation of Colombo until it became an independent Province in 2010. It has more than a hundred members. The number of formation is a matter of interest: because of the vastness of the country, the formation houses are divided into north and south. There are two Juniorates (north and south), a Philosophate and a Novitiate, and two Theologates (north and south).

The Indian Province has also started to branch out to different Oblate missions around the world. There are about 20 Indian Oblate missionaries around the world, in the USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, etc. Two newly ordained Indian Oblates have volunteered to the Japanese mission making the total number of Indian Oblates in Japan to three. The two Young Oblates are Fr. Stephen ROSARIO and Fr. John SELVARAJ both from Tamil Nadu.

Dedicated Oblate Missionaries in Japan

Br. Joseph Sueho Tsuda was born on November 23, 1899, in the family of a doctor in Tokyo. When he was a teenager he met with an accident and lost his right eye. He got interested in the book on “St. Teresa of Little Flower” that was translated by Fr. Bousquet who was living in Osaka after the world war. When Br. Tsuda visited Fr. Bousquet, he was advised to go to a church nearby to study catechism which later paved the way to his baptism. He had the liking for western painting. His faith experience encouraged him to paint drawings. It seems that when Fr. Tanaka Eikichi was at Shinhon machi church Br. Tsuda was living in the attic of the church, but there are less details of this.

Besides, he moved to Tokushima together with Fr. Tanaka, and while living on his own he not only continued his painting but also taught drawing. When Ms. Omura from the Orthodox Church returned to Catholicism, Fr. Tanaka came to Naruto, and Br. Tsuda too followed him. This move made some young people come to Naruto to begin a painting class, which later led to the inauguration of a church in Naruto.

Then, Fr. Tanaka was transferred to Takamatsu and Fr. Robitaille took office in Tokushima. Br. Tsuda taught catechism in Naruto, Tokushima and places to the west. His trouble with the left foot made him wear a prosthetic leg. But that did not stop his missionary work. Many young people came to Naruto to have some drinks and enjoy time together. Their coming together helped them progress towards faith. The missions in Tokushima and Naruto have produced some religious of whom two are Oblates.

At the beginning since Naruto did not have a church, mass was held at the house of Ms. Omura and at times in places like the community center and private girls' school. Later together with the kindergarten a church was built in the center of the city.

When Fr. Tanaka was the first bishop of the Diocese of Takamatsu Oblate Br. Tsuda was called to eternal life on July 23, 1981. – by John Iwo, OMI



Our Lady of Peace Parish, Koga



GERARD 'GERRY' STEVENS, OMI (4/30/1930-5/10/1996)

Our brother Gerry came to Japan in 1956. After language school in Tokyo for 2 years, he joined Xave DELPORTE (later TOSA Yoshikazu) and TSUDA Sueho, in Aki/Akaoka Apostolate and says "Xave gave me the basic training in evangelization".

It is at this stage, very early on, that he began to be involved with non-Christian children, and especially with the outcasts, which were very numerous in Akaoka, especially near the Yasu coast. His big helper was a teacher at the Church run Nursery School, Miss AOKI Asako, herself an outcast and one of the first to be baptized by the founder of the mission, Robert GILL.

Again in his words "after that very happy year with Xave", he was transferred to Tokushima Parish with Leonard ROBITAILLE. Len's contention was that there wasn't enough pastoral work for 2 priests there, so Gerry was free to contact the outcasts in that area of the island.

Always wanting to go further and further, though he was living in Tokushima, he spent his days taking the one way 2-hour trip by train to Ikeda, where he spent a lot of time with outcast-work. So much so, it was decided in 1962 (to save him travel time) to transfer him to the old little Ikeda church, just reopened by Leonard SIMONS, who was called away, within a year, to run the Enokuchi parish. He contacted teachers involved with outcasts in grade and middle schools especially and continued his favorite work.

The 'missionary' in Gerry's mind, is to keep going further and beyond to evangelize. So, though he kept some contact in Ikeda, he used his facilities there, to venture to the far-away mountain areas and contact the outcasts up there and work with them, for them and in amongst them. Sounds like Christ's approach!

While he was in Ikeda, he also started teaching languages (French, German, Spanish and Latin) at the Zentsuji Shikoku Christian College from 1975 to 1984. In Gerry's words: "I am glad to have had that experience, and I hope I was able to break down some prejudices against the Catholic Church in that staunchly Calvinistic society."

I was the Unit treasurer at the time, and he would very often send the unit 200,000 yen. Gerry was a man who believed in poverty, so he kept very little money and wore old clothes and shoes. Some of his shoes were so outworn, that his feet were bleeding from walking through the mountains.

After 24 years in that area, he was sent to Nakamura, where his style of going out from there to the mountainous areas to evangelize remained with him. Of course there are many Filipinas in this area so he went to the Philippines for 3 months to learn the Tagalog language and was better able to minister to them. The Filipina style is different to the Japanese and he was enthralled with the hugging, that the Filipina gave him! (I'm in Nakamura now and I'm beginning to appreciate the Filipina style, too!)

There's so much more I could write, but space is limited. I'll only refer to his spirit with two examples. One was his plan to "make more time for evangelization to the 2,700 or so islands in the Seto Sea, probably never visited by a Catholic missionary." And the other was his constant pleading for Japan to open a mission in Afghanistan, where according to him, no Christians are allowed to evangelize, the only nation in the world. -by Ray Bourgoïn, OMI



WELCOME to Japan, Steve & John!



Soon to join the Japanese Oblate mission are Fr. Stephen ROSARIO and Fr. John SELVARAJ. The two have been classmates from their Juniorate year in 2003 until they finished their theology at the Sacred Heart Seminary in Chennai in 2012. They were ordained to the Diaconate separately in 2012 and ordained together to the Priesthood on May 29, 2013.

They have expressed their desire to join the Japanese mission from the time they were scholastics and while writing this, they have received their First Obedience to the Delegation of Japan-Korea from Fr. Louie Lougen, OMI, Superior General.



Pope Francis' Message to all Church Leaders

As the World Youth Day celebrations in Brazil come to an end, Pope Francis sends a strong message to the leaders of the Church.

Pope challenged the Roman Catholic clergy "to leave the comfort of their churches and reach out to the poor and the marginalized".

He also said, "We cannot keep ourselves shut up in parishes, in our communities, when so many people are waiting for the Gospel."



Birthdays

September

09 Iwo, John
 12 Antonysamy, Iru
 17 Peirispulle, Jude
 17 Jeyachandran, James
 22 Hahn, Fran

October

05 Furukawa, Kenichi
 30 Rozairo, Brad

December

15 Santos, Eduardo
 15 Shitol, Nokrek
 24 Yamasaki, Mike

January

02 Williams, Ed
 22 Bourgoin, Ray
 30 Jayawardena, Hiran

February

13 Giorgianni, Maurizio
 15 Inui, Len

Ordinations

September

15 Jayawardena, Hiran
 15 Santos, Eduardo

October

19 Giorgianni, Maurizio

November

30 Ondap, Bernard

December

03 Antonysamy, Iru
 14 Nimalarajan, Christy
 14 Robinson, Robert

January

15 Jeyachandran, James

February

05 Shitol, Nokrek
 17 Furukawa, Kenichi

Deceased Members

Robert Gill, OMI
 Charles McBennett, OMI
 Len Robitaille, OMI
 Timothy Mulvery, OMI
 Nicholas Neville, OMI
 John Otto Meyer, OMI
 Bro. Sueho Tsuda, OMI
 Daniel Ward, OMI
 Gerard Stevens, OMI
 Leonard Scannell, OMI
 Patrick Brady, OMI
 Edward Lowney, OMI
 Donald O'Brien, OMI
 John Barrett, OMI
 Leo Simons, OMI
 Xavier Delporte, OMI
 John K. Mahoney, OMI
 Angelo Siani, OMI
 Richard Harr, OMI

Life is Beautiful



Pope Francis: solidarity with the poor is not optional. From the hungry, to the disillusioned, the Cross leads to hope.



