



Far East Star

Summer 2018

From the Desk of the Delegation Superior...

Brad Rozairo, OMI

Zeal shortage? Or Lack of passion?

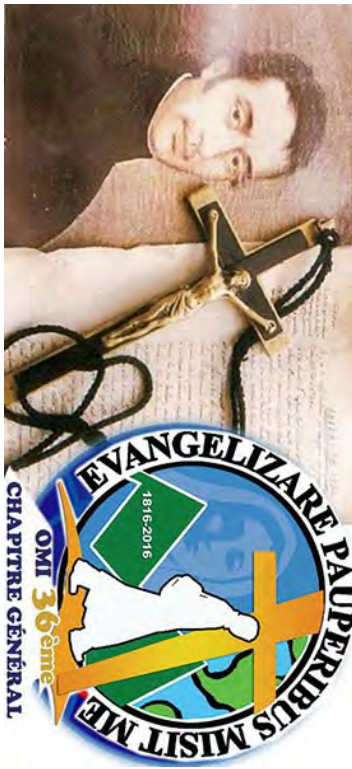
Dear Brothers,

Some time back I remember reading a reflection written by Archbishop Socrates Villegas of the Philippines. According to him, the Catholic Church in the Philippines does not face a problem of shortage of priests but a “zeal shortage”. According to the Archbishop, the reason for the “zeal shortage” is that the priests in the Philippines have descended into just *“maintaining the Church, keeping the schedule, continuing the order of the day.”*



For us Oblates “zeal” is not a strange word. It is zeal – ‘a feeling of strong eagerness’ that made our Founder St. Eugene commit himself for a cause. As sons of Eugene, you and I have committed ourselves to the Oblates because we have that zeal, I believe. But there are times I question whether that zeal is still burning within me/us.

Looking back at my experience in different mission parishes in Japan, I try to understand Archbishop Villegas. Having “a schedule” is important, but sometimes when that becomes the priority there is a tendency to get caught into what I call “my little parish” mentality. Parish ministry is good and there are different ministries that we can do within a parish, but at the same time there is also the danger of getting attached to a structure. A well-established structure can not only make us feel safe and comfortable, but also can force us to maintain what has been continued. This is true with parish ministry. When this hap-



Contents:

From the Desk of Delegation Superior...	1
Oblate Bro. Tsuda	2
The Young Oblate Gathering-2018	4
"Born equal? A global responsibility"	6
OBLATES CAN BE COMFORTABLE IN THE STREETS	8
WELCOME to Japan !	9
2018 SPRING MEETING	9
Delegation website	9



pens, we become blind to the outside world. If I rightly understand him, this is the point the Archbishop makes when he says, *"We must get out to the [villages] and public schools, visit the charity wards of hospitals, teach catechism again, visit homes again, make a 'mess' in society"*.

Some time back Pope Francis challenged the Roman Catholic clergy of Brazil and asked them *"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"*.

Brothers, when we think of new ways of reaching out to people at the peripheries, we have to get out of certain structures that give us security. A parish makes people come to us rather than we going out to meet them. I think for us as Oblate Missionaries it is the latter – going out into society and meeting the people. Therefore, as we take care of the spiritual needs of Christians in our parishes, let us also dedicate some time to go out into society and locate the poor with their many faces.

Let us be reminded that **"No ministry is alien to us as long as we never lose sight of the main purpose of the Congregation: the evangelization of the most abandoned."** – Oblate Constitutions and Rules.

Oblate Bro. Tsuda

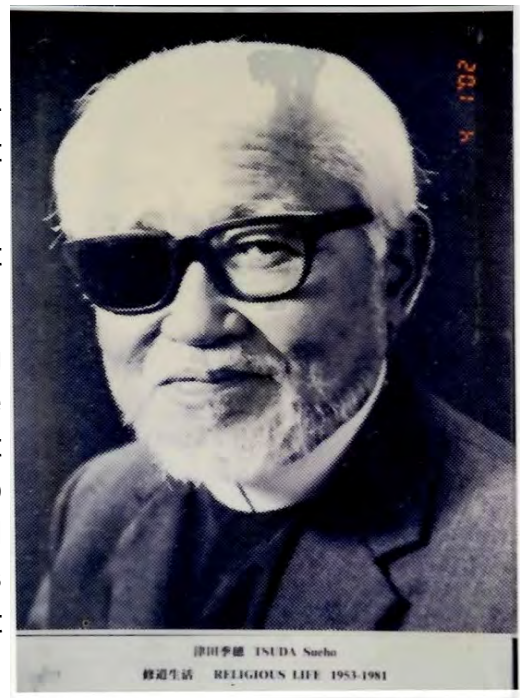
By Ray Bourgoin OMI

Recently we had a great talk on Brother Suelo TSUDA, OMI from one of his former disciples in the painting field Mr. Kazuhiko YAGI, brother on our Oblate Brother Nobuhiko YAGI, OMI. His talk clarified some of the misconceptions that had been handed down to us from word of mouth.

For example, he lost his right eye from a gunshot wound that his hunting cousin shot.

I had always heard that at the age of 17 he had been playing with his cousin's gun and not knowing it was still loaded, he himself shot the gun into his own eye. I also had heard that he was looking for a sign from God for him to decide or not to become a Catholic, and overnight his left leg dried up and had to be cut, so that was sign enough for him! But it seems his leg dried up after he had already been baptized. So, it goes to show you can't always believe 'hearsay'!

Born on November 23, 1899, he died of throat cancer in the summer of 1981, at the age of 81. His father was a well-known doctor in the famous city of Nikko, who had married a Tsuda lady and changed his family name to hers. His original name had been KAMIYOSHI.



At the age of 18 Sueo became involved in painting, first as a hobby, then later almost full time. He became friends with many famous artists and was in touch with them till his death. Many times, he would live in the homes of these artists.



Even after becoming an artist he spent 2 years as a fisherman, leaving his painting life during that time. He moved about the country a lot spending time in Tokyo, Osaka, Wakayama and even went to spend some time in China! At the end of all these travels he established himself at a friend's house on the island of Shikoku in the city of Naruto, the owner of which was also a painter.

In 1942, while in Naruto, he read the life of Saint Theresa the Little Flower, and was very impressed, which led him to be baptized, a little later at Sekiguchi church in Tokyo. That's when he took on the baptismal name of Joseph. That was in July of 1943.

In 1944 is when his leg went awry and he had to have some of it cut off, first it was just his ankle, then latter below the knee and in 1945 most of the leg had to go.

In 1947 he started living in a fellow artist's house on the second floor. He also joined the 'BENIUSU' club, of which he later became the director. It is at that time that the speaker Mr. Kazuhiko Yagi joined the club while still going to high school.

The pastor of Tokushima, Fr. Leonard ROBITAILLE, OMI, had just come to Japan, and wasn't yet well-versed in Japanese. Since heard that a Mr. Tsuda was teaching catechism in Naruto, he invited him to come live at the Tokushima rectory and take over the catechism classes. Fr. Robitaille describes Mr. Tsuda as a 'person of refinement, exceedingly humble, patient and prudent as well as zealous and devout'.

In 1952 Mr. Tsuda went to Aki, in Kochi Prefecture, to enter the Novitiate, where a year later he took first vows as an Oblate Brother. His Novice Master was none other than Fr. Robitaille! At that time, also in the novitiate was another young man from Naruto John Takaji IWO. He took first vows a few minutes after Sueo. Brother Iwo worked one year in the Enokuchi parish in Kochi City, and after one year decided he wanted to be a priest. He left the Brotherhood, went to Fukuoka to study Latin and Philosophy. He then went to the USA for his second novitiate year and studied Theology for one year in Washington DC. Following that he returned to Japan, where the Oblates had opened a seminary and finished his studies for the priesthood at the Jesuit run Sophia University. That's when I came to Japan 57 years ago, in 1961.



Brother Tsuda stayed in Aki till his final vows in 1959. From there he was sent to the Mission of Koga in Fukuoka Prefecture till 1968. At both places he served as a catechist while still painting. Because the Koga Parish bedrooms were all on the second floor, it would be difficult for him to continually climb the stairs, so he lived in a little house in front of the rectory and would take his

meals in the main house, on the first floor. That's when I first met him in the summer of 1962. As seminarians we weren't allowed to live in priests' house. There were 2 extra rooms in the same little house where Brother Tsuda lived, so we 4 seminarians lived in those 2 rooms. A TV room was set up in the garage for us to be able to watch TV ... not with the Fathers. We were also to keep wearing our cassocks the whole day.

But the Pastor, God bless him, Richard HARR, OMI stated that we would have to wear 3 sets of underwear a day in the heat of that area in the summer. He said that he could not overwork his laundry lady! Thanks be to God. Anyway, it was at that time that I got to know Brother Tsuda for one month.

From 1967 till even today after over 30 years past his death, his paintings are shown in various art museums once a year. The latest one was in 2018 the 65th Art festival of Brother Tsuda. He has had them in Tokyo, Osaka, Tokushima, Naruto etc. After Koga, he was sent to our Church in Anan City, Tokushima Prefecture. He went from Anan to Naruto and back many times a week and continued his 'BENIUSU' program.



On Friday nights he would teach Catechism to those who wanted to study about Catholicism and upwards of 45 people were baptized because of following his course. His Friday gatherings to teach catechism were known as 'Ippai Kai'. They would drink alcohol while he was teaching them and drinking with them!

It was in Anan, that I met him again. I had to fill in for the pastor for one month during the summer. At that time, since there was no room downstairs ... except for the cook, he lived on the second floor and struggled back and forth. While I was there, after the first week, I was down to 1 set of underwear. So, I started thinking that maybe the house-lady was putting my clothes in Brother's room. One day when he was out, I snuck into his room to look. I opened and closed every drawer ... nothing! Since in my room there was also a chest of drawers in the closet, I decided to open the sliding doors to look! At that time 2 wooden legs came rushing down from the closet. My heart was beating ... it seems that Brother had 3 sets of wooden legs, and according to the day, depending on the weather, he would wear one or the other according to the fit. Boy did my heart beat! Anyway, after replacing the legs where they came from, I finally opened the chest of drawers, and lo and behold there were my underwear and stockings and shirts! Whew! Those are the only 2 months I spent with Brother, so I didn't know him that well. However, Fr. Robitaille had written an article for the Missions magazine, about Brother, and by reading it I familiarized myself with him. He finally moved back to Naruto in 1980 and died not quite a year from that time.

The Young Oblate Gathering-2018

By Shitol Sebastian OMI

It was June 3, 2018. The Young Oblates arrived in Korea for the gathering. There were nine Oblates who joined the gathering. Frs. Shen and Bladimir from Hong Kong Delegation, Frs. Ber-

nard, Steve and Selva from Japan Delegation and Frs. Shitol, Peter, Sobuj from Korean Mission and Samuel, who is a missionary in Kenya, was back for his holiday and joined us.



On June 3, Sunday, we all arrived from different places and went to the retreat house at Aron, which is run by the Suwon diocese in South Korea. The gathering took place from June 3-7, 2018. The first day was day for relaxation and the time for getting to know each other. The second day we started our program. Fr. Simon, a professor who teaches moral ethics at Suwon Catholic University helped us during our whole program. He also enlightened us with a valuable conference on “East Asian Church and its growth.” In this conference he touched on the growth of the church

in China, Mongolia, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. He said “Every country is now touched by modernism, fewer vocations and local resources causing our strength to become weak. The big expectation is from China, but due to modernization, people are less interested in religion. In such a situation, Korea can be a model and resource country. Korea can come up with its material and personnel resources to evangelize in East Asia. Comparing to the other countries, Korea is better and more resourceful.”

In addition to his talk, Fr. Simon took us to visit different Shrines in South Korea in order to know the Catholic history of the church. One of them was “Cheongjinam Shrine” where the Catholic Church in Korea started.



We were also enriched and delighted with the history told by the priest in charge of the said Shrine. In this sharing we came to realize how not the priests, but local faithful played an important role in spreading the Good News in Korea. Their determination, devotion and dedication helped the Catholic Church in Korea grow. We also visited Haemi Martyrdom Holy Ground where 1,000 Catholics in Chungcheongnam-do were buried alive during the time between the Byeongin Persecution in 1866 (3rd year of King Gojong) and 1882. At that time, Catholics were executed outside Haemieupseong Fortress' Seomun Gate (West Gate). As it was difficult to execute them one by one, the martyrs were buried together alive in a big hole.

It was a very fruitful gathering. We were able to enrich our mutual relationship, as well as, getting to know about East Asian Churches. We also enriched ourselves by understanding not only about the local church but also about the ministries of the Korean Mission. We thank the Superiors of China and Japan delegations for making this gathering possible. We pray for each other that this kind of gathering will increase and may always help us to know



the church history of East Asia, its culture in order to help us evangelize the poor and marginalized. May God, Mother Mary and St. Eugene bless us all, and our ministries.

"Born equal? A global responsibility"

By Jerry Novotny, OMI



From June 25 to June 26, 2018, the Pontifical Academy for Life hosted a Workshop in Rome. The Theme was "Born equal? A global responsibility". The Workshop is held twice a year and this year it intention is to show a broader reflection of global bioethics and a deeper understanding of the relationship between a mother and her child. In the theme, the "cure" for pregnancy and prenatal life was at the forefront.

Those participating in the 2018 Assembly include 150 Catholic Academicians (experts, scholars, theologians) from different fields and from all over the world, including one Japanese Lawyer, Etsuko Akeba, whom I met after the second session. Although she has been a strong supporter of my Pro Life Movement in Japan for many years, it was the first time I met her in person. She is soft spoken, in her sixties and looks like someone's grandmother, which she probably is. At present, Prof. Etsuko Akeba is the only Japanese Catholic member on the executive board of CMA. The workshop took place at The New Hall of the Synod, 00120 Vatican City (Entrance from Piazza del S. Uffizio).



Briefly, Global Bioethics is an approach to care for human life in all its stages. This includes the fetus in the womb, the immigrant on a vessel, the pension-less elderly, the terminally ill and the exploitation of the environment.



The entire workshop was broad but very informative. I registered as a priest and later received a full membership. As a member, I will receive the bioethics journal "The Linacre Quarterly", MCA's magazine, email updates and action alerts, access to many materials and discounts at future conferences. Four topics in particular attracted my attention in this workshop: (1) (Euthanasia) What happens when a patient says, "Doc, help me die". (2) Statement on Emergency Contraception in Cases of Rape. (3) (Down Syndrome Children)

Evolution of Prenatal Diagnosis Techniques, Ethical and Policy. (4) Birth and Migration: the right to full life and dignity for migrant children after birth, and for migrant families, including the right to education, health care, decent living conditions, and to have a family. Space does not allow me to

relate in detail the contents of each session, but I will soon be writing summaries and posting them on my Blog - <https://jerry789.wordpress.com>.

Although the sessions were compact with little time for R&R, it was an opportunity to observe what the Vatican and (CMA) Catholic Medical Association are actively doing worldwide in the area of Human Rights and unborn children.

On Monday morning before the first session, June 25th in the Sala Clementina, located in the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis met the 200 participants attending the Pontifical Academy for Life Workshop. During his talk in Spanish, the Pope said: "When we give children over to poverty, the poor over to hunger, the persecuted over to war, and the elderly to abandonment, do we not ourselves do the "dirty work" of death? Where does this dirty work of death come from? It comes from sin". Usually after the Pope completes his talk to a group, he gives a General Blessing and then departs; in our case, however, a few minutes before the entrance, an announcement was made that the Holy Father had decided to extend the time and give each participant an individual blessing. It was his way of expressing personal gratitude and support to each one for their dedicated work in the field of Global Bioethics and Human Life. The Pope's speech showed the importance the Catholic Church places on protecting Human Life: sexuality and the transmission of life, sickness and old age, handicaps and disabilities, poverty and exclusion, violence and war. After the blessing everyone returned to the New Hall for the workshop.



In conclusion, the stay at the General House was my first and surprisingly very enjoyable. At first, I was a bit hesitant in going to Rome, but after an invitation from CMA and some encouragement from Fr. Bradly, I decided to go. It was completely different from what I had expected. Good impressions began when the Superior of the General House met me at the door and ended when a number of Oblates came to say Goodbye. In the time between the two, I found myself at the center, the focal point, the heart of the Oblate Congregation. What really struck me in general was

how human and how relaxed everyone was in the General House, the kindness, hospitality and concern. Not only communicative but also genuinely interested in how I, as an Oblate Missionary, am reaching the poor in Japan. After my 9-day stay, I left feeling that I still had a specific mission to fulfill in Japan.



A highlight in my life: Looking into the eyes of a Holy Man.

P.S. Thanks to Fr. General, the General Administration, Fr. Jerome in Archives, Fr. Shanil in Communications, Fr. Clement, Fr. Marc and the many Oblates who took time out of their busy schedule to sit down and talk with me. It is difficult to summarize into one word my afterthoughts but if I could, I would say, "It's good to be a brother in the Global Oblate Family."

OBLATES CAN BE COMFORTABLE IN THE STREETS

From Kochi I moved to Itami

From Parish I moved to the streets

From Kindergarten I moved to kodomoshokudo

From Prison Ministry I moved to visiting the park

By John Selvaraj OMI

Dear Oblates !

I wish to inform you how comfortable I am on the streets, experiencing God's providential care by describing my little life journey. I never had dream of God on the street until I went out to the street to see the real possibility of preaching the Good news and see the emerging needs of this modern society. Now I am sure that time and opportunities offer clear vision of Oblates making their presence relevant to the suffering society.

From Kochi Community I came to Itami community in the middle of April after the spring meeting this year. After coming to Osaka I wanted to learn Kansai ben (Kansai dialect). But I could not concentrate, because of Takidashi (boiled rice) and Kodomoshokudo (children meals). These two words made me reflect on the response of Oblates to the new faces of poor.

Takidashi means distribution of rice after an emergency, but now this word is used to give meals to those who are in need. The Catholic Church in Kobe started Takidashi after the earthquake in 1995, and still continues that mission for the homeless. As an Oblate I join a volunteer group to make Takidashi. I meet many people and their presence makes me happy in my mission. I am not doing anything special, but just stay with them and eat meals together.

At the welfare center in Kobe, Takidashi is done weekly - Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. On Wednesday night, some volunteers go around the city park and visit the people sleeping in the park and streets. They help them to stay safe in the night. Itami church also does Takidashi once in a month providing rice balls to few people at Amagasaki station. I have visited two Kodomoshokudo centers. One is at Hyogo Church and the other is in Itami city. More than a hundred children benefit from the kodomoshokudo.



On August 18th we Oblates did Takidashi. There were three Japanese youth members, three Sri Lankan youth members, a parish member and Fr. Hiran. It was a wonderful moment to make the Japanese young people see the increasing number of homeless. These young people spent the whole day with us playing cricket and eating meals together.

For me time and situation allowed to reflect on Oblate response to the modern poor like homeless people and kodomoshokudo. In former days, Oblates chose to work in the remote areas and difficult missions to proclaim the Gospel and serve the most abandoned. Today we can see the most abandoned in the metropolitan city. We may lack personnel but God provides people when we begin to act and respond to the needs of the society.



WELCOME to Japan !

Here to preach our annual retreat is Fr. Andrias FER-NANDO, Rector of St. Joseph's OMI Seminary, Colombo.



Delegation website: <https://www.omi-japankorea.net>

