



O.M.I. JAPAN/KOREA

OMI Information

Newsletter ; General Delegation of JAPAN



2008
Christmas

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Three things in life that, once gone, never come back

1. Time
2. Words
3. Opportunity

Three things in life that can destroy a person

1. Anger
2. Pride
3. Unforgiveness

Three things in life that you should never lose

1. Hope
2. Peace
3. Honesty

Three things in life that are most valuable

1. Love
2. Family, & Friends
3. Kindness

Three things in life that are never certain

1. Fortune
2. Success
3. Dreams

Three things that make a person

1. Commitment
2. Sincerity
3. Hard work

Three things that are truly constant -

Father - Son - Holy Spirit

I ask the Lord to bless all of us, as I pray today,
to guide all of us and protect all of us, as we go along
our way.

God's love is always with us,
God's promises are true.

And when we give God all our cares,
we know God will see us through.

Have a blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year,
2009



Jude PEIRISPULLE



Angelo SIANI

Dear Brother Oblates,

Christmas is beginning to be felt everywhere and it makes us want to share the joy of the coming of Jesus with everyone and especially with all of you.

Recently Jude came to see me and it was great to talk and share what is happening in Japan. As always Jude was bubbling with enthusiasm and painted a rosy picture about each of you. His stories, thoughts and sharing made me feel very close to you. Ron LaFramboise gave Jude a tour of the city, Niagara Falls and in the evening we visited my mother.

My treatments have been going well. The care at Roswell Park Cancer is excellent and they are careful to help you overcome the accompanying side effects. I still have hope of returning to Japan. The newsletter and phone calls make me really feel close to Japan. Hirowatari Sensei of the kindergarten keeps me in touch with all aspects of the school. Her daily emails keep me on my toes! Many thanks to all of you for your support and prayers.

May Jesus fill you with His Joy, Love and Peace at Christmas and in the New Year.



Dick HARR

To All My Brother Oblates,

A very merry and holy Christmas to all. After a full year of laboring for our Lord, I hope that each of you will be rewarded amply with the joy that only our Lord can give.

I truly miss being with you and working with you. However, our Lord has placed me here in this capacity, and what I can do is support of each of you with my life as a patient. May God bless you and inspire each of you to even greater lives and works for Him. I thoroughly enjoyed Jude's visit here in early December. It was very special.



James JEYACHANDRAN

This is to inform you about MAMI Benefactors. WE had our thanksgiving and Christmas party last 16th of December. Fifty people attended the mass. They all come from different part of the cities. Each one brought their own special food to share with others. Normally we have our monthly gathering and mass on the third Tuesday of the month. We pray for the oblates and for the benefactor's families. Since it was the last occasion of this year, we had an evaluation of our activities and good sharing. Finally we planned to do few more new things next year. With the sign of peace we departed. Thank God it was a beautiful celebration. You can enjoy the picture how beautiful they are.

Christ was born and worked a transformation in the lives of people. He gave a new and a spiritual turn to the

lives of people. There came a change upon the land. People started upon a new way of life. Thus a new era dawned for the world. If we have to enter into a new life of spiritual aspiration, purity and devotion, then the Christ-spirit must take its birth within our hearts. That is the real Christmas when the Divine element begins to express itself in the heart of people. From then onward, light begins to shine where darkness was before. If we don't find Christmas in our hearts, we will never find Christmas under the tree.

A very small, but very beautiful, point of deep significance is attached to Christmas. It is the time and the manner of the birth of the Lord upon the holy Christmas day. Jesus Christ was not born in a grand palace. He was not born to very wealthy or learned parents. Jesus Christ was born in a simple lowly place, a corner of a stable. He was born to humble and poor parents, who had nothing to boast about, except their own spotless character and holiness. It gives me consolation and courage to live up to my call. And I too wish you the same.

Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Ken-ichi FURUKAWA

Merry Christmas to all,

I hope you are doing well. Mainly I am working in Minamikasuya church. Fr. Jude and Br. Palomo support me all the time. I am happy in Koga. God bless you.



John Kenney MAHONEY

The San Antonio Spurs are important to the life of San Antonio residents. The games are on TV and are watched by all. I could not understand this excitement over a basket ball team. My preference was Turner Classic Movies. One evening I decided to watch the Spurs game. I was surprised to realize that I was enjoying this experience. The same can be said of my experience since my arrival here at the Maddona Residence. The food was good TexMex or Southwest cooking. More spicy than food in Japan. But now my taste buds have no problem with hot spice.

In short I am happy to tell you I have made the transition to my life in San Antonio. And to top it all off - I should be walking without a wheel chair or walker by Thanksgiving or Christmas. Happy Nativity.



Irudayaraj ANTONYSAMY

Apostleship Of the Sea (AOS)

Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move has organized the AOS Annual Meeting for this year. It was held at Akakura Sansou in Niigata Ken Myouko Church. It took place for two days that is October 27 and 28th 2008. The theme was: **Seafarers: as members of our church community.**



It was the first time that I attended this AOS meeting not knowing the meaning of AOS. We were 28 from all over Japan. From Shikoku I was the only one. From Kochi so far no one attended this meeting. Bishop Daiji Tani the Bishop of Saitama is the Chairman of the Catholic Commission of Japan for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move. After attending this meeting and also talking to Bishop Tani I was thinking how to co-operate for this ministry. They asked me to visit the Seafarers with the help of Fr.Garry who is at Fukuyama. Then slowly I can work with the help of other people for the Seafarers at Kochi.

People on the move include Seafarers, people of the circus, nomads and pilots. This is what Bishop Tani is saying: For those of us working on land, the word "Seafarers" sounds very far away. Nevertheless, the importation of goods for our daily food, housing and clothing, reaches the amount of 1.1 billion tons a year, or 8 tons for every person in Japan, 99% of the goods pass through seaports. This means that the seafarers are sustaining our life, and that we have a deep connection with them.

AOS is a Catholic organization visiting those seafarers, working to provide them with a satisfying experience in Japan. The AOS objective is to give a glass of water to the thirsty, regardless of nationality or religion (Matthew 25, 31-40). AOS helps them by speaking with them, introducing churches in port, post offices, stores, etc. There are many Catholic seafarers from Philippines and other Asian countries. Information of prayers and masses are probably the most welcome to them.

Jesus himself was on the Move at his birth (Luke 2). His public life was so also. In a broader sense, the people of Israel were People on the Move and the Church is said to be a Church on the Move. This made me to think about the Seafarers. I met some people coming to the church who are building the ship. I hope

that I may get some experience in the ministry of Seafarers.

Hope to see you all at Kochi. Jesus who is on the Move may move with you all where ever you may be. God Bless you. Merry Christmas.



Jan VAN HOYDONCK

This time, too, my best wishes for a Blessed and Merry Christmas, followed by a New Year filled with the Lord's blessings and protection upon everyone of you and all those dear to you, all through the year.

During this past year you have experienced many changes, and probably there are more to come yet. I am thinking now more particularly of the buildings in Itami, but there are others also. Over here, there was among others the sale of our property (house and land) in Korbeek-Lo (near Louvain), the place where I, and most (nearly all) of our Belgian (and some Dutch) Oblates, have made their noviciate. A smaller property was acquired only a few miles away. Also during that period the Lord has called to Himself several of our confreres from the three regions of our province, some of them older, some younger than I. Let us give them all a Memento in our prayers.

With my repeated best wishes for a Happy and Blessed Christmas and NewYear, and my prayers for all I remain Your loving brother in Christ an Mary Immaculate,



Len INUI

Merry Christmas! To every one of good will!

Infant Jesus has renewed in us our attitude how to be with our neighbor. He supports us everyday in whatever situation I may facing with; and his Mother also supports nearby. So, we are working and searching a right pass which would be fair to the neighbor, hoping that we adult shall become acceptable ones to our children's genus at this 'modern' age. Maria Montessori told us, "Inner energy of children is the only source of harmony and peace of mankind". This is the fountain of thought and activity of the formation work in education.

-Len M. Inui, OMI

クリスマスおめでとうございます!

私は、今年のクリスマスの集いの平均年齢が少しは低くなったかな、と喜んでます。普段の集いのメンバーに幼児が二人増えているからです。この二人の数的影響はおおきいですよね。クリスマスにホッとするのは、幼子から私たちとともに育つ道を迎えられる救い主を見ることです。今の世界情勢の中でも、大人が、幼い子どもに安心して受け入れてもらえる、心の貧しい人に成長することが待たれていると思います。幼な子イエスに対面しながら祈念します；「幼児の内面のエネルギーこそが、人類の調和と平和の源です」(M. モンテッソーリ)と。



Jerry NOVOTNY

"Christmas brings hope, hope is our only treasure now: we were poor, and now even the little we had has

been destroyed. But Christmas means that Christ is born, and every birth means a new life. Jesus came down from heaven to save us from this misery, from the pain, from abandonment, from our homelessness. His power fills us with hope, love, and forgiveness."

Christmas, then, is about the Gospel of Life. It illumines the meaning and value of every human person. Is it possible for one to accept the Christmas message, and then to turn the other way when human life is despised and destroyed? Can the Christian, who declares that the human person is called to the very heights of heaven, stand idly by when those same human beings are thrown in the garbage by abortion, or disposed of by euthanasia?

The hymn "O Holy Night" sums up this lesson in the verse which sings, "Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love, and His Gospel is peace. Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His name, all oppression shall cease."

That's how we here at Pro Life will celebrate Christmas this year: a complete re-dedication to ending contraception and abortion, the worst form of oppression of unborn tiny children and a re-dedication to ending euthanasia which is primarily geared for our senior citizens. A child is born, and His birth immerses us in the defense and celebration of life!

May the reality of this holy celebration bring much happiness and health to each member of our delegation in the coming New Year!

God Bless



Tom MAHER

A Day To Remember

On May 29th, Showa no hi, the names of those to receive decorations from the Emperor were announced. I knew that I was recommended for 36 years of service as a prison chaplain because I was asked to prepare a personal history. It was kept a secret till it was officially announced. Well it was announced on May 29 and the decorations were to be awarded in Tokyo at the Ministry of Justice which overlooks the Emperor Palace. Of course I went. It was a day to remember.

First we were served a delicious sandwich and coffee on the 20th floor. Then we moved to the large hall where the ceremony was to take place. After two short speeches, the medals were given to us. It took some time as there were over 100 of us. I was the only foreigner at this ceremony.

Then we were bussed to the emperor palace. The spacious grounds around the palace were beautiful. We were led to a magnificent hall and we waited for the Emperor to come. The wives or husbands of those receiving the decoration were allowed to attend. (I asked if my sister Pat could come but they said "No", wives only.)

Then the Emperor came into the hall. He thanked us for the many years of service to Japan and wished us good health. It was appropriate as all of us were senior citizens. (I just got the emblems which by law, have to be put on the front and back of your car if you are over 75.) The Emperor impressed me as being a kind, considerate and humble man. So I am back to reality now but it is a day to remember.

On the scroll I received is written in Japanese of

course and it says: "The Emperor of Japan awards Thomas Francis Maher the 'ORDER OF THE SACRED TREASURE -- GODL AND SILVER RAYS (ZUI HOO SO KO SHOO). And it is signed by the Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo and another official. Their name stamps and the stamp of Japan are on the scroll. The medal is very impressive, not something you would wear everyday. If you are down this way, I'll show them to you.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

God Bless You



Nobuhiko YAGI

World Youth Day in Japan



From the time I accepted the chairmanship of the preparatory committee for the World Youth Day in Japan (henceforward WYDJ), the staff had already, amongst themselves, decided to make the WYDJ a memorable event. Because of their enthusiasm, there existed a gap, which had formed in the purpose of the event. Added to that, since the committee of 20 people, included a huge variety of people, from religious, young people in Society, college students, things were somewhat in disarray. This created various problems. Each day, fears and concerns copped up. I started wondering if this was too large a role to be played out by a Brother from the countryside. Of course these were negative feelings that I had to deal with, but nevertheless I felt them strongly.

Just considering the size of the event (over 200 participants), and my limited talents was something to be dealt with. Knowing myself, I wondered if it were possible to form a unity among so many people on the staff. I had felt this from the beginning, so in my helplessness, I decided to leave everything up to the Holy Spirit, who was the main theme of this WYDJ event. From the beginning of the preparations, if the Holy Spirit were central to our activities, we should end up with a good gathering. These scattered elements could be brought into unison by the Spirit working within us. It certainly could be a warm experience because of the Spirit's input. All we had to do is cooperate with this Spirit, in order to be successful. Once we had decided on the thrust of our work, we just kept repeating daily: "Holy Spirit, help us!" For this reason, I think the WYDJ was a beautiful success. Below, I will share with you some of the remarks of the young people who attended the WYDJ.

- Community is great! Even when we are spread around into distant places, if we are in the presence of God, we can become one: one with God, one with our friends. There is a special bond that was created.

- Facing people, facing myself, facing God were very important things. In silence, having time to face myself, to reflect on myself, to look at myself, to face my sinful self, I felt my own powerlessness.

- I realized that I could change, just by encountering other people. I am very surprised at how much I have changed just during the time of the WYDJ gathering. My sense of values has changed.

- I believe I learned what I must consider as important in order to live a meaningful life.

- I began to feel that I want to take part in church activities. Not only do I want to attend the weekly Eucharist, pray everyday, but also whenever possible, according to my strength, I want to take part in church activities.

- From now on my image of the Church has changed. From a position where I considered the importance of keeping up the Church building, I will henceforth consider the gathering of the people more important. I want to help make a church where everybody is welcome, a church that welcomes various nationalities.

If I do this, the Japanese Church itself will become richer and many possibilities will open up to her.

- A conversion of the heart is necessary to welcome the youth within the church. This is especially true of those who are the pastoral leaders of the church and of the adults in the church. The youth of the church are looking for something, are longing for something, which will bring them happiness.

- When receiving the sacrament of penance, I felt I had received a wonderful light, which shone upon the darkness in my soul all these years. I really felt that this was a sacrament. I was able to speak freely about the problems I had down deep in my heart, and in doing so, I felt a great relief. I realized that being a Catholic is a great thing.

- By being pardoned, I received a great love, and now I want to be a pardoning person. I came to understand this not only with my head, but also from the bottom of my heart. I want to spread this Love to others.

- Other people as well as I are wonderful works of art, created in love by God. I came to realize that we live engulfed in the love of God. At that point I found this rather awesome and this brought me great hope.

- I want to continue, at all times, having my antenna attuned to the work of the Holy Spirit, first by returning to a peace of the heart, so that I can be an instrument which the holy Spirit can use freely.

- The Holy Spirit's work is to lead us. The people I met here, the experiences I made, even the WYDJ itself, I didn't choose, but the Spirit led me.

- Because we were filled with the Holy Spirit, the 200 of us became kinder people, we were able to open up, to share. I felt very strongly that the Spirit was working in each one of us.

- The Holy Spirit works when people are linked to God, when people are linked to each other.

- The importance of leaving things up to the Spirit. Even if we can't see the Spirit, we are sure that Spirit is beside us.

- I believe that by considering myself and others as important, we can become witnesses. I want to be in touch with myself and others with a warm heart.

- First of all, when I experienced the love of God, and also experienced that God loves everybody the same way, I then thought I could become a witness.

- If as many young people as possible could receive the Holy Spirit in their hearts, we could become witnesses and help bring a richer peace to the Church and to the world. I believe that that is to do God's will.



Jude PEIRISPULLE

Greetings from Koga

This is an update of my trip to USA. With the suggestion of many members in our unit I decided to make a trip to USA to see John Mahoney, Dick Harr and Angelo Siani.

Trip to St Antonio, Texas

I went to see John Mahoney 1st. Contacting the director of the place Fr. Patrick Guidon I made arrangements to go there. I was there from 26th of November to 28th, which means it gave me a chance to celebrate Thanksgiving day with John and Community where there are more than 30 members. I had enough time to spend with John, in fact we took a good walk on the thanksgiving day afternoon, of course John was in the wheelchair. He was giving me tour of the place, as it is a huge place owned by the Oblates. Speaking about the condition of John, he is doing pretty well. The place is a kind of an infirmary where there are nurses taking care of the priest there. Some are in good condition where they only need a little assistance. In the case of John I think he is getting 80% of the assistance from the nurses. He also made a remark saying that it would have been nice if he could have been in Tewksbury. That doesn't mean the place is bad but the guys who are in Tewksbury are more familiar to him. In fact the facilities in Texas are much better than Tewksbury. I hope by now you all know John has officially joined the USA province and is no longer a member of our delegation. It doesn't mean that we don't have any connection. I even told John that he is still in the hearts of us all and people. Let us continue this relationship through our prayers and contacts.

Trip to Tewksbury

Communicating with Dick Sudlik, the councilor for the area who is a busy man, was kind and humble enough to fetch me at the Woburn bus stop to where I had taken the Logan Express Shuttle bus. I arrived there on the 28th and had the opportunity to join the

community activities and the Sunday liturgy. The superior of the place Fr. McSweeney, a classmate of Dick Harr, who is 86 years old is a wonderful man and a great host. Dick is in great shape and I was surprised to see him doing his role in the community. Dick Harr is also in good shape. What I found out being with them for few days was that they are a happy community. There are about 20 members and Dick has his own humor to keep the community happy and smiling. There I also met few who had come to Japan to give us retreat in the past. Being there I also had a chance to go out for a dinner to celebrate the birthday of Jack Quinn, a former scholastic brother who was here at the beginning of the mission. Dick Harr was very happy and enthusiastic about going out. Dick really enjoyed the dinner as it gave him a chance to enjoy some good Japanese food after a long time. I didn't realize that time has passed so quickly. Dick has already spent 5 years in that community and doing well. Another good opportunity I had was to visit the graves of some of our pioneer Oblates of the mission including Fr. Bob Gill, even though I didn't know any of them.

Trip to Buffalo

Leaving Sunday night 30th from Boston to go to Buffalo, I had a little difficulty in getting the airplane as the weather was very bad at that time. In fact the delay was 2 hours and 30 minutes, which means Ron LaFramboise who came to pick me at the airport, had to wait more than an hour. It was past 11 o'clock at night when we reached the house. I could not see Angelo till the next day. Early the next morning, he and Angelo went to the hospital to receive his new chemo therapy treatment. He has to go to hospital 2 times a week, Tuesday and Friday. After 2 years I saw Angelo and I could not believe really what had happened to him in this last 2 years. He has shrunk a bit due to the bone getting eaten by the cancer. I only could see an old man walking. But when he sits down and speaks, one can only wonder what is wrong with him. He looks very good and we had a good time talking about some of our past experiences. In fact he joined the city tour when Ron took me, to give me an idea about the area as it was my 1st trip to USA.

The main topics I discussed with him were:

1. Position as the superior of the mission.
2. Situation of the Kindergarten.
3. Coming back to Japan.
4. How long this treatment is going to continue.

His reentry permit runs out next year which means if he cannot renew by next year he will lose his permanent residence status and he might have to apply for a new visa to come to Japan. If he loses his visa he cannot be the Principal of the school. His term as the superior ends next year. Therefore there is no rush for him to worry about it. Let Rome do what they want to do next. Keeping up with all these situation I suggested that he could come for a short time, if not for a long time, to renew his reentry permit and to meet the community here and his loved one. It will be hard for him to come alone. I have suggested some things to him how he can do that. He will think about it and consult the doctor on that. If he wants to make that trip he has to wait till he finishes the treatment that he is going

through now. He does not know till when this will be.

While being with members of the community in Buffalo I found out Angelo is really blessed in many ways. The hospital is not very far from the place. Ron is being really good him in many ways. He is going out of his way to help Angelo. I think it is a big support to him mentally. Ron is in charge of the pre-Novices, which means Angelo is around some nice young men. Some of them go to Angelo for spiritual direction. The Superior and the parish priest of the place is also very nice person. What else can a person get than a good community.

I was also very happy to meet Angelo's mother and 2 sisters. I enjoyed the dinner out with them. I could see in spite of all the pains and sufferings my going there made Angelo very happy which is also the same feeling on my side with all the experiences.

As a community we cannot do much to help our beloved friends except praying for them. During Holy season let us keep them in our prayers in a special way. If you need any other information about my trip I will be happy to give it to you. Hope to see you all at the Christmas party.

May God bless you.



Bradly ROZAIRO



Hello Everyone, Greetings from the Philippines!

In this country Christmas comes very early. The preparation for Christmas begins by the first week of September! At the end of last month I, together with my sabbatical companions went to see Manila by night. Wherever you turn you see beautiful Christmas trees, cribs and illuminations. In the malls and trains you hear Christmas songs. You really get into a Christmas mood. I said to myself after all I am in a Catholic country and for me Christmas has already come.

Coming to the sabbatical at the EAPI, for my mid-term break (one week) in October, I went to Mindanao. I visited some of the OMI missions in the North of Cotabato. I was very happy to meet Manobo (tribe) people in a village. I spent the whole day with them and it was a wonderful experience. I thank the Oblates in Cotabato for taking care of me. It was a very good five day exposure for me. I just finished my six month sabbatical program which ended with a one week "Asian Contemplative Retreat with John's Gospel". Now

I'm cleaning my room and packing my bag to go home for Christmas (sounds great! isn't it?). For me, the



"Sabbatical Pilgrimage" was an experience. I hope to share my experience with you next year.

What will I do from January? My original plan was to go to Israel, but I will not be able to get a visa in time to go there. Therefore, I decided to go to India. I think for the next newsletter I will be able to share some news from India.

Now, this is for

your reflection / Christmas homily:

Christ is born;

May he be born in our hearts.

Mary bore him in her womb;

May we bear him in our hearts.

The Virgin became pregnant with the incarnation of the Logos;

May our souls be impregnated through faith in Christ.

The Virgin gave birth to the Savior;

May our souls give birth to salvation.

We shall not remain unfruitful, for our souls have to become fruit-bearing in God. Have a Peaceful

CHRISTMAS & a Prosperous **NEW YEAR.**



Ray **BOURGOIN**

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

As usual a number of things happened during the past year, since the last Christmas letter. A quick run down, according to the order they came to me. Voted in by my fellow priests in the diocese. to the Priests' Senate, with its subsequent meetings; death of the only parishioner who availed herself of the morning Eucharist on days I was in Aki, with her accompanying funeral attended by well over 700 people; asked by Rome to give a hand to the other members of the OMI Delegation Council, with its meetings and secretarial work; hospitalization and subsequent death of our dear Brother, Lei Simons, and his funeral that included people from an enormous variety of groups that he was involved with; visit with my brother, where there was mostly thunder, lightning and rain; asked to be at the head of the Volunteer Bureau, and learning a whole new field of endeavors; becoming the contact priest for the Akaoka parish; grieving with my 2 Brazilian Oblates who lost their fathers, etc. etc.

I'm sure that there are others. It's just that as I am sitting here, I see these as coming to the forefront of my mind. I'm sure all of you have similar and larger lists.

Things that we can be thankful for as well as things that affected our lives in various ways are in the mix.

I've just about finished with the translation of the

Choice Texts of the Founder. Actually the text is finished, it's a question of printing it. Ron LaFramboise had asked me to translate a couple of each theme so he could use them in the formation program.

He also used them when Jean Drouart came to give lectures on the Founder, to the then seminarians. There are 73 themes so 146 letters should have been the limit.

Jean subsequently wrote to me from Indonesia with the encouragement to continue. So after close to 20 years of "here and there and in between", I'm reaching the final stage. There are 524 letters involved. I will have an index of all the letters by date written and by persons to whom they were written, besides the one by theme, which appears in the French and English editions. I translated from the French, as it is more meaningful to me to read them in the original. Also, I found that some parts of the English version hadn't captured the "genius" of the original, as I'm sure my Japanese version lacks in this respect. It is tortuous to express something in another language: there are just certain things that are inexpressible in another language.

These are things I do as a hobby, to keep me out of mischief! Some play TV games, others paint, others do linos, others do woodworking etc. etc. My hobby is translating, but because it is a hobby, I do it at my own pace! I have other irons in the fire, which I'll let you know about as I get to remove them from the fire.

I miss Ange's presence, his concern for all; I miss Dick Harr's presence, his jovial presence; I miss Jan's presence, his 'steady as a rock'; I miss Brad's presence, his quiet efficiency.

May all of you have a joyous season and a blessed New Year! Hope to see most of you in Kochi for our annual Christmas season gathering. Let us enjoy the moment!



Varam **ANTHONY SAMY**

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2009!

Life is full of choices. In fact, we make them everyday. We choose our clothes, food, friends, play, and study. In fact, life is full of choices of what we want to do. But as life goes on, we are slowly faced with a different kind of choice. Yes, some want to be an Engineer, priest, teacher, doctor, social worker, farmer, lawyer, scientist, researcher; filmmaker ... the list goes on. The choice is one's own. We can definitely choose our own career - **but not our vocation!**

Thus a vocation is a call. It is a call from God. While we may choose our own career, we cannot choose our vocation. It is God who chooses. Our response is to choose to follow the vocation God is calling us to follow. All the more, prayer plays a vital role in nurturing vocation.

Many are called to married and family life. Some are called to lead single lives. Yet some are called to follow God as ordained ministers. Further still, God calls some people to follow him in a special way, as religious, through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

I have been trying different means to promote vocation in our unit here in Korea since few years after I was assigned as vocation director. I conduct monthly meetings for middle school, high school and for some university students, with the help of our brothers. But

when they graduate from their high school already they look for something else in life and they discontinue coming for the monthly meetings and give up sometime the interest in their calling to religious life.

Therefore, whenever I met some known people and friends and some pious people who pray ardently, request them to pray for vocation in our congregation. Some for sure pray for vocations in our congregation. And recently I found a group of people, two hours journey from Suwon, the place called Taejon. They pray for vocations in the Church. As I somehow came to know this people I put a petition requesting them to pray for vocations in our congregation. They accepted with joy and now they pray for vocations particularly to our congregation. And as a result they also introduce some students both middle/high school and university students who have a slight interest in religious life. And I follow them up and encourage them to nurture this vocation in our congregation. Thanks to these pious people who in a way break through the heart of God through their prayers and thus He yields.

So, I now have a power transformer that prays for vocations in our congregation. I wish God bless us with at least with few vocations, if not with many. May I invite you all to continue to pray, pray ardently for vocations both in Japan and in Korea. May this Christmas at which we commemorate the INCARNATION OF JESUS be born in the hearts of these young souls and ours as well!

With this, we wish you **A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2009!**

Oblate Formation house community
Suwon, KOREA.

Center for homeless - ANNAS HOUSE BLESSEING

St. Brigid's Blessing for a home goes like this: May Brigid bless the house where you dwell, every fireside door and every wall; every heart that beats beneath its roof, every hand that toils to bring it joy, every foot that walks its portals through. May Brigid bless the house that shelters you.

Likewise, the newly built center ANNAS HOUSE', a center for the homeless was blessed and opened by Rt.Rev.Mathias Lee, coadjutor bishop of the diocese of Suwon, in the presence of the Nuncio Most Rev.Oswald Padilya, the ambassador of Italy, the Oblates, and many priests, religious, benefactors, friends and faithful. The blessing took place on December 9, 2008.

The blessing began with the liturgy of the Word. The bishop in his homily spoke about the need to work for the poor succinctly quoting our charism from the Gospel of Luke, 4, 16-18. He also appreciated the Oblates, particularly Fr.Vincenzo for his selfless service to the poor and the neglected.

Most Rev.Oswald Padilya, the nuncio, in his congratulatory address, while appreciating the Oblates for their work to the abandoned, invited many more people both in the Church and outside the church to commit themselves to this cause.

The ambassador for Italy had a word of appreciation for Fr.Vincenzo and the Oblates. He was tracing the generosity with which the Oblates work in other places too.

The house was full with guests and well-wishers, totaling more than 400 people. Thereafter the blessing culminated with cutting of cake, and a festive buffet meal. It is a wonderful center, put up investing lots of money and work. When you have sometime, come to visit this center, for if everything goes well, the Oblates will be able use it only for 10 years!

**CONGRATULATIONS DEAR
FRS.VINCENZO, ANSELMO & BRO.NOEL
& AL THOSE WHO HELP IN ANNAS
HOUSE!!!**



Bert Nathan SILVER



Decembr 2008



I really like the crib above that I made a few years back. I think it is the only one that is in Japan. When I go to the school every day! thank our Lord for the many gifts that he has given me during the past year.

My visit to the States, saw John Kenney, Dick Har and Ange. A short stay with my brother Ron and his wife Stasia in Florida - on to Lowell and several weeks with my sister Nat and her family. Nat broke her hip so I ended up as cook.

For the next few weeks it was check with the "net" for menus and then off to shopping. Through the kindness of Dick Sudlik I was able to have an Oblate car to get around with.

Back to Japan...my Intestinal hernia...it wasn't fun. But that is behind me. Able to be at the school bazaar, the "field day", baptism in the church and preparations for the dedication of the memorial for Fr.Yuki. Will have to start losing weight...doctors not happy. Looking forward to the Kochi celebration. See you Bert,OM!!



Wency LAGUIDAO

FROM THE HARD-HAT ZONE

One of the major hazards of erecting a building especially if you are doing it for the first time is being caught up with an unscrupulous builder who puts profit ahead of everything. Another is not having enough funds to finish the building, like the case of the man in the gospel parable who ended up a laughing-stock to his friends. Almost half way through the building project of the Itami kindergarten, we can heave sighs of relief. The construction company that we have chosen has proven to be a very conscientious one, cost-wise, safety-wise, schedule-wise, etc. We are also very thankful to the kindergartens of Koga and Naruto for lending us the money that we lack (special thanks to Len INUI and Ms. HIROWATARI of Koga), saving us from the rigmarole of borrowing from a lending institution. The building is expected to be ready for

occupancy by the end of March, 2009. It may not be on time for the next graduation ceremony but definitely, the opening ceremony of the next school year will be in our new all-purpose hall with a stage that mechanically retracts when not in use giving more moving space and elevates as the need arises for various occasions. You will have to come and see it for yourself!

The entire staff (including myself) has been re-orienting ourselves with the very basics of Montessori education with the help of Ms. Hirowatari. We spend one Friday afternoon and the whole day Saturday once a month to go through the different "teiji" or exercises. Even with my very bad eyesight, I have to relearn how to thread a needle and do some stitching, cross-stitching, etc. with the teachers. What is most interesting is the simple baking lessons. The children are all excited with their newly learned trick of baking cookies. They also have started learning the rudiments of tea ceremony.

From mid-November, we have been busy preparing for the yearly Christmas program. The kids are memorizing their parts for the Christmas-play with lots of interest. That's all from the "hard-hat area" with the hope that one day, it will be a place reborn, safe for the children and everyone to use. Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2009!



Bill MAHER

Merry Christmas and A Very Happy Year!

I hope this greeting finds you enjoying the comfort and joy of this coming Christmas. It might be a very trying New Year but with the help of the Christ Who became man we can have hope in it coming out better in the end. I'm not too sure what that means but I do have hope that the Lord will bring something good out of this even if it means we have to rearrange our life styles and take better care of all that He's so generously given us.

As I look back on 2008 the event that comes to mind is the Beatification ceremony in Nagasaki on Nov.24, of 188 Japanese Martyrs. I feel it was a time of great blessing for not only the Japanese church but for the church throughout the world. Our bishop Osamu Mizobe and the labors of many many others brought this about. The weather that day was a combination of rain, cloudy, and sunshine. The only thing we didn't get was snow but it was cold at times. The crowd of 30,000 was sometimes a pitiful sight in our rain coats since you could not use umbrellas in the stadium. But it gave us a chance to experience a bit of what the martyrs went through. Listening to the beautiful singing and feeling the bonding of the participants at the Liturgy was an experience I'll always remember. Cardinal Shirayanagi gave a wonderful sermon which summed up the meaning of the lives of the martyrs and what their sacrifices mean for us today. I'd like to quote some of that sermon for this letter.

"The martyrs beatified today are some of those martyred during the period of 36 years between the martyrdom in 1603 of Kumamoto and Yatsushiro to that of 1639 in Edo. The persecution, however, continued long after this period. In order to totally annihilate Christianity, the government kept the practice of making every citizen trample on a holy image to identify one's

religion. Under such cruel circumstances, the faith was transmitted by families through generations. On March 17, 1865, the discovery of the Christians from Uragami, Nagasaki, who had kept the faith for 250 years, through seven generations under persecution surprised the world. The depth and height of the faith of our ancestors cannot but deeply move us.

Entire families were martyred, a family is the smallest unit that constitutes society. If every family is solidly constituted, society too can be solid. The martyred families were united in faith, hope and love, sharing the same values and were fearless. They knew how to support and encourage each other in difficulties. In today's world, we hear that it is not easy to find a healthy and united family because of generation gaps and other problematic factors in society. A family united by love stronger than death truly is a model for us. Such a family is filled with joy, the meaningfulness of life and satisfaction. The martyrs invite us to form such families. Our families need to have a space where the whole family gathers to reflect on the Word of God and prays.

The martyrs make a strong appeal to us so that our Church, our community of faith, be a powerful witness of God's love. They are calling us who live in Japan where more than 30,000 kill themselves every year. They are inviting us to seriously reflect on the fundamental questions about life: what is life, what is death, for what do we live, what is the purpose of life, what is the meaning of suffering. The martyrs who could not enjoy the freedom of religion are calling us. They are making a strong appeal to us to commit ourselves to the value and importance of the dignity of the human intelligence and freedom of judgment and expression. The martyrs call us to struggle against everything that denies the fundamental truth about human beings: that the right of life from the womb to the grave should be respected, that the production as well as sales of arms, wars that use them to kill should be avoided at all cost, that the gap between rich and poor and dehumanizing misery should be eliminated. They are calling us to work for a more just and humane world where every human being is respected, cared for and enjoys life. Let us journey together unafraid. The martyrs are telling us not to be afraid. God is telling us not to be afraid." I think the Cardinals' message is the same as the Christmas message. I pray that we all can experience these things this Christmas and during the coming year. Merry Christmas.

P.S. I'm including my e-mail address but I'll put my name on anything I'd send you. Someone's using this address for real stupid things.

Yours in Christ,

PAGE 9





Bernard ONDAP

Yes, you heard me right. I just said "Tadaima." Yes, I just greeted you with the Japanese greeting "tadaima" which means "I am back". Yes, as of the moment I am here in Japan, my second home. Perhaps, bunch of queries are already boggling you. Why is he here? What is he doing here?...so on and so fort.

Last Friday, (December 12, 2008) at 10 in the morning, I boarded Philippine Airlines flight PR 426 bound for Fukuoka, Japan. In just a span of more than 3 less hours I trekked a couple of miles and came to my second home. The flight was 30 minutes early. That's why instead that Fr. Jude and Palomo waiting for me at the airport, I was the one who waited for them. It was kind of easy compared to my first trip here in Japan. Before, I could not even greet the airport officials with Ohayou gozaimasu, but this time my sentence was longer and even manage myself to converse with the Immigration official. Before, it took me almost 10 minutes in the Immigration, but this time it only took a minute. Before, I was in my short sleeves with no single idea how cold Japan is during winter, but this time I had my jacket ready and ready to smell the cold breeze of December. Before, I felt like steeping in to a new country but this time I feel so happy to be back home even just for a short time. I could consume all the pages if I will go on with my list of comparisons.

So, after fetching me at the International airport, Fr. Jude accompanied me to the Immigration office and applied for the extension of my visa since my visa will expire on the 23rd of February next year. After some consultations it was decided that it would be better for me to renew my visa than let it expire, go back to zero and apply again. I would say that the application was relatively difficult was I am 10 days early than the allowed time. So they asked me to write my reasons. So I got the pen and started writing. Then the official said, "日本語で書いてください". Thank God Fr. Jude was there. As of the moment, I am waiting for my hagaki since according to the official it would take 2-3 weeks. I hope and pray that I could get it.

Yes, it is really nice to be back home. But it would be nicer if I could meet all of you guys. Perhaps, we could meet and exchange stories during the Christmas

party. Tanoshimi shiteorimasu.

Let me grab this opportunity also to greet each and everyone "Merry Christmas", "Maligayang Pasko", クリスマスおめでとうございます。



Palomo BOYET

Celebrating Christmas Season in Japan

People started putting Christmas trees, decors, and lights in malls, houses, buildings and even in train stations as December month begins. It was that time I also started thinking that Christmas will be coming soon. Well, not to compare but I can say that in Philippines it also interesting because two or three months before December people starts decorating Christmas stuffs in almost every place, houses, and malls. Christmas songs, decors and other stuffs add more color for the season of Christmas. Thus, this season somehow make Filipinos remain hopeful. Indeed, as a nation which majority are Christians anybody can feel the excitement from each other's faces no matter how difficult life is. One of the Filipino values or traditions is that no matter how abundant or small the preparation inside the house what matters most is to celebrate Christmas with the whole family. In Japan, I sometimes wonder what Christmas really meant for non-Christian Japanese where I see lots decorations either? Is it for commercial and for attraction or for decoration? Of course I knew also many Japanese like my teachers in YMCA who are non-Christians yet understand where and what Christmas means. I just pondered and smiled sometimes wishing that someday Christmas be truly realized.

As I am told to write this article up to this moment where I am writing, I would honestly say that I have not completely experience the season of Christmas here in Japan. I know that there are still more events I have to be attended that makes my experience widened. In fact, a week ago, I attended the Christmas party of Filipino community in Fukuoka where it was a chance also for me to meet and mingle especially Filipinos who are not church goers. It was very nice like seeing them mingling one another like; smiling, laughing and talking. One Filipina mother told me, It was a like she was relieved from pressure and stress in her work and family.

I know celebrating Christmas here will be completely different from my country but I my thankful also to my community who are generous with me for allowing me to attend the Christmas party of Filipinos or even non-Filipinos. I am very thankful also to all parishioners in Koga for their love and support not only for counting me as a seminarian but more that as a friend and part of their family. To all of you who continuously supports me in prayers and in any ways, Thank You for making me a better person. To all of you; my Oblate Family, friends and all Parishioners, Merry-Merry Christmas and have a Grace-Filled New Year to All of You. God Bless!

