

(September 2008)

Annual Retreat 2008

by Fr. Al Hubenig OMI, Canada



From Ange -- sianiomi@lime.ocn.ne.jp

Change. Change seems to be the word at the moment in America. It started with Obama in his campaign for the office of president. It became a word of hope for the poor and the immigrants in America. And now even McCain is talking change.

Change is not new for us Oblates. St. Eugene always pushed us Oblates to read the signs of the times and make our ministry fit those signs.

The preparation for the Chapter is well underway. There will be changes for all Oblates but in particular for us as we decide our changed way of being as a Delegation.

In this time of change, I think we must first listen. Listen to God, to the church and to developments of our times. There is sure to be many cons or pros for accepting one way or another for our new Delegation but the source and the success of our decision must be, as St Eugene often reminded us, our commitment to the person of Jesus Christ. Keeping before us our commitment to love Christ and to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ we are well on the way to making the right changes for our ministry and our new delegation.

As for my health - I'll keep it short - I am doing pretty well. On September 19 the doctors will give me an evaluation of my condition. I'm hoping for the best. Even if I can return to Japan for some time I'd be thankful. Thank you for your prayers. You are always in my prayers.

God bless,
Ange

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From Varam and Korean Community

The Country:

Lee to express regret over religious bias:

President Lee Myung-bak will express regret today over alleged pro-Christian bias by government officials, which have triggered massive Buddhist protests since late last month, aides said.

Lee will make the gesture during a Cabinet meeting in which a clause banning religious discrimination will be added to the code of service for public officials. "President Lee will express regret over the incidents in relation to Buddhists while explaining the objective of the revision of the regulation," a ranking presidential official told reporters on condition of anonymity.

"The president will emphasize his resolve to eliminate religious discrimination and to prevent any recurrence of such an incident." Lee will also address Buddhists' concerns during a televised forum with the public tonight before he marks his 200th day in office Thursday, the official said. The conference is organized by state-run broadcaster KBS and will be broadcast live by major networks.

Buddhists held their largest-ever anti-government rally in Seoul on Aug. 27 and threatened to escalate action unless their demands are met by the Sept. 14 Chuseok holiday. They call on Lee to apologize for a series of acts by government officials and fire his police chief for an "excessive" police inspection in July of a Buddhist leader's car. -Sept10, 2008

The Universal Church:

VATICAN: POPE SENDS A TEXT MESSAGE TO WYD PARTICIPANTS VATICAN CITY, 9 SEP 2008 (VIS)

The Pope has sent a text message by mobile phone to young people who participated in the recent World Youth Day, which was held in Australia in July. The English-language message was transmitted yesterday, 8 September, to mark fifty days since the Mass presided by Benedict XVI on 20 July at Sydney's Randwick Racecourse, the culminating event of World Youth Day. The text message reads: "Dear Friends, fifty days ago we were together for the celebration of Mass. Today I greet you on the birthday of Mary, Mother of the Church. Empowered by the Spirit and courageous like Mary your pilgrimage of faith fills the Church with life! Soon I am to visit France. I ask you all to join me in praying for the young people of France. May we all be rejuvenated in hope! Benedict XVI". During the course of World Youth Day, the Holy Father sent a number of brief messages, which participants were able to receive thanks to a special service provided the by Australian

telecom company. - VIS

India, sisters of Mother Teresa assaulted by Hindu radicals and arrested by police by Nirmala Carvalho The fundamentalists attacked the religious, accusing them of the "kidnapping and forced conversion" of four children between one and two years old. Although their identification documents were in order, the children were taken away from the sisters and put in a government hospital. Tough condemnation by the Indian Church. New Delhi (AsiaNews09/06/2008) The Missionaries of Charity are again in the crosshairs of the fundamentalists: yesterday, September 5 - the anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta - four sisters of Mother Teresa were attacked by about 20 Bajrang Dal activists at the Durgh train station in Chhattisgarh, a state in central India. The Hindu radicals forced them off the train, and then handed them over to police officers while chanting anti-Christian slogans.

The Church in Korea:

1. On the occasion of the Month of Martyrs, September in Korea, various diocesan events are organized to commemorate martyrs and remember ancestors of faith. -For example, in the Archdiocese of Seoul:

The Committee for the Commemoration of Korean Martyrs in the Archdiocese of Seoul (Director: Msgr. Thomas Choi Chang-hwa) and the Lay Apostolate Council of Korea (President: Prof. Dr. Thomas Han Hong-soon) arrange special lectures and Masses to mark the 25th anniversary of the canonization of 103 Korean martyrs. The lectures with the theme "Break Forth in Blossoms! The Flowers of Martyrs!" were arranged at Myeongdong Cathedral of Seoul on September 4, 11 and 18, 2008.

2. Symposium of the Committee to Venerate Martyrs of the Diocese of Uijeongbu

The Committee to Venerate Martyrs of the Diocese of Uijeongbu (Director: Rev. John Choe Seong-u) in cooperation with the Research Foundation of Korean Church History held a symposium on the subject of "The Northern Part of Gyeonggi-do and the Catholic Church in Korea" at the Baekseokdong Parish in Goyang-si, Gyeonggi-do, on August 29, 2008.

At this symposium, historians and experts of the Church gave their presentations and illuminated the aspects of Catholicism of the northern part of Gyeonggi-do chronologically from the Early Church in Korea, through the persecutions, to Japan's colonial rule of Korea.

At this symposium, the Committee to Venerate Martyrs of the Diocese of Uijeongbu presented a comprehensive plan to venerate martyrs in five steps which will be concluded by 2020. The symposium was a significant moment to confirm the new fact that there are 61 parishes or secondary stations which had existed before Japan's colonial rule of Korea or still remain in the northern part of Gyeonggi-do.

3. The Diocesan Center for the 'Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family' is opened in the 2nd campus of Incheon Catholic University, located at New Songdo City, on August 22, 2008. This is the first step for the establishment of the Korean Session of the Institute, which is planned in next year.

The Central Session of the Institute in Rome asked the Diocese of Incheon, if it could establish the Korean Session of the Institute. Responding to the request positively, the Diocese of Incheon decided to establish the Korean Session of the Institute in Incheon and issued a 'Decree for the Opening of the Diocesan Center for the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family' on May 9, 2008. It also appointed Rev. Joseph Cheong Kwang-wung as the President of the 'Preparatory Commission for the Establishment of the Korean Session of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family' on July 3, 2008.

The Oblates:

1. The construction of Anna's House (center for the homeless): As the agreement was signed between the Oblates and the Diocese of Suwon that the Oblates after putting up a building, will use it for 10 years period, in the premises of the Church in Seongnam (Moran), the ground-breaking took place in the beginning of August, 2008. This building will be ready in the beginning of next year. Fr.vincenzo, along with Fr.Anselmo work hard to mobilize funds to make it a reality. While appreciating the works of these two Oblates in Korea, we assure them our prayers.

2. Two Oblates from the Province of Philippines arrived here in Korea on Sept 6, to share the life and works of the Oblates in Korean mission. In less than two days after their arrival, they already commenced their immersion in Korean language. They will learn Korean language a bit, for about three months and then will start to help the Oblates in different works. Fr.Bobby will help Fr.Maurizio in the work with migrants. And Br.Noel will work with Frs.Vincenzo and Anselmo with the homeless.

3. Fr. Al Hubenig, from Canada was here with us for a week. He also preached the annual retreat for the Oblates of Japan/Korea General Delegation. He went around seeing some places in Seoul, Suwon and other places. He also paid visits to the places where Oblates work. His presence was appreciated very much. As he spent most of his time in the formation house, the seminarians had the opportunity to meet and talk to an Oblate, with lots of missionary experiences in Mexico, Rome and in his home country and in many other places as he travels to preach retreats and conducts sessions on the Founder and the Oblate Congregation.

4. Br.Samuel Hong pronounced his first vows, along with 9 others from the Provinces of Colombo, Jaffna, and the delegations of India and Pakistan. The two provincials from Colombo and Jaffna were present to receive their vows. Rt.Rev.Winston, the bishop of Badulla presided over the Eucharistic celebrations.

The parents of Samuel, Mr. John Hong, Mrs. Maria Park and few others from Korea were present to witness his vows. Fr.Varam, from Korea was also present to witness this. Br.Samuel looked quite and calm before his vows and after pronouncing his vows he appeared to be happy and proud to be an Oblate. The parents of Samuel stayed on for few more days to go around Sri Lanka with him. Br. Samuel will spend few more months in Sri Lanka improving his English language. He will probably return to Korea in the month of December. Thanks to the provincial of Colombo and the formators who put in lots of efforts in taking care of Br.Sameul and the students from Korea.

5. Br. Peter Hong, who is in Australia to pursue his Seminary studies at St.Mary's scholasticate, Melbourne, renewed his vows for the first time for one year on September 5, 2008. As the superior of the scholasticate writes

to us: "This Saturday night at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish Sunshine at the 7.00 Mass Br Pedro will renew his vows for the first time. Fr Harry Dyer, the Australian Provincial, will receive the vows. In the same ceremony Br Krishan, who was in the Novitiate with Pedro, will renew his vows also. This is during our vocations weekend. Please pray for Pedro and Krishan and also for the success of the vocations weekend. - Mark Edwards OMI (Scholasticate superior in Melbourne, Australia).

Photos sent from Korea:

<http://www.omijapankorea.net/attach/var9.08/var-photo1.doc>

From Dick -- Wpmcsweeney@aol.com

There isn't much news to report. We're all under medication and activity is minimal. In August Bert Silver was close by staying at his sister's place in Lowell, the neighboring city to Tewksbury. I enjoyed getting out with him for lobster.

By the way, Bert is now 80. It's no longer a secret.

It's hurricane season now. These are very dangerous. One scraped us here, but little damage in the area. I really enjoy being kept up-to-date on news there. Thanks so much. Dick Harr, OMI

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From John K. -- frjkmomi@hotmail.com

How are you doing. I know from your recent email that you are extremely busy. My schedule is not as busy as that by any means. I have a young man who is my trainer. His main objective is to help me to walk in a few more weeks without the need of a walker. He is coming this afternoon. It is very hot and humid these days so I do my walking without a walker in the corridors.

Mike the trainer tells me that I will be walking without the need of special supports within a few weeks. Thank you for your email. It's always good to hear from you. God bless John K.

Fr. John K. Mahoney, O.M.I.

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From Jan -- hjanomi@yahoo.com

Much news I cannot send, since there isn't. One item that might be of interest is that last September 8, the traditional day here in the Province of celebrating the jubilarians of vows and ordination, it was the last time this celebration was held at the house in Korbeek-Lo. This house was built as the Noviciate House in 1937, and has served in that capacity up to now (provided there were novices, which for a good number of years there have not been). It has been decided to sell the whole property, and to move to a smaller one. Such a one having been found not too far away the transfer will take place in October. Father Tosa probably can give you more details.

I've with much interest read the report on the Provincial Council Meeting in Munakata. Thank you for keeping me informed. For now I send my cordial greetings to everyone, and wish you all Godspeed.

Fraternally yours in Christ and M.I.,
Jan, OMI.

Rev. Jan Van Hoydonck, OMI,

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From Jack -- SEPT31932@aol.com

Greetings from Nishi Tokyo

I hope everyone had a meaningful/fruitful Retreat in beautiful Munakata! I was thinking of you all while I was emptying the house and filling the apartment. With a couple of more trips back and forth, I should be finished, and hopefully the apartment will be a little more livable, but right now I'm buried in boxes! Am happy to report that the phone number is the same and that only the last few digits of the address have changed. That's right, I'm only a 5 minute walk from the house. And, I'm even happier to report that the radiation treatments ended on the 11th and that the side-effects are minor and manageable, Thank God. □Take care, □Jack□

Hoyacho 6-10-30-302 (instead of 6-8-17, OK?) □

西東京市保谷町便り

景色の良い宗像で、皆さんは内容が濃く実りの多い黙想会を過ごされたことと思います。私は、古い家の片付けや新しい部屋への荷物の搬入をしながら、皆さんのことを考えていました。あと数回往復すれば引越し作業は終わり、部屋はもう少し住み心地が良くなるでしょう。今は、段ボール箱に埋もれて生活しています。引越し先は歩いて 5 分ほどの同じ町内で、番地と号数が変わったただけなので、電話番号は変更ないのでありがたいです。・新住所: 東京都西東京市保谷町 6-10-30-302・今回は引越しのニュースのほかにも大ニュースをお届けします。放射線治療は無事に終わり、副作用は殆どありません。神に感謝！

From Bert -- bnsilver@lime.ocn.ne.jp

Anan: Sept. 12th, 2008. The two months spent in the States went by very quick. It was a "different" vacation for me. The day that I arrived in California had a call from my niece informing me that my sister Nat fell, broke her hip and was in the hospital. There really wasn't much that I could do about it as I was heading to my brother's in Florida. From the 19th of July until I returned, I ended up as "chief bottle washer and cook" for my sister. Thanks to the computer, I was able to get some recipes.

I was able to use my "perks" to get down to see John in San Antonio. He is doing well with his "walker" and his spirits are great. Also I got up to

Buffalo and spent a few days with Ange. For what he has gone through he also looks good and still has hopes for returning to Japan. I was able to go out a few times with Dick. All three send their best! Have put in some pictures of them.

After my 80th birthday with the family, I headed back to Anan. As always it is nice to be back and looking forward to the next 80. Bert, OMI

Attachment: Bert's Photos include visit to Ange, Dick and John K.

<http://www.omijapankorea.net/attach/ber9.08/ber-photo1.doc>

From Jerry – jerry@star.quolia.com

Still going for daily two-hour rehab sessions at Mizobuchi Sekeigeka Rehabilitation Clinic, about 10 minute drive from my house. If all goes well, I should be finished by the end of October. I look forward to going back to a full schedule by the beginning of next year.

From Brad -- brozairo@gmail.com

Sabbatical Pilgrimage at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI)

Dear Brothers, Greetings from the Philippines!

I am happy to share with you on my sabbatical program that I am following at the moment here in Manila. I think if you read what is below you will know the type of program.

Sabbatical at EAPI is a holistic program which caters to the laity, religious and ordained ministers who are in transition and in need of a change of pace away from their ordinary environment and lifestyle after a busy life of ministry.

- The focus of the Sabbatical Pilgrimage is inner journey, inner work.

- It creates a space that facilitates personal transition in a non-judgmental atmosphere giving the participants the chance to try new behavior, make mistakes and learn in the process. Thus, participants can relax in their sabbatical experience becoming more aware of rest and reflection as an integral part of living and spiritual renewal.
- It engages in a process of integrating body, mind and spirit through experiential classes.
- It provides a safe place to do some of life's work in the context of communion with co-journeymen.

The unique "modular" style of course work brings experts in theology, spirituality, scripture and psycho-spiritual integration. The Sabbatical Group sometimes joins participants from the Pastoral Renewal Program. Upon finishing the Sabbatical Pilgrimage, the participants receive a certificate of completion. It is expected that participants are committed to the entire program.

-Normally there are no scheduled activities on weekends except for some special cases. In most days, there is time for leisure, reflection, reading and resting.

The EAPI facilitators make themselves available for personal consultations and informal interactions within the duration of their modular classes.

-A reading program is strongly recommended. The Sabbatical participants may avail of EAPI facilities like the library which houses up-to-date materials including books, periodical subscriptions, etc.

Eucharistic liturgies, bi-weekly spiritual direction, days of prayer, contemplative sitting, praying with scriptures, rituals, body prayer, integrative art, journal writing, healing massage and a 6-day retreat are integral to the holistic approach of EAPI. The daily schedule includes time for leisure and recreation. There are also some scheduled days for community outings.

I enjoy not only the program ("Sabbatical Pilgrimage") but also the company of my friends. We are fifteen from the Asia Pacific. Different cultures, traditions and all that we share as a group makes my experience rich and I feel more Asian too! I am fully concentrating on my program and have almost

forgotten Japan! BUT not the Oblates! You are in my thoughts and prayers. I hope to see you next spring. Until then keep smiling and stay healthy. Brad.

(Our group picture)



From Burns -- burnsbun@gmail.com

Sense of Belongingness

The other day Gerald approached and asked me to write and contribute something for this semester's Tubod issue. He said that if possible I could write something about my mission exposure overseas since the theme for this semester's Tubod is about Mission ad intra/ ad extra. With Gerald's convincing prowess I could not say other than "YES, I will write but please give me time."

So I wasted no time and begin immediately to gather my thoughts and reflections regarding my stay in Japan. If I were to put into words my whole stay in Japan the phrase Sense of Belongingness rightly captures it.

February 23, 2006 the very day when I started my long list of first time journeys. It was my first time to queue at the Immigration, my first time to use my passport, my first time to ride on an international flight, my first time to be out of the country, my first time to experience winter, my first time to be in a foreign land, my first time to take a bath in public, my first time to use chopsticks, my first time to be in an international Oblate community, etc. The list just does not stop to a halt. For sure I would consume a lot of pages if I were to write all my first time experiences.

Despite these long lists of first time experiences I did not have the difficulty adjusting. The whole community, with opens arms, warmly welcomed and accepted me. I easily integrated to community. Even though I was just a few days old in the place but I felt that I've been there for ages because of the warm welcome and support they gave me. I was literally different to them in many ways but they accepted me as if I am one with them. I was a duck in a bunch of geese but they welcomed and accepted me and even treated me as one of them. In my first step in the long ladder of stay in Japan they already let me feel the sense of belongingness.

Even though my Japanese was truly, deeply, madly horrible but still they tried to understand every hiragana I uttered. They turned on they imaginative mode just to figure out what I was trying to say. I became an instant hand signal specialist since I could only communicate through hand signals. They patiently taught me a lot of things...the proper usage of chopsticks, the pronunciations of the words, proper way of taking a bath in public, when to greet and talk to children, even the proper way of slurping. I was like a baby who knows nothing. However, despite the mistakes and failures that I made, they patiently corrected me and let me feel that they are there always to support me. And indeed, I really felt that sense of belongingness from the very first day I was in Japan up to the last day of my stay there. Never did they let me feel that I was a duck in a bunch of geese.

The kindergarten, a few steps away form the rectory, holds a special place in my heart. From group D (3 years old) children up to the teaching staff, I owe a heartfelt thanks and gratitude. The children in their own little way helped me get rid of loneliness by welcoming me in any of their school

activities...memorizing hiragana, knitting threads, making odangos out of sand, training for the sports fest, making origamis...everything. They were my teachers and co-journeymen in many ways. I also owe a lot to the teachers for patiently bearing with me. I also give thanks to the parents of the kids for trusting their kids to me in learning English and being their yayo at times. Indeed, I really felt being one with you guys. Never did they let me feel that I was a duckling in a bunch of goslings.

Being in a foreign land is really a challenge. Living and not just mere surviving in a place where you are always a foreigner is fun yet challenging. And one of the many challenges that a missionary like me has to hurdle and face is learning the language. And I totally agree with Fr. Ray, OMI when he said that learning another language is already a mission. Yes, it's already a mission because you have to put your best foot forward in order to converse with the natives. A single mistake in the pronunciation could lead you to "trouble". Learning and studying with other foreigners is also another venue for missionary work. Lending your listening ears to these young lads and guys in the class is already a big service to them. Being with them in their struggles and letting them feel that you are one with them in their struggles is already a big ministry. Indeed, being a missionary knows no bounds: believers of the same faith or not, same age bracket or not, same cultural background or not, same goals and purposes or not, etc. Yes, I could say and I proudly say that YMCA staff and classmates really welcomed me and let me feel the sense of belongingness. Yes, we may have different skin colors, faiths, vocations, outlook in life but it did not hinder us to be one. It did not hinder us to let others feel that sense of belongingness. Never did they let me feel that I could not honk in a bunch of honking geese.

The "Filipinas/ Filipinos" whom I encountered in many different occasions is also another group that let me feel the sense of belongingness. I could not count anymore the many things and blessings that they whole-heartedly shared with me. They welcomed me not just as their "kababayan" but as a younger brother as well. Even though it was just my first time to meet them but it felt like we were friends already back then. It was really a privilege to meet them and share life with them. I must mention that even in a short span of time of mingling with them I have my own "conversion" of the way I look at Filipinos in Japan. To all of you guys, Thank you very much for guiding me and for being my big sisters and brothers. I'm really proud of you. Kokoro kara arigatou gozaimashita! Itsu ka kikai

attara Nihon demo Firipin demo doko demo aimashou. Never did they let feel that I was a duckling in a bunch of ducks.

After my language studies I was given the chance to visit all the OMI mission areas. It was again another experience that let me feel the sense of belongingness. It's time to practice my Japanese. In my visitations to the different OMI mission areas I should say that more than just practicing my Japanese it was more on journeying with my Oblate brothers in their missionary works even just for a short span of time. My stay in each mission areas was rather short but I really felt the sense of belongingness. In one of my articles, I wrote something about what really matters most in this once in a lifetime experience. And I would like to put them in this write up again.

Yes, 1 week or 2 weeks of stay in each mission area was really short but I believe that what matters most is not the distance traveled or how many days I will stay or how many areas I will visit, rather, the experience gained and journeying with my Oblates brothers is the one that really matters. What matters most is not how many people I've met or I will meet, rather, how I spend the time with them that matters. What matters most is not the type of food that is on the table, rather, the laughter and stories shared during meals. Indeed, it is not the quality of ingredients that makes the food delicious but the sharing of it with a brother, which makes it delicious.

It was really an experience that I can never forget. Though, there were challenges but I really enjoyed the whole experience. To Fr. Tom: Yes, I hanged on and I really enjoyed the ride. Never did they let me feel that I was a duckling learning to fly in a bunch of expert fliers.

My whole MEO experience would not be as meaningful and enjoyable without the presence of the ever supporting parishioners in the different parishes that I've been to. I could not have been able to stay in Japan for more than 2 years if not because of their undying love, support and care. I don't have to mention that I really felt the sense of belongingness. Minasama, kokoro kara arigatou gozaimashita. (From the bottom of my heart, thank you!) Nihon ni kaeritai yo. Kaeritai? Yes, I purposely use the word "Kaeritai" (come back) and not ikitai (go) because Japan is already my second home. To all of you guys, thank you very much for letting me be a part in your V-formation. Itsuka mata aimashou. Someday, let's fly again and honk together.

Indeed, what's important is not what you are but who you are!

From Wency -- wencylag@ta2.so-net.ne.jp

GOING, GOING... GONE! (But only for the time being)

After the cutting off of the basic utilities (electricity, water, gas, phone, internet, etc.) of the former Itami rectory for the very last time in early August, the wreckers came and methodically demolished the 60 year old building and garage with basement that included a boiler room, laundry room, atelier, etc. Emptying the Itami rectory of its contents and making it ready for demolition gave us a glimpse of the initial years of the Oblate mission. The building was strongly built with facilities for central heating generated from the underground boiler room, what might have been considered a "luxury" at a time when Japan was still recovering from the ravages of WWII. All of us would attribute the work to the efforts of late Fr. Bob GILL, founder of the mission. Fr. Gill built sturdy buildings to last for 50 years and more. Itami rectory was just one of them.

The late Mr. OKADA Rihei, former mayor of Itami and parishioner of Itami Church helped the Oblates purchase the Itami rectory/kindergarten land which is just a little bit shy of 1000 tsubo (1 tsubo is about 3.3 sq/m). We often hear stories of how cheap the price of land in the area was at that time some as cheap as 100 yen per tsubo. The late Mr. Okada had a vision of modernizing Itami City and one way to do this was opening up to foreign influence including welcoming foreign missionaries. He personally picked the land that the pioneering Oblates bought.

Eddie Williams said that the rec hall of the now gone Itami rectory used to be the parish chapel, hence the tall ceiling, chandeliers, etc. After a while, the place became too small and the kindergarten hall was used for Sunday services until the present church building was completed in 1967.

Itami rectory was known for its fine hospitality. We have heard many stories of how Fr. Gill served sumptuous dinners and how one would have earned his ire if one bypassed Itami rectory on one's way to Shikoku from Tokyo, for example.

Christ the King Kindergarten building will rise on the same spot where the

Itami rectory used to stand. The present kindergarten building has been judged "unsafe for use" by the government and that is the reason for the rush in building a new one. The new building is being built by TSUCHIYA GUMI (construction firm) which has its main office in Gifu Prefecture to the tune of 250,000M++ (half of the amount is being loaned from the school corporation) and is scheduled to be completed sometime in March, 2009.

Hopefully, the present venture that we have undertaken will not only mean demolishing buildings, erecting new ones and paying off debts after that. Hopefully also, the new rectory will not only be a place where older Oblates can retire but would be a place where new missionary endeavors will be hatched. And, may this whole endeavor usher in a new era especially for the younger Oblates as they make their presence felt in the Kansai area and beyond.

Photos of Itami building being demolished:

<http://www.omijapankorea.net/attach/wen9.08/wen-photol.doc>

From Gen -- genomijp@hotmail.com

Redoing Toyohashi Church

The complements I have received during the last few days for the new look of the Church can't compensate for all the trouble I had to go through to have it done. For me it was a clear need, given the reality of our parish. However, all the history and feelings involved in each stone, in each piece of that building became an obstacle. I met strong opposition and pressure from many sides for 2 years just to clarify the absolute need for the change.

Our church has become a much brighter place after the change. On the central wall, after a long hesitation, I finally painted a Transfiguration panel; a really prayerful experience and put into it all the difficulties I lived during the process. People seem to be proud of it. However, myself, I am not. In many persons attitude I see absolutely no change. I realize how far the experience of prayer in the Church had been insufficient to change people's hearts. Probably, most of us would like to have a peaceful space

where we can fall sleep like the three apostles who went with Jesus to Mount Tabor. Exactly, for that reason they don't appear in the picture. We can very easily fulfill that role.

From the beginning I knew that wasn't the only change needed in the parish. As Saint Francis of Assisi realized in front of crucifix of Saint Damian, the needed renewed of the church goes far beyond wall and painting. My hope is that now we can overcome what we had before, i.e. that the church is the church of the Japanese believers and they allow foreigners to use it. It seems that now everyone can say "this is our church!" Hopefully now we can make true the Isaiah's words: "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples", a place, where, as in the experience of the Transfiguration, Jesus himself didn't ignore Moses and Elias's memories. All the history and tradition of our parish leads us to a living encounter with God helping us to realize what is really essential for our faith journey.

Photos of Gen's hand-painted masterpiece:

<http://www.omijapankorea.net/attach/gen9.08/gen-photol.doc>

From Ray -- bourgoin@trust.ocn.ne.jp

A BIG HURDLE

For what it may be worth, I have one item I'd like to share with you all. It's a big hassle for a foreigner to die in Japan.

Not just anyone can register your death at the city hall. If not registered you can't be cremated and buried.

Take the case of Lei Simons as an example. When I sat down with the funeral director, the first thing he asked was who would register his death. I said I was willing to do it. He said it must be a next of kin. Well his kin was too far away to register at the Kochi City Hall.

Other than next of kin, it can be someone who lives with you. Lei was living alone. We suggested Ms. Takeda as she always stayed at the Aonami no Ie, therefore on the same property. The funeral director called the city hall

and they looked at their computers and she had a different address, since she was registered at her home address, which had a different house number. So she was out.

Another possibility is your landlord. In this case, the rectory belonging to the Bishop, he would have been the landlord ... but he was at a meeting of Bishops in Tokyo. Even if he had been in Takamatsu, unless he made the trip to Kochi City Hall, he wouldn't have been available to register.

Since Lei died in the hospital, wondered about the Doctor he had at the hospital? We called and the doctor had left for a seminar and was unavailable. But the "Fuku-incho" said bring the documents and I'll sign. So the funeral director went and got the signature.

He then brought the paper work to City Hall and they refused because ONLY the "Incho" of a hospital can officially register a death. The funeral director was quick to answer: "When I went to the hospital the 'Incho' was gone out-of-town so I got the 'Fuku-incho' to do it." With that City Hall relented and accepted the "lie". So Lei could be cremated and buried.

All this to say, that we foreigners, and Japanese who have no relatives in Japan, who live alone have to be careful. If they pass on in a hospital, we now know the procedure. If at home or elsewhere, we may rely on the landlord (who many times want to have nothing to do with death and will not sign) [taken from the funeral director's experience].

One of 2 possible solutions is to ask the landlord/landlady beforehand if he/she would be willing to do so when/if the time comes. If he/she is willing, it would be good for the OMI to know his/her name, address and phone number.

The other solution (while remaining to live where you do, calling it your place of work), you register your name, officially, at the address of the nearest OMI house. You can keep your mailing address as where you are, but at least we can say someone is living with you because your official address is the OMI house. With this solution, however, you'd have to use the OMI address for important matters.

Announcements:

1. Varam will handle the October and November Issues of the Delegation Newsletter. Please forward all materials to him at this address: varamomi@hotmail.com. Thank you.
2. Within a week or two, the Delegation Newsletter Archives will be accessed by going directly to the Japan/Korea OMI website and click "Newsletters" located in the menu. <http://www.omijapankorea.net/>
3. We would like someone to take over the Delegation OMI Website and update it regularly. Are there any volunteers?
4. Please access the OMI Website, go to 'Personnel' in the menu, and check the information under your name. <http://www.omijapankorea.net/> If you notice any errors, kindly notify Jerry at jerry@shirt.ocn.ne.jp
5. Delegation Newsletter Archives at present URL address:
<http://www.omijapankorea.net/delegationnews/index5.html>

Your Opinion:

Please look at the **OMI Blog**: <http://www.omijapankorea.net/blog/>

Questions:

1. Are you interested in continuing the "Delegation OMI Blog" as it is? If you say "yes", the OMI Blog will be accessed by going directly to the "Japan/Korea OMI website" and click "Blogs" in the menu.
2. Would you prefer instead to have individual Blogs? If "yes", we will cancel the "Delegation OMI Blog" and the 'individual Blogs' will be accessed by going directly to the "Japan/Korea OMI website" and click "Blogs" in the menu.

3. Or, in short, should we just cancel the project? Would appreciate your reply asap. Thanks! Jerry

