

## **The Oblate Mission in Vietnam**

The Missionary Oblates were allowed by the Communist government to enter Vietnam in 2010 to perform limited missionary work; they had been there since 2001. The Oblates are one of just a handful of religious congregations given permission to work in the country. Much of their work is pastoral in nature, but they also have outreach programs including overseeing the Bung Orphanage.

The Mission of Vietnam is attached to the Oblate Province of France. There are 97 professed Oblates - priests & brothers. This includes 13 that are studying abroad and 15 first year scholastics. A source of great pride for members of the Vietnam mission is that there are 57 Oblate seminarians currently in the country discerning a calling to religious life. This is the largest number of Oblate seminarians in any country.

I was very happy to have been invited by the Mission Superior of Vietnam Fr. Emmanuel Tran Quang Khuong OMI. The purpose of my trip was to visit the formation houses and to talk to the Oblate seminarians about the Oblate mission in Japan-Korea. My daily schedule was well planned and I was accompanied by an interpreter in the person of Fr. Jacques OMI. While staying with the postulants I made my visits to the formation houses.

In the Pre-Novitiate there are 16 Pre-Novices, of whom one can speak some Japanese, because he lived in Fukuoka for 3 years and was attending mass at Yoshizuka church when Fr. Bernard was the pastor. When I greeted him in Japanese he was very happy and wanted to practice his Japanese with me. I hope he will join us in the future.

After my visit to the Pre-Novitiate I made a trip to a different state in Ho Chi Minh City to meet with the Novices and the Scholastics. In the Novitiate there are 8 Novices. I spent 2 nights with them in a very relaxed atmosphere. They tried their best to communicate with me in English. In fact, one of the Novices interpreted my homily from English to Vietnamese.

The Scholasticate has almost 60 Scholastics! The day I visited them (Dec. 8, 2019) the Oblates had organized a one-day camp for the youth and the Scholastics were very busy, but they came together to listen to me. I found some who are interested in having an exposure in Japan-Korea. I also came across a few who can manage to carry on a conversation in English. I feel that since ours is an international congregation these young men are encouraged to learn English as their second language. I was happy to spend the day with them and to be part of the camp which was attended by over 300 young people!

After visiting the formation houses I had some time to also visit two Oblate missions before I returned to Japan. I am very much grateful to Fr. Roland Jacques OMI for helping me with a visa to enter Vietnam. I am also thankful to the Mission Superior and all those who took good care of me and for making my visit a memorable one. Vietnam is a young and up-coming mission but to work in a communist country is not very easy. Let us pray that our Founder may inspire the Oblates in Vietnam so that they may continue to plant the seeds of hope for the future, and may our Blessed Mother accompany them as they serve the people especially the poor.

- Bradly Rozairo OMI



Postulants and Scholastics



Novitiate community



Pre-Novitiate community (seated 3<sup>rd</sup> from right is the Pre-Novice who lived in Japan)



Orphans – looked after by the Oblates