

Delegation of Japan-Korea: A Retrospection (回顧)



Dear Brothers,

It was in 2016 summer that I received a notice from Rome about my appointment as the Superior of the Delegation. At that time, I was in Sri Lanka on vacation and was getting ready to go to Rome to attend the General Chapter (Sept. 13 ~ Oct. 11, 2016). On my return to Japan after the Chapter, I was installed on October 29, 2016. It has been more than three years since then, and I have just begun my second term.

At this juncture, I tried to look back at the past three years to see how we have journeyed together. I thought instead of making a very long report with details of things which happened in the past, it would be good to concentrate on a particular subject. Therefore, I have chosen the last three (2017, 2018, 2019) spring meetings because as you know, in the Delegation it has been a custom that we come together every spring to pray, study, reflect and discuss matters that concern our MISSION in Japan-Korea. Since this summary is mainly based on MISSION, I wish that it will not only refresh our past memories, but will also help us see where the Spirit has been leading us.

SPRING MEETINGS:

Having listened to different talks and discussions for almost a month in Rome during the Chapter, on my return to Japan I felt heavy. But, since the Chapter has given us “homework” for the next six years, I had a discussion with my council and we decided to take up the Acts of the 36th General Chapter and arranged a workshop for our 2017 spring meeting.

Thanks to Fr. Claudio BERTUCCIO OMI, who was the Chapter Commissioner for facilitating and helping us to understand the Acts of the Chapter. We spent a good amount of time in groups discussing each call of the Chapter, namely *mission and the new faces of the poor, mission with youth, formation for mission, mission and interculturality, mission and social media and mission & finance*. At the end of the workshop we came up with a summary which was taken up by the council for consideration. Having gone through what we did, it was obvious that given the number of personnel in the Delegation, we could not put into action each call of the Chapter.

Therefore, we chose ***mission and the new faces of the poor*** – specifically Migrants, and ***mission with youth***. In order to serve migrants and youth we came up with the following steps.

Mission and the New faces of the poor – Migrants (care givers, students etc.)

Steps we took:

- Study the situation (find out why they've become poor)
- Networking with others
- Our availability to reach out and build bridges with those at the peripheries

Mission with Youth –

Steps we took:

- Listen to the youth and understand them
- Have Recreation and Fellowship (coffee, movie, karaoke etc.)
- Seek support from parents
- Communication through media (Facebook, Messenger, Line etc.)
- Cooperating with networking
- Spiritual guidance

The following year (2018), to facilitate our spring meeting, we had the privilege of having two very important persons from Rome: Fr. Peter STOLL OMI, Regional Councillor for Asia-Oceania and Fr. Marc DESSUREAULT OMI, Treasurer General. Prior to that meeting I was asked by our Regional Councillor to update him on our 2017 spring meeting, so that he could pick up a few things from our sharing, and help us reflect further on our mission and ministry. As you may remember he came up with 3 questions: WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE? WHAT IF I STARTED OVER AGAIN AT THE AGE OF 40? and WHAT CAN WE DO NOW? We spent a good amount of time working on these questions in groups and came up with some answers. Since the answers were too long I do not want to include them here and make this long summary longer! but if you wish to have them, let me know. I think our answers to the above questions to some extent made us reflect on our past, present and what we might look forward to in the future.

After that session, our Treasurer General based his sharing on the sixth call of the Chapter, “***mission and finance***” and made us aware of accountability and responsibility in using money, goods, resources etc. in our Delegation and mission.

Last year (2019), with the help of two resource persons, Fr Graziano BATTISTELLA C. S and Ms. Yukari YAMASHITA, we came together to concentrate on ‘Migrants, Refugees and Peoples on the Move’. This theme was chosen with the intention of deepening our understanding of ministry to migrants and to look into the possibility of networking with others.

For this year (2020), we had planned to take up 2 topics for discussion, namely the ‘Policy for Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults’ and the ‘Process of Reflection and Evaluation of Our Mission in Japan-Korea with Future Planning’. But, due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible.



MEETING IN AUTUMN 2019:

Having given you a brief summary of the past spring meetings, I think at this point it is also important to mention that in autumn 2019, those of us in Japan came together for a session with Bishop ABELLA from October 15 – 16 to concentrate on our mission in Japan. There were 2 important events in the year 2019 that enabled us get together in Osaka.

1. Seventy years of Oblate mission and ministry in Japan
2. Extraordinary Missionary Month (EMM) - October

The Oblates arrived in Japan in the year 1948, and the mission began the following year. As Oblates, we have been ministering to people in Japan for more than seventy years, and in Korea for the last thirty years. Thanks to Pope Francis for giving us an opportunity during the Extraordinary Missionary Month to come together, *to thank God for our presence in Japan* and also *to renew and reawaken our commitment to mission*.

The session we had with Bishop ABELLA helped us to continue the process of reflection and evaluation of our mission in Japan with future planning. Thanks to the Bishop for sharing his experience and insights with us and also for inviting us to stay focused on our future, while listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The two important events mentioned above, gave us an opportunity to look back on our past with gratitude, to evaluate our present and to look into the future with hope.

After that session in October, to continue the process of evaluation, we had planned another gathering (STEP 1) on 24th February 2020, again with Bishop ABELLA as our facilitator. But as you know the COVID-19 pandemic decided otherwise. But, now that life is gradually returning, I think we will be able to get together. Until then, I would kindly invite us to go back to the questions given to us in preparation for the session in autumn, and also to go through the summary of talk given by Bishop ABELLA. In case you have lost them, see the attachments.

Brothers, I hope that my attempt to make a synthesis of the last three spring meetings has helped you understand what we have been doing together. Thank you for your support, co-operation and contribution to the Delegation. Trusting in God's providence, let us move forward towards future. May our Blessed Mother accompany us in this journey.

“We cannot do everything.....but can do something. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning...”
Read the rest from the Prayer of Archbishop Oscar Romero (below) for your meditation and reflection.

Thank you.

Brad Rozairo OMI
Delegation Superior

July 2020

IN MEMORY OF
ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO

(15 August 1917 – 24 March 1980)

A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw

It helps now and then to step back and take a long view.
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of
saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession
brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives include everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one
day will grow. We water the seeds already planted
knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects
far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of
liberation in realizing this.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's
grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results, but that is the
difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not
messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.