



# Far East Star

Summer 2021



## From the Desk of the Delegation Superior...

Brad Rozairo OMI

Dear Brothers,

Once the hot summer begins to calm down, we look forward to autumn which brings cool air to refresh our tired bodies, and colourful leaves to lift our spirits. The change of seasons offers an opportunity to reassess and figure out what is working and what isn't. It may be the perfect time to begin something new or



take on new challenges provided we are ready for a change. For change to happen, something must die. *But, don't we often fear change because it demands sacrificing something which gives comfort to our lives?*

In the past by listening to the responses of a few Oblates on the subject of transfer, I felt that there was a resistance to change. Without saying 'yes' to change, some might remain in a particular place for years. I think that can be interpreted either as an indirect 'no' or unwillingness to change. *Why are we afraid to change?*

One of the reasons why we are not willing to change is because we often lean on what some call "emotional crutches". This means an object or place that provides a temporary comfort for an individual in times of turmoil. Fear to change, refusal to take action, stay in control of a certain lifestyle or controlling finances are all signs of not wanting to lose that which makes life secure, dependable, easy and comfortable. *Isn't this true for most of us?*

Talking to the members of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Pope Francis said that **"We must not be afraid to leave 'old wineskins,' that is, to renew the routines and structures that, in the life of the church and in consecrated life, no longer respond to what God is asking us today in order to promote his kingdom in the world"**. He also said to a group of religious that structures **"prevent us from hearing the cry of those awaiting the good news of Jesus Christ."** *Are we not attached to certain structures like parishes or kindergartens that prevent us from seeing and listening to the cry of the poor around us?*

After many years of our presence in Japan, I look back at the mission and I feel that we are in a state of 'stagnation'. In other words, we are quite com-

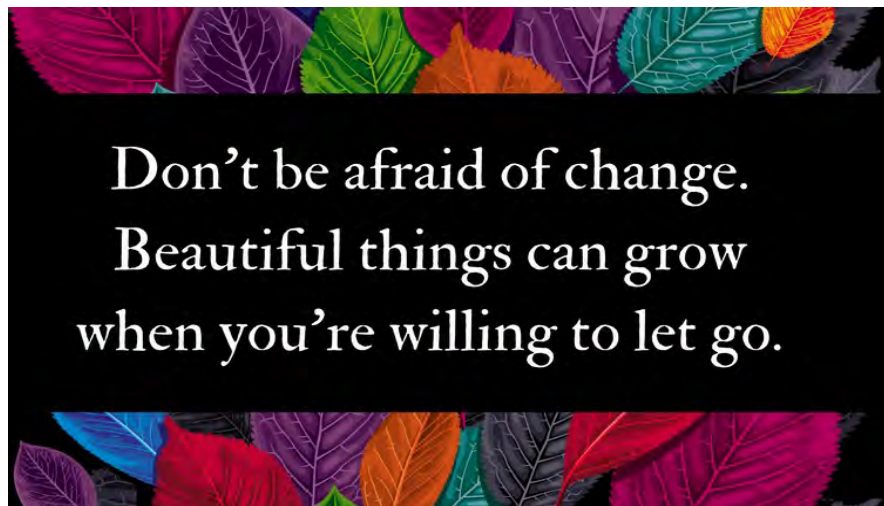
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comfortable with what we have been doing and would like to maintain the “status quo”, which means “*no change*”. When social situations change and new challenges are thrown at us, we remain indifferent. This is not going to help us move forward. Therefore, I feel that as a Delegation, we must seriously reflect on *where we are, where we want to go, and how we want to get there*.

In a few days, we will begin the annual retreat, which is an appropriate time to listen to what God is telling us at this time of the pandemic. I believe that He wants us to respond to the demands of changing realities by taking risks. *Are we ready to accept the new challenges the Holy Spirit is asking of us as Missionary Oblates working in Japan?*

May God give us the courage to let go of our fears, worries and anxieties that prevent us from reaching out to the new faces of the poor in today’s society.

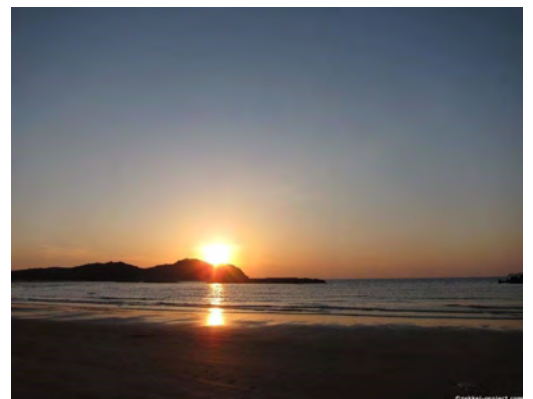


### Greetings from Koga Mission!

**Bill Maher OMI**

I live in the priest’s house of Koga parish and from my second-floor window to the left I see the sunsets and to the right I can see the sunrise. The sunsets with the beautiful shades of a blend of reds, oranges and yellows, coming up over the line of pine trees and the sun sinking behind those same trees. And when you are actually at the ocean, the sun a fiery orb, looks like it’s gradually receding into the waters below, and the waters below mirror this effect.

The story goes that a little girl was sitting with her father by the ocean watching the sun go down and the father said, “watch closely now, going...going...going...gone”! With that the little girl said, “do it again daddy”. It’s truly something that you want to have repeated you never can seem to get enough of it. Some years ago, when my schedule allowed it I would go down to the ocean at dusk to see what I dubbed, “the greatest show on earth”! And the sunrises with their beauties of a new day dawning. The golden rays of the sun give a bright coloring to the clouds and mountains. Shades of yellow, amber, copper and all of a sudden, this small ball of light in the sky goes on increasing in size and shine. The sunrise greets me in the morning. Or on a cloudy day it can only peek through the clouds or sometimes chases them away. At any rate sunsets and sunrises remind us of the cycles of nature that constantly remind us of the love of the Lord for each and every one of us. It’s always there, we just have to open our eyes. The cycles of nature, wow! To top things off, I can sometimes see the beautiful moons right out of my bedroom window. The other night a full moon was especially beautiful.



Last month I have been listening to a series of zoom lectures and sharing program put on by the Asia-Oceania Region for the 39 Scholastics from eight of our Oblate units. The theme was *Celebrating the Asian Soil - Formation for Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Dialogue*. I found some of it very interesting and some were way over my head, but I'm very thankful that it was brought to our attention and we were invited. All in all, it gives me great hope for the future. So many Asian young men imbibed with the spirit of the Founder, preparing themselves for a new approach to evangelization and for their lifetime commitment to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. You often hear about how many are in this or in that Delegation, but Zoom gives you at least a chance to meet the person on a screen although I did not talk to any of them personally.



I think that St. Eugene is very pleased with what he sees happening in the group the Lord asked him to form.

When I was at the Aix Experience years ago, they had Bishop De Mazenods' many letters pinned to the ceiling of one long hallway, hundreds of them. He spent hours trying to keep in touch with his group spread throughout the world. He was personally related to each of its members. I think he would have had a great time with a modern day I-pad. It was love of Jesus Christ and a dominant desire to live and preach his Gospel among the poorest of the poor

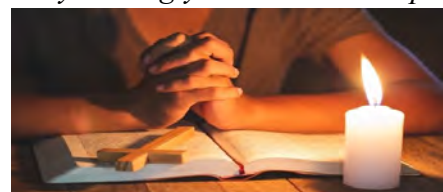
that fired the passion and empowered the drive of St. Eugene. At the time of his death in 1861, there were six Oblate bishops and over 400 missionaries working in ten countries.

By the way, on the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly (July 25), we prayed for the elderly.

Let me include a prayer by Hermann Heuvers S.J which gives me a lot of consolation in my old age.

### **“Life’s Greatest Task”**

*What is this life's most important task? -To grow old with a cheerful heart,- To be still even when I would like to be active,- To be silent when I would like to talk,-To have hope in times of frustration,-To carry my cross in humility and serenity of heart,-To put aside envy even when I see younger people walking God's path full of health and energy,-To humbly accept help from others when I would rather work for the sake of others,-So when I can no longer be useful for others because of frailty I need to gently and humbly accept the heavy burden of old age as a gift from God.- I have an aged heart that has been in use a long time and now God is giving it a final polishing so that I can return to my true home all shining. -To gradually release myself from the chains that bind me to this world is indeed a wonderful work.- When I cannot do things let me humbly accept these circumstances in humility.- However for my closing years God has kept for me the most important work of all, and that is:--Prayer--Hands can't do anything but to the very last they can be folded in prayer-To ask for the blessings of God on all who he loves.-And when all is done and you lay on your death bed you'll hear the voice of God, -Come my friend , We haven't deserted you. Only the heart (and its love) are forever.*



## **Praying the Rosary with Pope Francis in South Korea**

**Maurizio Giorgianni OMI**

### ***Migrants speak...***

**My name is Menchie Milanes, I am Filipina married to a Korean. I am forty years old. I came first to Korea in 2007, I am currently living in Yong-in Province with my husband and our two kids (son and daughter). I work as a factory worker and a volunteer English Teacher and assistant in the Elementary School where my kids graduated. I have been working in many different jobs before. but, then the Covid Pandemic took place last year. Some establishments closed and other Companies went bankrupt I decided to stop and become a fulltime housewife.**





I am a member of our church and our community. The Gwangju Emmaus Migrants Community, is headed by Fr. Maurizio Giorgianni OMI, who is assigned for the assistance and welfare of the migrants living and working here in Gwangju. In our community since most of us are catholic, Fr. Maurizio formed a group to pray the Rosary. We do volunteer work and also help by serving Mass.

Being an active member of the Rosary group, I was happy to be part of the Prayer Marathon initiated by Pope Francis during the month of May, dedicated to Mama Mary. Pope called us out to pray the rosary for an end to the pandemic while choosing Korea as one of the hosts for the recitation of the rosary. A week before praying of the rosary, Fr. Maurizio invited the migrants to participate, but since we were in the strict implementation of social distancing, only a few could come to the shrine. Four of us (3 Filipina and a brother from East-Timor) were chosen to represent our community in the prayer marathon, held at a very beautiful shrine. The prayer intention on that day was for the Youth all over the world. The Bishop offered a prayer for the youth. We

also prayed for those suffering from Covid-19, frontline workers and migrants working abroad.

It is hard to be away from your family and loved ones especially at this time of the pandemic, and it creates fear in you. But I felt happy and blessed to be part of this prayer marathon, and to receive strength from the Lord to endure this situation. It was a humble experience to be one in prayer with people from different countries from young to old united together for a purpose.

At the moment of prayer, you feel the goosebumps and the working of the Holy spirit. I believe that through this prayer marathon God will hear us, and will bring healing to our world and above all an end to this pandemic. I am thankful to God for this unforgettable experience. I also thank Fr. Maurizio for guiding us and giving us the opportunity to take part in this prayer service.

**My name is Jacarias Barreto Gancalves (Age 31). I come from East-Timor. I arrived in Korea in 2017. My family in East Timor lives a very simple life.**

My father died a few years ago, his name was Joao de Jesus, my mother's name is Rufina Barreto she is still alive. I have one brother and two sisters; they are all married. I am the youngest child of the family and am single.

I came to Korea to find a job and to support my mother and my family. I came here with many dreams, but since my arrival I have changed the place of work already three times. It is not easy to work in a foreign country and I do not have many friends, but I found a lot of help and support from the community of Emmaus in Gwangju, and from Fr. Maurizio.



I come from a Catholic family. I was baptized in my country but I did not receive first Holy Communion. When I met Fr. Maurizio, I asked him if I could receive Communion. Father prepared me for 3 months and I received first Holy Communion last year and it was a blessing. This year I was supposed to go back to my country because my contract has finished, but Covid-19, decided otherwise. The government of Korea decided to extend my visa and all the visas of the workers that were going to expire for one year. The reason was because Korea had a shortage of migrants coming in during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the workers who were here were allowed to work for one more year. It is a blessing for me and for my family.

Fr. Maurizio invited me to pray the rosary at Namyang Shrine with Pope Francis for an end to the pandemic. I am a bit shy, so I do not like places with many people, but I was glad to be there and to pray with other foreigners, Korean priests and Nuns. While I was there, I was also praying for my mother and my family and friends to be protected by Mary from Covid. I was also lucky to be chosen to offer the candle to Mama Mary in the last mystery of the Rosary. It was a happy experience for me.



**Hello everyone! I am Hwang Ga Eun my Korean name and Aiza Dela Cruz is my Filipino name, I am 33 years of age. I have two daughters and soon to be three this coming month of August. I have been in Korea for almost 14 years and counting more. I am working as a machine operator at an electronic company together with my husband.**

I come from the school of Sisters of Mary who are devoted to the Virgin of the Poor. I started to pray the rosary when I was in my high school. Now I belong to Gwangju Catholic Emmaus Community. Every Sunday I serve the liturgy and on Saturday we pray the Holy Rosary together with Fr. Maurizio.

I was very happy to be chosen and to join the rest from different countries to pray the rosary.

Prayer is the best medicine for all our needs and prayer is the powerful medicine for all nations. It is said that if we pray together no matter how difficult our lives, how dark our future, God will never give up on us and will always make our way and enlighten our future. I believe that by praying the rosary we save many lives in the world.

**My name is Mary Ann Herrera, a migrant and I am from Gwangju Emmaus Catholic Community. I am married with 5 children, who are all living in the Philippines, and I am an active volunteer of Gwangju Emmaus Migrant Catholic Community since 2005.**

Praying the rosary is one of my daily routines since I arrived in South Korea in 2005. This is where I get my strength, protection, and safety. So, when our community priest, Fr. Maurizio told us in our Sunday Mass that all Suwon Emmaus communities were invited to attend to pray the rosary, I was so excited. During that time, I didn't know that it was the rosary for the World. I thought it was just a simple gathering for migrants. Because of COVID-19 only 5 members in each community could participate.



We left Gwangju at 12 noon and arrived at Namyang Shrine past 1 pm. We immediately went to the entrance of the new church. It turned out that we were the 1<sup>st</sup> group of migrants to arrive, so, our priest decided that we go around the place and take a few pictures to pass time since it was still early to go inside. We were told that the Koreans were practicing the program for the live rosary. While we were waiting outside someone from the church called our priest and told us to come to the church and that we need to wear our traditional clothes because two of us in our group would participate in the lighting of the rosary candles. So, we hurriedly went inside the church and changed our clothes and joined in the practicing of the rosary. Our group was seated in the middle section in front of the altar. There were already a lot of Koreans wearing their traditional clothes, priests and nuns and other foreigners inside the church. The practice finished past 5 pm and everyone was quietly seated on their seats.

When the LIVE rosary started, we were all excited. The opening prayer of the Bishops and the songs were all very solemn. The readers and the children who were lighting the candles and reading each mystery prayer were astounding. The rosary was prayed in the Korean language. Though it was difficult for me to follow, I was able to pray fervently because of the way the whole congregation prayed the rosary. I was really moved by the beautiful melodious rhythmic sound of people praying. The rosary came to an end, all of the people inside the church greeted each other joyfully as if we won a tournament! It felt like we were part of that church. The people greeted us all very warmly. Time was very short that day. We did not feel



any tiredness at all. What we felt at that time was just purely being blessed. We were very much thankful and grateful to Fr. Maurizio for the opportunity given to us to be part of the Prayer Marathon. It was such a blessing for us. The Namyang Shrine is just one of the few shrines that our community had visited. Lastly, we are also thankful to the Namyang priests and volunteers who assisted and helped us, and the warm people who we joined in prayer. Truly God is good at all times.

## First Asia-Oceania Regional Lay Congress: 17th July 2021

### Steve Savarimuthu OMI

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been a lot of programs cancelled or postponed. So too the planned Oblate Lay Associates Congress (OLAC) has been postponed to 27-29th May 2022. The plan is that people will gather at two places, Colombo and Manila to be part of the International event. In order to prepare for this OLAC 22, they came up with the idea of the first Asia-Oceania Regional Lay Congress via zoom on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The aim of the gathering was:

- To know and share the reality of the Lay Oblate Associations of each Unit and at the Regional level,
- To connect between the different realities (exchange contacts, material, online instruments, etc.) and
- To prepare the Oblate Lay Associates Congress (OLAC) 2022.

Since this was the first gathering it was decided to limit the number to 1 Oblate with 3 laypeople per unit. From Japan Tsujimoto Midori (Koga parish), Sunggeun Kim (Mizumaki parish) and Steve OMI participated in this meeting.

All Oblate units were asked to make a video presentation of about 5 to 6 min max. Bro. Yagi OMI prepared a short video with a brief introduction about Japan and the unit's vision for working with laypeople and future projects for ministry with laity.

Along with lay members and Directors of MAMI, there were 35 participants from various countries belong to 14 Oblate units in the Asia-Oceania region who participated in this meeting. All of us were divided into 4 small groups around time zones. During our group sharing we shared our experience of MAMI, the involvement of MAMI Members, Oblates' concern towards MAMI and our ministry to the MAMI with the group members. The Provincials of Colombo and the Philippines invited us to make proposals for the development of MAMI in the region.

The Provincial of Australia Fr. Christian Fini OMI helped us in technical works, and the Councillor for Asia-Oceania Fr. Peter Stoll OMI was also with us.

Finally, our Superior General Fr. Louis Lougen OMI spoke a few words and encouraged us for more meetings. He also wished success of the lay congress to be held next year. The gathering was



Group picture



very useful and enriching in order to know how our charism is being lived in other provinces in the Asia-Oceania Region.

For more on the Regional Lay Congress:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bno5ezj7t02gj3w/AAB0XstjBMDych7aH4VrE\\_T0a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bno5ezj7t02gj3w/AAB0XstjBMDych7aH4VrE_T0a?dl=0)

***Annual Retreat of the Delegation:** Sept. 6 ~ 9, 2021*

*Our Retreat Master - Most Rev. Charlie M. INZON, OMI, Bishop of Jolo*



<https://www.omiworld.org/2020/05/25/a-new-oblate-bishop-to-guide-the-flock-of-jolo/>



*Major Superiors of the Asia-Oceania region with Fr. Charlie at the Inter-chapter in Poland, 2019*

# The Season of Creation 2021



A month dedicated to the gift of creation is an ecumenical initiative of the world's 2.2 billion Christians. During this time, we renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion and action.

See the information and resources at:

<https://seasonofcreation.org/>

**“The cry of the poor and the destruction of the environment go hand-in-hand. The present pandemic is but a small sign of the chaos we have wreaked on nature. Future global disasters will multiply if we do not choose to act effectively and immediately in favor of the gift of God’s creation. This is not a call to become an environmental watchdog. At the heart of our mission to evangelize is the call to conversion, accepting the Good News of Jesus. He came to reconcile us with God and with one another; to heal the brokenness within ourselves, and to reconcile us with God’s gift of creation, not as exploiters but as stewards, caretakers. The Gospel calls us as agents of evangelization to restore these relationships at all levels”.**

- Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI, Superior General