



OMI Information

Newsletter of the Vice Province of Japan
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

MARCH, 2000

From the Provincial's Desk:

Dear Brother Oblates,

Most likely, I will still be in Melbourne, Australia when this issue of the newsletter comes out. I would like to thank Jan VAN HOYDONCK for the many years that he served as editor of our newsletter. He asked me to find his replacement and I am thankful to Bro. Nobuhiko YAGI for accepting the task of taking care of the newsletter after Jan. I am sure that Nobuhiko's talent in desktop publishing will be put to good use.

Below are some news items, announcements, etc. that you might find useful. Looking forward to seeing everyone in Fukuoka during the Spring Meeting.

Wency Laguidao

■ Re-opening of the Novitiate:

Novices Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA started their canonical novitiate year during a simple welcoming ceremony last February 16, the eve of 174th anniversary of the approval of the congregation. Novice Master Nobuhiko YAGI and Dick HARR were joined in by the Provincial in welcoming the novices. Also significantly present were former Novice Masters Ray BOURGOIN and Xave TOSA and also Mr. Takayoshi KONDO (Hon) OMI. Ray was novice master in Tokyo and Xave had been a novice master in Aki, while Mr. Kondo has served the Oblates as a language teacher, catechist, secretary, etc. since 1952. A sumptuous meal prepared by the Superior of the House, Dick Harr, followed the simple ceremony.

Aki was established as a parish in 1951 with the late Fr. Len ROBITAILLE as the first pastor. It also served as a residence for newly arrived missionaries who studied the Japanese language before the big language centers in Tokyo opened. On May 31, 1952, Fr. Bob GILL made the formal promulgation of the decree of erection of a canonical novitiate in Aki (from the 50th Anniversary Album).

■ Post Script of a Visit:

"Your Vice Province has proved to be an excellent place to celebrate Christmas!" (cf letter, Jan. 1, 2000) wrote the Superior General after his visit. His letter however was no simple pat-on-the-back but has left us with plenty of food for thought regarding ourselves as Oblates and the Japanese mission: The Superior General said that he is strongly convinced that "Japan is a mission *ad gentes*." If we work with those already baptized, it is in view of a missionary outreach... he added.



"How do I look?"
The Superior General
in a Japanese outfit.

He also talked about the re-evaluation of our missionary practices that has been proposed by the last Chapter and will be undertaken by the General Administration in the near future. He wants to involve the whole congregation in this process of re-evaluation.

He posed some challenging questions such as:

"How do we prioritize activities, giving up some, opening others, so that the younger members of a province get a chance to create something new as well?" "Could we consider structural changes which would allow as many Oblates as possible to enjoy the benefits of living, praying and working together?"

The Superior General concluded his letter with **Refocusing on Christ** and his Church as the indispensable task that we have to take if are to succeed as an international group, "a condition *sine qua non*."

■ Congress 2001:

During the last Provincial Council Meeting in Itami (February 5), the Provincial Council deliberated on the convening of a Provincial Congress in March of the year 2001. The plan is still to be mapped out and needless to say, any congress will only be successful if there is good preparation and there is active participation from everyone.

The Provincial proposed that we invite an outsider to act as the facilitator. A few names were suggested. What we need is a down-to-earth and a practical congress, with less words but would unite us somehow around a *vision*, no matter how simple, as long as it is something we can own. It would be better if we end up even with just one resolution or decision that we are able to implement rather than be lost in verbiage and semantics.

■ FLASH!

As of this writing, Fr. Eugene KING, Vicar General, has agreed to come (almost) to facilitate our Congress in 2001 (he still has to find a replacement to cover for him in some previously arranged commitments). "I will try my best to be there," he assures us. His first question was: "What exactly do you have in mind by the word facilitation?" I promised to tell him later what we expect from him.

Please look forward to future announcements regarding the Congress 2001 and please leave the following dates open: **March 26-30, 2001.**

■ New Member of the Korean Mission:

Varaprasatham ANTHONYSAMY (Varam for short) obtained his visa to join the mission in Korea. He arrived in Seoul last February 23rd and was welcomed by the four members of the mission. The warm welcome given to him was in contrast to the minus 5C temperature of Seoul when he arrived. India

was some 35C when he left. Varam is originally from the Indian Delegation of the Province of Sri Lanka. He was born in India on December 20, 1970 and was ordained on July 21, 1998. He will spend two years of language study before he goes into fulltime ministry. We wish him Welcome and Good Luck with his initiation into the Korean mission.

We are very thankful to the Indian Delegation through its Superior, Fr. Antony JEEVARATNAM and the Province of Sri Lanka through its Provincial, Fr. Bernard QUINTUS for their generosity in sharing with us their personnel.

Varam with the Provincial during his visit to Bangalore, India



■ Visitors:

Welcome, Father Philipiah JESUNESAN, General Councilor for Asia-Oceania region who will be here on a visit from March 27 to April 9th.

■ Spring Meeting:

We also welcome Father Dudley PERERA of the Sri Lankan Province who is giving up the theological input during our Spring Meeting, March 27-30. He will give us a lecture on: 1) Midrash and its role in the Bible, and, 2) Presenting the message of Christ in a Asian context. Fr. FRANCO of the Fukuoka Diocese will give us an input on Liturgy during the first day.

Sometime during the Spring Meeting, Ray BOURGOIN will present the financial state of the Vice Province and other matters concerning finances. Evenings should be free except for previously scheduled meeting of the Formation Committee and the Provincial Council.

■ Having Completed Their Two-Year Stint...

Filipino scholastics, Jerry VILLAS and Howard TATEL will be returning to the Philippines sometime in April to continue their theological studies. They will have completed their two-year exposure program which included a year of language study and another year of pastoral work. They made their perpetual profession here last December. Good Luck, Jerry and Howard and Hurry Back!

■ Ongoing Formation Meeting:

The young Oblates will meet at the Passionist Retreat House in Fukuoka on March 24-27. They want to evaluate the past five years of coming together once a year a plan for future activities. They have invited the Provincial for this year's gathering.

■ AORC Meeting, Melbourne:

The Asia-Oceania Regional Conference (of which I am privileged to be the President for three years) convenes this year in Melbourne Australia for its annual meeting (March 11-16). It is an organization of some fourteen Oblate units in the Asia-Oceania region whose main aim is cooperation and collaboration in the different aspects of the mission. One important development in the region is the addition

of the mission of Turkmenistan starting this year. It formerly belonged to the European region being a mission of the Polish Province.

■ Youth Meeting in Itami:

The subject of Youth and what we should be doing for them has come up many times during our meetings in the past. The members of the Itami District thought of starting somewhere so last February 27, a group of youth gathered at the rectory in Itami just to share their answers to some of life's questions posed by their facilitator, Leo KAWAGUCHI, such as "What are your dreams?" "What do you want to be?" "What makes you come (or not come) to Church?" etc. Hopefully, the meeting will continue regularly and spread to other youth groups in Oblate parishes.

■ Cover of De Mazenod Mass in Japanese:

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the Mass of the Founder has been translated into Japanese by Ray BOURGOIN with the help of Ms. Keiko Maki of Zendana Parish. Copies of the Mass pamphlet have been sent to all Oblate parishes. Copies have also been sent to all the bishops of Japan including the Papal Nuncio who responded with a beautiful letter of gratitude.



■ Prayers for the Departed:

We pray for the brother of Ed WILLIAMS, Paul (67) who died in Massachusetts last January 2nd. Also for the brother of Len INUI, Mr. Shoji Inui, 72 and a long time educator, who died in Naruto last January 25.

"Do This And You Shall Live!"

Perpetual Profession of Two Filipino Scholastics in Japan
(Written for the Philippine Province Newsletter)
by Wency Laguidao, OMI

The timing couldn't had been better. The Vice Province was winding up its busy Christmas schedule and preparing to usher in a new millennium. The Superior General, Father Guillermo STECKLING, was spending Christmas in Japan on an unofficial visit after his earlier visit of the Philippine Province and the Mission of Korea. The whole world awaited the dawn of the year 2000 amidst fear of glitches in the computer system that might be triggered by the millennium bug that never was. There was millennium fever in the air!

Jerry VILLAS and Howard TATEL braved the uncertainties of the future and asked for the grace of God as they professed poverty, chastity, obedience and perseverance for life in the presence of their brother Oblates and novices, parishioners, MAMI benefactors and friends last December 27th. The solemn vow taking ceremony was held in Nakajimacho Parish Church in Kochi, a bastion of the missionary efforts of the Oblates in Japan which was also the center of the celebrations of the 50th year of foundation of the Vice Province in November, 1998. The liturgy opened with the strains of a familiar song of total self-dedication befitting the occasion, "Here I Am Lord", played on the flute and guitar by Japanese novices, Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA together with their novice master Bro. Nobuhiko YAGI. The Mass of the Founder which has just been translated into Japanese was used for the occasion. Away from their



Jerry and Howard together with the Superior General are greeted by parishioners after the vow ceremony.

families and confreres in their home Province, Jerry and Howard got the moral boost they needed to affirm **"I DO RESOLVE"** to every question posed by the Superior General to confirm their acceptance of the Oblate way of life... perpetually.

The Superior General exhorted the candidates on the beauty of being an Oblate and the importance of community life and prayer for every Oblate. He called each of the candidates by their first name, like a bountiful father would assure his own child at a very important juncture in his life. A mere coincidence or not, the newly professed were extremely happy at having no less than the Superior General himself to receive their perpetual oblation as missionary Oblates.

The Mass and Perpetual Profession was followed by the annual Christmas gathering of the Oblates of the Vice Province which was also to welcome the Superior General. Bingo games organized by the novices followed and the night was sealed by the rendition of the German Christmas carol *"Ihr Kinderlein Kommet"* on the piano by the Superior General himself. (Did you know that the beautiful song originated from the hometown of Fr. Steckling, in Gütersloh, Germany?) "Your Vice Province has proved to be an excellent place to celebrate Christmas!" wrote the Superior General from Rome. He did not expect to hear German Christmas carols being played in their original version in Japan and to find German Christmas delicacies like *"christstollen"* and yes, even *"sauerkraut!"* Indeed, the Vice Province feels honored and enriched with the short visit of Father General.

Jerry and Howard arrived in Japan in August, 1997 on a two-year foreign exposure program for scholastics in the Asia-Oceania region. It is the first experience of the Vice Province of Japan to host scholastics from another Province and has proved to be an enriching one. They settled at the House of Studies in Nagoya City where they became part of the community there while pursuing language studies at the YMCA language school. For a while Jerry and Howard were part of the Nagoya community where they were the *"sempai"* (seniors) of two Japanese aspirants who taught them Japanese language and in return they taught them simple English conversation. The two Japanese aspirants later left for Melbourne to join the pre-novitiate program of the Saint Mary's Seminary of the Australian Province and Jerry and Howard were left by themselves in the House of Studies with their Superior, Leo KAWAGUCHI who himself spent a short time in the Philippines as a scholastic. They have helped organize the summer vocation camps and stayed with Japanese families on a homestay program.

Learning the ropes like how to ride the local trains, make the changes while minding the time and while being deprived of understanding and speaking the language and not being able to read and make sense of Japanese characters, etc., etc. were part of the adjustment

period for Jerry and Howard. Those experiences, both exciting and painful, will for sure be reminisced as important moments of their formation.

Almost two years after those early months of adjustment, the two are now working separately in Oblate-run kindergartens as part time *"sensei"* (teacher) until they head for home sometime in April to continue their theological studies. The two are loved by the teachers they work with and the pre-school kids and will surely be missed when they leave.

After the vow ceremony, the Oblates greeted the newly professed with such encouraging words as *"Go, finish your studies and hurry back!"* We thank the Philippine Province for its gift of Jerry and Howard and we accompany the two of them with our brotherly support and prayers as they start their life as perpetually professed Oblates and as they wind up their two years in the Japanese mission. *"Gambatte kudasai, Jerry-san to Howard-san!"*

Starting from the roof...

I have been told that for a group of people to become a community is not enough to live under the same roof; there is a need for something more, particularly in order to make a religious community. Well... when few months ago I was appointed superior ad interim of the house in Seoul (the official nomination came later) my first activity was to repair the roof so that at least we have the essential!

Our community is growing and with the arrival of fr. Varam from India we increased by more than 33% (we were 3 and now we are 4, see what you can do with numbers and percentage). Two Italians (Vincenzo and Giovanni), one Sri-Lankan (James) and now an Indian, we have all the necessary elements of the first human community (the one in Babel) hoping to reach some of the characteristics of the first Christian community (after the Pentecost). Vincenzo is quite busy with the homeless ministry (soup kitchen, counseling, health care and masses in the nearby parish); Giovanni is always on the move trying to follow the migrant workers, while James is often at the hospital (he actually enjoys a very good health, he goes there being the hospital chaplain). And what about Varam? He is more than enthusiastic to join our community and ready to go to school and deal with that blessed language called Korean.

Our house has only one roof but several rooms (even for guests) so you are more than welcome to visit us and if you like.. you can join us!

Best wishes to all the members of our vice-province, particularly to the people involved in the novitiate program which just started; may the Lord grant us patience with ourselves first of all, and the necessary charity among us.

A report from the Oblate community in Seoul



Our last group discussion before Varam's arrival!

PILGRIMAGE TO SEOUL:

Realizing the need of the pilgrim Church I as one among the pilgrims started my journey to Korea on February 21, 2000 via Singapore and reached Seoul on 24 inst. You may wonder what happened to this guy for two days in between; don't worry nothing tragedy happened but I and James took off a day to visit Singapore. I accompanied James Jayachandran throughout all along my trip. Thanks to his kindness and generosity that I never felt lonely and out of place.

The Scripture says, **Love is greater than sacrifice**; but I would put both on parallel – love and sacrifice. Though the Indian Delegation loved and cared for me very much and was in need of my help for the mission work in the same land, for a greater cause it has almost sacrificed me heeding to the need of the mission in Korea as our CC.1 says, Christ himself thus invites us to follow him and to share in his mission through word and deed. Thanks to their generosity!

On the other side, on my arrival in Seoul KIMPO Airport I was warmly welcomed by Oblate confreres – Maurizio, the mission superior, Mauro, Giovanni and Vincenzo with an assuring and reassuring smile reflecting in the words of Prophet Isaiah, Can a woman forget her baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne? Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you (Is.49: 15). Thanks to the missionaries in Korea!

Now to give a brief sketch of myself: Hi, I am Varaprasathem ANTHONY SWAMY from India. India is in the South East Asia. I was born on December 20, 1970 to my parents Anthonyswamy and Lourdummy near Madras. And my mother tongue is Tamil. I was brought up in a Catholic atmosphere. I am the third in the family of four children; two sisters elder to me and two brothers of whom I am the elder. Having finished my primary schooling in a Catholic institute I did my high school in a government school in my native place.

My vocation to religious life steadily grew during my high school itself. Heeding to the call of God I joined the seminary July 27, 1985. Except my mother everyone in the family was for my vocation to religious life. However she too liked the idea little later. With the help and advice of Fr.Lourdusamy, an Oblate who himself was a missionary in Nigeria and in Cameroon I joined the Oblates Minor seminary wherein I spent quite a lot of time in serious discernment.

After completing my philosophical studies, I went for Regency (It is called Free-Regency = Earn-Learn-Live year programme). During this year I had to find a job myself amidst lot of unemployment in India within a short time, earn my livelihood and withstand in the world of competition. And I did so. Then I entered the Novitiate in Bandarawela, Sri Lanka, where I learned the Oblate Charism and traditions and deepened my vocation to Oblate way of life. After my theological studies I made my Oblation on December 09, 1997 and was consequently ordained a deacon of Dec.11, 1997 and was serving in Infant Jesus Shrine, Bangalore, India. Then my Sacerdotal Ordination took place on July 21, 1998 and was appointed as the assistant priest in charge of the same Shrine. To my surprise within two months of my ordination I was asked to take care of a vacant parish in the city itself by the Diocesan Administrator. As I spent one year there the proposal came to decide to go as a missionary. It was a sudden news I took sometime to discern and to decide.

Though the diocese of Bangalore wanted me to extend my service for few more years in the same parish I said yes to my superior as our C.26 says, In the superior we will see the sign of our unity in Christ Jesus; through faith we accept the authority he has been given. We

will give our support once a decision has been made and before coming to Korea from the beginning of this academic year June 1999 onwards I was in the Formation House (Philosophate), Bangalore,

Thanks to Fr.Wency, the Provincial of Japan for his kind and fraternal visit to the Indian Delegation and to me personally, and to all the members of the Province for their brotherly correspondence and the warm welcome most of you sent through e-mail and over the telephone. And to my delegation superior in India and the other members and to my friends in the Delegation; and my special thanks to the *Nivedanam* Community in Bangalore both fathers and brothers for their love and support in all my preparation to come to Korea.

It is really escalating experience for me to be in Korea. On the fourth day of my stay in Korea I went with Fr. Vincenzo to a Parish and concelebrated a Holy Mass, of course in Korean. In that parish I could already see the amount of interest the people showed. And on the fifth day I went with Fr.Giovanni to his office (*Emmaus* = come and see). I really went in to see what it is as he works for the migrants in the country. And I saw the amount of activities taking place in and out. And I had the feeling that there is someone to take care of these illegal migrants and that is, in the person of an Oblate.

As I thank God for the gift of my community members in *Seoul* and *Anyang* for their loving support, I do count on your valuable prayers very much that I may learn the language a little faster and be able to communicate with the people and be of a support in the work of the community.

Fraternally Yours in Js.Xt & M.I

Varam, OMI

Report of the Pastoral-Liturgical committee:

A meeting of the committee for Pastoral-Liturgical matters was held on February 21 at Itami. The following is the report of that meeting.

Date; February 21, 2000

Attendance; All members were present from Sunday evening February 20th. The members are Fran, Chairman, Bill, Jude, Bradley, Ed.

On Sunday evening after a delicious meal cooked by Wency, we talked. a bit about Ray's suggestion that we discuss matters related to the amount of money given by the various places to the Oblates working there. Wency and all of us were of the opinion that a later time might be better for this element of Pastoral. The next morning at the beginning of our meeting proper this opinion was confirmed. Wency was not present at the meeting because of commitment to another meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting we discussed briefly about what the committee was supposed to do. Our general opinion was that we should provide some items of information about liturgy and pastoral matters that could be of help to any of us who are interested.

After that the main discussion was about liturgical matters. In particular we talked about the focal points of the liturgical space. The four points are the Altar, the Pulpit, the Baptismal font, and the Presider's chair.

We decided to see if we can find some information about these focal points of the sacred space for our next meeting. Bill will check out material on the Altar since he is in the process of doing something with his altar. Bradley will consider the Pulpit, Fran, the Baptismal font, and Eddie, the Presider's chair. When

this material is gathered and put together it will be communicated to all. Given the diversity of the physical arrangements in our various missions, general information of this sort could prove helpful to all of us.

During the remainder of the meeting we discussed several other topics, symbols, the Japanese liturgy for adult baptisms, Father Shirahama's series of articles on liturgy in the Catholic newspaper (copies of this series were given to all of us). Since Wency had suggested that we help to prepare the liturgies during the General Meeting, Fran said he would check out the wishes of the various celebrants and we would prepare accordingly. Finally in the early afternoon we decided that our next meeting would be on May 22nd in Itami.

The materials given to us in addition to the series of Father Shirahama were, the structure and the meaning of Mass (this from the Fukuoka liturgical study) and The Mass of all the people of God. This was issued some years ago by the now defunct Present Day Liturgical Study Group.

The meeting ended about 2 P.M.

Ed Williams, O.M.I. recorder

典礼 - 司牧委員会報告

1. 日時: 2000年2月21日9時~14時
2. 場所: カトリック伊丹教会
3. 出席者: ハーン、マヘル(W)、ジュード、ブラドリ、ウィリアムス、

20日の夕方みんなが伊丹で集まりました。管区長が作った美味しい七面鳥のごちそうを食べたあと、小教区の司祭への報酬について少し話しましたが、みんなこの点について話したくなかったので、今回は話し合いませんでした。21日の朝の本会議でも同じ意見でした。

朝の会議の初めに私たちは典礼 - 司牧委員会の役割について話し合いました。私たちはいくつかの典礼 - 司牧の項目を調べて、みなさんにその結果を知らせたら関心のある人のためになると思いました。

その後、典礼についていろいろ話し合いました。特に聖なる空間の四つの中心的な物(祭壇、朗読台、洗礼盤、司式席)この四つについて調べ、みなさんに知らせます。マヘル氏が自分の教会の祭壇を考えているので祭壇を、ブラドリ氏が朗読台を、ハーン氏が洗礼盤を、私が司式席について調べます。この次の集まりの時、以上の研究の結果をまとめ編集してみなさんにお伝えします。教会によって建物が異なっていますが、誰かに役に立つと望んでいます。

会議の残りの時間にいろんなことを考えました。入信の秘蹟、白浜神父様のカトリック新聞に出している典礼についての記事。(私たちは皆その全部の記事をもらった)。管区長が私たちに総会の典礼を考えるように提案したので、ハーン氏がいろんな方々の意見を聞き、相談してから準備をします。

この次の集まりは5月22日伊丹でします。資料としてもらったのは白浜神父様の記事以外に、"ミサの構造とその意味; 福岡教区典礼研修会"と"神の民みんなのミサ; 現代典礼研修会編"です。

会議は午後2時で終わりました。

ウィリアムス書記

From Xavier Yoshikazu TOSA:

March is for me "School Spring Vacation". I'm using this time to make a short trip to Flanders (Belgium). As a good Japanese citizen, I must visit the grave of my elder sister who died a few months ago. Of course I will spend some time with the other aging sisters. My sister

Cecile was "special". She married a baker, made money and divorced. Her husband was sent to a mental institute. She started studies to become a nurse. Meanwhile her only daughter was left in the care of grandmother... After working for some time in a non-catholic hospital, she was dismissed on grounds of making her own decisions against the advice of the doctor. She left Belgium for South-Africa and worked there as a nurse. Rumors say that she enjoyed gambling in the blacks' homelands. When Mandella became president and the apartheid law was abolished, she thought that it was the end for her there, and came back to Belgium. She lived on welfare in Belgium. In her last will she had asked for a funeral Mass with Gregorian chant and cremation. However her daughter decided on cremation without Mass...

My asthma is not bothering me at all. I decided that I was healed but the doctor is not of my opinion. Now I am "punished" with the loss of my sense of smell. Eating fish or steak tastes about the same, believe it or not.

I include a small announcement about the "Debt relief", showing that the Jubilee 2000 Campaign has not been in vain.

昨日(3日)のルサカ発ロイター電で、「日本がザンビアに債務救済無償援助」という記事が流れています。これは、従来の「債務救済無償援助スキーム」の実施ということでしょうか?(とすれば、何でわざわざ流れるのか...。しかも何でザンビア発なのか...) また450万ドルという救済金額は、ODA債務額を表しているのでしょうか。

Japan grants Zambia \$4.5 mln in debt relief

LUSAKA, Feb 3 (Reuters)-Japan has granted Zambia \$4.5 million in debt relief, Japanese officials said on Thursday.

Ambassador Yoshihiro Nakamura said it was the first time Japan had offered debt relief to Zambia.

"The grant will be used to purchase telecommunications equipment, motor vehicles and fire-fighting equipment," Nakamura said. "It is hoped it will increase efficiency and effectiveness of government and improve the welfare of Zambians."

Zambia, whose economy is reliant on copper, has an external debt portfolio of \$6.5 billion and is looking to increased relief from lending agencies and countries in order to obtain funds for social development.

I hope to meet you all in Fukuoka at the Spring Meeting.

Xave Y. Tosa, OMI

From Jan VAN HOYDONCK:

Although there is really nothing happening out of the ordinary in Ikeda, at least in relation to the church (on the civil level we have had the opening - on March 11 - of the last stretch of highway, connecting Tokushima with Kochi by way of Kawanoe), I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude, first to the many fellow Oblates in Japan and Korea who have generously contributed to the OMI Newsletter during the years when I was in charge (From Christmas 1994 until Christmas 1999); and secondly, to Brother Yagi, who kindly agreed to take over when I requested the Provincial if I could be relieved from its publication in favor of some "younger ideas".

My best wishes go to Brother Yagi for a continued, even increasing cooperation of all of us.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in Fukuoka. So long!

Jan, OMI

From the Novitiate:

We started the novitiate on February the 17th. Thank you for the phone calls, faxes and e-mails expressing your encouragement at the beginning of the novitiate year. At the beginning I was so nervous since it is my first experience as novice master. But I became better and relaxed through the support of Fr. Harr, Mr. Kondoh and our novices. After one month of the novitiate we are thankful for the blessings of a peaceful environment here in Aki. We are able to spend a fruitful time together. Our two novices are eagerly living their novitiate period in peace and quiet.

They have experienced apostolic work for a month. I heard about things they did and feel there, and this was very impressive. So I asked them to write about their experiences during the apostolic work for this newsletter. Their contributions follow.

Nobuhiko YAGI, OMI

I went to Kamagasaki from January. The first two weeks, I couldn't get acclimatized to the new environment. Of course, Kamagasaki has a peculiar atmosphere but it was long time before I could get used to the workers. I volunteered for the distribution of boiled rice. But nobody talked to me. Especially when I was alone, I cut vegetables in silence. I thought why did I come to Kamagasaki?

But in the latter half of my stay, the workers accepted me as a guy who helped in the distribution of boiled rice. They finally to talk to me about something. One of the worker was the same age as me.

At the beginning, he never spoke to me his name clearly. He never told his life story. At last on my last day, after I thanked the workers after finishing my volunteer work, I headed straight for home not looking back.

Suddenly someone tapped my shoulder, I looked back, that man was he. He was reluctant to part from me, so he followed me. We bought liquor at an automatic vending machine, and we crouched on the roadside. And he talked to me about himself to my surprise. I knew that workers in Kamagasaki didn't like to tell their life story, so I was very surprised.

We talked to each other about everything. When I looked at my watch, it was time to say good-bye. I said good-bye to him, and I watched from behind for a while, he suddenly looked back at me, he said to me "Don't see me off, because I cannot say good-bye."

I reluctantly turned back. His back that disappeared into a crowd was very impressive. If I had stayed but a few days in Kamagasaki, I could never have experienced that, I would have lived with an illusion

Akio HORIUCHI

Dear everyone,

How are you doing? I am very well. I went to Hakuaien, a place where children are living in an orphanage the children don't live with their parents for various reasons. I had an experience there.

I met brothers that are only four years old, a girl and a five year old boy. They were mentally unbalanced. Because they haven't lived with parents for two weeks. According to the Hakuaien's teacher, they haven't been able to sleep easily because of loneliness. They used to cry in the night. So when they had gone to bed, I shook hands with them. I

prayed to God in my mind for their sound good sleep.

I think not only did I give them peace of mind but also I received various things from them. I realized I am a precious person because of them. I can even now help other people. It gave confidence to me, as I am accepted by them. Really some children didn't accept me at first. When we shook hands, I also was healed by them through God. God works surely for both of us. And then I realized it is important that I offer prayer to God. As to the others, I learned important things for them. I cannot express by word, but I have received grace. I have a feeling with children, smiling, being sad, worried etc... It is more important than monotonous study of school.

After this, this relationship is continuing. I think be able to learn various things from them. I will try hard.

Ken-ichi FURUKAWA

Anniversaries:

■ Birthday:

April 01 1960	Leo KAWAGUCHI
17 1941	Jack DEELY
22 1949	Wency LAGUIDAO
May 29 1931	Tom MAHER
June 24 1962	Giovanni ZEVOLA



■ Ordination:

April 04 1968	Jerry NOVOTNY
11 1970	Jack DEELY
25 1987	Vincenzo BORDO
26 1966	Bill MAHER
29 1972	Fran HAHN
May 30 1954	John MAHONEY
30 1954	Bert SILVER
30 1957	Tom MAHER
31 1965	Ange SIANI
June 2 1952	Dick HARR
7 1957	Ed WILLIAMS
14 1964	Len INUI
14 1964	John IWO
24 1962	Mike YAMASAKI

■ Death:

April 12 1982	Robert GILL
May 10 1996	Gerard STEVENS

From the editor's desk:

Here I would like to thank my predecessor for his 5 years of service as editor. We all appreciated his work. Now I would like to follow his example and give myself fully to getting the newsletter together. I count on the cooperation of everyone. Do not hesitate to give me your opinions and suggestions about the format and content of the newsletter.

The next issue is scheduled for June 15. Please send me your contributions by June 5.

