



O.M.I. JAPAN/KOREA

OMI Information

Newsletter of the Vice Province of Japan



2001

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Vice Province Convenes for Congress

This year's Spring Meeting of the Vice Province will be in a form of a congress, from March 27 to 30, at the Passionist Retreat House in Fukuoka. The purpose of the congress is to search for a vision for the Vice Province as we start a new millennium.

The three and a half days of conferences, discussions and deliberations will revolve around three major themes, namely: Day 1 Immense Hope; Day 2 Community; and Day 3 Mission. The last day will be for wrapping up and for other business matters.



Fr. Eugene King - Facilitator. Picture taken during the 23rd General Chapter immediately after he was chosen Vicar General.

Fr. Eugene KING, Vicar General, has generously accepted the task of being the facilitator. He obliged to tell us a little about himself, though he considers the task a "lenten mortification." He confides that he's 60 years old, "a grace I share with six others in the General House. When all six have made it through another birthday, we treat ourselves to pizza and beer."

"Forty-one of my years I have been an Oblate,

joining right out of Secondary School, as was the fashion in Ireland in the late 1950s. I was born in Ireland, just south of the Northern Ireland border, close enough most people would say to know a thing or two about smuggling. I heard of the Oblates when Father David Hennessy, an Irish Oblate, gave a vocations' conference to the senior classes. What caught my imagination was his claim, complete with photographs, that one could catch trout, fifty pounds and more, in Northern Canada. I have been fishing ever since."

"I reached Canada on the day Vatican II began, October 11th 1962, to study theology where I was ordained ten days after the Council ended in December 1965. For three years I taught various fields of theology at our scholasticate in Piltown, Ireland, before spending a further three years at the Biblicum in Rome where I was also a member of the staff of the International Scholasticate. Once finished with my studies I was on the pilgrim trail again, back to Canada and Ottawa, to teach at Saint Paul University and be a member of the staff of Saint Paul University Seminary. A whole twenty-six years; it seemed I took a vow of stability!. I never taught Scripture full-time but moved into Pastoral Theology, becoming Director of the Institute of Pastoral Studies, and eventually Rector of St. Paul University Seminary. My academic dreams foundered on the shores of administration."

"My twenty-six years were interrupted by doing a doctorate at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. Of interest to one or other American, I was there for the Joe Montana years! Returning from Notre Dame I stumbled on another great grace in my life - formation work for the life and rituals of the Adult Catechumenate as it caught on across the United States and Canada. So, through ministry formation and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults I came to know the North American Church from coast to coast."

"I was beginning a sabbatical when the grace of the last Chapter, in 1998, fell upon me and I have been overshadowed by it ever since. This past two years also brought the grace of discovering Aix, the cradle of our Congregation, into my life."

"And how has it been as Vicar General? I will take up the story when I see you."

Fr. King arrived in Kansai on March 23rd and will travel to Kochi, Tokushima and Nagoya prefectures after the congress. He is going back to Rome on April 8th.

From the Provincial's Desk:

The Provincial Congress will be in full-swing when this newsletter comes out. Thank you, once again, for the cooperation in answering the questionnaire. The questions did not cover as much as they should but hopefully, the questionnaire and the congress itself, will be our stepping stones towards a clarification of our mission as a Vice Province now (or whatever name we will assume as a unit) and for the coming years.

I welcome and thank our Vicar General, Fr. Gene KING for accepting the task of being our facilitator. He is also here to do consultation as I finish my first term as Provincial. Please have a pleasant stay, Father Gene!

Going back to the questionnaire and our answers: Even if the questions (and answers) did not cover as much as we would like them to, they gave me, personally, an idea of how we think collectively. I personally put together the answers seeing to it that I did not miss a period or punctuation. It was a painstaking job, to say the least.

As I finish three years of animating our small Vice Province, I can just compare myself with other Provincials of units with hundreds of members. Oftentimes, I say a prayer of thanks for being spared of the big problems and "occupational hazards" that come along being a leader of a large group, such as, law suits, financial crisis, violent death of members in troubled areas, major illnesses of members, having to deal with many dysfunctional or recalcitrant members, etc., etc. Most of our problems as a group stem from the fact that we are small in number: we tend to magnify each other's faults more because we rub shoulders more than members of bigger groups. We tend to worry more about ageing and lack of vocations because of our small number. But there are benefits, too, in being small: we have financial stability; we should have more interaction among ourselves, etc.

If I may quote some answers from the questionnaire booklet:

Because we have **only very small pool of human resources** from which to select our leaders, I think the responsibility for the Province must be shared and shouldered by each member of the Province to a much greater degree than in a numerically larger Province.

Are we each other's cheerleader? We should be each other's cheerleader in the most overt ways--- to be a support, to provide psychological and physical support to another OMI in his service of others.

What do we intend to accomplish in this year's congress? If we can just take an honest look at ourselves as a band of missionaries and individually as Oblates and start talking where do we go from here for the next few years, then we will have accomplished a lot.

My schedule: I will be attending the annual

Asia-Oceania Regional Conference (AORC) meeting which this year will be held at the cradle of the congregation, at our foundation house in Aix, April 18-28. I will avoid the Golden Week traffic and be back on May 8th.

Wishing you all the bountiful blessing of Easter!

Wency Laguidao

On the Death of Archbishop Marcello ZAGO (1932-2001)

by Mauro Concardi

(The following are excerpts from several emails received from Mauro, on, among other things, the death of Arch. M. Zago. The Vice Province of Japan pays tribute to the man, a true Oblate missionary who spent many years in Asia and is the founder of the Korean Mission.)

I write to inform you that our two postulants, Paolo and Anselmo have received their visa and tickets to Australia where they will spend their two years novitiate formation... Last Saturday, they returned from their vacation and with them two new candidates (Andrea and Thomas).

We had a simple ceremony and Mass at 6:00 PM when Mons. Zago's funeral mass was about to start at the Vatican. I saw it as a sign. New life is springing from the Korean soil, and we all know that Fr. Zago wanted the Korean mission (established) in a very special way. I don't think it is simple coincidence: it's God's work. I believe that we have a new protector in heaven.

I have received a short note (in Italian) that I translate for you:

"My life has been surrounded by the merciful love of God and enriched by His abundant graces". These are words from the Spiritual Testament of Mons. Marcello Zago, OMI who died in Rome on March 1st, 2001. The funeral Mass took place in the Vatican Basilica on March 3 and was a clear witness of how many people felt linked to Mons. Zago: Cardinal Tomko - who presided the Mass- and all the collaborators of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (Propaganda Fide) where Mons. Zago has been the Secretary for three years; then many Oblates with the Fr. W. Steckling, Superior General; family members and friends from his native village Villorba (near Treviso in the Northern part of Italy) arrived in buses and mini-vans; students and professors from Missionary Colleges in Rome and from the Urban and Lateran University where Fr. Zago taught for many years. Innumerable religious and sisters, priests and lay people came to pay their last respect to a man they all loved. They all filled the space in front of St. Peter's Chair and farther beyond. It was a simple celebration, with an atmosphere of Joy and Faith. There were more than 300 priests, 30 Bishops and 7 Cardinals. Andrea Riccardi, founder of



the International Movement "St. Egidio's Community", has written on the largest Catholic Newspaper in Italy (Avvenire) the following tribute to Mons. Zago: "The life of Marcello Zago has been always on the frontier between Christianity and the World of Non-Christian Religions. Whoever has met him during Congresses on Inter-religious Dialogue for sure has noticed the fundamental aspect of his life: he was a missionary (...) he was an Oblate of Mary Immaculate." His "profound spirituality", his "exemplar religious life" and his "pastoral zeal" as priest and bishop were recalled in a message from Pope John Paul II, read at the beginning of the Mass. The Pope also remembered "with sentiments of admiration the serene acceptance of his sickness (Leukemia), borne with confident resignation to the divine providence until the last moment". Fr. Zago has written in his Spiritual Testament the following words: "For me only three things are important: Jesus Christ, the Church and the mission." In his Homily Cardinal Tomko quoted from the same Spiritual Testament these words: "I entrust you to the Lord, and I hope to continue to be among the intercessors of the missionary work in the world."

Novices Profess First Vows

February 17, 2001 was not only the 175th year of the approval of our Constitutions and Rules but also for Akio HORIUCHI and Kenichi FURUKAWA, it was the day when they completed their two year novitiate and professed their First Vows as Oblates.



Vowing poverty, chastity and obedience before the Provincial.

The simple vow ceremony was held at the house chapel in Nakajima-cho, Kochi at 3:30 PM. Wency LAGUIDAO, Provincial received the vows of the new Oblates and extolled them on the importance of the vows as a call from Christ for us "to cast our nets on deep waters." The Provincial also encouraged them to try to become good and happy Oblates. The vow ceremony also included the habit-taking of the two new Oblates. Guests and relatives from the parishes of

Itami, Aki, Akaoka and Nakajima-cho filled the house chapel to capacity. A simple reception followed the vow-taking ceremony.

The two started their novitiate under the auspices of the Saint Mary's Seminary of the Australian Province where they spent a year. They then returned to Japan where they spent their full-year of canonical novitiate in Aki under the guidance of Nobuhiko YAGI, novice master.



Newly - professed Oblates with the Novice Master and Provincial

Akio and Kenichi will return to the House of Studies in Nagoya in mid-March to prepare for their re-entry into the theological program at Nanzan University. We wish the two a warm welcome as they start anew as Oblates.

Formation News: Korea

The Korean mission takes pride in sending its two postulants (Paolo and Anselmo) to Saint Mary's Seminary in Australia for the pre-novitiate and (canonical) novitiate programs. The two left for Australia last March 8th and will be there until January 2003. They will join other candidates, on different stages of formation, from other countries like China, Thailand, Laos, Sweden and Australia.

Two new Korean students (Andrea and Thomas) have shown interest in the Oblates and will enter the formation house in Anyang. They are both 30 years of age, one (Andrea) is from the nearby city of Seong Nam and has been helping Vincenzo in the soup kitchen for many years. Thomas is from Chongju a city that is an hour and a half away from Seoul. The two will attend classes at the Center for Religious Studies run by the Franciscans. They will also attend intensive English course while helping out at Vincenzo's soup kitchen and Giovanni's center for migrant workers (Emmaus) and also help out at a nearby parish.

Restructuring

The word 「リストラ」 ("Risutora") has become a

byword in the Japanese corporate world in recent times. It is a word feared especially by many middle-aged salaried workers. The word is actually a Japanized equivalent of the word "Restructure." It can mean reorganizing the company, cutting down on costs, mergers of small companies to survive and down-sizing or forcing middle-aged workers to early retirement with promises of pseudo-benefits. Many suicides have been attributed to "Risutora."

Many small units in the congregation like ours will have to go through the painful process of restructuring. It will call for sacrifices from us for the interest of the whole congregation. (I don't think there will be suicides along the process!)

In a letter from the Superior General dated Sept. 21, 2000, the existing Vice Provinces are invited "to reflect upon their future, involving both individual Oblates and local communities." The matter will be taken up during the Plenary Session of the General Council in May, 2001. Whatever decisions are made will always be done in consultation with all the parties involved, the Superior general assures everyone in the same letter.

The districts have been asked to discuss the different scenarios and come out with proposals to be submitted to the General Council.

Immense Hope Project: Animation Committee

As announced earlier, the Animation Committee for the Immense Hope project has been formed, composed of: Ray BOURGOIN (leader), Giovanni ZEVOLA, Nobu YAGI, Fran HAHN, and Brady ROZAIRO (members). The group has accepted the difficult task of leading the Vice Province through the process of evaluation and animation for the next four years. The group had their initial meeting in Tokushima last February 22.

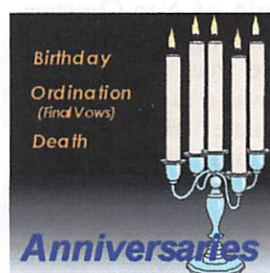
Letter from Brazil

Antonio Genivaldo CORDEIRO DE OLIVEIRA is a Brazilian scholastic on his final stages of preparation for ordination to the priesthood. He belongs to the Belem Delegation (French Province) in Brazil. He has expressed his interest in Asia and asked to come to Japan for an exposure for about two years. He has obtained his Japanese visa but delayed his trip until after his sacerdotal ordination in May 5th. He is expected to arrive in Japan sometime around May 14th. WELCOME!

Jubilarians

Jan VAN HOYDONCK and Wency LAGUIDAO are celebrating the Golden and Silver Jubilee of their ordinations (respectively) this year. Jan was ordained in

Belgium on July 1, 1951 and Wency was ordained in the Philippines on March 27, 1976. A simple celebration will be held during the Provincial Congress on March 29th.



■ 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 / Final Vows:

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

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

Nobuhiko



Family Portrait. Oblates and Honorary Oblates with the newly-professed.