

OMI Information

Newsletter of the Vice Province of Japan



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Looking Back At the Last Congress

There was perfect attendance. Well, almost. Twenty-eight of the possible thirty attended the Provincial Congress which started on March 27th and ended 29th. The theme of the congress was *Towards An Immense Hope*. Fr. Eugene KING, who served as facilitator, led the group to three and a half days of input, personal reflection, group discussions and plenary sessions. The whole group was divided into five smaller groups for discussions and sharing.

The congress opened with a fitting liturgy prepared by the Liturgical Committee headed by Fran. After the simple welcoming words from the Provincial, the facilitator took over to lay down the tasks for three and a half days.

The congress was conducted in a retreat-like atmosphere, with ample time for personal reflection and group sharing. The Provincial Council together with the facilitator acted as the steering committee. Bert, Jack and Nobu helped out as members of the secretariat.

The unofficial "night sessions" (food and drinks are always through the courtesy of Koga community led by Bill) were held as usual and they served as time to relax and unwind after a day of hard work. There was even a night to watch a movie, complete with popcorn and pizza!

The congress was also time to celebrate the Golden and Silver Jubilee of ordinations of Jan VAN HOYDONCK (ordained July 1, 1951) and Wency LAGUIDAO (ordained March 27, 1976) respectively with a liturgy and dinner.



Provincial Congress on Immense Hope

Welcome, Gen!

Latin Americans usually have long names and he is not an exemption: Antonio Genivaldo Cordeiro de Oliveira. The first thing he did when he arrived was to shorten his name for all of us to remember: please

call him "Gen" (pronounced jen).

Gen was just ordained last May 5th in his native Belem, in the region of Para, northern Brazil. (Sorry Mauro, he does not play soccer!) Although exhausted from his long

flight which took almost 30 hours, he felt relieved to be met by four Oblates (more than 10% of the Vice Province) at the airport. He arrived

last May 14th in Itami.

Gen comes from a family of eleven children and he is the eldest of the brood. He is a member of the Belem Delegation of the French Province and finished his studies in San Paolo where the Oblates run a

seminary for all the Oblate units in Brazil. Although Gen has received his obedience to his delegation, he will be here for a couple of years of exposure and study of Japanese culture and language.

After spending sometime in Kochi, he will join the scholasticate community in Nagoya and start his studies in September. *Bemvindo!*

Let me introduce myself

Antonio Genivaldo Cordeiro de Oliveira

I am Antonio Genivaldo Cordeiro de Oliveira, but you can call me Gen. I was born on August 14, 1973 in the state of Para, in the northern part of Brazil. That state is in the Amazon region. I am the eldest of a family of 11 children.

My region was unpopulated till 50 years ago, so it became a mission region. My home parish was staffed by Italian Barnabite priests. I always participated in youth groups in my home parish, but it was the uncompromising attitude of the vicar that raised the decisive question: "How can I help the people of God."

At that time I was finishing High School and I was a teacher there too. Finally I decided to make an experience in the religious life and I joined the Barnabite Congregation since it was the only one I knew. With them I studied Philosophy but I didn't feel well with their style of life and in my life the words of God to Abraham rang strongly: "Leave your country, family and your father's house, for the land I will show you." I decided to leave that congregation even though I had been approved to go to the novitiate.

In the seminary where I studied Philosophy there



was an Oblate who was teaching Holy Scripture and I heard something about his congregation. I decided to look for this father who was the Mission Superior of the Belém Delegation, Father François Rubeaux. After the first contacts he invited me to make an experience in Maraba, south of Para. It was so difficult, it was really another style of religious life and I had to go back to square one.

I began teaching in a public school again, accompanying the youth groups and one of the basic ecclesial communities (BEC's). I needed to work so hard but at the end of that year I felt I had found my way.

The Oblates invited me to go to the novitiate in Paraguay and I would have to leave everything again, but I accepted. In Paraguay I made a rich experience that m y confirmed missionary vocation. I came back to Sao Paulo, Brazil, where I studied Theology. During this time I always spoke with my superiors about the mission "Ad Gentes", especially in Asia. I

wanted to make an

experience in a small

church



Fr. F. Rubeaux, then Superior of Belem Delegation, imposes hands on the new Oblate priest.

inter-religious dialogue and I wanted to go to Indonesia, I don' t know why.

with

In the beginning of the year 2000 I met the Superior General in Uruguay during a meeting of CIAL (Interprovincial Conference of Latin America) and the Formation Committee of Latin America. He said to me that it would be impossible to go to Indonesia in that moment, but there were other options the Philippines, Thailand and Japan, but the last one would be the most difficult to adapt to.

After that I wrote to the provincials of these provinces and father Wency answered me quickly, and interestingly after that things were on their way. I was ordained on May 5th and on May 12th I left Brazil to come here. I am happy to meet here the same Oblate spirit of welcome and fraternity. I really feel at home.

Now remain the challenges of the Japanese language and culture. I need to be born again but this can be a privileged opportunity to live the words of the Gospel: "Unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God".

From the Provincial's Desk

Wency Laguidao

First, I would like to thank everyone for the show of unity and cooperation that made the last congress successful and individually enriching. I also personally thank Fr. Eugene KING, our facilitator. During and after the congress, he took the time to talk

to each one of us to listen to our concerns and to do the consultation for the nomination of the next Provincial.

Thank you also for putting your trust in me by giving me a second term. The concerns that you personally expressed to the Vicar General have been communicated directly to me and I will see to it that they are acted upon by me together with the next provincial council. Surely, there are lots of things to do during the next couple of years!

Jan VAN HOYDONCK and I would also like to thank all of you for the warm gesture of celebrating our 50th and 25th anniversary of ordination together through a beautiful liturgy and sumptuous dinner.

I also welcome the newest and youngest addition to the Vice Province, Gen. I hope that after a few years in Japan, he will decide to join the mission.

AORC Meeting in Aix en Provence: The Provincials and Delegation and Mission superiors of the Asia-Oceania region had their annual meeting at the foundation house in Aix en Provence from April 18-28. The annual meeting is usually held in the region but the group decided to make an exemption this year and meet at the very place where the Founder and his "Missionaries of Provence" started. The purpose of meeting at the cradle of the congregation was quite obvious, we wanted to go back to the roots and trace back, as it where, the early stages of the congregation. Fr. Ernest Ruch, outgoing director of the Centre International De Mazenod gave the input and accompanied the group to the various places that were significant to the early mission of the congregation.

I served as President of the group for two years and during this year's meeting, a new President was elected, Fr. Federico Labaglay who was a classmate at the scholasticate and present Provincial of Philippine Province.

Among the most important topics discussed during the meeting were:

Formation: This year, a two-month course for formators (psycho-spiritual) will be offered in Manila, October through December. Bro. Nobu YAGI will attend. Other formation-related topics that were discussed were: common programs on formation, exchange of formation personnel, overseas exposure before ordination, etc.

Opening of a mission in Vietnam: The bishop of the northern part of Vietnam has officially asked the Oblates to help in the formation of lay leaders and in teaching at the seminary. The French Province is looking at the different angles of the offer and member units of the AORC may be asked to cooperate in the project. The Provincial of France, Fr. Maxime Chaigne came to enlighten the group on the project.

Restructuring: Units affected by the restructuring process were asked about the progress of the consultations initiated by the General Council.

Since the meeting was being held in Europe, we had the privilege of inviting some members of the

General Council: Fr. P. Jesunesan, General Councilor of the region gave a report on the region and what the General Council expects from the units. Fr. Eugene KING who is in charge of the Centre International De Mazenod came to explain the importance of the center for the congregation and the animation in the congregation now known to us as the "Immense Hope Project." Fr. Rufus WHITLEY, the new Treasurer General made himself available to explain how he sees the financial situation of the whole congregation now and in the coming years. Fr. Camillus FERNANDO, AORC representative to the General Finance Committee also attended. The next AORC meeting will be held in Manila in February next year.

Provincial Gets Second Term

Wency LAGUIDAO was appointed for a second term by the General Council during its plenary session in Buffalo, Minnesota last May. His second term will start after the consultation and nomination of a new Provincial Council.

Website of the Vice Province

Visit us! Thanks to Jerry NOVOTNY for working on our website which is temporarily located at: www.lifeissues.net/omi Jerry is looking for a "webmaster" who will edit and update the site periodically, any volunteers? Meanwhile, Itami Parish has also made its own website on the following address: www.itami.net/

Summer is Coming!

With summer just a breath away, people are starting to make plans to escape the heat. Not so for scholastics Kenichi FURUKAWA and Akio HORIUCHI who are scheduled to spend a month of overseas exposure to places where there is perpetual summer! Negotiations are still being made for Kenichi to go to the Philippines and Akio to India right after they have folded up the tents of the next vocation camp. Don't get over-exposed guys!

Meanwhile, Leo KAWAGUCHI and his Mission for Youth group are also Manila-bound in late August for a week of immersion. The group will visit Oblate run places in Manila and a farm run by a Japanese sister outside of Manila.

Provincial Archives

In between doing his work as bursar and animator, Ray BOURGOIN has been rummaging through the provincial files in Kochi, sifting through what should be saved as documents for the provincial archives. The search is on for any document lying around in the houses that may be of value.

REQUEST: Provincial newsletters dating back from 1962 have already been compiled and neatly bound by Ray. Some copies are still missing. If anyone is in possession of old newsletters of the mission and any other document, *codex historicus*,

pictures, etc. that may be of value, will you kindly donate them to the archives?



VARIA

The English translation of the letter from the Japanese Bishops (いのちへのまなざし) **Reverence for Life** is now available on the internet: http://www02.so-net.ne.jp/~catholic/EDOC/01life.htm

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From Xave to Everybody,

Yoshikazu TOSA

Since April, very ordinary days have glided away into the past.

School life is as usual. I only lost my temper once at the All Girls College.

While Jan is on vacation, I go to Ikeda on the second Sunday of the month. That day the Philippine ladies gather at 2:00 PM for Mass, too. Father Romeo comes from Takamatsu, but Jan wants someone around.

My asthma doesn't give me much trouble.

You should congratulate me, because recently I didn't send any "letters" around. That doesn't mean I don't have ideas I would like to share with you. For instance, We started the 'Immense Hope' operation, but if that is only a structural reform, I am afraid it won't arouse much enthusiasm in me. On what change of spirituality are the new structures based? Only one example: In the last Spring meeting we exchanged opinions about poverty and sharing our 'money' with others. We opted for a status quo. In my eyes, we opted for conservatism. However, if we are persons (not only an individual) then we are human beings with a fundamental and creative freedom. We can freely and autonomously think and act. However, I know that such a freedom is connected with the freedom of others. We have our roots in others. We receive our freedom from others. And so, our freedom is the essence of solidarity. That is at the same time a call to accept our responsibility. Conservatism in the Church and the Congregation maybe provides stability (customs and habits). There is no need for personal thinking and responsibility (no need to worry). However responsible religious give form and substance to our mission vision. By so doing he creates human relations inside the community.

Past religious education was directed to a complete dependency, obedience without questions, and poverty by permission. We learned to leave responsibility to others.

On what spirituality is the Immense Hope revolution based, that I would like to know.

News from Nishi-Tokyo-shi

Jack DEELY

Months ago I tried emailing info about the change in the Tokyo address, but computer illiterate that I am, I failed to send the info simultaneously to all on the OMI list. The new snail mail address now is: Tokyo-to Nishi-Tokyo-shi Hoya-cho 6-8-17. My apologies.

As for news, some faculty and staff helped me to

celebrate my 60th back in April. I didn't think much about turning 60 until the Japanese referred to it as Kanreki --- with that, I felt more like 70...

On a more serious note, I've got another retreat for the deaf scheduled on the 20th and 21st of July in Nagoya. I've been trying to come up with something, but --- the well's dry! Any and all suggestions or ideas are most welcome. I hope to somehow develop something around that Sunday's Gospel on Mary and Martha. We shall see. Being in Nagoya and not being able to stop by the House there is a real shame, but I'll have to rush back for a Bible Class on the 22nd.

Am sorry to report that I will have to miss the OMI retreat again because I'll be traveling for the university. Along with the Section Chief of the Overseas Liaison Office, I'll be visiting some of our partner universities in the States.

Lastly, there is a major event in September that will keep me hopping. The National Catholic Deaf Association will be holding a convention from the 22nd to the 24th. Fr. Tom Coughlin, the first deaf priest in the world, will be joining us from New York. I'm happy to report that the bishops and priests have gradually showed a keener interest in a signed mass for the deaf and have expressed a desire to participate in Fr. Tom's liturgies. Fr. Tom, by the way, is presently involved in the training of 6 deaf seminarians from around world. From my recent association with deaf Protestants, one thing is patently clear and that is the enthusiasm with which they live their faith. I'm sure there are many factors involved, but one major factor that is obvious to me is they have **Deaf Ministers** serving them. Maybe someday in the not too distant future there will be a deaf priest to serve deaf Japanese Catholics!

Good health and God bless,

西東京市便り

数ヶ月前、自宅の住所変更をOMI会員全員に同時にメールでお知らせしようと思ったのですが、コンピュータ音痴の僕はそれに失敗しました。申し訳ありません。大変遅くなりましたが新住所をお知らせします:

〒 202-0015

東京都西東京市保谷町 6-8-17

ニュースとしては、60 歳を学校の近くにできたばかりのアイリッシュパブで大勢の教職員に祝ってもらったことです。60 歳はたいしたことないと思っていたのに、日本の人たちは「還暦」と言うと聞かされて、急に 70 歳ぐらいになったような気分です。

まじめな話です。7月20日(金)、21日(土)、名古屋で聾者のための黙想会を行います。色々々えてはいるのですが、アイディアが枯渇してよい案が浮かびません。皆さんにお知恵を拝借したいのですが・・マルタとマリアの話を中心にするつもりですので、ぜひ良い案をお教えください。せっかく名古屋へ行くのですから、名古屋の皆さんにお目にかかりたかったのですが、翌22日(日)はいつもの聖書研究会があって、東京へ飛んで帰らなければなりなりません。

ところで、今年の夏もまた上智の依頼で国際交流課の吉野課長と留学協定校を訪問してくる予定ですので、残念ながらOMIの黙想会には参加できそうにありません。

Greetings from Itami!

Bradly ROZAIRO

It is going to be three years since I came to Itami. Life has been good for me so far.

Work in the parish is going on as usual. The parish of Itami is blessed with some young and active people. They are a big help to me. On the 10th of this month we will have the HANSHIN CHIKU TAIKAI(district gathering) here in Itami. At the moment we are getting ready for this event.

This april I joined a group of fifteen from Itami on a pilgrimage to Europe. We went to Rome, Assisi, Marseille(Aix), Lourdes and Fatima. We visited the OMI General House in Rome. Ron Laframboise was very happy to meet some of his old friends. Going to Aix, the "Cradle of our Congregation" was something very special to me. I was happy to say mass at the tomb of our Founder. Lourdes impressed me very much. I really felt that it is a place for prayer. I think, the devotion to our Lady grows specially, because of Lourdes. On the whole, it was a very good pilgrimage.

I am happy to let you know that Itami church has it's home page!: www.itami.net/ It is only in Japanese(sorry for those who can not read Japanese).

"I was in prison and you visited me" Giovanni ZEVOLA

Everything started with some letters sent by a Nigerian from Taejon city. He used to visit our office every once an a while and due to some regrettable circumstances he is now confined to the prison. After receiving so many letters I decided to go once there and visit him, that was just the beginning of what can be considered a further expression of the apostolate with the migrant workers. By now the visit to the prison are regular and we just started to visit the new probation center in Hwasongkun

To live in a different country has already its difficulties (language, food and above all cultural differences), so how much more to be confined in a prison where is not possible to enjoy the minimum of possibilities in terms of relationship? If it this difficult for a Korean imagine how much more for a foreign who will have nobody to visit him/her, simply because the friends are undocumented? For a migrant worker to be in prison is the experience of being isolated and left alone.

Why do we do this ministry?

Because we do believe that human dignity can never be removed whatever we do and in spite of our possible negative experiences in life. The gospel is telling us that the prodigal son while leaving far away from home came to his sense and decided to go back to the father's house "He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity and he ran threw his arms around his son and kissed him" (Lk 15,20) There is always a Father waiting for us to embrace us and telling once again :"you are my beloved" (Mk 1,11). I have seen people in Taejon prison who are now better persons because they have learned from their experiences, regretting their past and ready to start with new spirit as new persons. One of them is Sanjit, a small Indian from Calcutta who is now back with his old parents being their joy and strength.

What do we do when we meet in the prison?

I follow a group of people coming from different countries (Nigeria, Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and South America) and thanks to the generosity and good will of the prison personnel and officials we can meet freely in one room for about two hours. We start always with a moment of prayer where in spite of the fact that we have different religions (Christians, Muslim and Indus) we do acknowledge the importance of faith in our lives particularly in time of need. A second moment is represented by a sharing regarding a particular topic (human relationship, advent, Ramadan a parable from the gospels), the aim is to come to know ourselves in a deeper way so that we can start to relate to others in a trusting way.

Without a dimension of faith is not easy to persevere in this ministry, too many are the difficulties (people asking always all kind of small favors, embassies reluctant to help out their nationals, bureaucratic impediments and sense of inadequacy). There is a need to always refresh the reason that motivates our action; "I was a prisoner and you came to visit me"(Mt 25)

Few things I learned that I' d like to share with you:

to the people in prison: remember that we are always God's children no matter what our past is, so do not give up your personal dignity:

to the migrant workers and the people who are supporting our apostolate: there are walls that we build within ourselves (coworkers and family members) due to conflicts and misunderstanding; those are our prisons from where we need to come out following St Paul words " never get tired of doing good".

"God raised Jesus from death setting him free from its power because it was impossible that death should hold him prisoner" (acts 2,24). The risen Lord might give to all of us the necessary strength to overcome evil by good and to come out from darkness into light.

From Yoshizuka

John Iwo

Last May 3rd, Len INUI, Leo KAWAGUCHI and

myself visited the historical churches of Tachi-Arai, Imamura and Hongo in the Fukuoka Diocese. We took the Kyushu expressway and reached Imamura in less than an hour which was fast enough considering that it was a holiday and the roads were crowded. We traversed the plains of Chikugo which looked carpeted with fields of wheat! It has been a long time that I have not seen this kind of rural scenery. As we went farther, the sight of a red-brick church could be seen from a distance. This was the Imamura Church. It was strange however that as we entered the village, the red-brick church building seemed to have disappeared from sight! We drove through narrow roads and finally Imamura Church, famous for its red-brick outside walls, again reappeared.

History says that the building plans of Imamura Church was first drafted in the 4th year of Meiji (1908) and construction was completed in 2nd year of Taisho (1913). There is a feeling of awe as one enters the church building and observe the way it was constructed in the olden days. The communion rail, a reminder of an age gone-by, is still there. Huge stone columns line the middle part of the building. The ceiling is representative of the method of construction common in Nagasaki in those days. The parish hall is adorned with ten different statues of the Blessed Virgin made of wood or ceramic.

It is believed that in 1560 the Christians settled on these plains to escape persecution. It took them until the Meiji Restoration to be reunited with the Christians in Urakami (Nagasaki).

The relics of Saint Peter and Saint Anthony also adorn the historical church of Hongo.

5月3日、乾神父様、川口神父様と三人で大刀 洗の二つの教会、今村教会と本郷教会に行った。 九州道を走ったが、連休とあって道はいくらについた。 地でいた。しかし一時間あまりで今村教会についた。 筑後平野は珍しく麦畑であった。長年この様な麦畑は見たことがなかった。その畑の中にこの然とレンガ造りの大聖堂が浮かび上がってきた入りがである。 それがと全然姿を消し、どこにあるのかわかなくなった。 そして狭い入り口の道路を通って、 とが造りの大聖堂についた。

明治4年(1908年)に計画され、大正2年(1913年)に完成した。まず内に入って圧倒された。昔の大聖堂の内部構造である。それに聖体拝領台も残っていた。褐色に輝く太い柱は親石の上に立っている。天井の梁は当時の長崎建築のものである。そして信徒会館には木製と陶器のマリア観音が午ばと置かれていた。

1560年頃からこの地方にキリシタン集団が生まれ、迫害の時代をこの様な平野の中で過ごし、明治になって浦上の信徒たちと連絡が取れたのである。

本郷教会には聖ペトロの骨と聖アントニオの骨が飾られていた。

Summer Vocation Camp

The 16th Summer Vocation Camp this year is scheduled for August 1-4 at Geisei Mura, Aki, Kochi.

Retreat

The Retreat this year will be preached by Fr. David POWER of the U.S.A. Province. Fr. David is presently teaching in Tahiti. The retreat will be from September 3rd, Monday (arrivals on Sept 2) to 7th, Friday, noon.

Visitors

Fr. Kajol Gomes from Bangladesh (early June). Fr. Raymond Crowe, from USA, a classmate of Bert Silver and JK Mahoney (September).

Jack Quinn and daughter Jennifer (August)

Prayers

For the Sick: Tom MAHER was in the hospital during the Holy Week for an infection on his leg. Ray BOURGOIN and Xave TOSA took turns in taking care of the Holy Week and Easter liturgies in Nakamura.

James JEYACHANDRAN had a knee operation after a bad fall while playing soccer.

Prayers are requested for the brother of Jan VAN HOYDONCK who has been diagnosed with a brain tumor. Also for the eldest son of Eddie QUIOCHO, Masaya, who figured in a serious traffic accident in Fukuoka. Eddie's son was in coma for days but have started to come out of it. Eddie thanks everyone for their prayers and expression of support.

Your prayers are also requested for our sick relatives: Ray's mother, Jerry's father, Bradly's father and other relatives whom we fail to mention here.

FLASH! Just when we were about print out this issue, news about Bill MAHER'S traffic accident in Chicago came in. Tom and Wency were able to talk to Bill by phone from his room at the Loyola Univ. Medical Center. Bill have broken ribs and knee caps.

Ordinations in the Region: Scholastic brothers Jerry Villlas and Howard Tatel, Filipino scholastics who spent two years with us are on the final months of their studies. Jerry and Howard are scheduled to be ordained to the diaconate on August 15th. The Delegation of Thailand has two newly ordained priests: Fr. Matthew B. Rachakit, OMI and

Fr. Peter W. Phuthasa, OMI. They were ordained last June 3rd. In Australia, Bro. Christian Fini, OMI will be ordained a priest on June 30. Congratulations!

For the Dead: Fr. John Savage of the former Eastern American Province and a good friend, mentor and spiritual guide to many of us died last April 24 at the age of 91. He came to preach our retreat some years ago.

From the editor

Nobuhiko

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



Glimpses from the Provincial Congress 2001

