

OMI Japan-Korea Newsletter #15

Spring is seen as a time of growth, renewal, of new life being born. The term is also used more generally as a metaphor for the start of better times. As we begin a New Year with the “Risen Lord”, let us hope and pray that we may have better times ahead of us.



Dick Harr, OMI

A happy and most blessed Easter to one and all. With Easter comes spring. It's been a rather cold, bleak, snowy winter here. And I fear it's not over yet. Thanks be to God, I've been getting out on the property to walk and get some exercise. I wish my waist line showed my effort. My age has taken over, I guess.

I'm thankful that the community life there is alive and well. And thanks so

much for keeping me in mind. The missionary life and work in Japan has been and will always be the center of my heart.

Each of you will be dominant in my prayers here. May God bless each of you and your labors.



John K. Mahoney

On Holy Thursday I participated in the 'washing of the feet'. This time I was not a washer but rather one who washed. Many things have changed in my life, but many good things too. One of these being a resident at Madonna. I have many helpers, the cooks are good, the cleaning ladies are wonderful, and the nursing staff is kind and helpful.

I think of you often. Every evening during evening prayer I pray for all of you. I have a picture in my breviary that I use at this time. Thank you for your e-mails and prayers. This keeps me close to each and everyone of you.



Bert, OMI

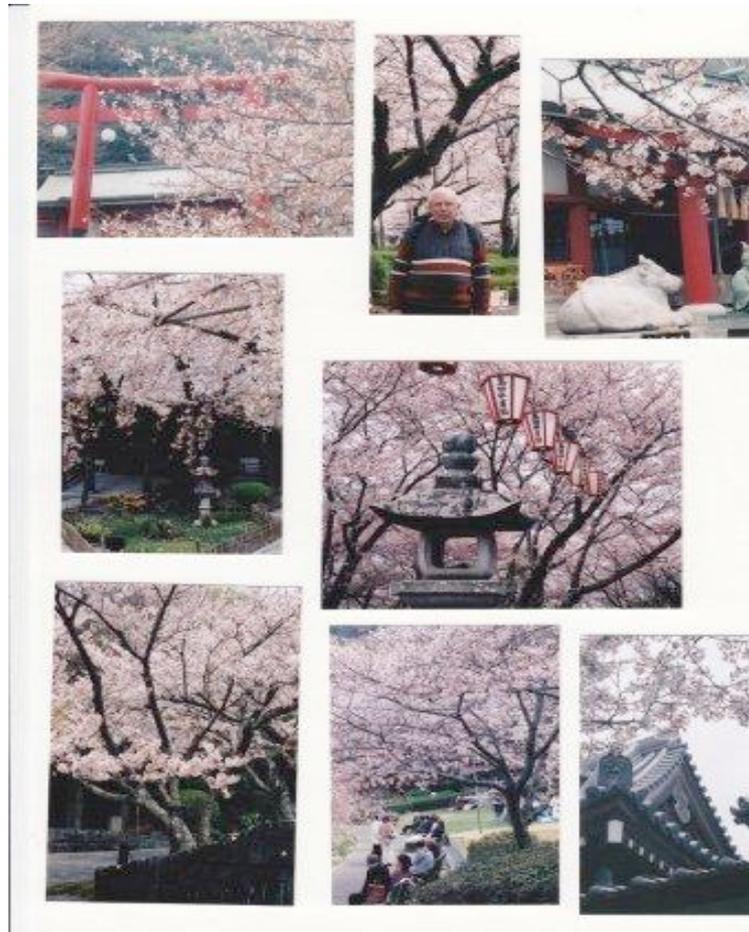
Fond memories of a martyr...who endured sickness...Azuma san. From the time that I went to Naruto his mother was always close to me. Her visits to the rectory, her calling when the "dog catcher" was in the neighborhood to put our dog in. My connection with her was always with her son who was in Banzai (hospital for TB patients) as a patient even before I came to Naruto.

I was teaching catechism and needed some charts for my class and he made them for me. And they were beautiful. I think they are still in Naruto if Len hasn't thrown them out.

I can't remember the year but Azuma san's mother made plans for him to come home from Banzai after many years. He wasn't in the new house long before his condition deteriorated and he was dying. When I went to the house to bring him Communion it was Good Friday and from twelve until three o'clock he went through his suffering the same as our Lord. Beside him knelling on the floor was his mother and at three o'clock on Good Friday he went to our Lord. His mother never got over the experience and on the feast of the Assumption she joined her son. There were many others that I have walked with, from baptism to the sacrament of the sick, from marriage to births in the family and I am grateful to our Lord for so many blessings.



From: Bert



Two year Missionary Exposure in Japan

Palomo

Japan is the country of my assignment for exposure. I still remember the first things came to my mind at that time were things I usually heard in Japan such as Toyota, Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki, Suzuki, Mitsubishi, sushi, sashimi, the animes such as pokemon, dragon ball, etc.,. Also, famous words like “Hai!”, arigatou, moshi-moshi and sayonara which many people also use in my country. Truly, I had fears because of unfamiliarity with the country and with people. But all I could do was to entrust everything to God for He was sending me to a new mission.

Growing up in a village and coming from a third world country is a completely different atmosphere and environment when I first came to Japan. I noticed that there are more cars running than people walking on the road. The train station is packed up with different types of train having different lines and different directions. Indeed, I lost my direction the first day of my Japanese class in Fukuoka (kawasou). I rode in the train two times (back and forth) in order to find the right direction. Thanks to God and I was back with Fr. Kenichi who was worrying and waiting for me.

However, I have seen that the environment looked very quiet, sad and I felt lonely, too. Even when I got inside the train I noticed that people were very silent, sleeping, reading, listening to music and seemed very tired. In Koga the surrounding made me feel lonely. In addition, because of the language barrier I found the difficulty to talk with somebody. Japanese language is mostly spoken even sometimes inside the house in Koga. I felt like a deaf; simply hearing without understanding. Truly, I felt homesick the first two weeks. I felt like going back to my country (hu!hu!hu!).

When I started getting involved in the kindergarten (youchien), things changed. I really had fun mingling, talking and playing with the children. Though I was teaching English, I also learned from them. They were sometimes my mentors teaching me on how to pronounce the Japanese word properly. They were really cute. Sometimes I could not stop myself hugging them. I also learn the Japanese custom and the way of living by simply looking at them. These kids at their young age are taught to be responsible and competent. But I feel how much pressure and strength they have released and exerted in order to prove that they are capable of doing things.

As weeks and months have moved on I got used to the environment. I gained plenty of friends as I slowly learned the language. I realized the beauty inside the heart of the Japanese people as I continued acquainting and mingling with them. People welcomed me in their homes. I really valued even little things they gave me. I really like their politeness, kindness, their passion for work, cleanliness, their love for nature, their sincerity and dedication to their work and their greetings even by simply bowing of heads as a sign of respect and it also entails many meanings.

This made me realize and to have the desire to learn the language. Also, my Japanese class in YMCA and my little apostolate in Daimyo Church led me to mingle and befriend with different nationalities.

As I moved from one oblate mission to another I met different types of people. The more I engaged and mingled with people the more I got to know the differences of culture and personalities in a particular place. I had the chance to work with the youth. In addition, I really enjoyed meeting the migrant people. I also learned a lot from them by simply listening from their stories and life sharing. Having the chance to also work with the Filipino migrants like giving communion service, faith sharing, facilitating and giving leadership seminar, counseling, baptism seminars, recollections, and by simply mingling, talking, laughing and listening from their stories as such were all graces to me. I also found sometimes of feeling heaviness to leave the place especially if the bonding was good. But to experience a new place and mission was again God's invitation to me to see more His gifts of creation. Truly, such experiences have helped me gain so much of confidence and trust in myself. Furthermore, these experiences have led me always to kneel and pray. I could bring the worries and problems of people, the gift of friendship, trust and openness into prayer. I thank God for this.

Lastly, I would like to thank my oblate community for all the support, the love, the hospitality and kindness you all have shared with me. Even in pains and sufferings, God continues to call us to awaken the life of people, to let them feel that they are also loved by simply through ourselves. There are many people who are waiting for us to be touched. Again, thank you very much for all these opportunities you have given me. Also my short stay in Korea had a strong impact on me especially with the community. To all my brothers in the Korean mission thank you for the hospitality. Like me, I hope you continue to care and show your love (person to person) with our young priests, because it is only through love and support that these young priests can offer the same to next generation. May the Lord Jesus Christ with the intercession of Mother Mary and St. Eugene continue to bless our mission and guide us on our journey. .

To the many people who kept asking me whether I will come back to Japan or not, I will say that I am looking forward. I love the people and I have good experiences there. Again, the answer does not come from me but only God alone knows. As I always pray and as God continues to call me that He will always make me an instrument of His peace and of His love to all. May God bless Us All.



Tosa Yoshikazu

The word "Spring Meeting" became a traditionally used word. But that last meeting was more like a "Winter Meeting". (At least for me it was.) It was a freezing return day too. (Or is that a sign of 'age?') I got home with a little fever.

I opened my computer hoping to have some warming up news. There was only one e-mail... (and 3 reports from Jude.)

I'm tempted to have my ears checked. As somebody told me: you will be able to hear the gossip whispered behind your back.

Father Mercado is a good speaker, although my ears could not hear all his sentences clearly. I'm still interested in Justice and Peace. Who is not? Just a little memory... After my experience with Bert's Christians, I thought to try other parishes. The big church in Itami may well do it, I thought. I went. I asked. I got an answer: "Justice and Peace? Here in the church there is a lady who comes continually to me with her J+ P proposals. She is a pain in the ass!"

During the spring meeting I approached some of the Korean missionaries about the next 'provincial/ administrator/ delegate...'. I told them my opinion: that one of the Korean OMI's should take the job. I might be

wrong but I have the impression that Korea is a rank lower than Japan. And so the days come and go. A week has still 7 days. The sun comes up in the east and disappears behind the horizon when it gets dark. The world doesn't get better. The trains above my house run from east to west and from west to east, and they don't make too much noise. People walk the newly paved street in front of my house, some with an umbrella, some with a parasol, some ladies in long skirts and the students in mini-skirts...



AORC Meeting in Australia 2010 Feb 22nd to 26th

Jude Peirisulle, OMI

2010 AORC meeting was held in Australia. The menu was chosen to be at the OMI, St Mary's seminary. Due to the flight schedule, James and I arrived in Australia 2 days ahead of the meeting. As a result of that we had a little time to rest from long journey to Australia. On Saturday Evening, Australian provincial offer a chance for the members who were there to part take in an Australian food ball game. On Sunday morning almost all the members were present for the parish mass which was held at John Viany parish, which is run by the Oblates, to partake in the Sunday liturgy, where all the members were welcomed and introduce to the parishioners there. The chief celebrant was Fr. Mon, provincial of Philippines who is also the president of the AORC. This was something arranged by the Australian province to get our selves known to the people and place. The meeting as such started in the evening of 20th evening to with the special prayer service.

Day 1

Fr. Peding gave his report as General Councilor for Asia-Oceania. He

discussed about the new context and situation of the Region and the need for new Oblate Responses. There were also Pressing Concerns to be addressed vital to our ministry and life. He calls for building an effective structures and strategies for greater collaboration. Some general information about the Region was also taken up such as expiring terms of some Provincials in the Region as well as Delegations to be “incorporated” by a Province. He also encouraged members of the Region to continue to pilot in the ministry/ies that they are very much capable in doing and for the various ministries to work together.

Fr. Oswald Firth gave his report on the 2010 Gen Chapter. He gave as a back drop how things happened before Chapter 2010 with an overall review of the general themes and challenges in the various General Chapters from 1972–2004. The general theme of the 2010 Chapter is Conversion: a new heart; a new spirit; and a new mission. The stress of the theme is that of the conversion of the person and community so that they become effective evangelizers in doing the mission. Changes in the General Oblate Directory he also presented. Some initial proposals to the Chapter of 2010 were also presented. Discussions followed after his presentation. Afternoon was the time to give the reports of the various units. Please find the report of Japan and Korea in a different page.

Day 2

The started by Fr. Ramon with his Presentation of Synthesis of Unit Reports to the General Chapter from the Asia–Oceania Region Unit Reports and Discussions. He asked the body for more feedbacks in order to finally complete the Region’s Report to the Chapter. He highlighted the different areas of growth, of diminishment, and concern. There was also a suggestion to include another important area, that of challenge. Adding of pictures and interviews can make the presentation a lot more interesting.

Fr. David Ullrich presented the Treasurer’s Report. A copy of his presentation was made available to the members.

The following presented their Committee Reports: Formation (Fr. Francis); JPIC (Fr. Paul); and IRD–MS (Fr. Roy).

Fr. Oswald said that a Dossier on Youth Ministry is on the way for the next Administration to deal with. The AORC members also shared their own unit's varied experiences, approaches and programs with the youth. In general, there is no felt need yet for a Youth Ministry or Committee in the Region. Fr. Peding reminded the unit Superiors to answer the two questions as regards Youth Ministry in their area and submit to Rome thru Fr. Chicho.

The afternoon was spent for Update on the Oblate International Scholasticate in Manila. The Scholasticate in Manila will temporarily house the OISM. An Executive Board has been set up to oversee and make decisions on matters pertinent to OISM. The OISM is ready to receive Formator or Scholastic this coming June 2010. But officialiy, the OISM will start on 2011. For those intending to send a scholastic and/or Formator for 2011, it is suggested to inform the Fr. Bernabe as soon as possible. Those coming to join either as Scholastic or Formator must come by March 2011. The body suggested for the Committee also to look into other programs such as Language, Pastoral, Clinical Pastoral Exposure, etc. beneficial to the candidate whose timetable differs greatly from the Philippines. Fr. Mon suggested that the Board meet during this AORC Meeting.

Day 3

Fr. Phil Estrella OMI gave his presentation from the Governance Committee. The Chapter of 2004 gave the mandate to again discuss the question of structure and function of government in all levels. The 1998 Chapter saw that the tasks and goals of the government have changed and that there is need for better organizational structures that would facilitate our life and mission and responsive the fast changing situations such as increase of oblate mission commitments and yet the decline of personnel and vocations.

The Committee came out with the following assumptions for future directions if the congregation wishes to revitalize: 1. strengthening of Provinces; 2. making Regions more operational; 3. having quality chapters; 4. having more functional central government.

- In presenting the proposed changes, the committee also showed the advantages and disadvantages.

The following is a summary of the proposed major changes:

1. To give as an option Regions some level of governmental authority;
2. To discontinue the General Councilors;
3. To extend the term of Provincial from 3 to 4 years;
4. To hold the Chapter every 8 years instead of 6 years;
5. To change the composition of the central government to 5 elected and 4 appointed
6. To fix the number of personnel to be a Province from 40 to 80 members
7. To elect the Superior General and his council for a term of 8 years from 6 years
8. To fix the number of representation to the Chapter to 1 delegate for every 120 members.

The meeting was adjourned before lunch to prepare for the afternoon tour.

Day 4

Fr. Mon informed that the body that the sharing about Running Council Meetings and Vision-Setting and Strategic Planning will be moved the following day to give way to more discussions on changes in the Congregation Structures in various levels such as Central Government, Region and Province.

The whole morning and afternoon were spent on the above agenda with the members of the body expressing their thoughts and feelings – for and against, decided and undecided about certain changes presented for the Chapter 2010.

Fr. Phil was even surprised of the AORC's interest on governance that the discussion took 1 ½ days. Some additional proposals surfaced as a result of the discussions and will be added in the final draft this June by the Committee on Governance.

Fr. Phil recommended that these discussions be brought down to the unit members for information. And that more thoughts and feelings can be

brought by the Region/Unit participants to the attention of the 2010 Chapter Capitulants.

Day 5

In the morning the group spends the time to discuss other matters as well as discussing the place, date, suggested theme and agenda for the next year AORC meeting. The place for next year AORC will be held in India, as it is going to be a province by August this year. The date will be from 7th to 11 Feb, 2011. The theme will be drawn from 35th General Chapter.

Since the arranged agenda finished before the schedule group decided to have the evening free and get ready to go to the cathedral for the inaugural mass of De Mazenod collage.

AORC members



Ange, OMI

Dear Oblate Brothers,

We continue to live with Joy the new life brought to us in Christ in His resurrection.

We received with joy the news that we are now a Delegation of the Sri Lankan Province. Our Statutes have been approved and we continue to fulfill our mission in Japan/Korea to bring the Good News and serve the poor with their many faces.

I thank Jude for all the work that he has accomplished in bringing about our new reality. The work on the Statutes by him and Ray. I also thank all of you for your contributions in this process.

I thank Jude for his leadership these past three years. The demands can be pressing and Jude has responded to them in Faith. He has done a good job. God has blessed us.

We will now choose a new superior who will take on the ministry of administration. I pray for him and our delegation. The mission faces new challenges with aging and decreasing numbers. The Chapter calls us to conversion and this conversion will create the atmosphere to face some hard decisions we will make in faith and with courage and strength.

Given the reality of our mission we know we will need missionaries from abroad for our very existence. Therefore we must seek vocations in Japan and Korea to continue the work of so many who gave their lives for His work. How can we ever thank these missionaries for their dedication in faith and their good example?

A word of thanks to Fr. Clement and his province for accepting us as a delegation. Working together we can and will build on the firm foundation of those Oblates who have gone before us. God is good.

God bless all of you. You are always in my prayers.



A PLACE WITHOUT FENCES (On my trip to Indonesia)

Bro.YAGI Nobuhiko

From February to March, during one month, I visited Indonesia. I spent the time in Borneo (Kalimantan) and Java visiting the Oblate Missionary area. Borneo is the 3rd largest island in the world. It is about twice size of Japan. However, there is very little population, spread all over the place. Most people are in a few cities along the coast, about 500,000. The rest is jungle area. At first, I left the capital of Jakarta by plane to an airport along the coast. From there, on a huge bus, I traveled for 10 hours, to a place in the inside of the island, which had a population of 100,000 people. Again I changed to a smaller bus (about the size of a High-Ace) and went for 2 hours to a small village. From there, by motorbike I followed a river for an hour and a half and arrived at a small port. Then I boarded a small boat to finally arrive, 2 hours later, at the Oblate missionary center.

There, for the first time in my life, I washed myself and my hair in the river (the color of the water was like houji tea), washed my clothes and went to the toilet. Of course there was no toilet paper, so I would wash with the river water and let it go downstream. At first I kind of resisted because I thought it rather unsanitary, but as I got used to it, I realized that the river water was better for the body than all the water we use at home, which supposedly is cleaner and sterilized. On the contrary, I started to feel that the dirt, grass and twigs with their nourishment were mixed with the water to make it more able to strengthen our bodies.

At this place, I didn't feel there was a border between peoples, nor between human beings and nature, between people and God. I'm sure that the warm atmosphere has something to do with it but, doors and windows never fit well, people came from everywhere in the neighborhood to drink tea, have pleasant conversations together. I saw this everywhere. Within this harmonious circle, small children as well as babies frolicked, (no matter if it were deep in the back area, there were children, babies, and many young people), not only the parents but, it seemed that all the people were warmly looking over the kids. Therefore, I felt that there seemed to

be very little barriers between nature and the children.

Besides that, it could be because of the atmosphere they live in, in general the personal relationships were peaceful and not at all unsociable. Even if someone makes a mistake, there was no atmosphere of condemnation, they just left the children be themselves. The lines of approval seemed to be far above what you find in Japan.

I was well received by many people. After returning from Indonesia, I felt first of all, including the Oblates in that country, so many people during this visit, I don't know how much time, money, food, goods, considerations, efforts, tenderness, kindness, smiling faces they were able to give me. "What, this also", is all I could think of as people took good care of me. I'm just so thankful.

During this trip, I was taught what was most important for people. That is, giving oneself up to the workings of nature, enjoying the harmony of family and neighbors, and within this lifestyle, recalling the graces that God has given us, to thank and praise Him, is what it's all about. That is, in ordinary life, in the simple workings of everyday, something very important is hidden. This is not necessarily only within great works or great events. This is very difficult to perceive within the Japanese atmosphere, so my own theme is to see how I can assimilate all these things that I have experienced on my trip into my own life. At least, I don't want to blame it on my present atmosphere, but I want to be careful about the way I carry this in my heart.



Motor boat trip



Gathering with youth



OMI Seminarians (paper crane in hand)



Oblates of Indonesia





*SPRING
MEETING
March 2010, Japan*

Pictures by Bert

HAPPY EASTER!

John Iwo OMI

It is still cold in the morning, but the cherry blossom is almost gone. Here the sisters left Yoshizuka on April 4, Easter Sunday afternoon. They came to Yoshizuka in 1954 and served for 59 years. However, the nursery school is going on, and also the credit union (kyojo kumiai) of Yoshizuka was closed at the end of March.

Happy Easter season in Christ and Mary.



Oblate Orphanage (“Pwoje Espwa”) in Haiti

Brad

We all know that on Tuesday, 12 January 2010, a violent earthquake (magnitude 7.3) struck Haiti. It took the lives of so many. The Oblate Provincial of Haiti in his letter to the Superior General says, “**You can understand, Fr. General, that the damages must be immense. One still cannot estimate them, even though the Prime Minister has spoken of about 100,000 deaths. The total is much worse than that for there are still the wounded, the disappeared and the material damages**”.

After the earthquake the Oblate orphanage in the city of Les Cayes has accepted 100 more children. Last month, we, the Oblates from Japan sent some money to this orphanage. I am sure that our contribution will be of some help to the orphans. Please read the article (“**Pwoje Espwa**” accepts 100 more orphans”) below.



THEO

Theo is a pen name for Father Marc Boisvert omi, the founder and director of Pwoje Espwa Sud in southern Haiti. In 1998 we rented a small house and filled it with street boys. Now we have 800 children living on a huge property outside the city of Les Cayes. There are six schools, a carpenters' workshop, an agricultural center, a small medical facility, an all-purpose space for chapel services, theater productions... In twelve years a miracle has been taking place in southern Haiti and you have helped make it happen! Spread the word so we can continue to save children's lives. Blog: <http://pwojeespwa.blogspot.com>



www.freethekids.org

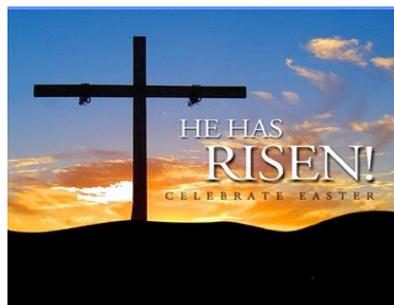


“Pwoje Espwa” accepts 100 more orphans

Haiti’s largest orphanage has agreed to welcome over 100 orphans to their village. Named Pwoje Espwa Sud (Project Hope South), the orphanage is located near Les Cayes and is already home to more than 650 abandoned children. The director of the orphanage, Oblate Father Marc Boisvert stated that, “With our staff of 250 and over 140 acres, we have the capacity to handle the extra children left helpless because of this devastation.” The orphans will be coming from Leogane, a town just a few miles west of the earthquake’s epicenter.

Pwoje Espwa also feeds and educates 1200 other local children. This requires a total preparation and serving of over 4000 meals each day. Boisvert said, “There was a point where we didn’t know where our next meal was coming from but we are starting to see supplies arrive in now.”

Funding for Pwoje Espwa is largely provided by *Free the Kids*, a United States non-profit organization. Executive Director Jami Vass said: “We are seeing a rapid increase in interest and donations. We believe we will have enough financial resources to feed, clothe, house, and educate these children, thanks to our most generous American friends and the international community.”



Christ has Risen! Let us rejoice and be glad
Fran

Spring has sprung but at times the “spring” part seems rather feeble. It is still cold here. The new house is now being used well with five bodies going in and out and as Brad says with our newest member, Hiran 君, we all

seem to be going to Japanese class, as he comes back filled with questions and seeking explanations for the “things” his mind is being flooded with daily at the WYCA School. His interest and enthusiasm is quite catching and I’m sure in a year he’ll be teaching me, not just English but Japanese, as you know I can use all the help I can get in either case.

I love and hate this time of year, as it is filled with the message of Christ’s Victory over death and with the “power and promise” that Victory means for me in my life, but then it is also it is the time of year when I have to close out the “Books of the Delegation” and make out the reports for the 文部省 and for Rome. Not exactly where His “power” works best, and not my favorite type of work, but it is time to take up the “cross” and walk. Maybe that’s where the “Power and Promise” come in.

Hope and pray that all is well and with you all, and with the new “promise” that our association with Colombo and the other two Provinces brings I have Immense Hope that God will help us face the tasks He gives us for the establishment of His kingdom in the hearts of the people to whom we are missioned to serve.

