

## *Japan-Korean OMI Newsletter 2010*



Christmas in Japan and Korea



### Korean Community

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I had a wonderful vacation at home for a month (November 2010). This time the vacation was more meaningful and full of celebrations.

First of all, the wedding of my niece, who is the eldest of all our nieces and nephews, took place on 12<sup>th</sup> November. The wedding went on very well. We all felt that it was my Sister's even though all of us were all very happy.



But within 12 days after the wedding of my niece was my parent's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (Golden Jubilee).

I strongly feel celebrating 50th wedding anniversary is definitely a great thing, especially in the age when divorce rate is the highest. Couples who have lived for half a century together would surely tell us that the journey was not a smooth one. They must surely have had their share of hardships, fights, differences which they conquered with the help of mutual love, respect and trust.

This time the celebration was my parents Mr. **Anthony**swamy and Mrs. **Lourdumary**. As I recall their married life they did have great love and respect for each other and mutual trust which I believe gave them long life though quite hard now with their sickness. They too had lots of hardships in all aspects of life but still I could see them standing together and supporting each other in their ups and downs of life.

This example of their life moved us their children to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with our close family and friends as per their request. With the kind cooperation of the Indian Oblates, we had the celebration in the philosophate community, Bangalore. Also there was a good participation from the part of the Oblates, about a dozen of them prayed for them at the concelebrated Mass. The brothers arranged a meaningful inculturated liturgy and thereafter the family arranged a festive dinner.

N.B: I am now in the Seoul House.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2011 to you all!**

Maurizio -- [mauriziogior@tiscali.it](mailto:mauriziogior@tiscali.it)

## The Broken Photocopy machine

We are in time of advent. It is the time we prepare for the coming of the Lord. He came once, 2000 years ago, and continue to visit us and to stay with us. In my apostolate with the migrants, I experience many times that God talks to me, come closer and visit me through the migrants. Sometimes God talks in ways that I don't imagine.

One Sunday as always I was in Emmaus migrant center in Kwanju. As always many people come to ask for help. Sometimes I am able to help them, sometimes I fail and I feel a bit sorry because I would like always to fulfill their desires.

In the morning one Filipino came to me with a simple request: "Fr. Maurizio, I need a photocopy of my passport today could you please help me?" "Of course", I answered very happy - we have here the copy machine in the office. No problem!".

I go to the copy machine and make the photocopy. To my surprise, the copy comes out white...no image of the passport, but only a white paper.

The photocopy machine had run out of toner ink, so I couldn't make the photocopy. What to do? "Don't worry", I say to the Filipino. Our printing machine can do also the photocopy!"

Again I put the passport on the printing machine to make the photocopy, I wait a while and ... again the paper comes out white, no photocopy, no image. Also the printer was without ink ... I was sure it had been filled with ink.

It was Sunday and there was no shop open to buy a new one. With sadness I give back the passport to the Filipino asking forgiveness because I disappointed him. "I am sorry I couldn't help you".

I was really upset not to be able to do a very simple thing. But the Filipino takes his white papers and the passport and smiles to me. "Father thank you so much" he says to me.

I say to the Filipino: "You have to say thanks to me when I give you what you asked for... I am giving you white papers and no photocopy. Why do you say thanks to me? You have to thank me when you have a result of what you asked for."

The Filipino answers me: "No Father! You are wrong! I thank you because you gave me your time, you listened to what I asked of you, you tried very hard to help me ... that's is the most important thing. The result is not so important to me".

Of course I realized that I have to check more often the machine in the office so that can be ready anytime. But through the answer of the Filipino I understood better about my life and Jesus...

How many times in my life I try to imitate Jesus, I try to listen to his words and to put into practice. I would like my love to be similar to the Love of Jesus. I try to be like a

"photocopy" of Jesus but every time I fail and I see that my love is not a photocopy of Jesus' Love, but it is more similar to the white papers I gave the Filipino. There is no change, no big results and I feel that I disappointed God. I have so many mistakes and sins that really the image of Jesus in me cannot be seen.

But I thought that probably through the Filipino, God was telling me that instead of looking for the results in my life. God is telling me thanks all the times I have listened to his word, that I don't ignore his commandments, that I give time to Him. As the Filipino was telling me thanks even though I gave him a white photocopy, God tells me that he is happy for the times I try to be his image and not if I am a perfect image. The mistakes and the failures in my life make me understand what I forgot, what I need to do better, so that I can improve.

When I realize this I am impatience and it is the time to improve patience. When I realize that I didn't forgive, it is the time to learn forgiveness and mercy. When I concentrate too much on myself, it is the time to learn to think about the others.

It is the lesson of the ***broken Photocopy machine***. I realized that I have to buy the ink and the toner to be ready for the next time. In that way I think that slowly the image of God will appear in our life as well as a photocopy will come out well if I learn to "buy" what was missing. ***Broken machines sometimes can be useful.***

**Good Advent!** and **Merry Christmas!**







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## My Life in Korea

"It makes me suffer - a dear friend told me once - to see you go here and there to beg and glean some funds for the table of the poor. I hope to become rich enough that I can help you much more." My answer came immediately: "I am not a poor beggar. I am a rich person. I am rich of the joy that comes from feeling welcome by God's merciful and infinite love. This gives me a free and happy heart."

I remember once when, after taking part in a wedding banquet, I realized that so many delicious courses and dainties were left untouched. Seeing all that plenty, I approached the person responsible for the buffet and asked him if I could be allowed to take some of those tasty foods for the boys I had left at home (we are managing three Family-Houses with 25 boys). The person responsible very happily agreed and gave me two large bags; he invited me to take all that I needed. I couldn't believe my ears. I filled the two bags with choice meat, exquisite cakes, chicken, fish, rice and several other delicacies which my boys go crazy about.

A devout churchgoer, who was present when I was happily being a predator, approached me with an attitude of annoyance and told me: "But, Father, have a little dignity! At least for the sake of the habit you are wearing. Are you not ashamed to do that?" My answer was prompt and decisive: "I know very well how much my boys appreciate these good things and I would

feel guilty if I had to go back to them empty handed... That would have been the greatest shame!"

### Bowing to the poor

Many people think that my missionary life must be beautiful and happy because it is filled with so many important activities to be done. These people think that it is those actions that bring me satisfaction and joy. It is not like that at all. On the contrary, the works I do in my priestly life, besides being a beggar for the love of God, can be summed up to only 3 or 4, not more, simple gestures that make my life happy and full of so much serenity.

The first and most significant reality of my apostolate is that of "being together" with my volunteers: to work with them, to sweat with them when it is hot, to experience together, the swelling of legs when our service becomes heavy; not being afraid of dirtying my hands with the sauces and of the smells of the kitchen in order to serve the poor. Towards the end of the evening, after having worked the whole afternoon side by side with them, I approach each volunteer, put my hand on his/her shoulder and whisper: "Thank you, brother!" or "Thank you, sister!" It is because of the commitment and sacrifice of these men and women that we can open our soup kitchen everyday and accept 450 people, who come to our threshold, and offer them something good to eat.

Another beautiful aspect of my daily life is that of welcoming the poor who come to our gate with a profound and devout bow - here in the Far East, culturally, the greeting is a bow more than a handshake; bowing is a sign of respect and sincere humility. While I bow, bending my body as low as I can, and with a cordial smile, I tell them: "Welcome this evening. I hope you will like our supper. Please make yourselves at home."

### A witness of God's signs

Another beautiful dimension of my missionary commitment is fulfilled rather late in the evenings. After having closed the soup kitchen and put everything in order, I go to visit our three Family-Houses and I stay a bit with the boys. I listen to them and exchange some words with them. Then, on taking my leave, I extend a light caress to their faces, one by one, and wish them good night. I go back to the community late at night, tying up the loose ends before going to bed. After having placed my existence in the Lord's merciful heart, I spend some time recalling the great favors the Lord has done for me during the day and for each one I whisper

with all my heart: "I praise you, Lord ... for the friend that you made me encounter today; I praise you, Lord ... for that little offering that has reached me today; I praise you, Lord ... because the boys are fine; I praise you, Lord ... for those unexpected bags of rice; I praise you, Lord." This is the most beautiful moment of my being a missionary: in the darkness of the night, in the solitude of my little room, I give witness to the Lord for the marvelous realities that He accomplishes everyday in my life.

My missionary existence is not a frantic going, traveling, converting, doing ... no, no. It is just being a witness of God's love, of God's miracles and signs He gives me every moment. It is I who have to be converted first so that I may then give witness to others, not so much with words but with my life - that God is a loving Father and takes care of us, His most beloved children.

Full of joy and happiness

Concluding this reflection on my missionary commitment, I can tell you, honestly, that those few gestures I wrote about: to beg out of love; to bow in front of the poor saying: "You are welcome!"; to whisper: "thank you" to the generous volunteers of the Center, with my hand on their shoulders; to extend a caress to the boys before sending them to bed, wishing them good night; to give a true and sincere praise that becomes a prayer to the Lord before falling asleep: all these make my life full of joy and happiness. This has been my missionary life for twenty years. Others may think that my life is boring and meaningless. I don't mind. It is sufficient for me, and it gives fullness of life to my heart.

Tomorrow, sure of God's love, I will start again doing the 3 or 4 small things that make my life great and my spirit happy. My only desire is to witness to the whole world the marvels of the Risen Jesus who is alive in our midst.

[From Editor; Contact Vencezo directly for his paper on the Homeless in Korea]

***"PASTORAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE HOMELESS IN KOREA"***



## Koga District

Kenichi -- [kensuke0157@hotmail.com](mailto:kensuke0157@hotmail.com)

May I wish you Merry Christmas to you. I hope that you are fine. This year we are very much blessed and Koga church seems to be very lively. (賑やか). At the binging we were 5 in the community. Angelo, Mahoney and Bernard going back to their own place replace the community only to 2 members. Now I see the community is over taken by the Sri Lankans and we are back to 5 now and I am learning the Sri Lankan language to communicate to them instead of Japanese.

This year is also a busy year for me as I was involving in the school where I meet various teachers. The schools where I have gone for training gave me a lot of chances to involve with lots of children. I see them as a gift of God. I cannot measure the experiences I have in various places. Over all it was a fruitful year for me. I am not yet sure where I will be next year but I am open to the situation.

Let me take this opportunity to say all of you **Happy Christmas** and hope to see you in Kochi with the Bingo game before we wish each other **Happy New Year**.

Jude -- [peirisp@gmail.com](mailto:peirisp@gmail.com)

### **“Time is near”**

Today the 1<sup>st</sup> reading (November 15<sup>th</sup> Rev1:3) speaks of the term “Time is near” as we are coming to the end of the liturgical year. This term is also used to stress the eschatological end. Today while saying mass I was reminded the mail Jerry send to each one of saying the closing date for the newsletter. It is true it can be reflected in many ways.

As you all know that I am getting ready to go for a one year sabbatical next year (from June 2011 to June 2012). In advance to that there are so many things I have to prepare, get ready, handing over things, while keeping this as closing date.

Coming to the end of the year there are so many assignments, undertakings, plans, events ahead of you where you have to keep a note of the closing date. Looking at the schedule in the



diary I already began some of the things that I have to do during this time while reminding myself “Time is near”. Is it not the same for you also, Christmas Cards, Nengajo, preparing for the services? For me, writing this article for the newsletter and getting ready to go home for my vacation in January reminds me “Time is near”, get ready.

Having spent almost 5 years in Koga, I look back at various things that I have been involved in this parish as I am preparing this blessed season with the idea “Time is near” while getting ready for it. While sharing these thoughts with you let me wish you all Happy Christmas. Hope to see you in Kochi to wish you Happy New Year.

John T. Iwo -- [j-iwo@gol.com](mailto:j-iwo@gol.com)

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

This is my last Christmas Greetings from Yoshizuka. Next April, I will move to Akaoka - Aki Church. It is 13 years in Yoshizuka. It is located in the northern part of Kyushu and it was a graceful time for the following reasons: 1) There are many Nagasaki Christians in this area. I could teach and understand the Nagasaki Christians' Faith and life. If we say Nagasaki, it brings images of Oura-Tenshudo, Urugami-Tenshudo and Nishizuka - 26 Japanese martyrs who were killed. However, I will say: Hirada, Tabira, Ikitsuki and the Churches of the Goto Islands. I think if you go there, you will be able to feel the faith of the Nagasaki Christians. 2) Fukuoka Museum is close by. I often went to see the many photos and works displayed. 3) People from Shikoku and Osaka visit Kyoto and Nara very often and also Tokyo. However, I think that without knowing the culture of Kyushu, people cannot understand well the Japanese Culture, especially Christianity. 4) Finally, the life in Yoshizuka was very delightful and fruitful. Thanks be to God.

クリスマスと新年のお喜びをも押し上げます。この挨拶は吉塚から最後の挨拶となります。来年 4 月、あら赤岡、安芸教会に転勤になります。吉塚に来てから 13 年になります。九州の北の一角に来ましたが、非常に恵まれた日々でした。

1) 長崎の信者がこの地方に多かったと、キリシタン信仰を身に感じ、受け取る事が出来たことです。長崎と言うと大浦天主堂とか、浦上天主堂、日本 26 聖殉教者記念の西坂を考える人が多いと思いますが、それよりも、平戸や田平、生月更に五島のキリシタン教会にふれるならば、これこそキリシタン信仰であると実感することが出来ると思います。

- 2) 博物館が近くにあり度々展示品を見に行く事が出来ました。伊丹にいた時は大阪まで一度行っただけでした。
- 3) 関西の者にとっては京都や奈良の文化を見る機会が多く、東京に憧れるのですが、私は九州の文化を知らないと、日本の文化特にキリスト教を理解できないと思います。
- 4) 結論。私にとって、吉塚生活は非常に有益であった。又、吉塚は飛行所や博多駅に近く交通の便がよく、病院も近くに沢山あって生活しやすい所であった。紙に感謝。

Robinson-- [rorobinson78@gmail.com](mailto:rorobinson78@gmail.com)

My dear brother Oblates, First of all let me wish you **a MERRY CHRISTMAS AND JOY FILLED NEW YEAR**. It is my pleasure to meet you all through this newsletter for the first time. I was really glad to be with you during the last annual retreat where I experienced the joy of being an Oblate in an international atmosphere. It is my fourth month in Japan. Most of the time I have been busy learning Japanese. It is interesting to learn Japanese along with other foreign students. Dear brothers I deem it a great opportunity to express my gratitude to all of you, especially your warmth and support. Looking forward to meeting you at the Christmas Gathering. God bless you.

Christy -- [christynir@yahoo.com](mailto:christynir@yahoo.com)

Greetings. Actually I was wondering as to what I could write in regard to the Christmas message. To begin with, I will start with a small story. Once a king traveled in a small ship, with his wife and his small baby and of course, with his security. While they were sailing the small baby happened to fall in the sea. The message was passed to the king, who before anybody else, jumped into the sea to save his own baby. Actually, this is Christmas. And this is the celebration. So let us celebrate it with utmost joy in our hearts. For, Jesus comes day in and day out to save us.

**Happy Christmas and Happy New Year**



Itami District

Hiran -- [jhiranomi@gmail.com](mailto:jhiranomi@gmail.com)

Dear brother Oblates, He, who was God and was with God, had that overflowing love to be one with us; the humankind. So not only do we desire to call Him God but want to feel close to Him because He came close to us. That is the intimacy; the Nativity story unfolds before us. If not for this intimacy our presence on the earth will have very little meaning on the whole. In other words, Christmas invites us for numerous celebrations because we are born human, yes just for the fact that we are weak, fragile human beings daring to reflect on “God among us”; Emmanuel. Therefore let us wish one another that: “we may have the gladness of Christmas; which is hope, the sprite of Christmas; which is peace, the heart of Christmas; which is love”.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS** TO ALL OF YOU, DEAR BROTHERS

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### **MY LITTLE FRIENDS**

This year has been special for us at the kindergarten. The youngest group of kids that we admitted this year (mostly three year olds) was special in many ways. Children being separated from their parents for the first time has always been difficult but this year was special. The screams and the tug-of-war sort of ritual every morning that characterize the start of a new school year were extra traumatic for the children and even for the teachers. We ask our part time teachers to put in extra time for a few weeks until the new kids get adjusted but this year, they did extra work for about 3 months. In fact, all of us had to put extra efforts in pacifying many of the new kids and seeing to it that all doors are locked, dangerous areas cordoned-off and every possible escape-route for would-be escapee is sealed-off. The weaning period which ordinarily took some weeks lasted for several months!

There is another reason why this school year is special for us. I personally have taken interest in a special field of study to help me understand developmental problems among children. We have three autistic children in this year's new batch. I have searched the internet and bookstores for materials on children with special needs and particularly with autism in its wide-ranging connotations. Experts in child development tell us of a "spectrum" in the manifestation of syndromes in autism. To understand autism, we have to make distinctions in technical language such as PDD, PDD-NOS, Asperger, ADHD, etc. which are observable symptoms in the broad spectrum of autism. The more I read the copious references on the subject, the more I am convinced that we all have symptoms of autism in its broadest meaning at one point in our childhood or even now as adults.

I make it a point to look for my "three little friends" every morning. Each one is so different from the other. One is very athletic and loves to just run and run. Not so much interest in the Montessori stuff, no eye contact and tends to repeat what he hears from others. The second is always buried in books and has reading ability at a very early stage. No eye contact and cries loudly at the slightest provocation. The third one hates outdoors and just goes around the building with a wide grin and sweet face and has language problem. My morning is not complete without seeking out the three of them. From a non-professional point of view, I think all three of them have the ability to overcome the little imperfection that is assigned to them. They too are God's masterpieces regardless of their developmental problem and every time I try to look at each of them straight in the eyes, the non-verbal message that I get from each one of them is: "No one's perfect!"

In my personal research on developmental problems in children, I stumbled into a very interesting novel, "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time" by Mark Haddon. It is a first-person narrative novel written from the point of view of a 15-year-old autistic youth. Many of us will remember the award-winning movie starring Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise entitled Rain Man. It was a comedy-drama with Dustin acting as an autistic brother to Tom Cruise. As I recall the movie now, I remember how funny it was, a comedy more than anything else. But there was a message in it especially from the world of autistic children, as if they are telling us: "People might find us odd or even abnormal, but viewed from our world, we are normal and it just happened that the numbers of people who think they are normal are just overwhelming. They define the rules of the game and those who do not follow the rules that they have made are considered odd and abnormal."

I hope that I am not boring you with my new preoccupation. We all know that God created an



imperfect world but with the encouraging words for us to try to be “perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect.” These encouraging words are made flesh in Jesus Christ. If this world was perfect, then the Incarnation would have been meaningless. And there would be no place especially for my “three little friends,” and Christmas will be nothing but empty celebration like the plastic-looking piece of Christmas cake that are so ubiquitous at this time of the year.

***A blessed Christmas to all of you amidst the imperfections***

***within us, amongst us and around us.***

Brad -- [brozairo@gmail.com](mailto:brozairo@gmail.com)

### **Christmas with the Poor**

Another Christmas brings some food to those who depend on others for their survival. The Catholic Social Action Center in Kobe, together with the other social welfare groups, organizes a program every year for the homeless, jobless and the dropouts of the society. The program is held at a park in Kobe from Dec. 28 – Jan 5. The poor in Kobe area look forward to this, because they are sure to get a decent meal continuously for 9 days!

During this period of time, apart from food the poor are also given a free medical check up, hair cut, calligraphy class and advice on social welfare. Some volunteers come forward to entertain them with songs and games. In the park there will be a place dedicated to the homeless who have died in the past. December 29<sup>th</sup> is the day to remember the dead whose names are written and placed on a board. Homeless people gather in front of it, offer flowers and pray for their friends in heaven. The poor even after their death are remembered by their own.

Thanks to some generous people and volunteers. Because of them the poor are given an opportunity to celebrate Christmas and the beginning of a new year. I think there is more joy when we celebrate Christmas with people outside than inside the church.  
(see following photos)



Preparing the Meal



Some Music



In Line for Food



Remembering those who died



Haircuts



Plenty of Dishes

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Greetings and prayers for all, that this season will be a time of “grace” and “conversion” that the General Chapter invites us all to enter into. Back after a wonderful two-month vacation, I wanted three but could not ask Wency and Brad to cover that long, I am once again immersed into Itami life. There is one big difference of course, since Ray has returned to the service of Bursar, my life is now really settled and relaxed. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all for your patience, and support during my service there! I also wish to thank Brad and Wency for filling in while I was gone, as I know they both have heavy schedules, to say the least.

I made it back in time for the parish bazaar it was really a great affair. Everyone worked together and we were very pleased with the results. Within the last 10 days, I will have presided at three funerals, one of a 64 year-old man who was very active and supportive, a grand lady who has two daughters who became Franciscan nuns and missionaries in Algeria and the Congo. She passed away one day after consciously celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday surrounded by family including 18 great grand children. And finally on the 6<sup>th</sup> we will bury a 55-year-old man, who was very active in the parish till he became seriously ill. He died suddenly at home, alone when no one was near.

While in the States, the Oblates and the Buffalo Diocesan priests, as well as the people of the

St. Amelia Parish, where I always stay, all welcomed me so warmly and whole-heartedly, I felt like I had never left. Their kindness always amazes me and I appreciate it so much.

While home I did many things; I witnessed the marriage of the grandson of dear friends in the Washington DC area, got reacquainted with a very special lady whom I met on a trip back in 1989. She and her husband befriended me on that 10<sup>th</sup> day the journey, and thereafter. Her husband, Richard, kept in contact sending me a card and gift every Christmas, and after his sudden death, his wife has remained faithful keeping in touch. After 21 years I was able meet and thank her, and visit and say a prayer at the grave of Dick.

I got to Tewkesbury, MA to spend time with Dick Harr and I also saw many men who were instrumental in my formation and becoming an Oblate. I was able to pray with Fr. Dick McAlear, at the bedside of his mother and say good-bye to a grand lady, who went to her heavenly reward the day after my visit.

Ron lent me a car for the first 3 weeks and my cousin Mike came through with a car for the last month, and I was able to put some 5,000 miles on their speedometers. I visited the cemetery where all the Hahn family are awaiting for the the return of the Lord, paid my respects, offered a prayer and even pulled grass off the grave markers.

I will not bore you further with my vacation details, there are so many happy moments and reunions, but each such journey home means being reconnected with your history, in so many ways, and each such revisit has its own blessings. As you can tell I had a great two months and am so conscious of how very blessed I have been these many years, with the family and friends that God has graced my life with.

Christmas is a time to celebrate the Mystery of the Incarnate Love of God for us. One of my favorite bible passages is 1 John 4:20-21 “anyone who says they love the God they cannot see, and does not love the Brother they can, is lying to themselves.

I thank the Lord daily for each of you, my brothers here in Japan and please know you are in my heart as I kneel before the manger in awe of the Mysterious love of God, present both that Mystery, and in the person of each one of you. Christmas is a time to enjoy and celebrate family and friends and to give the best “gift”, one self, to each other. See you all in Kochi. Have a Blessed and Christ-filled holiday.



Jack --

News from Hoya

Once again, not much happening here in Tokyo except that the house will soon be torn down and sold. For those of you who have never had the chance to see it, here are some pictures. The garden was beautiful, but -- as you can see from the picture I've selected -- I preferred the jungle effect (I actually saw a monkey out there one time...no joking). And, thanks to Ray's understanding, I also had many Gyoza Parties there with Deaf friends...pictures of which will give you an idea of what the "inside" looked like.

Recently I did a wedding for a daughter of one of the neighbors...and it's only newsworthy because Ray did the honors for the bride's parents. Nothing like keeping things in the OMI family!

The requests for Signed Lectures do continue, and recently the real joy has been to start a Lecture, look at the audience and find the faces of former Deaf students with their spouses and children sitting there in front of me. I guess it won't be long now before some will be bringing their grandchildren. It's a bugger getting old, isn't it!?! Related to that bit of news is -- years of concerted effort by the Deaf, their organizations and their supporters have finally taken the form of a petition strongly urging the Ministry of Education this month to soon recognize "Signs" as a language, as several countries like the U.S., Sweden and Finland have already done.

I am also including a picture of Dick Harr that I took while visiting him in Tewksbury in September. It was of course great seeing him but all too short a visit...as was my visit with John Kenney. I only wish that I had had a camera with me while visiting John. Both looked great and both were asking for everyone.

Take care. See you all soon. A Holy and Merry Christmas to all of you !



Dick Harr



You cannot tell from this picture but it was a great house

### 保谷便り

間もなく保谷の家を解体して売するという事以外、特に大きなニュースはありません。あの家を見たことのない、遊びに来たことのない人のために、写真を添付します。庭はとてもきれいだけど、私が選択した写真のように、ジャングル状態の庭が一番気に入ってました。実際、冗談ではなく、一度猿が通るのを見たことがありますよ。そして、ブルゴアンさんの理解を得て、聾の友達と、何度も餃子パーティーを開きました。家の感じをわかってもらうために、その時の写真も添付します。

この間、近所の娘さんの結婚式をしました。たいしたニュースではないと思うかもしれないけれど、このお嬢さんの両親の結婚式は、ブルゴアンさんが司式したんですよ！

相変わらず手話の講演会の依頼は続いています。最近、講演の時に会場を見回すと、受講者の中には昔の聾の教え子が、夫婦や子供連れで来ていることが増えて、本当に心からの喜びです。もしかしたら、じきに孫も連れてくるようになるかもしれない。年取るのはイヤだねえ。これに関連したニュースといえば、聾者や聾協会、そしてその支援者たちが長年の働きかけた努力によって、とうとう文部科学省は今月か近いうちに、アメリカ、スウェーデン、フィンランドが既にやっているように「手話」を言語と認めるようになります。

9月にチークスベリーに行って、Dick Harrを訪ねた時に写した写真も送ります。John Kenneyの時と同じく、とても短い訪問になってしまいましたが、会って嬉しかった。ジョンの訪問の時もカメラ持って行けば良かったのに！でも元気だったよ。お二人からも皆さんに宜しく、との伝言です。

ではお元気で。高知で会えるのが楽しみです。また、意義のある良いクリスマスを！

ジャック



Tokushima District



Dancing in Hospital? *Guess Who?*

[Anan Parish]

Bert -- [bnsilver@lime.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:bnsilver@lime.ocn.ne.jp)



Anan

December 2010

## Greetings from Anan!

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of December we have the Christmas Celebration for the children and parents of the kindergarten here in Anan. I put together a full page of the children as they take part in the “Story of Christ’s Birth” and other skits that they perform. The picture above of the young girl lighting the Christmas Candle is done before they perform the story of our Lord’s birth. It ends with Santa. (don’t need a pillow).

After Christmas, at the mission, with our parishioners everything changes into a New Year Celebration mode here. The year 2010 was a year filled with many blessings. And I count one of the blessings the seven weeks that I spent in the hospital after breaking my leg and wrist going into the mission entrance. I was all set to head for my visit to the States the middle of July, but had to change that after the operation.

Weather-wise, as you recall, it was brutally hot during July and August... but I had an air-conditioned room in the hospital for that time. After rehabilitation in the hospital was able to come home to the rectory with a cane. A word of thanks to Bill and Len for filling in for me.

Did so well, that I decided I would take a few weeks in the States in October. A first for me. So I was able to take in the magnificent foliage towards the end of October. My first stop after Seattle was Boston where I was able to spend a few weeks with my sister Nat and her family. Thanks to Fr. Dick Sudlic, OMI (Regional Superior) I was able to have wheels while I was in the Lowell area. Many mornings I made it to Tewksbury to say Mass with Dick Harr. I was also able to get in touch with some of my “remaining” Oblate classmates.



After a week or so in the Lowell area headed to Florida to be with my brother Ron and his wife, Stasia, for a few days. Mass at their condominium brought together friends of Ron and Stasia. What was also nice about the visit was that my niece Roberta and her husband Bill came for a few days. I haven’t seen them in years. Back to the Lowell area for more of my



sister's baked beans. Then it was about that time when I started packing my bags (unlocked for security) and the long trek back to Japan: Atlanta - Seattle - Osaka - Tokushima - and finally Anan.

Came back to find that the wall on the outside of the mission church had collapsed. My thanks to the Province and the Prefect Oblates for financial help. So for now, it was wonderful being with the family and friends. My thanks for you prayers when I was in the hospital. I am going to have to live with three pins in my leg. So what else is new? Best, Bert, OMI

\*\*\*\*\*

[Part II]

The weather was excellent so decided to take Dick out for the day. We ended up in Hampton, New Hampshire at a restaurant where the "stuffed baked Lobster" was out of this world. Dick despite some health problems is doing quite well. He sends his "best regards" to all.



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### [Part III]

As we enter into a new phase in the mission as a result of amalgamation it is good to know where we came from and who was there. Recently I came across the below picture. It took place in Aki on the occasion of Fr Gill's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Fr. Bob Gill, OMI was the first superior of the mission in 1948. To Father Gill's left is Fr. Len Robitaille, OMI (the first Treasurer of the mission. Behind Len is Fr. Pat Brady, OMI (the second superior of the mission). Fr. John K. Mahoney, OMI (presently residing at the OMI Retirement Home in San Antonio Texas. Fr. John Mayer, OMI (deceased). Fr. Dick Harr, OMI (presently residing at the OMI Retirement Home in Tewksbury, Mass. Fr. Nick Neville, OMI (deceased). Fr. Jan VanHoydonck, OMI (presently residing at the OMI Retirement Home in Belgium. Fr. Bert Silver, OMI (the first provincial of the mission.



[Naruto Parish]

Ed Williams -- [lenmiomi@guitar.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:lenmiomi@guitar.ocn.ne.jp)

### **Three dreams, a reverie, and priority seating.**

The other day I had a long wait for a plane at Tokushima Airport, mulling over the call to conversion from the General Chapter; Empty our heads of judgment, our hearts of cynicism, and our wills of fear. It is a new terminal, nice and warm with very comfortable seats so I drifted off. The next thing I knew I was brought back by the sound of somebody being paged. It wasn't me. But I had dreamed something.

When our new superior, Wency, was appointed each and everyone of us sat down and wrote a

letter of resignation from all positions and offices and also wrote a declaration of availability for anything he and his council would deem to be for the needs of the mission. And then the old man nodded off again.

Along came a group of students, excited and a little noisy. They brought me back. But I had dreamed something.

Tokushima Prefecture had all its Oblates changed. All the O.M.I.s were young. The Catholics were wringing their hands for the loss of the Oblates they had had so long. But at the same time their feet were jiggling and dancing with excitement at the prospect the young priests brought. But then the old man put his head down on the handle of his cane and rested his eyes.

You may have noticed that these seats at airports are for pregnant women, people with little children and older persons. Well, a pregnant woman with a little child sat next to me. But I had dreamed something.

All of us were very trusting that those who followed us in the various places would treat the people who had been our support through the years, sometimes through very long years, treat them with justice, respect and generous humanity. This trust made leaving a place more bearable.

I guess what followed was a reverie from which I was drawn back by the stewardess telling me it was time for Priority Seating.

There we were, all of us elders, living together in peace and harmony. No more were we troubled by the thought that we would have to leave this mission which we love and in which we have worked all our adult lives; no more the loneliness of spending our last years far away from the Oblates with whom we worked, fought, wept and laughed and prayed, from the people whom we had grown to love and who loved us much more in return. We could still hear confessions, replace someone when the need arose, give advice but, of course, only when asked. We could watch the next generation of Oblates and mumble amongst ourselves about what they were doing wrong, and remember how we had done it even worse. It was a kind of heaven.

All these dreams - so extremely unlikely - so utterly possible. Oh, I almost forgot. A cane,

white hair and a pregnancy undid the latest minor caste system so evident in airports. Diamond club members, Platinum club members, Gold, Silver and on down to, what is it called? Rabble? So get a cane, stop dyeing your hair if you still have any. Can't really recommend becoming pregnant.

**Merry Christmas and a New Year 2011** filed with emptying our heads of judgment, our hearts of cynicism and our wills of fear.

[Naruto Parish]

Len -- [lenmiomi@guitar.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:lenmiomi@guitar.ocn.ne.jp)

### **Merry Christmas! He is among us!**

This Advent has become very special to me; I chose to visit north Cotabato for the first time in order to witness our mission for peace among people there. The Gospel has been brought onto their lives, and His kingdom justice has been sought persistently by the people of good will.

Our Lord has called many 'friends' of Jesus because of their witnesses through years of Oblate work. And here, at Santo Nino Parish of Midsaya, is our ordained Father BERNARD SANCHEZ ONDAP, O.M.I., a native of the land. Thus November 30th of the 1st week of advent became a wonderful day of blessing. Church filled faithful are joyful and happy to be at this ordination; the atmosphere is a big good family mood. It is a day of witness of Oblate Mission in North Cotabato.

Photos: before and after the ceremony. His brother was there, but not in the picture.





Another witness is in Kidapawan, where Mindanao Children's Library Foundation, Inc. has developed an unexpected growth of a peace community of children who are refugees from inland fights or pushed out from their life territory by some big money business, such as a banana plantation. Each child is brought there through a good evaluation of his/her family situation; their ages are from three years old to college age i.e. schooling ages are depend on their circumstances; e.g. 22-year-old man is continuing his high-school curriculum. Many of the children are supported by benefactors for their school. They are Moslems, Manobos, Catholic, Christian and other groups, who speak their own tongue. They are brought here after Mr. Matsui's research on each village and family. They are happy being together and respected as one youth family. This boy, Tamar John is one of my scholarship pupil, of age 11. He has a elder sister also living there, and both are very good in music.



The other 3 boats photo is at Macasendeg, Pikit, North Cotabato, where we visit to see a

daycare center which is built by Lion's Club in Kitakyushu. There we are greeted by a Sultan, who has a noble eyes and gestures; and when I was introduced as an OMI priest, he gave me another shake-hand, so we promised to work for peace of the people.

One boat has no guests, that is of their army guards, about dozen with guns, and does not appear while we are doing our purpose, the on the water they follow us to guard. I don't know who asked to do so. They are not stiff and even let us touch the guns. Through this visit, I am relaxed in a sense, and how can we trust each other because of our faith which respects other's culture and faith for peace: that is our humble work with the work His Holy Spirit who makes us able to do His Love Mission every places, especially with the people in needs.

***Merry Christmas to every one!***

[Tokushima Parish]

Bill -- [\\_imomb@m4.dion.ne.jp](mailto:_imomb@m4.dion.ne.jp)

**Merry Christmas**

Sitting in the Tokyuin hall, at a study session for the volunteer teachers of the Shikoku prisons and waiting for the next part of the program I thought I'd try the Christmas contribution to the Newsletter. As usual this is a very busy time of the year, the New Years cards for your Japanese friends and the Christmas cards for others. The City Christmas program, a joint effort of all the Churches in Tokushima, which has been going for the last 34 years is only two weeks away. Everyone's put their all into the preparations, the City choir, the sign language choir and the preparation committee. This year the speaker will be a priest from the Tokyo Archdiocese Masahide Haresaku. He's well known to the Protestant pastors and the other priests. I'm presently listening to his recordings and I find him very simple but loaded with great insights on evangelization and working with the Holy Sprit. We hope to get 500 to 600 for the program.

The Christmas schedule will be as busy as usual but I'm looking forward to having our new

member Fr. Roberson Robert with me for the Christmas Holidays and our Oblate Christmas party on the 27th of December.

I hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year you'll all be in my prayers on the Lord's birthday and at our Holy Hour for the last hour of 2010 and the Mass at midnight to start the New Year. I'll be seeing some of you at the Christmas party in Kochi.



Kochi District

[Nakajima-cho Parish]

Ray --

## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Holiday Season has come around again. It gives me a chance to bring you up to date with what has gone on during the past year.

This will be very short as the new office of treasurer is keeping me busy while I get into the swing of things. Things will hopefully change after March is over, as I will not be responsible for Aki and Akaoka anymore.

I am happy, as I am sure all of us are, that we have received 3 new men from Sri Lanka this past year. Hoping for a Filipino and 2 Indians next year. God is good! The Korean mission seems to be growing also, so that's another blessing to be thankful for.

Last July I saw an eye doctor in the States, who says he can do a job on my eyes, which the Japanese doctors told me was impossible till the end of time (my time on earth)! So, next summer I should have eye surgery in August sometime.

See most of you at the Kochi Christmas Party!

[Nakamura Parish]

[Tom Maher – Tel: 088-035-4045](tel:088-035-4045)

By telephone Tom sends his greetings: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all Delegation members. Tom

[Akebono-cho, Kochi City]

[Jerry – jerry@shirt.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:jerry@shirt.ocn.ne.jp)

### Asia's Marginalized Suffering People

Working in the area of Family and Pro Life Issues, words of support and encouragement are few and far between. I'm sure that most of us experience this same feeling at times in our various ministries, definitely one soft spot of being an Oblate in a foreign country. Yet, for me the problems continue to increase, rather than decrease both here in Japan and throughout Asia. In Japan, HIV/AIDS has taken a drastic upturn with 80% of cases among MSM (men having sex with men). Not only Japan, but HIV/AIDS also continues to be a hotbed in Asia, especially in countries like India, Thailand, China and recently in the Catholic country of the Philippines.

The primary causes vary from India with sex workers, Thailand and China - drug needles,

Japan and Philippines - MSM. No matter how hard an individual Asian country attempts to control it, the flow of immigrants from country to country prevents any containment. A united effort of all Asian countries (including the Catholic Church) is necessary, but does not seem foreseeable in the near future. Why???

Some major Asian Life Issues, which continue to fester and skyrocket especially among children are: (1) abortion (demographic decline), (2) trafficking (children-prostitution) and (3) orphans (HIV/AIDS parent-deaths).

A brief look at abortions in Asia: There are 13 million abortions each year in China, compared to 20 million births. Russia in some years has more terminations than births. Korea: a recent survey of 2,898 middle school and high school students in Seoul shows 26.9% engaging in sex have had an abortion. 47.9% of all middle and high students responded that having sexual relations before marriage was not a problem. Japan: you may be surprised to know abortion has been legal in Japan since 1949, more than a decade earlier than in other industrialized countries. A conservative estimate shows modern Japan as an "Abortion Paradise" with 5000 abortions per day, a friend-doctor claims its closer to 15,000, only 5000 are being reported to the government.

Next year, Trafficking, Euthanasia and Pornography are new Libraries which I intend to include in my LifeIssues.net website, which is presently nearing 8.5 million viewers – the Japanese site shows over 3,500,000 viewers. Expanding will be a big project, but an important one because these three evils are currently bombarding Asian Countries. One more which I would like to mention is the Asian Orphans. In South Asia and East Asia, there are 67.5 million children orphans. Of these, 16.6 million are AIDS orphans who are homeless or being raised by a retired grandparent. Much, much genuine renewal and formation of new policies are facing our delegation within the near future; otherwise, we will remain on the fringes of Asia and its marginalized suffering people.

This past year, I have placed large emphasis in my life on becoming a genuine part of the ageing population here in Kochi. I thank God everyday for His Grace for allowing me to live and grow gracefully old with the Kochi people. One example, which has been a tremendous learning experience, has been joining the Kochi Sports Center. In order to continue my rehab for cancer and artificial knee surgeries, I became a fulltime member and now workout five mornings a week. The center has 1500 members and 70% are between 60 and 90 years old. The first two months no one spoke a word to me, but two years later finds everyone referring



to me as sensei, as a result of my work at Kochi University (also it is easier than to remember my name). The word sensei has placed me in the position of trust, something like a retired senpai. A large portion of my time is spent “present-sharing” with this so-called "unwanted generation". Many are lonely and just love to talk, others hint at their pains and sufferings, others ask for an opinion about an upcoming operation, whether it is needed or not, or some just like to sit in silence, but what they all have in common is a “strong determination to live” and “to make best of the present moment”. Vocal “support and Encouragement” are always part of the atmosphere. At present, many are excited about their children and grandchildren coming home for the New Year Holidays. The grandchildren seem to be their IKIGAI - reason for existing.

In short, God has allowed me to share in the mainstream of Kochi elderly people, in some way both of us helping each other in the final phase of our journey to God. The Holy Spirit works in unique ways and this Advent Season my heart is full of joy and gratitude to the little Child who became human in order to give meaning to my life, especially with His continual personal guidance and flow of Love. This special road in life has been made possible by the Holy Spirit in allowing me to become an Oblate and join the Missionary Community here in Japan and Korea.

I mentioned in the beginning about complements being few and far between. One email from one of my website writers has just arrived. Let me share it with you and close this article by wishing everyone a **Meaningful Christmas** and **much success in the coming New Year**. I look forward to seeing you on the 27<sup>th</sup> in Kochi.

[email] **Fr. Jerry -- FYI, I noticed in a search for my articles using Google's "scholarly" search tab which is finally listing many of mine and Dr. C. Ward Kischer's articles posted on your website for the first time. It is very hard to get listed under "scholarly", and this acceptance is not just good for me to get the information out there, but also good for YOU that they include LifeIssues.net website as a source of "scholarly" articles. :-)** So your "clear thinking" is paying off :-)

**God bless -- Dr. Dianne Irving, Ph.D.**

In conclusion, I attach my recent painting of an elderly woman in India. This October it was accepted and displayed at the 64th Kochi Prefecture Art Exhibition. My Art teacher and class members, averaging 67 years of age, were instrumental in encouraging me to participate and now I am able to enjoy the moment of being recognized by Kochi Prefecture. God Bless.



Aging Population – 101 years old



Oblates Abroad

Ange -- [sianiomi@lime.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:sianiomi@lime.ocn.ne.jp)

Dear Oblate Brothers,

"Tis the season to be jolly" The foyer at Roswell Cancer Center was decorated with a huge Christmas tree and 250 ginger bread houses. I was tempted to break off a piece! When I entered the chemo infusion center all the nurses greeted me "Welcome back" ( I've been off chemo for 6 months) and a nurse ... Catherine gave me a big hug! I received a two hour infusion of aridia all in all the treatment took six hours.

The high light for me this year was my visit to Japan. I want to thank everyone for the super welcome. It was great being back. I'll never forget the welcome in the kindergarten and the parishes, seeing all those people was just wonderful. I hope the next time it will be permanent.

The election of Louis Lougen was greeted with great joy here in Buffalo. Louie is Buffalo born and graduated from an Oblate High School. He was also pastor of Holy Angels. November 28 we had a Mass and celebration for him. About 400 people were in attendance.

We had our first big snow storm. Some places got 20 inches and others two feet! Cars were stuck for 20 hours on the thruway! The transportation department is busy making explanations which no one believes.

In a few days we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. God is so good He sent His Son for our salvation. I wish you all a Holy and Merry Christmas.

God bless,

Ange

Jan -- [hjanomi@yahoo.com](mailto:hjanomi@yahoo.com)

Blessed and Merry Christmas to everyone, and a Happy New Year with all the blessings of Our Lord all through the year upon yourselves and all the ones dear to you. For news I cannot add much, since I hardly get out of the house except for a short walk (if the weather and my medicine permit). I am always happy to hear from you, as a group or individually. I apologize for not always replying, which becomes more and more difficult for me, but I thank for and appreciate every word I receive.

With my constant prayers for each of you and renewed wishes for Christmas and New Year I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ and Mary Immaculate  
Jan Van Hoydonck, OMI.

Dick -- [Wpmcsweeney@aol.com](mailto:Wpmcsweeney@aol.com)

Dear Jerry,

It was good to hear from you again. Already Christmas is upon us. A very merry Christmas to each of you. I want you to know I think of you often and offer a prayer for our Oblate mission there and in Africa. Your group are doing exceptional work. I'm praying for you.

Bert Silver and Fran Hahn were here recently and we spent time getting caught up on everyone there. Jack Dealy earlier drove a distance to visit here. There are several of the community here who enjoyed so much seeing Jack. They hadn't seen him in a long time.

My physical condition is fairly good. I can't expect to be full of energy all of the time. But for my 84 years, I think I'm doing well.

Health and joy in your lives. A very merry Christmas and a happy New Year to one and all.

Dick Harr, OMI



*The Communications Committee wishes each member in our Delegation a Meaningful Christmas*

*and a Grace-Filled New Year in which the Blessed Mother through her Son will continue to guide us in our various involvements, keep us healthy throughout the new year 2011, and fill our hearts and minds with a generous amount of spiritual joy and warmth. God Bless!*

*Veram, Nobu, Brad, Jerry*