

December 25, 2011

JAPAN-KOREA

Christmas Newsletter

Once again the great feast of the Nativity of Our Lord is upon us as a reminder of the tremendous gift of the Incarnation – of the Word made flesh who was borne of the Virgin and lived among us so that we might know firsthand the Father's love for each of us.

Each year we look for signs of hope from the past year, signs that the Culture of Life has gained ground and that the light of Christ has exposed the evil of abortion, human embryonic stem cell research, physician assisted suicide, in vitro fertilization, and other attacks on innocent life. We look for signs of the Culture of Life in our works – prisons, homeless, disabled, the sick, and in the spiritual journeys of our Christians.

It seems that it gets ever more difficult to find signs of hope. However, it really only seems that way.

However uncertain the present situation may seem, we know with



certainty that Our Lord has already triumphed. The tiny babe lying in the manger is truly the King of the Universe and His Kingdom of Life will be triumphant. It is in Him we serve each day and for whom we find ourselves working as Oblates in Japan and Korea.

(The Communication Team)

The Year 2011

by Wency Laguidao

What are the best words to describe the year that is coming to a close? It started like just another ordinary year until March 11 when the Great Earthquake of the Tohoku Region shook the foundations of the nation. Thousand of lives lost, property reduced to debris, children rendered orphans and many remain missing with almost no more chance of being saved. The list is endless and the sufferings of those affected unabated. People who use to live quiet lives around the Fukushima power plant are now being told that they will not be able to go back for the next thirty years! For many of them, that means never again during the remaining years of their lifetime. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan in their joint message issued on November 11 has strongly called for the total elimination of the use of nuclear power in Japan. It can be said that money is not the main issue in coping with this disaster. The solution to the sufferings of the victims cannot simply be bought with money. What they have lost are simply irreplaceable.

For us Oblates in the delegation, 2011 will be remembered as the year when we lost three of our members: Xave TOSA in March, Ange SIANI in August and John K. MAHONEY in September. I remember well what Xave Tosa said years ago about a Flemish dance that makes three steps forward and one step backward. Though in the reverse, we see the death of our three members as three steps backwards and the arrival of our new member from the Philippine Province, Bernard ONDAP as a small step forward to shore up our dwindling personnel. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, a lesson we can learn from Job.

The memorial mass for Ange Siani and JK Mahoney in Naruto last October 29 was a fitting tribute to the two missionaries who offered many years in the mission. How lovely indeed are the feet of him who brings good news as St. Paul tells us.

The first official visit of Fr. Clement WAIDYASEKARA, councilor for Asia-Oceania and Fr. Rohan SILVA, our Provincial from Oct 23 to Oct 30 was an assurance from them that we will not be alone in our journey as an Oblate unit. We will not be dependent for financial support from our mother Province but we will continue to depend on the Colombo Province to help us find Oblates who might be interested in working in joining the Japanese mission.

Training Session for Superiors in Rome

Fifteen newly appointed Provincials and Delegation Superiors gathered at the General House in Rome for the training session organized by the General Administration, Nov. 20 to Dec 3. There were 6 from the Asian region, 5 from the Africa-Madagascar region, 3 from the North American region and one from the Latin American region.

Fr. Louis LOUGEN, our Superior General, made himself available for personal consultations and simply intermingled with the new superiors on a personal level. His genuineness and warmth gives a new air in the General House. I wanted to ask him for an early visit to our unit but the earliest he can make it is around mid February of 2015! He has a very busy schedule and let us pray for him that he will have all the strength he needs to lead the congregation during the next few years. He assures us of his prayers and support for what he calls the “very challenging missionary work in Japan.”

Fr. Paolo ARCHIATI, Vicar General, was the convenor and was assisted by Fr. Andrzej JASTRZEBSKI and Fr. Clement WAIDYASEKARA. Other members of the General Administration made their own presentations on their own portfolios and area of expertise. They kept us busy for two weeks, hardly any time to see the sights of Rome!

The Oblate Martyrs of Spain

Twenty two Spanish Oblates will be beatified in Madrid on December 17 this year. Fr. Joaquin Marninez, Postulator General has been working very hard on the causes for sainthood and his efforts will be rewarded with the beatification of 26 martyrs from his native Spain. Below is taken from one article of Fr. Martinez:

The three-year period from 1936 until 1939 was a time of bloody martyrdom for the Church of Spain. During this religious persecution, there were thousands of persons who suffered violent death, who were tortured and shot solely because they were believers; or because they wore a cassock or religious habit; or because they were priests or religious who conducted pastoral ministry in parishes, schools and hospitals; or because they were dedicated laity, committed to their faith in Jesus Christ.

New Mission Superior of Korea

We wish Maurizio GIORGIANNI good luck as he leads once again the Mission of Korea. He would been installed with his new councilors Varam ANTHONYSAMY and Shitol NOKREK by now. Our prayers go with you and we thank James JEYACHANDRAN for serving as superior for three years.

See you all at the Christmas Party in Kochi on the 26th and have a blessed celebration of Christmas and let us welcome the new year with a renewed hope!



Superior General: Fr. Louis Lougen

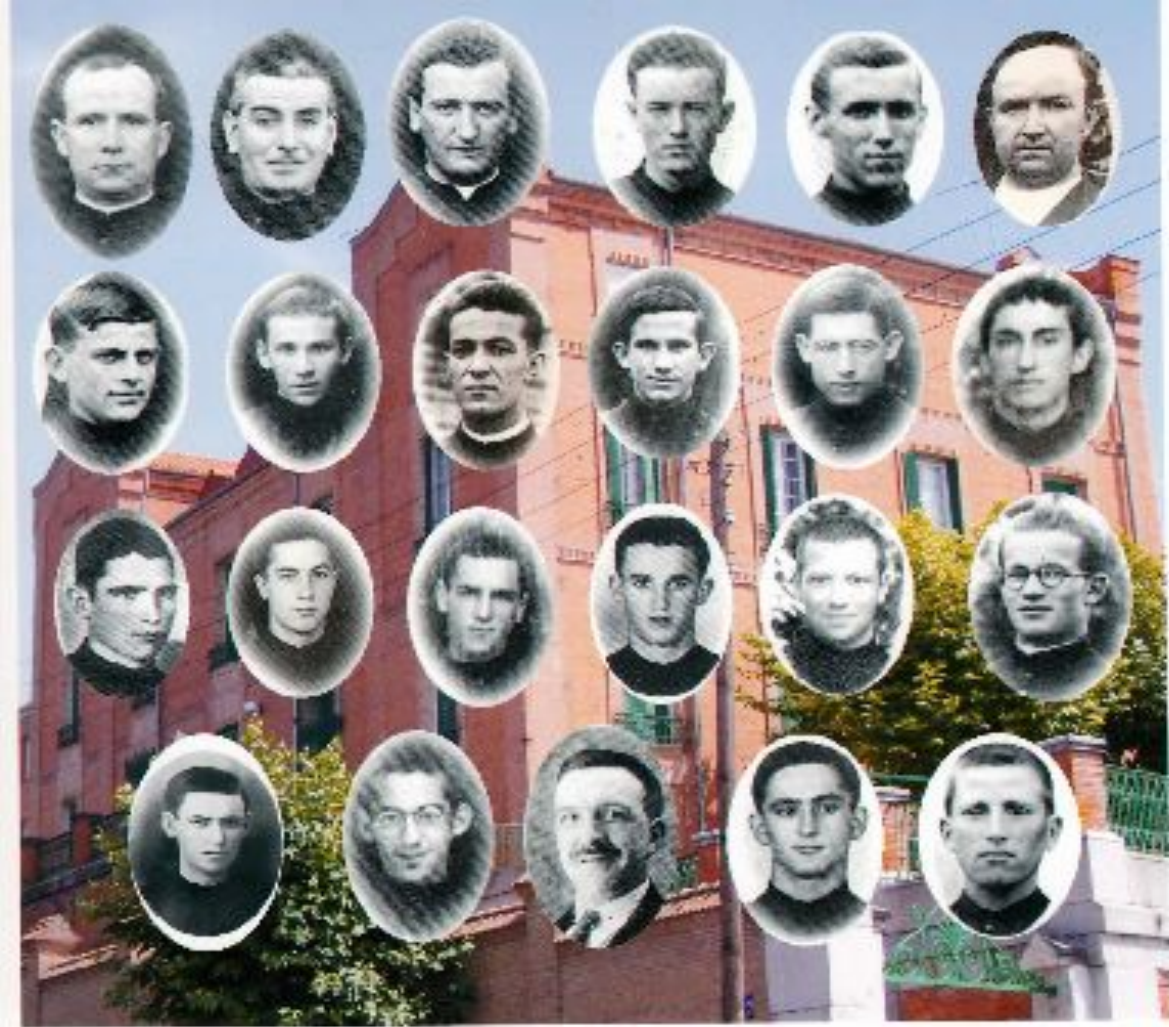


Cardinal Francis George of Chicago who dropped by for a visit



Participants of the training session for superiors with the Superior General and the members of the General Administration

OBLATE MARTYRS OF POZUELO-MADRID, SPAIN



Mártires Oblatos de Pozuelo - Madrid

Francisco Esteban – Vicente Blanco – José Vega – Juan Antonio Pérez – Gregorio Escobar – Ángel Bocas
 Juan José Caballero – Justo Gil – Eleuterio Prado – Marcelino Sánchez – Cecilio Vega – Juan Pedro Cotillo
 Clemente Rguez. – Pascual Aléiz – Francisco Polvorinos – Justo Fdez. – Publio Rguez. – Serviliano Riaño
 Manuel Gutiérrez – José Guerra – Cándido Castán – Daniel Gómez – Justo González



Christmas Greetings to all

Bert OMI

For me, Christmas is always a time of hope, a time for looking forward with trust in our Lord.

It is with these feelings, that recently, I submitted my withdrawal from the kindergarten apostolate and participation in the School Board. After some fifty years of my dedication to this apostolate, at 83 and going on (hopefully) 84, I feel as though it is time to let go and in the years left to me, to center my apostolate in the “small”



but important mission of Anan. I was encouraged by the words of David Power, OMI concerning small communities. He mentioned that the Synod has placed an accent on the importance of small communities. I was also impressed by the words of Marcel Dumais, OMI in the book “Challenges to Oblate Mission Today”. In one section is written “The heart of our charisma and mission according to the Rules and Constitutions” he writes the

following; the first chapter of our Constitutions and Rules, which is about our mission, perfectly reflects our missionary charism. Almost all the articles are centered on Jesus and his Kingdom, making them known to the most abandoned...I see the heart of the Oblate mission today, world-wide, very well expressed in art. 7 “we will spare no effort to awaken or reawaken the faith in the people to whom we are sent, and we will help them to discover “who Christ is”. It was with this spirit in mind that I first came to Japan. After some fifty years it has not changed. In correspondence with Father Zago I wrote to him about my concerns about our mission approach to the Japanese stating that my idea was ---the the poor in Japan were those who did not know Christ. He wrote back to me and confirmed me that I was correct in this interpretation of the “most poor”.

I end this note with a quote from a book that our Holy Father wrote “The Blessing of Christmas”: Old age and retirement are no longer the last stage of my life, a position from which all I can do is look backward: for something greater always lies ahead, and it is precisely the time of an apparent uselessness that can be the highest form of human ripening”. With these few words of rambling I again wish you the best for Christmas,



Bolivian Experience

Jude Peirisipulle, OMI

By the time you read this article I will be finished with my experience in Bolivia. It is the first part of my sabbatical where I study Spanish and experience the culture, which is very different from Asia. It has been a wonderful 5 months of experience. At the beginning it was very difficult for me to communicate with the people, as I didn't speak the language and did not know much about the culture. Getting adjusted to food was not difficult even though it is very different from Japan and Sri Lanka. People are very kind and cheerful.

Spending time here in Bolivia was a good opportunity to observe the differences in Sri Lanka and Japan. I have lived in Japan for a long time, getting used to a very confinable life and many bad practices, made me think about what life is. It also made me realize how much I was bogged down and attached to a particular way of life. Here, not having many responsibilities, gave me more time for personal life and prayer. I feel I am very much renewed and happy within myself.

The institute for language is not only a place to learn the language but also to study the culture that one lives in. Keeping this idea in my mind I too took a chance to visit some of the Oblates and see their wonderful work. In many of the places that I have visited, there was a call for me to work in those places. I was very happy to see the wonderful missionary work that these Oblates are doing here. After visiting these places I can say they are not just men of words but rather men of action in life, witnessing to people what they are doing.

I also took the opportunity to do some sightseeing during weekends without disturbing my classes. I know many people say Sri Lanka is a paradise but seeing some beautiful places here I cannot agree with what they say of Sri Lanka. During these 5 months I first had an opportunity to visit some of the mission stations that the Jesuits started, which can be seen in the film "The mission". Secondly I visited The lake called "Titicaca" which seems to be the biggest lake at the top of the world which is 4000 meters high (higher than mount Fuji). I also visited the salt lake, almost the same altitude as Lake Titicaca, which is also the biggest salt lake in the world. It is 12,000 square kilometers. There are no words to explain how beautiful this place is. Visiting La Paz and Sucre which seem to be the 2 capitals in this country, gave me a good idea about the history of the colonial power they had in this country. Some of the colonial structure can be still seen in the beautiful city of Sucre. It was also adventures to climb the highest mountain Cochabamba which is 5200

meters high.

According to my plan, I will finish my experience in Bolivia on the 8th of December and plan to return to Sri Lanka via Dubai to visit my brother. Since I have not spent Christmas for almost 25 years with my family, I will try to be with them this Christmas.

I wish and pray that I will be able to start my 2nd phase in mid-January and go to the Philippines. I know for sure, if everything goes well with my preparation, it is also going to be a wonderful experience. I am sure it will give me another different opportunity to see my life differently.

It has been more than 6 months since I left Japan. I already miss all of you. I missed the memorial mass you had for John and Siani. I too miss my friends and my parishioners in Japan, not to mention the food, especially sashimi and souчу.

Once I finish the program in the Philippines, I plan to return to Japan somewhere in July next year.

I know the Holy season of Christmas and New Years is to remember and pray for each other. As I write this Christmas message to you, let me promise you that I will remember each and every one of you during this Holy season including Xave, John and Siani who have gone to the house of the Father.

May God bless you all and your work.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Students and the staff.



During Class



5200M high mountain called Tunari



Salt lake



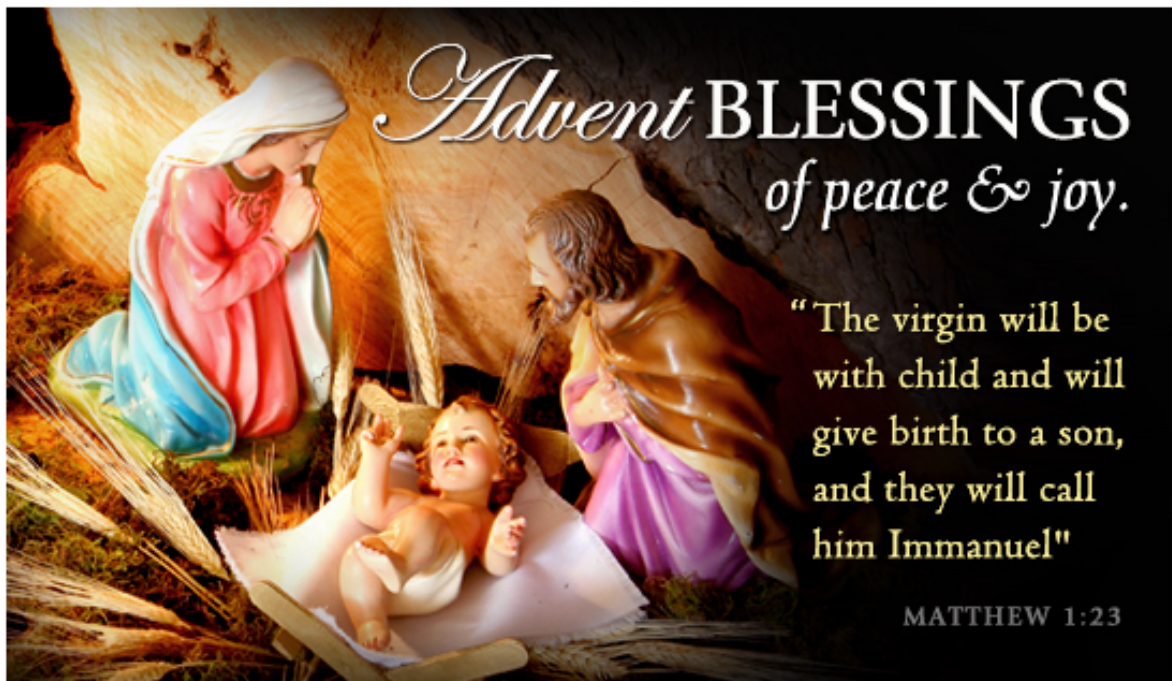
Oblates working in Oruro



Trip to Santa Cruz with some students, which was the first Jesuit mission.



4200M high Lake Titicaca



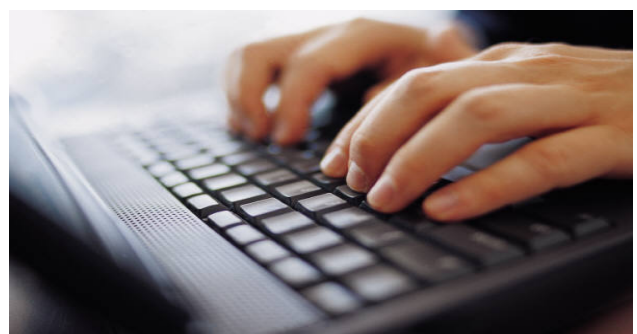
Thanks for the invitation.

But I can't write anything meaningful. According to biologists there are several clocks in a human body. If you are healthy these clocks are synchronized. To my regret, mine are all disorganized, especially the intestinal one is 'way off. Every time I try to sit to think it gives me wrong signals. So all I can say now is : A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!! to you all.

Mike Y.

I wish you a Merry Christmas.

This year was a year of big changes for me. I became Pastor of Yoshizuka church and Minami Kasuya church. I say the Mass, visit homes and sick people, hold Bible study for people in those parishes. I work for Montessori's school on the staff, and am allowed to study many things. I was also appointed as the director of the Iizuka Seibo kindergarten. In the Fukuoka parish, I also became in charge of the Sisters' League (Shudojorenmei. When I look back at this year, there is something I want to say. Please God, don't increase my work this year. May it be a good year for you also! **Ken'ichi**



Open the Doors

By Vincenzo Bordo



Some were saying: “God must be really angry.” Others added: “The end of the world is near!” The Weather Bureau confirmed it: “This year’s was the rainiest season in the last 100 years.” Some even claimed to have seen Noah wandering the streets of the city....who know? There certainly was a lot of water. It caused many

deaths, devastating landslides, enormous inconveniences for the people and millions in damages to the country. If that were not enough, in only the most recent days of this period of rain, we had 250 mm of water, a real flood. In spite of all that downpour, even on that evening we had prepared the usual supper at Anna’s House. To tell the truth, we were doubtful and we were saying: “Today, no one will come. It’s impossible to move around in this beastly weather.”

In fact, at 16:30, when we open the center’s doors for the evening meal, there were only 7 or 8 persons at the entrance. But it could not have been otherwise, given the buckets of water pouring down. But a few minutes later, people began to arrive. At the beginning, a few dozen homeless persons. Then, more and more...hundreds of the poor -- battered, soaked, and drenched -- with their shoes in their hands because you could not walk on those streets that had turned into rivers. Upon entering the dining room, one of them told me: “I’m hungry. I have not eaten for two days.” Another said: “I feel sick. I came to get some medicine.” Still another said: “I need a change of clothes.”

In seeing these brothers and hearing their words, my heart was filled with deep compassion.

Yes, feeding 450 poor people every day is a great work (in these last 13



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years, our volunteers have distributed more than a million meals!) Offering them medical care, showers, clothing, legal and employment advice, plus a school of basic human formation, is also very helpful. But without a doubt, the biggest service we offer to the street people is giving them hope in the difficult and arduous journey of life.

The one millionth visitor

By now, all the poor of the city and its surroundings know us and know that we, directors and volunteers of the Center, are always there to welcome them, to listen to them and to help them with great love and respect. That gives confident hope to all of them.



A few days ago, while I stood outside the door to welcome our guests with a smile, I saw standing before me a young father holding by the hand his little son. I immediately realized that his was not the usual homeless person coming for supper. In fact, approaching me, he said: “I want to talk with you.” I had him sit down in my office and there, between sobs and tears, he began to tell me his story of sorrow and frustration. He began by saying: “I had a small business that gave me enough to live with dignity. Gradually, things started to go wrong. To save my work, I took on more and more debt until I had a huge financial collapse. I ended up on the street with a great load of debt. I was angry with myself and with the world. One day, coming home I found on the kitchen table a note from my wife telling me to take care of the child because she could no longer take this life of hardship and she was going another direction. At that point, everything plunged me into an abyss of despair. Humanly speaking, I had only one solution before me: suicide for me and my child. We were alone, desperate, homeless, jobless...without food, without a future...without hope. I only wanted to die, taking my son with me. Then, one day while I was sleeping in a city park with other homeless men, one of them told me: ‘Try going to Anna’s House; there’s a priest there who knows how to listen to people like us.’ So I’ve come to find you.”

Now this man lives in a small room we have offered him. His boy goes regularly to



school and the father has begun to work.

That's Anna's House: not a center than can resolve the infinity of problems that the poor carry on their shoulders – only God can eliminate them all – but a place that is able to welcome whoever is in need and give hope to whoever is

suffering. Today more than ever, there is need for a lively and certain hope.

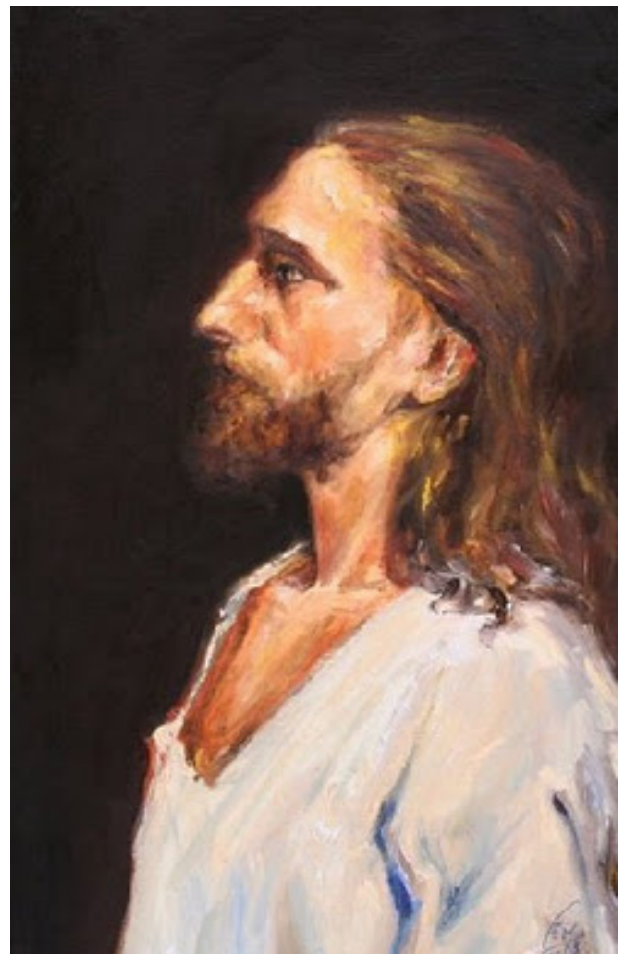
How nice it would be if, in these times of uncertainty and suffering, each of us who call ourselves Christian – followers of Jesus – were to open our hearts and homes to those in need; if we had the ingenuity, with an intelligent and creative mind, to give hope to those many persons who are challenged by life and by this deep financial crisis. If we don't want to be Pharisees and liars, this becomes an essential obligation for us who call ourselves children of the God who is Love and followers of a Prophet who said: "Blessed are you who are poor... Blessed are you who hunger... Blessed are you who weep...because my disciples, with the strength of my Spirit, will help you." (Vincenzo BORDO, Director of Anna's House)

With love,
Fr. Vincenzo Bordo

www.annahouse.or.kr

<http://www.annahouse.or.kr/English/>

<http://blog.naver.com/servoservo>



CHRIST THE KING

被災地訪問

Br. Nobuhiko Yagi

11/28(月)-29(火)、福島県のいわき市で、高松市内の信者さんと一緒にさぬきうどんをふるまうイベントに参加してきました。場所は、いわき市内の仮設住宅がたくさん並ぶ一角にある公園で、さぬきうどんは東北地方でも有名で、約 550 名の方々にさぬきうどんを提供しました。

このいわき市は、今問題になっている福島第一原子力発電所から直線にして約 40 km の位置にあり、ほとんどの人が非難しているのだと思いますが、意外に街には活気があり、たくさんの人々が普通に生活してことにとても驚きました。

津波が襲った海岸地域の集落も訪問しましたが、あまりにも悲惨な状態に悲しくなりました。いまだに数十人の方々が行方不明だそうです。ここで亡くなった人々のご冥福を祈らずにはいられませんでした。

でも、希望を持ちながら生きていこうとしている人々にもたくさん会えて、勇気をいっぱいもらって帰ってきました。

クリスマスの喜びがこの人々にも届きますように…。



Second time around

By Burns Bernard

皆さんフィリピンから二週間前日本に戻って来ました。Yes, I am back and I am happy to be back. It's been two weeks since I got back and I am still adjusting to the not-so-new environment. I am happy and confident to say that so far so good...things are doing great.

While sipping my hot black coffee and thinking what to contribute for our newsletter I accidentally opened a wrong file. It was the first article that I contribution for our newsletter way back 2006. I read it once again and it simply amuses me how "ignorant" I was. I could not stop smiling reading my "first time experiences" here Japan. I could not imagine myself how nervous I was to leave the Philippines and enter Japan for the first time. (*I wasn't able to answer the immigration officers' questions properly*). I could not imagine myself how I wrestled with the chopsticks in front of the Provincials from different provinces in Asia-Ocenia. (*I could not forget one bother Oblate who asked me, "First time???"*) I could not imagine myself inventing my own version of sign language just be able to communicate. I could not imagine how red my face was the first time I went for the public bath. Wow, that was an experience!

Nevertheless, the second time round is much different. As the saying goes, "It's sweeter the second time around". I feel more confident to face the immigration officers in the Philippines and Japan. I was able to answer their questions with ease. I even exchanged jokes with them. The Japanese immigration officer did not even asked anything about my purpose of stay in Japan or stuff like that. Rather, he was perplexed how come I greeted him in Japanese. Well, it was a short but nice conversation. (*I hope all immigration officers are like that*). Indeed, it's easier the second time around.

The first time I came to Japan, Eduardo and Gen fetched me at the Chubu international airport. However, I had no idea who they were and vice-versa. So I came out of the airport like a lost sheep looking for a shepherd. I had no idea that Eduardo is tall one and just arrived in Japan a day before me. So I talked to him as if he is Gen...まあ、恥ずかしかったよ。This time, when I went out of the airport, Wency and Brad were already waiting. Yes, it is really different when you see familiar faces waiting for you with their warm smiles and ready to give you a warm hug as a sign of welcome.

The first time I went for public bath was really an experience. I was looking from left to right checking whether there's somebody with me in the room. I was

always following Kenichi as if I was his shadow because I did not know anything about Onsen or Sauna. I only stayed about 3 minutes in the sauna at that time because I could not take the heat. (早かったね…Angelo commented). The other day Eduardo brought me to a public bath for my first sauna since I got back. Well, it was a lot better this time. I stayed in the sauna for a longer period of time, enjoyed all the amenities, did not care whether there were a hundred of us in the room and I did not have to be a shadow of Eduardo. Indeed, it is better the “second time around”.

The first time I used the chopsticks, beans were falling here and there and could hardly put any food in my watering mouth. I was almost tempted to ask for a spoon and fork just to appease the crumbling sound of my hungry stomach. Well, it is the complete opposite this time. Knife and fork were set on the table and I asked for chopsticks. (*I just want to check whether I still have it*). Indeed, it was quieter this time because my stomach was not complaining…he is well fed even to the last grain. お箸で食べるのが懐かしかったです。

The first time I attended the Eucharistic celebration in Zendana I was really “lost in translation”. I could not understand any word they were saying. I was just pretending that I was saying something. This time, I was able to join the people in their responses and was even given the chance to read the Gospel. Though, I still have many pronunciation mistakes, but I feel more at home this time. I don`t have to pretend. (笑い)

Indeed, “It`s sweeter the second time around”. Of course, I must admit that I still have a long way to go. だから頑張らなくちゃ。。。皆さんクリスマスおめでとうございます。



Martha and Mary

By Bill Maher

I just talked to Jerry Novotny on the phone having completely forgotten about the Christmas news letter and of course he reminded me of it. I thought it would be impossible to get it in on time but he also reminded me that we have till the 32nd of Nov.!! So I thought I'd better try and write something. This is that time of the year when everyone is asking for something with a deadline attached to it. The Church paper article the City Christmas program article. The prison Christmas party preparations and all the other things that go along with working in a mission church like Tokushima. It's hard to keep the heart of a Mary at the feet of the Lord when everyone wants Martha activities. Next week we have the former bishop, Bishop Mizobe coming for the Advent retreat and the present Bishop coming the following week for his first official visit to the parish. The week after that, we have cleaning of the entire property and the Christmas decorations. The life size stable has already been built on the front yard. In spite of this I'm still hoping for a very Merry and Graced Filled Christmas. And I hope that you all receive the same.

The New Year will be very Happy I'm sure even though, as you know it will bring the turning over of this parish to the diocese and the Oblates moving on to something more in line with our charism. It's been a

Christmas Message

By Christy

' Each year, as we approach the joyful atmosphere of the Christmas season, seeing the Christmas illuminations in every nook and corner, hearing and singing the Christmas carols being played on the radio, in the malls and throughout the stores and so on, we can't help, but think of going to Kochi for our joyous annual Christmas get together. So also it's time to share our Christmas greetings. Bit by bit I am able to say mass and give a small, a very small homily. It takes lot of practice but its wonderful to be able to do, even this little bit, at this point. Day by day I am able to help a little bit more and this makes me very happy. A good Christmas for all of you, and a New Year 2012, filled with God's protection and love. See you all in Kochi.'

very fruitful 62 years since we took over after the first Bishop of the diocese, Bishop Tanaka in 1949. By the way if you think of any thing that should leave with the Oblates please let me know soon. I'm going to take any of Bro. Tsudas' paintings that are here since they are the Oblates.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas party in Kochi. Again have a Grace Filled Christmas and A Wonderful New Year.

Christmas is coming again. What is the novelty?

By Eduardo



First Communion

Every year we have celebrated the birth of Jesus. I'm sure each one of us has own reasons to celebrate this great feast.

The way we are living our lives and our faith is a mark who make us look into our hearts and feel if we are well prepared to receive once again the rising Jesus. Even I believe we will be never well prepared for receive him, I also believe God want's us open for that and because of it He is showing many many small and good things that makes me happy and thankful to Him.

I still not so self confident about languages and things connect to it. But I'm sure God can show His through our acts. If we are open for that. I know I'm open to do it and I can tell this has being the center of the pastoral work here in Toyohashi. I'm happy with what it is happening here. I have to add into this I'm thankfull also for the support I receive specially from Wency and Hahn with their presence here, more than helping with masses their presence has showing we are family, all of the believers here like to see us together and with them. Even I'm almost all the time alone, their presence makes me feel not alone working here.

As all of you knew
we have four big
groups of believers:

Merry Christmas

Japanese; Brazilians; Philipinos and Peruvians. Somehow God is helping us to build or rebuild good relations among them.

One month before Bernard has arrived here in Toyohashi and I could feel the difference of living alone as a religious priest and living with one more brother. We are trying to build our community in a good and sharing way. Right now he is in Sendai as a volunteer.

I'd like to write a little more, but I think this is enough to tell you all my brothers the novelty of this coming Christmas is the happiness that I feel now comes from what I am. An Oblate of Mary Immaculate. We are not perfect, we will never be. The ways that we do things are not the best. I'm happy to be one of us with our good points and also our not so good points yet. I hope each one of you can feel happy to be an oblate and show God's love from feeling this the same way we feel the novelty of the birth of Jesus.



Christmas Greetings

My Christmas greetings to the missionaries in Japan and Korea. I'm always thankful to you for giving me the opportunity to keep in touch with all of you. A very blessed Christmas to each of you. May Our Lord cheer you and further the success of you labors.

This has been another full year in the Lord for the 26 members of this community. The year stands out for the number of our members called to the Lord. We'll miss and rejoice for John Kenny Mahoney, Angelo Siani, Xave de Porte, and Lei Simons, all tested and true Oblates and cherished friends. We have been blessed in countless ways.

May Our Lord bless and enrich the life and work of each of us. A very great and holy Christmas to each. Please keep us aging members in your prayers.

Dick Harr, OMI

THE COLOUR OF CHRISTMAS 2011

Fr.Hiran Indika omi

We, who live in Japan, feel the approach of the winter because of the colourful nature around us. That is to say, autumn leaves are at their best colours indicating the fall of the leaves that will soon be. So the whole nature is changing her colours, as if to suggest that we too need a different colour to celebrate the Christmas.

When we reflect over the year 2011, it is very clear that if not all the countries of the world, at least the most of them have been experiencing and still continue to experience

*I WISH YOU A BLESSED
CHRISTMAS! THIS IS THE DAY IN
WHICH OUR FATHER SHOWS US HOW
PRECIOUS BEINGS WE ARE,
WITNESSING THROUGH THIS
BIRTHDAY OF HIS ONLY SON AMONG
US! Len*

various challenges and downfalls, due to politics, economics, and natural disasters and so on. Japan is no exception on this subject. We all, in our own way, are searching for a new colour that would bring us some hope and tranquility. So as the whole world is in desperate need of this new colour of hope and tranquility, 2011 Christmas is the high time to revitalize and reenergize the whole of humanity with the hope and tranquility that Christ brings into the world.

I wish and pray that Jesus, who will be born anew in our hearts, may refashion our hope to bring forth God's Kingdom in and through the struggles of the world.

Dear brother Oblates, let me wish you that colour of Christmas; hope and tranquility for each and every one of you.





Since a number of guys inquired about the Japanese Version of my Tohoku Report, I thought I'd send it along as my contribution to the Newsletter. The Blessings of Christmas to you and the people you serve! Jack

[Jack's Tohoku Report is quite long for this Newsletter, we ask that you download it to your computer by clicking on the following URL. --Editors.]

URL: <http://lifeissues.net/delegation/jack.doc>

CHRISTMAS 2011

Fran

This September I turned 68. We tend to commemorate our 50, 60, or 75th birthdays but not 68. Yet for me this year will be a year of importance. My body is starting to really show signs of wear and tear, and I'm beyond the age where most people retire. Next April I'll celebrate 40 years of priesthood, and the "writing is on the wall" as to how many fruitful years I have left to serve in any meaningful way. I want to use the last 5 or 10 years, if I have that many, in the best way possible, so I decided to ask for my 2nd sabbatical. I took one in 1997 on the occasion of my 25th anniversary of ordination, it was a year for great blessing and grace for me, and I have decided it would be of no use taking one at my 50th so I'm striking while I can still move.

Many family and friends in States ask me if and when I'm coming "home" and I have a hard time answering. In the Bible Jesus warns "Once you've put your hand to the plow don't look back". I don't want to look back, I have no regrets about

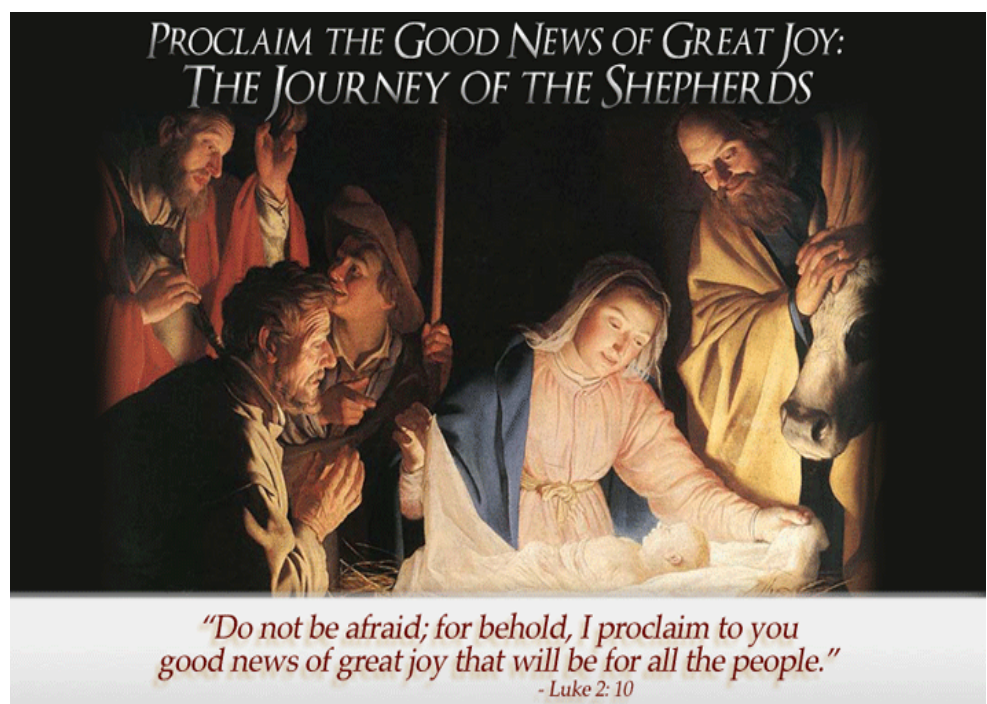
the life I have chosen, or which was chosen for me. In fact I have only gratitude to the Good God who called me, and the wonderful people in my life who have empowered me to come this far. What I want to do is use my last years to show my gratitude where it will count the most, not for me, but for the people I am with, and sent to. Hence I'm taking some time to pray and reflect.

I leave January 8th, for India to attend a seminar on "Personal growth and Transformation for Mission". India is a country I never thought I would visit, but it seems that this is where God is leading me. I'm not sure I'll meet a Guru to enlighten me, but I do believe God will do something if I'm open to his action. I'm going to a totally new culture and world to try and wake up from the rut I'm in.

I return to Japan March 9th to celebrate Easter, and then head for the States to celebrate the 60th wedding anniversary of dear friends in the DC area. After that to Buffalo to have a 40th anniversary celebration, a Mass for those of you who wish to join me, on or near the 29th of April, to pray for all those who helped me to this moment, living and dead. I'll only be home for 4 weeks, and then back here till mid August, when I'll leave again for The States for a 4 month session at Our Oblate Theological center in San Antonio Texas for part two of my 2nd sabbatical. The program is entitled "Ministering to Ministers". It is supposed to help us be better pastors. You might say it is a little late, but better late than never.

Taking this time is a great burden on my brother Oblates here who are all already overwhelmed with work, and also to the people of this parish, but I hope it will make me more able to serve them when I return.

May 2012 be a year of grace and growth for the whole delegation and Oblate world. Please know that you are especially in my thoughts and prayers at this Christmas season and that I will be praying for and with you wherever I go on this journey in 2012 and there after.



Homeless Reflection

I went looking for food but found nothing.

I was tired of walking, so I decided to relax in a near by park.

I found a small bench and sat on it.

As I was relaxing I saw a white tent full of people.

I wanted to know what it was all about, so I approached the tent.

There was a group of people distributing soup and rice to many who looked like me.

I joined the queue and got some food to fill my empty stomach.

After I finished, a person distributing food came to me and said, "Come again". I was happy because there was someone who cares for me.

Now I go to this park three times a week.

Today when I go, for sure there will be something special, because it is Christmas.



- Brad Rozairo

Christmas for the Unborn

Jerry Novotny

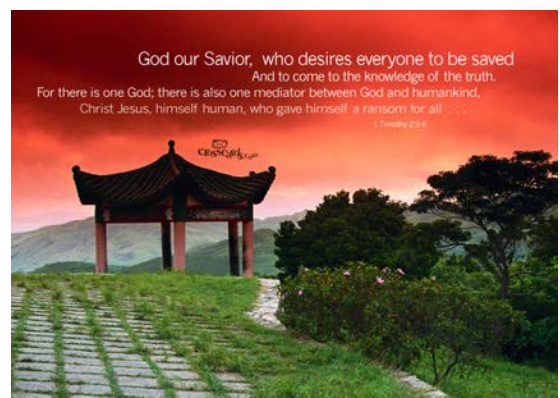
Have you ever wondered about Christmas, where the word comes from, where the christmas tree, decorations, gifts originate.

The "Mistletoe" came from the Druids during the period of Caesar. They considered the "Mistletoe" sacred, stand under it and you have the right to kiss. In short, the Druids were heathens, priests and ministers of an ancient celtic religion which practiced human sacrifice, especially small children.

The "Christmas tree" is a pagan tradition. It is also believed to originate with the Druids. These priests used evergreens during mysterious winter rituals. Mistletoe were used as symbols of eternal life, and evergreen branches were placed over doors to keep away evil spirits.

The "Tree decorations" has a longer history. People believed that tree-spirits lived in the greenery which they decorated their houses with. The greenery was brought into the house to provide a safe place for the tree-spirits during the harsh winter days. When spring came, it was necessary to return the greenery back outside to release the tree-spirits into the countryside once again. Failure to do this would mean agricultural disaster. Today people still feel uneasy about leaving the Christmas decorations up after 12 days. Despite decorations now being made of foil or paper, and the tree-spirits are long forgotten, the superstition still survives.

The tradition of "Exchanging Gifts" dates back to the Bronze Age, around 2100 BC in China. Many people believe that this tradition of gift-giving started weeks after Christ's birth as the 3 wise men brought gifts to honor Him, but the gifts really had nothing to do with His birthday. Christ received gifts because He was a King. This custom began in China and people in the East still visit with a gift in hand.





Today in 2011, the business world wraps itself up in these pagan symbolisms of mistletoes, trees, decorations, gifts and like the Druids, practices human sacrifice: an estimated 42,000,000 babies are killed each year (abortions), does not including the numbers for euthanasia.

On the other hand, Christians emphasis the birth of the baby Jesus which stands as the most significant event in all history, because it has meant the pouring into a sick world the healing medicine of love which has transformed all manner of hearts for almost two thousand years. Whether Christians are loosing the battle to the business world or not is subject to debate. But to remove Christ from the equation is to destroy Christmas and who we are. Christ becomes man precisely for all who share human nature. He excludes nobody. The good news of Christmas is for all people of all times and places. "Joy to the world."

So as I sit here in Kochi this December, I ponder on the real meaning of Christmas for me and my involvement with Pro Life. So far it has led me to this conclusion: Christmas is also for those 42,000,000 babies, for the 2011 human sacrifices. Jesus has come for the children yet living in their mothers' wombs. The Gospel message is addressed also to our youngest brothers and sisters. In fact, we can say it is addressed especially to them, because they are the most helpless.

Mommy, will it hurt?



ABORTION
is a **PAINFUL DEATH**

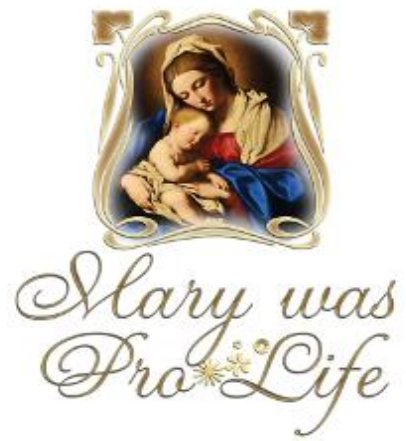
The Gospel news was announced first precisely to the lowly, not to the great and powerful. Jesus consistently sought out those who were on the outskirts of society. And His Church does the same today. The "poor" are not simply those deprived of material goods. "This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized in our world - unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, and victims of injustice and oppression" (US Bishops, Faithful Citizenship, 2007).



For me to welcome the Little Child this Christmas means to welcome the obligations which Christ's mission places on me. In turn, He will intervene



for the helpless, bringing deliverance to those held in bondage. Of course, that's all of us, but it's especially for our tiny unborn babies in the womb who are subject to the bondage of a Court decision that said, "The word person...does not include the unborn." (Roe vs. Wade, 1973).



In the beautiful Christmas hymn, "O Holy Night," we sing these words. "Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love, and His Gospel is Peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in His Name all oppression shall cease."

Pope Benedict XVI has taught that "love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential to [the Church] as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel" (Deus Caritas Est, no. 22). Our Christmas cannot be complete until we join in the great effort to



end the oppression of the unborn once and for all, and let them hear that for them too, a Savior has been born.

Isn't that what Christmas is really supposed to be about? Caring for each other, peace on Earth, good will toward all men and hope in the One who gave us this life?

God Bless
Jerry

P.S. Watch this astounding video and see if you don't agree that this is a step forward in building a shared understanding of the humanity of the children we are fortunate enough to conceive.

[Click or copy and paste URL into your computer.]

http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2011/11/astounding_video_shows_fetal_development_in_detail.html

The Helping Hand of Jesus the Messiah:



On 2011/11/15 – 16 Caritas Japan Inter Diocese Responsible Committee had gathered at Sendai Diocese for the 2011 Annual Meeting. Along with Vice President: Bishop Kazuo Koda, Executive Director Fr. Daisuke Narui, Director General: Mr. Isao Tadokoro We were 23 members from all over Japan. The first day we made a prayerful study tour towards Iwate Prefecture. In Sendai Diocese, Caritas Japan is having three Base Camps. They are Kamaishi, Yonekawa and Ishinomaki. But we were not able to visit all the Bases. We visited Kamaishi. The Kamaishi Catholic Church is being used as Base. Church is inviting not only the Christians but also other people. Caritas is for all. In the beginning there were so many volunteers but now very few. Lots of old and sick people are remaining. All the young people have moved away.



We also visited Ootuchi. In this place the Diocese of Nagasaki has rented a business hotel in order to serve the poor and the affected. Where ever we moved and talked to the people, all were telling only one thing: “thank you very much for your prayers, love and concern, but help us by sending more volunteers”.

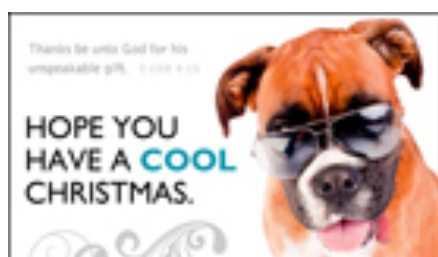
More than 9 months have passed away after the Earthquake and the tsunami in Japan. Still the cry of the voice is being echoing for more personal. They are also going to celebrate the birth of Jesus in that soil. We are waiting for the messiah and they are waiting for the helping hand of Jesus the messiah.

Wish you one and all for a meaningful Christmas 2011.

Irudayaraj, OMI



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



Hope this finds you all in the best of health and good spirits!

Last Christmastime, I told you I had been asked to serve another 3 years on the Bishop's Council. But on June 19, 2011 we had a new Bishop consecrated and my term ended at that time!

Health wise, I'm doing rather well for my age. I had told you that I was to have an operation on my eyes this year, but when I saw the doctor July 26, and his telling me he wouldn't have it done, if he were in my shoes because of a need for 2~3 more years of operations for other complications, I took his advice. That lengthened my "fun time" on this vacation! I spent a wonderful summer with my brother and his wife, and it was a great summer both companionship-wise and weather-wise and getting some work done on the computer that I couldn't get to in Japan.

One thing I finally accomplished March 23, was get rid of my car of 21 years and my driver's license. Since, in his late 70's Dad had trouble driving but wouldn't give up the wheel, I had sworn that I would quit at 70. Because of the parish work, I needed the car but dreaded continuing. When I was relieved of the 2 parishes, I acted! I feel a great relief!

We members of the MAMI committee and we meet in different parts of Japan with lay members who help our apostolic work. 3 of us give talks on Oblate spirituality, activity, which keeps these people in touch with our purposes as missionaries, as well as give them ways in which they can help. On February 15, as I do every year, I went to the Tax Office to declare my income. After all was said and done, they told me: "You don't have to declare for tax purposes from now on!"



I said to myself ‘wow, am I that old?’ but sighed a sigh of relief.

The sale of our Tokyo property took place on March 17th. It was within a week from the great earthquake in the Northeast of Japan and the hotel I stayed in shook violently from aftershocks. Boy, I got out of there as soon as the deal was over. With this, in a few days we were able to pay off our debt with the Osaka Archdiocese that had helped us build our new facilities in Itami!

I had been taking Xave out for the last few months for a lovely meal every week. The people who came for the funeral brought close to \$20,000 in funeral gifts, which we promptly sent to the earthquake/tsunami victims. Then I had to clean his house up with the help of some parishioners. I attended John Kenney Mahoney’s funeral in Tewksbury Massachusetts. On May 8, I had a special wedding to do, which was promised by Xave, way before he died. So they turned to me.



Our faithful catechist in the Aki parish, KONDO Takayoshi, (honorary Oblate) started to fail at 92, and is now in an old folks’ home. He had helped me greatly for 8 years when I was stationed there. I was able to visit him right before I left for the USA. Because of this, as he was treasurer for over 50 years, the new treasurer needed some guidance, to go according to diocesan rules and regulations. So I spent some time with her, even though I had cleaned out my belongings and there was a new pastor, who also didn’t know the diocesan regulations.

Ray



What: OMI Christmas Party

Place: Nakajima-cho, Kochi City, Shikoku

Date: December 26, 2011

Time:

16:30 - gathering

16:45 - prayer

17:00 - happy hour

18:00 - evening meal