



# OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

NATAL PROVINCE

THE MOTHER PROVINCE OF THE OBLATES IN AFRICA

WWW.OMI.ORG.ZA/NATAL

## OMI NATAL *Update*

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### Top News

**Feast of Founder, May 19<sup>th</sup> at MACHIBISA. Tea 10.00, Mass 11.00**  
*Come and Celebrate the Launch of Our New OMI Formation Programme*

### Good News about Oblate Mission

#### ***New Provincial Council Installed***



On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February the province celebrated the 182 anniversary of the approval of our congregation. About 100 Oblates were present to witness the installation of the new Provincial leadership for the Natal province. (go to P 2)

#### ***Ewen Swartz Makes Final Vows In Germany***

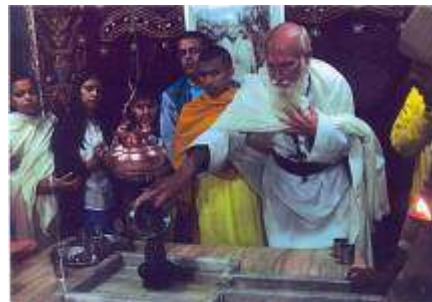
It was a cold, windy 2 March in this year in Lahnstein Germany. Showers were slowly coming down from the heavens. But, the cold was



completely overcome by the

loving warmth of God's love manifest in Brother Ewen Swartz's determination, readiness, and confidence to make his final vows. (Go to page 2)

#### ***Oblate Joins Hindu Pilgrimage***



Father Garth Michelson OMI was asked to be a guest participant in a Hindu pilgrimage to the Sivananda Ashram on the banks of the Ganges in Rishikesh, North India. (Go to page 2).

#### ***Province Website Upgraded***



We recently upgraded our province website to provide more information on our ministries our activities and our people. The website features a "latest news" section

in which news will be uploaded as it happens. Check it out at [www.omi.org.za/natal](http://www.omi.org.za/natal). (Go to page 3)

#### ***Archbishop Hurley's Ancestral Home***



The late Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI used to be a regular visitor to the town of Skibbereen in the west of Co. Cork in Ireland. In the nearby Abbeystrowry Cemetery there is an impressive plaque in memory of our late Archbishop. (Go to page 3).



#### ***New Local Superiors***

Frs. Mduzuzi Mchunu, Mxolisi Ngcobo and Zibonele Ngubane were recently appointed superiors of the Durban, Inchanga and Pietermaritzburg Districts. (Go to page 3)

## **Provincial Council Installed (from page 1)**

The new Council includes four members from the last administration: Provincial Fr. Stuart Bate, 1st Councillor Fr. Vusi Mazibuko, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councillor Fr. Sylvester David and 3<sup>rd</sup> Councillor Fr. Mhlanganisi Dlamini. Three new councillors were appointed. The 4<sup>th</sup> councillor is Fr. Zaba Mbanjwa parish priest at St Josephs Parish, Cedara and lecturer in African theology at St Joseph's Theological institute. The 5<sup>th</sup> Councillor, is Fr. Siphon Kunene the new Mission superior in Zimbabwe. The 6<sup>th</sup> Councillor is Fr. Wayne Weldschidt, Parish priest of Christ the King Parish, Wentworth in Durban.

The new council will continue to build on the initiatives developed as a result of the *Immense Hope* project and the vision and strategies of the last three years. It will deepen the strategies on a practical level and continue efforts to develop them. It will try to fulfil the six priorities of the mission vision of the Province. It will look to develop the initiatives building cultural and racial unity and solidarity in the Province.

## **Ewen Swartz (from page 1)**

People came in numbers to witness and give witness to this joyous and solemn celebration. Many were moved to tears, many laughed, many recommitted themselves to the Lord, and many found their way back to the Lord through Ewen's act of faith.

Bro. Ewen made his perpetual commitment to God as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate

before Father Thomas Klosterkamp in the Allerheiligenbergkapelle in Lahnstein site of the Oblate scholasticate

Bro Phumlani Ndlovu OMI, his companion from the province, writes: "He laughed when I told him afterwards, 'Look at you, you really look like an Oblate'". I repeat those words with pride: My brother Ewen really looks like an Oblate and it's not only on account of the Oblate Cross and Marian Medal that he received but also his exhibited and convincing readiness to serve God as an Oblate FOR LIFE."

## **Oblate Goes to Ganges**

(From page 1)

The headquarters of the Divine Life Society and the Sivanandashram in Durban invited him to participate at their expense. At the end of the pilgrimage they committed the ashes of their spiritual Master Sri Swami Sahajananda into the fast flowing waters of the Ganges.

The swami had been associated with Father Garth in interreligious encounter for more than twenty five years. During the height of South Africa's turbulent and violent resistance to the oppressive laws of segregation during 1970s and 1980s, Father Garth founded and animated the Community of Reconciliation in the premises of St Joan of Arc church in Pietermaritzburg.

The purpose of this community was to live in a multi cultural community of faith and prayer defying laws

of segregation and taking the consequences. The community comprised families, individuals, people from broken homes, the poor and the homeless.

One day Swami Sahajananda visited the community by surprise and put his head to the ground before the icon of JESUS in the sanctuary. Their long association began there.

Father Garth was at the bedside of Sri Swami Sahajananda, in long protracted silent prayer, a few hours before he died and he was then drawn intimately into the last rites and the cremation ceremony twenty eight hours after he died. This was attended by thousands of mourners mainly members of the Divine Life Society whose South African branch was founded by the Sri Swami Sahajananda.

In his many years of Interreligious collaboration Father Garth has remained inspired by the words of the Vatican II document *Nostrae Aetate* which states in paragraph 2:

*The church therefore has this exhortation for her members: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions and in witness of Christian life and faith acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral goods (truths and values) found among these people, as well as the values in their society and culture.*

## **Natal Website** (From p. 1)

The new website includes special pages on our parish ministries, our youth ministries and our healing ministries. There are also pages on our formation ministries, YOMI and MAMI. There is also an extensive documents section. The latest newsletter is always available on a special page. Then on the archives page you will find all the previous newsletters since January 2005. Also on this page you can access the provincial directory, the dictionary of Oblate Values and Vie Oblate life with articles on Oblates since 1991. The bibliography of the Catholic church in South Africa, produced for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Oblates in Southern Africa is also available as is the *Oblate Necrology* which is an interactive site that allows access to details of the death dates of Oblates. Some of these resources are accessed through links to the OMI worldwide website.

## **Hurley's Ancestral Home** (from page 1)

Brother Brendan, a Marist brother from Durban recently visited the town and spent a very pleasant couple of hours in the company of Dennis and Pauline O'Sullivan, cousins of the late Archbishop. He had stayed with them on many occasions during visits to Ireland and was well known in the town from which his parents came.

This cemetery is the burial place of many victims of the 1845-50 famine in Ireland..

It is good to know that this great Oblate is remembered in the land of his ancestors.

## **New Local Superiors**

(from page 1)

At a recent meeting of the Provincial Council the following new local superiors were appointed:

### *Pietermaritzburg District*

Superior

Fr. Zibonele Ngubane

1<sup>st</sup> Assistant

Fr. Jean Lambert Nzaji

2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant

Fr. Mario Ceruti

### *Inchanga District*

Superior

Fr. Mxolisi Ngcobo

1<sup>st</sup> Assistant

Fr. Thomas Zondi

2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant

Fr. Sithabiso Sithole

### *Durban District*

Superior

Fr. Mduduzi Mchunu

1<sup>st</sup> Assistant

Fr. Peter Foley

2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant

TBA

Oblates are reminded that requests and permissions should be directed to the local superiors before coming to the Provincial.

The role of the local superior is indicated in Constitution 93. Oblates in these districts are to support the superior in his ministry.

**93.** The local Superior animates and directs the community in its religious life, furthers the apostolate, and upholds the best interests of the members. At the service of his brothers, the Superior brings the community together to evaluate its experience, to give itself objectives for its common life and apostolic projects, and to ensure their implementation. He invites their collaboration, and maintains close liaison with the Provincial as well as fraternal

contact with other communities of the Province.

## **Convocation of 2010 General Chapter**

Father General recently convoked the General Chapter of 2010. It will begin on September 8, 2010 in Rome.

In his letter of convocation he notes that the purpose of the General Chapter is to "strengthen the bonds of unity and to express the members' participation in the life and mission of the Congregation. It therefore concerns all Oblates: old or young, in first formation, in full ministry or retired, Brothers and priests. All should have a chance to express their particular participation in our life and our mission. This means that the time of preparation should be one of prayer, of uniting ourselves more closely to Christ, of sharing in community and of reflection on our ministry".

"The Chapter Commissioner, to be appointed in May, and the Precapitular Commission, will provide the ways and means for us to move on together in our preparation. "

We are called to a "*Conversion to a better quality of our vowed life, and response to the poor whom we are sent to evangelize*".

In 2010, a new Superior General and his Council will be elected. As mandated by the last General Chapter, there will also be consideration of updated structures of government on all levels, in light of the needs of the Oblate mission.

He concludes in these words: I entrust the XXXV Chapter to your care and especially to your prayer. May Saint Eugene, Blessed Joseph Gerard, Blessed Joseph Cebula, and all the other Oblates who have left this world in God's friendship, intercede for us.

### **International Oblate Youth Encounter**

This event will be held in July in Melbourne Australia from July 9-12. Each province may have one delegate: an Oblate involved in Youth ministry. For us this will be Fr Mxolisi Ngcobo. In addition the region will sponsor one delegate from Zimbabwe who is Fr Charles Nwabenje. The encounter will provide opportunities for prayer, reconciliation, shared culture, an experience of community and an exploration of the Oblate charism.

The International Oblate Youth Encounter has taken as its theme, "Witness to the World" which links to the official World Youth Day theme, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses".

For more information go to [www.oblates.com.au](http://www.oblates.com.au)

The event will be followed by World Youth Day which will be held in Sydney, Australia from 15 - 20 July 2008. This event will be attended by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

### **Feast of Founder 2008 May 19 at Machibisa**

The province will assemble on 19 May at Machibisa to celebrate the Feast of the

founder., St Eugene de Mazenod and the week of prayer for Oblate vocations.

The celebrations will have as theme the launch of our new formation programme. Fr Dlamini will be the main celebrant and Fr Mxolisi Ngcobo will preach Tea will be available from 10.00 and the Mass will start at 11.00. Lunch will also be provided.

### **Provincial to Visit OMI Natal Diaspora**

One of the priorities of the second term will be a greater focus on visiting Oblates. Whilst every Oblate in KwaZulu Natal and Zimbabwe was visited at least once during the first term, a significant group was overlooked. These are the Natal Province Diaspora who are in mission or mission preparation elsewhere in the world. During May the Provincial will visit Natal Oblates in England, Ireland, Lourdes, Germany and Rome. He will also take the opportunity to visit the grave of his brother Geoffrey who passed away last year and to attend to some family matters.

### **Provincial's Diary**

#### **MARCH**

- 4 SACBC Subcommittee on Healing.
- 5-6 Provincial Council
- 11 Inchanga District retreat
- 19 Mass of Oils Durban
- 20-23 Triduum at selected Oblate parishes

#### **APRIL**

- 2 Inchanga Land Subcommittee
- 2 Consultation Sabon House
- 6. Education Committee meeting Gerard House
- 7 Open Day and Graduation St Josephs Theological Institute Cedara
- 8 Board Meeting St Josephs Theological Institute Cedara
- 9-11 OMI Anglophone Africa IPC

Sabon house  
28-29 Provincial Council  
Planning meeting Albini  
Hall Durban

MAY  
6-24 Visiting OMI Natal in Europe

### **Dates to Give Thanks**

Date	Name	Occasion
<b>March</b>		
09	M Gumede	Birthday
16	S Mpulo	Birthday
20	P Nkuna	Birthday
22	N Peters	Birthday
30	H Niemann	Ordination
31	M Ngcobo	Birthday

#### **April**

01	D Wheatley	Birthday
05	K Mutale	Birthday
06	N Nkosi	Ordination
10	B Gumede	Birthday
24	M Dlamini	Birthday
27	S Dube	Ordination
27	M Ince	Ordination
27	M Madlala	Ordination
27	V Mazibuko	Ordination
27	M Ngcobo	Ordination
28	E Boule	Birthday
29	M Mchunu	Ordination
29	S Sithole	Birthday

#### **May**

01	T Zondi	Ordination
04	M Dlamini	Ordination
06	C Richmond	Ordination
17	V Mazibuko	Ordination
19	C Nyere	Birthday
23	E Boule	Ordination
25	A Henriques	Birthday
30	C Khathali	Birthday

**Errors and omissions contact the  
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### **OMI NATAL Update**

Newsletter of the Natal Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

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