



OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

NATAL PROVINCE

THE MOTHER PROVINCE OF THE OBLATES IN AFRICA

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Good News about Oblate Mission

1. Provincial Assembly 2009



About eighty Oblates from KwaZulu-Natal and Zimbabwe took part in the 2009 Provincial Assembly at Albini Hall Congella. (Page 2)

2. Natal Response to Chapter 2010

(See Page 4)



3. Mission Development Programme Begins

Two workshops about project motivation and development marked the start of the Mission Development Programme in the Province (Page 5).



4. Plans for Inchanga

After many years spent dealing with land problems at Cedara we are now ready to begin a response to concerns about our property and mission at Inchanga (See Page 6)



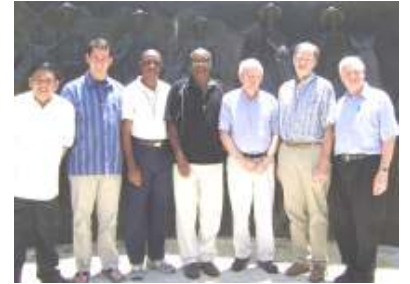
5. Mission Preaching in Northern Ireland

Three Oblates spent a month in Northern Ireland preaching in parishes to help raise awareness of the Oblate mission here. (See Page 7)



6. Education Ministry

St Josephs Theological Institute participated in the Second Meeting of the Association of Oblate Institutes of Higher Learning in San Antonio USA. Collaboration was on the agenda. (See Page 8)



7. A Saint for Southern Africa

St Eugene de Mazenod is truly a saint for Southern Africa. As the direct founder of the Natal Vicariate, his vision and charism has been carried into this part of the world by his followers who today as Bishops, Priests and Brothers are by far the largest group of male religious ministering in the Churches of this part of the world. (See Page 11)



Good News about Oblates

1. Hurley biography published

The biography of Archbishop Denis HURLEY was launched in centres in the South Africa, United States and Europe during August and September (Page 8)



2. Ordinations

Ewen SWARTZ ordained Priest (page 9)

Pamidzai MUDZUDZA
Ordained Deacon
(Page 9)



3. Fr Duffy turns 90

90 year old Fr Frank DUFFY is now the oldest Oblate in the Province. His September birthday was celebrated at Sabon House.



Transition: Death of Fr Mc Mahon

Fr Patrick MCMAHON passed away in Ireland on the 18th of September this year whilst on holiday and preparing to return to South Africa. He was born on the 23rd of April 1912 in County Meath in Ireland and in September 1938 he entered the Oblate novitiate in Cahermoyle Ireland. He made his first vows in 1939 and this year he celebrated 70 years of



his vows. He was ordained on the 29th of June 1944 and consequently celebrated his 65th anniversary of his Priestly ordination this year. He arrived in South Africa on the 15th of August 1946. After various appointments as assistant priest in Seven Oaks, Oakford, Dundee and Ladysmith, in 1956 he was appointed Parish Priest in Besters. Then in 1961 he was appointed Parish Priest in Estcourt. But from 1963 he worked exclusively in the Inanda Valley area: until 1975 as Parish priest in Edwaleni and then in 1975 as parish priest in Matikwe. From 1992 he continued to help in the parish but he focussed mainly in the Inanda area especially around the *Sukumawenze* community which he founded together with Sr Mary Anne Mkhize who was a Matikwe sister. He was also chaplain to the large community of Sisters at Matikwe. In August 2000 he retired to the *Sukumawenze* community which has become an important community centre for HIV/AIDS. In 2007 it won an award from the Ethekwini Municipality as the best community development project in the Durban Metro region.

In July this year he went on holiday to Ireland to visit family members and celebrate his 70th anniversary of religious life and the 65th of his ordination. In our last edition of OMI update we reported that, whilst on his way home, he was off-loaded from a Virgin Atlantic Aircraft into the Johannesburg cold and this severely affected his

health. However by the end of July he had recovered and requested to go home to Ireland to visit his family and friends. After celebrating his jubilee with his family and friends he was ready to return to South Africa in September when he suddenly took ill and was hospitalised. He died in Hospital on the 18th of September 2009. On the 11th of September the Provincial of the Oblates in Ireland wrote "he is in bed all the time but he is really determined to go back. The doctor saw him yesterday, he is thinking of putting him into hospital to build him up and then see if he can travel".

However his condition worsened. The nurse that was attending him was from South Africa and spoke about how happy she was to be caring for someone who had spent most of his life caring for people in South Africa. Just before his death he was visited by Fr Jean Baptiste MPUNI who said that Fr McMahon had been very happy to see him and was speaking Zulu to him. Fr Jean Baptiste reported: he told me so many times that he would like to go back home, when I asked him where is your home, he replied, "Matikwe is my real home". The funeral was on Monday 21 of September at Inchicore in Ireland and he was buried in the OMI community grave at Inchicore on the same day, Forty members of his family were present at his funeral. A memorial service was held for him in Matikwe on Friday 27 of September; many people came and spoke very highly of him in speeches, May his soul rest in peace.

Good News about Oblate Mission

1. Provincial Assembly 2009

About 80 Oblates from KwaZulu-Natal and Zimbabwe participated in the 2009 Provincial Assembly at Albin Hall Congella. The theme of the Assembly echoed that of the Congress last year: *LIVING A FULLY COMMITTED OBLATE LIFE*.

The Keynote Speaker was Fr Frank SANTUCCI, a South African Oblate who for many years has ministered in the International Administration of the Congregation. He was Superior of the International Scholasticate and then Postulator General of the Congregation. Since 2006 he has been based in Aix en Provence focussing on animating the Charism of the Founder worldwide.

It was good to have him with us for this event. In his presentation on the founder he noted that “the charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod is a gift of the Spirit to the Church, and it radiates throughout the world.” (R41) The charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod was born when he experienced and understood God’s love for him and from that personal experience to he came to understand God’s love for all people and his own mission to render that love present. Initially he ministered to youth, the sick, the poor and the servants in his own area. Then he established a band of followers. They spread the charism by setting up pilgrimage centres and Marian Shrines, and then by establishing seminaries for Priests. Finally from 1841 this same charism spread to foreign missions: Canada, USA, Ceylon and finally in his life time to Natal. By 2009 his followers had carried this charism to 67 countries throughout the world. Fr. Santucci led us on an extraordinary world wide journey of places and peoples where Oblates serve the poor. In parishes and amongst migrants; in shrines and amongst the youth; in seminaries and with the rural impoverished; in radio stations that inform the poor of their rights and responsibilities and in institutes of higher learning preparing the leaders of tomorrow. In all these the charism of St Eugene is alive uniting his sons and daughters in a worldwide enterprise mediating Gods love for his people! It was with this inspirational background presented by Fr Frank that we were able to enter into a review of our own ministries and community life.

We began with a review of life workshop in our 8 local communities: 4 houses, 3 districts and a mission. We saw both the quality and the difficulties of our life in local communities. We discovered that, generally, we Oblates are in a good space. We are happy in our ministry and our religious life. We are dedicated to those we serve. But it was noted that many of us are working too hard and this is a concern.

This review was followed by a presentation by Fr Sylvester DAVID on the role of the *Missionary Support Group* which is a resource in the province helping Oblates with special needs. Several Oblates volunteered to join this group.

Then the newly approved Provincial Directory was presented and copies handed out to all the members. The directory includes protocols and

policies which deal with many practical aspects of our life in South Africa and Zimbabwe

In the only evening session of the Assembly, we were joined by a number of lay associates who are involved in supporting our ministries. Fr Andrew KNOTT presented a vision of how we want to develop our lay associates through a greater incorporation of lay people into our life and mission. Mr Rob Redlinger presented plans for using the media to promote our ministries. Ms Veronica Young spoke of the growth and developments at our Retreat Centre in Redacres which she manages. Mr Paddy Kearney presented the new biography of Archbishop Hurley.

The second day was devoted to reports on our ministries. Fr. Siphon KUNENE & Fr. Claude LUKUBA reported on progress in the Zimbabwe mission. This was followed by a report on our Youth Ministries by Fr Mxolisi NGCOBO. Next there were reports from our three formation houses. First, Fr Vusi MAZIBUKO, Superior, reported on formation at St Josephs Scholasticate. Then Fr Callistus KHATHALI, Superior, reported on Formation at Cebula House. And, Fr Charles NABWENJE reported on formation at Mazenod House, Bulawayo. They were followed by Fr Zibonele NGUBANE who reported on the progress of the Province Regency Programme. Finally Fr Sylvester DAVID, President, reported on progress at St Josephs Theological Institute.

After these reports there was a session devoted to International Oblate Affairs. The first was a presentation and discussion of the responses of the Province to the questionnaires for the General Chapter of 2010. We provide a short summary statement of these responses later in the bulletin (See Page 4). This was followed by a presentation of the motivations presented to the Magisterium for the inclusion of St Eugene De Mazenod on the calendar of Particular churches in Southern Africa. A summary of these motivations is presented later in this newsletter (See Page 11). Finally, in this part of the Assembly, the current state of the Oblate restructuring process in Southern Africa was presented.

The last part of the Assembly was devoted to administrative and financial matters. The first matter here was a report on our properties. Starting with Cedara, the Provincial Treasurer noted that at whilst the land restitution claim was

withdrawn some time ago there are still some outstanding matters regarding the land tenure claim of the former farm workers. This is in the final stages of resolution. He also reported on the progress in the development of our retreat centre at Redacres which has been extensively refurbished. He also thanked Mrs Veronica Young for running the centre in a professional manner. He also mentioned that Cleland, which has been constituted this year as Cebula House of Formation, has a new building and this has provided much better conditions for the initial formation programme there.

Fr. Elphas KHOZA reported on the extensive renovations that have happened at Mazonod house in Bulawayo. He noted that even though the project is still in progress, the house is now in a better condition and was reopened as a prenovitiate at the beginning of 2009. He also expressed words of gratitude for the many Oblates who worked in Zimbabwe and for the wonderful work they did there.

Then the Provincial reported on our proposals for Inchange which are dealt with in another article in this newsletter (see Page 6).

This was followed by a full financial report by the Provincial Treasurer of each year between 2005-2008 showing income generated by the province over the years and how it has been spent. With most expenditure going on Formation expenses and our other ministries, he noted that there has been a pleasing increase in the financial sustainability of some of our Oblate works and communities. However, the province remains in financial hardship as a result of our ministries which are largely with the poor who are often unable to support our works. This is particularly true in Zimbabwe. The treasurer thanks those benefactors who continue to make our work possible and appealed to Oblates to look for more generous donors to help us continue our ministries.

Finally, the Provincial Treasurer presented the approved *Financial Directory* of the Province and each Oblate received a copy. The directory provides protocols and policies which help Oblates to remain in compliance with government financial and administrative regulations and the Congregation's *Directory for the Administration of Temporal Goods*.

In the last part of the assembly Fr. Provincial explained the situation of medical care of Oblates. He noted that whilst it is a general perception of Catholics that Priests and religious have no problems in this area, the reality is very different. Currently we are able to ensure that most Oblates receive medical care when they need it, but the reality is that in the future this may not be the case. The problems that face all people about health care also affect us. He presented some possible strategies for how we could respond to future challenges in this area.

Detailed minutes of the Assembly including copies of the reports will be sent out to everyone in electronic format and hard copies will be provided to local superiors for distribution to those who want them.

Good News about Oblate Mission

2. Our Response to the Chapter of 2010

The members of the Natal province and its Mission in Zimbabwe responded to a request from Rome for their views about the Chapter. We publish here the following summary statement of answers received to the four questions posed:

“To be an Oblate today means renewal in spirit, vows and prayer; renewal in our choice of an authentic human lifestyle; solidarity in a religious family and brotherhood; ready to change us to enable able us to face the challenges of the world that surrounds us”.

“Jesus at the centre of our lives is an excellent theme for our Chapter. It means a return to the founder’s original inspiration and a call to sustainable conversion”

“We expect the Congregation and its leadership to provide animation and empowerment; leadership by example; the stamp of the founder; a willingness to cross borders; and an ability to listen to the views of Oblates”

“We expect the Chapter to provide ongoing formation which should not just be a document but practical guidelines for the future. We expect to see it as a moment of grace, holiness and conversion leading to more effective structures at the General level, the Unit level and the Local level. We expect it to take account of demographic shifts and the importance of vocations and youth”

The scholastics of the Province responded to the questions they received as follows:

“Being an Oblate today means serving God as a man of God belonging to a family where the community is a support. It means an Awareness of the poor leading to Zeal and Daring in Serving the poor”.

“We experience this life in formation in entering into Internationality; in adjusting and adapting to the Oblate life; in finding Common ground and solidarity and in experiencing Inspiration from others. The formation programme assists us to experience Freedom and Responsibility and Formation with Oblates of Other cultures. We have the opportunity to focus on youth. We experience many Values in the formation process. We have an opportunity for Pastoral experiences”.

“There is some contact with the Oblates in our province. Sometimes they visit us, and during the academic breaks and we have pastoral experiences which helps us to learn more about what it means to be an Oblate in our days. Some Oblates keep in touch and even visit us. E-mails also keep us connected. Regency gets us involved in the parish ministry of the Oblate community where we are sent. But the studies take up much of our time and we find very little time to participate in Oblate mission”.

Good News about Oblate Mission

3. Mission Development Programme Begins

In September *Misean Cara* of Ireland sent two facilitators, Mr John Shiels and Ms Barbra McCauley, conducted two workshops in the province. These workshops provided skills training in motivating and managing development projects and in writing fund raising projects. The workshops, held in Albin Hall, included a two day workshop for beginners in which 15 Oblates participated and a 1 day workshop for those who have more experience in this area. The participants found the workshops extremely useful and valuable. The workshops were also a preparation for the establishment of a **Mission Development Programme** in the province. This programme will seek to co-ordinate all the development work that involves Oblates in the Natal Province and the Zimbabwe mission.

Without calling it such, Oblates in the Natal Province and the Zimbabwe mission are actually doing missionary development work amongst youth, marginalised women, those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, and in education both at the secondary and tertiary levels. The purpose of all these ministries is, in the light of the spirituality of St Eugene de Mazenod, to first make people human and then Christian and then saints. This is in line with our mission statement adopted in 2004 as a response to the Immense Hope programme of the Congregation. It states that we are **Serving the Church in a Renewed Response to the Poor**. And Pope John Paul II wrote in 1990 in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*: “The mission *ad gentes* is still being carried out...where action on behalf of integral development and liberation from all forms of oppression is most urgently needed” (RM58).

The *Mission Development Programme* of the Natal province and the Zimbabwe mission will help us and others to recognise the fact that the ministries we do are indeed human development projects and want to be collaborative with others in society who work for the good of human beings.

It is necessary that we come to a greater consciousness that the ministries we do in parishes and other works actualise **Catholic Social Teaching**. But in addition to that we need to own the fact that we are also helping to achieve the goals for human development as expressed by the international community in its six **Millennium Development Goals (MDG)**.

In addition to helping ourselves come to a greater consciousness of these truths, we also need to help others, both locally and in the international community, to recognise our contribution to fulfilling these goals and so encourage them to support our projects instead of dismissing them as merely sectarian religious activities.

The reality is that our missionary activity includes programmes seeking to alleviate poverty and hunger such as at St Lukes and elsewhere (MDG 1). They are involved in primary education such as at *Sibongumbomvu* and elsewhere (MDG 2). They are empowering women to collaborate with us and even take charge of our ministries such as at Redacres and elsewhere (MDG 3). They seek to reduce child mortality such as at Bergville and

elsewhere (MDG 4) and to improve maternal health such as at Inchanga and elsewhere (MDG 5). They are combating HIV/AIDS such as at *Sukumawenze*, SJTI Aids action and elsewhere (MDG 6). They are ensuring environmental sustainability at such as at Mazenod House and elsewhere (MDG 7). And we are engaged in a global partnership for development such as in this new Mission Development Programme with the Anglo Irish Province and with others elsewhere (MDG 8). Indeed we are ourselves an international global partnership as Oblates throughout the world.

The *Mission Development Programme* will seek to reveal to truth of the profound human development that occurs through our Oblate ministries. In this way to hope to increase our collaboration with those who are prepared to help us achieve these goals and where possible provide resources to multiply our small efforts.

The programme will operate a resource desk to empower Oblates and our co-workers to seek to provide funding and other support for those aspects of our missionary activity which fulfil human development goals since such goals are also the goals of the Churches mission and indeed the Oblate mission.

The problem we are increasingly facing is that often our education work, skills training programmes, our social development work and even in our HIV work and our youth work are often dismissed by organisations who seek to support development programmes. This is because those with the resources to support development work in poor countries like ours, live in a society where religion and human development have been separated out as a result of secularism. In Africa however most people are aware that human development includes the important dimension of a spirituality and moral value system based on faith in the one who is creator and Lord of all: a God who is at the heart of all we are and all we do as human beings. Indeed his in the homily at the Opening Eucharist for Second Special Assembly for Africa currently going on in Rome Pope Benedict XVI said: "Africa represents an enormous spiritual lung for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope".

Here too is a ministry of evangelisation in which we need to get involved. It must reveal to people

the essential truth of the Gospel for secular man imprisoned in a transitory world of the here and now and the visible and apparent.

From next year we will employ a lay Oblate associate in a full time position to co ordinate this work. He will be supervised by an Oblate who has experience in fund raising and development work. The role of the Missionary development officer will be to help those in projects and development work to put these on a more proficient and sustainable footing. Our various projects and activities will be gradually coordinated within clear development activities and Oblates and collaborators involved in these missionary activities will gradually be trained to write funding projects in such a way that the work they do can be funded by organisations which do not wish to fund specific evangelisation ministry.

This is very important and we need to work out ways to develop our fundraising. The mission development project will help Oblates and those who are associated with our ministries to recognise how involved we are in society and how we are involved in the human development of our society. Consequently we have a right and a duty to claim support from all those who wish to help our society to grow. The Mission Development Programme is a new initiative for us and will initially be funded by the Anglo Irish province and by the Misesan Cara group in Ireland. We are very grateful for their support.

Good News about Oblate Mission

4. Plans for Inchanga

For the last five years, concerns about our property and ministries at St Josephs Cedara have focussed our efforts there. Now, however, is the time to begin to look at our mission and ministries on our property at Inchanga.

Inchanga is a proud Oblate mission with a distinguished history. It was established by Father Albert HANON OMI in 1924 and is the only mission property bought by the Oblates. A parish and mission school which still exist today were started there. An Oblate Novitiate was established there in 1930 by Father Hanon. Bishop Dominic KHUMALO and Fr John NGUBANE, a former Provincial, were novices there. Subsequently an Oblate juniorate was established there until the 1970s and many Oblates from different parts of the country completed their high school at

Inchanga including Archbishop Buti TLHAGALE currently Archbishop of Johannesburg.

Today the dynamics in the mission have changed. The former juniorate is now Kwa Thintwa School for the Deaf. There is also a school for the handicapped on the former property. The Oblate Youth Ministry has chosen Inchanga as one of its sites for youth ministry development and Fr Mxolisi NGCOBO leads this ministry. The Archdiocesan *Right to Live* campaign is renting part of the property for its *Mater Homes* programme which includes a pregnancy crisis and abuse centre as well as an AIDS home and clinic.

Despite these valuable institutions and ministries serving programmes of human and spiritual development there are major infrastructural problems at Inchanga. Security is very problematic and has led to theft from all the institutions. Currently, as this is being written, there is no water on the mission as thieves have stolen the water meter. Computers have also been stolen from the school and the youth minister. Lack of funds mean that only a few areas are fenced. There are problems with the graveyard which despite many requests to the municipality is not yet registered and is almost full. Requests to extend the graveyard are unlikely to be accepted as these extensions will go into low lying land and there will be problems with water logging. The roads are also problematic. They are all gravel. But the mission is on a steep incline from the main road going to its various institutions. They are washed away every year in the summer storms and have to be re-graded.

Consequently the whole situation at the mission of Inchanga is currently being reviewed. An Inchanga Land Subcommittee has been established comprising the Provincial, the Provincial Treasurer, his Assistant Fr Sithabiso SITHOLE who is also acting parish priest at Inchanga, Fr Mxolisi NGCOBO who is the Superior of the Inchanga District community and also youth minister at Inchanga, Fr Chris RICHMOND our legal officer and Fr Mario CERUTI a former parish priest who also has expertise in land and property issues. In a recent meeting it was decided that we need to achieve effective collaboration between all the institutions on the mission so that they are seen in their entirety as communal pastoral activities of the one mission of the Church. We also need to work out

a programme of upgrading the infrastructure especially roads, fencing and other security areas as well as refurbishing the cottages that belong to the province and were previously used for Catechists and teachers. Many of these will be used by the youth ministry and other lay co workers including the Couples for Christ who wish to collaborate with us in ministry at Inchanga.

Good News about Oblate Mission

5. Mission Preaching in Northern Ireland

Fathers Peter FOLEY, Zaba MBANJWA and Donovan WHEATLEY went to Ireland from the 30 June – 21 July 2009 to preach in the Belfast area about our missions and to ask for financial support. The Anglo-Irish Province graciously set up these preaching appointments over a three weekend period. The hospitality of the Oblates from that Province should be commended. The Oblate Development Office in Ireland should also likewise be acknowledged for their preparations and organizing.

We arrived in Dublin after a hectic 20 hour journey via Abu Dhabi. Fr Paul BYRNE OMI met us at the airport. We stayed at Inchicore Oblate community for the first 3 days, familiarizing ourselves with the task at hand. A friend of the Oblates generously lent us one of his cars for the preaching tour. We set out on the Saturday morning with a map book and a GPRS navigator. When arriving in Belfast, we immediately went to establish contact with the parish priests of the parishes where we were going to preach on the first weekend. Our base while in Belfast was the Poor Clare's guest house off Antrim Road. The area of Belfast where we stayed and preached is significant in terms of the violent history of the Northern Ireland struggle. We arrived at the time of year where many are on holiday and out of Belfast on account of the Orange March parades on the 13 July. Fr Paul Byrne, a diocesan priest and native of Belfast, was very gracious in giving us a guided tour of the city's history on the eve of the Orange March. We preached in a number of the parishes affected by the violence, notably Falls Road and the Conard area of Belfast. So we were able to meet many who had been affected. It was amazing to hear of the similarities between the struggle histories of our respective countries.

Ireland is currently gripped by a severe economic recession and after the economic boom of the last few years, it was quite evident that people are rather traumatised by it. Nevertheless they were extremely generous and we were able to raise much more than we expected.

Having had a review of the 3 weeks with Fr Paul BYRNE, the Oblate Development Office coordinator, it was recommended that this becomes an annual fundraising initiative. It also gives the Oblate office in Dublin a profile.

It was a wonderful experience for all three of us. We experienced first hand the mood of the Church in Ireland. The generosity of the people was overwhelming and people were genuinely interested in the work we do. We also got an opportunity to travel a bit in the Republic of Ireland and even went across to visit the Oblates in Edinburgh. Some might remember Fr John MCFADDEN, who studied at Cedara between 1997 and 1999. He is now present parish priest of Leith in Edinburgh. It was good to see him again.

All three of us would like to thank the Province for sending us. It has broadened our vision of the Oblate Congregation and the Church at large. It was also an opportunity for us to feel we are contributing to a Province that seeks to embark on new missionary initiatives, but where finances are a very real challenge. We hope too that this experiment of preaching to share our mission with others can become an annual event. It provides a way for those who wish to collaborate with us by offering their resources. This is one way we can share our Oblate charism of solidarity with the poor.

Good News about Oblate Mission

6. Education Ministry

Since its inception, St Josephs Theological Institute has been a participant member of the Association of Oblate Institutes of Higher Education. This body was only established in 2008 as result of a decision of the Chapter of 2004 that Higher education was a constituent part of the Charism of the Oblates.

Fr Sylvester David OMI, president of the Institute attended the second meeting of the Association between May 25-29, 2009, at Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio USA. Members were also

present from the other constituent member Institutes. These are Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada; De Mazenod Institute, Kinshasa, Congo; Notre Dame University, Cotabato, Philippines and the Oblate Scholasticate at Obra Poland.

Fr. David POWER, OMI, shared his reflections on Higher Education in the Oblate Congregation from the perspective of his years of education ministry. He presented a vision of how the Oblate Charism can be seen in our Institutes of Higher Education. This led the group to discuss how the institutes of higher education can be of service to the congregation. They also examined how the institutes can plan together to recruit younger Oblates to pursue higher studies so that they might prepare to be leaders of these important centers of Oblate ministry for the mission of the Congregation.

In their business meetings, the group considered some future possibilities for the ministry of higher education within the Congregation, including some recommendations for the 2010 General Chapter. One of the most significant parts of the meeting was a series of one-on-one meetings between the various representatives present to plan future concrete methods of collaboration among the various institutes. (Edited from Omiworld.org).

Good News about Oblates

1. Hurley biography published

The biography of Archbishop Denis HURLEY was launched in centres in South Africa, the United States and Europe during August and September. The Durban launch was at the Diakonia centre in the centre of Durban and the guest speaker was the Premier of KwaZulu Natal, the Honourable Zweli Mkhize. Ms Ella Ghandi of the Ghandi Foundation also spoke as well as Bishop Kevin Dowling of Rustenburg, a cousin of Archbishop Hurley.

GUARDIAN OF THE LIGHT is the name of Archbishop Hurley's biography. The book was written by Paddy Kearney who was instrumental in the founding of the Diakonia Centre in the 1970's under the inspiration of Archbishop Hurley. The book starts with Hurley's early years from his birth to his life on Robben Island Cape Town where his father was the lighthouse keeper.

It continues through his schooldays to his decision to join the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, his novitiate in Ireland and scholasticate studies in Rome. It recounts his return to South Africa, first as curate at the Emmanuel Cathedral and then as Superior of St Josephs Oblate Scholasticate from where he was appointed as Vicar of the Natal Vicariate which in 1951 became the Archdiocese of Durban. The book focuses in particular on the struggle against Apartheid during the 1950's until liberation in 1994 and the roles that Archbishop Hurley played as a leader in the Catholic Church. These activities led him to be called the most significant Catholic leader in the struggle against apartheid during that time. He had a major role in the first document of a Christian church to call apartheid evil in the 1956 SACBC statement on apartheid. The book also speaks about the important role Archbishop Hurley had in the Second Vatican Council showing the significance of his various contributions. The book has been very well received both in this country and overseas. It was published by Continuum Press of New York and London and also by the University KwaZulu Natal Press in Pietermaritzburg. If you want to order a copy of this book it is available major book stores in the country. You can phone *On the Dot Distributors* (021) 918-8815 or email: orders@onthedot.co.za. The book will also be available through any of the major on-line booksellers in SA such as loot.co.za, Kalahari.net, or exclusivebooks.co.za. It is also available in the United States on Continuum's 800 number: 1 800 561 7704. In the UK it will be available from Waterstones Bookshops, from 1 September 2009. To order in Australia – contact Rainbow Books.

All royalties from the sale of the book will be donated to the Denis Hurley Centre at Emmanuel Cathedral. This multipurpose centre serves the social, educational and community-building needs of the cathedral parish, as well as providing extensive pastoral outreach to refugees, homeless people and people living with AIDS in one of the poorest areas in Durban's inner city.

Good News about Oblates

2. Ordinations

Ewen SWARTZ Ordained Priest

Deacon Ewen SWARTZ was ordained a priest by Bishop Barry WOOD OMI on the 5 September 2009 in front of a large crowd. The ordination took place at Holy Family parish in Newlands

East, Durban. His family and friends were present. In his homily Bishop Barry spoke about the virtue of the servant leader the one who leads through service to the people rather than through mastery of power over them. He emphasized the three fold role to which a priest is called: derived from the three-fold role of Christ as prophet, priest and king. Bishop and priest are said to share this three-fold role according to their own particular ministerial office and situation. The life of Christ makes it clear that our Lord stood power on its head: his kingship is not of this world, power is for loving service

Fr. Ewen was the first priest to be ordained from the Holy Family Parish, a parish founded by the Oblates in 1978 and now confided to the Franciscan Fathers. The liturgy was lively, spirited and joyful. Fr Swartz thanked his family, the people and the Oblates for their support over the years and he dedicated himself to serve the people of God in his ministry. The ordination was followed by a festive meal which took place in the multipurpose centre at the parish built during the time of Fr Allan Moss OMI who was instrumental in the founding of the parish. We give thanks to God for this new Priest.

Pamidzai MUDZUDZA ordinade Deacon

Scholastic Pamidzai MUDZUDZA of the Zimbabwe mission was ordained deacon by Bishop Barry WOOD on the 5th of August 2009. The celebration took place at the Oblate Scholasticate chapel in Cedara. Some family members and friends came from Zimbabwe for the event. Bishop Barry in his sermon spoke about importance of service in the life of a deacon and encouraged Deacon Pamidzai to live this value in his ministry. The liturgy was very colourful with music from many countries of Africa reflecting the international composition of the St Josephs Oblate scholasticate community.

Provincial's Diary

September 2009

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|-------|---|
| 5 | Ordination Ewen Swartz |
| 8 | Bishops and Superiors Meeting Glenmore |
| 14 | Renewal of Vows St Josephs Scholasticate |
| 15 | Board meeting SJTI |
| 16-18 | Anglophone Africa Interprovincial Conference Albin Hall |
| 21 | Council of Superiors, Provincial house |
| 22-23 | Provincial Council Provincial House |
| 22-24 | Training Workshops Mission Development |

Albini Hall, Congella

October

- 3 Visitation St Josephs Scholasticate
11-16 Annual Retreat Redacres.
30 Inchanga Land Committee.

November

- 11-12 Provincial Council, Provincial House

Errors and omissions contact the Administrative Assistant

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OMI NATAL Update

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

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Dates to Give Thanks

SEPTEMBER

| Date | Name | Occasion |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 02 | J Nxumalo (Arch Bishop) | Ordination (Priesthood) |
| 06 | Mbeki Ngcobo | Birthday |
| 08 | D Corjin | First Vows |
| 08 | P Decock | First Vows |
| 08 | C Lukuba | First Vows |
| 11 | F Duffy | Birthday |
| 12 | E Swartz | Birthday |
| 18 | V Phenyane | Ordination |
| 19 | P Foley | Birthday |
| 19 | S Mkhize (Schol) | Birthday |
| 21 | S Coleman | Ordination |
| 22 | J Patterson | First Vows |
| 25 | B Ndlovu | Birthday |
| 26 | S Coleman | Birthday |
| 29 | S Coleman | First Vows |
| 25 | SM Sithole | Ordination |

OCTOBER

| Date | Name | Occasion |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 01 | M Foley | Ordination |
| 01 | C Nabwenje | Birthday |
| 03 | H Niemann | Birthday |
| 08 | M Ceruti | Birthday |
| 08 | C Lukuba | Birthday |
| 08 | J Madondo | Birthday |
| 16 | J-B Mpuni | Birthday |
| 19 | M Mhlanga | Birthday |
| 19 | ZL Ngubane | Ordination |
| 21 | E Khoza | Birthday |
| 22 | I Zandonda | Birthday |
| 25 | S Dlamini (Schol) | Birthday |
| 27 | L Memela | Birthday |
| 29 | V Phenyane | Birthday |

NOVEMBER

| Date | Name | Occasion |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 06 | S Kunene | Birthday |
| 11 | JL Nzaji | Birthday |
| 14 | N Nkosi | Birthday |
| 20 | P Horrocks | Birthday |
| 21 | K Struve | Birthday |
| 23 | M Mncwabe | Birthday |
| 25 | B Ndlovu | Ordination |

Special Documentation
Why Is St Eugene De Mazenod Important Not
Just For Oblates But For All Catholics in
Southern Africa?
FEAST DAY: MAY 21

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are currently striving to petition for the feast of St Eugene de Mazenod recognised as a feast of the universal church. At this time it is important for us in Southern Africa to reflect on the contribution of St Eugene to the Church here. This article provides a series of motivations why his direct actions during his life have affected the Church in this part of the world. These little known activities reveal a series of motivations why his intercession is important for all of us.

This information is referenced from the Official biography of St Eugene de Mazenod, by Monsignor Jean Leflon., published in English by the University of Fordham Press between 1961 (Vol I) and 1970 (Vol IV). A supplementary Bibliography of relevant texts is also appended.

ACTIONS AND INSPIRATIONS FROM ST EUGENE

1. St Eugene agreed to accept the Natal Mission after others had refused

St Eugene De Mazenod agreed to accept to send missionaries to Natal so the Vicariate could be established. This was after other Religious Institutes, had refused the request of Propaganda Fide stating a lack of personnel. (Leflon IV p 223; See also Brain 1975 p. 26).

2. St Eugene recognized that this call comes through the Church and from God.

After a “first impulse to refuse stating, as had the Jesuits and Holy Ghost fathers, that his lack of men made it impossible for him to accept...he quickly perceived that such an unexpected proposal was providential. None of us had dreamed of such a thing, he noted in his Journal; ‘it came to through the official voice of the Church...Undeniably this call comes from God’.” (Leflon IV p. 223; Brain 1975 p. 27)

3. St Eugene did not give up when faced with personnel difficulties.

St Eugene prevailed when his choice of Vicar Apostolic expressed concerns about his own ability and other Oblates also advised caution. Rather he encouraged him and insisted he accept

the obedience since “it was a case of a formal command emanating from the head of the Church. (Leflon IV p. 224). Nor did he lose hope when two of the four original missionaries left in the first year because of the difficult conditions in Natal. Despite his continuing problems of a shortage of personnel, “Bishop De Mazenod immediately sent him reinforcements of one priest, a scholastic deacon and a lay brother” (Leflon IV p 236).

4. St Eugene did not give up in the midst of financial difficulties

He accepted the difficult financial circumstances after Propaganda Fide provided a lower than usual contribution based on the report of prosperity received from the visitor from the Eastern Vicariate before the Natal vicariate was founded (Brain 1975: 23-26). “On the strength of that report the Propaganda felt dispensed from any unneeded generosity” (Leflon IV p 229). This report however was based on a promising financial situation at the time; a situation which had severely deteriorated by the time the missionaries arrived as many colonists had moved onto Australia. (Leflon IV p 229; Brain 1975 23-26).

5. St Eugene looked for ways to secure financial support for the vicariate

From 1850 to the time of his death, St Eugene maintained a correspondence with the Missionary Society for the Propagation of the Faith in France. Much of the funding for the missionaries came from this source and he was at great pains to ensure the society was aware of the concerns. Bate (57-2001/2:86-88) describes the correspondence at the beginning of the Natal Mission and Beaudoin (1982) has published all 107 letters addressed to this body together with a commentary (1982:xxxix-xxxvi) indicating his conviction about their role in fostering the mission of the church and concern in ensuring a good allocation for his missionaries including those in Natal.

6. St Eugene maintained continual support of his missionaries until his death.

Through his regular correspondence to the missionaries he showed his support and dedication to the planting of the Church in the Natal Vicariate which at that time included a large portion of Southern Africa. These letters have been published. They portray a man who is

enthusiastic about the mission and who is tireless in his demands that the missionaries begin evangelizing the indigenous black population. He encourages them not to lose heart (Beaudoin 1980, p195), and congratulates them when they make plans for a mission amongst the Africans. He encourages Bishop Allard to be a loving father to the Oblates. He is scathing in the face of the failures of the African missions calling Natal a “failed mission” and placing the blame on the Vicar, encouraging him not to give up in the face of adversity. He brings affectionate greetings to the young missionaries insisting that “The time will come when the merciful grace of God will produce a sort of explosion and your African Church will be formed ...Victory is promised only to perseverance” (Letter to Blessed Joseph Gerard September 4 1860: Beaudoin 1980, p 220). This text was read out on 2nd June 20097 at the 150th anniversary of St Michaels mission, the first attempt in Southern Africa to evangelize the indigenous African population in their own context. St Eugene’s prophecy has come true.

7. The Vicariate of Natal, St Eugene’s last foundation

The vicariate of Natal was one of only five accepted and organized by the founder himself. (Leflon IV: 95). They were Canada 1841, USA 1847, Ceylon 1847 and Natal 1852.

8. The Vicariate of Natal has given birth to more than 40 particular churches today

Directly detached from the vicariate in chronological order were:

| |
|---|
| 1879 Mission "Sui Iuris" of Zambese (erected) |
| 1886 Prefecture Apostolic of Transvaal (erected) |
| 1886 Vicariate Apostolic of Kimberley in Orange (erected) |
| 1921 Prefecture Apostolic of Zululand (erected) |
| 1921 Vicariate Apostolic Mariannahill (erected) |
| 1923 Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland (erected) |
| Archdiocese of Durban |
| 1951 Archdiocese of Durban |
| 1958 Prefecture Apostolic of Volksrust (erected) |

The first (Zambese) has given birth to all the dioceses of Zimbabwe (8) and Zambia (10) The others have given birth to 21 Dioceses of South Africa and 4 of Lesotho.

9. Many Clergy have been motivated by the spirituality of St Eugene

The spirituality, witness and holy example of St Eugene inspired almost all of the clergy of the Vicariate of Natal and many of those subsequently detached from it. In this way, through them, it has profoundly influenced the character of these churches. In many of these churches most or many of the Clergy have been Oblates. In those particular churches detached in the changes made by Archbishop Van Gijlswijk (first apostolic delegate) in the 1920s, as well as in diocesan changes subsequent to that, seeds of an early Oblate presence often remain. In 1997 Abbot Godfrey Sieber OSB (1999: 91-93) published figures showing that the Indigenous Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Southern Africa outnumbered all other indigenous male religious put together providing clear evidence that the Spirituality of St Eugene is alive and well in the indigenous clergy of Southern Africa. Clearly it is now the time to remember this saint and ask for intercession from him throughout the churches of this conference

10. The Cult of the Founder

On the question of a cult there is no doubt that the Oblates themselves considered his vision, example and spirituality to be an example of holiness for them. In this way his life lived on in theirs and in their mission of building up the Church in southern Africa over 150 years. In other words he has been spiritually present in the life and work of many clergy. However, the fact that he was only beatified in 1975 and canonized in 1995 leaves little time for the development of such a cult beyond the Oblates themselves since the people had no direct experience of him. This is a cult which must be promoted since he remains a powerful ancestor of many churches and his direct interest in this part of God’s kingdom is more than evident in his life.

Merely to limit the cult of St Eugene to the religious houses of the congregation flies in the face of what it means to be an Apostolic Religious Institute. Our work is outward: to fulfill our proper purpose which is “evangelization and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root” (AG6). Clearly St Eugene was the instrument of the missionary activity which led to evangelisation and the planting of the church here.

These and other issues show a profound intentionality on his part to ensure the establishment of the Church in this part of the world and consequently it seems apposite that he be recognized on the calendars of Episcopal conferences comprising so many churches linked to the particular church that he was instrumental in founding. It is one of only five founded directly by him..

St Eugene De Mazenod was a holy man who was instrumental in the early existence of the Church in Southern Africa. He was closely tied to this church even in the name of its own patron, Mary Immaculate. The Immaculate Conception is the patron of the Archdiocese of Durban and the Archdiocese of Johannesburg. This name was given by the Church to the congregation before the dogma was defined: a definition to which St Eugene was personally invited to by the Holy Father and which he witnessed by his presence in Rome at the time.

We submit that these motivations indicate that that St Eugene de Mazenod has a particular relationship with the Church of Southern Africa since he was instrumental in much of its foundation and his spirituality has fed much of the clergy of many of its particular church from 1852 up until the present

Stuart C Bate OMI
Provincial
Oblates of Mary Immaculate
May 21 2009

Supplementary Bibliography

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