



# OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

Natal Province

The Mother Province of the Oblates in Africa  
www.omi.org.za/natal

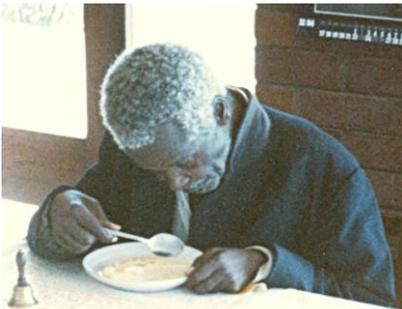
## OMI NATAL *Update*

**VOL 5 No 3 June-August 2008**

### Top News

**Retreats 2008. Bluff 5-10 October; Redacres 12-17 October. See page 3.  
Provincial Congress 2008: November 25 to 28. See page 2**

#### **Bro Philip Nkuna RIP**



On 5 June 2008, the Oblates gathered to bid farewell to Bro. Philip Nkuna who died on 30 May. He was 86 years old.

Fr. Michael Gumede preached a very moving homily at the funeral which took place at St. Joseph's Chapel in Cedara.

Born in 1922 in Maputo, Bro. Nkuna joined the Oblate novitiate in 1944 and professed his first vows in 1945. He was blind by the time he made his final profession. Almost all his religious life was spent at St. Theresa's Mission in Inchanga.

Fr. Gumede spoke of Bro. Nkuna as being a person who saw life through the eyes of faith and he was therefore a great witness to everyone he met. His life was lived in the passion of Christ. He endured many challenges, especially through his physical blindness, but he persevered and found

joy in his vocation. May God grant him eternal rest.

#### ***Celebrating the Feast of St Eugene de Mazenod***



On 19 May Oblates and lay people gathered to celebrate the Feast of St. Eugene De Mazenod. This is an annual celebration of the legacy of our founder who personally founded our province and thus all the dioceses which came out of the original Vicariate of Natal. For us it serves as an occasion to renew our resolve to mission to those who are the poor and abandoned today.

St. Augustine's Parish in Machibisa, Pietermaritzburg hosted this year's celebration. Fr. Mhlanganisi Dlamini presided at the Mass and Fr. Mxolisi Ngcobo delivered the sermon. The new formation programme of the province was also inaugurated. A major highlight of this annual feast is the jubilees of

Oblates who have served the province for many years. This year, no less than ten priests celebrated their jubilees. Fr Karl Struve celebrated 60 years of priesthood; Fr. Heinrich Niemann and Fr. Sean Coleman, 50 years of priesthood. 40 years in the priesthood was fêted by Fr. Rodney Boyd, Fr. Paul Decock, Fr Mario Ceruti and Bishop Barry Wood.

Great milestones of devotion and commitment to religious life were celebrated by Fr. Eric Boule (60 years) Fr. Michael Foley and Fr. Chris Lockyer (both 40 years). We give thanks for their immeasurable contribution to the needy and the poor.

#### ***When in Rome, run as the Romans run!***



Fr Callistus Khathali has just returned from Rome after completing a licentiate in Moral Theology. Before he left

he was able to complete the Rome Marathon.

He writes: I completed it in 3hrs,42mins! I was happy because it was my first marathon in less than 4 hours since 2001, the year I went on to run my best Comrades! The last time I ran a marathon was in 2005 (Midlands Meander), which I finished in 4hrs, 43mins! So I improved by more than an hour. That was really great!

### ***Vision of the New Provincial Administration***

As is the custom in the Congregation, the new Provincial Administration spent its first meeting developing a vision for the next three years based on the consultation in the province and the experience of the last three years.

A clear mandate was given by the province to continue with the six priorities developed in the last administration. Indeed the clearest message received from the consultation was the overwhelming support of the province for the leadership.

Since most of us served in that administration as well, we were humbled by the support we received.

Despite this affirmation we became aware that there is a need make an important addition to our focus during these coming three years. This concerns the quality of the religious life that we live.

The challenges of secularism and individualism mean that some of our ministries may be destroyed by a spirit of

secularism, business culture and the need for personal glorification which will be ultimately destructive.

Consequently, we intend also to include, in these three years, an emphasis on the theme “A fully committed Oblate life”. This will allow us to examine and improve the quality of our religious values.

Focus areas will include

1. Commitment to religious community, house and province
2. Our giftedness as Oblates
3. Recognising God’s Spirit working in us.
4. Community and personal prayer
5. Living the vows of Chastity and Obedience
6. On-going formation to develop of culture of religious life
7. Developing the values of religious life within us especially related to the way we do our ministry.
8. Improve the quality of religious leadership since many new superiors have been appointed recently

The Congress in November will be a first attempt to examine some of these matters

### ***Provincial Congress 2008***

The Provincial Congress will be held from Tuesday 25th to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November at Albin Hall. Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> will be the only day at which all members of the Province will be required to attend. The theme of this day is “A fully committed Oblate life”. Wednesday 26 will be a workshop for new superiors and assistants. The final two days will focus on the

requirements of our religious life in the administration of temporal goods in our ministry activities.

### ***Appointments In The Provincial Administration***

#### **1. Fr Thomas Zondi Vicar Provincial**

Constitution 107 allows us to appoint a Vicar Provincial who need not be a member of the Provincial Council. On Monday April 7 2008, Father Thomas Zondi was appointed Vicar Provincial of the Natal Province This extends the mandate of Fr Zondi as Vicar Provincial until the end of the current term of the Provincial.

Father Zondi will play a representative role for the Province in its relations with a number of Church bodies in South Africa. He will also represent the Province at meetings and celebrations that the Provincial is unable to attend.

He will participate in the Provincial Council when matters under this portfolio are discussed in much the same way as the Provincial Treasurer participates in the section on Administrative ministry.

#### **2. Portfolios**

##### **Personnel**

Fr. Thomas Zondi

##### **Diocesan meetings**

Fr. Thomas Zondi

##### **Finance**

Fr. Peter Foley assisted by Fr. Sithabiso Sithole who takes the place of Fr. Muzi Madlala

##### **Formation**

Fr. Vusi Mazibuko

##### **Youth Ministry**

Fr. Mhlanganisi Dlamini

**Zimbabwe**

Fr. Siphon Kunene

**Oblate Religious Life**

Fr. Sylvester David

**Education Ministry**

Fr. Zaba Mbanjwa

**Province Unity**

Fr. Stuart Bate

**Restructuring**

Fr. Stuart Bate

**3. Provincial Notary  
And Media liaison**

Fr Chris Lockyer has been appointed as Provincial Notary. In this role he will attend all meetings concerned with legal matters affecting the Province and its members He will take minutes of all such meetings. They will be kept in a special file in the Provincial Archives in accordance with civil and Church law in these matters. .

He is also responsible for liaison with the media when it comes to legal matters. No Oblate should contact the media on an individual basis without contacting him. This is to protect Oblates who may fall victim to an often unsympathetic media which often portrays the Catholic Church in a negative light. Contact Fr Chris at 0312616406.

**Restructuring**

The General governance in Rome has proposed a new model for restructuring of Provinces in Southern Africa.

The principal motive for the suggestion is the need for larger, stronger provinces to find qualified personnel as well as the financial needs for the Oblate mission. It will make defining and planning the mission easier.

They propose two new Provinces:

1. Natal + Northern Province + Zimbabwe
2. Lesotho + Central Province + Namibia + Botswana

For us this new suggestion would not be very different for us from the previous one. The only difference is that Central Province would now not be part of the new province into which we would be incorporated. For this reason, the council has not felt it necessary to call a special province meeting to discuss this matter. Instead we will discuss the matter at the Congress in November.

**New Superior  
Sabon House**

Fr Eric Boule has been appointed Superior of Sabon House from 24 July 2008 for a three year term. He will move from Gerard House. We are grateful to Fr Eric for accepting this appointment at 78 years of age. A housekeeper will also be employed for Sabon House and an advertisement for this position is included with this newsletter.

**OMI Retreats 2008**

The OMI Annual Retreats in Anglophone Africa will be preached by Fr David Power OMI. Zimbabwe will join Zambia for their retreat. The dates for our Province are as follows

**5-10 October Bluff**

**12-17 October Redacres**

NB There are only a few places left at the Bluff.

There are five ways to book:

1. E-mail admin@omi.org.za
- 2 SMS to 0827121047: Your name followed by BLUFF or REDACRES
- 3 Call Bridgette at the Office 0312059321 between 8.30 and 12.00 Monday to Friday
4. Fax your details to  
Fax 031-206-0270
5. Post to  
PO Box 17035  
Congella, 4013

|   |
|---|
| Name:.....  |
| Retreat Chosen<br>.....<br>(Write in Bluff or Redacres) |
| Your contact details:<br>.....                          |

**Provincial Visit to  
Natal Oblates in Europe**

Currently there are ten Oblates from the province in Europe: almost as big as a district!

During the month of May I was fortunate enough to visit them all. In England I was able to meet with Fr Mike Foley who is enjoying his sabbatical year after six years of leadership in Zimbabwe. He is happy and enjoying he rest and spiritual nourishment he is receiving. Then it was on to Germany to meet our Scholastic Bros. Ewen Swartz and Phumlani Ndlovu. Both speak German fluently and I was even able to hear Phumlani preach in the scholasticate Chapel. I didn't understand a word but the others told me he preached well. The location of the scholasticate is beautiful; high on a hill overlooking a winding river. I was also able to meet with the Rector of the

College where they are studying. In Rome I was able to see Fr Danny Corijn who is well settled in his new ministry as Rector of St Paul's College. I went for a meal at the College. There were about 200 priests from all over the world in the refectory, including some from South Africa. There are also quite a number from China showing the Church's growth there.

Our own student priests are both doing well. Fr Allan Henriques has one more year to do to complete his doctorate. I met his supervisor who was pleased with Allan's progress. Fr Callistus Khathali was ready to return (see elsewhere in this issue) and has done well to complete his Licentiate in Moral Theology in two years. Our Scholastics Chikomborero Maramwidze and Ndodana Tshuma are also well and settling into the International Scholasticate.

Then it was on to Ireland to meet Fr John Poole who I remember fondly from his pioneering efforts in the Valley of a Thousand Hills and his one year at Cedara. It was good to see him again after many years. After many years in Lourdes he has now joined the Anglo Irish Province.

Finally I went to Lourdes to see my ordination companion Fr Paul Horrocks. He is so happy to be ministering to people through the confessional and the renewal experience that is a visit to Lourdes. It was also great for me to celebrate Mass with him in the original church during this 150<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year of Lourdes. It was also great to

see Fr Mario Camarda with whom I made final vows in 1980. After many years as a missionary in Africa he is now working on the OMI Lourdes team. These men do a wonderful work and it is great to see the outreach of the Oblates there.

My European trip also included a visit to the grave of my brother who passed away last year at the age of 57. This was a sad occasion for me but also a comforting one as I prayed at the graveside with one of his friends. It brought a good sense of closure to me as I had not been able to attend the funeral.

Seeing the congregation on an international level is always inspiring since we are always brothers to one another and our similarity as Oblates is so clear wherever we come from. May God bless all our brothers in Europe and through them may many others be touched by the Gospel of Jesus.

Stuart C Bate OMI  
Provincial

***From the Fundraising Committee***

It was felt that, in the light of the dismal Easter Collection of 2008, more effort must be applied to increasing the strength of these collections. Oblates of the Province will be approached at the district level. It is recommended that the Provincial contact district superiors to provide a space at their coming gatherings for representatives from the Fundraising Committee to provide input and suggestions. Oblates will be engaged in awareness and

ownership of our fundraising ministry.

A schedule of the collections is provided on a separate sheet attached to the newsletter.

**Provincial's Diary**

**JUNE**  
24-25 Provincial Council

**JULY**  
15 SACBC KZN Healing group  
21 Workshop with CMM Scholastics  
23 SACBC Theological Advisory Commission

**Dates to Give Thanks**

**JULY**

|    |                 |            |
|----|-----------------|------------|
| 02 | J Money         | Ordination |
| 06 | A Knott         | Birthday   |
| 11 | K Struve        | Ordination |
| 14 | B Wood (Bishop) | Ordination |
| 20 | C Lukuba        | Ordination |
| 22 | N Meyiwa        | Ordination |
| 24 | C Mchunu        | Birthday   |
| 25 | R Boyd          | Birthday   |
| 28 | C Richmond      | Birthday   |
| 30 | A Moss          | Ordination |
| 30 | D Wheatley      | Ordination |

**AUGUST**

|    |                  |            |
|----|------------------|------------|
| 01 | JL Nzaji         | Ordination |
| 01 | JB Mpuni         | Ordination |
| 07 | D Mackenzie      | Birthday   |
| 11 | N Tshuma (Schol) | Birthday   |
| 15 | S David          | Birthday   |
| 15 | JL Nzaji         | First Vows |
| 16 | D Butt           | Birthday   |
| 21 | N Frank          | Birthday   |
| 21 | N Frank          | Ordination |
| 23 | J Ngubane        | Birthday   |
| 24 | S Bate           | Birthday   |
| 31 | B Duffey         | Birthday   |

**Errors and omissions contact the Administrative Assistant (admin@omi.org.za)**

**OMI NATAL Update**

Newsletter of the Natal Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate  
 ☒: Box 17035, Congella, 4013 South Africa  
 ☎: 031 205 9321  
 ☎: 031 206 0270