



# OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

NATAL PROVINCE

THE MOTHER PROVINCE OF THE OBLATES IN AFRICA

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## OMI NATAL *Update*

VOL 5 No 4 September–November 2008

### Top News

#### CONGRESS 2008

#### **LIVING A FULLY COMMITTED OBLATE LIFE**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November at Albini Hall, Congella Durban  
Each day begins at 8.30 am

#### Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Theme 1

Morning 8.30-12.00

#### Obedience and Initiative

Speaker:

Fr Macaire MANIMBA,  
President: OMI Africa Region  
Provincial, OMI Congo



#### Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Theme 2

Afternoon 14.00-17.30

#### Celibacy in a South Africa in Moral crisis

Speakers:

Most Rev Buti TLHAGALE  
Archbishop of Johannesburg



Prof. Graham Lindegger  
School of Psychology UKZN  
Member of RSA Professional  
Board for Psychology .

#### Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Theme 3

Evening 19.00-20.30

#### Natal Province: The End of an Era in 2009?

Oblate Restructuring in  
Southern Africa

Speaker: Fr Stuart BATE  
Provincial



The Tuesday Sessions are Compulsory for all Oblates in the Province

#### Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>: Leadership in the Province:

Workshop for all Superiors, assistants, Committee Chairs and Secretaries,  
Provincial Councillors  
(Optional for others)

Animation team: Frs. Eric BOULLE,  
Stuart BATE and Wayne WELDSCHIDT



#### Thursday 27 and Friday Morning 28 November: Evangelical Poverty and the Administration of Our Mission Workshop for all Oblates Involved in Active Ministry

Animation Team: Fr Rufus WHITELEY, Treasurer General  
Fr Chris PULCHNY (Member of OMI General Finance Committee; Former  
Provincial Assumption Province Canada.)  
Fr Peter FOLEY. Provincial Treasurer



## **Good News about Oblate Heritage**

### **1. St Eugene De Mazenod in Archdiocesan Calendar**

Cardinal Wilfrid Napier has issued a formal Archdiocesan Decree inserting the feast of St Eugene De Mazenod into the Calendar of the Archdiocese of Durban with the rank of obligatory memorial. The decree reads as follows:

*Whereas the Church has elevated Eugene de Mazenod to Sainthood.*

*Whereas the Archdiocese of Durban recognises the role played in the Archdiocese of Durban by Eugene de Mazenod of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate he founded.*

*Whereas the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have requested that his name be put in the liturgical calendar of the Archdiocese of Durban.*

*I hereby decree that the Feast of St Eugene de Mazenod be inserted into our Diocesan Calendar on 21 May with the rank of obligatory memorial.*

*Given at the Chancery on this 5th day of August 2008.*

The decree is signed by the Archbishop and the Vicar General/chancellor Bishop Barry Wood OMI.

We would like to thank His Eminence for the honour he has extended to our founder and to the Congregation. LJC&MI.

### **2. Archbishop Hurley honoured by Ghandi Development Trust**

At a glittering awards ceremony in the Durban City Hall, on 22 July 2008, Archbishop Denis HURLEY was given a posthumous *Satyagraha* ("soul force") Award by the Ghandi Development Trust in Durban. The citation used on the occasion reads as follows"

*"Denis Hurley was Bishop and Archbishop of this city from 1947 to 1992 - almost exactly the years of apartheid rule.*

*He saw the suffering caused by that policy and his faith made him ever more determined to do whatever he could to end apartheid.*

*- he spoke out against unjust laws;*

*- he supported those who were forcibly removed from their homes;*

*- he arranged for church buildings to give sanctuary to the victims of government policy;*

*- he went to court to have detainees released, and to defend conscientious objectors;*

*- he stood with those who were protesting in Durban's streets;*

*- he backed workers and trade unions when they were victimised;*

*- he was the first person in this province to sign the UDF's Million Signatures Campaign;*

*- he publicly criticised security force conduct in the townships and, most notably, in Namibia – which led to his being brought to court;*

*- his compassion ensured that no-one who came to him for*

*help was turned away empty-handed.*

*Ela Gandhi who handed out the award called him "an epitome of kindness."*

*In his efforts to promote justice and peace, Archbishop Hurley was willing not only to work with members of his own church, but those of all Christian churches and indeed, of all faiths – as well as those who simply had a passion for justice.*

*In the words of the prophetic motto he chose in 1947:*

*"WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM".*

In a related incident the Street which runs alongside the Cathedral Parish Centre in Durban has been renamed "Denis Hurley Street". By the Ethekwini (Durban) Municipality.

### **3. Oblate Researches the Genealogies of 'Coloured' People in KZN**

Retired Oblate Duncan McKenzie has worked for many years on tracing genealogies of the 'coloured' people of KwaZulu Natal.

His work is currently being computerized and recently formed part of an exhibition on the coloured people of Pietermaritzburg during heritage month (September)

Msunduzi Museum researcher and anthropologist Khanya Ndlovu, who specialises in Zulu and coloured history, confirmed that the exhibition, will join other cultural exhibitions on the mezzanine floor' of the museum

dedicated to representing the diverse cultural heritage of the province.

According to Ndlovu, pulling together the new exhibition demand a sensitive approach to issues of racial classification and identity. Raising these issues sometimes produced as an emotional response. 'Some people feel that the term coloured was problematic; others were more resigned to and accepting of the label'.

With sponsorship from the Msunduzi Municipality, the exhibitions will eventually boast a touch-screen computer through which visitors will be able to trace the genealogies of their families thanks to the work of Father Duncan.

#### **4. Cleland Community Celebrates Jubilees**

On Sunday 21 September, Fr Sean Coleman celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood at a Mass at Cleland. At the same celebration, Fr. John Patterson celebrated 65 years of religious profession. Both men have given many years of their life to the formation of future Oblates, both initial and on-going.

#### **Good News about Youth Ministry**

**Our Presence at the Youth Events in Australia**  
Our plans to send a good representation of Oblates and young people to the Youth Celebrations in Sydney, Australia did not come to fruition mainly due to lack of funds.

As a result, the chair of the Oblate Youth Committee Fr

Mxolisi Ngcobo OMI was the only delegate from Natal and Zimbabwe to go. This is his report on the three events he attended there.

#### **1. The Oblate Youth Encounter**

This took place at the Mazenod College in Melbourne between the 9th and the 12th of July. For many Oblates it was the highlight of our pilgrimage in Australia.

Oblates from all over the world, youth chaplains and the Oblate Youth Groups were gathered to celebrate the youth encounter with our Superior General Father Wilhelm Steckling. His presence was a constant reminder of our mission as Oblates, united by the charism inherited from our founder Saint Eugene de Mazenod, who worked passionately for the salvation of souls, especially amongst the most neglected; the youth of our time. It was Saint Eugene De Mazenod who said **we must leave nothing undared** in our mission for the salvation of souls.

The Oblate Youth Encounter was indeed a reminder to all of us that in our mission to youth we must leave no stone unturned. We are to sacrifice our resources, our gifts and talents, our lives, and even the comforts of our traditional ministries, for the sake of the youth of our time. In Melbourne we were reminded of the urgent call by our Founder Saint Eugene to work closely with the youth; whom he regarded as the most vulnerable members of The Body of Christ.

One should mention the wonderful manner in which we were received by our brother Oblates of the Australian province. They did everything to ensure that we all enjoyed their hospitality and that we all felt truly at home. Oblates young and old made themselves available and were ready to take on any responsibility entrusted to them for the success of the Oblate Youth Encounter. It is worth mentioning the names of Fr. Christian Fini (Youth chaplain) who worked tremendously to ensure the smooth co-ordination of all events related to the youth encounter. Fr. Mark (Scholasticate Superior) made us all feel most welcomed at the Saint Mary's Scholasticate. Fr. Vinni (The Scholasticate Bursar) who in his 70's ran around 24/7 to ensure that all visitors were well attended and Fr. McGinnity (Parish Priest of Eaglevale-Sydney) drove 800x2 Kms, to make himself available for whatever was required of him. Many other Oblate brothers inspired us by their sense of hospitality and generosity.

The highlight of our Melbourne experience came on the closing Mass when one of our scholastic brothers Jun (originally from Thailand) in the presence of the Superior General, the international Oblate family and associates; committed himself perpetually in vows to the Oblate Family. Many of the youth gathered on that celebration were moved to tears as Bro. Jun rendered himself in oblation to the Church and the congregation. We pray that his life as an Oblate Missionary may

continue to bear fruit and that his oblation may forever be a reminder of our zeal for the salvation of souls; especially the youth.

## **2. The International World Youth Day in Sydney**

All youth activities in Australia taking place between the 15th and the 20th of July culminated in the International World Youth Day in Sydney, where all the youth were celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit and giving witness to Jesus Christ, united with the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. About 500 000 young pilgrims from all continents of the world formed a massive crowd at the Randwick Racecourse first to officially welcome the Pope on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and then for the closing mass on the 20th. This for me was a great witness to the world that indeed the Holy Spirit is alive and working in Christ's Church to bring about God's Kingdom that was promised to us.

In the whole of Sydney, numerous parishes and Catholic Institutions opened their doors to host the thousands of young pilgrims, and to render various forms of catechesis during the week. Bishops were therefore full at work throughout Sydney; teaching about our Catholic faith and tradition. In our parish in Eaglevale we had the opportunity to receive catechesis from two bishops: one from India and another from Canada. Finally it was our own Cardinal Francis George OMI from Chicago who also gave us a powerful talk on the Holy Spirit at work in the Church. His Eminence our own Cardinal Wilfred

Napier touched the hearts of the many in Australia by his life giving message, especially the sanctity of human life. Even though I did not have the privilege to meet him in person, yet his presence was felt very strongly in Australia.

Sydney was alive with concerts, prayer sessions, lectures, visual arts exhibitions, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the excitement of youth. Many families Catholic and non-Catholic opened their homes to welcome the many pilgrims unknown to them, thus echoing the words of the Holy Father; that indeed 'the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit resonates in all of humanity'.

The re-assuring presence of the Holy Father could be felt even by the most ardent of sceptics. This was clearly manifested in the manner in which the media coverage of the World Youth Day events noticeably shifted from being that of cynicism to being that of hope and admiration for message hope, faith and peace brought along by the Pope.

One evening, on my return from the pilgrimage in the city, I found myself engaged in a 45 minutes long conversation with an Australian old man in the train. He was one of the volunteers who rendered their services for the smooth running of the Youth Day events. He spoke passionately about the excitement that filled the whole of Australia and a renewed hope for a better world. As I was about to disembark at the next station, I

hastily asked him if there were any pilgrims in the parish to which he belonged. He simply looked back at me with a smile and then told me that he was a member of a Baptist church in a small suburb of Glenfield south of Sydney.

I thought to myself on my way home that indeed the power of the Holy Spirit is at work here.

## **3. The Oblate Youth Chaplaincy Conference**

After the International World Youth Day all the Oblate Youth Chaplains in the congregation came together for a week to share about their experiences on youth ministry. The Superior General and the members of the General Administration were present throughout the conference, to show their unwavering support and keen interest on mission towards and in association with youth. Many of the delegates had brought along representatives from their respective youth groups and associates. There was a wonderful experience of fraternal support and co-operation amongst Religious and Laity. In one of the sessions led by Fr. Oswald Firth (Member of the General Council) a call was made to all Oblate units to work towards the creation and the establishment closer ties with our lay associates. We were encouraged to look into other forms of lay associates and not to focus only on the MAMI. Youth Chaplains were therefore encouraged to work tirelessly towards the formation of Youth Associates in their respective units. In the spirit of Saint Eugene we were reminded of our call to open

up our houses, chapels and institutions to the lay; to share more intimately in our charism, through prayer, hospitality, and the sharing of our lives.

During the conference we shared deeply on our Oblate values and mission to youth. The conference was very much inspired by the Natal Oblate Youth Ministry and its vision for mission amongst the youth. In particular they were impressed by the theology that drives our ministry to youth and therefore many of our elements were adopted by the conference to form part of the Oblate values for our mission to youth. I was also touched by the Superior General's attention to detail when it comes to the happenings in the various provinces regarding our mission. Representing the Africa-Madagascar unit in the conference was The Congo, The Northern Province, Lesotho and The Natal Province.

Clearly there is more that lies ahead of us in terms of our missionary vision regarding our youth ministry in particular. We should fear not for the many challenges that still lie ahead of us, as we are guaranteed by the presence of the Holy Spirit; who will continue to guide and inspire us in our work for the salvation of souls.

**WE ARE TO LEAVE NOTHING UNDARED!**

As the Oblate Natal Province, I believe we should be humble enough to acknowledge our failure to accord at least a small portion of our youth the

privilege to enjoy this wonderful experience of the Oblate celebration of their mission to youth, as well as the opportunity to be united with the Holy Father and the world's youth in Sydney. I choose to believe that no stone will be left unturned in our efforts to raise necessary resources to ensure that in the next three years we will be better prepared to journey with our youth on a pilgrimage to the next International Youth Day to be held in Madrid - Spain. While in Australia I also gathered that we are the only province in the Oblate world that enjoys that privilege of having eight young Oblates committed to youth ministry; through our Oblate Youth Ministry Committee. For us nothing is impossible!!!

**Questionnaire for Chapter**  
*All Oblates are reminded to return the completed questionnaire for the Chapter (recently sent by post) before November 1. The best is by email to [admin@omi.org.za](mailto:admin@omi.org.za). If you don't have email please post or fax to the addresses at the end of the newsletter.*

### Provincial's Diary

#### SEP

9 SACBC KZN Healing group  
16 SJTI Board  
17-19 IPC Albin Hall  
23-24 Provincial Council  
25-27 Misesan Cara Visit  
29-30 St Augustine College

#### OCT

1-3 St Augustine College  
5-10 Retreat  
16 SACBC Liturgy Commission  
Germiston

#### NOV

10-11 Provincial Council Meeting  
21-22 HIV/AIDS Funders

23 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bergville  
25-28 Congress 2008-10-09

#### DEC

1-5 Comboni Ongoing Formation Programme Pretoria

6-9 Assembly, Zimbabwe Mission

### Dates to Give Thanks

#### SEPTEMBER

2 +J NXUMALO

Episcopal Ordination

08 D CORIJN	First Vows
08 N COUGHLAN	First Vows
08 P DECOCK	First Vows
08 C LUKUBA	First Vows
11 F DUFFY	Birthday
12 E SWARTZ (s)	Birthday
15 P McMAHON	First Vows
16 M A NGCOBO	Birthday
18 V PHENYANE	Ordination
19 P FOLEY	Birthday
19 S MKHIZE (s)	Birthday
21 S COLEMAN	Ordination
22 J PATTERSON	First Vows
25 B NDLOVU	Birthday
25 S. SITHOLE	Ordination
26 S COLEMAN	Birthday
29 S COLEMAN	First Vows

#### OCTOBER

01 M Foley	Ordination
01 C Nabwenje	Birthday
03 H Niemann (Nam)	Birthday
08 M Ceruti	Birthday
08 J Madondo	Birthday
12 E Swartz (s)	Birthday
19 Z Ngubane	Ordination
21 E Khoza	Birthday
29 V Phenyane	Birthday

#### NOVEMBER

06 S KUNENE	Birthday
11 J-L NZAJI KALALA	Birthday
14 N NKOSI	Birthday
20 P HORROCKS	Birthday
21 K STRUVE	Birthday
23 M MNCWABE	Birthday
27 L MEMELA	Birthday

**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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