



AMR

Newsletter

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Gen. Councillor AMR: Fr. Moseou

President: Fr. Ngenomesho

V.President: Fr. Iheanacho

Treasurer: Fr. Peter Foley

Exec. Sec: Fr. Temswang

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Dear Brother Oblates,

Having arrived at the end of this Interchapter 2013 in Bangkok, we want to share with you in all simplicity a bit of our experience of these two weeks spent together and tell you about some of the fruits of our deliberations. Formally, an Interchapter meeting is of course the focal midpoint between two General Chapters (cf. R 128), but it is still much more than that. As we truly experienced here, an encounter among Oblates is an always powerful and joyful time of fraternal life, of prayer and of reflection; a time also for experiencing the richness of the Congregation, its life and its worldwide missionary commitment. And even if the flow of information and interventions sometimes overwhelmed us and prevented a more in-depth dialogue among us, we leave the meeting happy and encouraged in our service of leadership and authority among you.

What dynamic did we follow? Listening so as to better discern. Attentive listening, a necessary step for any discernment, occupied much of our time: listening to the Lord and His Word; listening to the reports of the Regions; to the various interventions; to our confreres; listening to what is happening in the Congregation in response to the calls for conversion of the last General Chapter. This listening helped us discover or recall the various contexts of the mission today and their demands: secular societies where Christians are only one voice among many other; situations of injustice and violence, of misery and despair; but also a world where the thirst for love, justice and truth is developing. It is from these multiple contexts that we asked ourselves: *What kind of men do we Oblates need to be and to form in order to be missionaries in such a world?*

Invited as a resource person, Fr. Oswald FIRTH helped us in this discussion by reminding us, among other things, of some expressions describing Oblates as "men of the human encounter," "men of Advent". We believe that ultimately, by our becoming humble like Jesus and faithful to the charism of St. Eugene, we must take the path that leads to attentive listening to the signs of the times and to the people; to empathy and to prayer that allows us to walk together towards the Truth. Does evangelizing not amount, therefore, to accompanying others in their encounter with Christ and helping them fulfill the commandment of love which

OMI Africa—Madagascar Region

Tél-fax : +27(0)11 782 4504* Cell : +27(0)78 552 2224 *Email : omi.africa@gmail.com *www.omiafrica.co.za

leads to God? In this regard, three areas appeared to us to be priorities in our effort to constantly pursue conversion: community life, formation and mission. To which should be added: the essential role of spirituality, especially an Oblate spirituality. Which events and which fruits of this meeting shall we share with you? Within the limits of this brief message, we chose four things which seemed to us to be the most important for the future: The official presentation of the new Constitutions and Rules by the Superior General to each participant at the end of a day of recollection. In a very well organized liturgy, each of us could hear these words resonate within him, “Do this and you will live”. And we hope that in each Unit, this book will be welcomed, read and studied and that its contents will be practiced, personally and in community. There is a treasure in it from which one can always draw, a companion on the path to holiness on which we are all committed to live, with Christ as the center of our life, after the example of St. Eugene and our martyred brothers, especially those of Spain and of Laos. The invitation to solidarity, indeed with the poor with whom we must always strive to live as closely as possible, but also solidarity among us, among the Units of the Congregation. Solidarity in personnel and material solidarity. And that is why we welcomed the prospect of a new campaign of solidarity throughout the Congregation as was suggested by our General Treasurer. The year 2016 will be the 200th anniversary of our founding. It will be a time of thanksgiving, of return to our sources and renewal for all of us. A *Triennium* of preparation is being proposed by the Central Government in response to a request of the Major Superiors. We totally welcomed it and we want to give it our full support. As an extension to the calls to conversion of the General Chapter, this preparation over three years will be for all of us a time of grace. It is an invitation to allow ourselves to be renewed in our apostolic community life; in our willingness to let ourselves be formed (first and ongoing formation); and finally in our apostolic zeal, as well as our missionary priorities. The 36th General Chapter appears on the horizon of 2016. We realized how important it is to begin preparing now for this “special time of reflection and community conversion.” (C 125) But what should be its theme? Some expressed their hope for a reaffirmation of our religious identity and in particular, that the vow of poverty as a life choice in service of the Kingdom be strengthened. But many also expressed the urgent need to set a common direction for the missionary work of the entire Congregation in a rapidly changing world and Church. This orientation, it is true, would be consistent with the theme of the last stage of the *Triennium* ending on January 25, 2017.

A Gospel passage especially spoke to us during this Interchapter. It’s that of the multiplication of the loaves from the five loaves and two fish generously given and by which Jesus fed a multitude (Mt 14, 13-21): the poverty of our means; confidence in Christ Jesus; joy at the banquet offered to all!

Finally, we want to thank all those who made it possible for this meeting to take place in such a good and



fruitful manner. In a particular way, we extend our warmest thanks to our brothers of the Delegation of Thailand-Laos for their hospitality and care for us during our stay among them.

For each of us, we implore the protection of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Eugene!

Your brothers at the Interchapter

Bangkok, 3 May 2013



FATHER GENERAL IN CAMEROON

The General, Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI., was recently on a visit to the Province of Cameroon and thereafter to the Oblate Mission of Nigeria. While in Cameroon, Fr. Louis visited and interacted with the Scholastics and the formation team in Yaounde. Some of the Confreres around the city of Yaounde, precisely the student priest and the Oblates of the parish of Oliga (Yaounde), also converged at the Scholasticate in order to share the Rare moment of hosting the successor of Saint Eugene de Mazenod. During his stay in Yaounde, the General was entertained, in a cultural night by the scholastics, with the rich traditions of the entities that make up the Province. He was been conferred with a red cap title by the Nigerians in the community; title which, from now henceforth, gives him the authority to frequent sacred shrines and to eat and drink with elders on the plate of the ancestors. From Yaounde, the General moved North, the chief lieu of the Oblates. He's had the rare privilege to visit, on his way, the rural missions and parishes in the remote areas. He visited the Novitiate where he interacted with the Novices and formators alike. In Garoua, he met with the Provincial Council and the many oblates who live in and around Garoua. Some oblates have had to travel hundreds of kilometres to come and « catch a glimpse » of the august visitor. Kudos must be given to this visitor in our Region as he braved the difficulty of having to travel on our roads to reach out to the Oblates working in the remote areas. He continued his visit to the Figuil Marian Sanctuary served by the Oblates, to Chad and later to the Prenovitiate in the Far Northern Region of Cameroon. The General, after a very rich and insightful visit to Cameroon, made his way to Nigeria.



THE GENERAL IN THE OMI Mission of Nigeria



The General was welcomed at the Abuja International Airport by the Mission Superior of Nigeria, Very Rev. Fr. George Chidi Iheanacho, OMI. After he had rested from his trip, the General was accompanied to the Eastern Region of Nigeria where the Oblates arrived at the inception of the Mission. His visit to this mission was very significant as the Mission will be celebrating the **25th (silver jubilee) anniversary of the Oblate's presence in Nigeria**. He visited with the Christians of the parish of Ihteowerri



and interacted with the shepherds, encouraged them in their mission to the poor. He later moved to Obibi-Ochasi, also a parish served by the Oblates. He was welcomed with a very warm reception by parishioners and pastors. He had an interactive session with both the Christians and Oblates of the parish. « It feels good to see the General come down to meet us in our own realities. We feel encouraged; and the zeal to give our best has received a major boost! », said one of the Oblates. From the East, the General proceeded to Jos, a city situated in the Central Region of Nigeria where the Oblates have their formation house and a parish. Though Nigeria, as a State, is faced with so many security challenges, the General's visit offered him a first hand experience of the state and also shows that the situation is not as bad as it's being reported by the media.

AMR MAJOR SUPERIORS IN BANGKOK



All the Major Superiors of the Region with the exception of the Executive Secretary who is not one and the General Councilor who belongs to the General Administration, were all present at the Inter Chapter in Bangkok. It was indeed an encounter which gave our leaders the opportunity to meet again, to interact and to discuss issues of common interest in the Region. Some were seen discussing on issues pertaining future collaborations, partnership with other sister Units; for others, it was an opportunity to evaluate the outstanding terms of collaboration. Aside the Inter Chapter encounter during which the President of the Region, Fr. Linus Ngenomesho (Provincial of Namibia), presented the General Report on the state of the Region; Fr Marek Ocklak of Madagascar and the

General Councilor presented the symbol of the Region which is a branch of a tree signifying hope, life and youthfulness. With the Africa-Madagascar Region participating actively in the debates, there had also been a lot of side meetings involving the Region with members of the General Administration on pressing matters concerning the Region. The sub-regions also used the medium to meet and to address urgent issues. Our Major Superiors, during the two week's long encounter, were involved in the liturgical animations. **Frs. Joseph** of Lesotho and **Vusi** of Natal celebrated their anniversaries of Priesthood and Religious life respecti-



Among the Major Superiors at the Inter Chapter, Fr. Freeborn, Superior of the Delegation of Zambia was unable to stay until the end because he had to travel to the USA for the defense of his Doctoral thesis in Paternal Studies. We wish Fr. Freeborn well and pray for the Spirit to enlighten him.

FINAL PROFESSION OF VOWS IN CEDARA

On February 17, 1826, Pope Leo XII approved the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Congregation and its Constitutions and Rules. This year (2013), the 17 of February fell on Sunday which meant that celebrations were postponed to Monday the 18th of February. On this day three of the Oblates brothers made their final vows. They were **Br Nhlanhla Mhlanga (Zim Mission)** for Brotherhood; **Br Patrick Dladla** from the Oblate Northern Province (JHB) and **Br Ernest Chimhowa** from Zimbabwe both preparing for the Priesthood. Those who were present: oblate brothers, their families, friends and parishioners, were mesmerized by the brothers' angelic voices who sang during the liturgy. The dance and singing was out of this world, one lady was overheard saying. The three brothers who made their perpetual Oblation also came to the party during the thanksgiving hymn and danced with jubilation; this prompted the whole assembly to get on its feet. **By Bro. Patrick Dladla, OMI.**



DIACONATE ORDINATION IN KINSHASA



The 28th of April 2013, will remain a memorable day in the lives of **KABEYA Delphin** (Congo), **MUNIA Marc** (Congo), **MUSHILA Florent** (Congo), **NATAKA Hervé** (Congo), **OYEGOKE John** (Nigeria), **TEBENE PATIZERE Jacques** (Cameroun), **TSHIMBUMBA Basile** (Congo); on that day, those 7 (seven) young men were raised to the Order of diaconate (transitional) by Most Rev. Timothé Bodika, Auxilliary Bishop of Kinshasa. The ordination took place in St. Rita's parish of the diocese of Kisantu in Kinshasa. It was a carefully prepared liturgical celebration that was graced by family members of some of the ordinands, friends, compatriots and other well wishers.

PRESBYTERAL CUM DIACONATE ORDINATIONS IN MASERU

The 6th of April 2013 was a happy day for all the inhabitants of the city of the Blessed Joseph Gerard as they witnessed yet another ordination of their sons who were been raised to the Order of presbyterate and diaconate respectively in the Sacred Heart parish of the Archdiocese of Maseru, by His Grace, Most Rev. Dr Gerard Lerotholi, OMI. Archbishop of Maseru. Were raised to the Holy Order, **Rev. Fr. Nathaniel Posholi and the two (2) assisting deacons** in a very rich celebration fill with traditional and cultural expressions of the subjects of the great Moshoeshe. Friends and families from South Africa, Zimbabwe,...attended the open air celebration.



ROME: FINAL PROFESSION / DIACONATE ORDINATION



290 Via Aurelia (as most of us remember) in the Eternal City came to life once more as always, the community witnessed on Saturday, the 11th of Mai 2013 the Final Profession of vows of four (4) Oblate scholastics of whom one is from the AMR and precisely from OMI Mission Nigeria: **Ali Nnaemeka Cornelius**. The ceremony was presided over by the Superior General, and attended by his Council, members of the General House community, a visiting Bishop from Cameroon, Most Rev. Barthelemy Yaouda Hourgo of the Diocese of Yagoua, and many friends. The four (4) perpetually professed brothers were, on Sunday, the 12th of May, raised to the Order of diaconate by His Grace, the Archbishop Secretary for the Congregation of the Cause of Saints, Archbishop Marcello Bertolucci. Priests from all over graced the event.

Also in Germany, **Bro Chrysogonus Uzor** of OMI Nigeria was raised to the Order of diaconate in Hunsfield this April

The two Sub-regions' committee of formation will meet in Zambia to discuss on issues pertaining formation in the Region in preparation for the 2014 Regional Conference Meeting in Kenya.