

# **Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate**

# **Provincial Update**

After 14 months, the Provincial Council were so happy to gather for a meeting at Camberwell. Provincial Council also celebrated Holy Mass at St Mary's Oblate scholasticate. Please keep the Provincial and his Council in your daily prayers.

# From the Director

Dear friends, Nations that boasted of their wealth, military power etc. are on their knees pleading to be saved from the corona virus. Yet the hope is that this too will pass away, and better and more prosperous days are ahead of us. If only we recognize the humanity and the divinity dwelling in every person irrespective of caste, creed, colour, language, and nationality because we need God more than ever.

I remember a story: A little boy liked ice cream very much! However, his family was poverty-stricken and so having an ice cream was quite a luxury. One day, this boy stood in front of a large ice cream parlour. A person, tall and well-built in stature – asked him, "Are you not going inside to enjoy a cup of ice cream?" The boy replied, "Sir, I have very less money. Moreover, the parlour requires all their patrons to wear shoes, and I have none!"

Seeing the glowing desire of the boy, the man handed over some money, took off his own larger size shoes and told the boy, "There you are! Take this money. Wear these pairs of shoes. Go in, enjoy your ice cream and come back!"



The boy was surprised – yet super elated! He wore the hefty shoes, went into the parlour, delightfully enjoyed his ice cream... came back, and with a magical glow on his face and twinkling sparkle in eyes, returned back the shoes saying, "Big Man, Big Shoes... and a BIG THANK YOU!"

Yes, a wonderful "generosity of spirit" and the "spirit of hospitality"

should be extended not only to strangers, but to all who are guests in our lives, to all who represent Jesus Christ. That includes our families, classmates, our school mates, our teammates, friends, all whom we

meet etc. It involves a basic generosity with our resources, giving freely. It also means a respect for persons. It also means just being for others. There can be times in our lives when we appear to have very little, in all kinds of ways, but if we give generously out of the little we have, we are rich in the eyes of the Lord. God loves generosity and he gives liberally to those who share his gifts with others. We are the members of a great community of love, faith, charity, encouragement, appreciation, tolerance, sacrifices, and strengthening of the weaker ones. St Eugene our founder and father inspires all of us to love everyone, encourage all good things which will help the well-being of others and lead them to salvation.

I am deeply indebted to God for His providential care, unconditional love, and generous support constantly shown to us through our beloved MAMI members to support Oblate Missions, Oblate Formation and Oblate Life in Australia and all over the world. My prayers are

with you and your family. Please be safe and God bless.

**Fr David Francis OMI** 

#### WE REMEMBER

# Fr. Ian Mackintosh OMI, RIP

Ian Joseph Mackintosh was born on the 7th November 1939, in Geelong, Victoria, and was educated at St Joseph's College Geelong.

He joined the Oblates in 1959 at Sorrento, and did his scholasticate studies at Cedara, South Africa,

from 1959 to 1965; he obtained a Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Africa. He was ordained in Geelong, on the 8th December 1965.

Fr lan's first obedience was to teach at Mazenod College, Lesmurdie, arriving there in 1966, its first year. He became Rector in 1973, and subsequently was Rector, Mazenod College Mulgrave from 1978 to 1983. Then in 1984 it was back to Mazenod College, WA as Head of Religious Education for nearly 6 years, before a final school appointment teaching at Iona College until the end of 1992.

He then moved in to parish work, with 12 years at St John Vianney's, Springvale North, firstly as assistant Parish Priest, then as Parish Priest. From 2005 to 2010 he was Parish priest at Sorrento, then spent 6 years as Parish Priest of Dernancourt before his final appointment in 2017 as Parish Priest of Sorrento.

True to his down to earth nature, Fr Mack spent his 3 month sabbatical in 2016 supplying in Geraldton diocese, as acting Parish Priest of Newman, Tom Price and Paraburdoo, driving many kilometres through the outback, ministering to miners, their families, and aboriginals, assisted by Josephite sisters. All in all an experience he enjoyed.

In January 2020 he retired to Camberwell community house. He died suddenly at Camberwell on the morning of February 19, 2021.

Affectionately known as "The Bear", lan was a passionate sportsman, loved Richmond AFL team (wore Richmond socks) and disliked umpires and referees. A great reader who loved history and politics, he was passionate about the Oblates and the Church, prepared his sermons in great detail, loyal and steadfast. He was a home body, who did not like sleeping away; gregarious, great company, and honest. He saw the best in people, was kind, and responded to needs.

We thank God for Fr Ian's faithful service to the Australia Province and Church for over 55 years.



#### ST. EUGENE DE MAZENOD



When we grow older, we need to remember more birthdays, wedding anniversaries and death anniversaries. It is a profound reminder that our family and social networks has

been expanding on earth and in heaven. St Eugene de Mazenod, the Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, treasured such an expansion in his own life. He was a happy and engaged member of his sister's family as much as he was a happy and engaged member of the Oblate Congregation. Facing the first deaths of his fellow Missionaries he also acknowledged that the Oblate Community was growing in heaven. St Eugene looked at death as a birth into eternal life. Therefore, he would turn to his Oblate community in heaven for inspiration and support.

On 21st of May 1861 he was born into eternal life himself. For his Oblates it was the end of the era when every year they wrote a personal letter to him knowing that a personal reply from the Founder would come. That unique correspondence ceased, however the connection which St Eugene established with his fellow Missionaries, and which he faithfully cultivated over years, took on a new form. The Mission turning to him like he turned to the deceased Oblates before. The Founder's commitment to evangelizing ensured the Oblates that his birth into eternal life would not be retirement.

Providentially St Eugene breathed his last on Pentecost Sunday. On the day when the Church celebrated the Holy Sprit's descent and the beginning of her evangelizing outreach St Eugene de Mazenod, a committed evangelizer, lived his dying as a gift to his Oblate Congregation and the whole Church. His death was his ultimate gift to support the great mission of Christ carried out by the Church.

For the Oblates and Associates his death anniversary is a profound reminder that he is a member of their expanding family and social network. They treasure his last words: **"Practice well among yourselves: charity, charity, charity and outside, zeal for the salvation of souls**" as his lasting testament for them and his lasting commitment to loving and supporting them in their zeal to make Jesus known and loved.

#### Fr Daniel Szewc OMI

#### MAZENOD COLLEGE Mission Action Day Concert

On Monday evening, March 29, Mazenod College Victoria launched their 2021 Mission Action Day with a very enjoyable Mission Action Day Concert which drew a crowd of over 300.

On Thursday, April 1, Term 1 finished at Mazenod College, Victoria with a day of high excitement and activity as we celebrated our traditional Mission Action Day (MAD) in support of our Oblate Missions. The day commenced with an



Easter Liturgy in Oblate Hall followed by a walkathon. Upon returning to the College there was a variety of foods and activities to be enjoyed which resulted in close to \$50,000.00 being raised. This day is also a reminder of our 'Catholicity', of being part of the great family called the Church of which we, as Oblate Family, are members.

We will probably never meet those we assist but due to our belonging to this family we have the responsibility to reach out and assist our fellow sisters and brothers in their various needs. The day concluded with the drawing of several raffles in front of excited and hopeful community members.

On behalf of the Oblates, especially our brother Oblates working in some of the most difficult missions and their people, I take this opportunity to thank all, especially during these difficult Covid times, who contributed to a great day of support for, and an awareness of, our Oblate Missions.



#### New Mazenod College Rector

During the Mazenod College, Victoria Inaugural Mass, celebrated on February 26, Fr Harry Dyer OMI was installed as the 10th Rector by Fr Christian Fini OMI, Oblate Provincial. Fr Harry commenced his new ministry after completing 7 years in our Parishes in Partnership in Moe/ Newborough. Previously he was the Oblate Provincial for 6 years.





Mr Tony Coghlan, Principal, 2020 Dux – Sean Ng and Fr Harry Dyer OMI, Rector.

#### **VOCATIONS**

We welcome back Br Nghieu Nguyen OMI to St Mary's Scholasticate after his four months of pastoral service in Fremantle parish, Perth.



**CONGRATULATIONS** to Br Dominic Fung King-ho OMI and Br Luan OMI as they are approved for their final vows by Rev. Fr. Louis Lougen OMI, Superior General. Br Dominic Fung

King-ho is one of the scholastics from the China Delegation who is also the first vocation from Hong Kong. He is currently studying in the Philippines.

Br Luân OMI who is currently studying at St Mary's, Camberwell, and a further 9 candidates from Vietnam, have received final vows confirmation. Please keep these great men in your prayers.



#### "Go therefore and make

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). These were the words I heard spoken by Pope Francis on Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro on 28th July 2013. I was at the final mass for World Youth Day amidst 3.7 million other Catholics from around the world. It was these words that rung in my ears the following day when we left Rio de Janeiro after an intense twoweek pilgrimage across Chile and Brazil. We left Rio and journeyed into the foothills behind the city to spend two days on retreat in a beautiful Jesuit retreat house amid the rainforest. When we arrived at the retreat centre, our chaplain gave us the task to put everything into our rooms and to head outside with nothing with us, to find a quiet place to be and to simply let God do the rest. We had had such an intense pilgrimage and experienced so many amazing things, we just needed some quiet time to reflect on it all. I left everything in my bedroom. I did not take my phone nor my wallet with me; after all there was no reception and no ATMs in the rainforest. I walked up a little path. meandering through the lush green forest. I eventually came to small running stream. There was some old concrete structure that had fallen over and which stuck out across the stream, so I climbed onto it and dangled my feet into the stream. I just sat there, thinking about all that had happened on that trip. Again and again, the words of Scripture came into my head; "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." It was resounding so loudly in my head that it was almost as if Christ himself was whispering it in my ear. As the sun shone through the trees, the gentle breeze danced around me, the water peacefully flowed under my feet. In that moment I was surrounded by God, by His Word and by His Creation. I couldn't escape the call that was before me.





Fr John Sherman, Vocations director, visited St. Mary's seminary and offered Holy Mass.

Prior to this trip, I had been working with the Catholic Office for Youth and Young Adults (COYYA) in the Archdiocese of Adelaide, my hometown. After school, I had originally studied Law and International Studies at the University of Adelaide. I had worked for a short time in South Africa for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and I was passionate about providing justice for those who needed it the most. Unfortunately, due to the political situation in Australia I found it very difficult to find work here in that field. An opportunity arose for me to work for the Archdiocese in the area of youth ministry. This appealed to me as I had been a member of my parish's Antioch group since 2007 and a coordinator for Oblate Youth Australia since 2009. I really enjoyed the work amongst the Catholic youth of Adelaide, I was passionate about my faith and I wanted to offer many young people the same opportunity I had to develop in their faith. I was lucky to be born into a wonderful family. My parents, along with my grandmother, were great examples of faith, dedication and perseverance. They raised my brother and I in the faith, contributed greatly to our local parish of St David's, Tea Tree Gully, and ensured we had a good, Catholic education. I was fortunate to have grown up in an Oblate parish and the Oblate priests who served there were always the kindest, friendliest, most welcoming and supportive priests I could have hoped for. They were always there for us; in many difficult times of my youth, the priests were there to support me. One of them especially was the impetus for me joining the youth group, which changed my life forever.



As I had begun the journey to World Youth Day in 2013, I was at a crossroads in my life. I had grown up in the Church, was involved in the Oblate Youth movement, was working for the Archdiocese in youth ministry, but also had my law degree and was constantly trying to find avenues where I could assist the poor and the outcast, especially refugees. Being in Brazil was the serendipitous moment where God found me at the crossroads, not too sure which way to turn. Little did I realise that there weren't just two options, and that God revealed a third to me. As I sat there in the rainforest. hearing God's Word resound inside my head, a question arose in my heart ... " what if I become a priest?" Up until that time, the idea had never even crossed my mind.

My whole life I had the Oblate priests as great examples of what a good priest should be. In my youth, I didn't really know any different, but once I was older and had

come in contact with other priests, I realised there was something special about the Oblates. When I returned from World Youth Day, it was to the Oblates that I went. I spoke about my experience with one Oblate who I was close to and he gave me the best advice. He said, "you experienced God on the mountaintop, wait until you get back to ground level to make a decision." He and I devised a plan. I would come to Melbourne once a month for an extended weekend and stay at St Mary's Seminary, then at Jacksons Rd. I would use the opportunity to switch off from work and life in Adelaide. I would have quiet time to reflect. I would join the brothers for prayers and meals and I would peruse the Oblate works in the library to learn more about St Eugene and his charism. Meanwhile, back in Adelaide, I sought the spiritual direction of my parish priest, an Oblate, and I attended Mass as frequently as possible. I even took the opportunity to go to China for a two-week immersion in the Beijing community to see the missionary work of Oblates outside of Australia. By the end of 2014, I was almost 100% sure that God was calling me to join the Oblates. I attended the Vocations Weekend with about a dozen other young men and by the end of the weekend I knew I had to apply. I spoke to the Vocations Director and we commenced the process.

I was eventually accepted into the Pre-Novitiate and moved to Melbourne on 14th February 2015. I lived in the community at Mazenod College, worked there and began my studies at the Catholic Theological College. In August of 2015, I flew to the United States to commence my Novitiate. My experience in America was amazing; I was fortunate to have five other men with me as novices, coming from a variety different cultural backgrounds. We had three formators who guided us through a very intense year of preparation. I made my first vows as an Oblate there in America on 1st August 2016. I returned to Melbourne and began living in the Camberwell community as the new St Mary's Scholasticate was being built. I continued my philosophical and theological studies at Catholic Theological College and undertook many different pastoral experiences over the next few years. I worked at Mazenod College, Mulgrave; Rosies Victoria; the Mary Mackillop Nursing Home in Hawthorn East; the Missionaries of Charity's soup kitchen in Fitzroy; the Cyrene Centre's counselling service for alcohol and drug addicts in Noble Park; the Metropolitan Remand Centre in Truganina; and most recently in the Media and Communications Office for the Australian Oblate Province in Camberwell. In June 2019, I took a semester

off from studies and participated in a Mission Experience overseas. I spent three months working with the YOUCAT youth team in Lourdes, France; and then four months in the Sacred Heart parish in London, UK. I learnt many a thing whilst overseas and I believe it was one of the most formative experiences that has prepared me to be a missionary.

I am now preparing to take my perpetual vows as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate. This means that I have come to discern that God wills for me to live a life of poverty, chastity, obedience and perseverance in the religious community of the Missionary Oblates. I humbly believe that God has worked a miracle, taking a young boy and preparing him over many years to be a disciple of Christ, who is destined to be sent out to preach the Good News. I pray that I may fulfil that great command, which I heard all those years ago in Brazil; that I may go and make disciples of all nations. Each and every day, I pray that I may live up to this challenge, and I sincerely ask for your prayers too.

Praised be Jesus Christ, and Mary Immaculate!

Br Joshua Nash OMI



## India COVID-19 Appeal

The Charismatic prayer group from the Good Shepherd Parish Mulgrave, and some of their friends from the neighbouring parishes organized a special prayer service and Holy Mass for India on the Feast Day of Our Lady of Christians. They took up a special collection to provide help and support to the poor in our Oblate missions in India. We are grateful and thankful to everyone who participated and donated \$12,000. Particularly a sincere thanks to Fr Christian Fini's parents who initiated and made this day a very meaningful and successful one.



As India's deadly Covid-19 second wave continues to devastate the country, many in our parishes and ministries have been asking how they can help.

If you would like to offer support to India, you can donate through MAMI. 100% of the funds donated will go directly to the Oblate projects in India to assist in responding to the Covid-19 Crisis.

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## Blast from the Past...

# Superior General's Visit to Australia 1961

On 5 January 1961, the Oblate Superior General Fr. Leo Deschatelets arrived in Sydney for a ten day tour of the Australian Province. It was the first visit to Australia by a Superior General since 1913 when Fr. Augustin Dontenwill visited the Oblates in Western Australia.

Here is Fr. Leo Deschatelets getting ready to travel by boat from Sorrento to Queenscliff in order to visit St Joseph's Junioriate at Geelong. Standing in the boat next to him is Fr. Ned Ryan (Provincial, Australian Province) This photo was taken on the 13th January 1961.



If you wish to make a donation to MAMI apart from the Annual August appeal, your gift is always happily received. To assist our administration and avoid confusion you might like to use this donation slip.

Please complete the donation form on the right and mail to us. Or donate online by following the below steps.

Please note that if you tick to receive a tax deductible receipt, your gift can only be used for community development projects and not religious work of the missions.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER     FOR TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS     CAN BE MADE TO:     Oblate Missions Developing     Countries Fund (OMDC)     NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK     BSB NO.: 083 347     ACCOUNT NO.: 45500 7380
ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER     FOR THE RELIGIOUS WORK OF     THE MISSION CAN BE MADE TO:     Oblates of Mary Immaculate     (MAMI)     NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK     BSB NO.: 083 347     ACCOUNT NO.: 45489 0669
Please send an email to: mami@oblates.com.au which includes your name,

postal address, EFT transfer details and Intention.

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Comments/intention:

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#### FROM THE MISSIONS

# INDONESIA

We have begun our Project building bridges in a remote area of Kampung Laut implemented by villagers and Y.S.B.S. staff.

Here is the photo story of the project site monitoring visit, to help you understand the life situation of many families in extreme poverty and very difficult situations living in squalor every day, every week, every month and for many years, so that we be very grateful for what we have – and yes – still complain – and that we share and become a friend of the poor and appreciate their sacrifices even though they have so little – to make the project a success. This is one of the 9 Projects to be implemented over the next 6 months in this general area. Hope all are keeping well.

God Bless for now,

#### Fr Charlie Burrows OMI







Tree trunk etc which allowed backhoe access to project site bridge unsafe to cross – Degraded

## **JAFFNA**

It is a house for retired Oblates with eight retired Oblates in the House. For urgent transportation for medical purposes the vehicle that was in the house was used very frequently but its maintenance was not looked into. It was at a point of total destruction. Your financial assistance helped us to repair the heavy damaged vehicle and it is now very useful for the retired Oblates.



## INDIA

India's deadly Covid-19 second wave has devastated big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Pune, Chennai and Bengaluru. Hospitals and crematoriums have run out of space, and funerals are taking place in car parks. But the pandemic has also firmly gripped many smaller cities, towns, and villages, where the devastation is largely under-reported.

People spend many hours taking their kith and kin from one hospital to another in autos, and bikes, as the people cannot get an ambulance or any other vehicles. Once they reach the hospitals, the hospital administration washes its hands, saying there are no beds available, ventilators are running short, pharmacies are empty, and even if they have medicines, they are unaffordable by a normal or even a middle-class family. Thus, the people leave ultimately everything to fate and come home leaving the patients in the corridors and sometimes spaces wherever they may be available in the hospital.

The hospitals, when they do not find a place for patients with the virus, send you back home to care for yourselves with prescribed medicines we need to buy ourselves. And, when people go to buy medicine in pharmacies, either it is very costly (which even a middle-class family cannot afford) or not available at all.

All the more, the government has made the 'Remdesivir Injection', to be sold only by the government in Government hospitals. Relatives need to stand in line for hours, and sometimes for days, without food and drink, and some lose their lives from dehydration, etc. This has become common if you watch the news on India, and while it could be the same elsewhere on the globe, to see it is really devastating.

The Oblates were not exempt from the infection of this deadly virus. Several Oblates in India are infected with this virus,



a few have recovered from it with great difficulties, and some have been treated in home quarantine with medicines prescribed by hospitals. A few others have not been able to get beds. Several Oblate students and brothers are being treated with medications, with 'Ayurveda' remedies in the communities themselves, as neither beds nor resources are available in reserve for us in this sudden devastating increase of this deadly virus in the second wave.

In the first wave, Oblates concentrated primarily outside of our communities to help the people affected, but now, in the second wave, we need to concentrate both within our communities who need help and outside for the people who are really struggling for their livelihood and survival, physically, mentally and medically. We too, as the people do here leave it to God Almighty to take care of the Oblates and people in his abundant mercy and compassion.

Fr Varam Anthonyswamy OMI, St. Eugene Province, India





With the help of the Australian Province and MAMI



The Vehicle of Amala Utpavam

#### PIM

#### Team spirit at work

Since the very beginning of our Oblate presence in mainland China, there has been the idea that a missionary spirit had to be carried on not by lone rangers, but rather through a community endeavour.

The Oblate community itself diverse in its composition, was enriched by lay people (PIM) who would be partners in the presence and activities.



It has been thanks to the MAMI constant support that many people (young and adults) have come and stayed with us in Beijing since the beginning, a period of a few months most of the time, up to a couple of years in certain cases. According to the specific activities we have been involved in, we have welcomed nurses, students, teachers, professors...

Things keep changing and so our partners; most have come from Australia connected with our parishes or colleges, then we did have some from Europe and nowadays with visa restrictions we do have local volunteers (either foreign nationals or Chinese themselves).



The initiative of having a more collaborative approach (not only strictly Oblates) with lay people, has evolved through the years by having also volunteers from other religious groups, or even people not sharing our own faith but willing to support the several projects we have been involved in ( cultural activities connected with our De Mazenod Company; the education of migrant children and families through our "5loaves@2fish" after school center; the animation of the OLC (Our Lady of China) community.

We are grateful to all of you for your support through the years and accompanying us in trying to respond to the new needs and challenges with a sense of family that goes well beyond the individual.

No more lone rangers but communities at large, trying to witness the passion and zeal of our missionary charism within the Church.

#### Fr Giovanni Zevola OMI



### **DE MAZENOD** FAMILY

As our States reopened to varying levels of normalcy, the first half of 2021 for the De Mazenod Family (DMF) team included producing an online Lenten Prayer program leading up to Easter, and an online May Prayer program to mark Oblate Week. Prayer resources were developed as well for various ministries meeting physically. Drawing us physically together for the first time after months online, was a Brother Josh-initiated Oblate Charism Pilgrimage walk, from Rosebud to Sorrento, highlighting various interesting and local Oblate landmarks. A healthy dose of faith, fitness, companionship and history that was enjoyed by all! Some new exciting courses, a new DMF website with ongoing online interactions, and a pilot project are also on the horizon, to be unveiled imminently.



A key upcoming event for your calendar is the National Gathering August 7, a chance to connect with each other and be updated. We are also looking to begin a DMF committee to be involved with ongoing projects, and we are looking for possible members. For all details on these and other updates of DMF activities and resources, sign up to our email list for the fortnightly newsletter 'De Mazenod Family Chat (www.omi.com.au).'





#### Hello everyone,

I am Fr. Joe Antony, an Oblate priest.While I come from India, I am now a permanent member of the Australian Oblate Province. In my call to serve, I work as a Chaplain to Rosies Youth Mission in Queensland. Today, around 20,000 Queenslanders are homeless and nearly half of them are women; over 40% are aged 25 or under, more than 3,500 are children, 12 years or under.Rosies Youth Mission is founded on faith and its crucial goal is to extend Jesus' friendly face, unconditional acceptance and connection of the heart to all without discrimination. I feel honoured and privileged to be part of over 1,200 Rosies volunteers who are God's blessing to homeless people who are at risk or simply lonely.I am indeed amazed to witness what a simple cuppa, bite to eat and a chat can offer.St. Eugene says, "Come then and learn what you are in the eyes of God".While personally experiencing this through my ministry, I feel graced in the shelter of God during my drive to all Rosies branches. I do approximately 20 outreaches a month on the street and I feel that connects me to real people, real stories and real life. Having dedicated ourselves to Rosies mission, we bring Christ's love and sacrifice; we strive to make our community one of service and hospitality, a blessing for all our members.

Fr Joe Antony, OMI

## WANTED YOUR STORIES!

There are many charities and good causes that solicit your support. Yet for some reason you have chosen to offer the Oblates your prayers, friendship and assistance.

We are curious:

- Why did you choose us?
- How did you hear about the Oblate missionary work?
- How have the Oblates supported, inspired and encouraged you?
- What are some of your best memories of Oblates and their missionary work?

Send your stories (and photos) to: mami@oblates.com.au or by replied paid envelopes.

# **Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate**

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