



Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

From the Director

I had the wonderful privilege of spending three weeks in the Parish of Eagle Vale, near Campbelltown in New South Wales, in early May. This has been a Parish in the care of the Oblates since its foundation and most recently was looked after by Fr Slawek Plonka. As you will notice in our recent address list, he has now been appointed to St Patrick's Basilica in Fremantle, Western Australia. While at Eagle Vale he was able to implement the principles of the Divine Renovation Ministry. This has resulted in an amazingly vibrant community that works in partnership with the Oblate priests. In many ways, the idea of "Oblate Family" has been realised in a very practical way. While filling in for the new Parish Priest, Fr Leo Mifsud, who was with a group of parishioners on a Marian Pilgrimage, I partnered with Fr Vasanthan, who also recently arrived at the Parish after cutting his teeth with Fr John McGinty in our Parish in Sorrento, Victoria.

The month of May is when we celebrate our Oblate heritage with the 21st of May being of special importance as it is the anniversary of the passing of our Founder, St Eugene de Mazenod. The children of the Mary Immaculate Primary School celebrated the feast day with a prayer liturgy during which five children of different ages portrayed events in the life of our Saint. I enjoyed this because it made Eugene very accessible and real. Pope Paul VI had described

Eugene de Mazenod as a saint for all people, a very human saint, and this was obvious in the liturgy.

It was very fitting then that I was able to do a MAMI appeal at all the Masses that weekend. I managed to tie in the Feast of the Ascension with the Feast of St Eugene based on the idea that with Jesus going to the Father the disciples had to continue the mission that had been entrusted to them by using their gifts and talents. Likewise, Eugene entrusted us to continue his mission.

The work of MAMI not only unites us as a family working in partnership, but it also gives us a unique identity and way of doing things. Making people "Humans, Christians and Saints", as we have been challenged to do by our Founder, allows us to journey with people who we effectively make a part of our family. I would like to thank the members of our family in Eagle Vale for their welcome, work and especially their generous response to the appeal. I hope that you will all continue to live the Oblate life.

In this newsletter, we celebrate a very special milestone in the lives of Fr Kevin Davine, Fr Dominic Fung King-Ho and Br Jesington Logu. Please remember them in your prayers as you thank God for the gift of their vocations. We give thanks too for the life of Fr Brian Harris who passed away early this year. We will also see the results of our generosity in the finished projects in Indonesia, Southern Africa, Bangladesh, and Kinshasa.

I hope that as we head into the colder parts of winter you may use the extra time indoors to pray for our family and especially the work we do together. I pray that the power of the Holy Spirit, recently renewed in the Church at Pentecost will give you the courage to go on and open your hearts to the possibilities that the gifts that have been entrusted to you may achieve.

Fr Eric Alleaume OMI
Director



WE FAREWELL

Fr Brian Edward Harris OMI



Brian Harris was born in Ipswich on the 11th of April 1934, into a Catholic but non-practicing family. He encountered the church in his late teens. He attended Brisbane State High School, Ipswich Boys Grammar, and Kelvin Grove Teachers Training College. He worked as a primary school teacher for a couple of years, before working in the public service as an industrial inspector. He tried to join the Oblates while in his early 20s – he went to Eagle Junction and spoke to Tom McDermott, who discerned he was not ready yet to pursue a vocation, and suggested marriage instead.

Brian married Kathleen Mahoney in 1959 and had 6 children, 3 sons and 3 daughters. Today five live in SE Queensland and one in Thailand. He worked for the Department of Industrial Development in various locations — Longreach, Mackay and 20 years in Rockhampton, where he became Regional Officer. After the death of his wife in 1981 he felt the call of his vocation and after waiting till his youngest turned 18, he joined the Oblates at Mulgrave in 1989. He was ordained on 17th December 1993 at Deception Bay, Brisbane. His children were always supportive of his vocation.

He served firstly as Assistant Priest, Mary Immaculate Eagle Vale for 4 and a half years, followed by 6 months assisting at St Paul's, Massey New Zealand. This was followed by two short-term stints, at St Patrick's Basilica, Fremantle as Hospital Chaplain then 18 months at St David's, Tea Tree Gully before being Novice Master, St Mary's Seminary Mulgrave, from October 2000 Oct to 2003.

The next 4 years were spent assisting at St Eugene de Mazenod, Burpengary then 4 years at Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sefton before returning in 2012 to assist at St Eugene de Mazenod, Burpengary where he remained until 2020. In that year he underwent cancer treatment and in 2021 retired while he continued living in Burpengary. Then in September 2022 he moved to St Vincent's Aged Care, Carseldine.

Fr Brian was a gentle, prayerful, very pastoral priest with a love of serving the sick. He was quietly determined, very respectful of people, and loved Our Lady and the Eucharist.

His great ability to care attracted people, as did his experience as a married man, parent, and grandparent. He was able to build bonds with people of all ages. Fr Brian passed away on 23rd February 2023 and was buried at Nudgee Catholic Cemetery on 7th March 2023.

Jenny McPherson



WE CELEBRATE

Fr Kevin Davine OMI

The Oblates of the Australian Province and China Delegation congratulate Fr Kevin Davine OMI on celebrating in May his 70th anniversary since his first oblation profession as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate.

We thank Fr Kevin for his ministry in our Australian Province. Fr Kevin is the only Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate who has been the Rector of our three Oblate Colleges in Brisbane, Perth, and Melbourne. Fr Kevin has also been the parish priest in our Oblate Parishes in Sorrento and in Springvale North. Currently, Fr Kevin is Chaplain at Mazenod College, Victoria and celebrates the 9.00 am Mass each Sunday at Good Shepherd Parish, Wheelers Hill.

Fr Luis Alonso OMI, the Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, sent a card of congratulations to Fr Kevin, in which he wrote, "May this wonderful jubilee be a time of joy and thanksgiving to God who has guided your life with provident love."

We pray that God, Mary our Mother and St Eugene de Mazenod will continue to pour their blessings on the life and ministry of Fr Kevin.

Fr Harry Dyer OMI



AROUND THE MISSIONS



SOUTHERN AFRICA

Warm greetings to you from the Oblates in South Africa.

We would like to thank you and the Oblates in Australia for investing in the future self-sustainability of Oblate Units in developing regions.

We are very grateful for the funding that was made available to our Province in 2022 for the developments at St Joseph's farm.

We have managed to surpass our target of 200 head of cattle for beef production.

However, we have made a strategic decision to scale up the sheep livestock of the farm instead of the cattle which had been originally planned. This was done out of research into the most optimum utility of scarce resources and competitor analysis. We have begun the scaling of the sheep livestock and are in the process of constructing a warehouse for a capacity of 2000 sheep.

We are confident that this move will push the farm to achieve financial break-even by the end of the year, as articulated in the report.

Fr Charles Rensburg OMI

Fr. Dominic Fung King-Ho

Father Dominic Fung King-Ho of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate was ordained a priest by Bishop Stephen Chow Sau Yan, SJ, on December 3 at the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception, Caine Road, Hong Kong. He is the first Oblate priest to have been born and raised in Hong Kong since the congregation came to Hong Kong in 1966.

Father Fung, who is 35 years old, was an altar server when he was young. He started to pursue his vocation in secondary school and attended several vocation camps. He later joined the Oblate youth group in 2006. He also participated in small vocation groups in the diocese to strengthen his prayer life and discern his vocation.

He worked at the Oblate Primary School for six years after graduating from secondary school and was attracted by the spirit of the congregation. His formation as a novice and subsequent training in philosophy and theology took place in the Philippines after joining the Oblates in 2014. He made his first vows in 2016 and returned to Hong Kong in 2018 after completing his training. He made his perpetual vows in September last year and was ordained a deacon in December 2021.

Apart from serving at St. Alfred's, where he was assigned, he has also been helping at the Oblate Store in To Kwa Wan, which was set up last



year to support the congregation's ministry for the poor by distributing food packets to low-income families.

Father Fung celebrated his first Mass at 10:30 am at St. Alfred's Church on December 4.

Several young people from Hong Kong have responded to their vocations in recent years and joined the Oblates. One will make his perpetual vows as an Oblate brother next year, while two more seminarians are receiving training in the Philippines.

Fr Slawek Kalisz OMI



Br Jesington Logu

After Easter, the Seminary resumed its regular rhythm of prayer, study and community life. This rhythm was enhanced by the final vows of Br Jesington which took place at St John Vianney's Parish in Springvale North on May 21. It was an inspiring event as we supported and witnessed our confrere committing himself for life to the mission of Christ realised in the Oblate Congregation. On July 2, 2023 Br Jesington will be ordained deacon by Bishop Mark Edwards in the same Springvale church before returning to his home Province of Jaffna in Sri Lanka.



The day after the Final Vows the Seminary hosted the Renewal of Vows of Br Thai, Br Hieu and Br Rupesh. It happened during the Vespers in honour of

St Eugene de Mazenod and was followed by a delicious dinner. We were thrilled to welcome most of the Victorian Oblates to our home and to share with them this special occasion.

Fr Daniel Szwec OMI



KINSHASA

The project aimed to provide the Presbytery of St Hubert Parish with a reliable energy system to improve the living conditions and apostolic work of the missionary team of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who are assigned there.

For a brief reminder, St Hubert is a parish of the Archdiocese of Kinshasa. It is in the eastern suburbs of the city of Kinshasa, in the Commune of N'Sele, about fifteen kilometres from the International Airport of N'djili.

The area is landlocked and access to basic social services (primary health care, schooling, housing, electricity, drinking water, etc.) remains very limited.

The survival of the population is supported by informal activities, in particular small-scale street trading, and livestock breeding and domestic agriculture. The presence of the Oblate



missionaries, since November 8, 2020, remains a real reason for Hope, Joy and Comfort for the proclamation of the Gospel and the development of the social life of this people of God.

And at this beginning time, the whole parish and local community are very conscious and aware of the different challenges that need to be faced in the various fields of evangelization and pastoral care, justice, peace and integrity of nature, education of young people and children, health, basic infrastructures, development in general.

In the same context, we can also note that the supply of electricity in this area remains very poor and unstable. This situation seriously affects the social life, the work and the apostolate of the Oblates assigned to the parish. The choice for the solar energy system

was thus aimed at finding a lasting solution to this problem and to offer, thanks to the electricity produced, good working conditions to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate serving the said parish.

Thus, thanks to your financial support, we were able to acquire and install solar modules which these days provide the St. Hubert's Presbytery with sufficient, reliable, and regular lighting for the evening and/or night activities of the resident missionary team.

Fr Guillaume Puludisu Katanga OMI



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:
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ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FOR **THE RELIGIOUS WORK OF THE MISSION** CAN BE MADE TO:
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NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK
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 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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INDONESIA

Fr Charlie Burrows has been working in partnership with Rotary, in fact, this is the fourth project they have worked on. This project was a land reclamation, dam and road project. He recently had a visit from the Auditor of Rotary who is an expert in Agriculture from Thailand and came with his wife for a three-day visit.



THE PACE PROJECT

— Helping Girls from Papua to become field officers of the Dept. of Agriculture —

The team from SMA Yos Sudarso class X ATPH won 1st place in Women’s Volleyball at SMK Yos Sudarso. Together with their friends at school, these girls formed a VOLLEYBALL TEAM to be able to take part in various volleyball competition events in the Sidareja District environment. The talents of the girls are starting to show. Their self-confidence began to grow along with the achievements they scored. Thank you to all who care about them.



Making packaged rice to share with Pedicab Driver/Cook and distribute to the Pedicab Drivers working around the dormitory.

From this, these daughters learn how to empathize with others even though our conditions are also sober. Whatever our condition, we are still obliged to remember and share with others regardless of the amount. This is to instil how we can truly present the Kingdom of God in the world regardless of ethnicity, race and religion.

Recollection for the PACE Program with the theme: “Building True Brotherhood in God and the Universe” with PBHK Sidareja Sisters and dormitory supervisors, Mrs Wiwin and Mrs. Trees.



In this Recollection, Papuan women are invited to collectively reflect on what they have received from the natural world around them and to be grateful for all of God’s creation so that a spirit is formed to take good care of God’s nature.

Fr Charlie Burrows OMI



BANGLADESH

We had our first Mass at St. Paul’s Parish, Parish Centre. A good number of Boarding children received the first communion. Almost 120 boys and girls live in boarding, taken care of by Salesian Sisters. After lunch, we went to Kharipahar. Like Bortoli, many years ago, all the families, belonging to Santal Community, became Catholics. They had a tin-roof chapel and walls made by clay block. A few years ago, due to a flash flood, clay blocks were washed away, leaving behind only pillars and tin roof. Over the years, they prayed and dreamed to have the walls of that chapel with bricks. With some donations from my friends and sacrifices of villagers, brick walls were put up. Their long-dreamed chapel was blessed, and Mass was offered.

Still plastering and decoration to be attended to. Currently, no fund is at hand, Villagers decided to raise funds, collecting 10kg rice from each family. A wonderful way of witnessing synodal Church!

Fr. Christian Fini, OMI, Provincial of Australian Province, Frs. Ranjit Costa, Subash Costa, Rupok Rozario, Plabon Rozario, Sr. Benuka, and I visited Lokhonpur Village.

On the occasion of 50 years of Missionary presence in Bangladesh, and endorsed by AORC (Asia Oceania Regional Conference), that indigenous ministry be strengthen in Bangladesh, after one year of discernment, Bangladesh Delegation is going to undertake Lokhonpur in perpetuity, a new mission. At present, there are 15 scattered villages, mostly belonging to Uroan Indigenous community. Santal Community also exists. Lokhonpur is virgin land for robust evangelization.

Fr. Fini, OMI, currently is serving as AORC president. He landed in Bangladesh on May 22, 2023 for an animation program and to visit our missions. From the moment of his arrival, he fully engaged in various activities. Despite heavy showers, we visited Lokhonpur. Villagers welcomed us all with enthusiasm. They expressed their gratefulness to Fr. Fini for his visit and to us for undertaking Lokhonpur. Having had Fr. Fini and us, in their midst, “they promised us their full support. They dream that their children will receive a good education and their faith formation will be well-taken care by the Oblates.”

Fr Ajit Victor Costa OMI

ST MARY'S SEMINARY

In April we said Bon voyage to our Rector Fr Andrew Chen OMI as he embarked on his well-deserved sabbatical. Ever since, St Mary's Seminary has been living up to the saying: When the cat's away the mice will play. And we have played a lot. Firstly, and for the first time, the Seminary in Camberwell is full after the two latest arrivals: Br Danistan and Br Rupesh.

I am Br Jesuthasan Jero Danistan, and I come from the Oblate Province of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. I began oblate formation in 2014 and I made my first profession in 2019. I completed my philosophical studies at the national seminary of Our Lady of Lanka and currently, I am doing my theological studies at CTC in Melbourne, Australia.



Br Rupesh Nand hails from an Indian province. I am pursuing my theological studies at CTC. I feel excited to be part of St Mary's scholasticate. I have been with the Oblates for the past 9 years. I have been cherishing the oblate religious life since I joined. It gives me lots of joy and happiness to be an Oblate.



The formation community travelled to Gippsland for Holy Week and Easter. We had a faith-filled experience of living and celebrating the summit of the liturgical year in the Parish of Moe/Newborough. It was also a great community-building experience living in the vacant Newborough presbytery and ministering together with Fr Vin and Fr Daniel. We managed to make the Oblate presence felt in the Diocese of Sale as we monopolised altar serving at the Chrism Mass at St Mary's Cathedral in Sale. All eight brothers did such a fantastic job assisting at Mass that it made the Bishop wish he could reintroduce the ring of steel around Melbourne to keep the brothers in the Diocese.



In May our Brothers took part in the Brotherhood Cup. It is an annual soccer tournament between different teams: Yarra Theological Union, Corpus Christi Seminary, Missionaries of God's Love and Vietnamese Youth Club, and each team is composed of religious brothers, diocesan seminarians, youth organisations, etc. It is not just merely a sporting event; far beyond the game, it fortifies and expresses our fraternity with each other. Three of our Oblate Scholastics are among the key players in YTU's team: Br. Luan, Br. Emmanuel and Br. Benjamin (who won the top goal scorer) as YTU's team lifted the Cup as champions of this year's tournament. Indeed, sport is therapeutic too, we encourage everyone to keep fit always.

We are already looking forward to Fr Andrew's return hoping that our life will be less 'playful' then.

Fr Daniel Szewc OMI, Br Logu, Br Luan Ha, Br Danistan, Br Nand

