THE HOPE MONUMENT
Lourdes Grotto and Tepeyac de San Antonio, TX
Dedicated in 2005 to inspire hope and respect for all human life
Artist: Beverly Paddleford
With the process of voting for the next leadership team of the U.S. Province already well underway, I can’t help but begin to reflect on the past 12 years in leadership.

First and foremost, I am happy and even relieved to pass the torch to the new Provincial and Council. I wish them well! Our Province is blessed with several energetic, competent Oblates willing to serve in leadership. This is a great blessing in today’s Church and in our Province.

I am grateful for the past 12 years, most especially for the privilege and opportunity to visit Oblates in their ministries, to meet many of the good and generous people they collaborate with, and meet with those who share the Oblate charism, our Mazenodian Family. It has been an honor to speak with retired Oblates and listen to their stories, to learn from them about our Congregation and our Church that, years ago, was rapidly expanding in this Western part of the world, particularly in the United States and Canada. I also learned from them the art of adaptability and flexibility as they faced a far different future in their later years of ministry and reduced active ministry.

I feel privileged to have attended two General Chapters, each very different from the other but both providing a blessed opportunity and encounter with Oblates ministering in difficult and often dangerous parts of the world: Ukraine, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Cuba, Haiti, just to name a few.

My travels within our province gave me the opportunity to witness first-hand the generosity and flexibility of Oblates in stressful, taxing ministries, often going above and beyond the obedience they had been given: handing out sandwiches to the poor outside their doors in the evening, celebrating as many as seven Masses some weekends, hearing Confessions five hours straight on a Saturday afternoon, and two more hours that evening, traveling six hours to anoint a woman who was dying, responding to a hospital call to visit and pray with a patient in the middle of the night.

Countless examples like these I never heard about from the Oblates themselves but from those to whom these Oblates were ministering; stories of how blessed and privileged they felt to have Oblates ministering to them.

As I look back on these 12 years, many Oblates and lay staff come to mind to graciously thank for their dedication, advice, generosity and friendship. Without them, the ministry of leadership would have been much more strenuous, difficult, challenging. I won’t even attempt to thank by name the many lay people who collaborated with us, except a few with whom I worked very closely.

Thank you to Vicar Provincials Jim Brobst and Art Flores and to Treasurer Jim Chambers and to all the Oblates who served on the four Provincial Councils. As I look back, it seems now like, about one or the other, important, pressing, issue, I met with one or the other of them almost daily!

Thank you to Rufus Whitley with whom I sometimes did meet or phone for extended periods of time! His sound, thoughtful, expert advice saved me many hours of worry and concern.

Thank you to our Oblate Superiors and Directors, many of whom have another full-time ministry but somehow find the time and energy to serve their brothers faithfully and generously.

Thanks to Bryan Silva whose good advice, patient listening and thoughtful insights were very helpful.

Thank you to Charles Hurkes and Jim Allen for their creative contributions with Oblate Communications, especially OMI/USA.
There are many Oblates whom I called, texted, or emailed, “Can you take care of this for me?” or “Are you willing to attend this meeting on my behalf?” or “Would you fill out this survey for me?” And a thousand other requests as well. Thank you for your willingness to say “Yes!”.

To all province Oblates, I am thankful for your generosity, kindness, hospitality, and your good example. Thank you for your generous response to God’s call!

Although I am limiting my thanks primarily to Oblates, I must mention a few members of our staff of very competent and helpful lay people in Washington DC, those with whom I worked more closely, although each of them deserve special thanks for their energy, time and many kindnesses.

Particularly I thank Sandee Richards, Janice Cooke, and Tony Jennings for always trying to make me look good, insofar as that was possible! Also, thanks to the Finance Department, Maintenance, all the folks in Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation. Your dedication, energy, and good work are much appreciated!

My thanks also to Rocky Grimard who drove me to the airport and always made those trips pleasant and enjoyable. Thanks for his ministry as Associate Treasurer and his patience in dealing with me!

I look forward to sabbatical time. Although I have yet to plan that more specifically, part of my time will be to make a couple retreats, catch up upon some reading, visit family and friends. I had hoped to learn Spanish but, at my age, that might be too steep of a challenge. The suggestion was made to me to keep some distance from the province for a time. I’m not planning to be out of the U.S. for the most part, though I am hoping to visit Aix-en-Provence for a few weeks in the Spring and take some other times for retreat, quiet time and reflection.

For the past several months, my Spiritual Companion’s mantra has been: “You need to stay in the saddle until the new Provincial and Council are installed!” While that is proving to be challenging and difficult at times, I feel grateful and blessed that we have energetic, faith-filled Oblates in our province to assume these challenging leadership ministries. You have the promise of my prayers and assistance, as needed.

God bless each of you, especially those whose advice and assistance greatly benefitted me these past 12 years. I look forward to my next ministry and my continuing collaboration with you in the years ahead!

**After Rome, Jerusalem!**

By Fr. Warren Brown, OMI

Some might ask what a sabbatical is - A sabbatical is defined as an extended period away from one’s normal assignment: to attend a formal program that will enable one to become more effective in ministry, to experience prayer at a place established for the development of the spiritual life. After 15 years at the Oblate School of Theology and 12 years on the General Council in Rome, I sincerely looked forward to having time apart to reflect on these past years and grow in my relationship with Jesus. It was a good point to do this after 40 years of priesthood and almost 45 years of religious life.

Last year, on finishing my appointment as part of the Central Gov’t of the Oblates as the General Councillor for Canada-United States, I was encouraged and given a chance to take the time. I joined some of my General Council colleagues, namely Frs. Louis Lougen, Peter Stoll, and...
and Guillaume Muthunda, for the experience of 3 months in Jerusalem.

The program, run by the White Fathers (or the Missionaries of Africa), was from March to May, so we could witness the period from winter to spring, seeing the desert slightly green and then the blooming of all the wildflowers. Being in the Holy Land during the Lenten and Easter periods in the Liturgy was a very rich experience because Jerusalem and Galilee are the central places of the salvation mystery of Jesus Christ's ministry, His death, and resurrection.

The program had 3 White Fathers as the team leaders and 18 participants, of which 6 were religious sisters. The sisters' presence helped enhance the Liturgy and the general atmosphere. Most participants were from African countries, which was an important part of the experience in better understanding the African Church context. As a group, we worked well together, supporting one another. The program was in English, even though, in some cases, it took a while to understand all the variations of spoken English fully. Some, understandably, had difficulty understanding my Texan English!

My expectation for this program was to follow Jesus's steps and life and deepen my relationship with Him. During the three months, I surpassed these expectations by visiting many places in Israel, visiting many Old and New Testament sites. One of the White Fathers was particularly knowledgeable about the history and culture of the Bible and served as an excellent guide. The program had 3 phases: introduction, visiting the sites, and finally, the 30-day retreat based on the Ignatian exercises.

We stayed in the Muslim section of the old city of Jerusalem, namely, at St Anne's Basilica and the pools of Bethesda. This place was so central as it was at the Lion's Gate and the beginning of the via Dolorosa, the traditional Way of the Cross leading to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. The church of St. Anne's had special meaning for me, as my home parish in Midland was St. Ann's. Also, it had special meaning for us as Oblates, as the Crusades-era Basilica was built on a traditional site for the birth of Mary. The Pools of Bethesda are one of the more authentic sites from the New Testament of Jesus' ministry, where the healing of a paralytic by Jesus took place, mentioned in the 5th Chapter of John. One could feel that the Lord was alive and present at that place even today.

It was truly a privilege and a great blessing to experience such an extended time in the Holy Land. The program had a well-balanced schedule with free time as well. We received many experiences and materials that still need to be digested and implemented in our lives. We were challenged and stretched and finally sent out as messengers of Peace for Jerusalem.
Since the first days the Christian era, the Church has relied on the prayers, sacrifices and monetary gifts of Her members, to further the work of preaching the Good News to the world and help those in need. St. Paul refers frequently to the gifts of the early Churches to support the needs of the poorer new Christian communities to whom he was preaching.

The needs of the Gospel and those who preach it continue to be great. The Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate in the United States continues to help the mission of the Oblates, not only in the United States but throughout the world.

Over the past few years, there has been an effort to restructure the fund-raising operation of MAMI-USA to stay in tune with the financial realities of the times, the demographics of the Church in North America and the modern means of communication.

A significant moment in this reorganization took place on April 25, 2023, when the Director of MAMI-USA, Fr. David Uribe, OMI, blessed the new quarters of a significant sector of the fund-raising ministry. The Guild Center at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows originally opened in 1984 to house a multi-media presentation on the history of salvation. Now it houses several departments of the fund-raising operation. Other offices at the Shrine have also been turned over to fund-raising.

The fund-raising offices located in Belleville work together with those located in San Antonio, TX, the MAMI-USA headquarters (formerly called “Oblate Missions”). Their goal is threefold: 1.) to share information about the many ministries of the Missionary Oblates here in the United States and 70 countries around the world; 2.) to elicit spiritual and financial support so that the Oblates can continue to live their motto: “To preach the Gospel to the poor;” and 3.) to promote the mutual support of Missionary Oblates and friends of MAMI-USA by prayer and good works. JFA
Welcome to the U.S. Province

(Ed. note: The U.S. Province has received some new members in recent years. Here’s a bit of information about some of them. We’ll introduce others in subsequent issues.)

Brother George Litiya, OMI

It’s been a quiet year on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi. Immaculate Heart of Mary Novitiate had no novices. And because the Novice Director, Fr. Frank Kuczera, OMI, had several travel engagements, his Associate Director, Bro. George Litiya, OMI, had the beautiful place mostly to himself…along with the handful of chickens who provide the community with their eggs!

Having arrived from the USA from Zambia in 2020, Bro. George brought with him numerous pastoral experiences and practical skills.

“The Oblates have been part of my life from the very beginning,” said Bro. George, who was born in 1983. “I was baptized by Bro. John Keplinger, OMI (d. 1984) who was one of those first Oblates to come to Zambia from Texas.” He grew up in the Oblates’ Sancta Maria Parish in Lukulu in the Western Province of Zambia. The parish was one of the first missions established by the Oblates in Zambia and is still a vital part of their ministry today.

In high school Bro. George became active in youth ministries coordinated by the Oblates. He began thinking about the possibility of religious life after getting to know the Oblate scholastic brothers who came to the area to take part in parish and youth ministries. Encouraged to discern an Oblate vocation by the late Fr. Ron Carignan (d. 2019), he entered the Zambian Oblates’ two-year prenovitiate program and professed his first vows at the Oblate novitiate in Namibia in 2008.

His first assignment after studies in South Africa was as part of the pastoral team at St. Michael Parish in Kalabo. The parish has numerous mission centers connected to it out in remote villages. Brother George would spend weeks at a time visiting these villages to bring them the Word of God. A trained auto mechanic, in 2015 he helped operate a garage run by the Oblates in Lusaka, fixing vehicles for the Oblates and other religious communities.

In 2015, Bro. George’s knowledge about mechanics came in good use when he was assigned to help operate a garage run by the Oblates in Lusaka. The garage fixes vehicles for the Oblates and other religious congregation. With many roads in Zambia nearly impassable, having a garage with good mechanics is vital for the Oblates to reach out to the most isolated.

In 2020, he got the shock of his life when he received an obedience halfway around the world, as a member of the formation team at the Oblate Novitiate the USA.

As part of the novitiate team Bro. George teaches a class in the charism of St. Eugene De Mazenod, founder of the Missionary Oblates.

Fr. Vincent Adaikalasamy, OMI

The newest member of the U.S. Province comes to us from India where he was born in Tamil Nadu in 1993. Fr. Vincent Fernandez Adaikalasamy, OMI, arrived recently to begin a year or so of pastoral experience in Buffalo, NY, prior to eventually enrolling in Catholic University in D.C. to pursue further studies in Sacred Theology.

But Fr. Vincent is no stranger to many Oblates in the United States. He was the first Oblate from India to complete both his novitiate and scholasticate formation in this country. He professed his first Oblate vows in...
Godfrey in 2015 and graduated from Oblate School of Theology in 2019 with M.Div. and M.A. (Theology) degrees. He returned to his homeland for ordination to the priesthood in that same year.

After ordination, he had several assignments in the Oblate Province of India: staff formator at the pre-novitiate house; Provincial Secretary, and Provincial Archivist. He can speak Tamil, Telugu, English, and has a limited working proficiency in Spanish.

Obtaining the visa for the United States was a long, two-year process, but he finally arrived in April 2023. In the U.S., he received his obedience as associate pastor to the Oblate parishes, Our Lady of Hope, Holy Cross, and Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Buffalo, NY.

Fr. Vincent recalls his formative years both in India and U.S. as a privilege because the different exposures and approaches have paved for him the way for effective pastoral work, and familiarity with diversity of every sort, be it society or culture. He considers that his priestly ministry in India serving the Provincial Administration in different capacities has given him wider exposure to Oblate life in India and across the world. He now believes that the multiethnic cultural environment of the Oblate parishes in Buffalo will give him ample opportunities for diverse pastoral works. He is grateful to the U.S. Provincial Administration for making possible his journey to this new mission field.

Fourteen Members of the Mazenodian Family, including three Oblates, participated in a retreat/workshop, in Aix en Provence, France, from June 18-28. Led by Oblates Frank Santucci, Billy Morell and Leader of the Oblate Partnership Artie Pingolt, the focus of our days together is learning about the life of St. Eugene as we trace his steps where our Congregation was founded in 1816 and blossomed. Oblate Provincial Lou Studer also attended.

Our days together were spent in prayer, discussion, classes, resting, as we became acquainted with one another and enjoyed the hospitality of the five members of the Oblate community at Aix, with newly named Superior Oblate Paolo Archiati, former Vicar General of the Congregation.

We saw where St. Eugene was born, baptized and confirmed and where he ministered to youth and prisoners in his early years. We traveled to nearby Marseille where he served the Church as bishop. We celebrated Mass at his tomb in Marseille.

While our time together also included sampling French wines and pastries, all agreed that we learned a lot about our Oblate charism, mission and the contribution of Oblate ministry in 60 countries to the wider Church, especially among the poor. by Lou Studer, OMI.

Photos on p. 13
Usually among us Oblates of Mary Immaculate, when we say that someone is a “formator,” we mean that he is working with future Oblate priests and Brothers, helping them to discern and develop in their vocation to the Oblate charism and way of life: prenovices, novices, scholastics.

In his 65 years as an Oblate, Fr. Bill Sheehan has surely done exactly that: preaching retreats to prenovices; serving for 2 years as Assistant Novice Master and then 4 years as Novice Master; and several years as a formator of Oblate scholastics in Washington, DC, and in Chicago. And he’s given many workshops to the Intercommunity Formation Program for women and men novices in the St. Louis area.

But besides those assignments, and even during them, he has also gained a reputation as one of the foremost formators of laity, men and women religious and the clergy in the theory and practice of the ancient form of communication with God: CENTERING PRAYER.

In 1983, he began his ministry of teaching others to pray when he became a disciple of the late Fr. Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O. (d. 2018), who founded the Contemplative Outreach ministry and program. Since then, he has given Centering Prayer workshops and retreats all over the country.

In the last several years, he has participated in 11th Step Retreats bringing to this retreat experience, the practice of Centering Prayer as well as the Welcoming Prayer practice.

Helping him to prepare for his formation ministries was his master’s degree in Formative Spirituality which he received in 1973 from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA.
Arthur A. Pingolt, Jr., President of the Missionary Oblate Partnership, recently shared a “15-Year Review” of the good work of these men and women who are fired up by the charism of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Their Mission Statement declares: The Missionary Oblate Partnership is a voluntary association of men and women working together to advance the Oblate charism of serving the world’s poor. The Partnership exists as a mutual exchange of gifts and resources between Missionary Oblates and Partners to materially assist Oblate missions and ministries and to spiritually enrich both Partners and Oblates.

In 2015 the Partnership was officially designated a “ministry of the US Province of Missionary Oblates.”

Material Support provided:

- $15 million pledge to Oblate School of Theology
- $2 million to build seminary residence in Lusaka, ZAMBIA
- $5 million Vance Residence/ Borzaga Community, San Antonio
- $4+ million to renovate IHM Novitate, Godfrey, IL
- $1.5 million to establish Partnership Mission Fund
- $1 million anonymous grant to OMI-Ukraine
- Hundreds of other grants, gifts, bequests for various projects

In-kind support:

- Crisis Assistance: Haiti 2010 Earthquake
- Building/architectural advisory: Haiti, Zambia, US
- Accounting/finance review: India, Bangladesh, Zambia
- Investment Committee: US Province
- Communications Committee: US Province

Events

- Annual De Mazenod Conference, 2013-2023
- Aix Retreat Experience, OMI-France
- Regional Meetings: Seattle, San Antonio, DC, Minneapolis
- Mission Trips: Zambia, Sri Lanka, India, Cuba, Peru, Mexico, Columbia, Italy

Members: Currently 75-80; peak pre-pandemic membership was 120.

In homage to our deceased Partners: Cliff & Rosalie Bolner; Mike Pohlen; Bebe Canales; Robie Wayne; Burt McGlynn; Sr. Mary Hope Doudard, CCSJ; Len Busch; Charles Drury; Peggy Cochran; Steve Saldana. Honorary Oblates (HOMI): Tom Benson; Archbishop Harry Flynn; Rosemary Walsh; Bob Kusenberger. Oblates (OMI): Cardinal Francis George; Patrick Guidon; John Sokolski; Jim Deegan.
The United States Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate is very grateful for having had the opportunity to serve at Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Brownsville for 175 years.

On December 4, 1849, four Oblates of Mary Immaculate arrived in Brownsville, TX, on horseback to establish a local parish. Seven years later, the first cornerstone of the Cathedral was laid. In 1859, the Church of the Immaculate Conception was completed, using 250,000 handmade bricks made as tithes by parishioners. Designed by the famous Father Pedro Kerralum (right) who studied architecture in France before entering the seminary, the church is an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style. Serving as the first Oblate seminary in Texas, it housed priests fleeing revolution in Mexico. The site became a cathedral in 1874 when the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville was established.

Since that December of long ago, countless confessions, Masses, anointing of the sick, weddings, funerals, baptisms, works of mercy, preaching the Good News, and building up community have defined our efforts for these many decades. Yet precisely because the Oblates have been present for so long, we have discerned as missionaries that it is time to move on. In July, the Missionary Oblates of May Immaculate will return to the Diocese of Brownsville the pastoral care and administration of the cathedral to Bishop Flores. To ease the transition, Oblates Nicholas Harding and Edgar Garcia will continue to help as priests in residence at the Cathedral with pastoral work for a year or so. They hope to be freed up to focus on seeking the lost sheep, especially the homeless, refugees, those on the margins, the fallen away, those needing healing.

Another reason to pass on to the diocese the pastoral administration of the Cathedral is the shortage of Oblate vocations. While God is sending us good young men to join our Order, it is not in the numbers from days past. Oblates must have time to be men of prayer and not just be active. Hopefully, the seeds planted by many dedicated Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate over the years will continue to bring forth fruit and a great harvest.

We are so grateful to Bishop Flores for his kindness. St. Eugene de Mazenod, the founder of our Order, was also a Diocesan Bishop. We will always be men of the Church, supporting our bishops. However, it is time for us to reach out to God's people in other pastures. The Missionary Oblates will always hold this beautiful Cathedral close to our hearts. May St. Eugene de Mazenod always be present to its parishioners, and may our Mother Mary always intercede for her children in Brownsville, and everywhere in this diocese. (Provincial Administration)
But ministry to the homeless continues

Even though the Oblates will no longer be in charge of the Cathedral in Brownsville, Fr. Nick Harding reports that their ministry to those without a place to call “home” will continue.

Several years ago, the then rector of the Cathedral, Fr. Mike Amesse, OMI, developed an extensive service to those living on the streets of downtown Brownsville. However, mostly due to the Covid pandemic, the ministry was suspended. Since Lent of 2023, the parish has resurrected this outreach with the name “Cristo en la Calle” (Christ in the Street) referring as a double entendre to the people in the street being Christ disguised (Matthew 25: 31-45) and also that the lay people with the Oblates represent Christ’s presence.

The visits consist in offering sandwiches, fruit and water, prayer and friendship. One elderly lady recently told us, “I feel I do not exist, but when you come, it makes me feel I exist.” If we encounter refugees on the way, we orient them to our parish respite center in the gym.

However, the main focus and priority are those who live long-term on the sidewalks and in alleys with their various problems: substance abuse issues, mental illness (and not taking medications), or without any income or family. For example, one elderly lady came from California and is stuck here after her money and IDs were stolen.

The ministry begins at 8:30 pm with a prayer and then a walk-through with wagons loaded with sandwiches, bottled water and fruit prepared by rotating groups.

Above: Fr. Nick and his companions pose with their wagons of food and water prior to starting their rounds.

Below: Migrants are held behind bars in the bus station until they can get on a bus. A little boy reaches through the bars for an orange offered by a volunteer.
Once again, the United States Province joyfully remembers its members (and those now serving in other Oblate Units) who are celebrating in 2023 milestone anniversaries of their First Profession of Vows as Oblates and/or their Ordination to the Priesthood. A special jubilee Mass was celebrated at Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence in Tewksbury, MA, on June 5. Fr. Roger Hallée presided and Fr. George Roy preached the homily. Others are scheduled for October 30 at the Immaculate Conception Chapel at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX, and November 13 at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, IL.

**FIRST VOWS**

80th ANNIVERSARY
Clarence Zachman

75th ANNIVERSARY
Armand (Pete) Carignan (Philippines)

70th ANNIVERSARY
Charles Hurkes
Thomas Killeen

65th ANNIVERSARY
Donald Arel
Raymond Bourgoin
Daniel Bozek
Eugene Cañas
John Drexel
Isidore Garcia
John Hogan
David Kalert
Paul Medeiros
Paul Nourie
Michael Pfeifer
William Sheehan
Harry Winter

60th ANNIVERSARY
John Hanley
Ronald Harrer
Allen Maes
Dale Schlitt
David Ullrich

50th ANNIVERSARY
William Antone
Craig Bonham
Robert Hickl
Scott Hill
Louis Lougen (Gen. Adm.)
Few Oblates reach the milestone of 80 or 75 years of religious life or priesthood. This year, 103-year-old Fr. Clarence Zachman, OMI, (below) celebrates both! On top of that, he has the distinction of being the second oldest Oblate in the world. The oldest is Canadian Oblate Fr. Roger Gauthier, OMI, of the Notre-Dame-du-Cap Province in Canada. He’s two months older than Fr. Clarence. Fr. Clarence lives at the Dammert Geriatric Care wing of the Benedictine Living Community, located on the grounds of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, IL.

With St. Eugene in Aix, cont. from p. 7

Frs. Frank Santucci (above) and Bill Morell (below) explain the Oblate charism and the life of St. Eugene to pilgrims.
Editor's note: When in 2004, Brownsville, TX, native, Bart Zavaleta, entered the Oblate Prenovitiate in Miramar, FL, he already knew a lot about and admired the almost mythical “Cavalry of Christ,” the Oblates on horseback who had carried the Gospel to the little towns and ranches in a vast swath of South Texas. He wanted to follow their example. After several years in Oblate formation, he discerned that his was not a calling to religious life but to marriage, family and eventually as religion teacher and as deacon in the Archdiocese of Omaha, NE. With his wife, he is dad to four children; in his role at Skutt Catholic High School, he is role model to teenagers; as a deacon, he is serving one of Omaha’s largest parishes. But he has never lost his admiration for the Oblates, as he explains in this story of his trip to the Oblate mission in Tijuana over the Easter break.

10 years ago, I formed a group of young men at Skutt Catholic High School in Omaha with the intention of leading them into a deeper, more abiding relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. Drawing on much of which I had received in my Oblate formation and always inspired by St. Eugene's zeal and love for our Lord, I set out to be a spiritual formator for these young men. The formation has proven very beneficial for the majority of these young men and for our local Church- 8 of them in the last 10 years have entered seminary/religious life.

However, as fruitful as it has been, I began to sense there was still something missing and that we hadn't yet achieved our goal of forming fully apostolic men. The crucial formation in mission was certainly missing. And so, I reached out to an old friend, Fr. Jesse Esqueda, OMI, mission superior in Tijuana. He gave me the confidence I needed to approach the young men and their parents with the idea of going on mission.

I reminded them that the narrow way of committed discipleship is one of Faith and Trust in the Lord's providence and utmost care for our lives. Sometimes, however, in order to strengthen us and deepen that essential Faith and Trust in Him, He invites us to accept a challenge and call to go beyond our comfort zones. As Pope Francis proclaimed in The Joy of the Gospel: “Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel” (EG 20).

It was clear then that we had to do this- not only for the sake of deepening/strengthening our formation but even more so out of Love for Jesus Christ and His people, especially the poor. I wanted these young men, many of whom are blessed with a very comfortable life, to have an experience of meeting Christ in the poor, in the stranger, in the foreign land, in the mission of the Church.

We were welcomed by Fr. Jesse and his pastoral team with the same beautiful Oblate hospitality I remembered from my days in the seminary. We were so impressed with the type of collaborative leadership and organization the mission was equipped with, much thanks to Fr. Jesse's natural gifts, no doubt!! Encountering Christ in every place and person was certainly the focus of our mission. And let me tell you, He showed up!! Personally, it was so beautiful to meet and experience Him in the people and through the grace of my diaconal ordination which I very much see as a gift for His people. Praying with and blessing the families of the parish, especially the sick and disabled, was a heartfelt experience I will never forget. Holding the large Crucifix during the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday brought me to tears and helped me feel simultaneously close to Jesus and Eugene in an absolutely powerful way. Playing soccer with the youth of the parish reminded me of how little it actually takes to enjoy life to the
fullest!! Eating Doña Sara's amazing meals was of heavenly delight. Assisting at the Holy Mass with Fr. Paco and Fr. Jesse each was a joy-filled experience, having been in seminary with both of them! Feeling at home in my Oblate Family was a dream come true. I will never forget my experience of being a Missionary Oblate and look forward to the ways I will continue to labor in the vineyard alongside my brothers in Mary Immaculate.

Comments of two of the lads from Skutt:

**Josh Roza:** No one can outdo the generosity of God, but the Mexican people make a determined effort. They served us excellent food, drinks, and snacks every day, gave us free T-shirts and backpacks, gave us the honor of acting as the 12 apostles in Holy Thursday mass, bought us cokes, and drove us all around Tijuana (which is very difficult). When we were crossing the border into San Diego some of the parish workers drove to the border and held our bags in the crossing line; after we had crossed the border they let us use our van to drive to the Church where we slept overnight. When we thanked them they told us that it was a Mexican thing.

**Timothy Combs:** The people there were amazing. It moved me greatly to see how poor things were there. The homes were often hot, with dirt floors, often cluttered, made of old wood, tarps and tires for stairs. It was eye-opening to see the poverty there, but what was truly amazing was to see the happiness of the people. These people barely have anything; not a lot of clothes, minimal food, and so much more. But they were spiritually rich, surrounded by family, finding Jesus as their strength. Any wealthy person who thinks earthly things make one happy should take one look at the joy of the people of Tijuana and realize that material things don’t make a person happy. It is the love of Christ and love of neighbor that makes one happy, and the people of Tijuana bear a strong witness to that.
Pilgrims of Hope in Communion
Journeying in our Regional Vocations/Formation

By Jarek Pachocki OMI
OMI Lacombe Canada – Vocation Director

During the week of April 17-21, 2023, Oblates who are involved in vocation and formation ministries within the Canada-US region gathered at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, ON. It was a time of discernment and fraternity that echoed the sentiments expressed by Pope Francis to the Oblates at the General Chapter, “You are a religious family dedicated to evangelization. And you are gathered to discern together the future of your mission in the Church and in the world.”

Our main focus was on building relationships as we explored and discerned together the direction from the Chapter for vocations/formation in the region. The story of the disciples walking to Emmaus gave us a meditative background; and the Oblate Constitutions and Rules along with the Acts of the 37th General Chapter focused our reflections on the theme “Pilgrims of Hope in Communion: Journeying in Our Regional Vocations/Formation”.

Dr. Carol Kuzmochka from St. Paul’s University in Ottawa, ON facilitated our conversations and discernment. Through the whole process she encouraged us to listen to each other with open minds, hearts and wills in order to see others’ perspectives, build emotional connections, shift in identity and self, and connect to the emerging future. Even though we didn’t have expectations or a strategic agenda, the Holy Spirit was moving as the new vision and passion for vocations/formation in the region was emerging.

One day our General Councillor for Canada-US, Jim P. Brobst OMI, joined us virtually from Rome. He reminded us that mission attracts and builds vocations more than vocations determine the mission. Three elements help to make it possible: mission (poor & evangelization), community (welcoming & joyful), and vocation (directors & province culture).

The 37th OMI General Chapter calls on all members of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to recognize that as a religious community, we are incomplete without the witness of our Oblate brothers. The Oblate brothers from the region, George Litiya OMI, Harley Mapes OMI and Pat McGee OMI shared their experiences of missionary and community life with us. In our congregation we are first missionary Oblates living the charism which is equally expressed in the vocation of an Oblate priest and brother. “As priests and Brothers, we have complementary responsibilities in evangelizing.” (OMI Const. 7)

Another day we welcomed virtually our Superior General, Chicho Rois OMI, and Assistant General with the responsibility for formation, Henricus Asodo, OMI. They shared joyful insights and experiences that gave us another perspective of the reality of vocations/formation in the region, and they also challenged us, “My dream is having young Oblates who are joyful being close to the...
poor… Are we ready to welcome vocations?"

Through our conversations, discernment and shared stories a number of themes/directions have emerged as we move toward the future: interdependence and communion, a call to conversion, authentically living the Oblate charism where our community becomes a place of welcome and discernment, building communion and collaboration, and embracing a sense of belonging to the region.

“A new moment of conversion (…) Like the disciples of Emmaus, we return to our respective Units with renewed hope to announce the Gospel.” (Acts of 37th OMI General Chapter)
Editor's note: A regrettable oversight in the previous issue of this newsletter was the omission of the name of the third Oblate to be named a Cardinal: Servant of God Benjamin Thomas Cooray, OMI, Archbishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka. It’s particularly regrettable because the editor had met him and was present in Rome when Cardinal Cooray received his red hat from Pope St. Paul VI in 1965! The Cardinal died in 1988 and the official opening of the process for his beatification began in 2010. He was present for all of Vatican II and was a Cardinal Elector for both conclaves of 1978.
Office Managers keep the U.S. Oblates on track

Since the merger of five Oblate Provinces into one U.S. Province in 1999, there has been an evolution in the way the members of the province and the provincial administration have communicated with one another and dealt with some of the administrative tasks that need to be done, closer to the locations of the Oblates themselves. Currently, there are three “Support Office Managers” who perform tasks that aid the administration, the local superiors and the members in various important ways. Their job description includes such things as: keeping track of the fleet of Oblate vehicles across the United States so that registrations are updated according to the rules in different states and that titles are filed properly; helping the Oblates update their “end of life documents” such as “power of attorney for health care” and funeral plans. At the time of Jubilee Celebrations or periodic meetings, they work out the details for lodging, meals, etc. Currently, there are three such offices that cover U.S. locations where there is a concentration of Oblate ministries: San Antonio (Arizona, California, Louisiana, Texas); Tewksbury, MA (Connecticut, D.C., Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York); Belleville, IL (Alaska, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri).

Eric Villalpando
San Antonio

Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas I attended St. Anthony Catholic High School where I first met the Oblates and found my faith and love for Jesus. I attended St. Mary’s University where I received my degree in Theology and History. While attending college I grew an affinity towards serving in campus ministry and continued desire for ministry by serving in summer camps with the youth. After college I worked at Central Catholic High School for four years as both a teacher and director of Campus Ministry. I now serve in the Oblates’ Support Office and as the Vocations Assistant for Fr. Victor Patricio Silva, Vocations Director for the United States assisting him in all things Vocations. It has been a joy to support the Oblates and continue to learn and grow as both a professional and follower of Jesus!

Maggie Butler
Tewksbury

I joined the Oblate USP Support Office team in March of 2022 serving in the newly relocated Tewksbury, MA office. Originally from Orange, Connecticut, I have lived in Tewksbury since 1999 with Ray, my husband of 29 years. We have four grown children. I have over 25 years of administrative experience. During my free time, I enjoy gardening, walking the family beagle, Ted, relaxing by the water and spending time with family and friends.

Lori Kelly
Belleville

I have worked for the Missionary Oblates for 28 years and truly believe in their mission and the good works they are doing with those less fortunate than I. I was born and raised on a dairy farm in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, the youngest of 6 kids. I then joined the US Air Force for 4 years. Brian, my husband, and I had our daughter, Lexi, in 1999. We now have our own farm in Waterloo, IL, where we have a variety of animals. In 2011, my daughter was critically injured in a horse riding accident and at the young age of 12, she was put on life support and was not expected to survive. I immediately reached out to the Oblates and asked for prayers and Masses. Today, my daughter is alive and doing well and we owe many thanks to the Oblates and the God we serve!
REMEMBERING OUR RECENTLY DECEASED OBLATES

Donald Arel, OMI, died on June 23, 2023, in Portland, OR.

FROM ANOTHER OBLATE UNIT

Patrice Morel, OMI, died on June 1, 2023, in Pontmain, France.
Formerly of U.S. Province and Tahiti Mission.

DECEASED FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Peter Tran, brother-in-law of Fr. Tuan Pham, OMI, died on April 16, 2023.
Ross Roy, brother-in-law of Fr. George Roy, OMI, died on May 9, 2023.
Lucio Castillo Torres, father of Fr. Luico Castillo, OMI, died on June 24, 2023.

Oblate Constitution 43
We will keep alive the memory of our deceased and not fail to pray for them, faithfully offering the suffrages prescribed on their behalf.