



## Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

# A Surge of Gospel Energy

**After twelve months of state based preparation, the Oblate Province of Australia including members of the Delegation of China met in Melbourne on the 21st of May, 2017 for our Provincial Gathering.**

St Eugene de Mazenod's Feast Day was an appropriate day to come together. Our Gathering was supported in prayer by many friends from our Oblate ministries, adding to our shared sense of ministry and mission. A number of these prayers were written and heard as we gathered. Fr Bill Morell OMI from the United States Province provided excellent guidance and direction.

The **See, Judge, Act** structure helped to facilitate a productive use of our time. From the outset there was a positive atmosphere, with all of the Oblates in attendance ready to listen to the Holy Spirit and make positive progress forward as a Province and Delegation.

Our Opening Liturgy featured scripture, prayer and a message of support from our Superior General who implored us to listen to the Holy Spirit and draw inspiration from St Eugene as well as our wider OMI communities.

On the first day each of us had an opportunity to share our thoughts and hopes on any aspect of our lives. Whether the Oblate was 19 years old, 80 years old or an OMI Bishop, we were all given time to share. This day was a wonderful affirmation of what inspires Oblates to continue to remain faithful to their call, ministries and the people we serve. It also provided the opportunity for Oblates to share their challenges, disappointments and struggles and this honesty was precious. The general theme of the sharing was the tremendous love that Oblates feel from and for the people with whom we work most closely.

This was reflected in the afternoon, where various representatives from Parish, Rosies, College and Partners in Mission shared thoughts on the Oblate ministry and community in a complex and changing world.

Our second day saw us reflect on the *Judge* aspect of our gathering with presentations by Mgr Greg Bennet (Melbourne Vicar General) and Brisbane Archbishop Mark Coleridge about the many challenges and joys of the modern life of the Church in Australia. We were challenged to offer a "surge of Gospel energy" in our response to the many challenges. This surge took the form of refining our Mission and Vision statements of the Province into a working document for further consideration at our Oblate Retreat in October. The following is our latest working version:

### **Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Australian Province**

We are a Catholic religious community founded by St Eugene de Mazenod in France, 1816. Our mission in Australia began in Fremantle, 1894 and faithfully continues today.

### **To be Faith witnesses of *Daring, Community, Passion and Service***

#### **Vision**

Followers of Jesus Christ in the footsteps of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate are a community of missionaries under the patronage of Mary.

Guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ,

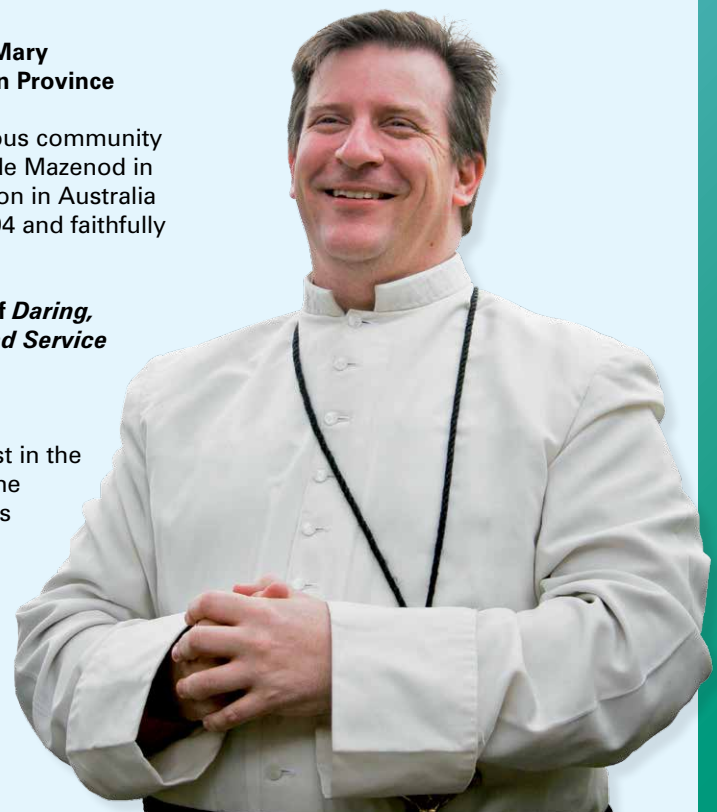
who is alive and active in the world, by living and witnessing as apostolic men of prayer and holiness.

Leaving nothing undared to establish the Kingdom of God, we work together with the people we serve, giving preference to the poor with their many faces.

#### **Mission**

Our Mission is characterised by Daring, Passion, Community and Service. In collaboration with the local Church, we are always open to new ways to reach those most in need, especially those who are poor or in any need. We commit to ongoing listening and dialogue with them.

*continued...*



# From the Director

Recently I was asked to attend an international meeting in Dublin of Oblate Fund-raisers. It was the first such meeting I have attended.

Our Australian Oblate Missionary Association mainly focuses on supporting the missionary and development work of our missionaries in Asia and Africa. It was enriching to hear of the work being done – especially by our Canadian, American, Anglo-Irish, German, Polish, Italian and Spanish Oblates Associates – in supporting the missions. Our Associates and other friends are an integral part of our Mazenod Family. Your prayers and financial support make our missionary endeavours in some 65 countries possible.

In Australia, donations for educational, social and health development are supported by our government through tax deductability. For this we are grateful. The missionaries living and working in local communities are well placed to work with the people in identifying their needs. Groups such as MAMI can assist these communities achieve the best results.

At the Dublin meeting, I became more aware of the difficulty some Oblate missionary communities have in providing resources for the necessities of life for the Oblates. There are communities who have to limit the number of students they can accept for the Priesthood and Brotherhood due to insufficient funds. In Australia responding to these needs cannot be sourced from tax deductible donations. Please keep these works in mind when making your donations.



Fr Des O'Donnell



Fr Gerry Kenny



Fr Tom Devereaux



Fr Brian Maher



Frs Pat Dwyer, Gerard Conlan and John Sherman

While in Ireland and England, it was great to catch up with several Oblates who are retired or working in their home Province.

In our retirement house in Inchicore, Dublin it was wonderful to catch up with:

- Fr Pat Dwyer, who is unfortunately not in the best of health. Please keep him in your prayers.
- Fr Gerry Kenny, who was with the original Rosies community on the Gold Coast, Queensland.
- Fr Des O'Donnell, who will be 90 this year. One would hesitate to say that he is retired as he is still giving talks and writing books.

In England, I contacted Frs. Tom Devereaux and Brian Maher. Fr Tom is working in the Oblate parish of Quex Rd, Kilburn in London. Fr Brian is in good health and responsible for running the Oblate retreat house in Crew, England. Both Tom and Brian worked for a number of years in Australia but remained members of the Anglo-Irish Province, to which they have now returned.

## Fr John Sherman OMI

# A Surge of Gospel Energy

...continued cover article



Fr Michael Twigg

## We value:

**Human Dignity** – Oblates walk with people, recognising and celebrating the God-given dignity of each, especially those who are poor or are in any need. We commit to ongoing listening and dialogue with them.

**Evangelisation** – Oblates proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all, renewing them through its influence.

**Missionary Challenges of the General Chapter** – We seek to discern the new faces of the poor; empower youth; form missionaries; be open to an interplay of cultures; embrace social media and be responsible stewards of finances.

Our final day of the Gathering saw us attempt to Act by creating a set of priorities that reflected our mission and vision. A commitment to a Province-wide promotion of vocations was the highest of the community priorities, and we ask that each of you pray for generous people to answer the call to be an Oblate. Our highest ministry priorities were to remain committed to those who are in need and to look for new needs in each of our works.

Our Gathering was blessed by the presence of our China Delegation who shared the great joys and challenges of the mission.

As a Province, we made a commitment to keep gathering and reflecting on renewed forms of mission. This was a great outcome as the mission continues to evolve asking us to renew, while always remembering our shared heritage. The Oblates have had a surge of Gospel energy and long may it continue.

## Fr Michael Twigg OMI



# Fr Conal Campbell OMI



**While in Dublin in May for an international meeting of Oblate MAMI Directors, I spent some time with Fr Con. On the first day we met for a short time as his sisters, Carmel and Anne, came to visit him. The love they had for each other was so obvious that I excused myself. That afternoon Con went to hospital with what was thought to be a chest infection. During the last few days of my stay in Dublin, I visited him in hospital twice. This was before the aggressive cancer was detected.**

In hospital, he was more than willing to have his photo taken for the MAMI newsletter (although we both agreed it would be better taken when he got home rather than while he was in his pyjamas). He returned to the Oblate retirement house for palliative care.



Fr Tom McCabe, who took the above photo four days before Connie died, remarked "though Con was weak and in pain, he mustered all his strength with a wonderful smile for all his friends in Australia and New Zealand".

Born in 1937 in Cloghan, County Donegal, Ireland, Con's schooling was at the local National School and the Oblate Boarding College at Belcamp, after that, he began his preparation for the Oblate priesthood, and he was ordained on 23rd February 1964. His obedience was to the Province of Australia, where he arrived in October 1964.

Over the next 50 years he served the Catholic communities of Sorrento, Moe and North Melbourne in Victoria; Kalinga in Queensland and Sefton in New South Wales. He spent 20 years in New Zealand at Massey, Onewa and Whangaparao as either Parish Priest or Assistant Priest. He also spent time looking after the former Oblate novitiate at Geelong.

Fr. Con was a real people's Priest – a man of God for God's people. No matter what the problem, you were welcomed and given his total non-judgemental attention. He particularly welcomed and listened to

those who felt lost and confused. From his own experiences, he understood what it meant to carry a cross.

Con's gentle but persuasive style made him a community builder who nurtured the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral life of the community while not being afraid to take up the challenge of physical development where it was necessary for the good of the parish. His years in New Zealand were a special time in his life. When the Oblates made the decision to withdraw from New Zealand, he succeeded in convincing the Provincial of the time to delay the final withdrawal for a number of years.

St Eugene wanted his Oblates to be authentic preachers of the Word of God. Con quickly became skilled in the use of computer and the internet, where he researched the best sources to prepare a good sermon and shared these weekly with his brother Oblates to help them prepare their Sunday homilies.

Some years ago Con said "I think the OMI's are great and am truly blessed to be part of this community. I think that we live in exciting times for society in general and the Church in particular, and that – in spite of all the shadows –, I continue to be a person and a minister of hope and faith". These sentiments indeed sum up the ministry of Father Connell Kevin Campbell, who died on the 18th July 2017 surrounded by his two families – especially his sisters Anne and Carmel, and the community of his brother Oblates in our retirement house at Inchicore, Dublin. He told a brother Oblate "I am not afraid and at peace with my God".

**Fr John Sherman OMI**

# Fr Don Hughes OMI



**We are soon to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Fr. Don Hughes' Priestly Ordination.**

**He has been a whole-hearted Missionary Oblate and dedicated priest with a great love of the world-wide Congregation through all these years. It is most unlikely that any other Oblate in the Province will ever have the opportunity or the call to fill as many roles as he has in those sixty years.**

Don was born and first educated in St. Patrick's parish, Fremantle. His family had a long and happy association with the Oblates who served there but, at first, he studied at St. Charles' Diocesan Seminary in Perth. While there, and making lasting friendships with many Western Australian priests, he felt called to join the Oblates and

began his novitiate in Sorrento. As we had no Scholasticate here yet, several of us had to go to Ireland to study, while others were sent to South Africa or Rome. Don became very involved in the life of the Seminary, researching the history of the Congregation, its missions and outstanding men while also editing the Annual.

After Ordination in Ireland, which his parents had the joy of attending, he spent a short time in an English parish before returning home. Over the years he has served in and led parishes in Victoria, South Australia, New Zealand and Western Australia. In those first years he was also appointed to preach Parish Missions and Retreats in NSW and Victoria. In the 1960s he was asked to join our new College, Iona, in Brisbane. As well as teaching most of the day, he supervised building and helped to develop the College financially in those challenging pre-funding days. Nevertheless he found time to help appeal for the Missions on weekends. These were the days of working bees with parents, bottle-drives and many social and fund-raising efforts, and working like this with the priests, helped to create a lasting family spirit and camaraderie.

Don's next challenge was to be the founding Rector of a new College and boarding unit at Lesmurdie-Mazenod College in Perth. After a time in New Zealand, he served as Novice Master and twice as Rector of the Oblate Seminary in Melbourne. After another time as a Parish Priest, he was asked to be the Rector of his alma mater, St. Charles' Seminary. Only God can assess all the good he has done in accepting these appointments.

Don is held in great affection and gratitude by his brother Oblates. He is, fittingly, enjoying retirement and the occasional supply duties at Mazenod, Lesmurdie and Fremantle. He is a "total Oblate" and, of course, has a great devotion to Mary Immaculate and an interest in the life of the Province. He has also retained a strong loyalty to the Perth Archdiocese and its priests.

We salute a great priest and friend in Don Hughes and, in giving thanks for him and all he has done, we ask the blessing of his Lord and the smile of Mary Immaculate.



**Fr Kevin Davine OMI**

# Immersion programmes

The students of our Oblates Colleges, together with their families, raise funds especially through their **MISSION ACTION DAYS**. It is also important that they are given an opportunity to have life experiences in the missions. At their own expense, senior students visit and assist for a short time in our missions in China, India and Sri Lanka. It is also hoped to recommence the Immersion programme to Indonesia which was halted a few years ago for security reasons.

For many of these men, it is a life-changing experience. Note the comment made on the recent China Immersion by a student from Mazenod College Victoria.

“Fr Wotherspoon runs an outreach programme for people who are very poor, and often homeless. During our stay we sang the Mazenod Anthem when introducing ourselves, served food to the gathered homeless and helped pack up the tables and chairs once the event was over. While it was disconcerting to encounter over two hundred poor and homeless people in one place, we felt we had made a real contribution”.

When they return home, these students frequently designate how the funds they raised should be used. This group wants some scholarships for poor students in China.



The orphanage run by the Oblates in Vietnam has received funds to cover the educational costs for the young people for the next twelve months.



Fr Sholto Douglas in Zimbabwe wrote recently thanking MAMI for the assistance given to several projects. Pictured above is a verandah the local people raised the money to build. It was only completed because of your assistance.



Mazenod College Western Australia saw the girls' toilet in one village school. They came home and raised the money to replace it with the new building shown here.

Since the last MAMI newsletter we have been able to assist with the programme of the Jaffna Oblates (Sri Lanka), working:

To create an environment and a supportive system of healing and rebuilding lives of shattered and wounded youth.

- To reintegrate and restore the traumatised and affected persons, especially the youth through the empowerment and education program.
- To create opportunities and enable people especially the youth, towards a hope – filled life.
- To find the way and resources to alleviate poverty among the youth.
- To build up unity among the youth of the affected society.

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 may like to use this donation slip. Thank you for kind and generous support.



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Please send an email to: [mami@oblates.com.au](mailto:mami@oblates.com.au) which includes your name, postal address, EFT transfer detail and intention.



# INDONESIA

**There is so much good work being done around our Province. Below is an article written by a member of the OMI Indonesia community about the work being done with high school students.**

Dormitory works cannot be separated from the role of the first Oblate missionaries, who came and worked in Indonesia. These Oblates saw that rural children were not educated because there was no access to education in their homes. These Oblates collected the rural children in a dormitory to be schooled and equipped with various skills. The work of the Dormitory continues to be developed, under the responsibility of the local Parish.

The work of Asrama becomes a place to unite the younger generation so they can get an adequate education as a provision for their future. This is a vast, natural state with many jungles. Difficult and remote access to urban areas means many children are unable to go to school. To do so, they have to go to the district town and it can be difficult for them to return to their homes afterwards. The Oblate



Children being taught by their mother because the village has no school.

Boarding House has tried to resolve these issues. Dormitories have been built in each of the Parishes served by Oblates. Most of the students are from the Dayak tribes. They are high school-level children and students from poor families.

Dormitory work is not always running smoothly. Common obstacles include a lack of living expenses and schools, students who return home and do not go to school, and parents who do not want their children to go to school. The dormitory work goes on simply because of the enormous zeal to live the noble values of Jesus Christ's teachings to serve God and others, especially the small, the weak, the poor and the excluded. Another great spirit is the number of special vocations within the boarding children.

The younger generation presents Christ in the midst of the society in which they live. The younger generation is the face of the Church of Christ in the future. It is incumbent upon all of us to jointly guide, shape and prepare qualified moral, intellectual and spiritual youth to face the challenges of a more diverse future so that they can become the face of a steady Church of Christ according to the demands of the times.



## An Immersion tour with a difference

In mid-2018, we want to run a 10-day Immersion tour to Indonesia. Discover the history of Indonesia with Fr Widi in Yogyakarta, work alongside Fr Charlie Burrows in Cilacap and see the capital's sights with Fr Andre, all with the spirit of St Eugene De Mazenod. Participants must be over 18, independent and in good health (able to manage stairs). We are taking expressions of interest for this tour. *Interested?*

There are 10 positions available. If you would like to secure a position or require further information, please contact Luisa Amati at the MAMI office 9805 8888 or pim@oblates.com.au

## In Other News...

Winter is well and truly upon us now, Victoria and other States have experienced some of its coldest winter years. Luckily some of our Partners in Mission volunteers headed off to Hong Kong to participate in the HK Summer Program and escape these cold days.

The summer program runs for four weeks over the summer period in HK. The children are on vacation and take the opportunity to learn English through our schools. This year we are fortunate to have four PIMS attend (Elwyn Bourbon, Maurice and Helen Fuller, Josie Howard).

We look forward to hearing from them upon their return. Please keep them in your prayers.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Applications are now open for volunteer work in Beijing and Hong Kong for 2018. We need people of all ages, from all backgrounds and professions.

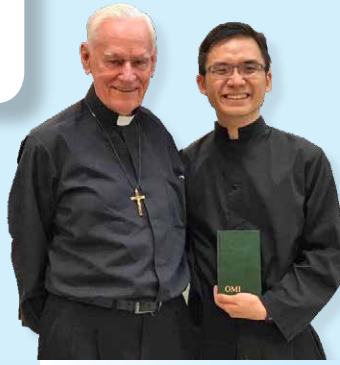
If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Luisa Amati for further information.



# VOCATIONS

The 1st and 6th of August have been days for blessings for the Australian Oblates. On 1st August, Casmir Arul OMI, who has been with us in the Formation Community for several years was ordained to the Priesthood in Chennai, India. The Provincial, Fr Peter Daly, represented the Australian Province at the ordination. Fr Casmir now awaits the letter from Fr General giving him an obedience to a Province.

On the same day, in Godfrey, USA, Bro. Thuan Bui OMI took his First Vows and officially became an Oblate. Thuan returned to Melbourne on 5th July to join the Formation Community and start his academic studies.



Fr Vincent McGillicuddy, who represented the Australian Province at Bro Thuan's Vows ceremony.

The 6th of August was an historic day for the Australian Oblates, with Bro Josh Nash OMI renewing his vows. It was also the day on which Fr. Provincial blessed the foundation stone for the new St Mary's Seminary being built at 647 Burke Road, Camberwell. Victoria. The contract was signed on the 7th August and construction should be well underway as you read this newsletter.

On 15th August Stephen Cheon, who has completed his pre novitiate with the Moe/Newborough Oblate Community, will leave to undertake his novitiate in Godfrey, USA.

Please keep these men in your prayers. The Holy Spirit is certainly actively at work. Present at the gathering on 6th August were a number of people seriously discerning a call to be Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

On the 8th and 9th September there is a –"COME AND SEE" weekend at 649 Burke Road, Camberwell. If you know any man wanting to know more about the life and mission of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, do encourage him to contact me at [jsherman@obates.com.au](mailto:jsherman@obates.com.au) or on my mobile 0418 825 701.



Bro Thuan with his mother and brother who came to the USA for his First Vows.



Bro Josh Nash OMI signing his Vow's declaration, witnessed by Fr Peter Daly, and Fr Daniel Szewc. Fr Daniel is the current Rector of St Mary's Seminary. Fr Austin Cooper, the first Rector of St Mary's is seated.



Fr Peter Daly with Brothers Josh and Thuan and Stephen after the blessing of the foundation plaque.



Bro Casmir processing to the Church with the Bishop. His mother is on the right.



Fr Casmir OMI

# NEWS



During July the Oblates accepted an invitation from Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane to undertake the pastoral care of the Parish of Cannon Hill in Brisbane. Cannon Hill is close to Iona College and has a long history of association with Iona. The first Oblate Parish Priest will be Fr Eric Alleamue OMI.

During July Cardinal Orlando Quevedo OMI Archbishop of Cotabato on the island of Mindanao, in the Philippines visited Mazonod College Victoria. The Cardinal was in Australia to deliver a public lecture on "Catholic social teaching and Inter-religious dialogue". He is pictured below with Frs. Christian Fini and Kevin Davine.



In June, Father Ron Rolheiser OMI visited Australia.

Fr Ron is an Oblate priest, theologian and popular spirituality writer. He is also President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas.

He is a community-builder, lecturer, and writer. Fr Ron's books are popular throughout the English-speaking world and have been translated into many languages. His weekly column is carried by more than 80 newspapers worldwide.



## Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

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