



Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

From the Director

In this Year of Youth in the Australian Church and the Year of Vocations in the Oblates, it is appropriate to dedicate this edition's "From the Director" to the role of young adults in the Mission of the Church.

Having spent most of my life as an Oblate Priest working with youth, it is with pride I recognise the involvement of young people in the Missions. All too frequently the question is asked 'Where are our young people in the Church today?' It is a valid question. However, there are positive Church actions taken by these young adults that need to be identified and recognised.

Many of our educational communities have service groups such as the Junior St Vincent de Paul and Rosies Oblate Youth Mission. There are also overseas IMMERSION programs. The inspiration for such activities frequently has its origin in the charism of the founder of the religious congregation connected with the particular college or parish.

I am involved with communities that embody the charism of the founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, St Eugene de Mazenod. For the purpose of this reflection, I will focus on our three colleges – Iona College in Queensland, Mazenod College in Western Australia and

Mazenod College in Victoria, which have IMMERSION programs in China, India, Sri Lanka and Fiji. They also financially support our missions in Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Iona College, in conjunction with Rosies Oblate Mission, recently provided an IMMERSION experience in North Queensland. Six young men from these colleges responded to two questions:

Why did you choose to go on the recent IMMERSION?

(India) On an overseas holiday trip, I had seen poverty but never did more than just "see it". The IMMERSION trip enabled me "to explore and see what it was like" by personal contact.

(Fiji) It opened my eyes. To see and understand how people living in such poverty are able to have healthy and happy lives The people were friendly and kind.

(Nth Qld) To give back to people in our local community.

(China) It enabled me to step out of my comfort zone and experience a new lifestyle.

(China) To grow my faith, to experience a new culture and come to appreciate how lucky I am living in Australia.

(Sri Lanka) The chance to view the work of the Oblates in another country was one that excited me. To experience a different culture and see how people live. To experience the work of the Oblates, working with the poorest of the poor, especially in education.



From the Director continued...



The second question regarding the impact on the person, I felt was more important.

Mazenod WA (India). It certainly changed me for the better and made me re-evaluate what I considered important. In two educational institutions run by the Oblates, one for young people and the other for women, we saw how it changed the lives of those they served, their generational development and skills. The happiness of the children and how they did not let their situation define them. How the Oblates

helped with a hand, and not just a "hand out", but by teaching skills to help these women provide for their families. It opened my eyes to the work of the people and just how proud people are.



Iona (Fiji) – Poverty does not prevent people from being friendly and kind to others.

Iona (Nth Qld) – The North Queensland IMMERSION had an enormous impact on me. I knew we had poverty in Australia but never appreciated how widespread it is, especially in rural and regional Queensland. I will always remember the primary school-aged Aboriginal children, many without a home and even more not attending school, lining up at the Mareeba outreach just to have a chat with someone.

Mazenod Vic (China) – The IMMERSION trip had a significant impact on me. It allowed me to recognise to never take anything for granted. Two weeks in China and I did not see one house. I saw only city buildings, which were apartments. The IMMERSION trip directed me in a spiritual way to believe that we are given a fortunate lifestyle and we should not think we are having it hard. It enabled me to connect with other people who suffer significantly.

Mazenod Vic (China) – The IMMERSION experience had an astounding impact on me. It was life-changing. How lucky I am to have education etc. The work of the Oblates such as Fr John Wotherspoon and Fr Luc in China was inspiring. It inspired me to return to Australia and make a difference through my faith. It motivated me to become a better person and actually make a difference in the world rather than being a bystander to poverty.

Mazenod WA (Sri Lanka) – It made me realise just how widespread the work of the Oblates is. The Oblate presence in our colleges connects us to so many people. The biggest take-away from the trip was, to be happy with where you are and to always have something to aspire to. It is when we are not aspiring that our lives become stagnant.

Fr John's comment – May we all play our part in encouraging young adults to be open to learning from their experiences and encourage them to step out of their comfort zone to serve. "What you do to the least of my people you do to me" Matt 25:40.



ANNIVERSARY

Fr Peter King

Fr Peter King OMI (left), Fr John Chai OMI (right), and Fr Stan Sun OMI, who has already gone to his Eternal Reward, were the three Chinese priests who, after ordination in the Philippines, joined the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Together they shared the journey of fleeing China during the Communist takeover. Each eventually returned to help form the Oblate Mission to China.

March 19 was the 60th anniversary of priestly ordination of Fr Peter King, OMI. Fr Peter likes to point out that he was born in Shanghai in 1924, the Year of the Rat. According to the traditional Chinese zodiac, those born in the Year of the Rat are often described as social, quick-witted, always on the go and hard-working. In many ways, this is an apt description of his life and ministry for the past 60 years.

As a small child, he and his family fled the fury of the Japanese invasion in the mission of the Columban Fathers. There he did various tasks for the missionaries and slowly developed a desire to serve as a priest. They helped him go to St Ignatius College to study. As painful as this time was for him



and his family, Fr Peter remembers it was in those dark days that his desire to serve as a priest was born. "If it had not been for the war," he says, "I would not have gone to school or wanted to be a priest. From every bad thing something good can come." The respite at the end of World War II was quickly overshadowed by the ravages of the civil war between the nationalists and communists, and the eventual communist victory in 1949.

Fr Peter, as well as many other seminarians, fled the country to seek refuge in the Philippines. There, in a refugee camp for displaced Chinese seminarians, he pursued his seminary studies. Finally on March 19, 1958, he was ordained a priest in St Cruz Church in Manila. His early ministry was in the southern Philippines, serving as a teacher at the Chinese High School Jolo, Sulu, then as director of the Chinese High School Kalibo, Aklan. He came to know the

Oblates of Mary Immaculate and felt called to become one of them.

After a year of novitiate, he made his first vows at Kennedy Ranch, Sarita, Texas, U.S.A. in December 1962. Returning to the Philippines, he served in various parishes and taught at Notre Dame University, Cotabato. He eventually became very involved in the Mission Apostolate to Overseas Chinese and was outstanding in his work at Queen of Peace Church, Cotabato. In 1994, he joined the Oblate China Delegation, Hong Kong. Since then he has been based in Notre Dame Parish, where he serves as chaplain and spiritual adviser to multiple groups of migrant domestic helpers.

At the end of the annual Oblate Retreat, the China delegation gathered with Fr Peter and his friends on May 2 at Notre Dame to celebrate his 60 YEARS of indefatigable service to God and the Church.

MISSIONS

Sri Lanka



The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate have been one of the major religious groups in the Sri Lankan Church. There are two Oblate Provinces, one centred on Jaffna in the north and the other at Colombo in the south. The education ministry of the Australian Province was founded through the efforts of Fr Tim Long OMI. The founding Rector of Iona College, he had previously been Rector of St Patrick's College in Jaffna. In October 2018, students from Iona College will have an IMMERSION experience in the Jaffna Province as part of the college's 60th anniversary celebrations. It will give them a chance to experience the works they have funded and explore with the local Oblate missionaries how best they can assist in the future.

Mazenod College Western Australia wishes to support the Oblates by:

Installing a water purifier in the St Eugene de Mazenod Parish in Pothanagama, Sri Lanka. Availability of safe drinking water is one of the main problems for the people in Sri Lanka's North Central Province. Many attribute this situation to the use of chemical fertilisers in cultivating paddies, vegetables and fruits. This results in unidentified chronic kidney disease (UKO). Medical research has proved that UKO has been caused by contaminated water, excessive use of fertilisers, pesticides and weedicides. Many have become victims of UKO. According to hospital sources, more than 360 kidney patients visit the main hospital in Anuradhapura daily, about 35 of them for dialysis.

The total cost of installing domestic water purifiers for 60 families is \$20,000. This is the most expensive of the three options submitted.

However, it will provide water purifiers for the most families. The students of Mazenod College WA are working to raise the money but they are going to need the assistance of MAMI DONORS.

China

Our two communities in mainland China continue to work among migrant people. Their work could not continue without your prayers and support. To quote Patrick, who was on the recent IMMERSION in China "The IMMERSION experience had an astounding impact on me. The activities we took part in were simply life changing".



Indonesia

At the time of going to press, we are waiting to receive a submission from the Indonesian Provincial.

Fr Eko Saktio has just been appointed Provincial and he and his council will prioritise the projects that serve the greatest needs. Fr Charlie Burrows has submitted projects that would exhaust the available funds. Among them are two rice field reclamations; subsidies for schools; and a toilet block, to name just a few. How successful the AUGUST APPEAL is will depend on just how much we can fund. During the first week of July, Fr John Sherman will visit the projects we have and are funding in Indonesia. This is part of the due diligence required, especially in the use of funds that are tax deductible. Of course, the funds raised by the Christmas card projects of goats, chickens and tools are dedicated to Fr Charlie's projects.



Fr Charlie Burrows OMI receives an award from the government for his humanitarian work.

Zimbabwe

Late in 2017, you funded a water-drilling project for a village where the people had to walk a considerable distance to get fresh water. Fr Sholto reports the project has been completed. We are exploring the possibility of another such project. The attached photo is celebrating the flowing of the water.

Fr Sholto reports on how projects funded in 2017 are going: "Bhomela water pump project. People have grown crops that they are trying to protect with robust fencing. As the wet season (November–April) has just finished, there are many hungry



animals (goats, cows, donkeys, monkeys) and people. Occasionally, maybe once a year, elephants come. People sometimes sleep in their fields even in winter to protect their crops."

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.

Send to: **MAMI Office**
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or ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FOR **THE RELIGIOUS WORK OF THE MISSION** CAN BE MADE TO:

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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.

Partners in Mission

This year marks the 10-year anniversary for the Partners in Mission Program. What started out as a small seed has flourished into a life-enriching program for both our volunteers and those whom they have worked with along the way.

Tony and Maureen first became involved in the PIM Program in 2012 as part of the Immersion Tour.

So, where are they now?

Maureen Brown wrote...

In 2012, Fr Christian Fini came to our Parish and spoke to us about the missions in China. Shortly after this visit, he organised a trip to Beijing with 12 or 13 people from different cities in Australia and very different walks of life. Over there we met Frs Irek, Luc and Jun, who inspired us to take up the challenge and join the Oblates in Hong Kong.

We arrived in Hong Kong in January 2013 and worked as volunteers in the OMI schools for a term of 13 weeks. We went to work immediately, doing conversational English that was a great challenge because the students were very shy. It took us a little while to gain their trust. However, after a while it was very rewarding as they became familiar with us. We returned there for a further three terms over a period of four years as the need is great for volunteers to help.



While we lived in Hong Kong, we had the opportunity to sightsee some of the famous landmarks of both Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland cities of Macau and Shenzhen. We loved the city lights and laser shows, as well as the famous markets and restaurants. We loved going on day trips to Disney with Fr Ronnie, who loves the rides and shows. We were very happy to have family and friends visit us each time we committed to staying for a few months in the beautiful and exhilarating city of Hong Kong.

Through being part of the PIMS program we have met so many new friends and our life and faith have been enriched. Going to Hong Kong has helped us to be caring, patient and loving in our personal and Parish lives. We have been blessed to serve and would encourage you to leave your comfort zone and just do it as the rewards outshine the challenges.

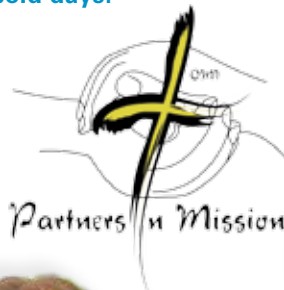
Mission Appeals for 2018

Many thanks to the very generous support for our appeal of St John Vianney's – Springvale, Victoria. We look forward to the coming appeals:

- St Pius X, Dernancourt, South Australia – July 21–22
- Moe/Newborough and Yallourn North, Victoria – September 21–22

Hong Kong Summer Program

Winter is well and truly upon us, and Victoria and other states have experienced some of its coldest winter weather in 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 during Hong Kong's summer. The children are on vacation and take the opportunity to learn English in our Oblate schools. This year we are fortunate to have three PIMS attend (Georgy Ewing, Lorraine Armstrong, Mary Graham).

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



By the time you receive this newsletter, the new Australian Province website should have been launched. We hope that it will help to strength your partnership with us in the OBLATE MISSION both within Australia and beyond our shores. It is also hoped that it will be more user friendly in regards to contacting the MAMI OFFICE.

The Prayer for Lay Associates.

Creator God, all that we have and are comes from you and through you we are blessed. By the power of the Holy Spirit, open our eyes that, like St Eugene, we may be aware of the needs of people around us and reach out to help those who feel abandoned. Inspire us to bring the Good News of Jesus to your people. Guide us as we live the Oblate mission together. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Congratulations to Mr Michael Piu, the new CEO of St Patrick's Community Support Centre, Fremantle. Michael succeeds Sean McDermott, who has retired after many years of outstanding leadership of St Pat's.

St Patrick's Community Support Centre was founded by Brother Ignatius Hannick OMI. The best way to introduce you to this outstanding outreach of the Oblate Parish of St Patrick's Fremantle is to invite you to look it up on the internet.



VOCATIONS

We welcome to St Mary's Seminary two Oblate scholastics from Vietnam.

1. **Anthony Nguyễn Văn Nghiêu** was born on March 10, 1985, in the region of Hanoi, in northern Vietnam. He took his first vows in 2012 and made his Perpetual Oblation on October 7, 2017. He is finishing the fifth year of the six-year programme of philosophy and theology. This year, besides



his studies, he is socius of Fr Nicholas Tân at the Prenovitate, with 18 prenovices (15 of these started the novitiate in June).

2. **John Baptist Hà Thành Luân** was born on September 1, 1988, in the region of Vung Tàu in



southern Vietnam. He took his first vows on May 21, 2016. This year, he is completing the two-year programme of philosophy.

During the mid-year break, Brother Josh Nash, Brother Thuan Bui and Chris Villanueva will visit Oblate communities in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland promoting vocations.



How can you help the vocations ministry?

- Please pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
- Suggest to someone you feel might have a vocation 'Have you ever thought of the priesthood or religious life'.
- Support the education of students for the priesthood/religious life financially. While such donations do not attract tax deductibility, they are still desperately needed as the Oblates bear the cost of educating our students.



Work is well advanced on the new St Mary's Seminary at 647 Burke Road, Camberwell. It should be ready for occupation in October. Since our pre-novices spend their time in a working Oblate community and the novitiate is presently being done in the USA, the new St Mary's will house the students in vows. However, if the rooms are fully occupied, the over flow could be accommodated in the neighbouring Oblate house. It looks as though it will initially have a community of five plus two formators.



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