

Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

From the Director

Greetings to you in our Lord Jesus Christ and our Blessed Mother! I pray and wish that you are all in good health by the grace and blessings of God.

In this challenging world, the Social Apostolate is the continuation of the ministry of Jesus; his reaching out to the poor, the sick and the marginalized through miracles, assuring presence and challenging actions were the sign as well as the reality of the imminent Kingdom of God as revealed in the Gospels. It shall become a way of spirituality for us, the Mazenodian Family as required by our Oblate Constitutions: we are men "set apart for the Gospel," men ready to leave everything to be disciples of Jesus. The desire to co-operate with him draws us to know him more deeply, to identify with him and to let him live in us. Like Christ, we too are sent into this real world to preach the good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and liberty to the oppressed (Lk. 4:18).

Hence, action for justice and participation in the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel. Around the Oblate world, our social apostolate begins with charity in the first place manifested through our sincere response to the people's immediate needs in specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc. Charity is all the more intensely manifested through our services in the so-called frontier ministries. MAMI members' generosity enables the disadvantaged of our missions to 'step up' out of their poverty and restore their belief in their dignity.

Yes, a wonderful "generosity of spirit" and the "spirit of hospitality" should be extended not only to strangers but also to all who are guests in our lives, to all who represent Jesus Christ. That includes our families, classmates, our schoolmates, our teammates, friends, all whom we meet, etc. It involves a basic generosity with our resources, giving freely. It also means respect for people. It also means just being for others.



We are members of a great community of love, faith, charity, encouragement, appreciation, tolerance, sacrifices, and strengthening of the weaker ones. St Eugene, our founder and father inspires all of us to love everyone and encourage all good things which will help the well-being of others and lead them to salvation.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our MAMI office team, particularly Sandra Dwyer, Luisa Amati,

Andrew Weegberg, Jenny McPherson and Leon Jongebloed for their passion, commitment, hard work and dedication in supporting the Oblate mission work.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Fr Eric Alleaume OMI, the new MAMI director, to this important role of service in our Australian Province. We wish Fr Eric God's choicest blessings upon him. I replaced Fr Eric and am now serving St John Vianney Parish, Mulgrave.

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

My prayers are with you and your family. Please be safe and may God bless you all abundantly!

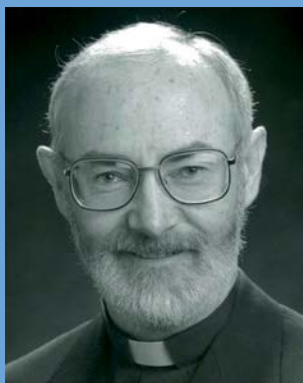
Fr David Francis OMI

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



LET US CELEBRATE

Fr Anthony Maher OMI 40th Ordination Anniversary



Anthony James Maher was born in Warragul, Victoria on the 23rd of January 1951, and was educated in Moe. He obtained a Bachelor of Economics from Monash University in 1973. He joined the Oblates in 1978, joining his elder brother John Maher, and was ordained on the 23rd of April 1982, in Trafalgar Vic.

His first assignments were short-term, assisting at Dernancourt and then Campbelltown, before spending 2 years as an assistant priest at Eagle Vale NSW. From 1985-86 he was parish priest at Eagle Vale then he assisted at Burpengary for 2 years; for the next 4 years he was Parish priest at Sefton.

He spent the first half of 1993 at Rosies Qld then from June to December 1998 he was Parish Priest, St John Vianney's, Springvale North Vic. The next 18 years were spent as parish priest of Sefton NSW followed by Tea Tree Gully SA, Burpengary Qld and St Patrick's Basilica, Fremantle.

In August 2016 he moved to Camberwell, where he conducts an induction program for priests new to the province and assists Fr Andrew Chen in St Mary's seminary.



Dear Fr Tony, Congratulations on the 40th Anniversary of your Priestly Ordination. It is a significant milestone in your priestly life as well as a joyful occasion for those to whom you minister. May your life be filled with God's good gifts, and abundant joy.

Jenny McPherson



Sixty-five years of Oblateness 1957 – 2022

I remember coming from the country town of Kapunda SA in February 1954, as our family moved into a new Housing Trust home in Klemzig. Our family home was three streets away from the old Hillcrest Church on North East Road. Our family pre-dates the Oblate Fathers' arrival because in 1954 the old church was an outstation of the Walkerville Parish. Fr. Thomas O'Rourke was the Walkerville Parish Priest and his assistants were Frs. Ted Mulvihill and Joe Grealy. I recall that the Walkerville parish boundary extended all the way to Birdwood. With the arrival of the Oblate Fathers in May 1957, the Walkerville parish stopped at O.G. Road and the Hillcrest Parish went from O.G. Road to Birdwood. Fr Joe McCann OMI was the first parish priest at St. Pius X and his assistant was newly ordained Fr. Frankie O'Hara OMI.

out a vocation to the priesthood and spent some years in the Oblate Seminary at Springvale, Melbourne Victoria. Two of my confreres have served in the parish, Fr. Pat MacAnally OMI and Fr. John McGinty OMI, who also became parish priest at Dernancourt. The priesthood was not to be my vocation and on my return home in 1969, I commenced a career in Financial Counselling. I cared for many thousands of individuals and families that were stressed out by overwhelming money problems.

At St. Pius X I met and fell in love with Lucy and we were married in the new parish church at St. David's Tea Tree Gully in 1972. The celebrant at our wedding was Fr. Michael Clarke OMI. Fr Michael served in the parishes of Hillcrest/Dernancourt and Tea Tree Gully for more than 20 years. Our two girls, Paula born in 1974 and Andrea born in 1976 were both baptised by Fr. Pat MacAnally OMI. Andrea was the last baby baptised in the old Hillcrest church before the parish relocated to a brand new church at Dernancourt.

In March 1973 the Hillcrest parish was divided into three by Archbishop James Gleeson to form the new parishes of Dernancourt, Modbury and Tea Tree Gully.

I have seen my daughters grow up in the twinkling of an eye as they were schooled at St. David's and Kildare College and went on to universities. My dad Henk and mum Willy celebrated their Golden wedding anniversary at St Pius X in 1974, and in 1997 Lucy and I celebrated our Silver wedding anniversary with our wedding celebrant Fr. Michael Clarke OMI again at St David's. On a somber note Fr. John McGinty OMI was the chief celebrant at dad's funeral in 1996 and nine years later in 2005 as parish priest at St Pius X, he also conducted mum's funeral.

I was in the seminary with and attended Fr. John O'Doherty's ordination in Melbourne and celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Priesthood when in his retirement he was stationed at St Pius X. Subsequently Fr. John was the celebrant at our daughter Andrea's wedding in 2013 and he also baptised our grandson James in 2014 and granddaughter Olivia in 2016.



This March 2022 Lucy and I celebrated our Golden wedding anniversary at St. Pius X, Fr Mathew Raj OMI our parish priest, presented us with a papal blessing to mark the momentous occasion. Starting as a small nine-year-old boy and having been part of the Oblate charism for 65 years I give thanks to God for all the treasured memories and hope that they continue for many more years to come.

Jos Hensing



St. Paul's Christian Brothers College Strathmont opened in February 1959 and I was one of its foundation students. After completing my studies at St. Paul's I tested



Welcome Fr Vincent Obialor OMI and Fr John Patrick John Mary OMI to our Australian Province



I, Fr Vincent Obialor OMI, was born into the family of Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Obialor, from Amato Umoko-Dike, Okwelle in Onuimo L.G.A, Imo State, Nigeria. I am the sixth child of their twelve children.

From 1983 to 1990, I attended Saint Michael Primary School, Omoku River State. I started my secondary school education in 1990 at Sancta Maria High School, Omoku, before I left in 1992 to join the minor seminary Sacred Heart Seminary, Port Harcourt (Nigeria), where I finished in 1996.

I joined the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1998. After one year of postulancy and a year in the pre-novitiate, in 2001 at the end of the novitiate, I made my first religious vows in Ngaoundere, Cameroon. From 2001 to 2004, I had my formation in philosophy at Institute Saint Joseph-Mukasa, Yaoundé, Cameroon. After one year of pastoral experience in the parish and Oblate formation house, I was sent to Saint Eugene de Mazenod Institute of Theology, Kinshasa, D.R. Congo, where I finished my theology in 2009. During my theological formation, in 2007, I took my final vows and was ordained deacon in 2008.

After my priestly ordination on 1st August 2009, I worked in various places:

- 2009 to 2011: Saint Joseph's Catholic Parish, Obibi-Ochasi, Orlu, Nigeria
- 2011 to 2013: Saint Martin's Catholic Parish, Ihitteowerri, Orlu, Nigeria
- 2013 to 2014: Saint Gabriel's Catholic Parish, Jebbu-Bassa, Jos, Nigeria
- 2014 to 2015: Sacred Heart Parish, Léré, Tchad
- 2015 to 2020: Holy Family Parish, Tada, Cameroon.



I, Fr John Patrick John Mary OMI, was born in Jaffna on the 17th of February 1979. After completing my primary and secondary education in Jaffna, I joined the Oblate congregation and pronounced

my first profession of vows in 2002. Having completed my philosophical and theological studies in Kandy and Jaffna, my final commitment and diaconate took place in 2009 at St. Joseph's Chapel, Columbuturai. As a deacon, I was in the parishes of Manipay and Navanthurai in Jaffna diocese. My ordination to the priesthood took place at St. Mary's Cathedral in Jaffna. After the ordination, I was working as a hospital chaplain and parish priest in the diocese of Jaffna. Before I came to Australia, I oversaw lay members of our Jaffna Province. The experiences I gained in my province will certainly help me serve in Australia.

Vocations My experience in Australia



Living in Australia means encountering many opportunities. It is a young, multicultural, and open country with an ever-growing economy. It is a country where people from all over the world can feel at home. My stay in Australia for the last two years has enriched me immensely with both beautiful, fascinating, and disappointing experiences. It has broadened my understanding of people, culture, and faith, and has widened my knowledge enormously. I would like to share here some of my profound realizations with some experiences.



My first realization was that dislikes can be momentary and very subjective. There is a list of things to share. I had a cultural shock when I came to Australia. Sri Lanka is a different country with its own unique culture. There were many cultural aspects of Australian life that I found different, weird, bizarre and strange such as cooking only one meal in a day, being encouraged to eat dinner around 6pm or before 6.30pm (time for evening tea), classes around 4pm is called afternoon classes and you are expected to greet everybody with words like 'hey, how is it going?' whether you know them or not. At first, I started to dislike everything because there were no friends

who could speak my language; I had poor skills in understanding typical Australian accents and not knowing how to cook at all but expected to cook for my community once a week. The primary reason I disliked them was due to my failure to see their culture as it is. I started to see their culture with the eyes of my cultural background with which I compared and judged them. It took me a while to see their culture as it is and to appreciate the beauty in their culture. Australians are very hospitable and generous; they do whatever possible within their capacity to make strangers or visitors feel at home. Though I am not much interested in cooking it seems that I have learned more about cooking than theology.

My second realisation was to not judge a book by its cover. When I came to Australia, I experienced loneliness due to this new environment and the Covid-19 pandemic. I was desperately looking for friends who would share my own culture, could speak my language and understand my struggles. When I went to university and sat in the class, it was a very strange experience sitting in the class with seminarians both from Australia and overseas. I felt like I was left all alone in the middle of the sea. I saw a brother standing next to the noticeboard and reading the information placed on the board. My first guess was, 'he might be an Indian.' I followed him for almost ten minutes without his knowledge to see whether he could speak my mother tongue. To my surprise, he said in Tamil 'va' (come), maybe by mistake. That was one of my best 'aha' moments. It was the first time I realized the deep meaning of the English phrase 'blessing in disguise.' We became good friends afterward and he helped me to settle comfortably in the class.



My third realisation was that powerlessness is the way to experience the powerful work of God in our lives. As an adult, I always thought that I can do anything and everything by myself. I don't need to depend on anybody. However, this false thought process was destroyed within a few days of my stay in Australia. The different lifestyle forced me to relearn everything. I became utterly dependent which I hated for some time. There were occasions when my companions wrongly assumed that I knew everything but I didn't. My first bath in Australia was cold, not knowing the fact that if I turned the tap in the opposite direction, I could have had a good warm bath. I still haven't forgotten that cold bath and the people I scolded very badly while freezing in the cold water. I was initially disappointed with all these experiences. I couldn't accept the fact that I lost all my security, my friends, and the environment in which I felt very comfortable. Just like the hymn says, "Trust and pray, go do your best today, then leave it in the hands of the Lord." I left everything in the hands of God. I prayed a lot and experienced the powerful work of God in my life through my spiritual director.



I also realized that missionary life is not always about doing but rather being. My experience in Australia reshaped my understanding of my vocation as a religious. Even in all my pastoral work, like visiting Mazenod College or Christmas ministry at Mary Immaculate Parish in Eagle Vale and St. David's parish Tea Tree Gully, I didn't do very many things. However, my very being in all those places allowed me an opportunity to understand youngsters and people with different backgrounds of faith.

Br Jesington OMI



THANKS BE TO GOD

I don't think that our family is anything special. We are just ordinary people, brought up by our families to know right and wrong, to follow the laws of society and the laws of God. I was baptised as an infant in the Catholic Church and attended mass religiously (pun intended!) every Sunday with my parents. Despite my parents being poor, Italian migrants, who came to Australia after the war, they managed to put my sister and me through a private, Catholic school. And even though, as a teenager, I strayed from going to Church every week, when it came to being married and having children, we wanted it to be in the Catholic church.

Once I was married, I found myself going to Church more regularly and especially once our sons were born. Even though my husband was not Catholic when we married, he often accompanied me to Church, especially after our sons were born. Making the decision to send the boys to Catholic school and seeing them receive their sacraments of reconciliation, communion and confirmation must have influenced my husband who then chose to complete

the RCIA program at St David's, Tea Tree Gully. He was baptised as a Catholic and we continue to attend Church together, we have been involved in many activities of our parish including Antioch youth group, the Parish Pastoral Council, liturgical ministries and the Sunday morning tea.

When we first started attending mass at St David's, we didn't appreciate the difference that the De Mazenod charism made to our experience of the Catholic community. But we just knew we felt more at home at St David's. Over the past 30+ years, we have learned much more about the charism of St Eugene de Mazenod, which we find to be inclusive, loving and compassionate. We have made many great friends in the parish and continue to thank God for blessing us with the wonderful, faith-filled men who serve as our parish priests. We always encouraged our sons to be involved in the Mass and both became altar boys, before deciding to enter the Antioch youth group and Oblate Youth Australia, which was a wonderful time in their lives; they both still have many good friends from those groups.

I feel that the experiences our sons had during those years have formed the growth of their personalities and characters, which in part, along with the wonderful example of the Oblate priests and others in our church community, have influenced our sons, and especially Joshua in his decision to join the Oblates as a priest. When Joshua first told us of his change of life direction, we were initially surprised, but it didn't take us five minutes to realise that this path suited him.

We have been blessed to be included in the De Mazenod Family and shared wonderful experiences with Joshua in his journey, including in the United States, France, and Australia. Especially, we have cherished sharing the special events in his life, such as his first vows in America, his final vows at our home parish of Tea Tree Gully and his recent ordination to the diaconate at St John Vianney's in Mulgrave. We look forward to the end of his formation journey, and the beginning of his journey as an Oblate priest when he is ordained later this year.

Doris Nash

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.

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AROUND THE MISSION



INDONESIA

Here are some photos of Easter celebrations in one of our smaller outstations – called KARANG SALAM. It is adjacent to a 10,000 hectare mangrove swamp. A teenage girl (white blouse and holding a microphone) and a small baby were baptized. All had a meal, supplied by the locals. Please keep our people and mission in your prayers.

Thanks for all the help,
Fr. Charlie Burrows OMI



PARTNERS IN MISSION



“According to family tradition”

In visiting families in China, it has happened already several times, that the people arrange some food, typical of their own country of origin and made according to “family tradition; just the way I learned at home from my grandmother or mother”. Most of the time it is a simple dish with some very essential ingredients and the flavour comes from that “secret family recipe”...

These past couple of years due mainly to restrictions in entering China (related mostly to the pandemic), the possibility of having volunteers coming for an extended period of time has drastically reduced, and this has created an opportunity to scout “local resources”.

This time I would like to introduce our group of catechists in the OLC community (Our Lady of China, foreign English-speaking community) in Beijing. Every year we arrange classes for first communion and confirmation, and this year we have an excellent group composed of people from Singapore, the Philippines and USA. Three mothers and one father are making the best out of their own experiences and



OYA UPDATE!

Oblate Youth Australia has been unable to gather for the past two years due to Covid and border restrictions, but we are excited to announce that we are finally going to be able to come together once again as a community.



different backgrounds; it is a delight to see how they first try to share among themselves what they will present to the children. A very “domestic Church” with meetings taking place in their homes with the involvement of all the parents, children periodically animating the liturgy with their singing, or volunteering for the local charitable organizations. Due to circumstances we cannot have a typically structured community and yet the essential ingredients are there, all flavoured by sharing of personal religious experience and enriched by sense of responsibility and commitment.

It is true that at times a less structured and clerical Church can provide the most delicious food, made with simple ingredients and keeping faithful to the “family tradition”.

Fr Giovanni Zevola OMI



RE-ENCOUNTER

Re-Encounter will be going ahead in September and will be a chance for members of OYA to join once again to strengthen ties between our local communities. The weekend will include formation sessions, the Oblate Youth AGM, Mass, formal dinner and lots of fun.

WHEN: 9th – 11th September
WHERE: Mazenod College, VIC

Registration for the event will be open soon on our website:
www.oblateyouth.com.au





Mazenod College community, Victoria, enjoyed our traditional Mission Action Day (MAD). The week started on Monday, April 4, with a large crowd attending the MAD Music evening. Missionary Action Day itself commenced with an Easter Liturgy in the Province Centre followed by a walkathon/run around the local streets. After these activities, it was down to some serious fun, food, friendship, and fundraising in support of our Oblate Missions. The day is not just about raising funds, though very much needed, more importantly, it is an opportunity for our young men, their families, our teachers, and staff, to grow in an awareness of the needs of their fellow human beings, especially in our Oblate Missions. The events for MAD raised a magnificent total of \$46,000.00 (still counting). On behalf of MAMI and the people who will benefit from this generous giving, I express our

thanks to our students, teachers, staff, families, and sponsors for your ongoing support of your fellow brothers and sisters in our various Oblate missionary outreaches.

Fr Harry Dyer OMI, Rector
Mazenod College



De Mazenod Family Pilgrimage

On the 15th of May, we gathered as members of the De Mazenod Family and shared in a Mass at Holy Family Parish in Rye where we introduced our theme of Pilgrims of Hope in Communion. After Mass we began our walk towards Sorrento, stopping for lunch and snacks along the way. We also paused at different moments along the way to share reflections that continued to open the theme of the Pilgrimage. Upon arriving in Sorrento at

St Mary's Star of the Sea (earlier than we had planned!) we had our final reflection and prayer before sharing a meal together. We were incredibly blessed that the rain held off for the day and no one got wet!

Many thanks to all those who attended and sent well wishes for the day.

We continue to look forward to planning more pilgrimages in the future.
Emma Hoad



ROSIES UPDATE!

Rosies Oblate Youth Mission is a community of young people sharing the Oblate spirit of daring. Inspired by the Gospel, Rosies has a ministry of being "Friends On The Street." Each Wednesday and Friday night the Rosies Van heads into Flinders Street Station to operate a coffee bus offering friendship and hospitality through the simple gesture of a free cuppa to those most abandoned in our society. One of the many frustrations for the homeless is not only having food and shelter, but also finding someone to listen to their story and to be their "Friend On The Street".

St. John Vianney's Golf Club has always been a great supporter of Rosies and on the 22nd of April, they hosted the Annual Rosies Charity Golf Day. It was the biggest turnout so far and was a great day for all involved. The day raised \$5700 for Rosies, which will go towards the running of the Rosies van.

Rosies is always looking for new volunteers, so if you (or anyone you know) are between the ages of 18-30 and are interested in volunteering, please feel free to email us for some more information on what is involved in volunteering, or to book in a training session.

Please visit our website www.rosiesvic.com.au or contact Emma Rice (Rosies Coordinator) via email erice@oblates.com.au.

We ask that you continue to keep all the volunteers and streeties in your prayers (especially during these colder months).



Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

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