

Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

From the Director

As we come to the end of another year it is time to reflect on the many

blessings we have enjoyed and to look forward in hope to the new year ahead, especially at a time when it seems that the world is intent on destruction. As wars and conflicts continue to break out, we can easily lose sight of the goodness of people and the presence of God amongst us. I pray that these times may not cause us to dissociate ourselves from those in need around us but rather see in stark contrast to death and destruction, the power of love and unity.

Over the years, many of you have come to know and maybe even call 'friend' that wonderful lady who has worked in the MAMI Office for the past nearly twenty-three years. I speak of Sandra Dwyer who has resigned from her position and begun her retirement. It is with great sadness yet also with great gratitude that we farewell Sandra and wish her well for the future. Sandra has worked in partnership with many Oblate MAMI Directors and has been a part of our Oblate Family from the time of Fr Denis McCarthy to recent times. In so many ways she has created and indeed embodied the truth of what MAMI is; a community of very diverse people who together share of themselves to give hope to those in need. Sandra has united, encouraged, and empowered us to make a difference. I am personally grateful for her generosity and the gentle way she has managed the transition of the office. The systems she enabled and her pastoral approach to dealing with all forms of communication created a very open and caring environment. I am sure that the new MAMI Officer, Kartika Hardjosantoso, will join me in

thanking Sandra for making our lives so easy. We wish Sandra all the very best as she takes up the challenge of retirement, which I am sure will include regular visits to Camberwell to meet with friends.

It was with great sadness that we bade farewell to Fr Austin Cooper who went to his eternal reward on the 2nd of July. While it was sad for us it was also a time of, dare I say it, joy, to give thanks for the extraordinary life of a great yet truly humble man. The requiem Mass we celebrated for him was a testament to his simple dignity and an outpouring of love from a congregation that represented the Church of Australia. Fr Austin had spent most of his life as a teacher and educator, particularly of Priests, many of whom joined us along with seven Bishops who all called him friend. I was privileged to have had Fr Austin as my Rector in the Seminary in the early eighties and as a member of my community here in Camberwell for the last years. I am grateful for his friendship, guidance, and especially his help with the ministry of MAMI. His dedication to the Eucharist and prayers have been a support for our work, especially our commitment to pray for the dead and the many special intentions we receive. His influence and wisdom will never fade. and our thanks will never be enough. Of course, his advice would be to thank God for what God has been able to accomplish in his life.

On the weekend of the 21st and 22nd of October Fr Mathew Raj and Fr Christian Fini, our Provincial, celebrated the Masses in the Parish of Lesmurdie in Western Australia. The Parish had originally been an Oblate ministry but had been returned to the care of the Archdiocese of Perth many years ago. Fr Mathew will live in community at the nearby Mazenod College and take on the role of Parish Priest of Lesmurdie. We are grateful

to the Archbishop for offering us this ministry and thank the parishioners for their enthusiastic welcome. It is wonderful to be able to welcome them back to the Family!

There is still much else to be grateful for. The work done by the young men in Mazenod College in Victoria and Iona College in Brisbane on their respective MADs (Mission Action Days) has not only raised large sums of money but more importantly has shown them that they can make a difference.

continued...

Christmas Greeting



At a time when the birthland of our Saviour is at war we pray for the people of Israel, the 'Chosen ones' of God. May a return to peace and harmony in all places experiencing hardship be the answer to our prayers.

As God's people may we, through our own sense of peace, become examples and beacons of Hope for all we meet. I pray that, as we reflect on the birth of our Redeemer, we will truly understand the power of what we may think is only a small contribution on our part, when added to that of others, can become a miracle that changes the whole world.

May God bless you all with a truly Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year.

CHRISTMAS
CLOSURE DATES
Friday 22nd Dec
- 8th January 2024

MAMI

...continued cover article

I believe that the days allowed them to celebrate and enjoy themselves through the many organised activities that they engaged in.

Some of our MAMI funds were sent to Bangladesh to support a "Sustainability Project" whereby cows and pigs were purchased to be raised and then sold for profit. Some funds were given to support Paul Vorrasi, a parishioner from Cannon Hill in Brisbane, who journeyed to Kenya to work with Fr Gerry Conlan in the mission. You will be able to read the reports in this newsletter. We also have articles from our Seminary, the journey to World Youth Day, a notice regarding the upcoming De Mazenod Family gathering, and the Oblate Youth Encounter.

Thank you to all who responded to the 'August Appeal'. Your generosity will go a long way to answering the many calls we have for help. At this time of year, we also begin selling our special Christmas cards. As you know we have Chickens, Goats, Toolboxes, and Education and Development projects,

represented as cards, that can be purchased, the proceeds of which go to works in Indonesia, China, and Africa. Some new cards have been printed and will be available for sale in Parishes, online, or by filling and returning the attached form. I thank you in advance for your generosity and the explanations you may have to give to the recipients of the cards!

As we join together at Christmas as families and with friends let us remember that each person we meet is a blessing and gift from God and that our task is to help them realise their potential as ministers of hope. Maybe we could avail ourselves of the wonderful resources offered by the de Mazenod Family Charism team in the Advent program, available online. There will also be resources available early next year that will guide our prayer during Lent.

May our love and prayers for one another unite us as God's family under the care and patronage of Saint Eugene de Mazenod. May God bless you all and grant you, and indeed the whole world, His peace.

Fr Eric Alleaume OMI Director

AROUND THE MISSIONS

Bangladesh

Greetings to you in the Lord! Hope you are keeping fine. We are doing well. This is to share with you on the project of rearing cows and pigs for our sustainability with your grant of USD 7000. You will be pleased to know that with that money we were able to repair the cowshed and the piggery. We were able to purchase 5 cows and 20 piglets. They are growing well, and we hope to make some profit when we sell them. In three months, we were able to receive a profit of 300 USD from selling two cows. We hope to buy a few more calves from the profit and increase the number of cows. However, we were not selling the pigs yet as they must grow more.

We sincerely thank you for your generous contribution and cooperation towards our self-sustainability.

Be assured of our prayers and God bless you!

Fr Pius Pohdueng OMI

WE REMEMBER

Fr Austin Cooper OMI

It is with great sadness that the Australian Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate announces the death of Fr Austin Patrick Cooper OMI, in Melbourne on 2nd July 2023.

Austin Cooper was born on January 14, 1931, in Sorrento, Victoria. He attended Assumption College, Kilmore, and joined the Oblates in March 1950. He was sent to Kidalton Abbey, Piltown, Ireland to study and was ordained there on 16 September 1956.

On arrival back in Australia he worked in Brisbane while attending the University of Queensland (BA Hons in history), followed by Iona College in its second year. He was nominated as the first rector for the future St Mary's Oblate Seminary and went to study in Washington DC in 1961 to 62 to prepare for this ministry. While there he completed an MA in History at the Catholic University of America, and he later completed his PhD on the Oxford Movement at Monash University (1972).

As the founding Rector of St Mary's Seminary, Mulgrave from 1963 to 73, he established a close relationship with the nearby Monash University and combined the traditional training in philosophy with a university degree.



Fr Cooper served as the Australia Provincial from 1976 to 1983.

He then continued his significant and influential academic career: Foundation Master, Catholic Theological College, Melbourne, 1972–76; Vice-President of Melbourne College of Divinity, 1974–76; President of Melbourne College of Divinity, 1976–78. He has been a lecturer at CTC since 1972, including two further stints as Master, from 1992–94 and then again from 1998–2002. He was a Professor in the Department of Church History at CTC until 2022 and led overseas study tours as part of his courses in Christian Spirituality. His areas of expertise include Julian of Norwich and Cardinal Newman.

His writings include the history of the Australian Oblates up to 1994, 'A Little By Ourselves'; books on Julian of Norwich, The Cloud of Unknowing, and John Henry Newman, 'A Developing Spirituality' (2012).

In 2004 Fr Austin received the Order of Australia for services to Theological Education.

Fr Austin has been an outstanding priest and dedicated Oblate of Mary Immaculate. He was highly capable as well as being a man of prayer and deep spirituality.

He was influential in the human and spiritual formation of many Oblates, Lay people, Religious and Priests in Australia. In his 72 years as an Oblate, he was a pillar of the Australian Province and will be greatly missed. He was buried at Springvale on 12 July following a Requiem Mass at St John Vianney's Mulgrave attended by around 60 Priests, 2 Archbishops, and 5 Bishops.

Jenny McPherson

AROUND THE MISSIONS

Kenya

'A middle-aged, privileged white guy goes to Kenya'.

Firstly, I need to thank the people of Cannon Hill Catholic Parish and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for their support of this crazy idea I had. It started with a question during an Alpha course, "How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life?" I started thinking about what I had to share and how to share it. Sure, I volunteer around the church, and I have a World Vision child but what else can I do? And what skills do I have? My skill set is in Electro-Mechanical Engineering and IT, not very useful "volunteering" skills but I wanted to do something more than just sponsor, I wanted to go and do it!

I spoke to my Parish Priest Fr Basti about my desire to go overseas to a place in need and volunteer my skills, all the time thinking, "These places need people to build dwellings or dig wells for water, who needs an IT guy?" Fr Basti gave me two options of places that could use me, Indonesia and Kenya. Kenya seemed about as far away as I could go so, I reached out to Fr Gerry and started to plan, and it was agreed that I would come to Kenya for 4 weeks to teach IT skills whilst fixing computers and IT systems.

I was based in Karen, a suburb of Nairobi (the capital of Kenya), staying at Karen Hospitality & Admin Centre which also had a contingent of Pre-Novices to whom I taught 'Excel' skills. From day one I was working on laptops for the priests and the Prenovice students to use in their studies, but I also got out and about seeing all the amazing work the OMI were doing in Kenya. Mere hours after getting off the plane I was at a Mass held at the Nyumbani Orphanage. Later that week I was invited by Tommy Nyawir, Founder of 'Mirror of Hope', to see the work his foundation is doing in the Kibera Slum. The foundation organises sponsors for talented students to receive funding for high school and university. State Sponsored schooling ends with primary school so students from places like slums rarely get an opportunity to go to high school let alone University. I was invited to present a talk on "Hope" and "paying it forward" to the students that ran overtime due to the student's interest.





All the OMI priests in Kenya were very keen to meet me and for me to experience the work they do in Kenya. I visited parishes in Kionyo, Meru, and Kisaju. I spent a week at the Kisaju Postulancy teaching Microsoft Office, general IT skills and fixing old IT equipment. Kisaju is (how my wife described it) the "World Vision Postcard" part of Kenya, it is very basic, dry, and dusty. It is largely a traditional Maasai people area of Kenya. Unfortunately, I only had time to spend a couple of days in Kionyo, a beautiful mountain area near Mt Kenya surrounded by Tea Plantations and Meru where they are building a new church.



The work the OMI are doing in Kenya is excellent, and it's refreshing to see the Church expanding instead of slowly dying like it is doing in the Western world. The priests are passionate about the work they do, they are engaged in their communities and are building new churches and infrastructure for those communities. The Kenya OMI have several outreach programs and an active and engaged youth group that volunteers at places like 'Mathare Slum' with a food program.



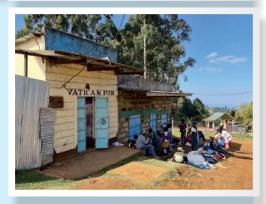
Most of what I did do was with very limited resources as most of the IT equipment I worked on would have been thrown away long ago in the Western world. I upgraded what I could with more RAM or bigger/faster hard disks, and thanks to the financial support I received I was able to buy needed IT infrastructure.

I left Kenya feeling I could have done so much more and wishing I had more time (and money for IT gear). I feel like I had only started scratching the surface of what I could offer but I had a very rewarding experience, I made some new friends and hopefully helped some people.

Mr Paul Vorrasi







AROUND THE PROVINCE

St Mary's Seminary

Greetings from St Mary's Scholasticate!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all MAMI members for your continued prayer and support for the formation community here at St Mary's. Currently, all brothers are busily working on their assignments and preparing for end-of-semester exams as the academic year of 2023 concludes. Here are some updates on our second semester:

Fr Andrew, Rector, returned after his sabbatical leave before the beginning of the second semester in July. During his sabbatical, Fr Andrew had the opportunity to visit Oblates in Vietnam and spend a few days with the scholastics in Ho Chi Minh City. It was heartwarming to see more than 40 young men in Formation for the Oblate mission. We pray that some of them may be missionaries in Australia in the future.

Two significant components of the sabbatical were participation in a pilgrimage of Marian Shrines in Europe and a 4-week course on the Holy Land at the 'Tantur Ecumenical Institute'. Fr Andrew was inspired by the faith of so many pilgrims from all over the world visiting shrines such as 'Our Lady of Fatima', 'Our Lady of Lourdes', 'La Salette', and 'Our Lady of Czestochowa'. The immersion in the Biblical world has opened the Fifth Gospel, giving Fr Andrew fresh insight into the world that Jesus lived and walked. He is very grateful for this opportunity. Special thanks go to Fr Daniel Szewc, who, on top of his parish duty, was overseeing the formation community in Fr Andrew's absence.



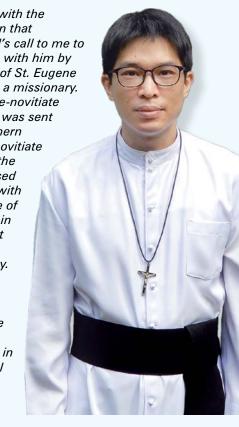




Since the last update, the community has finally welcomed Br Bernard, from Hong Kong, amongst us. Br Bernard is the first scholastic from the China Delegation to undergo part of his initial formation here in Australia. I shall let him introduce himself:

"My name is Bernard Yeung and I am from Hong Kong. As an Oblate, I am a member of the China Delegation under the Australian Province. I was raised in a Catholic family but did not meet the Oblates until my late high school days.

It was my involvement with the Oblates' work since then that I gradually realized God's call to me to deepen my relationship with him by following the footsteps of St. Eugene de Mazenod to become a missionary. After completing my pre-novitiate in Hong Kong in 2019, I was sent to Cotabato in the southern Philippines to join the novitiate programme. In May of the following year, I professed my first vows. I stayed with the Oblate scholasticate of the Philippine Province in Quezon City for the next three years as I studied philosophy and theology. I arrived in Melbourne in August this year to join the community of St. Mary's Scholasticate and continue my postnovitiate formation and in the Catholic Theological College theological studies for the next couple of years.



From rural areas in the tropical Philippines to international communities to challenges during the COVID pandemic, formation experiences have been exciting for me to say the least. Languages, cultures, community life, brotherhood, and friendship are all solid sources of joy and difficulties through which this journey helps me grow as a person and as a religious. And I am equally thrilled to be in Australia and experience another face of the Oblate mission here. Religious life aside, I studied and worked professionally in the field of contemporary art prior to my religious formation. Though not being a very good athlete myself,

Also, we have Fr Marco who joined our community recently. Fr Marco is originally from Madagascar and has volunteered for the Australia mission. Currently, he is undertaking an English course.

I have huge interests in soccer and rugby union."

Fr Andrew Chen OMI



From left to right: Br's Benjamin, Rupesh, Emmanuel, Danistan, Thai, Hieu, Bernard, Luan (Front centre)

World Youth Day

On the 20th of July, a group of 15 members from 'Oblate Youth Australia' embarked on a pilgrimage to Lisbon to be part of the World Youth Day 2023 Celebrations.

Beginning our pilgrimage in Bethlehem, we then travelled throughout the Holy Land following the footsteps of Jesus. One of the highlights of our time in the Holy Land was getting to say Mass on the Sea of Galilee in an old fishing boat. The last day was spent in Jerusalem walking the 'Via Dolorosa' before entering the 'Church of the Holy Sepulchre' – another deeply moving and spiritual experience that none of us will ever forget.

We then continued to the next part of our pilgrimage, World Youth Day week in Lisbon, Portugal. Our first day was spent exploring Fatima before the chaos of World Youth Day week began. It was wonderful to see so many young people coming together to proudly share their faith. There are many highlights of our time in Lisbon, but one in particular was the International Oblate Youth Gathering.

Our last international gathering of young people was at World Youth Day in Poland, 2016 and even though almost 7 years have passed since then, it was fantastic to see old

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friends reunited. It was also wonderful

to witness those who have never been to an international 'Oblate Youth Encounter meet' and get to know other young members of the De Mazenod Family. It was especially wonderful for our group as we were able to connect with the China Mission Pilgrimage group from Hong Kong which is also part of the Australian Province. The highlight of the event was the address from the Superior General Fr Chicho. It was a powerful moment of prayer and reflection as we listened to Fr Chicho reflect on the theme from the General Chapter: 'Pilgrims of Hope in Communion'. Fr Chicho challenged us to walk with God just as Mary did, to be Sowers of hope by placing ourselves at the service of the poor and to continue to be in communion with the Church and with God. We ended this powerful moment of prayer and reflection by being blessed by our founder St Eugene's cross and being told to go be 'Superior Generals' in our communities.

Soon enough it was time to leave Lisbon and head to our final destination on our pilgrimage, Aix-En-Provence, France. Our first stop was Marseille where we were lucky enough to have Mass at the tomb of our founder, St Eugene de Mazenod.



We then spent our final days in Aix-En-Provence, visiting the foundation house and walking in the footsteps of St Eugene. We were also lucky enough to reunite with the group from Hong Kong and share mass in the Church of the Mission before lunch with the Oblates at Foundation House.

We'd like to thank everyone who supported us whether it be through fundraising or prayers, we know this pilgrimage would not have been possible without the support of the entire De Mazenod Family.

Emma Rice



De Mazenod Family

We are thrilled to extend an invitation to all members of the De Mazenod family to embark on a journey of discovery, reflection, and connection. Originally designed for the dedicated staff of Oblate colleges attending an international education conference, the De Mazenod Family Education Network Charism Pilgrimage is now open to everyone eager to explore the profound heritage and spiritual legacy of our beloved founder, Saint Eugene de Mazenod.

What to Expect:

A Spiritual Awakening: Immerse yourself in the rich history and spirituality of Saint Eugene de Mazenod. Experience the transformative power of his charism, which has touched countless lives around the world.

Historical Exploration: Walk in the footsteps of Saint Eugene, visiting significant sites and shrines where he found inspiration and solace.

Community Building: Connect with fellow members of the De Mazenod family, building friendships and a sense of unity that transcends borders and generations.

Details:

Dates: 19th – 30th June 2024 Location: PARIS - AIX EN PROVENCE –

ROME

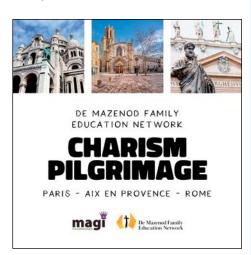
Indicative Cost (Land Only!): \$6590 – twin share

Open to All: This pilgrimage is no longer exclusive to Oblate college staff. All are welcome to join and experience the De Mazenod legacy.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to strengthen your connection to the De Mazenod family and deepen your spiritual journey. Space is limited, so be sure to reserve your spot today!

For more info visit: www.omi.com.au or contact Tony Coghlan: Email: tcoghlan@omi.com.au Phone: 0488 788 137

The De Mazenod Family Education Network Charism Pilgrimage is your chance to be part of something truly extraordinary. We look forward to sharing this unforgettable experience with you.



National Oblate Youth Encounter

It's been a long time coming, but we are very excited to announce that the National Oblate Youth Encounter will be back in January 2024!

The National Oblate Youth Encounter is an event that brings together young people from around Australia who wish to share their Catholic faith in tandem with the Charism of St Eugene de Mazenod. It will be a great chance to grow in faith and reflect, as well as sharing plenty of fun with other young people. NOYE provides a balance of prayer, workshops, open forums, liturgy, and community time.

The theme for this year's camp will be "You Are the Light of the World". We invite young people (Year 12 students - 30 years old) to come and explore this theme whilst sharing the charism of the Oblates.

WHEN: Thurs 4th – Sun 7th January, 2024

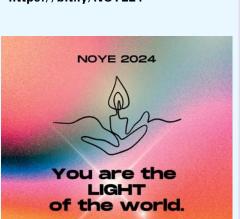
WHERE: Mazenod College, Victoria

COST: \$50 – Interstate participants

\$100 - Victorian participants

Registration is now open via our website:

https://bit.ly/NOYE24



4-7 JANUARY 2024

Adore 2023

The Advent Program Adore 2023 is now available. Advent begins on 3rd December and this year's program will focus on the Nativity through the eyes of four artists: Giotto, Van Der Goes, Botticelli and Caravaggio.

This program has been designed so that you can use all or part of it to make it work for you and your community to its best advantage. You can join us online, run the program for your local community, or join individually as time allows. This Advent, we hope this program allows you time and space to forget about the busyness of our daily lives, and to stop and prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord while trying to find the beauty in all that is around us.

The De Mazenod Family Team will be running the online sessions every Thursday evening during Advent beginning Thurs 30th November at 8pm AEDT.

A breakdown of the time zones and the zoom link are below.

VIC and NSW 8.00 pm SA 7.30 pm QLD 7.00 pm WA 5.00 pm

You can download the resource and find the zoom link here:

https://demazenodfamily.com.au/ programs/adore/

We also encourage you to check out the De Mazenod Family website, which hosts all of our past, present and future programs and loads of other resources:

www.demazenodfamily.com.au







Published by the Oblate Office of Mission, M.A.M.I. Centre, P.O. Box 384, Camberwell, Vic 3124 Telephone (03) 9805 8888 Email: mami@oblates.com.au Web: www.oblates.com.au



At Christmas we celebrate the greatest gift of all, the birth of Jesus Christ.

In the true spirit of Christmas, your gift can be a gift to those less fortunate – a gift of love.

The concept is simple: make a recommended tax deductible donation to one of our programs and you will receive a Christmas Gift Card, which explains that you have purchased a gift card in place of a gift, and give it to a loved one.

An ideal meaningful gift for someone special this Christmas is a MAMI Gift Card: a gift that keeps on giving for the entire year and beyond.



Make a donation to one of these projects in the Missions supported by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.



How to order your MAMI Gift Card

- 1. Order online at www.oblates.com.au/christmas-cards
- 2. Complete the form on the reverse side of this brochure
- 3. Call us on (03) 9805 8888



MAMI Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate PO Box 384, Camberwell, VIC 3124 E: mami@oblates.com.au www.oblates.com.au/mami



Our Gift to You: Novena of Masses

Dear Father,

Kindly include the following
intentions in the Christmas
Masses.

(Optional) Name:		

Please forward this to:

Address:

MAMI Office P.O. Box 384 Camberwell Vic 3124

The Novenas of Masses for you -**Christmas 2023**

As we look forward to celebrating the great Feast of Christmas our hope is that we can join with family and friends to give thanks and share of the many gifts we have received over the year. Let us think too of the many people throughout the world whose lives have been torn apart by war and conflict. We pray that peace may return so that we may be focused on the true meaning and essentials of who we are and what we are doing. May our time together enable us to see the truth of the presence of God in and around us.

When God gave us the gift of His Son He showed us the importance of sharing not just with those whom we love but also with those who are isolated, unknown and without hope. Jesus gave us the challenge, by his example, of being the hands of God in the world. As we gather, we will share our stories, renew our relationships, reconcile our differences and give thanks as well as offer hope as we exchange gifts. This we will do for those we love and I am sure, given the opportunity, for those in need we don't know we love!

As members of the Family founded by Saint Eugene de Mazenod, we each share our stories, experience and gifts. This time of year, is one where the memory of loved ones who have left us is felt most keenly. As the spiritual Fathers of our Family, the priests of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate want to support you at this time and offer the gift of a Christmas Novena of Masses. This is our way of thanking you for your support of our common missionary endeavours.

You are invited to place your special intentions and prayers of thanksgiving, particularly for the members of your family that have gone to God this year, in the message box below. All intentions will be placed in the Camberwell chapel where Masses will be offered from 16th December to Christmas Day.

Fr. Eric Alleaume OMI

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lif you wish to make a donation to MAMI apart from the Annual August

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Oblate Missions Developing Countries Fund (OMDC) **NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK**

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Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

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