



# Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

## From the Provincial

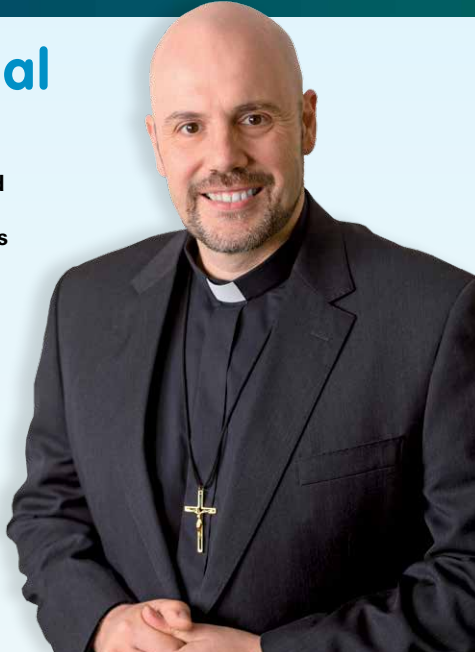
**When I first wrote to you as a newly appointed Provincial, in early 2019, I was filled with a great sense of excitement and expectation, having just celebrated the blessing and opening of the new St Mary's Seminary and preparing to celebrate the 125th Anniversary Celebrations of the Oblates arriving in Australia, along with the De Mazenod Family launch.**

The Provincial Council and I had spent a considerable amount of time in 2019 listening and consulting with members of the Province to develop from the Province Mission and Vision Statement five achievable priorities for the last three years which were – a program of Province Visitation, relaunch, and significant investment in the De Mazenod Family, Vocations, Ongoing Formation and Ministry with Youth.

Little did we know what was waiting for us in 2020 and 2021, which would effectively change all our lives. The world pandemic, caused by an invisible virus, stopped all our plans in its tracks and challenged each of us to examine how we were missioning and discover new ways to be Parishes, Colleges, Oblate Youth Australia, Rosies, De Mazenod Family, and a Province.

We have been blessed to be comparatively unharmed from the direct effects of the virus here in Australia. However, the collateral damage has impacted all our lives; many special moments, celebrations of life have come and gone without the appropriate celebration or occasion to mark them.

Even from an economic perspective once again Australia for the most part has done well. The introduction of JobKeeper was a fairy-tale for most around the world but salvation for many here. In 2020 and 2021, even though we were not able to make Parish Appeals, you as MAMI supporters continued to be generous and made it possible for us to directly impact the lives of thousands of people in our region and beyond. With the economic effects impacting the poor, well before the health impacts, we quickly moved our funding model from projects to emergency aid. You helped to provide food and medical supplies to Oblates working with the poor in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Bolivia, South Africa, Pakistan,



Sri Lanka, Madagascar, and Haiti; for the most part, you helped to feed thousands of people. Thank you for your generosity.

Despite the challenges over the last three years, we have much to be grateful for and to celebrate. Br Dominic Fung OMI celebrated his Perpetual Vows, our first Hong Kong vocation since the Oblates arrived in 1966. In Australia, after a long wait and a couple of reschedules, it was with great joy that we celebrated as a Province the Perpetual Vows of Br Joshua Nash and Br Luan Ha at St David's Tea Tree Gully SA in November and Br Joshua's Ordination to the Diaconate at St John Vianney's Vic in December. These celebrations fill us with joy that young men continue to respond to God's call and remind us that we need to invite men personally to consider a vocation to the Oblates.

The De Mazenod Family has been established and several programs have been run online, including two national gatherings. Our website provides many resources and opportunities, [www.demazenodfamily.com.au](http://www.demazenodfamily.com.au)

Having been re-appointed Provincial for a second term of three years, I can assure you the excitement, passion, and enthusiasm for the Mission remains, along with a degree of uncertainty and anxiety as we navigate the omicron outbreak.

I envisage the De Mazenod Family to be a significant focus to assist us in deepening and strengthening our community experience in the Australian Province and recovering from the experience of the last two years.

While I do believe we have achieved a great deal over the last three years, I also believe that returning to a new normal and opening borders will allow us to share and deepen our relationships in a meaningful way, strengthen our communities, and help each of us contribute to the future of the Australian Province as one De Mazenod Family.

My invitation is to join us in this journey of discernment as we work out together to discover what it means to be the De Mazenod Family, in Australia, in a 'change of era.'

God bless.

Fr Christian Fini OMI



## De Mazenod Family Lenten Resource

A De Mazenod Family Lenten Resource is available for use individually or together as a Ministry prayer group.

Resource reflections identify some key sufferings of Jesus, and focus on how we can see Jesus as companion in our life journey and rely on Him for support through our various trials, knowing He has gone through these sufferings Himself.

(Resource available for download on the De Mazenod Family website).

# From the Director

Dear Missionary Associates,

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. I spent three months from December 2021 to February 2022 in our Oblate Parishes of Tea Tree Gully and Dernancourt, South Australia, helping and celebrating Holy Masses. While I was in our Oblate parishes, I had a great opportunity to meet and thank our MAMI members. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to God for all your generous help and wholehearted support that we have received through and from you, MAMI (Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate) to support the poor in our Oblate Missions all over the world and the Oblate Life in Australia. I express my heartfelt thanks to Fr James Jeyachandran OMI, Fr Mathew Jeyaraj OMI, and Parishioners for their warm hospitality and great care.



I would like to share an inspiring story of St Mother Teresa of Calcutta with you. One day Mother Teresa was walking down the street when a poor man came up to her and said, "Mother Teresa, everybody is giving to you, I also want to give to you. Today, for the whole day I got only fifty cents. I want to give it to you". Mother Teresa thought for a moment: "If I take the fifty cents, he will have nothing to eat tonight, and if I don't take it, I will hurt his feelings. So, I put out my hands and I took the money. I have never seen such a joy on anybody's face as I saw on the face of that beggar man at the thought that he too could give to Mother Teresa". Mother Teresa went on: "It was a big sacrifice for that poor man who had sat in the sun all day long and received only fifty cents. It was beautiful. Fifty cents are such a small amount, and I can get nothing with it, but as he gave it up and I took it, it became like

thousands because it was given with so much love. God looks, not at the amount of money but at the love with which it is given". As St Francis of Assisi says, "For it is in giving that we receive". You are one of those people who offer your love and support to those who are in need during these difficult times.

Even during the pandemic, we have continued to support the work of our Oblates serving the poor around the world through spiritual and humanitarian works – feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, clothing the naked, and bringing the love of God to those in need. I know it has been a very difficult year with all the restrictions imposed on us due to the COVID pandemic. I warmly thank you for your understanding and support. With restrictions easing, I pray that 2022 will be a better year for us all. Be always assured of our prayers for you and your family. Please be safe and God bless.

Fr David Francis OMI



## LET US CELEBRATE

### 60th Ordination Anniversary of Fr Anthony Joseph Colbert OMI



Tony Colbert was born on 5 April 1937 in Nedlands, Perth, one of eight children and was educated at CBC Perth; he later attended the Oblate Juniorate in Lovely Banks, Vic. He joined the Oblates on 16 March 1954 at Sorrento and studied at Cedara, South Africa from 1955–1961 along with Bernie O'Brien, Vincent McGillicuddy, Kevin Casey, and later, John Sherman.

Fr Tony was ordained on 16th December 1961, at Fremantle.

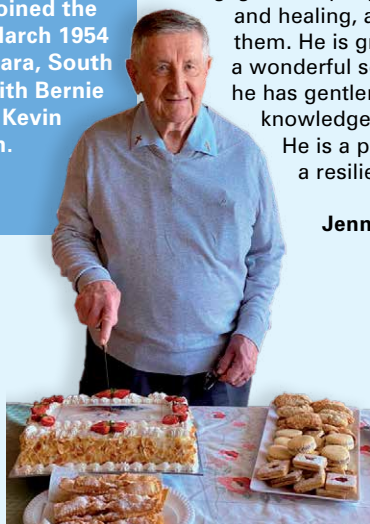
His first obedience was to Iona College, followed by assisting at Hillcrest, Fremantle, and 3 years at Sefton. In 1970 he went to Massey NZ as an assistant then parish priest before returning to Victoria in 1976, first to Moe, assisting, followed by parish priest at Sorrento. He spent three years at Dernancourt, a further 5 years at Moe, and a year at Eagle Vale (all as an assistant) before settling at Fremantle in 1994 as hospital/prison chaplain, where he served until 2020.

He is currently mostly retired, living at Fremantle.

Fr Tony is a kind and generous priest; nothing is too much trouble, and he is a man of great patience. As a chaplain, he engages with people, brings comfort and healing, and is interested in them. He is great company, with a wonderful sense of humour; he has gentlemanly manners, is knowledgeable and affable.

He is a prayerful priest and a resilient one.

Jenny McPherson



### 40th Ordination Anniversary



Dear Fr Vincent Ryan OMI and Fr Leo Mifsud OMI, Congratulations on the 40th Anniversary of your Priesthood Ordination. It's 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.





# Vocations



## Final Profession and Diaconate Ordination of Br Joshua Nash OMI

My story started some 30 years ago, when, as a baby, my parents brought me to be baptised at St David's. My parents, my extended family, and my parish community instilled in me the values of our Catholic faith. I am particularly indebted to the Antioch youth group at Tea Tree Gully and Oblate Youth Australia for providing me the space I needed as a teenager and young adult, to understand more about my faith, to claim my faith as my own, and to journey deeper into that faith. To be honest,

up until 2013, I had never even thought about becoming a priest. My dream after school was to become a human rights lawyer, to work for the rights of refugees and migrants, and to travel the world helping the less fortunate. I tried this. I graduated from university with a law degree, I worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), I travelled to every continent of the world (except Antarctica). But there was always something missing...

I have since completed my novitiate in the United States, undergone several years of seminary formation, and had the great opportunity to work in the Oblate missions in Lourdes and London. Now, as I prepare for my priestly ordination, I feel that I am standing at the precipice. I stand with the story of my family, my community, my formation behind me. Not forgotten, their presence is strong and supports me. What is in front of me I don't exactly know? But it will be a lifetime of bringing to fulfillment the vocation to which Christ has called me; that is to bring the Good News to the poor and the most abandoned. That is what an Oblate does, with the grace of God and the support of his brothers. This is what I have dedicated my life to and I wouldn't have it any other way!

**Br Joshua Nash OMI**



## Final Profession of Br Luan Ha OMI

I was born into a family with 8 members. It can also be seen as a large, extended family. My father, unfortunately, died quite young, when I was only 16 years old. My mother remained single and raised all her children alone. Now all my brothers and my sister are married, except me, an Oblate who has taken religious vows to worship God and help people, particularly the poor and the most abandoned following the charism of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Some people ask me why I follow this vocation, why I have become religious, in particular an Oblate. Does God call me? Honestly, God does not call me directly by having a conversation with me or giving me a vision like other saints. However, he gives me a sign. That is the joy, peace, and happiness that come from living and working in an Oblate community. Moreover, this sign draws me to join the community. Additionally, some Oblates have helped me discern my vocation. Finally, I have realized that God has called me through this sign to live with him and participate in his mission through the charism of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.



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**Br Luan Ha OMI**



## Perpetual Oblation of the First Oblate from Hong Kong

### Responding to the Call for the Poor

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) has been in Hong Kong for 55 years since 1966 to evangelize and to serve the poor and the most abandoned. The first Oblate from Hong Kong has just professed his perpetual oblation responding to this call for the poor.

On September 8, 2021, the OMI celebrated the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary with this perpetual oblation in the Notre Dame Parish, To Kwa Wan, Hong Kong. Fr. Slawomir Kalisz, OMI (Fr. Slawek), China Delegation Superior, presided over the Eucharistic celebration, concelebrated with our Oblates and Cardinal Joseph Zen (bishop emeritus of Hong Kong).



Fr. Slawomir Kalisz, OMI (left) giving the Oblate Cross to Br. Dominic King Ho Fung, OMI

In the perpetual oblation Fr. Slawek assessed Br. Dominic King Ho Fung, OMI whether he can love Jesus Christ with all his heart like the Blessed Virgin. Br. Dominic promised to love Christ wholeheartedly and to follow the examples of our founder St. Eugene de Mazenod to love God and his neighbours in his life.

Every Oblate professing perpetual oblation can receive a new Cross or inherit from deceased Oblates. Br. Dominic has been the Pastoral Assistant in the Oblate Primary School Hong Kong (OPS), so he chose to carry the Cross of the former school supervisor Fr. Stanislaus Sun, OMI. Receiving the Cross of Fr. Sun signifies the inheritance of his spirit of love for the youth and the poor.

In his thanksgiving message, Br. Dominic gave a flower to his parents and thanked them for the cultivation of faith.

Now 34 years old, several times Br. Dominic has participated in OMI Vocation Weekend during secondary school. In 2006 he joined the Oblate Youth. Meanwhile, he was discerning his vocation living in prayer life with vocation groups of the Hong Kong Diocese. He studied abroad after secondary school, then became the Pastoral Assistant in OPS. He joined the Oblates in 2014, professed his first vows in the Philippines in 2016, and finished his Philosophy and Theology studies this year. From this Summer he serves in St. Alfred's Parish, Hong Kong as he continues his formation becoming a priest.

Receiving the perpetual oblation of the first Oblate from Hong Kong, Fr. Slawek said: "I am wonderfully happy today. We have waited for 55 years, and today we have the first fruit from Hong Kong... We form Oblates by accompanying them to love God and neighbours, especially the poor; and my way is to be with them, to take care of people in need in parishes and on the streets."

This spirit of service and accompaniment has deeply touched Br. Dominic as he said: "Oblates always love to stay with the poor and the youth, I agree very much with this spirit and vocation." Br. Dominic has served in mountain areas in the Philippines, and this experience confirms what he has learned: "We as Christians should learn from the poor because God likes to show us the spirit of the Gospel through them."

**Fr Slawomir Kalisz OMI**



# AROUND THE MISSION

## INDONESIA

### CHRISTMAS IN ST. STEPHENS PARISH – CILACAP

We were graced to be able to celebrate Christmas again with parishioners celebrating in person and online, but still in line with the health protocols stipulated by the government and increasing the number of masses celebrated.



In the town, we held two vigil masses and two Christmas morning masses with around 350 parishioners at each mass and around 2,000 followed the masses from live streaming.

Fr. Petrus, O.M.I. went to the sea villages with a group of parishioners from Cilacap and had full churches as these areas are isolated and free from Covid 19. I celebrated Christmas in the local jail where Catholic and Protestants joined together for the celebration, and



we have permission from the local bishops to invite all to receive Communion. Also, the Masses in the main Church.

Fr. Petrus celebrated a special children's mass in the main Church with "entertainment" after the mass.

We had a police presence from Dec 23rd to Jan 2nd as there is still some danger of extremists interfering with Christian celebrations and we provided a special tent and meals for the officers guarding the churches.

On a national level – the president of Indonesia – Joko Widodo – attended celebrations for Christmas in a very large and packed sports stadium and gave a very positive talk to all present. Many Ministers and past presidents attended the ceremonies. There is a big effort for the unity of all.

Fr. Petrus brightened up the presbytery with a Christmas tree, lights, etc. and we had 8 seminarians – 6 O.M.I.'s and 2 Diocesan with us for Christmas, and they prepared the priest visit at the outstations.

The parishioners prepared for Christmas with a penitential Liturgy – in person and online with general absolution but also an opportunity for private confession if asked for.

Christmas was a happy time and health protocols did not dampen the spirit of Cooperation and community which Christmas lit up in the hearts of men of goodwill and we thank God for graces received and Love shared and we thank again M.A.M.I. Australia for so generous help to us and our people.

Fr Charlie Burrows OMI

### Christmas card sales

Christmas card sales totalled \$39,176.41 with a breakdown of:

Chickens	\$ 9,215.00
Development	\$ 2,940.00
Education	\$ 7,998.53
Goats	\$ 9,965.00
Toolboxes	\$ 9,057.88

Thanks to everyone who bought the Christmas Cards to support the poor and needy in our Oblate Missions.

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.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FOR **TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS** CAN BE MADE TO:  
**Oblate Missions Developing Countries Fund (OMDC)**  
**NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK**  
 BSB NO.: **083 347**  
 ACCOUNT NO.: **45500 7380**

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FOR **THE RELIGIOUS WORK OF THE MISSION** CAN BE MADE TO:  
**Oblates of Mary Immaculate (MAMI)**  
**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.

Send to: **MAMI Office**  
**PO Box 384**  
**Camberwell Vic 3124**

Name			
Address			
City	State	Postcode	
Phone			
Email			

I have enclosed a Cheque/Money Order made payable to MAMI for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

or debit my credit card:  Mastercard  Visa the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

One off payment  Monthly payment

Card number

Credit card expiry date   /   CCV number    (final 3 digits printed on card back)

Card holder's name (as appears on the card)

Card holder's signature  Date

I require a tax deductible receipt.

I would like further information on making a bequest in my will.

Comments/intention:





## AROUND THE MISSION

### KENYA Getting Stronger

**Although politics is getting complicated heading to elections in August 2022, the country is peaceful and slowly increasing the number of jobs available. In northern parts, people are suffering drought, while the whole country is wondering why the wet season is so dry. This will be a big problem for food supplies in the coming months. Security is a little bit concerning at present, with so many people still struggling to get by. I no longer travel at night, and we use taxis for airport runs.**

The Oblates are still alive and kicking. And our Kenya Mission numbers just increased with four scholastics returning from Cedara, South Africa: a pastoral year for three and (God willing), a 2022 ordination for the fourth man. This is very encouraging for us. In August two more Pre-Novices from Namibia joined our Karen Pre-Novitiate; we now have 9 Pre-Novices: four (Namibia) and five (Kenya).

November was a busy time A new planning committee was formed for the 25th Anniversary of the Oblates in Kenya to be celebrated in May 2022.

The Oblate youth group in Nairobi continued quietly but visited a small Children's Home in July. The Oblate youth chipped in with a donor from Australia to send money and buy footwear for the children to stop them getting infected with "jiggers" (worms), that burrow into the skin – they don't feel it until it's too late due to the thick "padding" under the feet (walking barefoot for years). Oblate youth are planning to visit on a regular schedule to give encouraging talks and open up their minds to new possibilities. Parents at this place are, generally, not interested in education for their children. Fr Fidele continues Prison Ministry at the women's maximum prison and Fr Gerard continued Chaplaincy at Nyumbani HIV+ children's home.



Irinda Parish had its big celebration in May, opening the new church and celebrating its official Canonical Erection as St Eugene de Mazenod Parish. (photo right, with Bishop)



In June, the Oblates in Meru held a Child Protection awareness seminar attracting people from the Education and Government sectors as well as local Catechists, Parish Leaders, youth, and parishioners. It was successful and we plan more in the future. There is still a great ignorance in the general population about the harm caused by child abuse.

We still have three student priests from Lesotho, Zambia, and DR Congo. Fr Gerard is now part of a special Liaison Committee to help improve working relationships between the Religious and Diocesan Clergy around Kenya. Projects around the Kenya Mission continued:

1. **Our Mission Centre at Karen** storehouse started in September and progressing slowly, slowly. Fr Fidel continues with the landscaping around the new residence.
2. **At Rongai**, we've now waited 7 months for a 3-phase meter: a shortage caused by corruption in the power company and a change of leadership.
3. **In Kionyo parish** our new church continues with internal furnishings and finishes to prepare for the 25th Anniversary in May 2022
4. **At Irinda parish (Meru town)** the new borehole was drilled successfully. Church planning continues – adjusting to budget constraints.



Fr Gerard Conlan OMI

### PAKISTAN Thank you from Mazenod College, Lahore, Pakistan.

Youhanabad, Lahore, is the largest Christian settlement in Pakistan and was established around 46 years back. Youhanabad is surrounded by 16 different colonies with approximately one million residents including Muslims and Christians. The educational system among all these settlements is awful. Youth do not have quality education or skills. They are unaware of their future and living life without any purpose. The Church has established a few schools, but they are also not sufficient. The government opened a few schools in different areas, but they are also up to primary, middle, and high school education. For college and university education students must travel to the main city which is beyond the capacity of the majority. The lack of colleges and university education has left the youth, especially the Christian population with minimum opportunities for a brighter future.



To meet the big need for education the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Delegation Pakistan got approval from the Secretariat of Rome to build a college for this population. The Mission Procure Germany sponsored the full cost of construction of Mazenod College. Within two years, we have completed the college construction and the building is ready now for the admissions of students.

With the help of the Australian Province and MAMI, we were able to purchase furniture and equipment for the staff as well as for classrooms. We thank the Australian MAMI for their continued generous help and support to our Mazenod College, Lahore, Pakistan.

Wishing you many more blessings.

Fr Khan Paulus OMI



## INDIA Words of gratitude

### CHINTHALAVALASA

From Chinthalavalasa Oblate Mission in India: And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit exults in God, my saviour! For he has looked upon his servant in her lowliness. And people forever call me blessed." Lk 1: 46–48.

Along with Mother Mary, I sing praises of the lord. The good Lord has looked with favour on Chinthalavalasa parish which is one of the smallest parishes of the Archdiocese. We are happy to note that the Australian province has donated \$46000 AUD for the construction of projects.



I am Fr. Varghese OMI, of Oblates of Mary Immaculate Congregation. I am the parish priest of Chinthalavalasa mission of Visakhapatnam Archdiocese. It is for 6 years a parish of Oblates. Since it is a new one we had to start from scratch. Our need was the construction of a community hall, Oblate residence, and church.

This dream of the faithful of this mission is fulfilled because of your generosity. I along with the parishioners and the Oblates express our gratitude for doing this favour to this growing mission. I like to mention some names, especially, Rev. Fr. Christian Fini OMI, the Provincial of Australia, and his team of councillors, Rev. Fr David Francis OMI. The Provincial Bursar and the MAMI members and all other Donors. Here I also thank Rev. Fr. S. Chinnappan OMI, our Indian Provincial, and his team of councillors for allowing me to request you. I also thank Fr. Varaprasathem OMI, provincial treasurer, India. May God bless you all. Let Mother Mary protect you all during this pandemic.

The community hall is built and half of the Oblate residence is also complete. Already Oblates are staying in completed rooms. Now church work is going on. We aim to complete it by end of April 2022. The fund from Australia will be used for the completion of the church.

Once again, I thank you all. I offer holy masses for your intentions. May the good Lord allow you to continue to do this kind of favour to the poor of the world.

Fr Varghese Cheruparamban OMI



### BUTTAYAGUDEM PARISH

The Mission in Buttayagudem, Andhra Pradesh received a two-wheeler for both the mission and ministry purposes. Fr. Tomy Thomas and Fr. Yesuraj are the pastors and beneficiaries of the gift.

#### Mission and School in Ramsapathar

It is in the North East Region. In the diocese of Dhiphu, near Guwahati, Assam. The mission is full of 'Karbi' tribals. It has got a higher primary school with 250 students with thatched houses, as we do not afford to have a school building structure. This has got 4 missions attached to the parish of Ramsapathar that is in the Oblates' care.

Thank you.

Fr Varam Anthony OMI







## HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PROVINCIAL AND HIS NEW COUNCIL!

### PROVINCIAL

Fr Christian Fini OMI

### NEW PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Fr Andrew Chen OMI

Fr Michael Twigg OMI

Fr Slawek Plonka OMI

Fr David Francis OMI

Wishing them all the blessings and entrusting them to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our mother.

On Saturday 22nd January, several members of Oblate Youth Australia (OYA) gathered for "Reconnect". Due to COVID-19, OYA has not been able to host the annual National Oblate Youth Encounter since January 2020. "Reconnect" was organised to give the young people in the Victorian contingent of the community an opportunity to finally gather in person and 'reconnect' with one another, after two years of extended lockdowns and online ministry.



The theme of the day was "The Most United Family" – exploring ways in which each of us as individuals are connected to the wider De Mazenod Family. It was a great chance for us to explore the importance of community in our lives and how each of us is called to serve our community and each other, making use of our unique gifts and talents. The day involved a combination of prayer, personal sharing, discussion and finished with Mass, where each participant was given the chance to reflect on the experiences and challenges faced during the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was a great way to begin 2022 with a sense of renewal in the community of OYA participants in Victoria. We continue to hope and pray that we will be able to "reconnect" with our wider national community as soon as border and Covid restrictions allow!

Emma Rice

## Thank you, Sorrento Parish

On the weekend of January 1–2, 2022, Fr Christian Fini OMI, Provincial, Fr Harry Dyer OMI, Rector Mazenod College, and Fr Austin Cooper OMI, of Camberwell, were warmly welcomed to the Oblate Parish of St Mary's Star of the Sea, Sorrento, Holy Family, Rye and St Thomas's, Portsea for the annual promotion of the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate which raises awareness of and funds for the Oblates Missions.



The mission appeal is held at this time of the year as it captures many of the holidaymakers who call the Mornington Peninsula home during the summer months, inviting them to consider becoming supporters of our missions. Over many years the parishioners of Sorrento, Rye, and Portsea have proven to be very generous supporters of the Oblates and our various missions.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all who supported this appeal which was overwhelmingly successful considering the tough times many people have experienced during these COVID times.

Fr Harry Dyer OMI



## Friend on the Street – Queensland Rosies

**The early months of the year often bring a sense of hope and excitement for what the new year will have in store for us. This year, however, feels a little different. We have experienced a surge in the number of cases of COVID-19, with many volunteers in isolation, employed as carers, classed as essential workers or vulnerable themselves, our outreaches were greatly affected. It seemed dire – many local businesses were unable to open because staff were sick, supply chain interruption meant a lack of essential items, and people began to get nervous. Was this 2020 all over again?**

It has been a stressful time for all but more so for those who rely on Rosies for a cuppa and chat each week. This might be the only meaningful interaction they have – what would happen if there was no one there to ask, "Hey mate or hello friend, how are you?"

With this thought in mind, we put a call out for new volunteers and where possible asked existing volunteers to put their hand up for an extra shift or two if they had space to help Rosies stay present for our patrons. We were overwhelmed with responses from individuals and teams wanting to know how they could do more to support our mission.

New volunteers poured in from across the state to lend a hand, share friendship, and ensure that no patron felt alone or afraid that they wouldn't be able to grab a snack and engage in simple conversation. Our people, Rosies people, continued to show up for those in need; to show that even though we may have our faces covered and we are standing 1.5m apart, I am still here for you, I care for you and care about what happens to you.

It is times like these when we witness the generosity of spirit that our volunteers carry with them every day that we are reminded of a line in Galatians chapter 6, verse 9: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up". At a time when it would have been so easy for our volunteers to grow weary of doing good many decided to put their hands up and do more and encourage their friends and family to join them in doing "more." Those volunteers picked up this mantle and carried it aloft ensuring that the risk of a cancelled outreach grew smaller and smaller as restrictions continue to change.

The Rosies volunteers' commitment to service has been humbling to witness over the last two years during COVID – but it has been even more apparent over the last several weeks. When it would have been so easy for many of our volunteers to take a step back and look after their own needs, they stepped up and put the wellbeing of our patrons first. They have continued to sew faith, friendship, and connection so that our patrons may reap the love and community that flourishes on outreach.

To support Rosies or to learn more about our work in Queensland, please follow us on Facebook or visit our website.

Jayne Shallcross



## Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

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## PROMOTION OF VOCATIONS INVOLVES YOUR PRAYERS AND YOUR ENCOURAGING CHALLENGE

If we want a Church tomorrow, the encouragement of vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life must be the responsibility of every Catholic. Many will remember my last visit to Indonesia where I attended the First Vows ceremony of eleven young men and on the previous evening witnessed about the same number commence their novitiate. The Vocations Director shared with me the secret to their success: *'We have committees in each parish who invite people who they feel have a vocation to take up the challenge.'*

Oblates are always willing to meet a person you refer to us. Rather than asking them to talk about a religious vocation, encourage them to share with us their vision for the Church, and what we might change to be more relevant to today's generations of people: *from little things, big things grow.*

**Fr John Sherman OMI**  
Oblate Vocations Coordinator

