

Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

Director's reflection

As members of the Oblate Family we have just celebrated our 200th anniversary of founding by St Eugene de Mazenod. Let us quickly take stock of where, as the Australian Province, we have come from and our goals for the future.

In 1894 the Oblates arrived in Fremantle and faced the challenges of a harbour city parish, the giving of missions throughout Western Australia and the establishment of an Industrial school for boys. Since then we have spread throughout mainland Australia with today, missioning in nine parishes, three colleges, outreaches to the materially poor particularly in Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland and chaplaincies in prisons, hospitals and Notre Dame University Western Australia. St Mary's Oblate seminary has educated Oblates to mission both in Australia and beyond. It has also assisted a number of our Oblate communities in Asia in the formation of their local Oblates. A significant commitment has also been made to the staffing of Catholic Theological College Melbourne.

In 1971 we established the Mission of Java which together with two other missions, staffed mainly by French and Italian Oblates expelled by the communist government of Laos, in 1990 became a Province which we still support financially. The Australian Oblates also had two missions in New Zealand. In 1990 we took on responsibility for the China Mission. Australian Oblates also work in Kenya and Zimbabwe.

Being missionaries there are times when for various reasons you have to move on. The four communities who conducted parish missions and retreats were closed. About the same time we founded our colleges. We withdrew from the New Zealand Mission and four Australian parishes once under the pastoral care of the Oblates have been handed back to their respective dioceses.

The original Oblates came from Ireland and the UK. Then they were joined by local vocations and Oblates from Italy, Poland, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and China.

Thousands of laypeople have become part of the Oblate Family. They are known as the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate. They support the Oblate mission by their prayers, financial assistance and participation in the immersion programmes known as PIMs – Partners in Mission.

What is at the heart of these people who call themselves OBLATES? Fr. Jette, a former Superior General, described us as 'Men of the Poor', 'Men of the Church', 'Men of the Virgin Mary'. Our Constitution and Rules calls us to live Jesus Christ in apostolic communities, leaving nothing undared as we seek out the most abandoned in a spirit of daring, humility and trust. As vowed religious we see this as a call to radical discipleship.

Celebrating 200 years since our founding, the General Chapter of 2016 set the following goals for the future:

- Continue to mission as we identify the 'new' poor.
- To give a priority to missioning with youth.
- To use information technology and social media to advance the mission.
- To work together financially to enable the missions to continue in the poorest and most difficult places.
- To ensure that both initial and ongoing formation equips the Oblate for the most challenging of missions.
- The Spirit is calling us to a deeper conversion to form intercultural communities.

With the spiritual and financial support of our Missionary Associates much has been achieved since 1816. To move forward to the next century we need the partnership of all in our Oblates Family to 'leave nothing undared for the kingdom of God.'

Fr John Sherman OMI



Events around the Province



21st May
the Feast of
St Eugene



29th May
the Feast of Blessed
Joseph Gerard



21st–25th May
Oblate Province
Gathering



12th June
the Feast of Blessed
Joseph Cebula

The following Oblates have moved to new communities:

- Fr Asad Gill to Mazenod College WA.
- Fr Jude Amirthanayagam to St Patrick's Fremantle.
- Fr Eric Alleaume to Sefton NSW.
- Fr Mathew Raj to St Pius Parish, Dernancourt in South Australia.
- Fr Kevin Davine to Mazenod College Victoria.
- Fr Andrew Chen to Moe, Victoria.
- Fr Ian Mackintosh to Sorrento, Victoria.

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Fr Luc Young celebrates 25th anniversary of Priesthood in Beijing

Luc Young Chen Uin, born in 1960 on Rodrigues Island, Mauritius. 9th of 12 siblings (8 boys and 4 girls). Educated by nuns at a Catholic Primary school, then went to a government run high school. After high school became a nurse and worked in a public hospital for 4 years. In 1984 left home and through Calcutta, India reached Hong Kong and Macau and started studies to be a brother with the Missionaries of Charity of Mother Theresa. In 1985, feeling called to the priesthood, left the Brothers and started discerning the priestly vocation with the Oblates in Hong Kong. Arrived in the Philippines at the end of 1985



and went through the prenovitiate, novitiate and professed vows as an OMI. After philosophy studies, was sent to St Paul's University in Ottawa where from 1988 to 1991 completed Theological studies. Final vows in 1990, DEACONATE in 1991 and ordained to the priesthood on February 16, 1992 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Hong Kong.

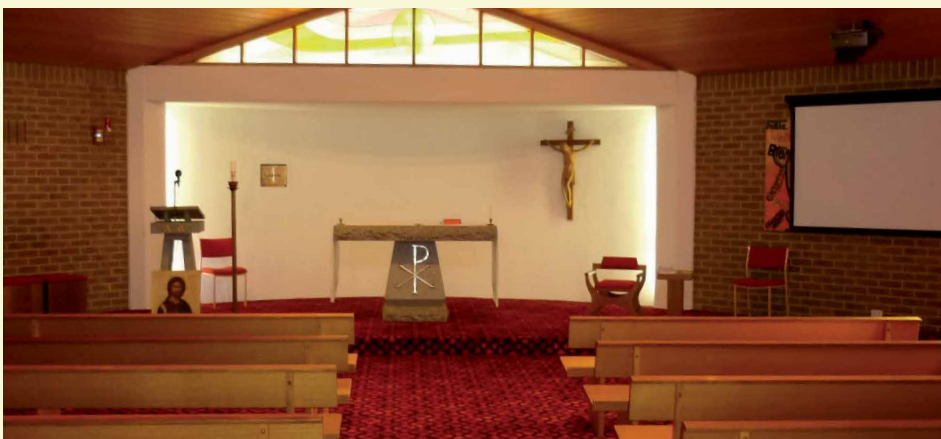
From 1992 to 2008 worked in schools, parishes, prisons and hospital ministries before being sent to Beijing in 2008.

Fr Luc provided the above curriculum vitae. His ordination in 1992 was the first after the China Mission became a delegation of the Australian Province. Whether working in Hong Kong or Mainland China, Fr Luc's enthusiasm for the mission combined with his warmth, caring and dedication, has touched all who meet him.



No big church for Fr Luc to celebrate his 25th anniversary of ordination. The Mass was celebrated with his Oblate Community and a few friends in his unit in Beijing.

50th anniversary of the founding of Mazenod College Victoria



26th March

Mission Action Day
11.00am to 2.00pm at the college
(All Oblate friends invited.)

20th May

Founders Day Sports Carnival at
the college

Hong Kong

Fr John
Wotherspoon OMI



Dear Friends

Hello from Bloemfontein airport where I've just arrived from Lesotho and am now waiting for a fight, I mean flight, to Durban where I'm due to visit five more families of prisoners in Hong Kong.

For the last few days I've been in the most Oblate country in the world – Lesotho! Three of its four dioceses have O.M.I. bishops and half of the 200 priests are Oblates.

Yesterday was a special day for me: I was able to say Mass at the grave of Blessed Joseph Gerard O.M.I. who spent most of his long life serving the people of this region. His grave surely is the second most sacred site in the world for Oblates ...after that of St Eugene de Mazenod in Marseilles.

Last Sunday I joined local prison chaplain Fr Tanti O.M.I. for two prison Masses – one at a men's prison and one at a women's prison. At both prisons I had the chance to warn inmates about the danger of drug trafficking (recently released inmates are a prime target for Drug Lords).

So far I've met with the families of about 20 prisoners in HK. Most of the African drug mules in HK are from family or neighbourhood groups. By accessing these circles I'm hoping the message will spread widely: "Don't take drugs to HK"

Thank you to the many kind friends who made this trip possible. I've been praying for you each day.

Photos of the trip – including photos of beautiful Lesotho – and daily updates are at www.v2catholic.com on recent menus

Thank you for a prayer.

Greetings from St. Eugene Province of India!

Fr. S. Chinnappan OMI
Provincial



We are happy to note that you have mobilized \$ 7000 for bush bikes for school children. We thank you sincerely for always helping the Indian Province and its ministry. We know that this money is raised by MAMI and the Oblate colleges (Christmas cards). Our prayers are always for you.

Fr Chinnappan felt the situation had changed regarding the need for bikes, as a very busy main road had been built near the school and that the educational needs of the school were greater. I have supported this change of direction of the project, provided the money is used to provide better facilities for the children...Fr John.

Indonesia

It was September 2013, one month after my father passed away. I had to leave my village in order to pursue higher education. It was difficult for me especially as the backbone of my family, my father, had been "broken." However, I should go on to a better life and I should be useful for other people and that is the truth. It has been the reason why I got my spirit back and why I decided to pursue higher education in a foreign place.

At that time, one of my friends offered an opportunity to pursue higher education in Cilacap. He informed that there was an academy that provided a program called Student Loan. A thousand questions made me restless about the opportunity. Should I go and leave my mother alone after my father passed away? Would I pass the admittance test within the academy? Would I be able to adapt myself to a completely new neighbourhood?

My mother understood my restlessness and she finally gave her blessing to my departure to Cilacap and to my enrolment within the academy

The semi-military art of education that has been implemented opened my eyes and my heart and I found that success might be achieved through struggle, training and patience. Struggle represents the limit of an individual in managing the existing situations, training provides the learning about how to keep moving forward and patience shows that success demands long struggle and training.

Finally, in October 15th, 2016, the graduation was held and I was one of the best graduates. I am very indebted to Father Charlie Burrows, OMI, the founder of the *Akademi Maritim Nusantara* and the one who has granted me the Student Loan program. The program has helped me a lot in achieving my inspiration. I thank you very much for your kindness and wisdom.



Pakistan

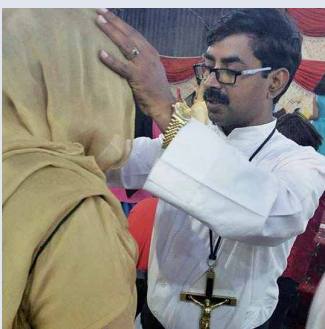
On 8 August 2016, a terrorist bomb killed at least 70 people and injured 130 more in a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan. On 25 October 2016, at least 59 cadets and guards were killed in an attack by militants on a police college in that same city. The Vicar Apostolic of Quetta is an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Bishop Victor GNANAPRAGASAM OMI



On 28 October, the Vatican news bureau, *Fides*, published the following report:

Christian and Islamic religious leaders who intervened to resolve a case of alleged blasphemy in Quetta, in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, played a decisive role regarding two Christians. As Fr. Renald REMINDRAN, Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate in Quetta, reports to *Fides*, a nine-year-old Christian boy named Izhan and his mother Shakeela Kauser, a nurse at the Civil Hospital in Quetta and mother of three children, were stopped and questioned on charges of blasphemy: they were accused of having burned pages of the Koran on 20 October.

After the complaint, the police stopped them. In this instance some local Christian leaders got the leaders of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam organization involved, who played a key role to exonerate the two of all charges. The matter was resolved on October 21, and accusations of blasphemy were declared void, "We are delighted with this outcome. It is significant".



Haiti

There are nearly 150 Oblates working in Haiti, the largest Catholic congregation in the country. They run parishes, schools and medical facilities throughout the island nation. Most of their ministries were damaged by Hurricane Matthew. As the Oblates work mainly among the 'poorest of the poor' many of those they work with had their homes destroyed or badly damaged by Hurricane Matthew.

Fr Joe Corriveau OMI wrote:

'In 2010 an earthquake destroyed St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Fond-Oies, Haiti. Thirty parishioners were killed, and all of the buildings were reduced to rubble.'

For years worshippers used a makeshift building made with tarpaulins on the side and sheet metal on top. With financial assistance from overseas a new church and rectory were constructed. In October Hurricane Matthew literally blew away much of the hard work of the people at St. Anthony. The church was destroyed and the rectory was severely damaged. The people again face not only rebuilding their homes but also their church.

Thanks to the generosity of MAMI we have been able to assist in a small way with reconstruction

If you wish to make a donation to MAMI apart from the Annual August appeal, your gift is always happily received. To assist our administration and avoid confusion you may like to use this donation slip. Thank you for kind and generous support.

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PARTNERS IN MISSIONS (PIMS)



Beijing Mission

Trish Mulqueen (Principal at St Joseph's Trafalgar in Sale Diocese) and her daughter Sarah (Year 12 student at Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon) volunteered at the Beijing Mission for four weeks from December 8th till January 6th 2017. In this article they reflect on their experience....

We felt privileged to have had the experience to contribute in a small way to the mission work in Beijing. We were struck by the instantaneous feeling of community as we were warmly greeted at the airport by Fr Luc Young and Sunny. It was clear right from the beginning, that we were an integral part of a very special team, loving and caring for this community.

We helped in the De Mazenod Inter-Cultural Exchange Company teaching English, Sarah teaching small groups with Jayden (19 yr old Mazenod College graduate from Perth) and Trish instructing individual lessons.

We also helped at the kindergartens with scheduled English lessons to classes. We had so much fun teaching the young students English and talking about Australia.

As you are probably aware the Oblate Beijing Mission run an afterschool care facility called 'Five Loaves and Two Fish' and we were able to help with this work as well. At this facility the children are fed and cared for, and encouraged to do their homework. We were also able to help with English lessons here.....

When we reflect on our time away, we both feel so privileged to have had this opportunity. It is difficult to put into words the impact that this community has had on us, there is something about being part of a community of people whose sole motivation is to love and care for others. We strive so hard in our catholic schools to create these environments and we do a particularly good job at it, but we all go home of an evening and live and work in our families as we should do, as this vocation too is equally important. In Beijing however, Fr Luc, Fr Giovanni and

Fr Johnny's work is totally about loving and helping the families and it is evident that they are committed passionately to doing God's work here on Earth. We were deeply moved by this.

Jayden writes having just returned from five months in China: Deciding to leave University after 4 days was a decision that was one of the biggest steps I've taken. Around April 2016, the opportunity came up for me to work alongside with the Oblates in China and I snatched it up with barely any hesitation.

When I arrived, I was met by Luc, Giovanni and Johnny in Beijing. They made me feel like I was more than welcomed and set everything up for me perfectly. Sunny (the receptionist/accountant/mother of the company) was like a second mother to me in my time away. These 4 incredible individuals work tirelessly and unselfishly throughout their entire day for the benefit of others and they have shown me how to care for others.

Throughout my time in Beijing, I met so many wonderful people that I feel I will know for a long time into the future. Every single person associated with the company in any regard were inviting and open to any concerns I had with the work.

For the first week or two I took time to find my feet. I struggled with all this responsibility placed on me. I was in charge of these children's English education which could help them for the rest of their lives.

Learning to build relationships with these children (of whom most are migrants) is one of the most fulfilling and incredible parts about my trip. I have never been more excited to go into work each day than when I was teaching.

I have never had a real passion for children. I don't mean to say I don't like them, I just never felt a want to learn about them or even as simple as holding babies. But seeing these kids in China has really opened up my eyes to how precious and innocent children really are (which I feel is a massive step into adulthood). This has forced me to be more considerate and patient with people that I'm working with or teaching.



For a guy who didn't really have any direction set out for his near future, to me now enrolled for a Primary School Education degree, this trip really opened up my eyes to not only how the rest of the world is operating, but also to what I want to do with the rest of my life.

Hong Kong – home to 7.3 million people, fantastic food, Victoria Peak, the Star ferries that constantly crisscross the harbor, shopping, Stanley Market, little old trams that rattle and trundle around Hong Kong island. And also home to Notre Dame College in Kowloon, part of the Oblates Parish, where three colleagues and I spent a month earlier this year volunteering our services in the Summer School Programme.

Before retiring from teaching at the end of 2015, I had taught for some years at St Pius X School in Adelaide. It is part of Dernancourt Parish, run by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Since 2011 the school has been involved in what has become known as the Hong Kong Exchange Programme, whereby staff members travel to Kowloon to teach conversational English during their summer vacation

We were met at the airport by two staff members from the Oblate Primary School, where we were to live while in Hong Kong. This was our first experience of the consideration and respect shown to us during our visit. Then, off to Kowloon.

Monday was our first teaching day. Our accommodation is about 10 minutes by bus, or 25 a minute walk from Notre Dame, where we were teaching. On to the bus to school, usually the only Westerners around. A friend has asked me if that felt strange, I actually enjoyed the feeling that nobody took any special notice of us, We were just part of the local scene.

Our teaching day started at 8:15 am, with a break from 10:00 – 10:30 am, then until 12:15 pm. We taught two different groups each day, so only needed to prepare one set of activities.

Most days we had lunch with the parish priests, who live on the top floor at Notre Dame.

Friends at home have asked if I would volunteer again in the Summer School Programme. My answer, unhesitatingly, is "Yes." Despite the sweat running down one's back, the crowded streets and the occasional frustration of not understanding another language, I felt incredibly privileged at being able to live as a local, and be immersed in the culture for a month. I found it very rewarding working with the students and being able to share some of our Australian experiences and culture with them. We experienced wonderful hospitality and have made some wonderful friends. Great memories!

George Ewing



Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

Published by the Oblate Office of Mission, M.A.M.I. Centre, P.O. Box 384, Camberwell, Vic 3124
Telephone (03) 9805 8888 Fax: (03) 9813 2696 Email: mami@oblates.com.au Web: www.oblates.com.au