



# M.A.M.I.



## Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

### De Mazenod Family Fundraising Mass & Dinner – South Australia

On Saturday evening 11th April, 2015, 104 guests gathered at the Clovercrest Hotel for the De Mazenod Fundraising Dinner to raise funds for the Oblate Missions. The ten tables filled the hotel dining room and gave plenty of walk space to catch up with friends on other tables. Our entertainment for the evening was provided by the Adelindo Angklung, a traditional Indonesian music Group. The Angklung is a musical instrument made of two to four bamboo tubes attached to a bamboo frame. The tubes are carved to have a resonant pitch when struck and are tuned to octaves. The group provided wonderful entrainment during the meal.

The guest speaker for the evening was none other than Fr Christian Fini OMI the outgoing Director of MAMI. Fr Christian shared with us some of his experiences



over the last six years as Director and this was followed by a number of photos from his adventures. Honary Oblate Mrs Carmel Farrow thanked Fr Christian and presented him with a small gift on behalf of the Oblate Parishes in Australia to show our appreciation for his many gifts he brought to the job.

Following the formalities, the Adelino Angklung group provided an interactive session. About 30 guests scattered at different tables were invited to learn how to play the Angklung. Each different note has a number. Under the direction of Mr Ferry Chandra the group's conductor, soon had our dinner guests playing the instrument. This provided a great deal of fun and entertainment around the table. It turned out to be one of the great highlights of the evening.

Following dessert the raffle and door prizes were drawn. A total of \$4188 was raised on the night for the Missions. Special thanks to all those who made the night possible particular our major Sponsor Ivan Butler Funerals.

## MAMI Triennium Pilgrimage 2016



In 2016 the Oblates of Mary Immaculate will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation. The year 1816 is significant as the year in which St Eugene De Mazenod, Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, began to live in common with the first group of companions in the Mission House in Aix-en-Provence. On 25th January, 1816, the feast of St Paul's Conversion, the five young priests gathered in the common room to sign a formal petition asking the archdiocese to authorise their newly formed society, to be known as the Missionaries of Provence.

In 2016, Fr Christian Fini OMI, will be leading a MAMI Pilgrimage visiting Rome, Assisi, and Florence, followed by Lourdes, Aix, Marseilles, and Paris. The highlight of the pilgrimage will be time exploring Aix, the town where St Eugene De Mazenod was born and where the Congregation was born. We will also visit Marseilles where St Eugene was Bishop and from where the charism spread to the four

corners of the world. The Oblate Youth Australia World Youth Day Pilgrimage will join the MAMI pilgrimage in Aix, Marseilles and Paris on their way to Poland, to share this wonderful experience.

The final itinerary and costing will be advertised in the August newsletter; the tentative dates are 3rd – 20th July.



2014 Pilgrimage – Group shot of 2014 MAMI Pilgrims at the tomb of St Eugene in Marseilles, France.



# Director's Update



Dear Friends,

**Have you ever heard of an Oblate Mentoring Community? Probably not. Well that is just what we have here at Mazenod College in Victoria. Fr Christian Fini is now the Rector of Mazenod College and I am in community with him just in case he needs advice. However, while I am supposed to be an 'old hand' as a principal, Fr Christian is a reasonably young 'old hand' as a MAMI Director and he is mentoring me. We are a mutually mentoring community!**

Recently I was having coffee with a person who has a possible vocation to the Oblates. 'Leave nothing undared for the Kingdom of God' is an aspect of the Oblate charism that he said appeals

to him. It is in this spirit I take up the challenge of being MAMI Director.

Over the years I have seen the work of my Brother Oblates in the overseas missions, particularly in South Africa where I studied and was ordained some 50 years ago, and throughout Asia especially in Indonesia, China and India. Recently as chaplain to the Oblate Rosies Outreach in Queensland, where some nine communities and 900+ volunteers work with people who are doing it tough, was for me a totally new missionary experience. How do these works survive, is a question I repeatedly put to myself.

The immediate response is the wonderful Oblate Priests, Brothers and Lay Co-operators on the missions. They, however, would be the first to identify that one of

the strengths for them is knowing that there is a great group of people – the De Mazenod Family (MAMI) whose prayers and material support enable them to bring the care of Jesus to those among whom they mission.

Many years ago my office in Camberwell was next door to that of Fr Denis McCarthy. As he opened his mail each day, he not only shared with me how generous you were to our Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate (MAMI) but also in many cases, the 'needs' of you and your families. I used to tell him that 'he had the biggest parish in Australia'. My ambition is to support you as you also support the Oblates. We are indeed all members of the De Mazenod Family.

I look forward to meeting you at appeals or through whatever occasions present themselves. If there are times when I can be united with you in prayer or through special remembrances at Mass, please feel free to contract me by email at [jsherman@oblates.com.au](mailto:jsherman@oblates.com.au) or by phoning Sandra at the MAMI office.

**Fr John Sherman OMI  
Director**

## Mazenod Reflection

### STALACTITES FROM GOD AND STALAGMITES TO GOD

**As a school kid I could never tell the difference between the names of the beautiful icicle-shaped formations that hang from the ceiling of caves and those of the shapes that grew out of the ground. Stalactites and stalagmites are formed over thousands of years by the slow process of a drop of water at a time falling on the shape. My catechism teacher solved the problem by telling me that "c" is for ceiling and "g" is for ground. Stalactites tell us about God's love coming down to us, and stalagmites tell us about our actions going up to God. They take years and years to be formed, drop by drop into the striking shapes that enchant onlookers. What a lovely image for the formation of people as we reflect on how Saint Eugene looked at the process of formation. For him the method was clear: becoming fully human, then Christian and then saints as members of the Oblate family. One tiny drop at a time just like these beautiful mineral formations in a cave.**

Right at the beginning of our existence as Oblates, Eugene gave us the strategy to do this: "How, indeed, did our Lord Jesus Christ proceed when he undertook to convert the world? He chose a number of apostles and disciples whom he himself trained in piety, and he filled them with his Spirit. These men he sent forth, once

they had been schooled in his teaching, to conquer the world which, before long, was to bow to his holy rule."

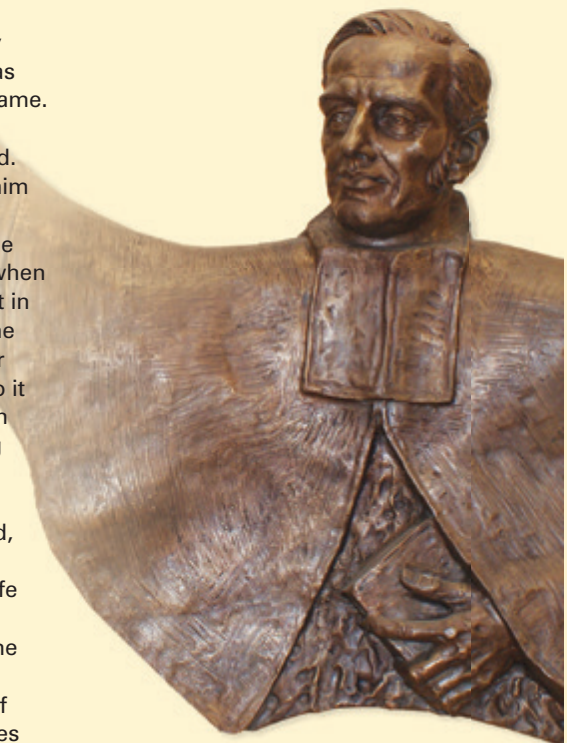
How do we continue to do this today? By allowing God's love in the Scriptures and in the sacraments to nourish us and form us as stalactites, drop by drop. Each day Eugene spent time reading the Scriptures, meditating and giving Jesus quiet time before the Eucharist and at other quiet moments to receive from God. Drop by drop the stalactite of his spiritual life was formed – and he teaches us to do the same.

But Eugene had both feet on the ground. He allowed people and events to lead him to God. He saw the Church ravaged by the Revolution, he suffered when people were ignorant of God's love for them, when they were in situations of abandonment in misery, in prison, in exile... wherever he heard the words of Jesus: "Whatsoever you do to the least one of these, you do it to me". Drop by drop every good action formed him into the stalagmite building towards God's love.

This was Eugene's way of being formed, and it is the method he has left us as members of his family. In our Rule of Life it is expressed as: "Each act in life is an occasion for personal encounter with the Lord, who through us gives himself to others and through others gives himself to us. While maintaining within ourselves

an atmosphere of silence and inner peace, we seek his presence in the hearts of the people and in the events of daily life as well as in the Word of God, in the sacraments and in prayer. We are pilgrims, walking with Jesus in faith, hope and love (C31)." Formation is about becoming stalactites and stalagmites!

**Fr Frank Santucci OMI**



# Fr George Ryan

When I think of Fr George Ryan OMI, there are two words which come to mind: kind and patient. Having had the privilege of living with Fr George as a newly ordained priest, I both witnessed and experienced a man who lived his Priestly and Oblate vocation in a kind and caring way, patient with all whom he was called to serve. For Fr George it is the person that matters.



This years jubilarians Frs John Sherman, George Ryan and Ian Mackintosh



George Bernard Ryan was born in October 1941 in Portlaoise, County Leix, Ireland. Later the family moved to Dublin where he completed his primary and secondary schooling. The latter was at the Oblate College, Belcamp where his uncle, the scholarly Fr P. J. Ryan OMI taught Latin for 50 years. Before his seventeenth birthday George entered the Oblate Novitiate, in September 1958, and in 1959 he followed the priestly course of studies at the two Oblate Seminaries in Ireland, Belmont for Philosophy and Piltown for Theology. On the 11th April 1965 he was ordained to the Priesthood in the presence of his large family and a larger gathering of relatives, friends, and his fellow Oblates. Later that year he arrived

in Australia with three other young men – Frs P. Dwyer, P. Moroney and L. Keelty to begin his priestly work in the Australian Province.

Fr George was appointed as Assistant to Moe, then Massey in Auckland, followed by a period at St. John Vianney's. In 1973 he joined the mission staff at Camberwell and later was transferred to the mission staff at Eagle Junction. In 1975 he was appointed Parish Priest of St. Kieran's, Moe after which he was appointed Chaplain to Fremantle Prison, W.A. After five years he returned to Parish Ministry as Parish Priest in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Lesmurdie, WA, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sefton, Mary Immaculate Parish, Eagle Vale, NSW, and then St David's, Tea Tree Gully, SA. While at St David's he became ill with cancer and continued as Parish Priest until returning to Immaculate Heart of Mary Sefton as an assistant. Even through his illness Fr George remains a witness to his faith and great character.

Fr George has a calm and well balanced nature a marvellous gift to those coping with hassles, disappointments and the challenges that life throws up fairly frequently. Fr George has never allowed situations to control him – he controls situations. He has a charisma that enables him to give to others his time – tension-free, non-judgemental time, and pleasant, relaxing companionship.

Fr George loves his sport and simply enjoys watching good competition not wanting to see any team loosing badly. He was and is a keen competitor in sport, as all who take him on in a game of

golf know. Fr George combines a very independent mind with a most affable, pleasant and generous nature. He loves company and community life and is a wonderful host. He is a great listener and the time-urgency that makes many priests tense and hurried, is totally alien to him. These qualities endeared him to the staff, prisoners and all workers wherever he has served. He was ever approachable, patient, and never judgemental, and knew only too well that many do not get a favourable start in the Race we all have to run as humans.

Congratulation Fr George on you 50th Anniversary of Priesthood and thank you for the witness you have been to those you have served but also to your brother Oblates.

## Fr Christian Fini OMI



Frs G Ryan, P Moroney, L Keelty, P Dwyer



# PIM-China

**It has been 2 months since I left Melbourne to begin my work as a Partner in Mission in Beijing.**

The reality of coming to China to work as a Partner in Mission (PIM) is a far cry from anything I ever imagined. Prior to coming to China I would simply describe what I was planning to do as 'teach English' but as soon as I began my work it became clear that 'teaching English' is far too simplistic a description.



Play at Goa Li Ying



Connect 4 against Spencer at GuCheng

My work as a PIM takes me to several locations, working with a range of children and adults. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons I have the privilege of working with Fr Luc and Miss Liu at Gu Cheng After-School Program. The children who attend the program often sit with me one-on-one to improve their English pronunciations, and although at first they were reluctant to talk to me, they have now taken to teaching me Chinese and laughing at my pronunciations (which are evidently quite bad).

Wednesday mornings take me to Goa Li Ying Kindergarten where I teach one class with the help of Rachel, a volunteer with the Family Missions Company (FMC). The first few weeks at Goa Li Ying were chaotic: classes of over 35 kindergarten students who spoke no English were extraordinarily confronting and tested every skill I have as a teacher. However with the support of both Sunny and Rachel these students now understand 2 basic sentences and have a vocabulary of over 15 words! Their ability and desire to learn amazes me!



Class PLB company Mairead and Sunny teaching

Every Friday morning I have the honour of teaching three grade 6 English classes at Kong Gang Elementary School. Each class is comprised of 40 students with varying abilities. Again their reluctance to speak to me was disheartening at first, but now after only 6 weeks of classes they approach me to ask questions and share a great deal about themselves and their families. A few have even started coming to Gu Cheng After-School Program to receive further assistance with their English.

Of course I also teach English classes at the De Mazenod Cultural Exchange Company and every time I speak with the students who come to the company I am constantly reminded of the hard work that has gone into these students and programs prior to my arrival.

It is extremely difficult to convey the experiences I have had in a short article. There is so much opportunity to explore here in Beijing and also, more importantly, to interact with some of the most wonderful people I have ever met. Morning runs in the park have often turned into dancing lessons, broken conversations about education and even chain-whipping lessons. Of course I cannot forget the time spent with the Group Home families that has been wonderful and absolutely inspiring.

I think having few expectations of what being here in Beijing would be like, means I have been able to enjoy every moment of my time thus far. My role here is to help provide and enhance opportunity and I have found that in doing so I have been afforded many unique opportunities myself. I have even been lucky enough to celebrate my birthday here! I cannot thank Fr Luc Young and Sunny enough for ensuring my time here is unforgettable!

### Mairead Johnson



Aaron turns 18 and Mairead turns 26



## New Presbytery in Indonesia

**The opening of the new presbytery at the Church of Mary Immaculate, Cengkareng Parish, Jakarta. The Oblates moved in in March. The cutting of the ribbon by the Vicar General of Jakarta Archdiocese, Rev Fr Samuel Pangestu PR.**



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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**PO Box 384**  
**Camberwell Vic 3124**

# A New Beginning in the Valley

**It is now just over 12 months since the parishes of St Kieran's, Moe and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Newborough came together to form a new parish identity known as 'Parishes in Partnership'. This partnership also includes the churches of St Brigid's, Yallourn North and Sacred Heart, Erica.**

Under the 'Parishes in Partnership' governance of both communities are still responsible for and required to administer their own finances but all other areas of the faith communities can come together.

The first 12 months of this transition has been very smooth indeed. The parishioners have been very welcoming and encouraging to an 'old boy' coming home as they are realistic about the present and future staffing of parishes in regards to clergy. At the start of the year we had two Oblates present, Fr Harry Dyer and Fr Paul Smithers, who was followed by Fr Matthew Raj.

The transition to 'Parishes in Partnership' commenced with a parish meeting and shared lunch in March 2014 with 100 parishioners in attendance. As Parish Priest this meeting gave me the opportunity to share my vision and thoughts in regards to the new

Partnership with parishioners having the opportunity to ask questions, share their vision and give feedback. From this first meeting came the following actions:

A new format for a combined weekly newsletter has been developed to ensure that all parishioners are kept informed.

During Holy Week we trialled the celebration of one Holy Thursday Eucharist at St Mary's, Newborough which proved a great move with good numbers and a prayerful liturgy. This year we will continue to celebrate this way as well as a combined Good Friday liturgy at St Kieran's.

Socially the Partnership has been very active. In 2014 we held two parish dinners with a total of 170 parishioners attending. A Christmas lunch was also held with nearly 100 parishioners to witness the drawing of the parish raffle.

The partnership was active in fund raising with a Christmas parish raffle, and a cake stall and sausage sizzle held on voting day was also very successful. Both activities raised in excess of five thousand dollars.

Please pray for the parish as we continue to move forward with the challenging task of bringing the two communities together.

**Fr Harry Dyer OMI**



Moe church



Newborough church





Oblates gathered at Mazenod College to celebrate Oblate feast day 17th February



Oblates gathered in Victoria for Easter lunch



## Police Chaplain

Pope Francis declared that 2015 would be dedicated to the Consecrated Life. In his message the Pope challenged religious to "leave their 'nests' and bring the Gospel to the peripheries." Late last year (2104) Fr Harry Dyer OMI was approached by a member of the Victoria Police in Moe to consider taking on a volunteer role as chaplain to the Latrobe Police Service Area (Moe, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill). On Friday November 28 Fr Harry attended an interview with the police inspector

for the Latrobe PSA. Fr Harry said: "I was pleasantly surprised by the welcome and appreciation of the Officers for my willingness to assist in this role". During the first part of this year Fr Harry had all the official clearances processed so as to commence this ministry. The requirement is about 2 hours a week, mainly by being a presence, visiting the officers at their various stations. "In a positive way I believe this new role is faithful to Pope Francis' call in stepping beyond the normal religious 'nest' of the parish as well as witnessing to our Oblate Charism and the Spirit of St Eugene to 'Leave Nothing Undared.'

## Prize winners

- 1st Prize (O'Shannessey's Quality Tours) – P. McCulloch
- 2nd Prize (Founds Furniture) – K. Drayton
- 3rd Prize (Peninsula Dining) – J. Kirk
- 4th Prize (Quality Wines) – P. Little
- 5th Prize (Casual Bag and Gourmet products) – D. Gorman

The raffle committee wishes to thank the Oblate Melbourne parishes, Melbourne's Catenian Circles and Sorrento's St Joseph's Primary School for their wonderful support. Special thanks to Jean and Peter Christie for their tireless effort in managing the raffle administration and being the driving force in a very successful result: the Oblates' St Eugene School in India and the Franciscan Sisters School in Jericho will each receive \$6,000. An excellent effort made possible by a dedicated band of volunteers.

## 2015 Appointments

- Fr Mathew Raj OMI to Moe/Newborough.
- Fr John David OMI to Iona College.
- Fr Asad Gill OMI to Springvale North.



Fr David Raj and Brian Haris along with St Eugeenes Parish Brisbane almost under water.

## Things to Pray for

- Provincial Council 1st –5th June 2015
- Province Retreat, 2–7 August, 2015
- Provincial Council 8th August 2015



## 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  
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