

AMMI *Lacombe* Canada MAMI

Oblate Spirit

June 2016

Annual Report



The Spirit at work



It never ceases to amaze when we hear of the many and varied ways the Oblates continue to support those in need around the world. When we introduced the new name of this publication, *Oblate Spirit*, seven years ago, the purpose was to try and capture the essence of what it meant to be a member of the Oblate family, and to provide a means for our Canadian members of MAMI to help embody this spirit through their prayers and donations.

Just as the Canadian Oblates gracefully age, so does the membership of MAMI. There are fewer of us this year, numbering 8,540 compared to 8,884 a year ago, but we have still succeeded in supporting 63 projects in Canada and abroad to the tune of \$1,015,890.39. From beds and blankets, to books and desks, from seminarians and priests in Kenya and Peru to ashrams in India, members of MAMI can proudly say we are there helping the less fortunate, a goal St. Eugene de Mazenod set out 200 years ago when he founded the Oblates in France.

Those disbursements of more than \$1 million came from donations totalling \$1,261,285.38 in 2015. Of that total there was \$128,629.99 from nine estates, while there were four donations of publicly-traded securities that brought \$108,650.69. The average donation from 1,810 members came to \$696.84.

The expenses incurred to operate MAMI in 2015 totalled \$283,515.45, a decrease of approximately \$13,000 from 2014. That number includes office expenses and supplies, salaries, accounting and legal fees, and costs of assembling and printing of the *Oblate Spirit* in both English (\$1.83 per copy) and French (\$6.39 per copy).

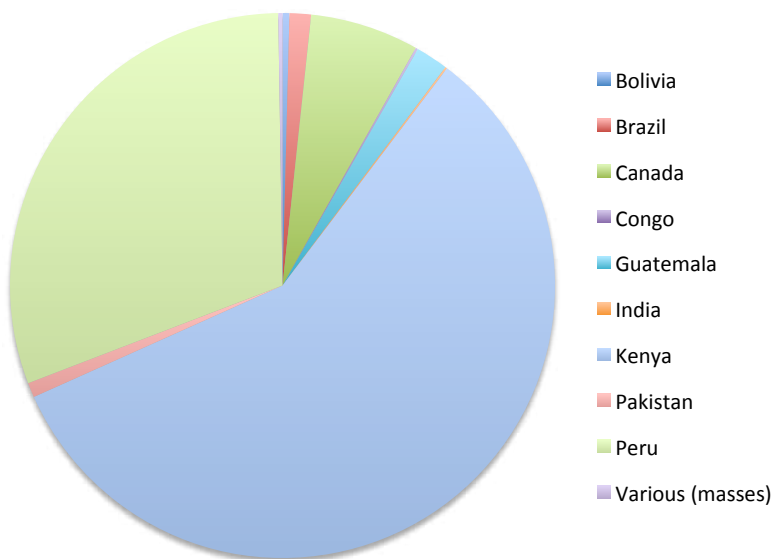


So, as we venture further into 2016, into jails in Peru (see Blaise MacQuarrie's story on Page 12), or a health clinic for the poor in Guatemala (Page 16), we witness this universal spirit at work. It is the Oblate way. And for that spirit we give thanks, as we give thanks to you, our MAMI friends, for the many ways you continue to help us support these projects.

John and Emily Cherneski
Communications Coordinators

2015 Projects Funded

\$1,015,890.39



Bolivia	\$4,146.39
Brazil	\$12,905.32
Canada	\$65,617.77
Congo	\$1,363.25
Guatemala	\$19,617.50
India	\$1,159.00
Kenya	\$589,010.00
Pakistan	\$8,801.34
Peru	\$310,732.93
Various (masses)	\$2,536.89



PROJECTS FUNDED

Africa

CONGO

- City of Youth – roof repair

KENYA

- Assistance for Catechists
- Care of mission





KENYA, *continued*

- Development
- Embuyangat Primary School – desks and chairs
- Kepiro Primary School – lunch program
- Lenchani Secondary School – desks and chairs
- Oltoruto Secondary Boarding School – bunk beds
- JMJ Rehabilitation Centre
- Kionyo Parish – parking lot
- Kisaju Parish
 - Land purchase
 - Oblate residence
 - Parish leadership training
 - Water supply
- Masses
- Widows and orphans



Asia - Oceania

INDIA

- Renovation of cottages at Ashram

PAKISTAN

- Education





Canada



- Care of Oblate elders
- Northern missions
- Healing programs through Retreat Centres
- Youth ministry

Marek Pisarek, OMI



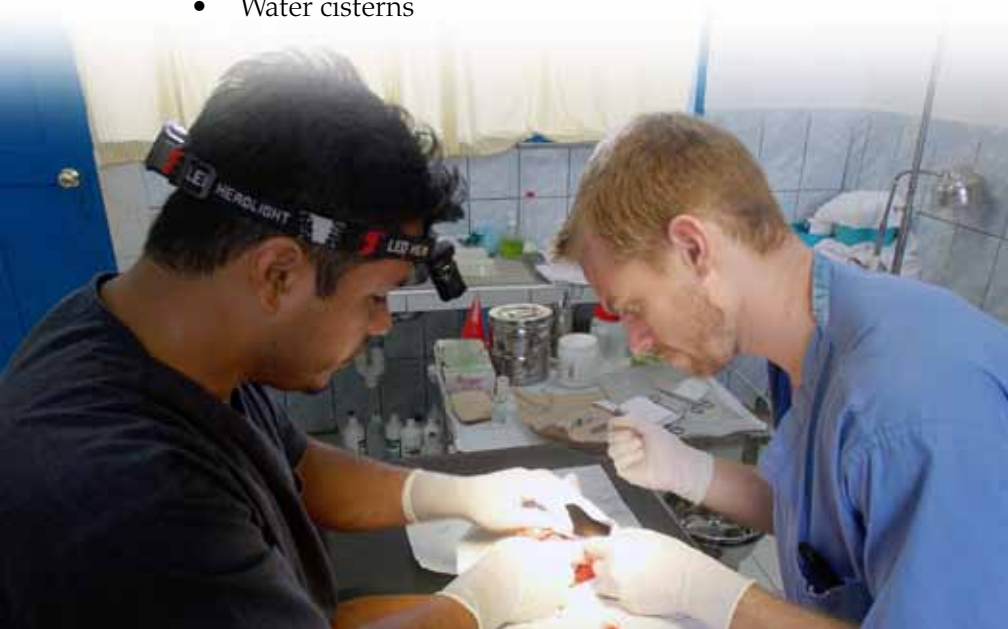
Latin America

BOLIVIA

- Christmas packages

BRAZIL

- Nilzete Orphanage
- Children's clothing
- Water cisterns



GUATEMALA

- Center for Integral Development Health Clinic

PÉRU

- Parish needs
- Tertiary Care Patient House
- House building
- Beds and blankets
- Vehicle
- Care of Oblate elders
- Milk for malnourished children
- Santa Clotilde hospital





2016 Goals

\$1,300,000

Bolivia	\$10,000
Brazil	\$5,000
Canada.....	\$145,000
Guatemala	\$10,000
India	\$10,000
Kenya	\$600,000
Pakistan.....	\$10,000
Peru	\$450,000
Sri Lanka.....	\$10,000
World (<i>Congo, Haiti, Lesotho, Madagascar, etc.</i>).....	\$50,000



Transformation in jail

BY BLAISE MACQUARRIE, OMI

CHINCHA ALTA, Peru – Our local bishop heard of our active visits to the jail and showed much interest in this new apostolate of ours. He asked for priest volunteers from the seven parishes here in our area.

Bishop Hector is young and likes the idea of helping inmates with basic needs and seeing to the welfare of their souls. So some priests volunteered to go to the jail and celebrate Holy Mass and to hear tons of confessions, confessions that would make your hair stand on end.

Fr. Jesui, an Oblate priest, told me he heard more confessions in three hours than he had heard in the parish in two months. Now lay women and men are going with Fr. Jesui every Thursday to help in the evangelization and are meeting with great success.

Marcos, Walter, Paulino and I go to the jails on Fridays. There is a real connection between the priest and laypeople





that go to the jail to celebrate mass and with ourselves who go there with basic items the inmates need. One group prays for the needs of the inmates, both spiritual and material, and we help meet those needs.

We can go anywhere in this huge jail, speak with the inmates and see for ourselves their specific needs. Once knowing these needs, we take action. For example, we visited four workshops: a carpenter shop with machinery but no wood; a clothes shop with eight machines but no cloth; a shoe shop with a modern machine but no leather; and a craft shop that is also lacking material.

We can't meet all their needs, but we can try to do something. So ...

Roberto and Elena Rior are our link to the inmates. Chatting with this pair of good souls, we devised a project to buy shoe models, leather, glue, etc. Because they know Lima and where to make good buys, I gave them money to make the purchases.

With product in hand, my team headed to jail on our regular Friday to offer them to the inmates. Now there is a moment that you have to be in charge of your emotions because the



way the inmates react is so heart-warming ... big hugs followed by "thank you for remembering us."

We move on to the clothes workshop. Meeting this group, we ask what cloth material is required. So that evening Roberto and Elena came to our house and we made up another project list.

Recently we gave kits to 40 inmates to make purses for women. These have turned out great because Roberto and Elena sell the purses at a nearby parish after mass. The money collected goes back to buying more material.

We are now eyeing the carpenter shop and soon they will have wood to make tables and chairs.



This brings us to 27 inmates, mostly elderly who are in jail for life and not looked upon with any love or respect. We learned from other inmates that this group lacks toilet paper, toothpaste, tooth brushes and soap. Why? Because they are sexual violators.

I said to my team, "Let's demonstrate love for this group." So another great couple, Marcos and Teresa, went and bought 27 toiletry kits. Off we went to the jail. The reaction from the inmates was immediate. They came to us with hugs and tears in their weak eyes that said everything that words can't. We are all God's children, we are sisters and brothers.

What next? In the jail of 1,400 mouths, they buy 6,000 buns per day. This modern jail has no bakery. So, chatting with Roberto and Elena about this situation, I asked if we could set up a bakery in the jail. They came up with a few good ideas, and now there is a scent of bread in the air. We have great hopes that this bakery shop will become a reality, and I say this because of the faith I have in Canadians.

In Christ and Mary, lots of love.

DONATING SECURITIES

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missionary
works*



Do you have publicly traded securities that you would like to donate to the benefit of the Oblate missions? With the tax law introduced in 2006, you can directly donate your publicly traded securities (shares) to **AMMI Lacombe Canada MAMI** and receive an official income tax receipt while avoiding the payment of capital gains tax.

To take advantage of this tax-saving offer, please call Diane Lepage (1-866-432-6264) at our office for further information. A minimum market value of \$5,000 is suggested. We would be happy to facilitate this exchange that benefits you and the poor of the Oblate missions.



Focus on health

GUATEMALA – The framework is in place, but there are a few floors, doors and windows missing.

The first phase of the St. Eugene de Mazenod Centre for Integral Development Health Clinic, a project supported by MAMI in 2015, is nearing completion.

“We still have to build a cistern for the water supply along with the pump to introduce the water in the building,”

wrote Padre Gerardo Kapustka, OMI, as he explained the progress and future requests for assistance. “The work ahead is still very large and costly ... finishing the walls, placing the floor, doors and windows, bathrooms, and the installation of the electric wiring and lighting.”

“We continue creating activities here on the local level to raise



monies to realize the project. Help trickles in, but we are hopeful that within a year we can begin to use the centre.

"We would like to ask our Canadian friends for funds to help install doors and windows, and to help furnish the five clinics, the pharmacy and the reception area," he said.

The completion of the health clinic will result in having doctors and nurses attend to out-patients, along with offering several health-related programs.

For example, a nutritional project that helps 44 families with undernourished children is already under way. Fr. Gerardo said the goal is to work with mothers to improve domestic hygiene and prepare healthy food in difficult environments.

WANTED

YOUR STORIES!

There are many charities and good causes that solicit your support. Yet for some reason you have chosen to offer the Oblates your prayers, friendship and assistance.

We are curious:

Why did you choose us?

How did you hear about the Oblate missionary work?

How have the Oblates supported, inspired and encouraged you?

What are some of your best memories of Oblates and their missionary work?

Send your stories (and photos) to: lacombemissions@yahoo.ca



Growing the mission

BY FIDELE MUNKIELE, OMI

Since the foundation of the Kenya mission, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Kenya have been trying their best to respond to our missionary motto: “Evangelizare Pauperes misit me”. This encourages us to receive young vocations in order to preach the Gospel message and Christian values to the poor and the most abandoned in Kenya.

From the Méru postulancy to the Nairobi Oblate pre-novitiate, our Oblate formation provides candidates with time and opportunities for apostolic work so the young brothers can understand the Oblate call to be in touch with the reality of the poor to whom they minister.

At our Oblate formation house in Nairobi there is also time for apostolic work both within and outside the community. This is in addition to the time the candidates spend studying philosophy at Tangaza Institute.





Planting corn in Kionyo

In the community, the pre-novices participate in maintenance, manual work, liturgy, hospitality and community building activities. They work in the garden, with the poultry and take care of the rabbits. We always get vegetables, maize, chicken and rabbit meat from our small farm. The 12 pre-novices also prepare the daily breakfasts and the Sunday meals.

Outside the pre-novitiate, our young men visit an orphanage, the Nyumbani Children's Home, on Sundays. They assist in teaching catechism, and they pray with them. They are always accompanied by Oblates Stephen Muriungi or Christopher.

I minister at the Langata women's prison and the pre-novices are beginning to visit with me.

When the academic year closes in May, the pre-novices spend two months in our parishes. Some go to Kionyo, where they become involved in small Christian communities, youth ministries, schools apostolate and Sunday services in the prayer houses. Others go to our new parish in Kisaju, just south of Nairobi, to participate in various pastoral activities.

Our formation program is trying to connect the pre-novices to the pastoral realities so they can learn about the Oblate way of ministering to the poor and to the community.

To help you, our MAMI supporters, become better acquainted with the Oblates serving in Kenya we are providing profiles of the individuals serving in the mission.

KENYA MISSION PROFILE

Praveen Selvadurai, OMI



I was born in Sri Lanka in 1972. I have an elder sister who is practising medicine and two elder brothers, both married and settled. My parents are deceased.

I became interested in the Oblates at a young age. My mother inspired me by her faith in Mother Mary, encouraging me to look upon her as my mother. My mother gave me the seed of vocation and guided me throughout my formation period with her prayers.

The Oblates who worked in my country helped me understand their spirit of dedication and service.

I have started working in the formation house, universities, lay apostolate and the JPIC (Justice and Peace) ministry. I began to see the exciting life in ministry to develop the capacity of the people and the young who have been aspiring to an Oblate life.

As a missionary I am trying to understand the various cultures of the Kenyan people.

I have to keep preparing myself to help guide the people. Our days start with morning prayer and mass. We are three in our community, which really enables us to understand each other and our differences.

(Praveen Selvadurai, OMI, is working in justice and peace ministry based in Karen, Nairobi)

KENYA MISSION PROFILE

Zachary Mwenda, OMI



I was born in eastern Kenya, Méru District in 1983, and my home area is Kionyo. I am the second born of three sons.

I was drawn to the Oblates because of their hard work with the people to whom they minister, the Oblate charism and their simplicity.

My mother was the most inspirational person in my life. Being the only female figure in our family, and because of our cultural ways, she always had to work extra hard to make sure we all had the attention we needed from her.

Obstacles we face in Kenya include the slow pace of growth in self-sustainability and local missionary vocations.

I am currently a student and one of the bigger hurdles is to balance the demands between the scholasticate academic institute and the formation program in the scholasticate. I am torn between studies that are very demanding and formation as an Oblate missionary, which is much more personal.

(Zachary Mwenda, OMI, is a seminarian scholastic studying for the priesthood)



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Dionisius Ananua, OMI



I was born in 1978 in eastern Kenya on the slope on Mt. Kenya. I have a brother and two sisters. I grew up admiring consecrated life and was an active altar server. My vocation was well nurtured in my Catholic family.

I had my first contact with Oblates towards the end of my secondary school education, as they had just arrived in Kenya and established a parish within my school. When I was discerning about my vocation, I had a chance to join the local diocesan major seminary but settled on the Oblate charism, which had an immediate influence on me ... living together as a community, sharing everything, and particularly the Oblate dedication to work among the poor and the most abandoned.

The most inspirational and influential person in my life was my dad, who died in 2005. He was a man of substance and character, always available and attentive to other's needs. He was of strong faith and prayer. He taught me the fear of God and the value of being fully human.

The biggest obstacles facing the Oblate mission in Kenya are lack of personnel, lack of steady growth of Oblate vocations in the mission, and self-sustainability.

My ministry includes work with all ages; it has been nourishing in many ways because the faith I witness in the people is strong and I always hear wonderful testimonies of the work of God among His people.

The hardest things to deal with on a daily basis include moving around on rough terrain where the roads are bad, and

needy and desperate cases that requires financial assistance that is not always available.

A typical day starts at 6:30 a.m. with meditation followed by breviary prayer and mass as a community. People are already knocking on the office door by 8 a.m. In Kionyo parish where I serve, there could be on average five home masses in a week and three small Christian community masses. We visit nine primary schools and five secondary schools. Visiting small Christian communities, office work and personal programs are included in the simple tasks of the day.

(Dionisius Ananua, OMI, is the assistant pastor in the parish in Kionyo)

KENYA MISSION PROFILE

Joseph Magambo, OMI



I was born in 1974 in Méru County and have four brothers and three sisters.

I have been influenced by Fr. Bill Stang and the others Oblates who came to Kenya like Fathers Ken Forster, the late Harold Kaufmann, Joe Jacek, and many others.

One of the difficulties we encounter is the lack of enough personnel to service the needs of the community

I am working in the formation houses promoting vocations.

There are times when I find it hard to do all that is expected in a day.

To promote vocations we organise youth seminars and meetings in the parish, or we meet young candidates in institutions like universities, colleges and secondary schools.

(Joseph Magambo, OMI, is based in Méru and involved in formation for those entering the Oblates prior to novitiate formation)

200 years and counting

BY RON ROLHEISER, OMI

What we cease to celebrate we will soon cease to cherish. This year, 2016, marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of the religious congregation to which I belong, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. We have a proud history, 200 years now, of ministering to the poor around the world. This merits celebrating.

As a writer, I don't normally highlight the fact that I am a professed religious, just as I don't usually highlight the fact that I'm a Roman Catholic priest, because I fear that labels such as "Catholic priest", "Father", or "Oblate of Mary Immaculate" attached to an author's name serve more to limit his readership than to increase it. Jesus, too, was pretty negative on religious labels. Mostly though I avoid writing under a specific religious label because I want to speak more through the wider prism of my humanity and my baptism than through the more specific prism of my priesthood and vowed religious commitment. It's a choice I've made, respecting the choice of others.

With that being said, I want to break my own rules here and speak more specifically through the prism of my identity as vowed religious. So I write this particular column as Father Ronald Rolheiser OMI, proud member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Let me begin with a little history: Our congregation was founded in Southern France in 1816 by Eugene de Mazenod, declared a saint by the church in 1995. Eugene was a dioc-



esan priest who immediately upon entering the ministry saw that the Gospel wasn't reaching many of the poor and so he began to focus his own ministry very much on reaching out to the poor. It takes a village to raise a child and, soon enough, he realized that it takes more than one person to bring about effective change. It takes a community to make compassion effective: What we dream alone remains a dream, what we dream with others can become a reality. So he sought out other like-minded men, diocesan priests like himself, and called them together around this mission and eventually they began to live together and formed a new religious congregation dedicated to serving the poor.

That was 200 years ago and the Oblates (as we're commonly called) have had a proud, if not always comfortable, history since. Today we are ministering in 68 countries on every continent on earth and our mission is still the same. We serve the poor. That's why you'll find us ministering mainly on the margins of society, where mainstream society prefers not to cast its glance, on the borders with migrants, on Native reservations, in immigrant areas of our cities, in tough inner-city places where the police are reluctant to go, and in developing countries where access to food, health, and education are still scarce commodities. Our mission is not to the privileged, though we try to bring them onside with our mission, and our members themselves are often drawn from among the poor and our message to the young men entering our ranks is: If you join us, consider what's not in it for you!

And we're missionaries, meaning that we understand our task to be that of establishing communities and churches, helping them to become self-sufficient, and then moving on to do this over and over



again. That may be a noble task, but it's also a formula for heart-ache. It isn't easy on the heart to be forever building something only to give it over to someone else and move on. You don't ever get to have a permanent home; but there's a compensation, as a missionary, after a while every place is home.

We aren't a large congregation. We're only about 4,000 members scattered in some 68 countries, humble in comparison to the likes of the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans. Indeed in an early version of the famous French Larousse Dictionary, we were described as "a kind of mini-Jesuit found mostly in rural areas." We are flattered by this description. Our call is not to be in the limelight, but to be at the edges. No accident that it's there, at the edges, in a rural area, where I met the Oblates.

We also pride ourselves on being robust, practical, earthy, and close to those we serve, and our dress often betrays this. Our families and close friends are forever buying us clothing to try to upgrade our less-than-stellar wardrobes. It's not that we deliberately cultivate an image of being somewhat unkempt; it's more that we tend to draw men to our ranks who have other priorities.

And our founder? He wasn't an easy man, obsessed as he was, as sometimes saints are, by a single-mindedness that doesn't easily tolerate weaknesses among those around him. He could exhibit blessed rage sometimes. I'm secretly glad that I never met him in person, fearing his judgment on my own weaknesses; but I'm wonderfully glad for his charism and for that motley group of men, often over-casually dressed, who continue his mission.

(Ron Rolheiser, president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX, received the 2016 National Federation of Priests' Councils Touchstone award in April. The award is presented annually to "the priest who, in the view of the National Federation of Priests' Councils, is one whose service in the Gospel of Jesus Christ exemplifies the purpose and goals of the Federation. In particular, his leadership enhances the ministry of others and his words and deeds support the life and ministry of priests; thus he is, as it were, a Touchstone for genuine, quality priesthood.")



Remembering

We remember the following Oblates who died in 2015:

January 5	Br. John Heysel (1929)
January 21	Br. Arthur Van Hecke (1923)
March 17	Br. John O'Reilly (1929)
April 13	Fr. Donald McLeod (1927)
September 5	Archbishop Peter Sutton (1934)
September 7	Br. Georges Nadeau (1936)
September 23	Fr. Archibald Daley (1923)
November 8	Br. Bernard Mulligan (1928)
December 23	Fr. Maurice McMahon (1922)



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*Oblate
Spirit*

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