

AMMI *Lacombe* Canada MAMI

Oblate Spirit



November 2010

*Gifts
of Life*



Alternative gift giving



Our parents, God bless their souls, were always strong proponents of a good education. John's father (C.L. Cherneski) finished "Grade 3, Page 15" and Emily's father (Peter Fenrich) almost made it to Grade 4. Our mothers (Mary and Mary) fared a touch better. Both were avid readers. When they were alive, we struggled to find gifts that would show how much we appreciated them. Today we found them. A 'Gift of Life' would have been perfect. On the next few pages you will find ways to give 'Gifts of Life' should you choose to celebrate family or friends, or to share in a gift with them, in this way.

If you choose one of these gifts, you will receive a card containing a description of the gift. You can then personalize this card by inserting your name and the name of the person to whom this gift is offered. All the information is provided in a form included with this publication. We encourage families, groups of friends, classrooms, auxiliary groups, one or all, to creatively and collectively participate in this offering of hope to struggling children and families around the Oblate world. And, yes, this offer extends beyond the Christmas season.

We have chosen a gift of education and a gift of knowledge belatedly in the names of our parents. If alive, we would have said "Merry Christmas. We love you and appreciate all you did for us."

To our readers, we pass on the same greeting. We appreciate all you do for our missions.

John and Emily Cherneski
Communications Coordinators

Gifts of Life

Experience the joy of giving a meaningful Christmas gift to a loved one this year and change the life of a child and family in a developing country.



At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done.

We will be judged by 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was naked and you clothed me, I was homeless and you took me in.'

Hungry not only for bread - but hungry for love. Naked not only for clothing - but naked for human dignity and respect. Homeless not only for want of a room of bricks - but homeless because of rejection.

- Mother Teresa



TO KENYA:

Gift of Education

Many poor families are unable to afford costs relating to sending their children to school. You can make a difference in opening the doors to a future of life-changing possibilities. Your gift will be used for school fees, books and supplies.

Education of a child for one month in Kenya ~ \$50







TO KENYA:

Gift of Knowledge

The minds of students at the Kionyo Secondary School eagerly await the arrival of library resources. Help stimulate the intellect and imagination of these 175 young people in filling the library shelves with books.

Library books in Kenya ~ \$50

Donating securities to Oblate missionary works

Do you have publicly traded securities that you would like to donate to the benefit of the Oblate missions?

With the new tax law introduced in 2006, you can now 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.

TO KENYA:

Gift of Future Oblate Presence

The Oblate charism continues to be shared through personal human contact where many humanitarian and spiritual needs are met with compassion. Your support provides a simple lifestyle for one month of food, clothing and education of future Oblate missionaries.



**Future Oblates in
Kenya ~ \$525**

The Kenya mission has
attracted many Canadian
Oblates over the years





TO KENYA:

Gift of Love

The Oblates are petitioned daily to help orphans and widows who are desperately seeking basic necessities of food, clothing, medicine and shelter. Together we can feed the hungry, clothe the naked and care for the sick and dying.

Gift of love to the poor in Kenya ~ \$75



TO BOLIVIA:

Gift of Joy

Hear the giggles of laughter echoing as children run down the remote rural mountains of Bolivia, eager to receive a Christmas package of food, clothes, shoes, medicine and a small toy. Imagine their delight in knowing that someone in Canada cares for them, the poor near Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Three Christmas gift packages in Bolivia ~ \$30



TO BRAZIL:

Gift of Water

Refreshingly clear, clean water is provided to rural families in Canudos, Brazil through the construction of simple, cement rainwater cisterns. Participating families who contribute to the project through labour and some materials greatly improve their health conditions by reducing parasites and other illnesses associated with unsafe water.

**Rainwater
cistern in Brazil**
~ \$560





TO PERU: *Gift of Hope*

In the devastating earthquake of August 2007, many people of Chinchá Alta, Peru lost everything – their homes, jobs and even loved ones. Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, operates a gravel pit making bricks to build houses for the poor. Receiving families actively participate in the construction. Join them in rebuilding their homes, their lives by giving a gift of love.

Brick concrete home in Peru ~ \$1,800

TO PERU:

Gift of Nourishment

Santa Clotilde is a 40-bed rural hospital serving an estimated 30,000 people along the Napo River in the jungles of the Peruvian Amazon. Funds are needed to provide malnourished babies with powdered milk, giving them a chance to live and grow.

**Feed 10
malnourished
babies for one
month in Peru
~ \$100**



Seasons in the Sun

BY JIM FIORI, OMI

As the song “Seasons in the Sun” says, “goodbye my friends, it’s hard to die...”.

While I am not dying physically, it is certainly time to say goodbye. I left for the Kenya Oblate Mission on Oct. 6. As the date of departure approached, I became profoundly aware there is certainly a death to what has been a necessary step to experience what will be.

Since leaving leadership I took some sabbatical time at the Oblate House in Duncan, BC. The first thing I became aware of was how tired I was. The six years on the leadership team had taken its toll. One of my objectives of this time was to deepen my prayer life. I also spent time learning some Kiswahili and digitalizing my extensive slide collection.



Oblates: Ken Forster,
Harold Kaufmann++, and Jim Fiori



While in leadership I didn’t have a lot of time to ponder what I would do next. I knew I wasn’t ready to retire but I was contemplating slowing down a bit. I didn’t think it was appropriate to give myself an obedience. When I held the portfolio for the Kenya Mission, I was certainly aware of the needs. I never



Jim Fiori, OMI, and Leo Mann, OMI, on a past visit to the Kenya water project

gave much thought to my going there. It was only after my last visit in October 2008 that the question was asked, “why don’t you go there?” I couldn’t think of a good “why not?” I do feel it is the community that is asking me to undertake this mission.

On Sept. 8 I celebrated 44 years of religious profession. I still remember the day and I don’t think my enthusiasm has diminished with the years. At the time I belonged to the Keewatin-Le Pas Province. This was a group of missionaries who came from Quebec and committed their lives to working in the missions of northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. I saw myself as being a missionary like them. I knew that I would be going to some isolated area to work with the First Nations peoples, probably for the rest of my life. I never imagined that I would be called to mission elsewhere.

People ask: “Why are you doing this?” My response is because I am a missionary. I am profoundly aware that I joined a missionary order. We are after all the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I am doing this because OMI Lacombe Canada has asked me to help it fulfill its obligation to mission and ministry in Kenya. In this sense I am being empowered and sent. As a missionary order we are not called to be the local clergy but rather to establish local Church and move on. We

are called to be missionaries no matter where we exercise our ministry. I don't consider what I am doing to be extraordinary in any way. Hopefully I am being faithful to my vocation.

Some have reflected that I am a bit old in the tooth to be undertaking such an assignment. Indeed I am a senior but my enthusiasm for mission has not diminished with the years. While I have many seasons behind me I am not decrepit. I remain a missionary and in place of youth I can perhaps bring maturity and experience to this mission. Age does not prevent us from proclaiming the Good News.

I leave aware of what I am leaving behind. I have accumulated a lot of stuff over the years. There is a renewed challenge to embrace poverty and simplicity. More profoundly I am leaving behind friends, family and community. I know they will continue to support me but the nature of the relationships changes profoundly with distance. I am about to enter a new culture where I will once again be a minority and I will have to develop skills of survival in this new environment. Initially my only supports will be the Oblate Community.

I leave with a certain sorrow of what I am leaving behind but I am also excited about the new that is waiting. Death is the rite of passage to new life. I hope and pray that I will be, in the sense of Eugene de Mazenod, a disciple of Jesus sent to proclaim the Good News to the poor. I believe I am being sent by the community. Thank you for your confidence in me.



An Emmaus walk

Once every six years, the Oblates from around the world gather for a month-long meeting called a General Chapter, which is the highest authority within the Oblate Congregation. Through this gathering the bonds of unity are strengthened and all members have a chance to actively participate in the life and the mission of the Oblates. It is a most privileged time of community reflection and conversation to determine both vision and general policy for the coming years. The meeting this year took place in Rome from Sept. 8 – Oct. 8, and involved 88 Oblates from 70 countries. Four Oblates represented OMI Lacombe Canada: Ron Rolheiser, OMI; John Malazdrewich, OMI; Andy Boyer, OMI; and Tony O'Dell, OMI.

BY RON ROLHEISER, OMI

ROME – The 35th General Chapter of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate has just ended. We began with a mass to the Holy Spirit and a challenge from our facilitator to empty our heads of judgments, our hearts of cynicism, and our wills of fear.

The highlight of the first week was a report from our outgoing Superior General, Guillermo Steckling, on the state of the congregation. Among other things, he suggested that four considerations now constitute the most urgent imperatives for the congregation: i) that we build Christ-centered communities; ii) that we truly love the poor and move towards them; iii) that we face up to the massive demographic changes that are reshaping the face of the congregation; and iv) that we recommit ourselves in our love for the church.

We then spent time examining and debating a series of proposals regarding possible new governmental structures. After a passionate debate, the Chapter voted to retain our present structures. The majority feeling was that, at this time,



Louis Lougen, OMI, is greeted by the Pope

it is more important that we change our attitudes than change our structures.

We then entered a third, and very important, phase of our Chapter: elections. And the Holy Spirit sent us a very clear message. Louis Lougen, OMI, was elected, nearly unanimously, on the first ballot. As Fr. Louis rose and humbly accepted the call to serve, the Chapter delegates rose, as one, to their feet and a thundering applause went on for several minutes. There were tears in the eyes of many of the delegates and the feeling in the room at that moment – the oneness of heart, the sense of the rightness of this choice, the warmth of energy – will forever remain the highlight of this Chapter.

The energy flowing from that moment carried us forward as we then elected a Vicar General, Paulo Archiati; two Assistants General, Cornelius Ngoka and Gilberto Pinon; and five General Councillors for the Regions, Evans Chinyemba, Clement Waidyasekara; Warren Brown, Luis Ignatio Rois Alonso, and Miguel Fritz.

Throughout the Chapter, the delegates kept listening, waiting for a particular biblical image to be given us as a key to help us more deeply understand both our experience at this Chapter and the Oblate and ecclesial reality within which we are now living. Again and again, spontaneously in our conversations, the image that came to us was the one given in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24, where the disciples (dispirited and without heart because their religious world had been crucified) meet the resurrected Christ on the road to Emmaus, feel their hearts burning within them as he speaks to them, eventually recognize him and the new reality they are living, and go back into their religious lives with renewed vision, hope, and energy.

This General Chapter has been an Emmaus walk. We have examined our crucified worlds, met the resurrected Christ on the road, and leave here with our hearts burning with new vision, new hope, and new energy.

Our wish is to share that with you!

Ron Rolheiser, OMI, congratulates Louis Lougen, OMI,
the new Superior General



Oblate Mission travel news

Next year (2011) marks the 150th anniversary of the death of Oblate founder St. Eugene de Mazenod. To celebrate, we have three trips planned.

Cuba – February 5-14

Experience Cuba and its people away from the tourist areas. Experience the new realities of Cuba with high employment and the anticipation of a new regime. Join Oblate Mission Travel for a mission trip, led by Father Paul 'Pablo' Feeley, OMI, to Cuba. Volunteer side-by-side with the Oblates as they mission to the people of Cuba. Learn how they have kept their faith alive for more than 50 years under socialist rule. Space is limited to 12.



Peru

We are working to get a group to Peru in July.

Kenya

There are many changes occurring in Kenya. We are planning to put together a travel group with Ken Thorson, OMI, as the spiritual director.

Please telephone or send Neysa Finnie an e-mail to be included on the list of interested participants. You will receive all the information as the travel plans develop.

The contact information is: nmfinnie@yahoo.com or call (604) 736-3972.

In your words: Cured by St. Eugene

(Ron Lewis was born in 1929. His father was convicted of income tax evasion and sentenced to jail in 1948. He was devastated. He suffered from bouts of depression until an "encounter" with St. Eugene de Mazenod in 2002.)

BY RON LEWIS

OTTAWA – My attitude towards society and authority in general was broken. I did not know it at the time (1948), but I was drifting into depression. This affected my ability to concentrate and remember things. After this I had four unsuccessful years at university, including three years at St. Patrick's College in a commerce program. I repeated my sophomore year twice and failed my junior year. I left college after this and did not feel welcome because of some remarks by my teachers. I promised myself that I would not go down their road again and very seldom attended any reunions.

Keep these comments in mind as I relate my spiritual encounter with St. Eugene de Mazenod, the founder of the Oblate order.

The affects of this depression remained with me for many years. I improved some over time, but it was not until I had my encounter with St. Eugene that I was completely cured. Here is how it happened.

My wife Margaret and I were in Aix-en-Provence for two weeks in the spring of 2002. We enjoyed this old city and the area very much. The first Sunday we attended mass at a Catholic church in the Italian section. The following week we heard about another church that was much closer.

The church was packed. After mass I noticed a corner dedicated to St. Eugene de Mazenod, the founder of the Oblates. His followers taught me at St. Patrick's College in Ottawa.

About 15 minutes after we left the church, I had a warm

feeling come over me. It certainly got my attention. In my mind I could see St. Eugene, and he was accompanied by Father Peak, the head of the athletic department at St. Pat's.

St. Eugene was laughing and walking very quickly, and Father Peak was right beside him. St. Eugene said: "This is an easy one, you did not know what you were doing and neither did your teachers." Father Peak then encouraged me to be a supporter once again. Father Birch, another Oblate priest, was in the forefront of this scene. He did not say anything or move. Both priests had been dead for some time.

What can we learn from this? There are many things that can knock us off balance – a jail sentence, a sudden death by accident or illness, a failed relationship and divorce, mental illness, sexual abuse, financial challenges and the list goes on. We should always seek the best help from professionals, but we should also pray and seek the help of Jesus, Mary, the saints and our past relatives. They all can and want to help, as witnessed by my story.



Ron and Margaret Lewis



Gift Payment Option

We now have the ability to accept donations by way of credit card!

Please complete the gift form enclosed or call our office toll free: 1-866-432-6264 and we will be pleased to assist you in facilitating your donation to the Oblate missions.



Fund-raising for Kenya

Fund-raising doesn't always have to be an elaborate affair.

"On Palm Sunday our parish, under the initiative of the CWL, held what has become an annual jar sale as a Lenten project," explained Anne Moldenhauer, St. Aloysius pastoral parish worker in Allan, SK. She said the jars were filled with items of the donor's choice and sold for \$2 each. Eighty jars were donated, generating \$160.

The CWL also decided to make and sell pie for \$2 a slice. Another \$161 was raised.

The parish and the CWL designated their donation for the Missionary Oblates Mount East Kenya water project. The donation was made in memory of Ed Lequiea, OMI, the last resident pastor in Allan, and in gratitude for the work and service of the Oblates near and far.

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:

lacombemami@sasktel.net

AMMI Lacombe Canada MAMI is pleased to support various Oblate Missions and Ministries, such as:

Canada...

Care of Elders
Education of Laity
Education of Oblates
First Nations
Northern Canada
Parish Mission Team
Prayer and Retreat Centres
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Sri Lanka



Have you considered
including the
*Missionary
Oblates*
as a beneficiary
in your will?



Your gift to AMMI Lacombe
Canada MAMI would ensure that
the good ministry and mission
works of the Oblates continues in
Canada and throughout the world.
You could even specify an Oblate
mission that is dear to your heart.



**Communications
Coordinators:**

John and Emily Cherneski
lacombemissions@yahoo.ca

www.oblatemissionassociates.ca

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*AMMI Lacombe
Canada MAMI*

601 Taylor Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0C9
Phone (306) 653-6453

TOLL FREE:
1-866-432-MAMI (6264)

Fax (306) 652-1133

lacombemami@sasktel.net

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