

AMMI *Lacombe* MAMI
Canada

Oblate Spirit



November 2012

Share the Joy



Spread the Joy

It has often been said that “the joy is in the giving.”

We understand that statement better as we advance in age. We are fortunate to live in a country with an excellent standard of living and a medical system that helps cover our basic needs.

However, that word “needs” means so many different things around the world. There are many less fortunate souls living in countries where even the basic necessities of life are hard to come by, be it milk for a newborn child, a comfortable bed in which to sleep, or transportation to a nearby hospital.

We were particularly touched by the story of the Barcaza, a boat that chugs along the Napo River in Peru ferrying people as far as 400 kilometres, including some to the hospital in Santa Clotilde. The Barcaza has been in dry-dock, desperately in need of repairs and a new engine. It is a lifeline for many of the impoverished along the Napa River. It is also a visible link to the Oblates in Peru, who operate the hospital at Santa Clotilde and have undertaken the task of getting the Barcaza up and running again.

As we approach Christmas, we talked about our “needs.” They have greatly diminished as we move to a simpler lifestyle. Individually, most of us can’t afford to resurrect the Barcaza. But with a little help from many of us, it can happen. Or a baby can get fed, or a child educated. Or, perhaps, we can help a community in Kenya spiritually nourish its faithful.

Yes, there can be joy in giving. And even the smallest gift can go a long way.

Our hope for all this Christmas season is that someone comes into our lives and puts a simple smile on our face. Oh, Joy!



John and Emily Cherneski
Communications Coordinators



Share the Joy

Mario Azrak, OMI





Kenya – Oblate Presence

(any donation appreciated)

There are many ways to be present to people, to reflect Christ's actions, and to carry out the charism of St. Eugene. The Oblates vital ministry in Kenya encompasses many forms of ministry including catechesis; ministering to the sick and dying; embracing the youth; responding to HIV children, orphans, widows. The Oblates are key leaders/servants for the water project, building schools, prayers houses, assisting with the health clinic, and starting self-sustaining initiatives for the people through the bakery and the Duka lumber mill. Fortunately, as you can see from Jim Fiori's article in this issue, many young men are answering the call to serve.





Moms waiting for nutrition clinic

Peru – Milk for Babies

(feed three for \$30)

We all know how important it is for babies to be well-nourished. Your support is needed to provide mal-nourished babies with powdered milk and nourishment at the Santa Clotilde hospital along the Napo River in the jungles of the Peruvian Amazon. This 40-bed rural hospital serves an estimated 30,000 people.

A pair of twins in the arms of mother and grandmother. Mother with severe rheumatoid arthritis (see hands) and no breast milk. Babies in calorie-protein deficiency (see puffy faces), and both holding their bottles of milk from our donors.



Bolivia – Christmas packages

(three for \$45)

We all know the joy of receiving an unexpected gift. Imagine the delight of children in Bolivia receiving a Christmas package of food, clothes, shoes, medicine and a small toy. Their laughter and giggles will resound in the remote rural mountains near Cochabamba, Bolivia.







Peru – Beds *(one for \$60)*

We all know the comfort of crawling into our own bed. Since 2007, Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, has been assisting the people of Chinchá Alta, Peru, by making bricks and building houses. Now he is also helping them by supplying the beds in which they will comfortably rest.





Help Resurrect the Barcaza *(any donation appreciated)*

When the inhabitants along the Napo River in Peru see the Barcaza on the water they are led to think of the Oblates and the Santa Clotilde mission. However, the Barcaza, a 47-ton river boat capable of carrying 50 passengers, needs some help. It has been out of commission for the last two years because it needs a new motor and body work. The Oblates would like to put it back in service.

For many years the Barcaza has been a mainstay in the life of the community of Santa Clotilde and the villages of the Rio Napo for health, education, community development, protection of the environment, and transportation of people and produce. The Barcaza plays a significant role in all of these, and the lack of it causes a considerable inconvenience for the mission and for the people.

Please help us get the Barcaza afloat again to enable the Oblates to service the people (20,000 inhabitants) who live in about 100 villages along 400 kilometres of the Napo River in the Peruvian Amazon. The majority of these people live in conditions of extreme poverty.

The lack of the Barcaza has also been impairment for the



medical services provided at Santa Clotilde and for the young Oblates who have assumed the mission.

The cost of \$23,000 to get the Barcaza repaired includes towing, dry docking, body work, a new motor, insurance, crew and licensing.

"I would like to begin a campaign to raise the money we need to fix it," said Moe Schroeder, OMI, the Mission Superior in Peru.

We in Canada have an opportunity to help the Oblates in Peru, even if it is just a little bit at a time.

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



Please note: the correct e-mail address for receiving more information about the Oblate Mission Travel is oblatetravel@yahoo.ca.

Oblate Mission travel news

Next stop – Kenya

Amidst the lush tea and coffee plantations of the Meru people, on the slopes of Mount Kenya, you will find the first Oblate mission in Kenya established in 1997 under the jurisdiction of the OMI Lacombe Canada province.

The Oblates have taken root, witnessing spiritual and economic growth in the communities of Kionyo, Igandene and Méru.

For a first-hand look at the mission, you can join the MAMI mission trip to Kenya from Feb. 22 – March 10, 2013.

In addition to joining the Oblates in their daily work, participants will be invited to volunteer their time and energies to an orphanage in Méru, Oblate supported secondary schools, local primary schools, and the dispensary. We will celebrate the impact MAMI supporters have made on the people of Kionyo as we visit the Women's Co-operative Bakery and the Water Project. There will be a daily mass and group prayer.

If you are interested in receiving information about the trip, please contact Neysa, Mattea or Teresa at oblatetravel@yahoo.ca or 604-736-3972. We would be pleased to discuss any questions you might have.



Please keep us in your prayers as we look to take Oblate Mission Travel to a new location in South America in the fall of 2013.



Planting Seeds

KENYA – The seeds have been planted, and now the harvest is in progress. It is the kind of ‘work’ Jim Fiori, OMI, quite enjoys. As the Kenya Mission Superior, it falls on his shoulders to welcome new members into the community

“In Kenya we have been blessed with a steady pilgrimage of young men choosing to join us,” explained Fiori.

In March, he welcomed Bonaventure Adede, Francis Malombe Muli, Innocent Osundwa and Michael Orwa Juma into postulancy at Blessed Joseph Gerard Formation House in Méru.

The formation house provides a nine-month postulancy program. During this time, besides becoming familiar with the Oblate community, the men are provided with the opportunity to improve their English and to learn some computer skills. These are necessary for their future studies.

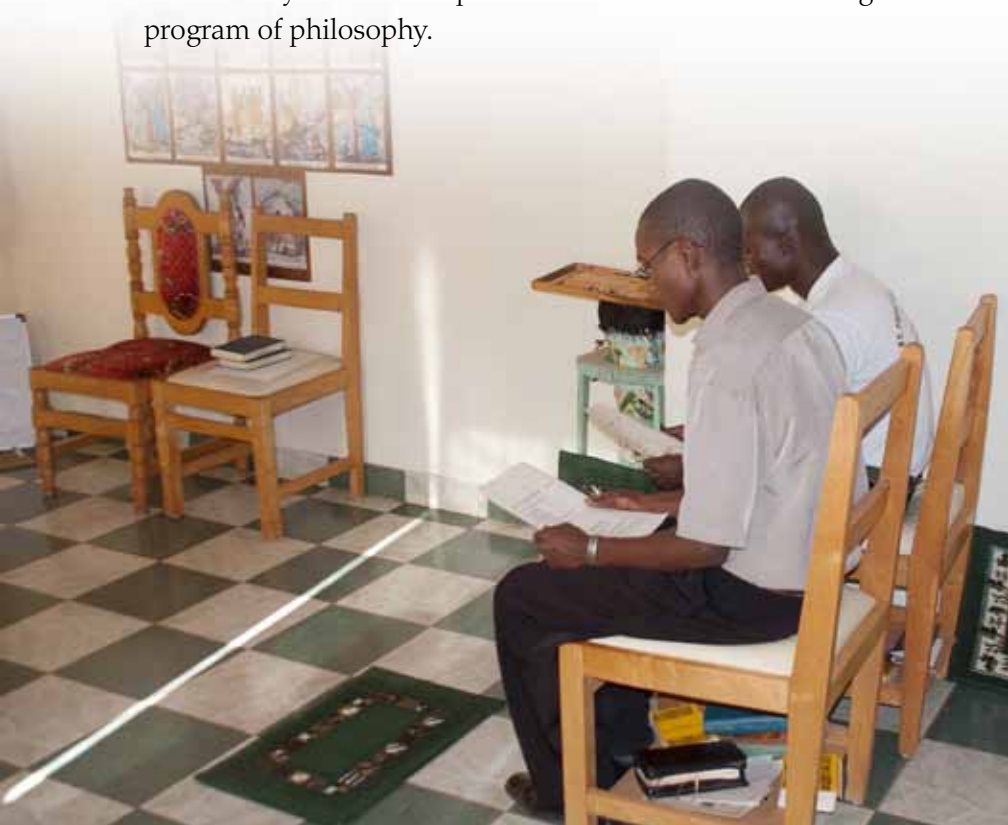
At the completion of their postulancy the candidates transfer to the Blessed Joseph Cebula pre-novitiate in Karen

(Nairobi), where, besides becoming pre-novices, the first phase in Oblate formation, they enroll in the Consolata Philosophical Institute where they study philosophy. After three years they graduate with a B.A. in philosophy.

Following the pre-novitiate program they go to South Africa to begin the next phase of formation novitiate. Novitiate is a one-year program, the official initiation into the Missionary Oblates. At the end of the novitiate they make their first vows and begin their theological studies at St. Joseph's Scholasticate in Cedara (near Pietermaritzburg or Durban).

This spring, Blessed Joseph Cebula pre-novitiate welcomed James Ibare, Moses Odhiambo and Phelix Johyua into the community to begin the next phase of their formation by becoming pre-novices.

As the name suggests the purpose of this phase of formation is the preparation for novitiate. The orientation program assures they have the requisite credits to enroll in the degree program of philosophy.



Earlier this year, at the Kanyakine Parish, Oblate brothers Stephen Murungi and Dionisius Ananua made Perpetual Profession of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and Perseverance as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

“Dionisius and Stephen were among the first group that was sent to do their novitiate. There were eight men in all, four went to the Novitiate in Johannesburg, South Africa and four went to Namibia. Following their novitiate Stephen and Dionisius were asked to go to Cameroon to begin their philosophical studies. As a result they are both fluent in French. I was going to say they were bilingual but they are more, they also speak Swahili and Kimeru. Following their philosophical studies they transferred to St. Joseph’s Scholasticate where they have taken their theological studies,” explained Fiori.

“Following their Profession they have returned to South Africa to complete their studies. They will probably be ordained to the Diaconate, with Ordination to the priesthood sometime in 2013.”

Jim Fiori, OMI





Jim Fiori, OMI, and postulants

Zachary Mwenda has just finished his novitiate (first vows) and is in Cedara for his theological studies. Cosmas Kubai is in the Novitiate in Johannesburg.

“We rejoice and are glad that God is blessing us with vocations. While North America is experiencing a true famine in terms of vocations, Africa and certainly Kenya are in what we could term the rainy season,” said Fiori.

“We give thanks to God for the generosity of the newly professed who have given their lives to God and to us. We not only feel blessed, we are blessed.

“I invite your prayerful support for all these men in formation. We are grateful to God but we are also grateful for all who have and continue to support us.

“Our gratitude goes out in a special way to the many benefactors who have in fact funded and made possible our formation program. May you share in the Blessings that God has bestowed on us.”



Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, and Karen Sax

Building Community

BY DAVID AND KAREN SAX

PERU – On the outskirts of Pueblo Nuevo/Chincha Alta, a small community several hours south of Lima in Peru, there is a large Oblate compound called El Rancho. It serves as a centre for renewal and a workspace for the Oblate building project. It has a large wall surrounding the yard, and many buildings including a chapel, a large meeting hall, eating and sleeping facilities, storage buildings and large covered work shelters. This compound is a place of transformation for many who come for a retreat, a workshop or to work with dignity.

Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, brought us to the compound to meet some of the brick-making team. One such worker is a witness to the transformative power of the work happening in El Rancho. Beyond the buildings in a dry area of dust and clay, Brother Blaise introduced us to Eluterio, the adobe maker.

We found Eluterio, pants rolled up and feet caked in clay, surrounded by hundreds of adobe bricks drying in the sun. He greeted us warmly in Spanish and smiled broadly as he demonstrated how he makes adobe bricks in a form, while Brother Blaise told us how critical adobe is to the whole project and

how it's a means of evangelization and sustainable income for the workers.

Eluterio came to the Oblate compound in dire straits. His addiction to alcohol had taken his job, his home and even his family. Although Eluterio had been living on the streets for several years, he had always managed to get through each day. But one day something changed and he could no longer keep up the illusion of survival. He knew his death was coming soon unless something powerful

happened in his life. Someone on the street told him to speak to Brother Blaise at the compound.

Like many transients who come to the Oblate house or the compound, there is much desperation and many sad stories, but little courage or perseverance to follow a new path. Many come and receive a meal, a promise of pay for work and plenty of water to help sweat out the past and keep going in the sand-pit or the compound. But the work is physically exhausting and the sun is merciless during the day. So many stay a few hours and then walk away. A few last days and occasionally someone will stay several months. Eluterio has stayed several years.

Eluterio had told Blaise he knew how to make good adobe bricks. Blaise had been making both adobe and cement bricks for the building project and welcomed this opportunity. So a deal was struck: a meal, a shower at the compound, some clean clothes, a shovel and a place to make adobe for regular pay.



Eluterio

Adobe was the common building block for Peruvians until mass-produced clay bricks were introduced. Adobe is surprisingly strong, weather resistant, earthquake safe and a good insulator against heat and cold. Most people have lost the knowledge to make good adobe so they must purchase it from a supplier to repair an adobe home or walled yard area. Unfortunately, the loss of knowledge and practice results in short supply and higher prices than the poor can afford.

Brother Blaise has found adobe to be a valuable resource as it creates a way to help the poor who have adobe homes and provides a source of income to fund the workers who make bricks and build cement brick homes with the poor. Blaise is determined to use the money from MAMI for building materials, but the workers need a source of income for their work. Selling adobe to the general public, especially businesses in the town, gives a source of funds for the workers. According to Blaise, it is also a means of evangelizing.

The adobe brick form has a cross imbedded inside and each brick comes out bearing the cross of Christ on one side. So each time someone loads a brick to take home they carry

Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, checks the house chart





the cross of Christ in their hands and place it into the walls of their homes and yards.

Brother Blaise told us that bringing dignity back to a person is more than food or clothing. They need a place of sustainable work where they can experience their sweat from honest labour, perseverance in their task, and accomplishment at the end of their day. Such labour is transformative as revealed in the life of Eluterio. Every morning he comes to the compound with enthusiasm and a love for what he does to make the building project and the mission of the Oblate community a witness of hope and transformation.

(David and Karen Sax are Oblate Associates from Saskatchewan who recently travelled to Peru)

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We now have the ability to accept donations by way of credit card! Please complete the gift form enclosed, visit our website at www.oblatemissionassociates.ca to give on-line, 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.



Always a Need

BY JOE DEVLIN, OMI

LIMA, PERU – In August, UNICEF declared that there are 340,000 children and adolescents living in Lima who are poor.

Anyone who consumes less than 272 soles (\$102.82 Cdn) per month for food and other needs is considered poor. Those who consume less than 143 soles (\$54 Cdn) are considered extremely poor. The average size of a family in Peru is five members.

Several people that I know get behind in paying the rent. Many of them are widows or unwed mothers who cannot find work. Some are affected by sickness and are unable to work. Some have no money for medicine or medical attention. When they have no money to feed their children they get desperate.

We try to help them survive until we can provide enough money to help them set up a small business or find a job.

Josefina Garcia and Jacky Eugenia Alancoa are two women living in a basement and taking care of 10 children. When Jacky was 13 years old, her mother abandoned her and left

her with two younger sisters and a brother. She sold candies on buses until 10:30 p.m. in order to feed and educate them.

When she was 17, she came to me because she was behind in her rent. Then she found a house whose owner was moving to Argentina. Jacky would have to take care of the place, pay the water and electricity bills, but she



Joe Devlin, OMI



Jacky's washroom after the roof collapsed

would not have to pay rent. Then Josefina and her three children moved in.

Later, a sick woman about to abandon her two small children was also given a space. However, within a month she died. The boys, aged 2 and 4, became part of the two families. About that time, Jacky was raped by four men, and as a result gave birth to two girls. Josefine takes care of one of them, and does what she can for the two boys. She impresses me. She walks about 16 kilometres every day collecting bottles and paper for recycling. She runs errands for other people and can make them laugh even when she has nothing to eat

The house was built on the side of a steep hill and the living quarters were in the basement. The first floor was never completed and has no roof. A room made of wood on the first floor serves as a kitchen. Jacky planned to transform the kitchen into a small grocery store, and Josefina rented a tiny store and planned to sell clothes. Then came the setback. A section of the cement floor collapsed along with part of the wall and destroyed the washroom in the basement. Repairing the damage became an urgent need, but there was not enough money available to finish the work, nor to buy a toilet and sink.

If Jacky and Josefina were the only ones needing help, their problems would have been solved quickly. Unfortunately, there are too many families desperately looking for help, and the funds I received were distributed quickly.

Before I went to Canada for my holiday in June, I had spoken to the landlords of several poor families and I told them I would pay the rent when I returned. I also told the one in charge of a “Soup Kitchen” that I would pay Josefina’s bill when I got back.

Fortunately the money I received through MAMI covered those and other expenses. I also receive some help from a prayer group in Lima. A few Peruvian families have also contributed.

May the Lord bless you and repay you for your kindness!

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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 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.

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clothing the naked and
bringing the love of God
to those most in need.

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