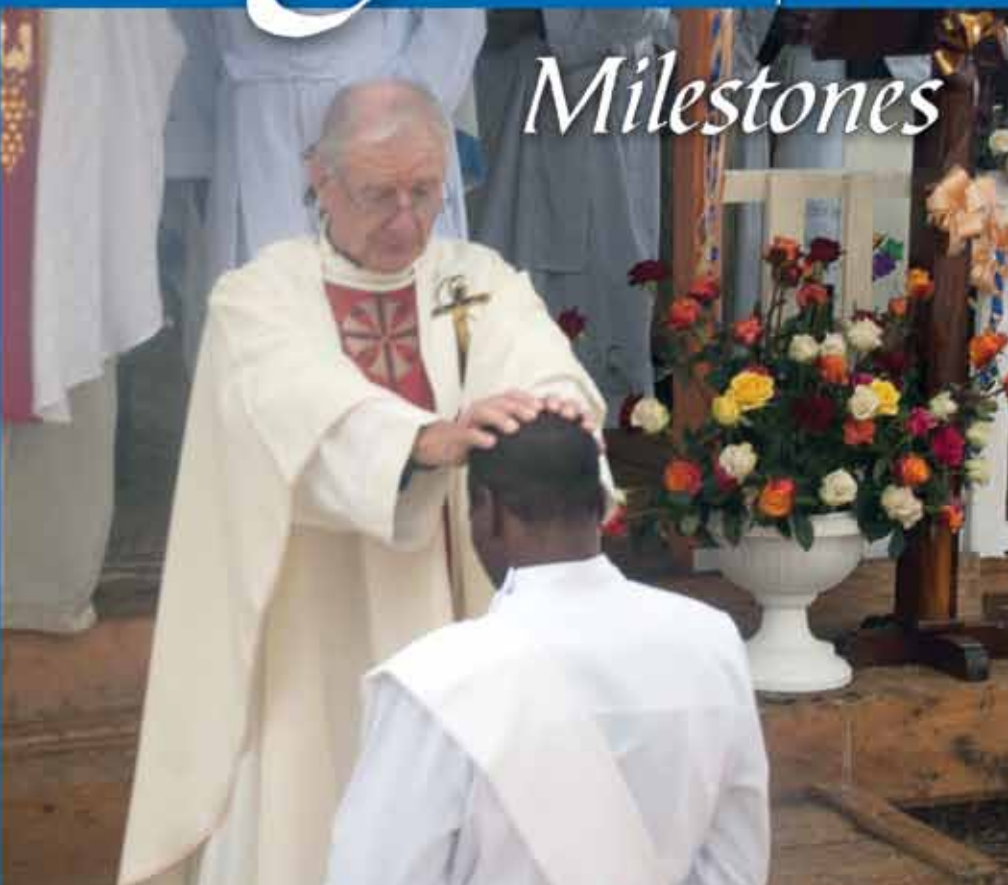


AMMI *Lacombe* Canada MAMI

# Oblate Spirit

September 2012

*Milestones*



# Our world is always changing



We live in a world of constant, rapid change, but some events will linger in our minds much longer than most. We chose milestones as the theme for this issue because of the number of significant events that have occurred in the Oblate world in the last year.

The most significant is the ordination of Gideon Mberia, OMI, the first Kenyan to join the priesthood as an Oblate. It was a momentous occasion and celebration that reflects the dawn of a new era.

The shifting winds of change flow through our lives in so many ways, from leaving old friends behind and bridging to a new life, from living and learning in impoverished conditions to the opportunities available in comfortable new housing and schools, from academic awards to retirement.

And ultimately we come to the end of our time on this planet. We have an opportunity in this issue to especially remember and offer prayers for those who have gone before us.

These are the ebbs and flows of life, and we celebrate all of them.

*John and Emily Cherneski*  
*Communications Coordinators*

**Cover photo:** Kenya Mission Superior Jim Fiori, OMI, during ordination of Gideon Mberia, OMI

# You are a priest forever

## The ordination of Gideon Mberia

BY JIM FIORI

KENYA MISSION SUPERIOR

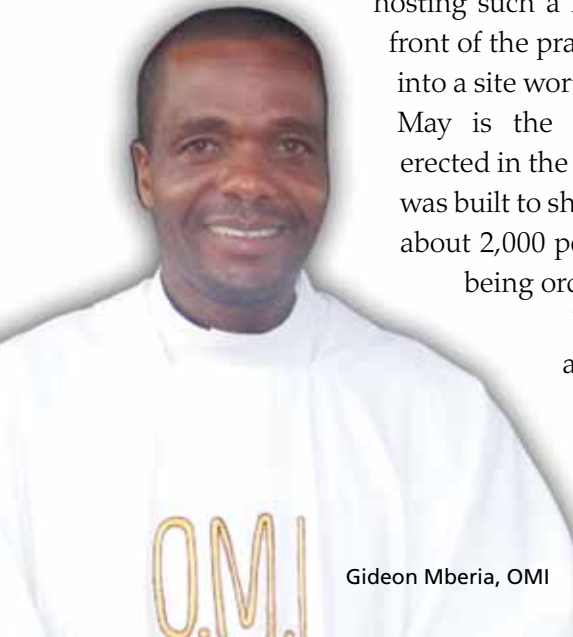
*Shout joyfully to God all you on Earth, sing praise  
to the glory of his name; proclaim his glorious praise  
(psalm 66:1-2)*

KENYA – These were the thoughts and feelings we had when, in the shadow of Mount Kenya, the Oblate Kenya Mission celebrated the ordination of its first born Oblate in May. Gideon Mberia is the first Kenyan Oblate to be ordained a priest, a significant moment in the life and history of the Oblate Kenya Mission.

Much preparation had taken place for this awesome event.

There are simply no buildings or halls capable of hosting such a large festivity. The field in front of the prayer house was transformed into a site worthy of a Papal visit. Because May is the rainy season, tents were erected in the event of rain. An enclosure was built to shelter the altar and to permit about 2,000 people to celebrate their son being ordained a priest.

With the beat of the drums and joyous song of the choir, dancers brought the procession to the altar. Bishop Salesius Magambi of Méru,



Gideon Mberia, OMI

accompanied by the Oblate community and many Diocesan priests, presided.

As the Mission Superior I had the privilege of presenting Gideon as being worthy and prepared. Following the Bishop's homily Gideon prostrated himself before the altar while we called on the whole of the Communion of Saints to be attentive to this moment. The choir aptly sang the Litany of the Saints. This is a moment of awareness that all the angels and saints, including the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and our ancestors, join us before God.

The bishop laid his hands on Gideon, followed by all the priests, and with hands extended the prayer of ordination was said. Gideon is now and forever a priest. The anointing of his hands, hands that will hold the Body and Blood of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist and extend the blessing of God, followed this. He was then vested with the stole and chasuble, and was presented with the chalice and bread. At this point he took his place beside the bishop at the altar and for the first time celebrated the Eucharist.

A community celebration followed, including cultural dances and a meal. Not unlike the banquet portrayed in Scripture, the fattened bull, a goat and many chickens were

Gideon with Mario Azrak, OMI





slaughtered. The entire community sat to eat. You can only imagine the amount of work to prepare such a feast on wood and charcoal fires.

Early in the morning the sky was clear and Mount Kenya was visible. Traditionally the mountaintop was the place of God. We were certainly aware that we were in God's presence as we gathered on the eastern slopes of the mountain. Midway through the service the clouds descended and it looked like it was going to pour rain. It didn't, but we discovered it rained on the other side of the road, truly a sign of blessing. In the evening, after everything was finished, it poured as in a deluge. Were these God's tears of joy?

The ordination was the culmination of a long journey. Gideon was one of the first Kenyan men to knock at our door asking to join the Oblate community. He came when, as a community, we hadn't even considered recruiting. We had just arrived in Kenya at St. Stephen's Parish in Kionyo.

Gideon spent a year under the tutelage of Bill Stang, OMI, at Igandene, one of the prayer houses in the parish. A more formal formation program was started in Méru, a community about 35 kilometres from Kionyo. Again under the tutelage of Bill Stang and Harley Mapes, OMI, he spent two years at the pre-novitiate.



Eight Candidates left Méru for novitiate, four to Namibia, including Gideon, and four to Johannesburg, South Africa. From there he went to St Joseph's Scholasticate in Cedara, South Africa, where he completed both his philosophical and theological studies. On Sept. 16, 2011, he was ordained a deacon at the scholasticate. He returned to Kenya and ministered as a deacon in the parish.

Two others of this group will likely be ordained in 2013.

In so many ways this ordination marks the maturity of the Kenya Mission. We now have a Kenyan Oblate priest, indeed our First Born. We are ever so grateful to God for this incredible blessing.

A very special thanks to all who have supported Gideon through MAMI. None of this would have been realized without you. You can consider him as your son as well as he stands at the altar and holds you in prayer.

On Sunday, May 13, Fr. Gideon presided at his first Eucharist in his home prayer house Njogune. The Church was packed.

A few days after his ordination, his mother died. His first funeral as a priest was that of his mother. May she rest in peace.

## **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](mailto:lacombemami@sasktel.net)**



# Saying good-bye again

BY DAVID MACPHEE, OMI (aka Daudi Mwenda)

KENYA – I remember when I was leaving for Kenya last year, my confrere Bradley made fun of me because of how much stress it was to say good-bye to everyone in Ottawa.

He laughed as I told him about all the people I had to visit, what they said, and how emotional I got. Granted I can be a bit over-dramatic sometimes, but I still view saying good-bye as one of the most difficult things about religious life.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux believed that her vocation was to be God's love. I believe that statement is at the core of any religious vocation. If you're not in it to love then don't bother coming out. The problem with love, however, is that in order to love you must be vulnerable. Being vulnerable isn't easy and you risk being hurt by people much easier. Essentially, the problem is the more you love the more you hurt. The more you love the more you get into the messiness of people's lives ... their deepest hurts, their fear, their longings and pain.

The upside to love is that this connection with other people can do positive things for you. The more you love the better chance that you will feel true joy and happiness ... a type of happiness that doesn't come from an episode of The Big Bang Theory (unless you're watching it with someone you love). The point is the risk of being vulnerable and open can lead to some amazing moments that will lead you to a better understanding of yourself and what you value.

I can honestly say that I have tried to live out my vocation by St. Thérèse's ideal. Yes, in some cases I haven't done it perfectly, but being perfect is boring. Love is all about being open to the possibilities of the moment. If I could only recount the





David MacPhee, OMI

difficulties that some of the people I love have shared with me I'm sure you'd feel the sorrow that I have felt intensely here in Kenya.

Likewise, I have stories of laughter and joy I've shared with the people here.

That brings me back to saying good-bye. As Shakespeare wrote "Parting is such sweet sorrow." All I can say is that I know this feeling well because of religious life. On one hand saying good-bye has left me in sorrow. The last days at every place I've been have been filled with sadness at letting go and fear of the unknown that lurks somewhere in the future. On the other hand, there is something to be said about the sweet part of it. The sweetness is the immense gratitude that fills your heart having been able to share and be part of people's lives. There are people that I will never forget, even if it was only a couple of hours that I spent with them, because I could feel the love of the other person.

I'm sure I will feel lost when I return to Canada because of leaving behind my friends here. But their memory is like chocolate cake to my soul.

*(David MacPhee, OMI, left Kenya for Europe in July, where he attended a three-week Oblate final vows retreat in Rome before returning to Halifax. He has been approved to make perpetual vows, a life-long commitment to the Oblate congregation.)*



# *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.com](mailto:oblatetravel@yahoo.com) or 604-736-3972. We would be pleased to discuss any questions you might have.

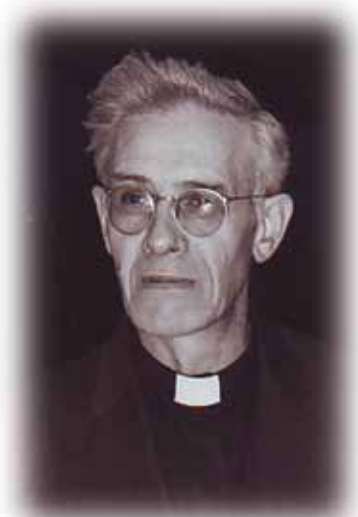


Please keep us in your prayers as we look to take Oblate Mission Travel to a new location in South America in the fall of 2013.

# A Tribute to Charles de Campigneulles, OMI

BY CORRINE PAMBRUN

SASKATOON – I didn't know Fr. Charles de Campigneulles long, but during his time at Mazenod Residence in Saskatoon, we shared many laughs and had many talks about his finances. He was someone who always knew what he wanted and made his wants and wishes very clear. With a wave of his hands and a loud comment, I would know exactly what he wanted me to do.



Charles de Campigneulles, OMI

When I heard the news of his passing, I first was saddened but remembered very quickly that he would not stand for grieving at his leaving as he wanted his passing to be a celebration of his life and service. I quickly put the tears aside and began to remember the special moments.

When Fr. Charles was hospitalized at the end of January, my family learned that our mother was going to be hospitalized as well. I had spent the night with Mom in the emergency room, and when family members came to relieve me the next day I went home to rest knowing the hospital was doing its best to find a bed for her on one of the wards.

It was early afternoon when my brother phoned to say that they not only had found a bed on the fifth floor for Mom, but

that she was going to be rooming with a man. My brother said Mom seemed quite fine with this plan because she believed this was no ordinary man; she was sure it was a priest and that he was one of “Corrine’s priests.” It was Fr. Charles de Campigneulles.

I wasn’t sure how to react as my family is large and loud and I was a bit worried we would drive Fr. Charles crazy or make him angry with our loudness and many visitors. I soon realized I did not need to worry. Fr. Charles soon became part of our family and brought to my mother such comfort and peace.

He gave many blessings at our shared meals and it just didn’t matter if he gave a blessing with one hand as he held his pj’s closed from behind with the other hand. His blessings were many and each one of them will be remembered by my entire family.

Fr. Charles loved my great nieces’ and nephews’ visits to mom. He would share stories with them about his ministry when he was young and doing First Nations ministry. They listened with such interest and then they would share with him what sports they were interested in and it would go back and forth with each visit.

Fr. Charles shared with my great niece who dances how he loved to dance as well when he was young, and he began to hum a tune to a French song while waving his hands and finishing with a very loud and hearty laugh. Kyla still talks about her visit with Fr. Charles.

I have come to believe that although Fr. Charles was retired and dealing with his own very serious health issues, God had given him one last assignment ... my mother!

I thank God for blessing my mom and my family with the company of Fr. Charles during her stay in the hospital. His presence, stories and humour were a blessing to each one of my family, old and young. If I had to grade his last assignment it would be an A+++.

When I told Fr. Charles about how much

he meant to my family he laughed and told me that although we are a very loud bunch, he enjoyed his time with us too.

Thank you my Oblate family for the many blessings you have given me. I am blessed and happy to have each one of you in my life.

*(Pambrun is an Oblate Associate and employee of OMI Lacombe Canada)*

## Into God's hands:

**Jerome Dowling, OMI, Oct. 8, 1950 – July 21, 2012**

**Robert Paradis, OMI, Aug. 31, 1922 – July 9, 2012**

**Paul-Antoine Hudon, OMI, March 3, 1927 – June 28, 2012**

**André Brault, OMI,**  
Dec. 1, 1928 - May 10, 2012

**Charles de Campgneulles,**  
**OMI,**  
Nov. 1, 1926 – April 8, 2012

**Louis Détilleux, OMI,**  
Dec. 28, 1925 – March 9, 2012

**Alexander Sampson, OMI,**  
Jan. 9, 1916 – Jan. 15, 2012

**John 'Jack' Davis, OMI,**  
May 8, 1929 – Jan. 7, 2012

**Francis MacDonald, OMI,**  
April 20, 1924 – April 6, 2012



# Memorable moments

**Ron Rolheiser, OMI**, was recognized for his outstanding contribution in the contemporary world of philosophy and spirituality when the University of Saint Paul in Ottawa awarded him an Honourary Doctorate Degree.

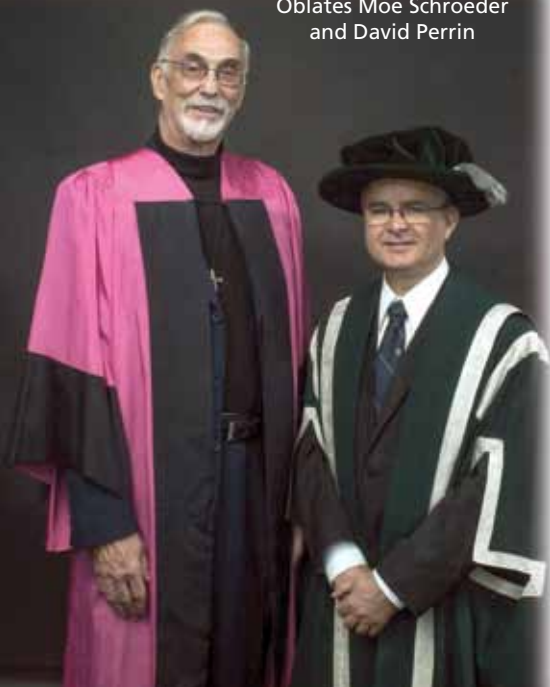
President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, Rolheiser has become one of the most popular writers and speakers on spirituality in the world. His weekly column is syndicated in more than 60 newspapers in various countries. He is the rare thinker who can speak to both specialists as well as the population in general when answering questions about spirituality in the 21st century.

**Dr. Moe Schroeder, OMI**, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Waterloo.

Schroeder is one of two medical doctors running the Centro de Salud Santa Clotilde, a mission hospital in the Amazon Basin of northeastern Peru. The hospital has 30 beds, an outpatient clinic, a pharmacy and public health programs.

Under the active leadership of Dr. Schroeder, the hospital has served more

Oblates Moe Schroeder  
and David Perrin





than 20,000 indigenous people who have little or no access to healthcare.

His work in bringing in locums to provide medical care in very difficult circumstances make him a wonderful role model and mentor to other Canadian doctors and to society in general. Dr. Schroeder is a shining example of good global citizenship and a model of leadership.

**Fidele Munkiele, OMI**, received the Master of Arts in Spirituality and Counseling from the University of Saint Paul in Ottawa. Fidele, born in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and now a member of Lacombe's Kenyan Mission team, has been director of the formation programs in the mission. The purpose of coming to Ottawa to spend two years earning this degree was to build upon and further develop the natural skills he brings to this important work.

**Archbishop Peter Sutton, OMI**, recognized for bringing the Gospel to northern communities, was the recipient of the St. Joseph Award presented by Catholic Missions in Canada

Every year, the St. Joseph Award honours a missionary whose dedication is a light for the world or salt of the earth. For more than 32 years he was bishop of the Diocese of Labrador Schefferville and latterly of Keewatin-The Pas.

He entered missionary work in 1967, visiting 56 communities, towns, villages, settlements and missions that make up the diocese spread across northern Manitoba, northern Saskatchewan and Sandy Lake, Ont.

"They were good experiences," said Archbishop Sutton. "And I certainly have no regrets. So I'm grateful to receive an award that carries with it a lot of people."

**Bishop Gerald Wiesner, OMI**, retired as Bishop of the Prince George Diocese. As is custom in the Catholic Church, he offered his resignation on his 75th birthday.

Drummers from the Nak'azdli Band welcomed 500 people from throughout the diocese and beyond to the celebratory banquet. Expressions of gratitude brought into clear focus the gift that the bishop has been friend, servant, teacher and shepherd.

Several First Nations communities in the diocese were represented, and others travelled from Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and other parts of BC to participate. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, brother Oblate and longtime friend of Bishop Gerry, was the guest speaker at the banquet.

**David Perrin, OMI**, has completed his five-year term as president of St. Jerome's University situated in the heart of the University of Waterloo campus.

"It has been the experience of a lifetime. My time as president and vice-chancellor has shaped me profoundly, and I will carry this experience with me forever."

## 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 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.



Alicia visits her future home

# A visit with Alicia

**BY DAVID AND KAREN SAX**

PUEBLO NUEVO, Peru – Although the height of the Peruvian summer had passed, it was hot and dusty in Pueblo Nuevo. This is a new town outside of Chincha Alta, along the southern coast and just over 200 kilometres from Lima. It is March, and we are staying as guests of Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, and the local Oblate priest Fr. Eduardo, in the nearby Oblate residence.

Together with our brother-in-law, we are excited about seeing the Oblate building project just outside of the town and meeting some of the residents. We are fortunate to have our daughter Marieka accompany us as our tour guide and interpreter.

On our walk around the shanty-house community and the building site, we meet Alicia, a friendly and welcoming resident who is eager to talk with us about her new house being constructed adjacent to the shack she occupies with her children.

Alicia moved here from another town about 100 kilometres north of Ica, an area hard hit by the earthquake in 2007. With Marieka's help, we are able to understand a little of her story.

Alicia leads us to her neatly organized humble home to show us around. It is made of bamboo poles driven into the ground every metre or so with overlapping woven reed mats attached to the poles. The inner dividers are of the same construction and create three small rooms with packed-dirt floors: one for cooking, one for sleeping and one for meeting. The roof has bamboo rafters with a blue tarpaulin over top.

Karen and Alicia



Alicia enthusiastically says it will be wonderful to move into the new house that has a real floor, roof, windows and door. It will provide added security and a sense of permanent ownership. She explains that the shack is hot in the summer and cold and drafty in the winter. Although it rains very rarely, there is a thick mist that comes in the winter that deposits heavy dew on the roof. This inevitably finds holes through which it leaks, causing wet bedding and clothing. And then there is the endless dust to contend with year round. You can tell she likes a clean and orderly household.

Like all project participants, Alicia and her family contribute several hours of labour a day to assist the local building team. They carry bags of cement from the truck, and water from the irrigation canal about a quarter of a kilometre away that is used to make the mortar. They have a strong sense of pride in what they are building with the project team members. She has a soft spot for Brother Blaise (Hermano Blas in Spanish), whom she loves to tease and compliment in the typical Peruvian way.

Within days of our visit, Blaise wrote to say the new roof had been installed. Alicia must be pleased.

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

## **NEW** Gift Payment Option

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](http://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.





# Bringing hope

BY ARIANE BOYER ROY

CHAD – The HIV/AIDS pandemic is one of the biggest challenges we are facing in terms of public health and socio-economic development. The importance of the pandemic, present throughout the five continents, led the United Nations to include in its Millennium Development Goals the objective to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. Despite this objective, the pandemic is still one of the first causes of mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa, where approximately 22.5 million people are now living with HIV/AIDS.

Fortunately, many projects were elaborated locally, with the contribution of the international community, to fight the disease. From 2009 to 2012, the Centre Missionnaire Oblat (Oblate Missionary Centre, CMO), an NGO based in Montreal and supporting worldwide initiatives for development, is leading a project in the city of Pala, in Chad. Realized with the financial support of Canadian International Development Agency



(CIDA), this project aims to prevent the spread of HIV/



Canadian International  
Development Agency

AIDS among the population, and to assist people living with it.

The region of Mayo-Kebbi, in the city of Pala, is particularly concerned with this issue: the number of people affected by the disease in Pala is estimated to 2,500, and 60 per cent of them are women. A local organization, the Study and Liaison Office for Charitable Action and Development, elaborated a project, with the collaboration of the CMO, that would improve the general health of the population living in the area.

The project comprises two principal activities. The first is the construction of the Greth Marty Centre, a clinic offering voluntary AIDS tests and socio-medical support to those diagnosed HIV positive. The Centre also offers treatments to pregnant women in order to prevent the transmission of HIV to their children. Since the beginning of the project, the clinic utilizes the "treatment literacy" approach, which consists of involving the patients in the health care provided by the medical team.

The second activity is a long-term prevention campaign that aims to tackle the causes of HIV/AIDS by offering to the





Greth Marty Clinic

population a formation called Education to Life and Love. Developed for adolescents and young adults, it provides general information on human biology and psychology, and encourages participants to adopt responsible sexual behaviors. This program can also count on the support of a local radio channel for the diffusion of spots and special programs throughout the entire Mayo-Kebbi region.

At the end of the project, in February 2012, general improvements could be observed in the Pala area. The mortality within people living with HIV/AIDS has gone down by five per cent, and more than 55,000 people have participated to the Education to Life and Love formation.

Beyond these improvements concerning the general health of the population, the project has also achieved a great success by bringing back hope to the people affected by HIV/AIDS. "Hope is essential to continue the fight against HIV/AIDS. When I started to follow the patients, I was accompanying them from life to death, but now we accompany them from death to life," said a member of the medical staff.

*(Ariane Boyer Roy is the Project Manager at Centre Missionnaire Oblat, Montreal)*



## Haiti update

Institution Jean Paul II, an Oblate school located in north-east Haiti at the border with the Dominican Republic, has been utilizing the parish hall for three years.

Last year, with the help of the Oblate Province and some benefactors, Jean Luc Bourdeau, the director, has been able to build six classrooms. Three of the classrooms have a roof and are being used by the students who are refugee children that lost their homes in the earthquake of January 2010.

We are pleased to report that funds from AMMI Lacombe Canada MAMI have been sent to the Oblates in Haiti to complete the remaining three classroom roofs.





AMMI Lacombe Canada  
MAMI is pleased to  
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clothing the naked and  
bringing the love of God  
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