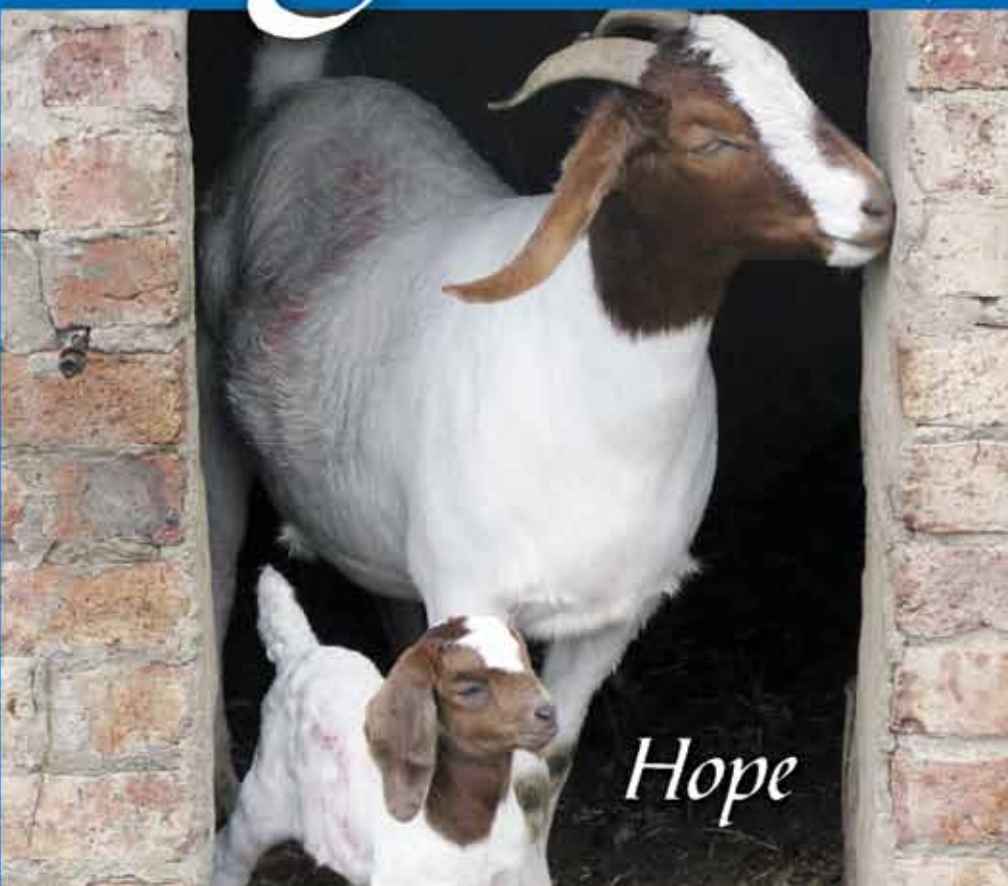


AMMI *Lacombe* MAMI  
Canada

# Oblate Spirit



Christmas 2017



*Hope*

# Hope from a goat?



How would you feel if you woke up Dec. 25 with a goat tied to your Christmas tree?

That sounds a bit far-fetched, but it isn't far from our suggestion to offer goats as a form of alternative gift giving this year.

That was one of the suggestions from Gerry Conlan, OMI, who is a member of the Canadian Oblate mission team in Kenya. The whole idea is to start herds of goats at Kisaju, Kionyo and at their farm in Kiirua. These herds would produce baby goats that could be sold and the profits would in turn support programs that help the youth group to grow spiritually and emotionally.

In other words, we are offering hope for a better future from a goat!

This is but one of several ways we can help the Oblates in Kenya, here in Canada or in the missions in Peru. We help provide milk for malnourished babies at the hospital in Santa Clotilde, help for women and their children in prisons in Nairobi, educational needs for the poor, assistance with the construction/development of chapels in Peru and Canada, or helping bring communities of First Nations together in an effort to preserve their cultures.

This is what the Oblates do around the world. Through their efforts, lives are improved and people are connected to each other and to God.

And it can be done as simply as by buying a goat!

We can never thank our Oblates friends and family enough for your help and prayers. May you all experience peace and blessings, not only through Christmas, but every day of the year.

*John and Emily Cherneski*  
*Communications Coordinators*

A group of about ten people, including men and women of various ages, are sitting on a rocky, uneven terrain. In the background, a large, white statue of the Virgin Mary stands on a pedestal, surrounded by a wire fence. The setting appears to be a rural or mountainous area with large rocks and some sparse vegetation.

# Christmas Wish List

## KENYA

Goats	\$50
Women's prison supplies	\$50
Water tanks	\$75
Educational needs	\$50

## PERU

Chapel building	\$50
Milk for babies	\$50
Beds, blankets, mattresses	\$50

## CANADA

The art of regalia	\$25
Prairie Flower House of Prayer	\$50



# Kenya

## GOATS (\$50)

The Oblates have a keen interest in helping the youth to grow into people who are happy and productive.

The youth in Kenya have no money, and parents reluctantly give them the little they can afford. Of course, the youth do small jobs here and there, but that little money goes toward their phone, to communicate with their friends.

So, whenever we Oblates try to help the youth, we need to find something to pay for transport, speakers and lunches. It was suggested we buy goats and produce some baby goats to generate income each year.

We have the newly born Oblate Youth program in Nairobi plus the youth in Kionyo and Kisaju parishes. By helping us start a herd of goats at Kisaju, Kionyo and our Oblate farm in Kiirua, we can help our youth. They need activities that will help them increase knowledge and skills, while growing spiritually and emotionally.



## WOMEN'S PRISON NEEDS (\$50)

Prison is tough for everyone in developing nations, but especially for women. Fr. Fidele does a wonderful ministry helping women in prison and also post-prison.

Inside, prisoners must fend for themselves. Those without families suffer a lot, struggling to procure toiletries, medicine, clothing and baby needs if they have a child.

There is no social security in Kenya, and after prison it is sometimes more difficult than in prison, because women are often rejected by family and have difficulty getting their children to school, and covering medical expenses.



## WATER TANKS (\$75)

Water is life!



### Kisaju Parish

We are installing a borehole at Kisaju Parish (Olturuto), where the locals will need a water storage point.

Farm manager Euticus  
with water tank



Water tank is delivered for the children at Langata Women's prison

### Langata Women's Prison

Water is a big issue in Nairobi in general, and especially in Langata Women's Prison. The city council provides water twice a week and the prison has to store it for drinking, showers and toilets. The price of a storage tank depends on the size, with a good quality 3,500-litre tank priced at about \$350.

### Oblate Centre in Kisaju

The future Oblate Centre in Kisaju needs water to sustain a self-reliance project. By planting crops using the stored water, we can generate income to continue our Oblate ministry in the district.

### Kiirua Farm

The Kiirua Farm area has fluctuating rain fall. With better water storage we can produce more crops and livestock to contribute to the mission expenses.

## **EDUCATION INCLUDING DESKS, CHAIRS, FEES (\$50)**

In Kenya, the government schools have a local church appointed as sponsor to help maintain integrity on the board, morality in the school, and assist in the provision of material needs. The Oblates sponsor 10 primary and four secondary schools in Kionyo, and three primary and one secondary school in Kisaju. Assistance is needed for books, desks, chairs and school fees.







A chapel in progress

# Peru

## A PLACE TO PRAY

BY BLAISE MACQUARRIE, OMI

CHOSICA, Peru – At this writing I am in a place some 40 kilometres northeast of Lima, at the foothills of the Andes Mountains. The town is called Chosica. We Oblates are here on a retreat of some sort, one of three such five-day encounters we have each year. I enjoy these gatherings because it gives me a chance to meet, chat and to share with my fellow Oblates about work being done and yet to do.

We Oblates have four parishes but far apart in distance. For example, it would take 16 hours to visit the parish in the jungle, providing there were no problems.

A few weeks ago we Oblates visited a huge and flat desert area where thousands of families live. Because there is no Church presence in this area, the people were most delighted to hear that the purpose of our visit was about the building of chapels.



Over the past several years we have constructed 10 chapels, and helped with building materials in six others. Because the chapels in the desert are now on our agenda, we already have a group of people busy arranging the proper paperwork required before construction begins.

The chapels we build are 8 metres wide by 20 meters in length. The building is made from our concrete bricks, which we have had tested at universities in Lima and Ica. This type of chapel will take us about six weeks to build, and the cost is shared equally by the community the chapel will serve, the parish and we Oblates. The total cost of a chapel is \$14,000 (Canadian).

Of course, houses are still the highest of the needs. We will soon reach 800 homes built since 2008. This work will continue until the coming of Christ! Because we live in an area of earthquakes, there is no guarantee that any house, no matter how well it is built, won't be destroyed by a quake.

Beds, blankets and day care are always in need.

We greatly appreciate all the help we get from Canada. Without it, we could do but next to nothing.

**Contribution to chapel building.....\$50**

A completed chapel





## **MILK FOR BABIES (\$50)**

We all know the importance of milk for newborns, but many mothers are unable to breast feed

their babies. Reasons for this include poor maternal health, multiple close pregnancies, abandonment, etc. The Santa Clotilde hospital along the Napo River in the jungles of the Peruvian Amazon responds to this need by providing supplements like powdered milk for the newborns.

## **BEDS, BLANKETS AND MATTRESSES (\$50)**

Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, takes the words of Matthew's gospel literally...he feeds the hungry, provides homes for shelter and beds, blankets and mattresses to keep the poor warm and comfortable. He continues these good works in schools, prisons and among the homeless and needy.



# Canada

## THE ART OF REGALIA

VANCOUVER—The St. Kateri Tekakwitha Centre in the midst of downtown eastside Vancouver brings together First Nations people from many different communities across Canada, each with their own traditions.

While the centre's mandate is addressing the spiritual needs of all people, the centre also encourages learning and teaching to carry on traditions. One of those traditions is the making of regalia, including drums, rattles, vests, moccasins and moss bags.

Passing on the skill of traditional arts is important for carrying on tradition and for community building, but some of these skills have been lost for many reasons, for example the loss of culture in residential schools and the move to city living.

Fr. Gary LaBoucane, a Métis Oblate priest and pastor of the St. Kateri Centre, says "the students become the teachers" as members of the group learn together, laugh and share traditional knowledge. People connect in new ways and become empowered by remembering tradition and passing it on.



Dory LaBoucane holds a completed moss bag

**Material for making regalia ..... \$25**



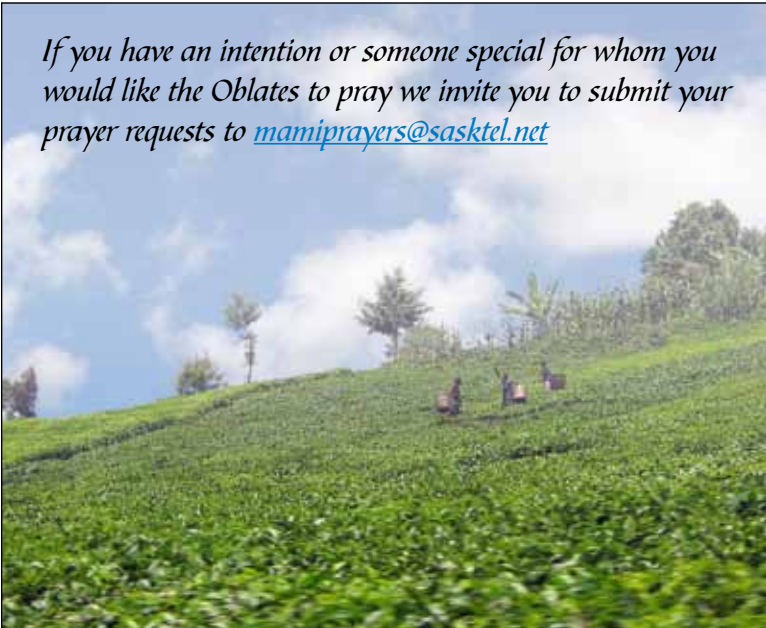
### Prairie Flower House of Prayer

## HOUSE OF PRAYER, WILKIE

Once the doors to the Prairie Flower House of Prayer at Wilkie, SK, are opened, it will honour the requests of those who seek to understand the meaning of and the presence of God in their lives. Material and furnishings are required for a small chapel that will serve as the base for spiritual nourishment. A small building can be refurbished for about \$1,000. Donations can help reach that goal.

**Material, furnishings for chapel ..... \$50**

*If you have an intention or someone special for whom you would like the Oblates to pray we invite you to submit your prayer requests to [mamiprayers@sasktel.net](mailto:mamiprayers@sasktel.net)*







# Kenya

## N O T E B O O K

BY GERRY CONLAN, OMI

### AUGUST 19

NAIROBI, Kenya – When I celebrated mass at Nyumbani, I gave them a greeting from Jim Fiori, OMI, our former Kenya mission superior who called me the night before. He was a favourite priest there because of his homilies and kindly grandfather nature with the children.

As 28 children prepared for confirmation, they recalled that Fr. Jim baptised most of them. They sent greetings back, so after mass I took a little picture of some of the regular ‘suspects’ at mass. We’ll see about a picture after confirmation and see if they’ve been transformed into angels!



Gerry Conlan, OMI

Oblates Gideon Rimberia, Stephen Muthomi, Martin Gikunda, Joseph Magambo and Joseph Nzioka (in background) share breakfast before Sunday mass





Participants at the IPTC meeting

## **AUGUST 26**

On Sunday I visited the 12 novices in Johannesburg, where I was attending meetings. They had just come back from a sad funeral. The 17-year-old brother of one novice committed suicide. Two brothers got caught up in drug deals in and out of school and the police were moving in. One asked for help from the parents, and one killed himself. It was very sad. Drugs are becoming a bigger and bigger problem in South Africa.

I was part of the Capital Investment Fund sub-committee that met on Wednesday evening. We are looking at regional projects that can generate income to pay for the rising formation costs (for training new Oblates). As someone remarked, our formation costs have exceeded the economic capacity of the community we serve. Perhaps it's time to review the way we form men.

During our meeting on Thursday, we reviewed, corrected and approved the 2018 budgets for the novitiate, seminary and regional leaders meetings and activities. Financially, the Oblates are in a difficult place with aging men, increasing costs and reducing numbers resulting in reducing contributions.

## SEPTEMBER 2

I arrived at our home base in Karen after taking the night bus from Mombasa. The plan was to take the train, which is quicker, but the bus got me to Nairobi in time for the

computer technician to give my laptop a thorough cleanout (the system fan had stopped working and the chip was getting very hot). I also went to the industrial area to order 190 mattresses for the orphanage. Sadly, they no longer deliver outside Nairobi because of hassles with local authorities wanting bribes along the way.

When I left mass to have breakfast at the restaurant, I came across the street boys. As I approached, a man rushed over with two large bags of bread. The street boys then greeted me and politely requested some milk. I offered to take them for tea, but they said, "No, just milk from the supermarket please."

Our little bulls are growing



Nairobi youth group meeting  
with lots of new ideas and vision







Gave the boys some milk and soap

So two came with me and when I asked if they needed anything else, they requested soap.

As you look at the face of each boy, you become worried about their future. The boy front right in the picture looks like a newcomer, while most of them look tired and older than their age. The boy in the middle has a plastic bottle with glue in it.

On Sunday we have a youth group meeting and I'll be asking them what they think is possible for them to do for the street boys. I was wondering whether the new governor might be open to do something along the lines of a food-for-work, clothes-for-work scheme. He has already started employing hundreds of youth for the Sonko Rescue Team that cleans up the city.

After a bit of lunch, my friend Godfrey and his friend drove me home (they thought I was too tired to take



Farm manager Euticus with new small bull donated by Kionyo Community



the bus). That was kind of them. His friend is the personal chauffeur for the head organizer of the president's movements around Kenya. He's a nice chap I've met regularly at Godfrey's for the last few years. He has a GK number-plate (Government of Kenya) so the police leave him alone. (Where can I get one of those?)

## SEPTEMBER 9

Sadly, I couldn't attend a funeral for Alex, a friend. A lawyer, he had a crash on Easter Sunday with a truck. After 10 weeks in ICU he started to rally, then went into a coma and back to ICU for three weeks where he died. The medical costs were enormous, but people chipped in. His wife works for CRS (Catholic Relief Services, USA). Alex was sponsoring a home for children with disabilities, and a few other good causes, as well as being the superman of his family. Very sad.

Saturday morning, after two masses with the sisters, I headed to Kisaju with a load of maize stalks from our harvest at Karen. On the way home I passed by our "son" Denis to see if all was ready for university on Monday. He was sad because he was pick-pocketed and lost his phone. A youth without a phone is like a one-legged duck. But I did feel sorry for him

A load of maize chaff for the Kisaju animals



and there was no money to buy another. He was totally disorganized for university, but after an hour we had it somewhat sorted.

His university is at Kirinyaga, halfway to Méru, where he's been offered a course in statistics by the government.

## SEPTEMBER 17

I visited Ngongo Primary School to check on the disabilities project I started in 2013, installing disabled toilets, a concrete path and some friendly desks in the class-room (thanks Denise in Canada). Fr. Dio and the school finally finished what they could with the money available.

The school also contributed about three times the amount. It's not perfect, but it's a great step forward and a great example to all other schools in the district. I hope the Ministry of

# 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](mailto:lacombemissions@yahoo.ca)**



Education shares the good news: it's not that hard, and it makes a big difference. I believe the Oblates are good at expanding the imagination of the local people (the Oblates opened the first day secondary school in the whole county about 15 years ago).

All the Ngongo teachers and students are happy and proud. They are working on gutters for the upper buildings and a tank to store the rain water, which will run down to the flushing toilets ... probably the first in the district.

After lunch Tuesday, I picked up some chicken feed and headed to the farm, which is progressing slowly, and preparations are under way for the rains coming in October.

On Thursday, Fr. Praveen and I headed to Nairobi with four 12-week-old puppies in a wooden box for Fr. Gideon at Kisaju. I arrived at Kisaju by 1:30 p.m. The puppies were OK, but one tried to bite me as I pulled it out.

At Kisaju I was able to fine-tune some final work with the carpenter before heading back to Karen. Along the way I picked up the new title deed from our lawyer for the donated land we received in Kisaju, then got 200 used paper/plastic sacks for the farm (for erosion protection, carrying manure from Méru

Class 1 and 2 children with their teacher





Fr. Praveen released his last four puppies from Méru for the assistance of Fr. Gideon and community who have no guard dog at the moment

for the tree seedlings, and cladding on the chicken coup).

I drove Stephen from Kisaju back to Karen to buy dog food. Because the puppies had fleas, I asked Stephen to scrub the wooden box as we prepared to collect piglets from Mr. Richard's farm.

I brought Fr. Faustin with me so he could meet some of the Richard's family and build a relationship with them. He was amazed at the variety on the four-acre farm: more than 100 pigs, 30 cattle, 50 sheep and goats, 20 or 30 dogs (they breed and sell them), and acres of vegetables for the restaurant.

I've suggested to Mr. Richard we could place some students here for a few weeks' work to expand their imagination about what is possible for us to do in the future. We were stuck in a traffic jam coming home but arrived safely with two piglets to eat the food scraps.



## Gift Payment Option



We have the ability to accept donations by way of credit card! Please complete the gift form enclosed, visit our website at [omilacombe.ca/mami/donate/](http://omilacombe.ca/mami/donate/) 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.





The Nairobi Youth group visit the Divine Mercy Shrine in Chumvi, Kenya

## SEPTEMBER 24

Greetings from beautiful Nairobi where we've had rain and sunshine during the week, but we had sad news as well. Fr. Gideon's dad has been diagnosed with cancer, two lumps in the stomach and quite advanced. Please pray for the family at this time.

Last Sunday I had a great day driving the Nairobi youth group to Chumvi Divine Mercy Shrine, only 20 kilometres outside the city limits on the way to Mombasa. It's on top of a mountain, and you can see for miles. We reflected on the Gospel – about forgiveness – and I challenged them to ponder if they needed to forgive their parents, or God or themselves.

Then we walked the Stations of the Cross and ate lunch, followed by mass and then home. They had a good time, and were very happy.

On Monday, as I came home, I picked up one of our youth who travelled from Kionyo and he came for lunch at Karen. Then I took him to Nyumbani where he met the counsellor to talk about being HIV positive and get re-tested. He had been suicidal last week. I think I'm the only one who knows he's HIV positive. The cost was a bit steep, but how does one say no to a young man in his situation? I told him to pay me back when he can.

The next day, I received a call saying the tests came back negative. "The young man has no HIV positive in his blood. We did the test twice to confirm. He's clean."

I was amazed and happy about the results. I was almost afraid to call and tell him the good news in case it was a mistake. He was also amazed, but a bit cautious and wanted to visit the next day to confirm and see the counsellor.

The rest of the day I felt like a dad holding a new baby in his arms. The poor lad had carried the knowledge of being positive for three years.

## SEPTEMBER 30

It's been a week of "poverty" and some frustration not having a car to get around efficiently. But it's good to take public means to remind ourselves how difficult it is for ordinary people. By Friday I had a sore throat that I put down to the conductor not closing the bus door and cold wind blowing over everyone. I fear my Kionyo immunity has gone.

From Tuesday to Friday I had morning mass at the Loreto Girls School near town. It was my first visit to the school, where

Fr. Gideon saying morning mass for the community



there were many red diplomatic-plated cars dropping off kids. I needed four masses to get through all the girls from Year 1 to Year 12. I heard it's a popular school and difficult to get in. The principal (a Sister) said half the students are not Catholic, but they all participate in the Catholic system. The parents sign a form agreeing to it all.

## OCTOBER 8

I was driving home via Ngongo and picked up a few kids walking home from school. I said I can take a few but they all squeezed in. I counted nine as they burst out from the back seat of the car. They were so excited and happy about reducing their walk by two or three kilometres. These little events always put a smile on my face.

Thanks for your prayers for Kenya and all the Mission.

### 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? 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.



# Guardian Angel

**BY BLAISE MACQUARRIE, OMI**

After visiting my family in Canada, I was ready to return to Peru. On the morning of my departure from London, ON, my sister Roberta and brother Gerry took me to the small bus station.

Needless to say “goodbyes” are always emotional.

At the airport I was dropped off at international flights and headed for the Air Canada flight to Peru. I was worried about the weight of both my bags, because the last time they soaked me \$100 for the second bag. And in the bags were little gifts for friends plus lots of candy for the children.

This time I chatted with my Guardian Angel, asking this God-given Spirit to influence the Guardian Angel of the person who was to deal with me. When my turn came, the first bag on the scale showed overweight. The man asked “is your second bag overweight?”

I said, “slightly.”



He said, "This is going to cost you \$100!"

I then asked the man – a kind person nevertheless, "where were you born?"

He answered, "Trinidad."

"Do you speak Spanish?" I asked.

He said, "No, but I am going to learn it."

Then he asked me where I was going. "Peru, and these bags are filled with goodies for the children. I am a missionary."

He was getting my boarding pass ready, and out of the blue he said, "You will not be charged for the overweight nor for the second bag!"

He wished me a happy and successful trip.

At the Lima airport I was given the 'green light' to bypass Customs with my heavy bags!

Thank you, my Guardian Angel!



**NEW WEBSITE!**

**[www.omilacombe.ca/mami/](http://www.omilacombe.ca/mami/)**



# Publishing Change

After many years of publishing *Oblate Spirit* in both English and French, it was decided that the November 2016 issue would be the last French print publication because of the significant cost of a limited run of copies in French. This means we can channel as much of your generous donations as possible to our missions.

An identical French version of *Oblate Spirit* is available online at [www.omilacombe.ca/mami/](http://www.omilacombe.ca/mami/)

We wish to acknowledge and thank our French supporters for their ongoing support.



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## Changement dans la publication

Après plusieurs années de publication de *Oblate Spirit* en anglais et en français, nous avons décidé en novembre 2016 de mettre fin à l'édition française à cause du coût important de l'impression en nombre restreint des exemplaires en français. Cela signifie que nous pouvons acheminer une part plus importante des dons généreux vers nos missions.

Les lecteurs francophones peuvent cependant accéder à une version électronique identique en français de *L'Esprit oblat* en suivant le lien : [www.omilacombe.ca/mami/](http://www.omilacombe.ca/mami/)

Nous sommes reconnaissants envers nos amis francophones de leur appui continu.

AMMI Lacombe Canada  
MAMI is pleased to  
support our Missionary  
Oblates serving the poor  
around the world through  
spiritual and humanitarian  
works – feeding the  
hungry, caring for the sick,  
clothing the naked and  
bringing the love of God  
to those most in need.

*We support Oblate  
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Guatemala  
Haiti  
India  
Kenya  
Pakistan  
Peru  
Puerto Rico  
Sri Lanka





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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.*

# *Oblate Spirit*

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<https://www.omilacombe.ca/mami/>

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*A publication of the  
Oblate Mission office.*

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