



Prayers

Fr. Maurice Blackburn, Fr. Virgilio Baratto, and most recently, Fr. Jean-Paul Vantroys were admitted to the hospital with various complications. Fr. Blackburn and Fr. Baratto are now recovering at home at Youville Home while Fr. Vantroys continues to battle pneumonia.

January & February Anniversaries



Birthdays

January 16 – Fr. Jean-Paul Vantroys

February 05 – Br. Jerome Blackburn

First Vows

January 6 – Fr. Virgilio Baratto (70 years)

Ordinations

January 3 – Fr. Wladyslaw Karciaz (42 years)

January 29 – Fr. Louis-Philippe Roy (74 years)

February 15 – Fr. Félicien Labat (65 years)

Invitation – February 16

All are invited to come and celebrate with the Oblate community as the Oblate Associates renew their commitment; new Associates will also be making their first commitment. The celebration will take place on the eve of the Oblate Feast Day of the Approval of the Constitutions and Rules of the Missionary Oblates. A reception will follow.

Come join us at St. Albert Parish, at 7 pm on Friday, February 16, 2018.

New Year's Message from Fr. Alfred Groleau, OMI

The festivities have passed and we are already engaged in beginning the New Year. In keeping with the tradition of the twelve days of Christmas ending with Epiphany, allow me to offer belated greeting, blessings, wishes and prayers.

Last year saw the demise of five Oblates of our district not to mention Fr. Paul-Eugene Plouffe who had moved to Manitoba but nevertheless was much a part of us because of the years he spent in Grouard and Grandin Provinces; his decease is the most recent. Though Fr. Joseph Goutier died in 2016, he who was buried in the first days of 2017. The five from our district who died last year include Bob Kelly (Jan. 31), Al Roy (April 1), Alex Shahun (May 16), Daniel Lafrance (June 18), and Yvon Boulianne (Oct. 24). We miss them and we remain one with them in the Communion of Saints. May we be inspired by their examples. Father Robert Filion's departure was only a move to his home province but it was significant due to his many years of service to the Grouard diocese first as a brother and then as a priest. Also, his diligence and his calm presence in recent years.

Our memorable events for our district last year include our spring and fall assemblies. In September, we participated in a discernment process led by our core team about the retreat houses in the Province. The Provincial Counsel recently completed this process and I am happy for its endorsement of Star of the North. I have attended meetings of the Star's board of governors and I have been very impressed by its competence and creativity. In April, Father Bonga was an inspiration with his youthful enthusiasm and his ability to make Eugene present to us.

In the Edmonton Archdiocese presently, Oblates are capably administering four parishes. In Sacred Heart, Father Jim Holland ended a term that exceeded twenty years and he was granted a medal of honour as citizen of the year. Father Susai Jesu has now replaced him, demonstrating leadership skills in the number of challenging Christmas projects, counting among his supporters many Oblate Associates who responded generously to his appeal for help. At St. Charles Parish, the change of personnel at St. Charles seems to have passed almost unnoticed. Father Frank is now in formation ministry at Godfrey, Illinois and he needs to be remembered in this year when we are asked to pray in special way for Oblate vocations. Father Les and Ignacy have become mature pastors in Enoch/Lac Ste- Anne and St. Albert. The great pilgrimage continues to develop a new style of administration. The team of Oblates in the Territories continues to provide the anchor for the mission there while a new Bishop appears.

It has been a good year, with continuity and also some forms of gradual transformation. As mentioned above some have left us, but others have come. Father Thomas Kurudeepan was with us for the summer and the fall. Father Guislain Kibete has arrived only last month and he has been absorbed in language study. Father Wladyslaw Karciarz quickly settled at Foyer Lacombe and he has given much assistance to St. Albert Parish. Father Alfred Hubenig has moved to Foyer Lacombe and continues to bolster the faith community of Pickardville.

At Vital Grandin Centre, Father Camille Piche is working arduously on the monumental task of sorting out our archives so that they will be ready to move to the Alberta Provincial Archives, whereas Father Ed Kosa continues chaplaincy at Youville Home. Since my own return from Kenya where I attended the twentieth anniversary of the mission and I spent the months of May to September at the postulancy in Meru, there are reports of seven candidates for novitiate who will go to Sri Lanka and the Philippines as well as to South Africa. Among the seven postulants whom I accompanied in Meru during that time, three have been admitted to study Philosophy at the pre-novitiate in Nairobi. In this year of prayer for Oblate vocations, we should pray for the seeds planted being planted by our core team in their visits to Vietnam and India where Oblate communities are sprouting. They hope that among the fifty or so oblate candidates in each country some might come to us eventually just as Father Guy is responding today to an invitation made by Father Jacques Johnson to Congolese scholastics back in the 1990s. At the same time, we hear about this influx of vocations south and east of us, we need the grace of serenity and realism to accept our present diminishment since our number in the district is down to thirty-two. In this context, Our Oblate Associates are a meaningful support to us because of the sincerity of their commitment to the Oblate charism; more than a half dozen candidates are aspiring to join our family in the coming month. These are signs that our Oblate Charism will not soon vanish.

I am very grateful for the generosity of all our Oblates and Associates, especially for the council of Father Ed Kosa, our treasurer, the care and dedication Brother Tom Cavanaugh

for our elders and the presence of Lucie Leduc on our council, and the faithful services of Monique Cloutier, our administrator.

To all, I wish a very blessed new year!

Alfred Groleau, omi

Programs at Star of the North: Registration: 780-459-5511 or www.starofthenorth.ca

TLC for Caregivers

An afternoon of quiet reflection and some sharing and rest to honour those who are in for the long haul of caring for someone with little ability to care for themselves. This is also a time to honour the feelings that come with selfless giving and compassion; a time to be with others who understand the wave of emotions that are often mixed with sorrow and joy. A time to be spiritually embraced and uplifted for the continuing journey.

Facilitator Helen Gledhow is a certified grief counsellor and former pastoral associate of a large parish where she served in the Pastoral Care ministry and grief support.

Wednesday January 24, 2018 - 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm - \$25

Slow Down! Retreat Days with Sandy Prather

Feeling like you need a time out? Busy lives often leave us feeling tired, lacklustre and spiritually empty. A Slow Down Day is your opportunity to rest your body and refresh your spirit. Each day consists of thought-provoking presentations on a spiritual topic combined with ample time for personal reflection and prayer; small group faith sharing is an option. Come slow down with us by following the Star to an oasis of peace.

Thurs. January 18: "How I Love Your Word!": Soaking in Scripture.

Thursdays: Jan 18, March 15, April 19 - 9:30 to 3 pm - \$40/retreat day (includes lunch)

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