

AMMI *Lacombe* Canada MAMI

Oblate Spirit



February 2018

*Helping
Hands*



A search for healing



When we watch the news, read the newspapers and look around our communities, one cannot help but feel a sense of helplessness as we observe a world that seems so desperately in need of healing.

Threats of war and use of nuclear weapons, environmental disasters, wildfires in the middle of winter, extreme cold, and extreme heat: there seems to be no end to it. Humanity and Mother Nature are taking a beating.

So where do we go for that calming effect and sense of peace? We seek the love of God. We turn to those close to us, to our families. We cocoon.

But for many on the fringes of society, there often seems nobody to whom one can turn. It's on these fringes that we often find the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, lending open ears and open hearts.

As we see in this issue, we find the Oblates in the women's prisons in Kenya, offering hope and the barest of necessities needed for survival and growth. We find it in Ukraine, where Canadians have helped the Oblates nurture many young children. We find it in Peru, where a Canadian Oblate priest/doctor spent more than 40 years tending to the sick and weak.

We can open our eyes and see the best of humanity at work. We see hope. And that vision of hope makes us grateful for your prayers and support that allow for the work of the Oblates to take place.

Blessings to all of you for helping make the world a better place.

John and Emily Cherneski
Communications Coordinators

A common goal at the patient house in Lima

BY MAURICE SCHROEDER, OMI, MD

We would like our supporters of the Santa Clotilde Hospital Mission to meet some of your collaborators who, unknown to you, are your partners in a common mission.

For years your mission donations have enabled us to maintain a patient house in Lima as an essential tertiary level care extension for patients from Santa Clotilde and the Amazon who require specialized treatments in Lima as out-patients. Typical are cancer patients receiving or recovering from chemotherapy or children with surgical interventions in specialized hospitals (cardiac, orthopedic, etc.)

The volunteers of MiBanco at the conclusion of their restoration work at the patient house in Lima. Manuel Trudel, director of the house is at the extreme left in the front row. The leader of the group, Sr. Elmer Guardia is on Manuel's left side. A manager of Mibanco (standing, green sleeves), Sra. Mariela Ramirez, is holding an orthopedic patient from the Amazon.

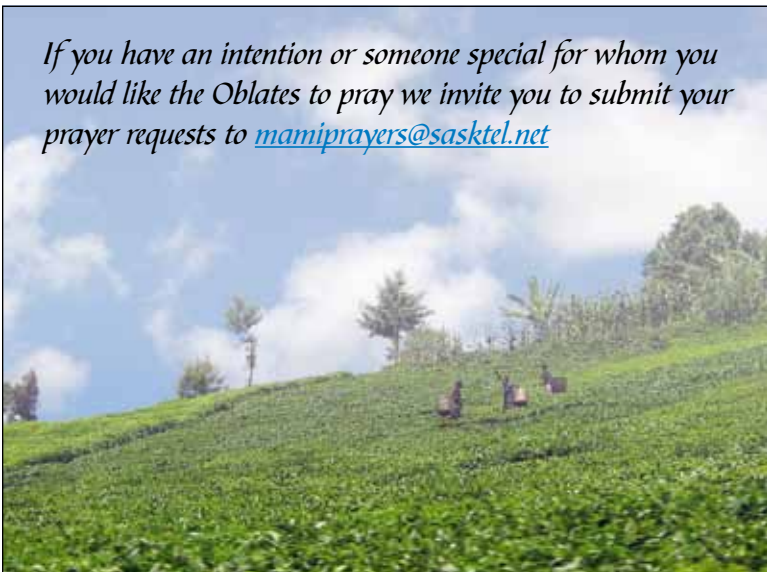


These patients are routinely accompanied by a family member, and treatments and convalescences can require prolonged stays in Lima. For housing and facilitating their often complicated treatment schedules and paperwork, we maintain a house under the direction of Manuel Trudel, a full-time director. The house, property of the Norbertine Fathers since their mission in Peru in the 1960s, was given to us to use for this purpose for our Santa Clotilde patients.

Recently a volunteer group of young people, all employees of a Peruvian bank, called MiBanco, chose our house for their annual civic action (typically doing maintenance and repair work for some charitable institution such as a home for the aged or a shelter). After assessing the needs of our house, they arrived with tools and materials and began two weeks of intensive reparations and restorations, painting, and various installations on all three floors of the house.

We are grateful for the creative energy of this generous group of colleagues in our and your mutual mission of providing medical care for this underprivileged portion of the Amazon people.

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





Fr. Fidele and pre-novices deliver gifts

Langata women's prison

BY FIDELE MUNKIELE, OMI

NAIROBI – In line with our charism to “evangelize the poor, the most abandoned,” the Oblates of Mary Immaculate are involved in prison ministry in many places in the World.

In Kenya, we provide ministry at the Nairobi Langata Women's Prison.

Langata is the major women's prison in Kenya, the only maximum prison. There is also a separate remand prison where women can spend years waiting for their court's procedures. Most of the prisoners are 18 to 25 years old.

Our ministry consists of attending to the prisoners' spiritual needs (masses, sacraments) and pastoral needs, social welfare and psychological care. It is a challenging ministry because it involves time, material means and presence.

Many women are convicted because of crimes (minor or major) committed on the basis of their lives of poverty and



Fr. Fidele as Fr. Christmas at the women's prison

joblessness. Desperation leads them to do anything to survive. Many are single mothers.

Our ministry gives them the opportunity to reform their lives and provides counseling so they can live normal and healthy lives once they are free.

We assist them with their basic needs, including soaps, toiletries, shoes and medicines. Once they are out, we try to help them with a small amount of money to start a small activity in order to survive.

Some have children who unfortunately cannot access education. We are also trying to assist with a limited means for their education.

We wish to thank all the benefactors through MAMI, for their generous contribution to the prison ministry.

(Fidele Munkiele, OMI, ministers at Langata Women's Prison and has been including pre-novices for visits.)

Prayers from Kenya

NAIROBI – On All Souls day, Nov. 2, the Oblate Community in Karen, Nairobi, celebrated a special memorial mass for all the deceased family and friends of our MAMI members in Canada.

The Oblates and pre-novices in Karen are direct beneficiaries of the kindness and generosity of our MAMI benefactors – both prayer and financial support. So Gerry Conlan, OMI, explained how this act of prayer and celebrating mass for the loved ones of our benefactors in MAMI Lacombe was an important and practical way of appreciating and thanking them.

The liturgical colour for mass was purple, which is the universal symbol for humility and humble requests. With the kind assistance and intention of Fr. Faustin concelebrating the special mass, we prayed to God: *please have mercy on the deceased friends and family members of our benefactors, and welcome them home to be with you.*

After pre-novices Boniface and Samuel Onduso proclaimed the First and Second Readings, Fr. Faustin proclaimed the Gospel of the Beatitudes. In

Fr. Gerry celebrates
a memorial mass
for deceased family
and friends of MAMI
members



the homily, Fr Gerry reminded us about one of the first and most enduring images used to describe the church: a ship (some say a hospital ship, but not all on board are sick). He reminded us that even the church buildings are connected to this image: the “nave” of a church (the main area where people sit), is the root word for “ship”. The captain of a ship must always respond to distress signals – visible or by radio. The ship must interrupt its journey and change course to rescue those in danger.

This sacred duty to rescue our brothers and sisters does not end when they die in this earthly life. The Body of Christ prays for the deceased so that their love may be purified and they can then see and be with God. The Morning Prayer hymn was recalled:

Oblates attend the memorial mass



*Remember those O Lord,
Who in your peace have died,
Yet may not gain love's high reward
Till love is purified.*

The homily continued with a final image/story, of a man who was ship-wrecked and washed up on a small island in the middle of nowhere. He was all alone. He struggled to build a shelter and hunt for food. After a few days, he returned from hunting to find his shelter burned to the ground. He fell into despair and wanted to give up. But the next day, a ship appeared on the horizon and he waved mightily to attract their attention. Thankfully they saw him and, when they rescued him, the man asked: *"How did you know I was here?"* They replied, *"Late yesterday we saw smoke and we came to investigate."*

The image is this: the destroyed temporary shelter symbolises our defences and bad habits that prevent us from seeing God clearly. When we reflect on the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, we remember that Jesus first rose from the dead, and only then did He ascend into Heaven. But none can ascend into Heaven unless they have destroyed (burned) their bad habits, defences, anger, lack of forgiveness, etc.

Our sacred task, as members of the living ship of the Church, is to call attention to those who have died, so our ship's Captain, Jesus Christ, might change direction and rescue them. If we, who are imperfect, can love the deceased, how much more will God, who is perfect and more advanced in loving, also love and forgive them in answer to our requests?

Let us pray earnestly for the "temporary shelters" of our deceased brothers and sisters to be burned quickly so they might be at home with God: *in peace and joy for ever.*

The Mass continued as usual, until the *sign of peace*, when Fr. Gerry invited all of us to close our eyes and give our peace to those we know, who have died, and whom we need to forgive and release from their past actions. We then united

ourselves spiritually with all the deceased through Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, before finally praying together our special prayer for our Benefactors:

Prayer for Our Benefactors

*God Our Father, pour out your blessings
on the friends and Benefactors
of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.
Their goodness has encouraged us and fed us;
their gifts are enabling us to recreate
your merciful presence in our world.
In gratitude,
we ask You to reward them in this world,
with signs of Your generous love,
and when their lives on earth are complete,
that You welcome them to Your Heavenly banquet.
We ask our blessed Mother, Mary,
to encourage us, as signs of our gratitude,
to use wisely what we receive,
and work hard in our own situations,
to mirror the sacrifices our Benefactors make.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



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/ 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.

Coming full circle

BY MAURICE SCHROEDER, OMI, MD

TRITE (*adj.*) - According to Webster's Dictionary it means: "Used until so common as to have lost novelty and interest, without the freshness that evokes attention or interest."



Moe Schroeder, OMI, MD

We live surrounded by the trite in life. But once in a while a trite reality pushes itself forward in our consciousness to surprise us with new significance.

I recently had such a trite moment.

I'd left Saskatchewan in 1954 at age 17 after graduation from Grade 12 at St. Thomas College in North Battleford. In August I was "re-patriated" to Saskatchewan, specifically to Battleford in time for my 80th birthday, after many years in our mission in Peru.

It was the closing of a full circle.

In Peru I was always different from the people with whom I lived. I looked different. I spoke differently. My skin color was different. My physical size was different. My mind-set was different.

Being different had long become common and lost its novelty and interest. In my own mind I was accustomed to being an *extranjero*, a foreigner. My official document of identification for the last 40 years has been a Peruvian "*carnet de extranjería*".

Then one morning I was walking out of the North Battleford Hospital. Suddenly I realized that I'd just been moving among and interacting with people who were my size and age and color. They spoke just like me. They looked just like me. A good few of them even walked just like me. None of them looked at me as if I were any different from them.

Crossing to the parking lot my “trite moment” crashed in and made me stop to take it in.

Right out loud, I said into the wind, “I’m not an *extranjero* any more!”

Trite? No. Significant (for me)? Yes!

In my imagination there was a woman behind me on that sidewalk where I’d stopped.

She’d pushed by me, muttering, “So who cares, Mac? Outta my way!”

(Fr. Moe is a medical doctor who served in Peru for many years.)

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

A spiritual journey

BY DOUG JEFFREY, OMI

WILKIE, SK – It has been more than a year since the beginning and blessing of the Prairie Flower House of Prayer.

Janice and Dan Lamoureux and I consider ourselves blessed to receive donations from so many of you. Your gift of your hard-earned dollars to us is appreciated. The support you give to our call and our desire to create a House of Prayer here in Central Saskatchewan is a generous act of faith and trust in God.

As the year unfolded and as we shared our vision with

Dan and Janice planting a tree



people, we hear again and again words of gratitude that we are doing this. We also hear words of support and encouragement.

Perhaps the most telling words are from those people who say, "When are you going to be ready to receive people? When can we come to experience some silence? How long can we stay? Can we stay for a few days or maybe a week? I need to take stock of my life and especially my life with God?"

More than a hundred people have posed these questions to us, so now our focus is to get the trailer set up so that we can begin to receive these people who thirst, not for liturgical prayers, prayer formulas and rituals, but for the sound of silence.

Much of our attention in the first year has been focused on the ongoing formation of Dan and Janice in preparation for Dan's ordination last July as a permanent deacon for the Church and for the Diocese of Prince Albert in particular.

Since his ordination Dan has been faithfully serving the First Nations People of the Battlefords' area reserves, namely Mosquito, Poundmaker, Red Pheasant and Sweetgrass. Janice has continued her ministry of visiting and leading prayer at Villa Pascal in North Battleford. Their ministry experience reminds us that God is at work.

Another highlight has been the growing number of

A gift of wood





Fr. Doug (in blue toque)
and Dan help unload
the gift of wood

requests for spiritual direction, for faith conversations and parish retreats. While attendance at and participation in traditional parishes is waning, these requests suggest that people seek to understand the meaning of and the presence of God in their lives. It is our belief that establishing a House of Prayer will assist in responding to this need.

The year has also been characterized by waiting and reflecting. We have had countless conversations about what our House of Prayer will look like and what we will do. We continue to imagine that the finished project will include the main house where Dan and Janice now live, the trailer where I will eventually live, a chapel and a hermitage or two. Our first priority is to get the trailer set up.

Last year we learned a valuable lesson with the wet spring. We discovered where the water tends to flow to and sit in the yard when there is above-normal runoff. As we look to set up the yard for the Prayer House, we will have to take into account those exceptional years where there is an abundance of runoff and the subsequent challenge of standing water.

We have deliberately chosen not to begin work setting up the trailer until we are certain we can complete the project. We do not see ourselves doing any work until the spring/summer of 2018.

What are our needs? At this point in time we are in need of resources to build a pad for the trailer, move the trailer onto the pad, hook up the electricity, install a septic tank and run water from our well to the trailer and hook it up at a total approximate cost of \$20,000.

We need to purchase and install a propane tank (\$2,500). An enclosed porch/entrance deck for the trailer will require \$3,500 in materials.

Preparing a small building to serve as our chapel – materials and furnishings \$1,000.

Following this initial work, we hope to build or purchase a building to serve as a hermitage. At the present time Dan and Janice are occupying the main house and I am living a short distance away in Wilkie, in an apartment. The trailer will serve initially as our multi-purpose building until we are able to realize the rest of our plan.

It is important to note that in addition to the financial donations we were given last year, we also received wood, food, material resources, trees and an abundance of prayer and encouragement.

If you would like to assist us in the development of our community life and vision here at Prairie Flower House of Prayer, please be in touch with the Oblate Mission Office (MAMI) in Saskatoon. If you would like to know more about our work and our life you can visit our website at www.wilkie-prayerhouse.com or phone us at (306) 480-2536.

Thanks from Ukraine

BY BERDARD FELCZYKOWSKI, OMI

CHERNIHIV, Ukraine – I would very much like to thank you for the financial support we received last year.

Thanks to your help, we have managed not only to sustain but to further develop the activities of our day-care center, which has been in operation since October 2015.

This development includes the creation of the English language learning class for the youngest children, with 10 children directly benefiting from those classes, plus we did additional English language tutoring for four children who could not attend the classes. These classes took place in their family homes in the presence of parents or educators.

Thanks to your help, we have been able to pay 12 months of teaching and training work to the educator, Sr. Konstancja Lachowska, CSFN, and English teacher Irena Sharif.

We purchased textbooks with exercises, two computers, a computer screen, two printers with ink and cartridges, a portable hard drive and paid for eight months of gas and electricity charges.

English teacher Irena Sharif and children



Over the last year, about 50 children visited our common room, including children attending English classes. They are various ages, from four-year-old pre-schoolers to 14-year-old juniors.

It is most gratifying that some of the children and parents who did not have any or limited contact with the church returned to the parish community or found their place in it.

There are even some parents who began to meditate on the meaning of life, to ask about God and prayer, and even occasionally come to the liturgy.

During this time we have gained some new experience and we have seen the real needs and problems of children in our parish, the needs of the poor families or those who live around us.

We notice it is not a simple thing to help children with such families. They are often afraid to receive help from others because they often have negative experiences or they were misunderstood or even misled by others. Hence, our day-care centre is not only a place of rest, play or learning, but also a place of formation and emotional or psychological help through the regular presence of a psychologist and educators.

The difficulty of finding an English teacher on a voluntary basis was one of our biggest problems in implementing our project. We solved this by employing a professional teacher for a minimal-promotional payment.

This has proven to be a good opportunity to attract children and their parents to a friendly environment where they experience God's love and the helpful hand of neighbors.

Without your help, the implementation of our project would be very difficult, if not impossible. Therefore our gratitude, in particular the gratitude of the children, their parents and the educators, is immeasurable. For our part, we remember you in our prayers, thanking God for your good heart and asking for God's grace for you.



Kenya

NOTEBOOK

BY GERRY CONLAN, OMI

OCT. 15

NAIROBI – The rain started this week, thanks be to God. At the farm, manager Euticus said half the farm was washed down the road. It was unfortunate as we were still digging some anti-erosion trenches. Still, the rain is most welcome. In Kenya they say the rain is always a blessing.

Last Sunday I celebrated Mass at Nyumbani with the children. The little children were laughing a lot as I told them about one of the few times mom gave me the wooden-spoon treatment for using the bed like a trampoline. The staff is now complaining of an epidemic of children jumping on the beds!



Gerry Conlan, OMI

Kionyo youth members prepare lunch at the Mujwa orphanage



I learned that Fr. Bright, Br. Charles and Br. David took the Kionyo youth to the orphanage at Mujwa, about 20 kilometres from Kionyo. It's wonderful to see the outreach and energy of Fr. Bright, our new Oblate from Zambia, and our two pre-novices. It was nice to see the interaction and how the youth involved the orphan children in the maintenance work.

Tuesday, I was shocked to hear from Fr. Gideon that they received a letter from the education ministry blocking the primary school from transferring two acres to the Church. The primary school was built on Church land in the 1990s and the government has kind of land grabbed from the Church. Now other people over the years also helped themselves and we find ourselves with very little and surrounded by a school that we are assisting financially, morally and spiritually. It's so frustrating for all involved.

I visited the Reuben Centre, where our Australian friend Bev is doing wonderful work with the Australian Christian Brothers. While there I met Br. Frank in the sewing training centre and he showed off his star pupils making jumpers and thick pile mats. These girls have various disabilities, but amazingly

are still able to do beautiful work.



Br. Frank helps young women with disabilities make thick pile rugs



Fr. Bright helps out at orphanage

It was inspiring to see the dedication of the Christian Brothers and the lay teachers. The girls had shy smiles as Br. Frank carried on like an enthusiastic teenager. It was a real God moment for the week, giving people a chance to shine and do something helpful for others and themselves.

OCT. 22

It's been raining cats and dogs. At the farm, poor Euticus sent me a message: "Am so worried over the erosion taking place on this hill, the rains are too heavy. You can't believe it when I tell you some of the seeds we have planted will grow at the tarmac." The tarmac is 300 metres away.

Monday was the big Finance Committee meeting at Karen to edit and recommend the 2018 budgets for the council to approve before sending to Canada with lots of prayers. We started with a short presentation by Michael, the CEO of Longitude Finance, a micro-credit institution that does a lot of impact investing (as Pope Francis called it). They give loans to people who would not normally qualify at a bank, helping the poor.

We were all suitably impressed and now he's waiting to see if we invest any funds. Michael connected me to the Bureau of Standards for a waiver on some hospital equipment we hope to import. Now he's interviewing one of our youth group for a job. God is good!

Laban standing in trench
caused by heavy rains





Euticus and Laban unload seedlings

OCT. 29

This year we will plant about 4,500 seedlings, a small contribution to offset global deforestation!

NOV. 3

Although we are just keeping our heads above water (literally), it's not all hard work over here in Kenya. Last week, I was invited on the Wednesday to a wine and cheese night with new friends in Karen. The cheeses were amazing, the wine very nice.

Euticus has been busy planting trees. Fr. Daquin kindly picked up another 800 seedlings at Méru and ferried them to the farm. We have now purchased about 4,500 seedlings. And the rain is continuing daily or every two days ... essential for new seedlings to survive. Thank God for small mercies after the flood damage. Fr. Praveen recommended this week that we plant macadamia tree seedlings. It's a great idea as the two trees at Méru produced income this year. It was accidental (act of God?) when the man who came to slaughter the pig saw the nuts and requested to buy them.

Although many parts of Kenya are getting rain, it is very little in some other parts like our parish in Kisaju. The Maasai

must be crying as their cattle (wealth) are growing weaker and many are dying.

Thursday was All Souls Day and I'd been requested by MAMI Lacombe in Canada to offer mass for the deceased family and friends of our MAMI members. It was good for us and the pre-novices to do something for the people who support us so much with their prayers and financially.

NOV. 10

Last Saturday a couple of the small pigs had "mange" on their skin. I was expecting a powder or spray from the vet shop but she said the disease required injections. I decided to do all four of the little pigs, even though only two were affected. The pigs were not happy to be held still while I jabbed the needle in between shoulder and ear.

We have a new Oblate priest from Congo visiting for one or two years to study. Fr. Pascal is fluent in French but is learning English.

NOV. 17

It's a wet week, but the sun is now shining. Unfortunately our brothers in Kisaju are not getting much rain. It will be a tough year ahead for the Maasai people there.

Fr. Daquin is doing good work in justice and peace, and trying to assist some students from the university where they minister near Méru. Note the picture of a woman needing assistance because she is at risk of discrimination because of her Albino condition. In some parts of the country they are targeted for killing out of superstitious beliefs. The other women are from



Doreen Gaki, an albino woman
supported by the Oblates

very poor families and exams are just around the corner. Imagine being sent home and failing because a small fee is due. Anyway, we have some support for them, so they are very happy!

NOV. 24

The big Supreme Court announcement came last Monday to validate the election of President Uhuru. It was a critical decision to allow the country to move ahead, so we thank God for that. Some of our pre-novices are pro-opposition but could also see the country needed to move on.

Monday morning I stopped to buy a couple of snacks. As I came out of the supermarket two street boys approached claiming they were hungry. So I purchased some oranges for them. They went off with a smile, as did I. It was a little God moment for the week.

Tuesday I spent the afternoon at the farm with Euticus. The gum trees (4,300) and macadamia (50) seedlings are all planted. More trenching has been done to better handle the water runoff.

Euticus inspects macadamia seedlings



A young man carries his mother to the voting booth



Tuesday evening I had spiritual direction for two of the postulants, who are nervous about whether they will be approved to go to Karen next year. I tried to help them see that they are a success already, whatever happens. They came to discern what God wants for them, not to try and get to Karen. I suggested they prepare themselves for a “no” by thinking about what might be next. That way they will not feel so lost if it happens. I feel for them, but I also told them they’ve been very courageous to allow themselves to be guided and corrected; to reflect on how much they have learned about themselves and how to act in the world – not to mention about religion, religious life and who God is.

DEC. 2

Thanks be to God, we had a peaceful inauguration of the president this week. Sadly, the opposition tried to create disturbances elsewhere. Everything went smoothly, including the 40 heads of state who attended.

Tuesday was inauguration day, so I stayed in Karen for safety, although nothing bad happened. President Uhuru has some ambitious plans with a great desire to connect with other African countries, and he put the public service on notice: “It will no longer be business as usual.” I can’t wait for that to occur.

Wednesday, it was off to the airport to collect Phelix Joyha, OMI, returning home from studies in South Africa. Phelix was in good shape and happy to be home. I was proud of him, choosing the cheaper, but longer Ethiopian flight, instead of the more expensive direct flight.

We were up at 3 a.m. Friday for an early trip to Kionyo and Méru for Fr. Andrew Mbiko’s funeral. Fr. Mbiko was the diocesan financial director for Méru since 1984. It’s a tough loss for the diocese and especially for Bishop Salesius who has been so supportive of the Oblates.

More than 2,000 lay people, three bishops and 130 priests



Fr. Mbiko's funeral

attended the funeral, which lasted more than four hours. Fr. Mbiko did a lot for the community through many projects in the environment and water resources areas.

Saturday, it was off to Kiirua farm to spend time with Euticus. He's doing a wonderful job and I feel blessed he is there. He is honest, hard-working and diplomatically handling some neighbours who are stealing.

We checked out the weeding and trenching work done, and looked at expenses. The cows and chickens are doing well, and the crops and trees look fantastic... such a difference to the dry season.

DEC. 9

Greetings from a happy mission community in Kenya. After the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, we are all feeling uplifted by the community spirit as well as the Holy Spirit!

The Mission is thinking about the future and where a community gravesite might be located. I visited the big cemetery on Langata Road, which is not the most appealing place to rest one's bones, but it was good to get the information. The Archdiocesan cemetery is filling quickly and they have no room to share. They've done a lot of planning and costing to build a mausoleum, an above-ground building that can be filled efficiently with many coffins. But they are not sure the government will approve.

They also have a large cemetery in Kiambu which is close to Nairobi, and a new road under construction will make it very quick for us to reach. I suggested they might make an underground mausoleum, like an office block with two or three levels underground. Then we could lease a corridor for the Oblates. He was quite happy with that idea and admitted they were not doing much because they still had space for themselves, but admitted it is an urgent problem. He suggested the Kenya Mission write a letter to the Cardinal so they might get active again.

Br. Magambo has been busy in Kisaju Parish with the youth. He took them to plant trees somewhere, but said the parents were annoyed with him for coming home late. That's life in Kenya!



Br. Magambo with tree planted by youth group

DEC. 16

I prepared the truck for a journey to Kiirua to haul our little cow from Karen. Unfortunately, they don't want a cow that produces milk in Karen, so we'll add her to the cows in Kiirua. The cow, which was donated to us, is pregnant for the first time.

For the trip, I needed a



Fr. Gerry takes possession of a donated cow



Young carpenter training other youth

water bucket, sawdust, the rubber sleeping mats for cows, and a bale of hay. When I went shopping I met a young carpenter with his own sim-

ple shop and we chatted while they prepared the sawdust. He's a graduate from the Don Bosco Tech in Karen and was praising them for the good training.

He recalled how an American visitor came through Don Bosco and agreed to get him a machine to start his own workshop. He's very grateful, and now he is training a number of youth how to be carpenters because they can't afford to go to Don Bosco. I love stories like that ... they are living God moments. You educate one person and it has a ripple effect out into the community. He was such a happy lad and happy to be a Catholic.

Euticus and I discussed many things and arranged for a list of milking equipment which I purchased in Méru.

DEC. 23

On Monday, I was off again at 5:30 a.m. to collect Fr. Sam from the Korean priest community in Nairobi and we headed off towards Mombasa. About 75 kilometres from Karen is a new city being built called Konza I.T. City. It's part of the "Vision 2030" development program for the Kenyan government. They are constructing the first high-rise, the only building inside the 5,000-acre reservation fenced by concrete posts and chain-link mesh. Sam and I went to inspect a two-acre block of land offered to us and checked out by Fr. Fidele previously. It's in an ideal location, just 500 metres directly opposite the main entry to Konza. We think it will be an excellent property for future growth, especially financially, but possibly for ministry.



Fr. Gideon and Br. Magambo after youth mass in Kisaju

Fr. Fidele decided to become Fr. Christmas and took some special treats to the women's prison. He looked quite smart. And Br. Magambo organized a closing mass for the youth in Kisaju Parish, led by Fr. Gideon. They all looked happy.

DEC. 30

The Sisters made me work hard, preparing two Christmas homilies (Vigil and morning) as I was the only donkey left in the stables. Frs. Stephen and Dio went home to Kionyo/ Kanyakine, Fr. Faustin went home to assist family in Congo, and the two guest Oblates from Congo and Nigeria headed to Kionyo. Fr. Fidele was busy helping the Loreto Sisters with a three-day seminar until Christmas Eve, then moved on to prison ministry.

Celebrating Christmas mass with the nuns



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Please indicate on the enclosed gift form if you wish to receive the Healing Prayers book.

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