

AMMI *Lacombe* Canada MAMI

Oblate Spirit

September 2018



New Life

Fond memories



It has been more than a year since my brother Dave took his final breath. We think of him often, probably more now since his death than when he was alive. We often take life for granted, but when a person is gone we frequently look back at what that person meant in our lives.

Dave was a father figure, a friend, a teacher, an influencer. Did I share that with him when he was alive? Did I tell him what his life meant to me? Not in so many words. But I hope that by my actions he could feel how much he was loved and respected. It is with this love and respect that we offer up our prayers for him on All Souls Day. With that in mind, we invite all our MAMI friends to submit names of those they so dearly miss for this annual day of prayer. (*See the enclosure.*)

This year, Susai Jesu, an Oblate priest in Edmonton, will offer our prayers in a Eucharistic celebration for those who have died.

We feature Susai (cover picture) prominently in this issue because of his ongoing work and devotion to the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples parish in Edmonton. The parish serves the needs of some of the poorest people in the city.

Staying with Edmonton, Lucie Leduc explains the profound impact a retreat centre can have on the life of a person seeking a spiritual home.

Whether close to home, or in the far reaches of our world, the Oblates continue to reach out to those in need. As we ask them to offer prayers on All Souls Day, we should also offer our prayers for the Oblates who do such good work around the world.

John and Emily Cherneski
Communications Coordinators



Parishioners

Serving many needs

BY SUSAI JESU, OMI

EDMONTON – Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples provides pastoral care to the homeless, marginalized, the poor and urban Indigenous peoples of the Edmonton area through numerous ministries offered by the parish. In 1991 Archbishop Joseph McNeil designated Sacred Heart Church as a National Indigenous parish, the first of its kind in Canada. Anyone with Indigenous ancestry is considered a parishioner. However, everyone is most welcome as we are all part of the one circle of life (medicine wheel).

Sacred Heart Parish is a unique Catholic community that incarnates Indigenous culture with Christian faith. As a result of this uniqueness there are many requests for educational tours on Native spirituality from schools in Edmonton and surrounding areas. The dialogue on Native spirituality includes explanations of symbols that are in the church such as the Medicine Wheel, eagle, Native Way of the Cross, Métis sash,

and interpretation of the artwork. There is also an explanation on the use of smudging that is done before and during the mass.

Rituals meaningful to native culture are incorporated into the Catholic liturgy. The church is filled each Sunday with Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, Inuit and others) from Alberta, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and beyond. It is one of the busiest parishes in Edmonton, mostly dealing with the marginalized, the poor and the homeless.

Sacred Heart is also a unique parish for priestly training. Seminarians from Newman Theological College come here on a weekly basis for training. We also receive Oblate seminarians who receive training and orientation to inner city parish life.

Br. Abraham meets a parish elder



Brother Abraham Hernandez Reyes from Guatemala arrived at Sacred Heart in December, 2017, and immersed himself for six months in pastoral activities with the homeless, hospital visits, house blessings, visiting agencies within the area and listening and learning from the elders.

Another Oblate seminarian from the United States will be arriving in the fall to spend 10 months with us.

Sacred Heart has a large immigrant and refugee community and works closely with Catholic Social Services to sponsor the many refugees (mainly from Eritrea and Sudan) that arrive in Edmonton each year. Every Sunday, mass is celebrated with an Eritrean community of approximately 600 fervent faithful. This group is very active, supportive and collaborative with the parish community.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The parish is located on Church Street in the McCauley area of Edmonton. McCauley is a vibrant, ethnically diverse inner city neighbourhood. Sacred Heart is nestled between Chinatown and Little Italy. The street is famous for its many churches: there are 19 churches located on Church Street, of which 14 are functional. Sacred Heart Church is one of the most active and busiest.

There is also a large presence of homeless and marginalized people in the McCauley neighbourhood whose needs are acute. The parish is involved daily to try and meet those needs. As well, many of the city's agencies that offer services to the homeless, marginalized and low-income families have a presence in the area.

MINISTRIES

Sacred Heart parish has many ministries and activities that are ongoing throughout the year to meet the needs of all the people in the inner-city area. The liturgical ministries include Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, RCIA, marriage

SACRED HEART OF JESUS THY KINGDOM COME



preparation, music/choir ministry, Eucharistic ministry, funeral and wake services, pastoral care and hospital care ministry.

COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND

Our volunteer Eucharistic ministers make weekly visits to provide spiritual comfort and communion to the homebound and nursing home residents of our parish community.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

At the request of the community, a team consisting of Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, Lucie Leduc, Oblate lay associate and director of Star of the North, and Fr. Susai provide spiritual guidance to those who request it.

STEP FIVE

There has also been a strong demand for Step Five of the AA program. Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, and Justin Robert have offered to provide this service for the parish.

GRIEF COUNSELLING

Grief counselling is provided to help people cope with grief and mourning following the death of loved ones. This is a new ministry for Sacred Heart Parish and the response to this service, provided by certified grief counsellor Helen Gledhow and Fr. Susai, has been tremendous. This team follows up with the grieving families after the funeral service. This has become a growing need.

CLOTHING/HOUSEHOLD GOODS/FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Our clothing/household goods and food distribution occurs on a daily basis. Each day we have the poor and homeless people coming to the door that are in need of clothing, food, furniture, money, bus tickets, and household items. Many also request crosses, rosaries, holy water and blessings.



Clothing drive

We are fortunate to have the Salvation Army deliver cases of bread twice a week to Sacred Heart, bread that is then distributed to those in need in the community. They also provide, on a less frequent basis, cases of non-perishable food items, fresh vegetables, clothing and diapers that are then distributed as people come to the door. Cobs Bread, a local bakery, also donates a large amount of day-old bread once a week to the parish for distribution.

Food items, perishable and non-perishable, are always in high demand as many people are in need of enough food to sustain them for a short period of time. Many Edmonton families generously donate household items, clothing and furniture daily, which are then given to people in need.

PRAYER GROUP

Originally from the Cursillo movement, St. Paul's Prayer Group has been meeting for the last few years at St. Joseph's Basilica. Recently they decided to move to Sacred Heart Church for their bi-weekly gathering. The group shares their rich experience of piety, study and action that continually feeds our spiritual growth as disciples of Jesus Christ. The membership of this group is growing.

BIBLE STUDY

In response to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Letter by Archbishop Richard Smith, and at the request of our parishioners, we have started a Bible study group that meets bi-weekly. At each gathering we choose one parable from the Gospel that is printed in the Sunday bulletin for everyone to reflect upon. During the gatherings, all are welcome to share their insights on this parable.

ULTREYA

The Ultreya group, part of the Cursillo movement, meets every three months with 60 to 80 members attending. In a climate of friendship, members share their life experiences based on the three tenets of Cursillo life: prayer, study and action. It continues to grow and has been very successful.

Prayer group meeting





Christmas food hamper courtesy of Bishop Savaryn Elementary School

WAKES

This is a tradition in First Nations and Métis culture. The majority of Indigenous families who have funerals at Sacred Heart Church for their loved one hold a wake in the church hall the night prior to the funeral. The wake provides an opportunity for family and friends to grieve, view the deceased's body, get together and share their memories of the deceased person, which helps with the healing process. It is a time of reflecting and looking back on the person's life. Often the wake goes throughout the night with many family members and friends attending. Wakes may include prayers, drumming and a feast. This ministry is unique to Sacred Heart Church.

FUNERALS

The poor, lonely, alienated, those without families, all reach out to our parish to provide funeral services they can't afford. They are encouraged to make a donation, but most often nothing is offered and the parish bears the full brunt of the cost. Nevertheless, we feel called and are committed to helping the poor who are carrying the double burden of poverty and loss.

MONTHLY LUNCHESES

Sunday lunches, prepared by the Lions Club and volunteers, are provided once a month. As many as 700 people, including many homeless from the inner city, attend these lunches. For most of these people it may be the only meal they have that day.

MOVIE NIGHT

At the initiative of St.Vincent de Paul Society, Sacred Heart Parish started a monthly movie night. Movies of a spiritual and religious nature are shown to provide an entertaining and informative social event to help build community.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Each year Sacred Heart Church organizes two large events - a children's Christmas party and food hamper distribution.



Christmas party

For those living at or below the poverty line, each month is a struggle to provide for their families. Our ministry in the inner city is year-round, but assistance is most urgently needed at Christmas. Through the continued generosity of organizations, businesses, corporations, individuals, schools and parishes, we are able to provide Christmas gifts for children and hampers for families.

OBLATE PARISHES LEND A HAND

We were blessed to have three Oblate parishes (St. Albert, St. Charles and Lac St. Anne) within the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton who generously support our Christmas activities. The Our Lady of Perpetual Help diocesan parish in Sherwood Park also provided generous support to meet our needs for the Christmas hampers. Bishop Savaryn Elementary School was most generous in providing us with completed hampers to give away. The assistance these parishes and school provided through financial and food donations helped make these much needed activities a huge success.

These events depend on the time and commitment of hundreds of volunteers. With their generous giving of time, we were able to comfortably reach our goal of providing a Christmas to remember to those in need.

With all these ministries and activities taking place throughout the year, we are at times the busiest parish in the city, as well as the poorest. Sacred Heart Church is not self-sufficient, although that is our eventual goal. We are grateful that the Archdiocese of Edmonton generously supports our ministry. We are constantly in need of financial assistance to continue this much-needed ministry in the inner city. We graciously invite and encourage donations so that we can make a difference in the lives of the homeless, marginalized and the poor.

The sacred value in retreat centres

BY LUCIE LEDUC

EDMONTON – Meet Janice. She showed up at Star of the North for a retreat. The retreat used scripture and 12-step spirituality to see how faith and relationship with a loving, forgiving God shifts us out of depression into joy, even when circumstances are painful and overwhelmingly difficult.

Janice was one of 24 people on retreat. She sat at the back, eyes wide open, yet mute to any verbal sharing. She did, however, join in the visualizing through artistic expression or writing exercises. Janice followed me to my office after one of the sessions during a personal reflection time.

I turn to her, saying, “Did you want to see me?”

She says, “Yes”, in a quiet, darkly subdued way.

Meeting with her I learn of her circumstances. She was

North American Conference of Oblate Retreat
and Renewal Centres (NACORRC) attendees



never raised with any religion or faith beliefs, she has not thought of or considered God on her journey thus far. She lost her husband two years ago, has one young adult daughter on the verge of leaving home. After her husband's death, she decided to move to a city in British Columbia. She was born and raised in Alberta, but thought she needed a change of scene and life.

That's when things began to turn difficult. She had not taken her need to grieve into consideration when she moved. She found herself withdrawing and she didn't find a community to fit into. She became intensely lonely, developing phobias and obsessive, compulsive behaviors of all kinds. She realized she had made a mistake moving away, trying to run from her grief. After two years she found herself back in Alberta with her daughter, this time in a small, newer apartment, instead of a house.

Within a year of moving into her new space, her apartment was found to be with bedbugs. Her stark fear and horror at the thought of these bugs in her space compelled her to get rid of absolutely every possession she owned. Years of precious memories in the form of collected artworks, statuettes, or décor pieces she had purchased on memorable trips abroad were thrown out along with all of her more pragmatic belongings.

Pouring grief upon grief, she realized she was making poor decisions based on exaggerated fears. Having to begin all over in another apartment proved daunting and hollow. She felt emptied out of everything, like she'd fallen into a dark hole and couldn't get out. Even to look at her face was to see this hollowing out of personhood and identity. She felt lost, suicidal, and desperate.

I encouraged her to find a community of faith to belong to, even welcomed her to my own. She mentioned having met with the Salvation Army chaplain and having attended one of his services. She liked it there and going forward she would



A session during the conference

explore her belonging to a faith community and other communities of interest to heal and begin to grow. I encouraged her to attend to her grief by meeting with a counsellor on-site at the Star of the North. She agreed.

On her second visit, she spoke about a growing need inside of her to learn about God and faith. She told of how in her need and desperation she had begun to attend the Salvation Army worship services and liked the pastor and his teachings on scripture. She spoke of how she'd find herself in the supermarket praying desperately inside for God to help her, and how she was becoming aware of God's presence attending to her questions and fears.

She could hardly believe that she was praying this way given she'd never believed in God, or had need for God. Imperceptibly, God awareness and faith in the God of love, healing, and forgiveness we'd shared on retreat, was taking hold and she wanted to find ways and means for deepening her very new and budding relationship.

Before long, Janice found herself attending select retreats at Star of the North and recommending others do the same. She stayed committed to her Salvation Army worship services

and began to feel the joys of being a part of their community and family of faith. She turned to art as a way and means to express herself and to grow the beauty that was beginning to unfurl inside her.

On retreats, she expressed herself more freely and naturally, and to see her smile is to see light coming out of the darkness. One thing is certain, Star of the North is one of her safe places to be now, and she comes intermittently to retreat and nourish herself spiritually.

Janice represents some people who find themselves at Oblate retreat centres, lost, confused, suffering, and seeking a way through their life struggles and losses. She also demonstrates several important principles about the role of retreat centres in people's lives.

During our annual North American Conference of Oblate Retreat and Renewal Centres (NACORRC), keynote conference presenter David Perrin suggested, "all spirituality is particular," and context or place contributes to your personal identity "because of the way our environment influences who

we are and how we are in relationship to God, others, self, and the world."

Seven Oblate retreat centres, represented by 15 people, attended this year's conference. The theme was "A Spirituality of Place."

David Perrin



Perrin helped us consider how our centres are places for spiritual identity formation, where the mix that forms and shapes personal identities, i.e., geography, climate, culture, and politics, all bring forward a personal spirituality of place.

In this way, Oblate retreat centres are distinct from, yet uniquely complement, parish life. They provide safe and sacred space for spiritual identity formation and growth for any person from any background, whether religious, atheist, Christian or other. Safe places for spiritual growth, distinct from temple, mosque or church, help people to freely form and shape their particular spiritual identity. A centre with an implicitly Oblate Catholic Christian identity becomes a place for countless people to form their faith and spiritual identity, each in their splendid particularity.

How are we to find middle, neutral ground to obtain our bearings, and grow a renewed or new spiritual identity? Retreat centres, it seems, implicitly hold the spiritual ground to help seekers on their journeys of faith.

Reflecting on “Spirituality of Place” reminded us of the value of our Oblate retreat centres as places where hospitality welcomes people on their spiritual journey and hopefully mirrors a way through to fullness of life in Christ.

Our few days together at NACORRC gave us pause to celebrate where we are and intentionally reflect on where we’d like to grow in service to community, the church, and ultimately to many more people like Janice seeking hope and meaning for their lives.

(Lucie Leduc is Director of Star of the North Retreat Centre and an Oblate associate)

Seeds of hope

BY ALFRED GROLEAU, OMI

EDMONTON – Since my return from Kenya, where I attended the 20th anniversary of the mission and spent five months at the postulancy in Méru, three men have been admitted to study philosophy at the pre-novitiate in Nairobi.



Alfred Groleau, OMI

As we pray for Oblate vocations, we should pray for the seeds being planted by our core team in their visits to Vietnam and India where Oblate communities are sprouting. They hope that among the 50 or so Oblate candidates in each country, some might eventually come to us.

At the same time, we need the grace of serenity and realism to accept our present diminishment in Canada. In this context, our Oblate associates are a meaningful support to us because of the sincerity of their commitment to the Oblate charism with many more candidates aspiring to join our family in the coming months. These are signs that our Oblate charism will not soon vanish.



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Formation testimony

BY COSMAS KITHINJI, OMI

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – Like all the years of my Oblate formation since 2006, the year 2017 brought many rich experiences leading to my growth as a human being, minister, and follower of Jesus Christ.

Apart from the graduate studies which I'm doing at our Oblate School of Theology here in San Antonio, I was able to participate in the life of my formation community with our three formators and 12 scholastics from eight different countries.

My formation community began the year with a three-day community retreat and orientation. This was an opportunity to check in, share our Christmas experiences and plan for the year. This provided each of us with an opportunity to get the community support in our lived joys and sorrows. It was also

Oblate Cosmas during his visit to Canada last Christmas





Cosmas renews his vows

an opportunity to learn to trust and share our personal lives with community members. These opportunities of sharing in, and with, the community continued throughout the year through our weekly community meetings and other gatherings through which we shared our stories and lives.

My Oblate horizon was widened through the various inputs we had on our Oblate founder and his spirituality, and other human and church issues. The daily communal prayers and masses nourished my spiritual life.

I grew as a minister through the pastoral courses and opportunities offered at school. In the first half of the year, I did my weekly theological field education ministry at one of the parishes, helping to prepare children for baptism and first communion. Given the cultural differences between Kenya and the U.S., and the uniqueness of ministry to children, I was hesitant to do this ministry. Accepting this ministry was an opportunity for me to learn to accept appointments with which I am not comfortable. The enriching experience and

learning I received was an affirmation that God puts me where I need to be, so all I need is to trust God's plan and be docile to the invitations that I get.

In the second part of the year I ministered to retired nuns. Along with being there to journey with the nuns in their old age, I was able to learn and get inspiration from their stories and counsel. The testimonies of the lives the nuns have touched through their ministry, and the joy and contentment the nuns showed, was an affirmation of the great worth of consecrated life for the religious and those they serve.

The other pastoral growth opportunity came with doing summer clinical pastoral education (CPE) for 10 weeks in a seniors' living facility. Through this I was able to see, evaluate and improve my pastoral skills through the help of my CPE supervisor and my peers. I was also able to do some personal growth by reflecting on my experiences and my life.

Throughout the year I grew socially and physically through my interaction with other students at the school and through the group that I join for weekly runs. Together with a few other scholastics from my house, we joined the diocesan and religious seminarians twice a week to play soccer and volleyball. These social activities helped me keep fit and become more outgoing by pushing my introvert comfort zone. This has greatly helped me reach out to more people, which I need as a minister.

All these graces fill me with gratitude to God for my Oblate vocation and opportunities for academic, human, spiritual and pastoral growth. I am also grateful to the Oblates, especially my formators, for their continued support in my formation journey.

Lastly I am grateful to those who generously make my life and that of other Oblates possible through their prayers, moral and financial support. I promise them all my prayers and my service to God's people.

(Cosmas is a Master of Divinity student in San Antonio, Texas)



Kenya

NOTEBOOK

BY GERRY CONLAN, OMI

MAY 19

It's still raining! Every day, almost without fail, we get some heavy showers.

During the week, I was inspired by the story of a woman working as a secretary in a clinic in the flood area at Nakuru, where 48 people died in a flood after a dam broke. She stayed behind at the clinic and helped save about 30 children. When the dam broke the two male doctors ran to safety.

I have grown to very much appreciate Uwezo Bank. Most of the bank's customers are "small people" who can't access small loans at the major banks. So, we feel that investing with them is living what Pope Francis called us to do: "impact investment," where we assist people as we gain a return for the principal.



Gerry Conlan, OMI

Fr Fidele blesses the worksite and workers at the new Karen residence site





Oblates Gerry and Fidele celebrate St. Eugene's feast day
with Stella and Lesley from the NIC Bank

MAY 26

The Oblate celebration for St. Eugene was great. We had two women from NIC Bank (Stella and Lesley), two Christian Brothers (Frank and George) with our friend Beverley (Australian) and my dad. After the mass led by Fr. Fidele, we held a feast of snacks and drinks, introductions and sharing and lively chats. It was also a moment to enjoy the company of Benjamin and Wekesa, our two novices-to-be, before they head to Cameroon to learn French.

Tuesday morning my father and I left at 5 a.m. for Kionyo and, trying to be a good son, I stopped at a nice Old English "Inn" for breakfast. Amazingly, a woman from Kionyo, who made our youth T-shirts in Nairobi, was there with friends, heading to a funeral. I embarrassed myself by not immediately realizing who she was (she had changed her hair.) Later she came to our table and pressed a small paper in my hand and said, "Let me buy your Dad breakfast (US\$10)". I was



Trucks haul excess dirt from the site of the new Karen residence

amazed and touched: people really love the Oblates for what they've done over the last 20 years (thanks to the men who went before us!). I prayed a blessing for safe travels and the family of the deceased.

Wednesday we collected some lunch to take to Kiirua Farm. We managed to get halfway up the hill to the farm before we were forced to stop. The road had been destroyed by the rain and runoff. The farm is lush and green, with so much growth in the trees and napier grass. The chickens are all gone, and one old shed has been demolished under the new management of Fr. Daquin. The small bulls have been sold to make way for the cows.

Dad and I then headed off to Kionyo to pick up two small bulls donated by our parishioners. Along the way, Fr. Constant

Celebration during mass



asked me to collect a male pig from Marimba and bring it to Kionyo.

Then it was back to Méru, where the pre-novices were too busy to help clean the car, so I had to climb in and clean out all the pig and cow droppings.

JUNE 2

Fr. Fidele visited Méru, and the Bishop there, to arrange our entry into a new parish in the town of Méru itself, the poorer part that also includes some middle-class areas that will help develop the parish. We officially took responsibility in August.

Friday was a big holiday for Kenya, the anniversary of self-rule (autonomy) before independence on Dec. 12, 1964. Imagine, I was three years old when that took place. I joined my father, who watched all the official presidential ceremonies held in Méru this year, and he was quite impressed. It seems the talk against corruption is now turning into action as one large scandal is dragged through the courts and 100 government staff are being “processed.” It involved \$96 million, a lot of money!

JUNE 9

During the week there was a plane crash, a small commercial plane from Kitale (up north). The pilot was the daughter of a friend of Godfrey’s and myself. We visit him occasionally

Family day celebrations



for prayer and anointing as he has kidney problems. It is very sad for the family. So Godfrey and I attended to them at a hotel opposite Wilson Airport where the airline company had gathered people to wait for news. I've been so disappointed by the disaster management response of Kenya. Here is a plane of 10 people crashing only 50 kilometres from Nairobi and it took 40 hours to find it.

JUNE 23

Fr. Praveen and I are waiting for the wedding to start at Nkubu, near Kionyo. It's for our catechist Martin at Kionyo Prayer House. His wife comes from Nkubu. The 10 a.m. mass actually started at 1:40 p.m. Welcome to Africa.

I'm very proud of our Nairobi youth again this weekend. They visited the Bahati Education Centre in Nairobi and helped the sisters with cleaning and played with the children in the rescue centre the nuns have established, taking at-risk children from the slums nearby.

Youth at the Bahati Education Centre





Frs. Praveen and Gerry officiate at the wedding for Kionyo Prayer House catechist Martin and his wife Meeriam. They are accompanied by the best man and bridesmaid.

I celebrated mass with the sisters a few times this week. On Tuesday morning, as I returned home, I gave an older woman a lift. I saw her carrying a big sack over her shoulder. She was very happy. That morning the Gospel was about going two miles if someone asks you to go one mile. So I could hardly do otherwise! It's little smiles from people like that woman that gives us missionaries the energy to keep going, not to mention being reminded how easy we have it compared to many poor people.

JULY 1

Special greetings and prayers go out to our friends in Canada who celebrated Canada Day. Thanks for the wonderful support Canada has given to us in Kenya over the last 21 years.

Many preparations are under way this week for the big African Oblates meeting in July. The week will be interesting with many airport trips to collect the 22 delegates from about 16 countries in which Oblates minister in Africa.

Fr. Faustin just returned from the sisters' mass and shared a sad story. Eleven Asumbi sisters (part of the Franciscan family) were on a public transit bus from Nairobi to western Kenya (Kisii) when it crashed. Two died on the spot, another in hospital and the rest were injured and in hospital. Let's pray for



Parish council meeting

them. Now my Oblate brothers are no longer laughing when I say we should not all travel on the same bus or plane.

As I dashed into town early Friday morning, I offered a ride to two Kenyan workers. I've helped these men several times before, so I know it's safe. They're very grateful. We have to remember our cars belong to our people, not to us. I feel bad when we can't assist people along the way. It is such a privilege to have a car.

JULY 8

The mission has been hosting the OMI Africa Madagascar Region (AMR) formation training workshop, so we have some great men from all over Africa (16 countries represented). It was busy collecting people from the airport and preparing programs. We are happy to be host and be blessed by the wide variety of brothers.

On Sunday, after Mass at Nyumbani, I visited Dad and Godfrey for lunch, and later celebrated Fr. Faustin's 12th anniversary of priesthood.

JULY 15

With the AMR Formation meeting running all week and the normal demands of life in the mission, it's been an extra busy week. Fr. Fidele was one of the facilitators.

Fr. Daquin and Euticus, our farm manager, have been busy

building some extra 'rooms' at the Kiirua farm to allow the cows from Méru to be transferred. It will reduce the less important work for Fr. Daquin now that there are no students in Méru.

At the Kisaju Parish Council meeting on Saturday, I asked

them one "favour" as well as making one strong demand: buy the insurance to protect our catechists and also the Public Liability Insurance for the parish. I've been pushing the community for more than a year because it is really critical and a legal obligation to cover the Catechists. They agreed to do it quickly.

My request was for the parish, as a way of appreciating MAMI and the Oblates, to host some goats for our Nairobi youth (the Christmas gift offering of last year). We have funding to buy the goats, breed them and produce more goats for sale, so we can raise funds for the youth. The program can also be shared by Kisaju and Kionyo parish youth groups. The parish was happy with the idea and promised to see how the hosting could work.

The AMR meeting finished Saturday morning, so we have about 12 Oblate guests gracing our home in Karen. In the coming week we will have about eight trips to the airport, several at 3 in the morning.



Euticus and a new cow at the farm



Children in their new sari outfits
provided by visiting Indian business families

JULY 22

During the week I had to do a bit of counselling for one of our youth who wanted to leave his work, but in the end he realized he has annoyed the boss by his behaviour, and he needs to change his attitude. It's hard for the youth who don't have fathers to develop a sense of what's acceptable: no bull elephants around to blow their trumpets at the young males. Then, during the week an article appears in the paper from Zimbabwe encouraging men to have sex more often to prevent prostate cancer. That's not the sort of encouragement we need when we're trying to teach the youth to be responsible and wait for marriage. A few weeks ago we received reports that, in east Africa, youth are the highest and fastest age group to be infected with HIV AIDS. Let's pray for them.

JULY 29

Last Sunday we had visitors at Nyumbani who brought gifts from the United States (rosaries, laptops, etc.). They donated a two-metre-long wooden rosary to me that we will use in our chapel at Karen.

After mass Tuesday morning at the Good Shepherd Sisters, I gave two of them a ride to town. Along the way, they were amazed at people waving to us. I explained that I usually wave to everyone as I move between Resurrection Gardens and home. It puts a smile on people's faces. It's the same giving people a lift for a few hundred metres. It's not much but psychologically it gives people a sense that they are worthy to be recognized. Isn't that what our faith life is all about?

AUG. 4

While in Méru this week, I was touched once again by the sadness many young people suffer. While waiting for a key to be cut, a street-boy came to the car and Dad gave him a sweet and directed him to me inside the shop. I chatted with the boy after giving him a small donation. His father went to Mombasa for work and left him with the step-mother. She didn't want him – a common problem in Kenya – so, at only eight years of age, she forced his hand into the cooking fire and he ran

away with a
b u r n e d
hand. It is
healed now,
but he stays
away from
home.

Fr. Oreste at
the Catholic
radio station
started in 2016



Monday, I met a young priest (Fr. Oreste) in charge of the Catholic radio station started in 2016. He remembered me from Kionyo where he and a few other seminarians came for ordination preparation in 2014. I'd forgotten they asked me to give some input and he declared he still had the notes I gave them. Now he wants me to do a radio presentation, but I hope he forgets!

AUG. 11

I travelled daily to Karen to view the residence project and make small corrections with the well construction. A fellow named George finally arrived with the earth remover and took the excess bad soil from the site.

DONATING SECURITIES

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missionary
works*



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But officer, the crank works!

BY BLAISE MACQUARRIE, OMI

CHINCHA ALTA, Peru – One fine summer morning, I received a phone call from a teacher asking if I was interested in buying a large adobe wall. The school was expanding, and the wall had to be taken apart. Because I was building adobe houses at the time, these adobe bricks could be useful.

I bought the adobe wall for \$30.

Next, I hired a truck driven by a man called Jose. That adobe wall was taken apart and the adobe bricks were neatly piled so Jose and his helper began to deliver the bricks to our building site.

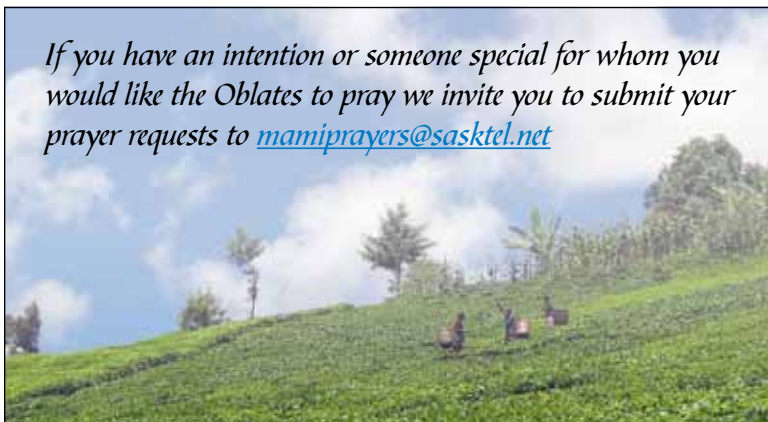
All was going well until the day the police stopped the truck. And this is how the conversation went:

Policeman: "Let me see your driver's licence and the papers concerning the truck."

Jose: "I don't have a driver's license nor papers for the truck."

Policeman: "Where are the doors of the truck and the windows?"

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



Jose: "As you can see, sir, they are not needed!"

Policeman: "Where is the driver's seat and what is the wooden fruit box doing there behind the wheel?"

Jose: "That is my seat as the other one wasted away due to use."

Policeman: "Where are the lights?"

Jose: "I don't need them because I only work in the day."

Policeman: "Enough of this. Give me the key for the truck."

So, Jose gave the policeman the key to the truck. It was a metre-long crank!

"Get that pile of junk out of my sight," concluded the policeman.

Jose delivered the bricks, wooden box for a seat, no doors, and no lights. A few months later he died of cancer. He was a good soul! Remember him in your prayers.

WANTED

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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

Sacred Heart rosary

To enhance your prayer life, we are offering you a gift. The Sacred Heart rosary is made up of fire-polished dark blue crystal beads joined with a sturdy, lock-link silver chain. The traditional fleur-de-lis crucifix and Sacred Heart centerpiece are silver-plated.

Please indicate on the enclosed gift form if you wish to receive a Sacred Heart rosary.

(One rosary per member, limited quantity available)





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

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