

AMMI *Lacombe* MAMI
Canada

Oblate Spirit



June 2019



Annual Report

Gratitude! Appreciation! New Life! Hope!

These are all words we have chosen for titles of our more recent publications, words that would have been used to express the feelings of the thousands of marginalized people around the world – men, women and children – whose lives have been improved because of the helping hands of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.



We are fortunate to live in a country that offers a comfortable lifestyle compared to many regions in the world. We are fortunate to have grown up with organizations like the Oblates that have been a spiritual presence in the lives of so many people, especially our ancestors when they settled in this vast and beautiful country.

The Oblates came to Canada more than 150 years ago as missionaries in a mostly barren country. They moved with the settlers, they established parishes, and they became great friends of the poor and marginalized.

As the years and decades passed, some of the Canadian Oblates were called to other parts of the world where they have made a difference in the lives of so many more thousands of people, people who have been helped in some part by the financial support channeled through *AMMI Lacombe Canada MAMI*.

As you browse through this, our *Annual Report*, you will come across the many countries to which Canadian funds and support have been channelled. A large portion has gone to Kenya, where Canadians established a mission more than 25 years ago, a seed that has blossomed and produced Kenyan priests and brothers that now serve a large community.

Br. Blaise MacQuarrie continues to make a huge difference to the lives of many poor families in Peru. Canadian funds have been used for education, health and spiritual growth in The Philippines, Tanzania, Ukraine, Vietnam and Madagascar.

We continue to be humbled by the generosity of those of you in the MAMI family. Last year, donations came to \$1,586,701.26, which we are pleased to say surpassed our goal of \$1.2 million.

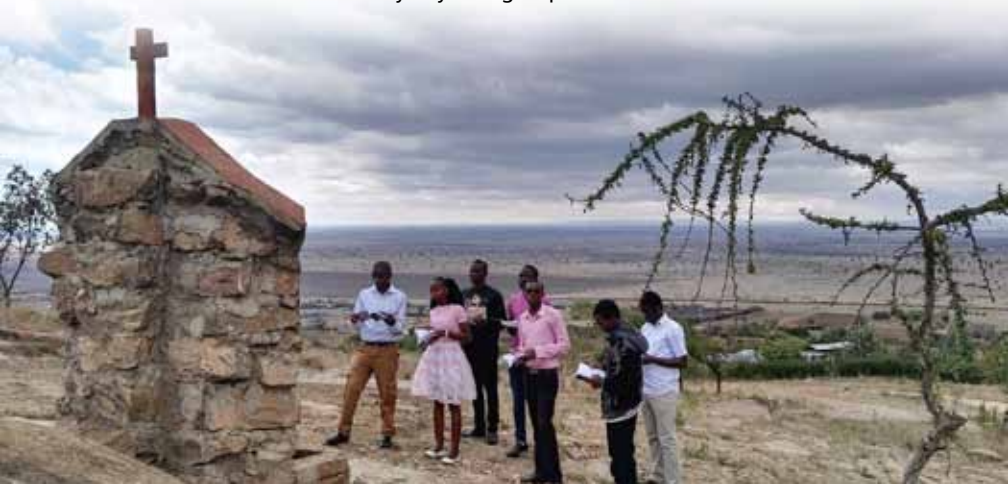
Operating expenses for the MAMI organization came to \$320,534.22, which includes the printing and distribution of the *Oblate Spirit* publication and the translation of the publication into French. Also included are administration and bank fees, insurance, rent, phone, promotion, travel and meeting costs.

The French publication can be accessed at <https://www.omilacombe.ca/mami/oblate-spirit/>

At the end of the day, there are words missing from our list of titles, words that could never be put in large enough print. We want to **THANK YOU**, a huge and resounding thanks to our readers and supporters who make all this possible for the Oblate family, and most of all for what you do to enhance the lives of those in need, the men, women and children that we help feed and nurture.

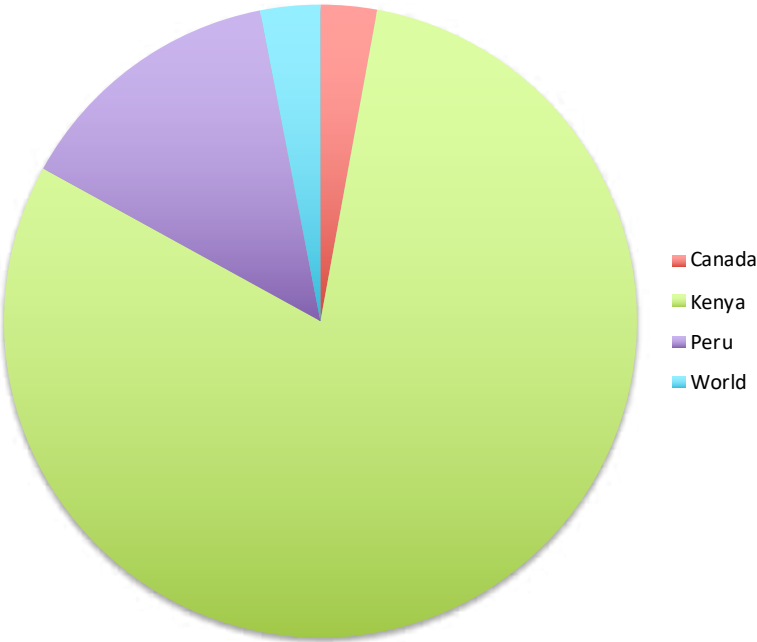
John and Emily Cherneski
Communications Coordinators

Kenyan youth group visits a shrine



2018 Projects Funded

\$1,428,399.94



Canada	\$40,997.17
Kenya	\$1,144,640.00
Peru	\$198,985.25
World	\$43,777.52

(Philippines, Tanzania, Ukraine, Vietnam, Madagascar)

CARE OF THE MISSION

Donations covered the cost of vocations and formation of young men studying and discerning to be Missionary Oblates as well as care of the Oblates working in the Kenya mission.

CATECHISTS

Catechists were provided with training, a stipend and use of a parish vehicle.

YOUTH EDUCATION

A Kionyo youth who assisted in the Kisaju community house was assisted to obtain a trade skill at the polytechnic school in Karen, Nairobi.

The Nazareth Sisters work at Isiolo with poor girls, most of them from pastoralist and nomadic communities. They welcome young women who run away from their families because of forced marriages and female genitalia mutilation. Funds were provided to assist students with basic needs and food.

KISAJU PARISH

Funds were provided to help the parish connect power to the water pump. A borehole for water was dug and will be shared by the school and the church.



Kisaju water tower



Women in the marketplace

Water supply was also needed for the community at Olturoto village. A borehole was drilled and a submersible pump installed.

Repairs were made to parish vehicles to ensure adequate ministry coverage in rough, muddy conditions.

LANGATA PRISON

Renovations were conducted for the toilets, showers and kitchen for the school where the children of the prisoners and wardens are educated. Without these renovations, children were at risk of contracting sicknesses and germs. Two water tanks were

brought in and installed. The children and their teachers now have a nice, healthy and clean environment.

FORMATION OF LAITY

Assistance for the formation of laity, especially OMI lay associates, was provided. The training involved leadership skills, Oblate charism and information about missionary life.

KISAJU SCHOOL FEES

Kisaju is a dry area and families struggle for water and basic needs. Students from poor families were assisted with their school fees. Education is the most important gift to help them break the cycle of poverty. It empowers them to secure a bright future.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The Good Shepherd Sisters work in the Kitui Diocese, a poor and dry area. Many women are poor, especially mothers and widows. The sisters work with them to help them set up a small business to sustain themselves and their children. Funds were provided to facilitate workshops on leadership and self-reliance projects in order to provide the women with skills and support.

KISAJU POSTULANCY

The postulancy program originally organized in Méru was moved to Kisaju. The postulants were using a small room for prayers and spiritual activities because the house did not have a chapel. Work was conducted on the basement to help the community have a decent chapel and sacristy for the Oblates and the four young men in formation.

Fr. Fidele with postulant Matt





Gachanka congregation



Frs. Ken Forster and Daquin Iyo serve communion



Fr. Daquin provides pastoral care

A few years ago, a borehole was dug to provide water, which is considered gold in Kisaju. Water towers and tanks were provided to help store good water because many times there is a shortage of electricity and the pump cannot function. As well, by law in Kenya, all buildings need to have solar hot water systems.

Kisaju is generally dry and dusty. All the dust around the house affects the inside of the house. When it rains a bit, it becomes very muddy. Pavement was installed around the house and in the parking area close to the house.

PARISH MINISTRY

Parish ministry requires the ability to reach distant areas on inconsistent roads or pathways. A second-hand vehicle was purchased to facilitate this ministry.

MISSION ADMINISTRATION

Currently the OMI Kenya Mission has no specific place for administration. It is sharing facilities with the pre-novitiate,



Kisaju house

resulting in overcrowding, especially considering the number of resident priests for administration and studies has been slowly increasing.

It is also important that formation take place in places separate from the world and administrative functions. The fact that administration often requires a flexible time schedule sets a bad example for the students. It is equally important for mission leadership to be at a distance from the students to provide objective discernment and approval of the students' progress in formation.

In addition, as the mission increases its pastoral activities in more parishes and particular service areas (e.g. youth, JPIC, and vocations), members need space to meet, to have temporary or permanent accommodation and to have a place where they can come for a short rest. As the mission grows in numbers, there is a need for accommodation of members who fall sick and need recovery in a place close to good medical care or eventually a place to retire.

Consequently, funding has been provided to build an administration and residence building in Karen.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ASSOCIATES

The Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, launched the Oblate Studies Certificate Program in 2017. Six online courses give students an in-depth knowledge of the constitutive elements of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The program is open to students who wish to complete the course for a certificate, as well as any qualified student who wishes to register for enrichment non-academic purposes. Ten scholarships were offered to Oblate associates to deepen their understanding of St. Eugene de Mazenod's charism and tradition. Associates who participate in the program will share their knowledge and insights with their local communities and be a source of animation and formation for lay people interested in becoming Associates of OMI Lacombe Canada.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A \$25,000 donation to the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation was used to encourage women to become

Youth retreat





Fr. Susai and volunteers
prepare food hampers

involved as leaders in society through their participation in a transformative leadership program offered in Ottawa in conjunction with St. Paul University.

CATECHIST TRAINING

Catechists from St. Kateri Tekakwitha Aboriginal Catholic Parish in Winnipeg received additional training to expand their outreach to families, youth, elderly,

sick and those on the periphery of society.

FIRST NATIONS YOUTH RETREAT

A retreat for First Nations youth from Churchill Community High School designed to develop a feeling of hope and optimism for the future was sponsored at Queen's House of Retreats in Saskatoon. In addition to quiet contemplation time, workshops were offered that focused on self-esteem, coping skills for times of stress and anxiety, and positive cultural exposure.

SACRED HEART CHURCH OF THE FIRST PEOPLES

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. It is a unique Catholic community that incarnates Indigenous culture with Christian faith. Sacred Heart received donations for its Christmas party, food hampers, supper and gifts.



Beds and blankets for the needy

PARISH NEEDS

Aucayacu Parish of Jesus Salvador was provided funds for training of Christian leaders, visits to remote communities, maintenance of transmission equipment of Radio Amistad and maintenance of the parish church and house.

BLAISE MACQUARRIE

Blaise continues to provide beds and blankets to the needy; is active in prison ministry; building houses and chapels; and improvements for the local retreat centre.

SANTA CLOTILDE HOSPITAL

In addition to continuing support of Santa Clotilde hospital and the patient house in Lima, workshops, food and shelter were provided for a group of vulnerable adolescents facing



Patients at Santa Clotilde hospital

parental abandonment, sexual harassment and those suffering from low self-esteem.

Malnourished children lack breast milk and require supplemental nourishment. Donations helped provide for this important element of the work of Santa Clotilde hospital.

The patient house in Lima plays an essential role in housing patients

from Santa Clotilde Hospital who are referred for treatment not available at the hospital. The house also serves as a hospitality house for medical personnel in transit to or from the hospital. Donations covered the cost of operating the house, as well as food, transportation and medical costs. Lodging for accompanying family members and assistance through the complicated urban and government systems were also provided.

A water mission project was also inaugurated in June 2018.

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

An industrial engineering student in his last year of studies at the University of Lima needed funding for his education fees and his research project on behalf of the Santa Clotilde Centro de Salud.

PHILIPPINES

Notre Dame of Kulaman Inc. is a Catholic school established and run by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Oblates have a special connection with the Manobo Dulangan people. They maintain a dormitory for Manobo Dulangan boys enrolled in Notre Dame of Kulaman school. Eighty students are given free education and room and board with limited parental support, but there are more students wanting to attend. The school has initiated programs to help the out-of-dorm scholars (staying in boarding houses) with uniforms, shoes, a weekly rice allowance and school fees and supplies.

Bags of rice are delivered for the scholastics in Madagascar



TANZANIA

The Archdiocese of Arusha conducted seminars on health and wellness for 40 catechists.

UKRAINE

The Poltava house and church (one building) was constructed 15 years ago and needed renovation work. The work included new plastic covers for the window openings; redesigning and revival of the church front yard, including the installation of a small playground; restoration of the church façade; and the painting and placement of icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Eugene de Mazenod in niches on the church façade.

VIETNAM

Assistance was given to house pre-novitiate candidates in a dedicated community and assist discerning vocations with missionary experience and group sessions.

MADAGASCAR

The scholastics at St. Eugene Scholasticate were provided with a printer and funds to buy rice.

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.

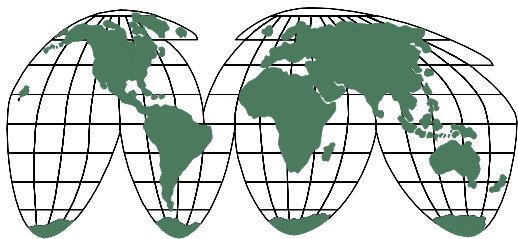
To take advantage of this tax-saving offer, please call Diane Lepage (1-866-432-6264) at our office for further information. A minimum market value of \$5,000 is suggested. We would be happy to facilitate this exchange that benefits you and the poor of the Oblate missions.



2019 Goals

\$1,200,000

Canada.....	\$100,000
Guatemala	\$10,000
India	\$10,000
Kenya	\$750,000
Peru	\$250,000
Ukraine	\$15,000
Vietnam	\$20,000
World (<i>Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Pakistan</i>)	\$45,000





Volunteers prepare sandwiches for De Mazenod Door

Reaching out

BY JOACHIM BROUWER

HAMILTON – A recent viewing of the movie “Angela’s Ashes,” based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Frank McCourt about his childhood experience growing up in Limerick, Ireland, in the 1930s, gave pause to consider the role that charity has played in the Roman Catholic Church and its pastoral outreaches in Hamilton, and how that role has changed over the decades.

Pope Leo, who Frank McCourt’s father exclaims in the movie was a great friend of the working man, reaches far back into the past to buttress his argument when he quotes the 13th-century scholastic theologian Thomas Aquinas. “It is one thing to have a right to possess money and another to have a right to use money as one pleases.”

At one point the title character in “Angela’s Ashes” stands with her head hung before a sneering tribunal of suited men

seated high on a podium, and made to account for herself and her destitution.

She receives a sheep's head for Christmas dinner and a docket for a few sticks of furniture and lumps of coal. The dispensers of this charity, the Vincent de Paul Society, founded by Frederic Ozanam in 1833, have been in Hamilton ever since the first influx of Catholics fleeing the famine in Ireland arrived here in the late 1840s. But today the poor, or more accurately the marginalized and underprivileged, are not browbeaten, sermonized to or otherwise humiliated before receiving food, clothing and given access to other needed services.

Last year, the Vincent de Paul Society opened its largest thrift store yet in Hamilton. Friendly staff and volunteers provide shoppers, indigent or otherwise, a warm welcoming experience with no hint of judgment or condemnation.

In another poignant scene in the movie, Angela stands in line at the ornate wooden door of the parish rectory for the table scraps from the priest's dinner, prepared by servants.

In Hamilton, the hungry similarly gather at the De Mazenod Door Outreach near St. Patrick's rectory, a large church with distinct Gothic stylings.



The De Mazenod Door Outreach is based on the social justice teaching of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the French aristocrat who founded the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1816. The outreach is a product of the pastoral team that Oblate priests Tony O' Dell and Jarek Pachocki created around them after they arrived from Labrador in 2012.

From sporadically giving out brown-bag lunches at the rectory office, the De Mazenod Door now provides a hot nutritious meal prepared by a veritable army of volunteers ranging from high school students to retired parishioners at a beautifully inscribed arched green door in the old St. Patrick's Elementary school, next to the church.

A full-service barbecue funded by a specific donor is held every Friday at noon. There are also special sit-down dinners at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

With 22,000 volunteer hours booked last year and 114,000 guests served, the De Mazenod Door may be the largest street outreach providing bodily sustenance to needy people in Hamilton.

Its website states "Our goal is that every single visitor to our door walks away with a true sense of community." Each

In front of De Mazenod Door





Lunch at De Mazenod Door

person that uses de Mazenod Door is treated with kindness and made to feel a part of the Body of Christ, one of the many communities we belong to.

It is a professionally-run organization that regularly has goal-setting and conflict resolution offsite retreats.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that any material act done to assist the needy is almsgiving. This is why the De Mazenod Door Outreach is now exploring other ways to serve the underprivileged in the community.

Joachim Brouwer is a member of the Gibson-Landsdale Planning Team and a lector at St. Patrick's Church. Reprinted with permission from the Hamilton Spectator



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 www.omilacombe.ca/mami/donations/ 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.

A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

BY DAVID MORGAN

OBLATE ASSOCIATE

ARNPRIOR, ONT – Have you ever been to the Holy Land? Would you like to go? What could be more rewarding spiritually than visiting the actual places where Jesus was born, baptized, transfigured, performed miracles, was crucified, resurrected and ascended to heaven?

That is exactly what happened last fall when 28 pilgrims from four Canadian provinces embarked on such a pilgrimage to the Holy Land under the spiritual guidance of Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, and Susai Jesu, OMI. Our trip was expertly organized by Maria Drueco of Marianatha Tours, who accompanied us on the journey.

So what was it like being on this pilgrimage? First of all we felt totally safe. It is fair to say that there is state-of-the-art security in Israel at all times. Secondly, as someone said part way through, this is a crash course in biblical theology. Sami, our local tour guide, was not only an expert guide, but also a bible scholar. He would quote verse after verse and ask us

to look it up and read it as we went each day. He would ask us theological questions that challenged and educated us.

Of course it was also tiring. Getting on the bus early in the morning, visiting a half dozen sites, walking, standing, listening intently to Sami



Pilgrims in the Holy Land



Oblates Susai Jesu, Tap Kurudeepan, and Sylvain Lavoie

and arriving back at our hotel often at 7 p.m. or later, was tiring. However, our group bonded well and we all helped each other when needed. There was much joking and laughter and of course one could always nap a bit on the bus.

The highlight for many was the daily Eucharist celebrated in the holiest of places, like on top of Mt. Tabor where Jesus was transfigured, or on a boat on the Sea of Galilee. Our personal highlight was celebrating mass in the Tomb of Jesus in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. My wife Marie and I were invited into the inner tomb with Bishop Sylvain and Fr. Susai just as they started distributing the Host. We laid our hands on the slab of stone where they laid the body of Christ after his crucifixion, and our eyes welled up.

There were many other highlights such as visiting the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Then there was the renewal of our baptismal vows in the Jordan River where John baptized Jesus, and visiting the outdoor reconstructed Nazareth Village to learn what it was like living back in the time of Jesus.

There was even a chance meeting with Tap Kurudeepan, OMI, who was on a separate pilgrimage with another group.

Stopping for some delicious Palestinian kanafeh – a cheese pastry soaked in sweet syrup – was a high. Then too there was praying the Stations of the Cross on the Via Della Rosa in Jerusalem – at 4 a.m.

Jerusalem, like much of Israel, is a hilly place. It is also much divided between two political states and three major religions. There are walls and checkpoints restricting the movement of Palestinians. New Israeli settlements are proceeding on “unceded” land. It is indeed disturbing but also symptomatic of our divided world today. We are all God’s children and wish to live in peace and harmony. Our pilgrimage has deepened our faith and given us much hope for more unity and forgiveness in the world.

After we returned home, Bishop Sylvain sent us a copy of his journal detailing all the sites we visited each day along with the beautiful prayers we said together. There was also access to literally thousands of photos he and Maria had each taken. We feel really transformed, and with this permanent record we will not soon forget this experience.

There was so much to absorb, savour and learn. The Bible has really come alive for us. This is why some group members had been here three or four times before. That is why some of us may come back again.

A Walk the Lands of the Bible pilgrimage is a real gift from God. Thank you Bishop Sylvain and Fr. Susai for walking with us on this unforgettable pilgrimage.





NEW PROVINCIAL AND COUNCIL

Fr. Ken Thorson, OMI, has been named as provincial of OMI Lacombe Canada and will begin his first term Aug. 15.

Oblates Richard Beaudette, Leszek Kwiatkowski, Susai Jesu, and Jaroslaw Pachocki have been named to the provincial council of OMI Lacombe Canada.

CENTRE OBLAT

The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), OMI Lacombe Office, per se, has ceased to operate. In mid-February a new initiative, Centre Oblat – A Voice for Justice, opened. This ministry is a collaborative effort of the three Canadian Oblate provinces – OMI Lacombe Canada, Assumption, and

Notre-Dame-du-Cap. Joe Gunn, a person with a great passion for justice, has been named executive director of this new national and international venture.

Centre Oblat will advocate and raise awareness about issues affecting Indigenous People, mining industry, human rights and ecology. Having its office in



Ken Thorson, OMI

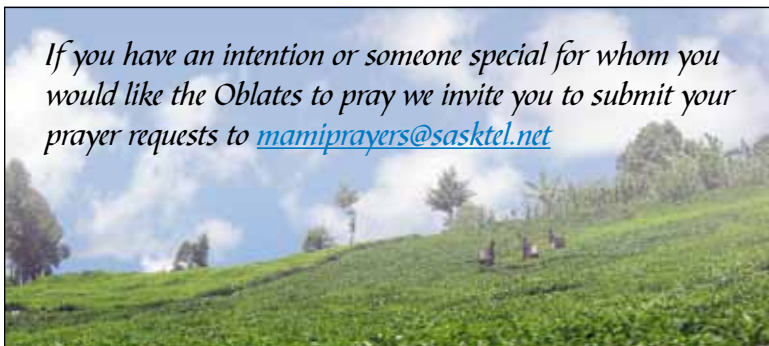
St. Paul's University in Ottawa will enable it to more easily promote the Six Calls of the Last General Chapter, beginning with its multicultural population of youth.

Joe Gunn can be reached 613-236-1393, or by email at jgunn@omilacombe.ca

LAC STE ANNE PILGRIMAGE

The annual Lac Ste Anne Pilgrimage will take place at Lac Ste Anne July 20-25. For more information, please visit the official pilgrimage website: <https://lacsteannepilgrimage.ca>

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



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: lacombeemissions@yahoo.ca





Kenya

N O T E B O O K

BY GERRY CONLAN, OMI

MARCH 16

Hi from Albany, West Australia.

Although interrupted by daily administration work for Kenya, I've enjoyed a nice relaxing week in West Australia. Our youth in Nairobi are inspiring me again by their visit to the "Nyumba ya Wazee" (home for the elderly). Taking gifts and cash, as well as their time, they create a wonderful sense of joy for the elderly and the staff who look after them (including some nuns). They amaze me how they make the sacrifice when they have so little. Even the transportation cost to come to town, then out to the centre, and then back home again, is a significant chunk of their weekly finances.



Gerry Conlan, OMI

At home in Australia



MARCH 23

We have five active projects between Kisaju and Karen, plus two projects in Méru, and the financial management details. In Méru, after 10 years of minimal maintenance, our Oblate house is being “fixed up” under the watchful eyes of Fr. Daquin and Fr. Fidele.

Secondly, a small unused dispensary at the new parish in Méru is being enlarged to become a temporary presbytery. We need this temporary presbytery so that Fr. Daquin and Br. Phelix can be closer to the people and allow our Oblate residence to be used by the Sons of Divine Providence, who need a temporary novitiate location for two years. When the new parish builds its permanent presbytery, the temporary place can become a rental income for the parish or be used as a medical clinic if needed.

In Kisaju, the security wall for our four-acre, future OMI Centre kicked off and is progressing slowly. The extension of our basement to create a proper chapel space has also commenced and they just poured the floor slab. Then, we have a long overdue water tower being constructed for the house. Instead of wasting the foundation space, I pushed for basement water storage to be constructed. Finally, we have the car park-



The youth group took gifts to the elderly



Kisaju house water tower

ing area around the house being dug out and replaced by hard stones and paving bricks.

In the background, we also kicked off the professional self-reliance investigation for our Méru property. Projects like this will be important so we can contribute some funds to our missionary work in the future.



Br. Magambo accompanies St. Teresa small Christian community to a shrine for prayer and reflection

APRIL 13

My last three weeks in Australia have been enjoyable and a little busy doing final bits and pieces and saying farewell to good friends and family. The parish in Albany kindly allowed me to lead the weekend masses and people kindly made donations for the Kenya Mission. In return we left gifts of tea for the people.

APRIL 20

I arrived back safely in Nairobi and I managed to look and smile nicely enough that the customs lady just waved

me through. I'd strategically delayed until the X-ray machine was occupied. It saved a lot of explaining about all the goodies I carried back including an extra two laptops and a 48-port CISCO network switch.

I joined the Nyumbani orphanage for the Holy Mass on Thursday and it was



Washing of the feet in Nyumbani



Holy Spirit sisters begin veneration of the cross

nice to be warmly welcomed back by the children and Sisters. On Good Friday I celebrated the Stations and Veneration of the Cross with the Holy Spirit Sisters. Fr. Fidele and I then visited Rongai and looked at the land purchased for our future low cost University hostel accommodation centre.

Saturday I caught up on some administrative work and fixed a couple of laptops before joining Nyumbani orphanage again for the Vigil. They had 15 baptisms and everyone was joyful. It is desperately dry here in Kenya with little rain, whereas we should have daily rains for three months. As we started the fire at Nyumbani, a slight drizzle started. At the blessing of the font for baptisms, the rain poured down. The Holy Spirit is definitely listening to our prayers.

Nairobi youth group meets at the home of a supporter



APRIL 27

The punishment for taking a holiday is a very full inbox. This week I was able to touch base with all the projects on play at the Mission – except for Méru and Kionyo. Fr. Fidele also “opened” the new year for our postulancy program. We are supposed to have two young men, but one is still finishing a course at university, which sounds promising to me.

During the week our Nairobi youth were organizing themselves and making donations for a visit to the National Spinal Injury Hospital in Nairobi. Some of the patients are paralysed so we hope we can help cheer them up.

As I mentioned last week, Kenya has been suffering from a lack of rain. The rain that started Easter Vigil has continued for the whole week, widespread and a good amount. We thank God and we are happy to give credit to God for taking care of us all. Sadly some people died in minor flooding in the Kibera slums here in Nairobi.

The Mission is excited to initiate the planning for a major project to assist university students with lower costs and safer accommodation in Nairobi. In March we concluded the purchase of a quarter acre of land just above a river in the area of several universities at Rongai, and only 300 metres from the main Nairobi road. This week we took two architects to visit the site and requested proposals. Two drilling companies were also contacted for water borehole provision.

As I drove out to Kisaju last Tuesday, the police had a



St. Stephen's on the move visits the Little Sisters of the Poor home

checkpoint just before our place, and they asked for something, but I explained I have many “children” to feed. I had not done anything wrong. He looked in the window and saw my bag of tropical mints, so I gave him a handful. He smiled and let me go.

MAY 5

Thank God small amounts of rain have kept falling during the week, not enough to be muddy for long, but great for the crops and gardens and underground water table.

Last Sunday, our Nairobi Youth and I visited the Nairobi Spinal Injury Hospital. They have a maximum of 25 to 30 patients. We took toiletries so we could share something with the patients. There were two very sad cases, and overall it was a sobering and confronting experience for all involved. The youth forgot to share out the tropical mint sweets, so I gave them to the nurses and thanked them for their dedication and care for the patients.

One man was very talkative and told the youth “any of you are also candidates to be here, any time.” One person was hit by a bus, another by a car and another by a motorbike. One fell out of a tree; one was a passenger on a motorbike, another in a car rollover.

There was a touching moment when we encountered a mother who was there helping her son to eat. Another young man was flat on his back unable to move his legs, and his hands were not very useful, but he could move his arms. We all left happy to have prayed with each group (each room had about four patients), encouraged them and listened to their stories.

I hope we might visit more than once a year. It might be a great pastoral work for our pre-novices.

Our architect sent pictures and I’m amazed at the progress of Kionyo Church. They have practically completed the mezzanine floor at the altar end on both sides, and now excavated the soil in front of the church entrance to construct the offices



Nairobi youth visit the spinal injury hospital

under the entrance slab. This was part of the original design to maximise the value of the entry slab, which can also act as a roof over offices below. The existing offices are in poor shape and had only been erected with a lifespan of 10 years, and that was 16 years ago.

The project at Méru has progressed faster than normal for Kenya, and Fr. Daquin should be able to move in before the end of May. Our friends from Sons of Divine Providence have already moved into our Méru property to prepare for their novices arriving in June. Fr. Fidele and Br. Phelix worked together to do some renovations.

MAY 12

Welcome to another week where we had good rains. We thank God and hope it reaches all the dry parts of Kenya. There is talk of how thousands of dollars sent to the drought areas are being lost due to corruption. The Kenya Conference of Bishops released a joint statement critical of corruption at all levels, and the main newspaper editorial cartoon had the top politicians and even a church leader sitting at a table with



Work continues on the security wall around Kisaju house

a slab of meat shaped like Kenya – everyone carving off a slice for themselves.

During the week Patrick, one of our former pre-novices, called and was desperate for help for his brother in Kibera slums. The brother has been doing work in a place handling cement, so he now has respiratory problems and can't work to care for his wife and children. I helped him out a bit. Hopefully the brother will buy a mask once he recovers. But it's sad that employers

don't care enough to provide.

Saturday morning I left for Kisaju at 5:30 a.m. to check the projects there. On the bypass, as I passed a semitrailer, I saw some people and a motorbike on its side in the central median strip. Even in the darkness it was obviously an accident, so I stopped. I was a bit nervous due to the proximity to the slums nearby and stories about robberies involving fake accidents.

I spotted two police officers so I walked over and they said it was a hit and run. Fr. Fidele told me later there are a number of false police around, and they caught 10 of them recently extracting bribes along the road to Naivasha.

The poor bloke was lying on his side and then rolled over just as I was starting a prayer. Covered in blood, he didn't look a pretty sight. After the prayer, he started to sit up and almost fell into the road so I supported him and called the police, who had moved away. At least his movement meant he didn't have broken bones or a back problem.

We were happy to have Fr. Praveen back with us on Monday, safe and sound despite the terrible bombings in Sri Lanka last month. He's now busy in the community catching up.



Remembering

We remember the following Oblates who died in 2018:

April 2	Charles Donovan (1940)
April 12	Félicien Labat (1928)
June 20	Raymond Deschênes (1927)
June 22	John Dourley (1936)
July 13	James Jordan (1945)
July 19	Louis Andreas (1948)
July 27	Jack McCann (1928)
July 30	Chris Rushton (1948)
September 1	Maurice Blackburn (1924)
September 6	Gerald Guillet (1937)
September 8	Louis Hoffart (1932)
October 13	Virgilio Baratto (1925)
October 29	Hugh James MacDonald (1946)
December 24	Norbert Dufault (1924)



**Communications
Coordinators:**

John and Emily Cherneski
lacombemissions@yahoo.ca

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

*A publication of the
Oblate Mission office.*

Have you considered
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.*

**Donations for Oblate
Missionary Projects
can be sent to:**

*AMMI Lacombe
Canada MAMI*

601 Taylor Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0C9

Phone (306) 653-6453

TOLL FREE:

1-866-432-MAMI (6264)

Fax (306) 652-1133

lacombemami@sasktel.net

On-line donations
can be given through:
<https://www.omilacombe.ca/mami/>

Printed in Canada

