



HIGHLIGHTS

ONTARIO DISTRICT NEWS

December 2020

A Light Shining in the Darkness: An Ignatian Online Christmas Retreat



By Fr. Clyde Rausch, OMI

Are you looking for a special way to contemplate the light of the Christ child this Christmas season? Would you like an opportunity to pray with your family or church group? Sometimes the joys of the holiday season, the preparations and hospitality can distract us. This online retreat from the comfort of your home could help you refocus your thoughts and prayers on the meaning of the light that Jesus brings into our world.

Join *A Light Shining in the Darkness* ten-day Christmas retreat. You will pray with a biblical passage from December 24th to January 2nd. Each day you will receive a format and a reflection for your morning or evening prayers.

To sign up visit: <https://ost.edu/christmas2020/> This retreat is a Christmas gift from the Oblate School of Theology – it is free.

From Springhurst...

Being on Covid19 lock down for Christmas isn't so bad when you live in Community! Here at Springhurst the decorations are in abundance. We have two beautiful trees to light the winter nights and help bring a glow to all that live here. We also have several different types of nativity scenes around the house and a new one in front of the house! There are also new lights outside in an effort to help raise the spirits of those in our neighbourhood as well.

The only thing missing are the visits of fellow Oblates living in Ottawa and our wonderful Oblate Associates who traditionally come to help decorate and spend time in the Community. All are truly missed!



Advent & Christmas Blessings

"As you celebrate the Advent and Christmas season, may your hearts be filled with wonder and praise for all that God is doing with and for you.

Take care & God bless,

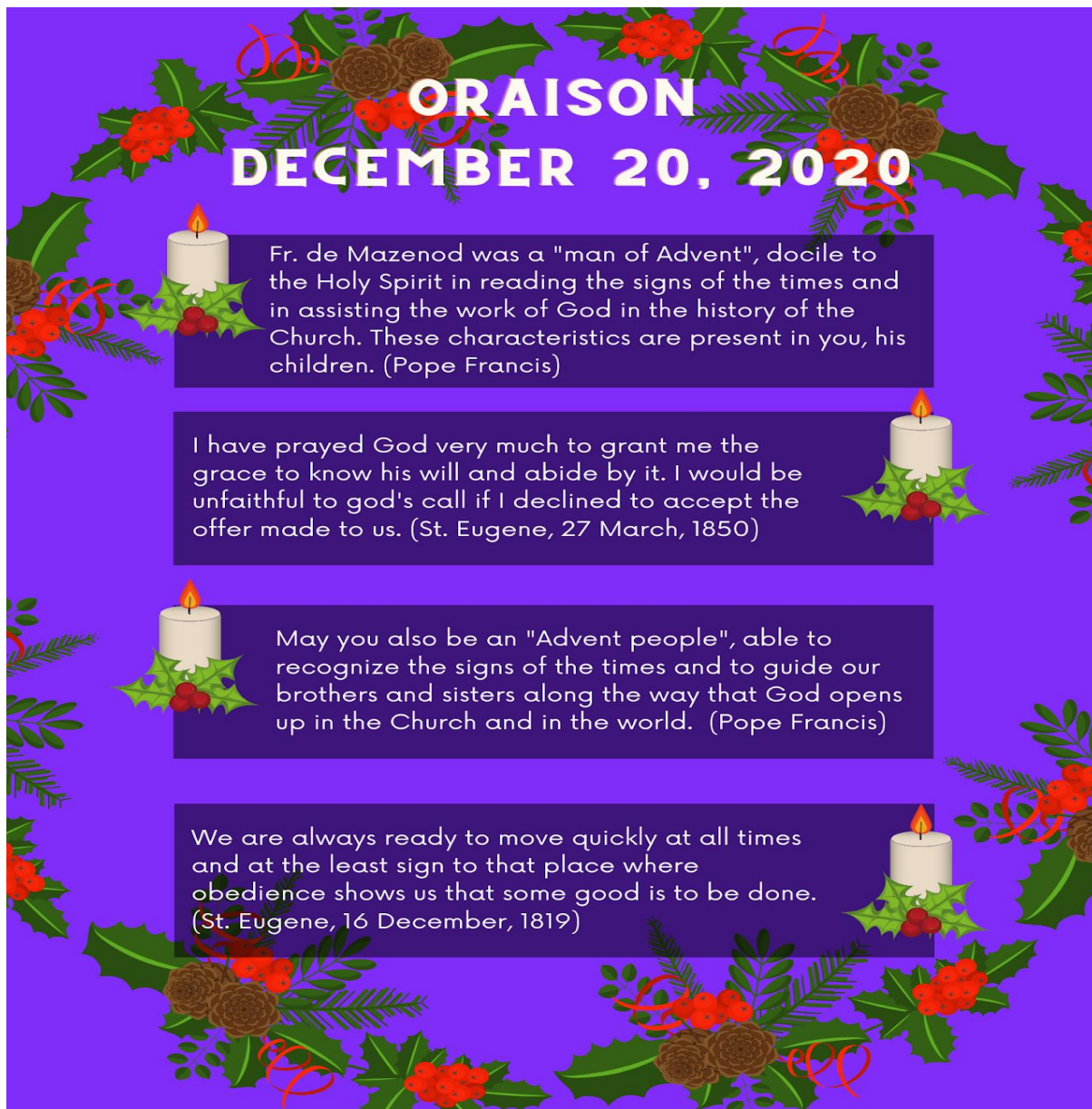
Jim Bleackley.

Kionyo Tea from Kenya:

A big Thank you to all who purchased Tea from Kenya – there are still a few bags left for those who were not able to get any. The price is \$25 a bag and all the money raised goes back to our Mission in Kenya. Please contact Eleanor Rabnett at rabnete@gmail.com for more information.



Mazenodian Family Monthly Oraison December 20



From St. Eugene de Mazenod

"You cannot imagine how I worry before God, before my dear missionaries of the Red River. I have only this means to approach them. There, in the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament, I seem to see and touch you. It must happen often that you too are in His presence. It is then that we meet in this living center that serves as our intermediary. Do you not think that your sufferings and your painful work are not frequent subjects of my conversations and admiration?"

(Letter to p. Lacombe, March 6, 1857 Ecrits Oblats, 2, p.148)



St. Eugene de Mazenod, remains present to us in these challenging times.

Getting Know our Honorary Oblates This will be the launch of a new series about the Honorary Oblates in our District. We begin this month with the story of Kay Cronin, HOMI; the first “Lady Oblate in the Congregation”. She was an Oblate Missionary extraordinaire who touched many and I count myself blessed to be one of them.

First Encounter with an Oblate Missionary - Kay Cronin, HOMI

I first met Kay Cronin in 1967 at a planning meeting for the launch of Development & Peace in Vancouver, BC. Kay was the featured speaker and we took a liking to each other despite the many differences in our lives. Kay was a writer – for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and had written the book: “Cross in the Wilderness” which was a “human, spirited account of the small, dynamic group of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate... in the wilderness of the Pacific northwest.”



Although my life was immersed in addictions, our friendship grew as Kay would invite me to meet in her office (at St. Augustine’s); she would talk with me about her time in Peru – making it sound like such an adventure. She was gentle as she spoke to me about my life styles, loving me as I was.

Kay seemed to take great pleasure in introducing me to her beloved Oblates. I can remember her taking me to the “Crescent” once for a celebration of some sort; this was like entering into a different world and yet they all treated me with welcome dignity. In taking me under her wing and befriending me she shared the light in her life and it pushed back the darkness in mine. She encouraged me with my writing; and when I wrote a poem about how I saw her experiences in Peru she had it printed in the Oblate Missions Review for March-April 1968.

Kay shared her love of the many indigenous young people who were coming into Vancouver at the time to get a better education and to find jobs. She continued to befriend me even as she saw me going deeper into a life of addiction and crime. What a lady!

While my own journey was taking me deeper into darkness Kay moved steadily towards a new way of being as she stood and walked in the light of the Oblates. In 1972 Kay was named and became an Honorary Oblate, the first “Lady Oblate” in the congregation.

Kay died in 1975 and it took me another 30 years to reconnect with her. It happened in St. Joe’s parish which was celebrating its 150th Anniversary; our celebrations included a special Mass followed by a dinner for the Oblates. At Mass I listened carefully to the homily given by a visiting Oblate priest who came from Rome for the occasion. His words touched a place deep within me, breaking free the chains that held me. I whispered to my old friend Kay that her beloved Oblates were there in full force.

Kay and I have talked regularly since that evening; becoming close friends once again. I treasure her presence in my life and being able to share my own journey as an Oblate Associate and member of the Mazenodian Family. When I made my commitment as an Oblate Associate and received my small Oblate cross I showed it first to Jesus, and then immediately to Kay, sharing my joy.

Some months ago I was going through old papers that were given to me twenty years ago and which remained unseen until I opened the envelope a couple of months ago. It was filled with pieces about Kay and her life as an Honorary Oblate; the first “Lady Oblate” as Fr. Herbert Francis Dunlop, OMI called her. Kay was the first Oblate Missionary in my life. It was Kay who introduced me to the idea behind JPIC, and serving the poorest of the poor. She had fostered within me a deep love and respect for our Indigenous brothers and sisters; and she promoted and encouraged me to keep writing.

Fr. Dunlop wrote: “Her little Oblate Newsletter not only brought us many friends, it kept the OMI’s aware of one another, aware of one another’s needs... dreams... successes! It helped to maintain a real bond among the members who lived in the East and the North, and far away Peru.”

Talk about a Missionary Oblate loving all who felt unloved and abandoned. I give thanks to God and St. Eugene for inspiring Kay to love and be a friend. She was my very own “Don Bartolo”!

*Eleanor Rabnett
Oblate Associate*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

December 20 – Monthly

Oraison Our Monthly Oraison for the Mazenodian Family takes place on the 3rd Sunday of each month. No matter where you are in the world or the time of day you are invited to join in coming together in the presence of the heart of Jesus for silent prayer. All are welcome.

December 26 – Special

Christmas ZOOM Gathering for all Ontario District Oblates and Oblate Associates. .

For more information email Eleanor Rabnett for an invitation reminder.

December 7 – 15th Forward Together: Listening for the Spirit - Phase II.2 – What did we hear?

This is the next step in our synodal process of Forward Together about which we all received an email from Isabell Gigault on December 1st.

Want to remind all of us of other common dates? Send us an email and we'll include what we can.

In Love and Prayers

We continue to keep Frank Kavanagh OMI, Ron Kedrosky, Maureen Pinsonneault HOMI, Jane McDonald, and Yvon Oullet in our ongoing thoughts and prayers.

Upcoming Birthdays 🎂

Mike McCarthy – December 24

Ed McNeil – December 29

Claude Tardif – December 31

Gilbert Mason – January 3

Christie Joachimpillai – January 6

Maureen Pinsonneault – January 6

John Renken – January 18

Joseph Lasowski – January 20

Marie Morgan – January 28

Henry Arruda – January 29

