



HIGHLIGHTS

ONTARIO DISTRICT NEWS

May 2021

Springtime at Springhurst

Finer weather brings people out of doors. Our outdoors crew have been doing their utmost to make the flower beds around the property come to life. We thought that there might be issues with the snow that fell last week, but spring flowers are as resilient as they are beautiful!

This week we had a couple of new members decide to try their green thumbs on the property. They want to plant some Jerusalem artichokes behind the patio. We are all looking forward to watching them grow. In the picture you can see Fr. John Renken clearing the area for planting.



By: Jane Brennan

Spirit of Joy

Eberhard Arnold

It is a simple thing: joy in everything that lives. Anyone who can rejoice in life, in other people, in the fellowship of church community – anyone who feels joy in the mutual relationships of trust and inner fellowship – such a person experiences what love is. Anyone who cannot feel joy cannot live.... Only where there is joy do love and justice dwell. We need the spirit of joy to overcome the gloomy spirit of covetousness, the spirit of unjust mammon and its deadly hate. We can only have such joy if we have faith, and if we believe that the earth has a future.



This article first appeared in What's New on the OMI Lacombe website April 9, 2021; however, it spoke strongly of how community is an integral part of our calls and responses of how we live as members of the Mazenodian Family. It is for this reason that I reprint it today.

God calls, using many voices

Jesus said to them again, *"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."* John 20: 21

It would be very simple to put all the focus on Thomas as we reflect on the story of this post-Resurrection appearance of Jesus; but that would do a disservice to the other disciples who were gathered in that house. We would also miss the importance of the need for the support of community in living out one's discipleship.



ALL the disciples were locked away out of fear. They were probably commiserating with each other about their lot, having lost their teacher and master; feeling dejected, alone and perhaps even despairing. Thomas, in a sense, symbolizes the mood, doubt and questioning of all the disciples.

Notice that Jesus chooses to appear to the whole community of disciples. He does not single them out and approach them one by one. Their faith and their discipleship will grow and be lived out in community, not in isolation. Each one will fulfill his or her vocation as a disciple in the context of the community of disciples, with the support, encouragement and care of all the others. It is as a community of disciples that Jesus sends them forth. True, each one will have to do their individual part in living out that vocation and each one will have to make a personal choice to respond to the call of Jesus. But it is done with the care and support, and in the context, of a community of disciples.

Reflecting on my own vocation as an Oblate, I can easily recognize that the call was communicated through the members of a small, rural parish community of which I was a member while living on the farm. The people of that community continually encouraged me to take leadership in the community, to share faith with them, to assist them to pray and celebrate as a small community that did not have a priest present on a regular basis. It was through their encouragement that I eventually (slow at catching on sometimes!) realized that God was calling me to religious life and priesthood.

I believe strongly that our parish communities play a vital role in calling and encouraging each member in their vocation – first of all as disciples of the risen Lord, and then in particular vocations within our Church. Each member of the community, and the community together, is called to listen for the voice of the Spirit and encourage members in their particular vocations.

By Richard Beaudette, OMI

The Secret of Happiness



"I don't call you servants but friends". And then he says: "I command you". Isn't there a contradiction between these two statements of Jesus? Servants are commanded, not friends. It also commands to love. But can love be commanded?

The explanation is in the sentence that is right at the center of the whole speech: "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete".

Extraordinary! God cares about our joy. It doesn't take good, save... it takes happy! It does not require, as one would expect from a God, adoration, obedience, submission. He cares that we are in joy, indeed, in the fullness of joy. He does not focus on himself, but on us. I imagine it's the same for parents: what else do they want for their children?

And here, almost whispering in the ear, as you do with a friend, he reveals a secret: to be happy you must love, indeed, you must love each other, because only together are you fully happy. Our happiness is so close to his heart that he even begs us (he commands us) to live in such a way as to be happy: to love us. He really treats us like friends, the servants do not confide secrets.

Saturday 8 May 2021
Fabio Ciardi

From St. Eugene de Mazenod...

May the Blessed Virgin conceived without stain be your guide and patroness, devotion to whom, you must bear in mind, is a special duty of our vocation to propagate in every place.

Selected Texts: # 105: Letter of Obedience to Father Honorat and the first missionaries to Canada, September 20, 1841



Mazenodian Family ORAISON

May 16, 2021

We shall always look on her as our mother. In the joys and sorrows of our missionary life, we feel close to her who is the Mother of Mercy. (OMI Rule of Life, 10)

St. Eugene sought Mary's intercession during every cholera epidemic during his time. Following his example, as a Mazenodian Family we turn to Mary in this time of need united in prayer with Pope Francis all around the world:

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God, and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic.

Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.



Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity, and continued health.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen

A final draft of the Future Directions/Orientations and Concrete Action Plan will be based on these responses.

To access this page online: [Mazenodian Family Oraison May 2021](#)

In Our Love and Prayers...

We continue to pray for all whose lives have been touched by COVID19, especially those in the more densely populated and poorest countries in the world.

We continue to pray for Malcolm Mansfield, brother of Ken Mansfield, who is now home from the hospital and continues the healing process.

We pray for Antonio Pannunzi and his family in Italy. His mother and brother have Covid-19, and his sister passed away from the same virus. It has been difficult for him since he has not been able to be with his family at this time.

Roslyn, sister of Eugene Whyte was taken to the hospital last week. Let us keep Roslyn and all of Eugene's family in our thoughts and prayers.

We thank God for the success of Fr. Louis Lougen's surgery and his return home to Rome. Fr. Louis we continue to hold you in our thoughts and prayers as you work on getting your strength back.

We pray for Colleen and Brian's granddaughter Micah and a dear friend, Maria. At the same time, we pray for Brian who is not well and for Colleen. Let us hold all of them in our hearts.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 16 – Monthly Oraison Our Monthly Oraison for the Mazenodian Family will take place in in reflection and prayer for Mary Immaculate – Mother of our Mazenodian Family. All are welcome.

Birthday Celebrations



Daniel Dionne – May 4

Bill Thompson – May 19

Colleen Kerr – May 29

Richard Kelly – June 8

Erin Ryan – June 16

Doug Crosby – June 28

Tony O'Dell – June 30

The Voice of Truth *by Mahatma Gandhi*

Truth alone will endure, all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time. I must continue to bear testimony to truth even if I am forsaken by all. Mine may today be a voice in the wilderness, but it will be heard when all other voices are silenced, if it is the voice of truth.

Getting to Know Our Oblate Associates

Some of the many faces at one of the two recent Province-wide ZOOM Gatherings



RETREATS:

From Queens House:

Growing in Wisdom: Seeking Deeper Generativity

A two-day "Come and See" gathering for those interested in learning more about **Growing in Wisdom** - a two-year program beginning September 2021.

Friday June 4 & Saturday June 5

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST/MDT

with presentations from Fr. Ron Rolheiser OMI and the faculty of the Forest Dwelling Program, Oblate School of Theology, past graduates, and the planning committee for this ground-breaking new program for wisdom seekers.

Registration deadline: June 1

[Summary of this 2-day gathering](#)

[Register for this gathering](#)

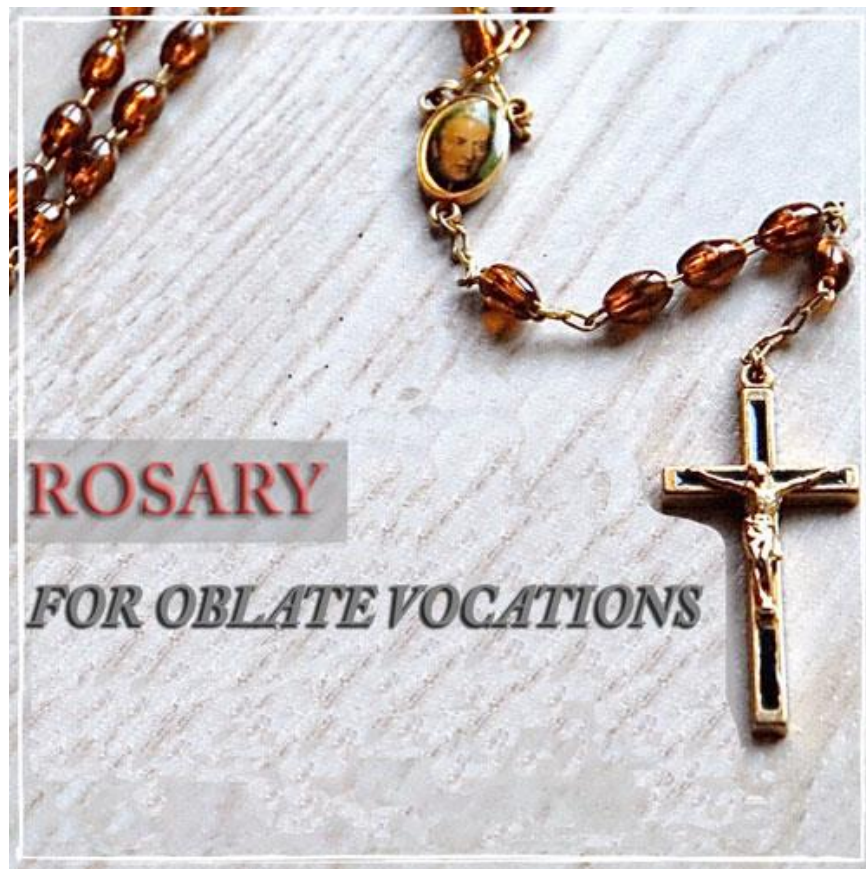
[Learn more about the Growing in Wisdom 2-year program](#)

Don't forget to also check the **Star of the North Retreat Centre** website [Star of the North](#) as well as **Galilee Centre** website [Galilee Centre](#)

The Rosary Prayer Chain for Oblate Vocations

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Pablo Reinedo & Fr. Carmine Marrone, OMI



The Rosary Prayer Chain for Oblate Vocations is in its eleventh year and growing!

It was in the year 2008 when Fr. Ismael Garcia Moreno OMI, in Spain, launched this initiative of continuous prayer of the rosary. He was inspired by the experience of a group of young people that he followed in Monzòn, in the north of Spain. Every year they organized a prayer chain of 24 consecutive hours on the occasion of the Confirmation day of the young people in the group. “Why not do the same for Oblate

vocations?”, was the question that was ringing in his mind. So, Fr. Ismael launched the 24-hour continuous prayer initiative for this intention.

In 2009 and 2010, the prayer shifts were extended to 36 hours, beginning on 20 May at 12 noon. Ismael took up the idea again, involving a group of lay people who were put in charge of the **“Rosary Prayer Chain”** initiative. Pablo Reinedo, a layman, took on the coordination. In 2014, an invitation was launched to pray the rosary every day of the novena for Oblate vocations. Oblates and lay people from the entire Mediterranean Province, and also from other parts of the world were involved with a lot of enthusiasm. To our great surprise and joy, all available prayer shifts were completed in the week of 21-29 May.

Since then, the Rosary Prayer Chain has retained its current format of 9 days. Thanks to the Facebook profile and the progress made with the translations to facilitate booking, the initiative has spread all over the world and many people are now involved. The aim, of course, is not so much to complete the list of shifts, but to

promote prayer and a vocational culture. In last year's edition, 424 shifts were covered by people scattered throughout the Oblate world in 20 countries. Today, the Rosary Prayer Chain is a heritage of the entire Congregation.

For this reason, from this year on, the continuous rosary becomes an initiative officially promoted by the General Administration for the entire Oblate family of the world.

It will be very easy to book: everyone can become an animator of the initiative.



[Click here to register](#)

Let us make the vocational culture and prayer for Oblate vocations grow in the world! The world, as Pope Francis reminded us, counts on Oblate Missionaries.

And the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate need the prayers of all of us.

Let us move forward together! We were born for times like this!

From May 21 to 29, may we all experience a fruitful novena for Oblate vocations!

