

Oblate Spirit

AMMI *Lacombe* Canada MAMI



Christmas 2022

A Helping Hand



Finding those *God moments*



As we bring this year slowly to a close, we are reminded that so much in our lives is out of our control. The year 2022 has been a classic example of difficult times thrust upon our friends and neighbours at home and around the world, especially in countries where the Oblates have a significant presence.

There was, and still is, the ruthless and brutal war in Ukraine waged by Russia. With substantial help from Canadian supporters, Oblates in neighbouring Poland have helped Oblates in Ukraine aid those so desperately in need of food and shelter.

Devastating floods crippled Pakistan, and once again Oblate supporters in Canada were called upon to offer whatever assistance we could muster.

In Canada, the economy and, depending on where you live, the weather have not been kind. Oblate parishes in Hamilton (St. Patrick's) and Edmonton (Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples) have seen a huge increase in need from those less fortunate.

Throw in COVID and you have a year we would like to forget.

Still, we continue to provide a helping hand. The work of Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI, is a classic example of the good we can create. He saw young students in a dirty, dust-filled playground and didn't waste any time in quickly finding a way to help rectify the situation (see Page 6).

Blaise saw the need and responded. That is the spirit of the Oblates at work. As Fr. Gerry Conlan often writes from Kenya, these are '*God moments*.' We can only hope that all our Oblate supporters in Canada can experience the joy of these *God Moments* as we move into what we hope and pray will be a more peaceful year.

John and Emily Cherneski
Communications Coordinators



Christmas Wish List

CANADA OUTREACH

- ~ De Mazenod Door and Farm \$50
- ~ Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples \$50

KENYA

- ~ Prison Ministry\$25
- ~ School Fees for Children \$50
- ~ Food Parcels for Needy Families in Slum and Parish..... \$20
- ~ Blankets and Warm Clothing for the Elderly \$50

PERU

- ~ St. Clotilde Hospital \$25
- ~ Building Materials and Labour for Projects \$100
- ~ Education Supplies (desks, chairs, workbooks) \$25

A heart-warming Christmas memory

BY BLAISE MACQUARRIE, OMI

(The following is Br. Blaise's response to our request for a special Christmas memory.)

I was raised in Inverness, Cape Breton Island, a small coal-mining town with a population of about 2,500. There were two main churches about 300 metres apart ... Catholic and Protestant. We got along very well.

We were coal miners, fishermen, farmers, lumberjacks and merchants. We had two hospitals and two schools. Everybody knew everybody and in times of need they were there to give a hand, especially at the five coal mines in the area. There were many sad accidents and tragedies that brought people together.

The town was located on the Gulf of St. Lawrence and nestled among low, rolling woodland hills. The four seasons all had their beauty, but the one I liked was winter. Coal-mining towns have something bleak about them, and when the snow fell everything was white and clean. When the moon came up over the rolling hills, the snow sparkled like diamonds. The smoke coming from the chimneys gently rose in the cold air.

At Christmas, the farmers would come into town with their Clydesdale horses and sledges, and the bells on the harnesses 'sang' when the horses either walked or ran. The few stores were lit, and houses had colourful lights in their windows. We had a huge crib at the church, where the Christmas celebrations helped make this season special.

Our coal-company house was made of wood and was



Blaise MacQuarrie, OMI

two floors high, with no insulation, which is why each family had to use two stoves that burned coal. One stove was in the kitchen while the other, called the *morning glory*, was in the living room and kept a fire burning all night long.

It was in the living room that we placed a tree cut from the forest, and the smell of the spruce wafted throughout the house. We had many decorations, and the whole family helped dress the tree and apply the colourful lights. Under the tree were gifts so beautifully wrapped. However, the toys for the children had to wait until they were delivered by Santa.

On Christmas Eve we tots would be put to bed while the adults went to midnight mass. A chicken was in the oven for the adults to share once mass ended. Early in the cold morning we youngsters got up, and still in our long johns, ran to the tree to find toys. They were small, but they were toys. My sister and two brothers were overjoyed that we got what we requested from Santa.

Christmas was a most joyous time filled with peace and love. I often wondered how Mom could buy the right toys on her mother's allowance check of \$40 per month. (Our father died when I was five years old.)

Christmas for me was then and is now a special spiritual time. It is like putting coal on a fire to warm our belief in Christ and His mission on earth, a spiritual gift that seems to have been misplaced by many today.

It was so important for our family to celebrate this noble event. The greatest gift that we received was the gift of God. We

should never take for granted the faith that Christ gave us, and we should live this life in peace and happiness in spite of the unsettled world in which we live today.

Br. Blaise's family home



Where there is a will ...

BY BLAISE MACQUARRIE, OMI

CHINCHA ALTA, Peru – While visiting a public school I noticed the dirty, dusty playground where the children played. When they ran about, jumping and rolling, a fine dust floated in the air.

Many of these children are underfed, underweight and many go to school without anything in their stomach. This visit had sparked me to do something concrete ... like putting down a clean concrete floor!

WANTED

YOUR STORIES!

There are many charities and good causes that solicit your support. Yet for some reason you have chosen to offer the Oblates your prayers, friendship and assistance.

We are curious:

Why did you choose us?

How did you hear about the Oblate missionary work?

How have the Oblates supported, inspired and encouraged you?

What are some of your best memories of Oblates and their missionary work?

Send your stories (and photos) to:
lacombemissions@yahoo.ca



After meeting with the school director, we agreed to supply the cement and gravel, and the school would pay for the labour.

The total cost of the labour was about \$1,500, but the director told me the school had no funds to cover that.

I offered to help the school raise the funds. I was willing to donate five beds and mattresses for a raffle.

Meanwhile, my work team of eight young men devised a plan that included materials required, and a start and finish date. A group of school mothers were to look after the materials so nothing was stolen. As it happened, school was out for two weeks, which was plenty of time to finish the job.

We provided 180 bags of cement and 14 truckloads of clean gravel from our pit. The women did a fine job in looking after the materials and even shared coffee and sandwiches with the workers.

As the floor of 400 square metres took shape, the teachers at this school of more than 1,000 children sold tickets on the beds. A few days before the work was complete, the raffle was successful and the men were paid for their time. Leave it to women to get the job done!

When the students returned, they couldn't believe their eyes. They saw a huge, clean floor upon which they could play. The teachers watched with tears in their eyes.

These good acts of charity are largely possible because of people like you in Canada. God bless. We love you!

One of the playing surfaces Br. Blaise constructed



A memorable first Christmas in Kenya

BY FR. KEN FORSTER, OMI

(Fr. Forster helped kickstart the Kenya Mission in 1997)

VANCOUVER – As we prepare for the upcoming celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am now writing from my office in Vancouver. Yes, just like a Kenyan Christmas, I expect no snow. But there are a few dissimilarities. I reflect on that first Christmas in Kionyo (in 1997) with quite vivid memories. These are the things that come to mind.

Fr. Bill Stang and I shared this memorable night. It was

Fr. Ken visits with friends





memorable not because it was the first time that the Christians had a Christmas mass celebrated this high on the mountain, or that there was only standing room in the parish church in Kionyo, but rather a few other experiences that marked this as a unique Christmas.

Number one: Yes, it was true that Catholics who lived in this rural high mountain terrain never ever celebrated the vigil of Christmas. Being aware of that, we planned our evening services earlier, about seven o'clock, as it was completely dark by 6:30 p.m. throughout the year. We lived on the equator.

Number two: We had Fr. Salesius (a Merian priest), the first Indigenous priest ordained for the Diocese of Méru, staying with us with the impossible task of teaching us Kimeru. So, we boldly planned three evening services, one in the main parish of Kionyo, and two in outstations of Igandene and Gaturi. We had one old Hilux 4x4 pickup as transportation so I proceeded down the "road", I say "road" which might best describe it, with Fr. Salesius Kiranthia (now deceased) who I dropped off at Igandene to celebrate with the Christians in that area.

Number three: The rainy season has been known to begin around mid-October and end mid-December. Being our first experience of weather in Kionyo, we didn't know that what we were experiencing was in fact unusual. It had rained and poured every day during those months and drenched the land and people, extending right through normal dry season, until the end of January. Although rain is indeed a gift of God, especially for tea farmers, I could not join the chorus that was sung by everyone, every day, "Tharima ya Murungu! (Blessings of God). That year, 1997, we experienced what they later spoke about as El Niño.

After I dropped off Fr. Salesius at Igandene, I returned on the road until I arrived at the junction to take the trail to Gatari. Wisdom rather than missionary zeal grabbed me as I delayed at the junction. The road we had just descended had some traction (no gravel, but welcome rock and boulders). The narrow road ahead to Gatari had no such virtues, only mud and nothing to enable the wheels to climb forward or brake as one descends.

I reflected on the foolishness of proceeding on this mountain trail, 2,000 meters above sea level, which had no guard rails. Without crediting myself with more than average intelligence, I decided to return to join Fr. Bill Stang as he celebrated in Kionyo. Unfortunately, I had no means to contact those who might be waiting for me in Gatari to allay their concerns about whether I was up to my axles with my four wheels spinning; over the mountainside; or a man of common sense.

There were no Christmas trees, lights, or decorations to mark this special evening. In the deluge of that dark first Christmas Eve mass, we joined a very sparse number of parishioners that came with the gift of their faith, and a hundred or more bats swooping down like angels over the altar to praise the new-born King.

A welcome response to a growing need

BY DIANE DOWNEY

HAMILTON – This year (2022) has been our busiest year by far at De Mazenod Door Outreach. We have seen many record-breaking days in a row, month after month, where the number of meals served at ‘The Door’ has surpassed anything we had ever expected to see.

We have seen a 19-per-cent increase over last year with just short of 100,000 meals served well into September. There have been days and weeks of more than 500 meals served each day to a mass of individuals who have nowhere else to turn.

All of them are in need of the relief of so many of the essential services offered by ‘The Door’ due to issues such as

De Mazenod Door outreach





Drying garlic

homelessness, mental health and lack of housing, where having to choose something to eat over some place to lay your head becomes a necessary reality. The cost of living isn't only high here in inner-city Hamilton, but throughout Ontario and across Canada. Food supply prices and all the program costs have skyrocketed.

Having said that, our staff and volunteers continue to exceed all expectations we had of them, all going above and beyond to meet the need. The need is great, but God is greater!

The new St. Patrick School is getting close to completion (late fall or early winter), and the De Mazenod Door Kitchen will once again move from the pastoral centre, where it has been located since the demolition of the old school prior to Covid-19, to a much greater and better space. Once there, we will need a



Fr. Tony feeds the chickens

whole raft of new appliances and equipment, such as a 'combi oven' which will hold stacks of trays at one time. We've just never had the space or ability before.

De Mazenod Farm had an amazing bounty of crops this year, so much so that we were able to host a 'Pick Your Own' program, allowing our guests and parishioners of St. Patrick's Parish to come to the farm to pick a basketful of produce and then pay what they were able, in support of De Mazenod Door Outreach. While we haven't yet been able to fulfil the dream of a 'petting farm', as we are still in need of another barn and outbuildings, it's still in the works. Donations are needed to see several of our farming projects through to fruition.

De Mazenod Door Housing is holding its own. The six men at the Eugene's Place House are flourishing in this environment where sober living is a must, rules must be followed, and boundaries are set. They now cook a 'family meal' every Sunday

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. To view an excellent instructive tutorial on how you can increase the value of your donation of securities and earn a tax credit at the same time: <https://omilacombe.ca/powerful-way-leave-legacy-2/>

(we provide the food), each one taking part in the day – like a family. At least one of them has returned to school and a couple have found jobs. They’ve come such a distance from where they had been in life, proving the necessity of this home! We assist with transportation, gift cards for groceries and clothing as a support and it’s made all the difference in the world.

Our newest initiative is a gift shop called Humankind Artisan Gifts and Décor. Humankind (as a symbol and celebration of our common humanity and the ever-growing need for kindness) will open later in the Fall and is an effort to generate more sustainable funding to support the DeMazenod Door.

We are looking for and collecting donations of unique and eclectic handmade gifts and artisan crafts to sell, with 100 per cent of the profits going right back into the ministry. Our hope is to create a community of artisan supporters, all eagerly sharing their gifts and talents as creative contributions to this initiative. There is much to be done to get this endeavour off the ground.

There is so much that can be done, so many that can be helped, even with the assistance of only a few.

(Diane provides program support for De Mazenod Door outreach and St. Patrick’s Parish)



Fun on the farm

Sense of urgency for those in need

EDMONTON – Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples extends a hearty thank you to those that have supported our charitable ministries in the past, and especially the Christmas ministries.

In addition to those ministries, we humbly request that the supporters of AMMI Lacombe MAMI also consider supporting our outreach programs that are directed in support of the homeless and those less fortunate that need a helping hand with their daily lives.

The pandemic caused many of the neighboring charities to temporarily close due to the lack of volunteer workers. Sacred Heart Church stepped up to fill this void and began our daily sandwich lunch program. In the beginning, we served between 15 and 20 sandwich lunches per day. In the 2.5 years

Volunteers prepare food hampers





Food hamper pickup

of its existence, the need has grown to between 250 and 300 full lunches per day.

Each lunch contains a sandwich of meat, cheese, mustard and mayo; a bottle of water or juice; and a treat such as a muffin or cookie. Lunch is served from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. This program requires nearly 10 volunteers daily to support these needs.

In addition to the lunch program, our emergency food hamper program has grown from one or two hampers per week to five to seven requests per day. This need has grown so substantially that limits on the amount of groceries given to each hamper and the number of requests to two per month had to be placed on recipients.

The annual children's Christmas party delivers gifts to approximately 800 and each child receives a minimum of two gifts each during the party. These children may not receive any other gifts during the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The children also enjoy clowns, face painting and balloons shaped into animals during these parties.

Our Christmas hamper program is designed to ensure those less fortunate will have an excellent meal on Christmas Day. The Christmas hampers come complete with a turkey,

Volunteers prepare sandwiches



potatoes, gravy, stuffing, canned vegetables, cereal and all the trimmings for a Christmas day celebration. Last year groceries were provided to more than 3,200 family members that would not have had access to a meal on Christmas day.

For the single folks, a Christmas Day meal with turkey and all the trimmings is prepared and served to those that do not have anywhere to go on Christmas Day. A total of 40 turkeys are cooked over a three-day period to serve between 700 and 800 people.

All our outreach ministries are operated through our parish offices and staffed by up to 100 Sacred Heart Church volunteers during peak periods. We do not have one paid volunteer in any of our programs. Our annual budget needs to raise more than \$100,000 for these charitable ministries. We humbly seek your support in order that we may continue to do the work of our Lord.

Thanking you all well in advance for your generous donations, we remain.

Fr. Susai Jesu, OMI

Fr. Mark Blom, OMI

*Ron Martineau (Sacred Heart Church
volunteer co-ordinator)*



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.

Money talks, but so do our values

Centre Oblat 
A Voice For Justice

BY JOE GUNN

OTTAWA – Growing up, we were firmly instructed that a respectful person did not bring up two topics in polite conversation: money and politics. (A third forbidden subject was, of course, sex. But none of my youthful peers ever imagined that our good Catholic parents engaged in whatever that was!)



Joe Gunn

Jesus certainly does talk about money in many New Testament parables. In Luke's account alone we hear of the Prodigal Son (15:3); the Unrighteous Steward (16:1); the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19–31) and how hard it is for those with wealth to enter the reign of God (18: 24-25.)

In September, Oblate leadership from English and French-speaking Canada, along with their financial staff, certainly did talk about money – as well as the politics of placing monies where their values lie. Specifically, the issue was the debate over divestment from fossil fuel enterprises. Resource persons for this presentation included experts in the issue, money management staff, as well as a religious sister, superior of one of the seven Canadian congregations that have already divested their portfolios.

Why is divestment a hot topic? Because this issue, once the purview of ethical debate, has now shifted. Financial institutions and economists are increasingly advising divestment strategies.

Canadian Mark Carney (in 2015, when Governor of the Bank of England) stated that most reserves are “unburnable”

if global temperature rise is to meet established targets. He warned that industries that don't move towards zero-carbon emissions could be punished by investors who fear the creation of a "carbon bubble" that would shutter their massive projects, leaving them as bankrupted "stranded assets."

All G7 countries, except Canada, have managed to drive down their emissions since 2015. The coal, oil and gas industries in Canada contribute more than 25 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions nationwide. Nonetheless, Canada projects our fossil fuel sector to increase emissions.

A full third of global divestments (totalling over \$18 trillion US) are from communities of faith. Some 320 Catholic institutions have already divested – including Catholic universities, religious congregations, bishops' conferences in Ireland, the UK, the Philippines, and even the Vatican Bank.

Years ago, I asked my financial institution to avoid any fossil fuel equities in my meager RSP portfolio. They hesitated; redesigning my holdings (under \$200,000) was not worth their trouble. Eventually, they made an exception, our earnings did not really suffer, and today fossil-free options are widely available from investment firms and banks.

Nonetheless, withdrawing your investments from these industries today is reason for pause. As the economy is threatened with recession, the fat profits of fossil fuel companies – evidenced by the outrageous prices you pay at the pump! – are relatively attractive. Aligning your environmental values with your investment goals should be handled with care.

Here in North America, Christians are wealthier than in any other region of the globe. Based on our stated care for creation, is it obvious that Christians are using our investments in more ethically-just ways than any other community?

(Joe Gunn is the Executive Director of Le Centre Oblat.)

K E N Y A

reflections



Fr. Jim Fiori

BY JIM FIORI, OMI

WINNIPEG – I remember well when the Oblate Superior General invited the Canadian region to open a new missionary thrust in Kenya. The Bishop of Méru invited the Oblates because he wanted our charism in his diocese.

As skeptics we thought he wanted our money. In fact, he really did want our charism. A delegation went to Kenya to see if it was possible or feasible to open a new mission. Their report was favorable. Most of the Oblate provinces agreed to fund the project. Volunteers were sought, and St. Mary's and B.C. Yukon provinces agreed to designate personnel.

In 1997, Frs. Ken Forster, Bill Stang, Harry Kaufmann and Joe Singarajah left Canada for the new Oblate mission. On arrival they were assigned to learn the language and culture. They spent time living with local priests.

It wasn't long before Bishop Silas divided a parish that had some 50 outstations and asked the Oblates to take pastoral care of the Kiony Parish with its 12 outstations. We remain there.

Back in Canada there was a change in leadership. I was named the Provincial of Manitoba. In one of the first meetings of the Oblates I attended, I was asked to be one of the liaison provincials along with Fr. Leo Mann, the other Oblate responsible for the mission.



My first experience of the new venture was the first of our annual pilgrimages to the mission. The water project was amazing, and the Canadian missionaries were also quite involved in repairing and construction of schools.

As a complete surprise, several young men wanted to join us. We established a formation house in Méru itself, and formation to this day remains an important ministry.

In 2010, as I stepped out of leadership, I was invited to put my body where my mouth had been and on Oct. 9 I departed for Kenya. Because I had visited several times, the transition was fairly easy. There was no time for self-pity. Shortly after I arrived I was named the superior of the mission.

During my watch we established a new mission in Kisaju, a new diocese. One of the great moments for me was being asked to pray at the initiation of the new parish. I remember clearly standing before this crowd, holding up my Oblate Cross and blessing this new parish. It was a moment when the bishop understood who the Oblates are.



The establishment of the Kisaju parish was a significant Oblate achievement. I was moved to tears when the Maasai people began to dance their way to the Marions, another tribe that came down from Kionyo proclaiming they too wanted to be missionaries like the Oblates, who in turn danced their way to the reunion. For a country where tribalism is rampant, this was a good moment.

Challenging moments were related to terrorism. The Al Shabbat was on a rampage. The Westgate Shopping Centre in Nairobi was blown up. Our new Oblate missionary from Korea was abducted.

Despite my age, Kenya was a wonderful experience. I would encourage everyone to give some thought to be missionary, not just in word but in fact. Many go to see the wild animals, an awesome experience, but I challenge you to see Christ present among his people. We do not bring God to these people. Jesus is present with them.

I think of Kenya often, and I'm grateful for the time I was there.

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 by e-mail to mamiprayers@sasktel.net



Dear Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate:

Re: Appreciation

I have been an inmate of Langata Women Prison since 2014 serving a sentence that has ended today on 5th August 2022. (4 years)

I acknowledge receipt of 5000 shillings (\$55 Cdn) from Father Fidel which has come in handy to facilitate my transport home. I am very grateful and really appreciate your continued support during my incarceration in Langata Women Prison.

Thank you very much for your love, kindness, and above all, for the spiritual nourishment. May God bless you abundantly.

Yours faithfully,

Florence

Check out our Facebook page:



Lacombe Canada MAMI

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



YouTube Lacombe MAMI Oblate Missions



Kenya

NOTEBOOK

BY GERRY CONLAN, OMI

AUG. 20

NAIROBI – The youth group members continue to distribute food to the poor people in Mathare Slums. Andrew and George said the people are so grateful. A few of

the youth went about 30 kilometres out of Nairobi into Kiambu area to visit our brother youth, Eric Muteti. He

was amazed and very happy to see them. He has been working on a project that created a new water dam opened on Aug. 1 by President Uhuru.

In a previous issue I wrote about a poor lady shining shoes and getting harassed by the city council. So, one week ago I helped her buy the annual licence. I was feeling guilty as I wrote about the situation and decided I should do something. She promised me free shoe-shines forever. It will take three years to pay me back. But I was very happy that she was happy. I think that was a nice *God moment*, seeing her smiling weather-beaten face. Now she doesn't have to pay bribes.



Food distribution in the Mathare Slum



Gerry Conlan, OMI

AUG. 27

The political climate is very calm – we are just not sure if this is the calm before the storm. It seems there are a lot of things going on behind the scenes as we wait for the courts

to rule on the voting. Meanwhile, many people are struggling in their small businesses. Our carpenter nearby is very sad because he has several young people he teaches, and they have no work due to the election shutdown. So I sent him a bit of cash to help out.



Ngong Cathedral

SEPT. 4

The highlight of the week was the ordination of Fr. Phelix Johya, OMI, on Sept. 1. The day went off well except for a lack of food for lunch at the end. Not sure what happened because we had paid about US\$1,000 to the Diocese of Ngong. Fr. Fidele complained and they promised to refund. It was really embarrassing. We had told Christians from Larmudiac, Méru, Kionyo and Kisaju that we had prepared lunch for them. So we coughed up another \$700 to sort them out as they went home. People understood and were grateful.



Liturgical procession

After Holy Communion, all the new priests came forward and blessed the bishop, who knelt in front of the altar ... a nice touch of humility. Three religious superiors were invited to come forward and give letters of obedience to their newly ordained priests. Fr. Fidele gave Fr. Phelix an obedience to Kisaju Parish.



Fr. Phelix's first mass

While in Méru, a man from the parish came to visit Fr. Daquin, and we chatted for two hours. He works as a legal clerk at a lawyer's office and told me how the defilement of children is a huge problem in Kenya – so many cases every week. He was very happy about the child protection seminars run by Fr. Daquin, and funded by MAMI in Canada, so a huge thanks to all of you supporting MAMI and the mission.

He said he was also guilty of not knowing how to talk to the children about sexual matters, and about what is acceptable behaviour. I asked him to write something about how he felt about the seminar as a parent:

"Lekoomet Elijah is my name, a parent and a father of three daughters: (ages) 9, 6 and 4 months old, from Our Lady of Assumption, Gachanka. The training for children against violence was very well organized and as a parent it was useful since we are living in shocking times. My prayer and hope is, if possible, we can have this training twice in a year. Am also willing and ready to be recruited as a trainer so that we enhance child protection against

violence in legal procedure and proceedings. On the issue of funds, we can meet all concerned parents and request them to contribute even 100 shillings so that we support the logistics. Thanks a lot. God bless you.

He also shared how he became aware of a 13-year-old girl in his village becoming pregnant by a 21-year-old teacher at her school. When he tried to raise issues about it, the teacher's mother started harassing him and demanding to know why he was making trouble because she said the family will look after the young girl and the baby.

Just before my long chat and supper with Lekoomet, we were starting evening prayer in the church when the power went funny, and a shout was heard from next door where a fire had started. We rushed out and already it was leaping above the house, about 20 metres from our fence.

Gachanka fire



I ran around the block to reach them while Fr. Daquin went to get his phone and call someone. When I arrived, people were attacking a wooden door into the complex – a car was inside a garage – and there were many young people milling around. About 100 secondary students from

Gachanka Public School board at this complex, three or four to a room. Many were in the school studying, and by the time they ran back to their rooms, they had lost everything.

Others ran out carrying their mattress or other belongings. They had to sleep in the school classroom. The 100 students come from up-country near Ethiopia or other dry and isolated poor areas. We'll have to run a fund-raiser for them at the parish. I'm sure locals will rally around.

Apparently, a man living in the same complex was confused by the new gas cannister he received and played with the tap and didn't turn it off properly. The gas leaked out and caught fire after he left.

The timber complex burned quickly and the gas cylinder exploded while I was standing on the road. It scared the living daylights out of me. I then tried to get people to fall back in case another cylinder exploded. Some listened and others didn't. Thankfully the fire brigade arrived quickly and they had a very modern tanker. Unfortunately, there were no water mains around, so they had to leave for more water after almost getting the fire out.



Fr. Phelix serves communion
at his first mass in Kisaju

Kenya is a country that is somewhat developed but still missing some key components. Everyone appears to have evacuated and no one was burned. Strangely, I saw no police.

SEPT. 11

We are very grateful that the elections went on peacefully and, more importantly, the aftermath court case and waiting was also peaceful. I must say I was impressed by the conduct of the judges and the verdict was unanimous. Some people are very concerned about the state of the economy because a large portion of the population is struggling to get enough food to eat. If that continues it could lead to violence, so the new government already has a difficult job.

I had a God-moment when we stopped in town and caught up with Rose, the shoeshine lady. It's the first time we've met since we assisted her to get her business permit. She was so happy. For three weeks, she has been carrying around a gift of two shirts for me to say thank you.

Rose Atieno, the shoeshine lady, with a gift of gratitude for Fr. Gerry



George and Andrew were busy in Mathare Slums feeding 120 people. Usually they give flour, oil and something else, but, due to the demand (and huge increase in cooking oil prices), they are now just giving flour and it helps 120 families, albeit with less. But more people are becoming desperate.

SEPT. 18

The President was installed on Tuesday, which was declared a public holiday. Someone commented that Kenya has one of the highest number of public holidays in the world. The people who benefit most are the government workers. Most people have to work every day to get enough food to survive.

We sorted out some bank paperwork and added a new bank account to our online access: MAMI Kenya. We are finally making some small steps to establish MAMI in Kenya with local supporters for the future of the Oblates here, and we thank God for Fr. Praveen's energy and work in this regard.



The Kiirua farm gates are stolen overnight

SEPT. 25

Euticus, our manager at Kiirua Farm, reported that the main gates were stolen. They were simple local gates, poorly attached and always left open because the fence is also in disrepair. Euticus thinks they weakened the post connections



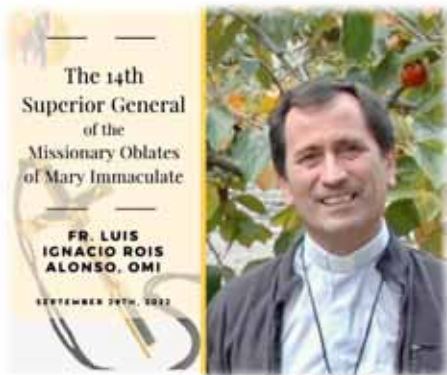
Fr. Cosmas' farewell from the pre-novitiate before he moves to Kionyo parish

while he was at Sunday Mass. I guess people are getting desperate. It is a bit frustrating for us, but thank God that Euticus and his younger brother live on the farm to provide security most of the time.

OCT. 2

We bid farewell to Fr. Cosmas as he concludes his time at the pre-novitiate and starts his role of assistant parish priest at Kionyo.

There was excitement in Rome at our General Chapter. We have a new Superior General, Fr. Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso from Spain, who was working in Western Sahara. (He is not to be confused with Fr. Louis Lougen from USA who just finished as Superior General!).





***Every cent** of every dollar
you give will go **entirely**
to the mission works
and ministries of the Oblates.*

Dr. Barrett Adams, RIP

Dr. Barrett Adams, HOMI, former president of the Medical Friends of Peru passed away in Ottawa, on September 27, 2022. Dr. Adams contributed to his profession through active involvement with the Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Pediatric Society and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.



Dr. Barrett Adams

We thank God for the gift of Dr. Adams in our midst and pray that he will now enjoy his place at the table in heaven. We also pray for the members of Dr. Adams' family and all who mourn his death. May they be given strength, peace and consolation.



Gift offer

Fr. Bill Stang, after his recent visit to Kenya to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Kenyan mission, carefully transported Kenyan tea back to Canada. The lush slopes of Mount Kenya are home to many small tea plantations, one of which is sponsored by the Oblates to enhance their outreach to the poor and to assist a small group to become financially stable.

If you would like to receive a packet of Kenyan tea, please indicate it on the gift form.



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