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Oblate Connections

Oblate Connections – No.31, 21st May, 2016

In his article to celebrate the Feast of St. Eugene, Fr Frank Santucci echoes the words of Blessed Mother Teresa: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." He also reminds us of the cause of these ripples, "the Crucified Saviour with his arms wide open on the Cross who invites all to his loving embrace."

While the late Fr. Tom Murphy when he was Provincial would often echo the words of William Toms, when he would say, "Be careful how you live. You may be the only Good News some person ever reads." Through out this issue of Oblate Connections we are blessed with many examples of how members of the Oblate family continue to respond to the call of Jesus to be Good News and to reach out to those on the margins of society.

One example of such commitment can be found in Birmingham where we see members of the Friends of St Eugene making a tangible expression of the Oblate mission through opening the doors of their parish church to the homeless of the city. Such examples are numerous and in so many ways and in so many places we can see similar examples of our faith in action and we should celebrate them all.

Finally, the feast of St. Eugene also marks the start of the traditional novena for vocations, which will culminate on May 29th with the feast of Blessed Joseph Gerard. During these days you are invited to pray for vocations to Oblate Religious Life as priests, brothers and sisters. Each day we hope that you will pray the Novena Prayer found on page 16 and entrust this intention to Mary Immaculate, patroness of the Oblate Family and to all Oblate Saints and Martyrs.

- Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI

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The Fire That Shimmers Deep Within Things

- Fr Ron Rolheiser, OMI

“About the best way I can describe the transformation is to say that, now, I see colours!” A man once shared this story with me: He had recently undergone a serious conversion. That conversion, as he described it, was not strictly speaking a religious one, nor, in a certain manner of speaking, even a moral one. It was an aesthetic conversion of sorts, though ultimately it was also profoundly religious and moral.

What had happened to him? He was in early middle-age, unmarried, and he had always been quite religious, fulfilling his religious duties with a vigor bordering on the scrupulous. Morally too, prior to the conversion he described, his life was essentially in order. What he suffered from were two interrelated addictions, masturbation and alcohol. But even here, on the surface at least, these were relatively under control. They never, at least so it seemed, interfered with his work, his relationships, or his religious life. He was highly respected and no one who knew him would have guessed that he had a problem.

Except . . . except he knew he had one. As he matured, through his prayer life and through the respect that others entrusted him with, he began to see his own inconsistencies and he sought help. His counsellor advised him to enter a separate 12-step program for each addiction, alcohol and sex. At first, he resisted, thinking: “I’m not an alcoholic! My sexual issues aren’t that serious!” Eventually, however, he entered the programs and they, to use his own words, “wrought a great transformation” inside of him: “It wasn’t like I was that bad or anything before I entered those programs. My life was always essentially in order.”

“So what happened to me? As best as I can put it, now that I go regularly to Alcoholics’ and Sexual Anonymous meetings, I see colours again. Before that, I wasn’t a bad person, but I was always so taken up with my own needs and yearnings that, most of the time, I wasn’t really seeing what was in front of me. Now, I see colours again and my life is rich in a way that it never was before.”

What kind of conversion is this? Is the challenge of the Gospel about seeing colours? I think so. Abraham

Maslow, after suffering a near fatal heart attack, went on to write: “One very important aspect of post-mortem life is that everything gets precious, gets piercingly important. You get stabbed by things, by flowers and by babies and by beautiful things—just the very act of living, of walking and breathing and eating and having friends and chatting. “Everything seems to look more beautiful rather than less, and one gets the much-intensified sense of miracles.” (Quoted by John Shea, Spirit Master, p. 99).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in his spiritual masterpiece, *The Divine Milieu*, describes his own effort at letting things be piercingly important, I paraphrase: “It is a question of seeing. I long to see the fire that shimmers deep beneath things and deep within things. Oh, to see all things ablaze with God’s fire!”

Oh, to see color! I have a hunch that Jesus had precisely this in mind when he warned us: “Stay awake! Stay vigilant! You know not the time nor the hour!” There are different ways to being awake, just as there are different ways to being vigilant. Normally, we take Jesus’ words to stay awake and be vigilant as a more direct (and crass) religious and moral challenge: “Get your life in order because you don’t know when death will hit! Do the reconciliations you need to do! Wrap up your unfinished religious, moral, and relational business because death can catch you rather suddenly! Stay awake and vigilant—religiously and morally.”

There is truth and wisdom in that interpretation of things, but Jesus isn’t just talking about preparation for death, he is also talking about seeing colours while we are alive. Like Maslow and Teilhard he is saying: “Be awake to the fire that is beneath and within things. Let things get precious and piercingly important—when you are still pre-mortem.

“Be awake to the beauty of babies, and flowers, and your family, and your friends, and your own health—before you are separated from them. Don’t be asleep while you are awake. Don’t be dead to life while you are living. Don’t be blind to miracle, especially to the miracle of your own life.

“Repent... and begin to see colours!”



Brazil News

The Oblate mission in Brazil took another step forward in its history last year when the Oblate delegation from the Anglo-Irish Province became part of the new Brazil Province. Fr. Miguel Fritz, General Councilor for Latin America, recently visited the Oblates in the State of Goiás in the Central-West of Brazil and here he shares with us the story of that visit.

The Oblates arrived from Ireland in the 1960's and continue to work in the southernmost part of the State of Goiás in the Central-West of Brazil. The parishes of Paranaiguara and São Simão were established by them. Above all, Fathers Jeremiah Donovan and Tom O' Shea were there for decades, during the big changes that occurred when villages were flooded for the construction of an enormous dam in the 1970's.

Miguel BRADY is still somewhat new in Paranaiguara. Among his ministries, I would like to focus on three areas that are worth knowing about in the context of the Oblate commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

Prisoners

The little town has a small jail. Miguel is by no means unknown there. He got permission for me to accompany him. There are only seven cells along a single corridor. Twelve prisoners in five cells looked at us behind barred doors and windows. It was a bit strange to greet them, one by one, shaking their hands through the bars. The guard stays in front of us at all times. Miguel introduced me and invited me to speak. I told them about Eugene who had to suffer being far from his country and from his mother. And I told of how he in turn got together with the youth (the majority of the prisoners are youths); how he visited the prisoners, even giving the sacraments to the condemned. How attentive they were! When Miguel spoke to them about the Bible, five of them had one at hand and they looked up Matthew 25 (When did we see you in prison?); and John 19 (The mother stayed next to her son..). They joyfully took the oranges we had picked in the Oblates' garden.

Water

That's the theme of the "Campaign of Brotherhood" for this year (an ecumenical Lenten campaign). Representatives of different churches, together with government agencies, are planting trees to protect the springs. At the same time, they are investigating reports that the drinking water of the city is already in bad shape. Pesticides are suspected: Goiás is an area of huge sugarcane farms — for the production of ethanol; i.e.: to give "food" to vehicles.

The landless

This very situation of bigger and bigger farms always leaves more peasants without land. So a large estate, where a landowner plants a large amount of sugarcane (they say he has seven other farms) was declared free for agrarian reform in 1999. We went to visit the farming community in the middle of the cane field: after kilometers of cane, suddenly there were beautiful plants of corn, cassava, etc.

In the first humble little house, an old bachelor excitedly told us what we had already heard. A little further on, near the community shelter, we could see the car: all the windows were broken and the radiator shot out. And a little further on, two young men show us their injuries. A few days before, at nine in the morning, there arrived a beautiful and armored black truck, with three guys. They got out and began to attack the car, damaging it with the lug wrench and a revolver, and then beating the youth with their feet and their fists, shouting that next time they would kill them.

We listened to them calmly; Mike encouraged them, told them that they have done well, that they should go to the hospital and to the police. He encouraged them also to contact the "Land Ministry" with their lawyers. He told them that they are within their rights. We prayed with them. Of course, in an interview on a local radio, and in the next Masses – the issue was brought up.



Celebrating Two Hundred Years of Ongoing Ripples With New Expressions That Keep Moving

What a year this has been! For over two years we have been anticipating and preparing for our 200th anniversary of coming to birth. 25 January 2016 dawned, and God and St Eugene did not disappoint us in the graces that we have been privileged to live.

The celebrations in each Oblate unit around the world had their own flavour. In San Antonio, Texas, we gathered with many friends on Sunday afternoon to reflect, pray and celebrate. St Eugene came onto the stage and looked back on his life and helped us to reflect and pray about the key foundational moments. He then told us the story of how his sons got to Texas, and helped us to celebrate their mission to many neighbouring states and in Mexico. We listened to the memories of some of our senior Oblates, and we ended off with Tex-Mex fiesta refreshments.

Change the setting, and you have every other national celebration throughout the Oblate world. Speaking in the Anglo-Irish province, Eugene would have recounted how he sent Fr. Daly and Fr. Aubert across the Channel. With emotion he would have evoked the joy of his two visits to the province, the misery that he saw in so many areas, and the wonderful response of the dedication of the Oblates. With unconcealed pride he would have pointed to a world map and joyfully identified every one of the countries that the Oblates of the Anglo-Irish province have evangelized in 175 years. Then, with a sense of wonder, he would have looked at the new missionary “worlds” being embraced today by his Anglo-Irish family in justice, peace and reconciliation, the integrity of creation, addiction support, out reach to homeless, mission development and a new Centre for Spirituality in the heart of London.

As the father of a huge family, St. Eugene would have embraced his sons and daughters with many titles: friends, partners, associates, co-workers. What a joy, what a grace, and what a source of gratitude!

Throughout these ongoing celebrations I have had the words of Blessed Mother Teresa echoing in my heart: “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” We have been giving thanks for countless life-giving ripples that were created by the “stone” of Eugene experiencing the embrace of Jesus the Saviour on that Good Friday that changed his life – and ours! We are celebrating 200 years of ripples and of how these have transformed the lives of countless persons.

If the bicentenary, however, remains merely a sentimental journey down memory lane – as pleasant as that is – we have missed the point of the celebrations. The “stone” that was cast has caused such a powerful reaction that the ripples continue to spread with wider momentum. It is the Saviour, through Eugene, who caused the ripples, and it is the Saviour who constantly surprises us with new expressions of the same Good Friday experience. Ongoing ripples with new expressions – but all from the same impetus and all inter-related with recognizable characteristics.

Eugene adopted the words of Jesus as our motto “He has sent me to preach the Good News to the Poor.” As a missionary community He has sent “us” to do this. The “us” started off as missionary priests, then expanded to missionary Oblate Brothers and priests, and today the “us” refers to the large Mazenodian Family with its multiple life-giving expressions in the Province. As we look back on 200 years, our focus cannot remain on past glories, but on the very cause of the ripples: the Crucified Saviour with his arms wide open on the Cross who invites all to his loving embrace.

It is that embrace that becomes bigger and bigger and more-encompassing and increasingly diverse. That is where our focus has to be – and we need to ride with it with confidence to new and uncharted horizons. It is the Saviour who has called us and it does not matter whether our human mathematical calculations and projections about our “survival” become negative – what counts is that we keep our vision firmly grounded on the “stone” of the Crucified Saviour and allow ourselves to move with the ripples.

If we listen carefully to the sound of the ripples we can hear Eugene’s voice: “ He has sent us to evangelize the poor.” We tune into another ripple and we hear: “They are called to be the Saviour’s co-workers, the co-redeemers of mankind.” Focusing on the sound of yet another: “We must lead people to act like human beings, first of all, and then like Christians, and, finally, we must help them to become saints.”

So it continues... each ripple has a different sound of Eugene’s words to tune into and to allow us to be carried forward into the future. Two hundred years! What an achievement! And what an impetus for the next 200 of focusing with hope and grounded optimism “through the eyes of our crucified Saviour we see the world which he redeemed with his blood, desiring that those in whom he continues to suffer will know also the power of his resurrection.” (Oblate Rule of Life, Constitution 4). As a Mazenodian Family let us maintain our vision focused on the “Stone” at all times, and not be distracted as we follow the ripples and continue responding to the cry of the most abandoned as the Saviour’s co-workers.

- Frank Santucci OMI

Lourdes Pilgrimage

Since their first pilgrimage in 1883 the Oblates have been answering the call of Our Lady to come in procession. Today we have groups that depart from Dublin, London, Manchester and Jersey.

ASSISTED PILGRIMS

We offer pilgrims who need assistance a special service to travel to Lourdes from Dublin and London. This includes full-time nursing care in the Accueil Notre Dame while taking part in the pilgrimage.

We invite you to join us as a pilgrim or helper and share in a journey of faith together. For more information please contact:

BRITAIN

London 17th-22nd September

Pilgrims £545 | *Assisted Pilgrims £465

Contact: Noreen Keenan, Sacred Heart Church, New Priory, Quex Road, London, NW6 4PS

Tel: 020 7624 1701 **Email:** noreen@omiquex.org.uk

Manchester 16th-23rd September. £685

Contact: Kirk Jacob, 14 Quex Road, London, NW6 4PL

Tel: 020 7624 7296

Email: kirk.oblate.partners@googlemail.com

Overland Trip Departing from London

Visiting Nevers, Paris, and joining the rest of the Oblate pilgrimage in Lourdes on the 17th September.

Contact: Fr. Paschal Dillon OMI, 237 Goldhurst Terrace, London, NW6 3EP **Tel:** 020 7328 8610

IRELAND

Dublin 17th-22nd September

Pilgrims from €635 | *Assisted Pilgrims €580

Contact: Fr. Vincent Mulligan OMI or Barbara Hogan, Mission Office, House of Retreat, Tyrconnell Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8.

Tel: 01-4542888 **Email:** mamioblate@eircom.net

Oblate Youth Service Pilgrimage

If you are aged 18 – 26 and would like to volunteer on the pilgrimage please contact:

Padraig Corcoran, OYS, St Michaels Parish, 52 Bulfin Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8

Email: padraig.oblate.partners@gmail.com



For more information about the pilgrimage visit www.OblateLourdesPilgrimage.com

The Flying Oblate Priest



A German Oblate priest, Fr. Paul Schulte O.M.I. (1896-1975), who became known as 'The Flying Priest', has the honour of being the first person to celebrate Mass in the air! This first aerial Mass (and I've no idea if there has been a second!) took place on 6th May 1936 onboard the giant Zeppelin airship LZ 129 Hindenburg. The Hindenburg is notorious because in 1937, when it arrived in New Jersey after a transatlantic flight, suddenly burst into flames and fell to the ground. The disaster was caught on film and makes for horrifying viewing. Of the 97 people on board (36 passengers and 61 crew), there were 35 fatalities and one worker on the ground was also killed. Strangely this disaster, which brought an end to more than 30 years of passenger travel on commercial zeppelins, occurred on 6th May 1937 - exactly one year after the first aerial Mass.

Fr. Schulte's life was full of adventure and reads like a story from the Boys' Own magazine! He was training for the priesthood when World War I started and he was conscripted to serve in the Prussian 4th Guard Grenadier Regiment. After two and a half years in this regiment he was wounded and, after recovering from his injuries, he joined the Air Force, trained as a pilot, and served in Palestine. After the war Fr. Schulte returned to his studies and was ordained an Oblate Priest in 1922. His first posting was to South Africa.

In 1925 a tragic event inspired Fr. Schulte to found an organisation that is still in operation today, namely MIVA, which stands for 'Missionalium Vehiculorum Associatio' (Missionary Vehicle Association). It was in June of 1925, in Namibia, that a childhood friend of Fr. Schulte, Fr. Otto Fuhrmann, became ill with pneumonia complicated by malaria. In an attempt to

get medical treatment Fr. Fuhrmann travelled for five days, passing through the desert, until he finally reached the hospital of the Protestant Finnish mission in Owamboland. However, the delay in getting treatment was fatal and Fr. Fuhrmann died on 23rd June. The loss of his friend, when swift transport to a medical facility could have saved him, led Fr. Schulte to found MIVA in 1927 with the aim of providing modern vehicles for missionaries, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The motto of the organisation was *Obviam Christo terra marique et in aera* ("Toward Christ by land and sea and in the air").



To get his scheme off the ground Fr. Schulte needed to gather support and funds and he received permission to return to Germany to promote his cause. On his way home he visited Pope Pius XI who approved his plans. In Berlin, Fr. Schulte submitted his idea to the German Bishops who were gathered in the capital city for their annual Easter meeting. According to the memoirs of a fellow Oblate priest, Fr. Peter Minwegen: 'They were sceptical about the practicality of airplanes in the service of the missionaries. The war pilot was ready to demonstrate their practical value. He was offered the use of a plane. A young bishop and Prince Loevenstein were taken along as passengers. He circled high over Berlin to the delight of the onlookers on the ground.' Soon after this aerial display generous benefactors came forward and, by the time that Fr. Schulte celebrated the first aerial Mass, MIVA had bought a dozen aircraft, and more than 150 automobiles and motorbikes for mission stations across the globe.

Fr. Schulte was next assigned to a parish in Northern Canada and he set about bringing medical aid and supplies by plane to remote Oblate missions, particularly north of the Arctic Circle. In August 1938, hearing

that fellow Oblate, Fr. Julien Cochard, who was based in Arctic Bay, the most northerly Catholic mission in the world, was seriously ill with double pneumonia he mounted a 2,200 mile medical evacuation. In his Stinson Reliant floatplane Fr. Schulte flew through storm force winds and thick fog in order to rescue Fr. Cochard, and received a special blessing from Pope Pius XI for his services. Fr. Schulte attributed the success of this heroic mercy flight to Our Lady of the Snows and, according to Fr. Peter Minwegen's memoir 'when he was afraid of an imminent crash during a snowstorm he promised our Lady to spread her devotion under that title if she came to his aid and saved him in this emergency.'

After his time in Canada Fr. Schulte was transferred to St. Henry's Seminary in Belleville, Illinois where, during World War II, because he was German, he came under suspicion of being a spy and the authorities ordered him not to travel but to remain in Belleville, where he was kept under F.B.I. surveillance. Fr. Schulte now set about spreading devotion to Our Lady of the Snows and, in the early 1940s, he commissioned the artist John Watson Davis (1870-1959) to paint a picture of Our Lady under this title. The painting, which now hangs in the North American National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville (www.snows.org), run by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, depicts a missionary and an aeroplane on a sick call to an Inuit mission with Our Lady appearing surrounded by rays of the Northern Lights.

After the war, Fr. Schulte continued his work for MIVA until his death in Swakopmund, Namibia, in 1975. He is buried beside his boyhood friend, Father Otto Fuhrmann.



Today Fr. Schulte's foundation, MIVA, continues to support the Church's mission of spreading the Good News, through the provision of essential transport. There are 'MIVAs' in Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia, and in Great Britain (SURVIVE-MIVA). SURVIVE-MIVA was founded in 1974 and has funded over 5,000 modes of transport over the last 42 years, thanks to the generosity of the Association's supporters. In 2015 alone the charity supplied 82 modes of transport (15 community health outreach vehicles, 37 motorbikes/mopeds, and 30 bicycles) to 10 countries.

Next year, 2017, will mark the 90th anniversary of MIVA's foundation – something worth celebrating, especially among the Oblate family.

– Theresa Codd, www.survive-miva.org

Oblate Website

On the new site you will be able to:

- Submit a prayer request
- Find the scripture readings of the day
- There will be a weekly reflection on the scriptures for the upcoming Sunday
- Learn about our upcoming events and make a booking online
- Keep up to date with news from around the Oblate world
- Discover the story of St. Eugene
- Find out how to become a member of the Oblate Congregation
- Get the latest article from Fr. Ron Rolheiser OMI
- Donate to support the work of the Oblate Mission and take out a subscription to the Oblate pools

www.oblates.co.uk | www.oblates.ie



1916 Centenary Commemorations

St Michael's Church, Inchicore

In this centenary year of the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland, with commemorative events taking place nationwide, it is fitting that the parish of St Michael's would commemorate its significance in the story of Éirí Amach na Cásca.

Situated in a very historic part of Dublin, St Michael's church was built as a garrison church of Richmond Barracks. Richmond Barracks was one of the largest British barracks in the country, and it was here that the 1916 Leaders were held and court-martialed, prior to their execution in nearby Kilmainham Gaol. From the mid 1800's until the British Military withdrawal in 1922, the church served as a place of worship for the soldiers and their families in addition to providing school facilities for their children. In 1926, The Diocese of Dublin took charge of the church, consecrating it as St Michael's. From this time to the present, there have been many changes and many significant milestones in the history of St Michael's church. The changes include an extension to the original building in 1934 and the installation of the magnificent set of stained glass windows by the renowned artist Harry Clarke.

The coming of the Oblates to St Michael's in 1972 began a new exciting chapter in our history, where collaborative ministry and the sharing of each other's gifts is greatly encouraged.

This two week commemorative programme with six distinct events was a re-visiting of the many narratives, stories and significances of 1916, from the standpoint of now, and from who we are as a community of 2016.

Events began with an opening Mass on April 12th. For our celebrant, Oblate Provincial, Fr Ray, the occasion was of special significance as Ray's grand uncle, Commandant Michael Mallin was one of the 1916 leaders held in Richmond Barracks and later executed in May 2016. Many members of the Mallin family were also present, as was George McKay, grandnephew of James Connolly, who had travelled from Edinburgh for the occasion. The Mass was streamed live and it was our hope that Fr Joseph Mallin, sole surviving child of the 1916 leaders, and living in Hong Kong, could be part of the celebration. Symbols of historic significance were presented; these included the Irish and U.N Flags, the Irish Proclamation, Parish Records, Laurel and Poppy wreaths, Footprints, and Baptismal candles representing the earliest recorded and latest baptisms in our church. In his homily, Fr Ray referenced the footprints symbol as he spoke of all who walked these historic pavements down the years, all who served, recognising also the contribution of the Mercy Sisters and the Christian Brothers to the life of the community. Ray spoke movingly of the sacrifices his grand uncle, along with the idealistic men and women of 1916, made in leaving their families so that future generations would be beneficiaries of freedom and equality.

Included in our programme of events was an evening of song and poetry of the 1916 poets. The Easter Rising of 1916 was known as the Poet's Rebellion as many of the leaders were poets, writers and actively involved in the artistic life of Dublin of the time. One such poet was Francis Ledwidge who also would have known the inside of Richmond Barracks. The emotion that poetry evokes was evident in the robust and heartfelt delivery of some well-known poems by members of our community.



The children, many in period dress along with their parents, enjoyed an afternoon of fun and games. A favourite was the puppet show, and if you think Punch has been rehabilitated, not a chance, he's still in need of an anger management course!! Another great occasion was the school choir's concert featuring our local schools along with the Holy Family School, Derry. Joe Duffy of RTE was compere. Joe was a popular choice for MC. After years of research he has compiled a list of the children, estimated 40 in all, who were killed in the Easter Rising of 1916. One of these children was eight year old Eugene Lynch, from St Vincent Street West, Inchicore.

While all events were memorable and had their own uniqueness, the closing Interfaith Service is one that will remain as extra special. Representatives from nine faith traditions participated; The Roman Catholic Archbishop, The Church of Ireland Archbishop, Representatives from the Eire Vedanta Society, the Dublin Buddhist Centre, the Assembly of the Baha i, the Dublin Jewish Congregation, the Islamic Cultural Centre, the Irish Sikh Council and the Romanian

Orthodox Church. Each offered a prayer or reading from a sacred text of their own tradition. As Fr Louis referred to in his closing words, the underlying theme of each prayer was one of peace. Louis also spoke of the many different ethnic backgrounds and cultures that now make up our parish community creating a richness of new energy and creativity.

Our Centenary Commemorations was an opportunity to celebrate locally. To celebrate locally is to celebrate nationally. It is an enriching experience to celebrate with a community of such vibrancy and welcome who always seek to put inclusion into action. While celebrating our history, we are also creating history, as hopefully our celebrations are a point of continuity and change in the story of St Michael's community into the future.

And even though the vibrancy and vitality may lose its glow, the flame remains.
– Helen Scott

We are all ministers of the Mercy of God

*"Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you! Do not be afraid to dream of great things."
- Pope Francis*

Fr. Leo Philomin, OMI, The Presbytery,
Darndale, Dublin 17.
l.philomin@oblates.ie

Fr. John Mc Fadden, OMI,
Sacred Heart Church, Quex Road, London, NW6 4PS
j.mcfadden@oblates.co.uk

www.oblatevocations.com

Birmingham Churches Night Shelter

For the past 2 years, Mgr. Pat Browne, a few Friends of St. Eugene and some other parishioners had joined members of the Redditch St. Vincent De Paul conference, going into the City Centre at night, befriending and providing food and hot drinks for some of the ever increasing number of homeless people who squat and sleep on the streets.

A number of meetings and training sessions followed during the Autumn, with 40 volunteers signing up to take part.

Fr. Pat found just the right man to co-ordinate the project, in Eugene Renehan: a local man whose family are well known parishioners of St. Anne's. He had spent some time sleeping on the streets and said that it was the scariest time of his life. He liaised with Birmingham Churches Lead co-ordinator, David Begg, and with his cheerful optimism, which kept all involved in good spirits throughout.

Teams of volunteers quickly formed to take responsibility for the range of jobs which needed to be done: they included getting beds and bedding, making beds, managing laundry, shopping, cooking meals, washing, providing social engagement and support as well as managing communication across the network of 40 volunteers who live all over the city. The quality which marked each contribution was the boundless energy and generosity along with the belief that each and every one of us, guests and volunteers, stand equal in the eyes of God. To quote St. Eugene: "We are all children of God – sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ".

During the evenings, some volunteers started at 5pm and made up the beds in the church and another group prepared the food. At 7pm, the guests arrived, they were collected at a pre-arranged point and brought by a mini-bus. All were known to the Lead co-ordinator and were familiar with the ground rules, i.e. no alcohol on the premises and no smoking inside.



During the evening, they dined in the presbytery dining room at the long table, which had all the finesse of parish houses from a bygone era. As an integral part of the socialising on the first evening, a few volunteers joined the guests at table. It was not an easy relaxed dining experience on that evening. The guests had felt strange and unfamiliar, perhaps for some a painful reminder of their earlier happy family meals.

At the outset, we felt that sleeping in the church might be uncomfortable for them, but how wrong and humbled we were as they respectfully arranged their nests for the night. Some genuflected, many blessed themselves, one lit a candle at Our Lady's altar, one stood with their hands joined in front of the Sacred Heart statue; another settled by the statue of St. Anne's and remarked that the saints were looking down on him, and another said about the sanctuary light on the altar that: 'the Lord was keeping watch on him'.

As the weeks passed, the men and the volunteers had relaxed. As they arrived each Monday, they were joyful and happy. We learnt their names and they learnt our own. Meal times became relaxed

with laughter and confident requests were made for second helpings. On the fifth evening, Archbishop Bernard and another priest dropped in and mingled and chatted to the guests and volunteers.

After the evening meals, some went out into the yard to smoke, others played cards and dominoes; some rested and two of them had read novels.

On the fourth evening, a young man who had joined the group for the first time, played a guitar loaned to him by one of the parish music group who had just dropped in for the evening. Despite language barriers, they talked and played as they sat on the steps of Our Lady's altar. He joined the volunteers at 7.30 Mass the next morning. The following week, the youngest member of our choir and her father played polish polkas and waltzes which had the guests and volunteers dancing in the aisles and the young man playing the guitar.

One or two of the men who came the first night did not return, for whatever reason, but others took their place.

Friends of St. Eugene and other volunteers have spoken about how they have learnt anew, that one wrong twist of fate or wrong turn in life can lead to a lonely life on the streets. In today's economy, that possibility is all the more likely. The need for action is so urgent.

We believe that the Catholic communities of St. Anne's and St. Catherine's have been enriched by the experience.

A plenary meeting has been planned and volunteers from St. Anne's will join other city teams in a service of thanksgiving after. Throughout the whole project, our parish community has supported in practical ways but most crucially through their daily prayer for success and safety for all involved. Our hope is that other parishes will participate in the Birmingham Churches Night Shelter scheme next year.

Kathleen Mullin – Friend of St. Eugene, Birmingham

Wistaston Hall Events

Seasonal Retreats

For these seasonal retreats we have a theme, this year our theme is "Why am I so favoured?" We also invite you to spend Holy week with.
27th June – 1st July, Art and Prayer
13th – 19th August, 6 Day Preached Retreat

Individually Guided Retreats

An individually guided retreat gives you the time and opportunity to spend some time alone and with God. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on the "things that matter" in your life and to deepen your relationship with God. An IGR helps you to be more aware of how God works in your life and it allows you to become more aware of the many ways God is present to you.

Each retreatant has their own retreat guide/spiritual director with whom they meet each day, and who will help you focus, reflect and discern.

An IGR is held in silence. There is a celebration of the Eucharist and half-an-hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for communal prayer available each day.



We offer several options for the length of an IGR. For those who have not done an IGR before there is the possibility of coming for a shorter period of time. In general our IGRs are either 6 or 8 days. As well as the prayerful atmosphere of the house there are also five acres of garden for the exclusive use of our retreatants. We are just beside Wistaston Park which gives plenty of space for longer walks. Be assured of a warm Oblate Welcome to Wistaston Hall for your retreat. "It is good to come away and rest awhile."

Dates available:

1st – 10th July; 20th – 27th August;
11th – 16th September;

For information on these and our other events please contact the Oblate Team at:

Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall,
89 Broughton Lane, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 8JS

Tel: +44 (0) 1270 568 653 or

E-mail: director@oblateretreatcentre.org.uk
www.orc-crewe.org



The Parish of Saint John Ogilvie, Wester Hailes, Edinburgh

St John Ogilvie's is a relatively new parish and is situated on the western outskirts of the Scottish capital, Edinburgh. The church is located in the Wester Hailes area of the city. Wester Hailes was a new housing development created in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The area was named after a large private house with the surrounding area being undeveloped until the City's housing needs demanded that the area be developed and saw large swaths of local authority housing being constructed with a mixture of purpose-build flats and tower blocks. The Hailes estate itself derives its name from the Gaelic meaning 'green plane'. The parish also incorporates the Sighthill and Baberton Mains housing estates which are primarily made up of owner-occupied houses.

There was an original Catholic parish in the larger area covering a number of small villages, records show that the parish was gifted by Ethelred, the third son of Malcolm Canmore in 1095, that parish remained until the reformation.

With the massive influx of new inhabitants moving into the area, the need for a new Roman Catholic Parish was evident. The then Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Cardinal Gordon Joseph Gray, put in place plans to create a new parish and a purpose built church and presbytery were commissioned. While the construction was taking place, Masses took place in a school hall in one of the local schools in Clovenstone. The parish was originally served by Fr John McQuade sj. In 1980 as Fr McQuade's request to the Jesuit order for an assistant priest was refused so on his withdrawal, Cardinal Joseph Gray approached and invited the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to take over the parish. Cardinal Gray, (who was born and brought up in ancient port of Leith, a burgh to the North of Edinburgh), would have been well aware of the mission and work of the Oblates having been a parishioner of Saint Mary's Star of the Sea all of his early life.

It was decided to name the new parish after Saint John Ogilvie, who was canonised in 1976. John Ogilvie

was a Scottish Jesuit martyr, who was put to death by being hanged and drawn in Glasgow in 1615, this was after he was charged with celebrating Mass clandestinely in private homes and found guilty for refusing to pledge allegiance to King James.

The newly built church was opened in 1978, the main building had a slightly unconventional design with a large multi-purpose hall next to a day chapel which were separated by large sliding doors. The main hall gets reinstated into the main chapel for Sundays and Feast Days. The transformation of chapel back to hall requires the altar to be moved every week-end and all the seats to be cleared and the hall to be rearranged to meet the needs of any upcoming events for that week. This weekly transformation has now developed into what is like a well-oiled machine with everyone having a task and the changes being undertaken without anyone having to ask for anything to be done.

On a Sunday the parish still has three Masses each week; the vigil Mass, where the hymns are led by a very accomplished guitarist and singer, at the 9am Mass the service is accompanied with a cappella singing, and the 11am Mass which is led by a cantor and organist. This late morning Mass is popular with the increasing Polish and African contingent of the congregation. Currently the total congregation is estimated at approximately 800.

The make-up of the parishioners has changed over its short history, with a range from relative wealthy, to those suffering social and financial deprivation. This make-up and the needs of local inhabitants' fits well with the ethos and mission of the Oblates.

The parish has a number of very active groups which include the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Justice and Peace and Integrity of creation Groups, as well as Youth groups. The parish is also an accredited Fair Trade Parish winning an award from the Edinburgh Lord Provost in 2014, and it can also boast recognition of being awarded as an Eco Congregation.



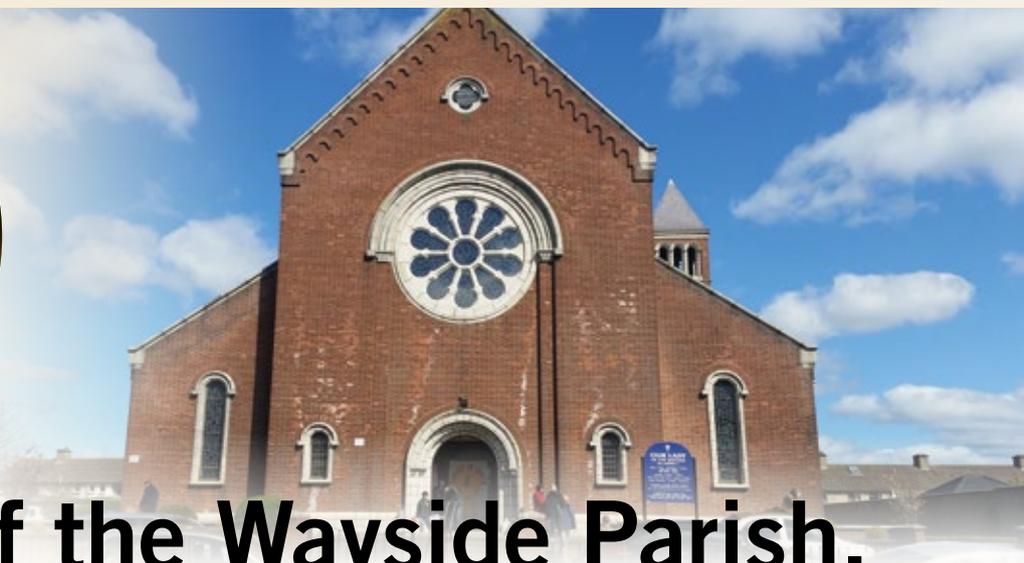
During the life of the parish it has been served by a number of Oblate priests, sometimes two and sometimes only the one. The parish also has close links with its sister parish of The Star of the Sea in Leith.

Even with the declining numbers attending Mass on a regular basis, the parish is still self-funding and this includes the ongoing repayment of the remaining outstanding debt for the building of the church. The parish runs a number of fundraising activities including their weekly Bingo nights which are well attended and has a larger percentage of non-parishioners attending than parishioners, but this is seen as an important

component of the outreach activities of the parish. The parish is also very proud of their weekly 'lottery bonus ball' fundraising which generates funds to pay the salary of a children's nurse in one of the Oblate parishes in Brazil.

Due to falling congregations across most parishes, aligned with the shortage of and the aging of the clergy, the current Archbishop of St Andrew and Edinburgh has started a consultation process across the archdiocese to look at a number of options including the feasibility of clustering of parishes. It is being suggested to reduce the number of parishes in the archdiocese down from over 100 to approximately 30. This process is still on-going and it is not possible to foretell the possible outcome and implication for the parish. However this reorganisation will set a real challenge for the Oblate Mission in Edinburgh.

– Maurice Dougan



Our Lady of the Wayside Parish, Bluebell (An Cloigín Gorm)

Our Lady of the Wayside Parish, Bluebell (An Cloigín Gorm) is situated on the main Dublin to Naas dual-carriageway, about half a mile up the road from what the parishioners here jokingly refer to as "the real Oblates" in Mary Immaculate, Inchicore. The parish was established by the archdiocese in 1967 to minister to the spiritual needs of the families who had been housed in the new development of Bluebell completed some years earlier, around 1953. The parish comprises Bluebell, old Bluebell, Ballymount, Fox & Geese, Gallanstown Lane, Knockmitten, the Naas Road, Old Naas Road and Robinhood and consists of approximately 1,000 families.

The building of the church came about due to the efforts of Father Meleady, who was a priest of the

archdiocese, and the church was built on farmland left by the owner, Ms Dowling, specifically for the purpose of the construction of a church. The first sod was turned in 1964 and building commenced. It was consecrated on 7 June 1967 and next year (2017) we will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

In the early years, priests from the Dublin Archdiocese ministered to the people. The first parish priest was Fr. Hayes and, while the church was under construction, we are told, he slept in Our Lady of the Wayside National School, which had been established in 1959, as there was no presbytery. Fr. Granville, Fr. Hickey and Fr. Kearney also ministered to the people of the parish in the early years.



In 1972, the administration of the parish was given to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and from then went from strength to strength under the Oblates who built upon the pioneering work of the men who founded the parish. The parish has greatly benefited from the support and witness of two other religious communities of women. The first being the Daughters of Charity, who worked in the parish for a number of years, and then, for the past 10 years to the present day, the Holy Faith sisters. For many years the parish has benefited from the work of the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Legion of Mary, whose members have always reached out to the needs of the people of the parish in many different ways.

Over the years small renovations have been made to the building to facilitate the people of the parish community. There was always the problem of the need of some space for the people to meet for social or personal/faith development. This was addressed by the portioning off of the back of the church and the creation of two corral areas, one each side as you enter the church, which are now used for various parish/group events. Incorporated at the same time was a new kitchen area at the back of the church which is used on a daily basis. A dedicated parish office was also recently developed to the side of the church and this has proved to be a great asset to the parish. You will always be assured of a warm welcome when you come to visit our Church and, maybe, even a cup of tea to help you on your journey!

We are delighted to welcome all new members of the community to our church, especially the new Irish, to ensure that people of different nationalities and cultures find their place in the liturgy and parish life.

There is, and always has been, a marvellous community spirit in Our Lady of the Wayside due, in no small part, to the fact that a lot of young married couples moved into Bluebell around the same time, had their children together, sent them to the local schools and reared their families in some very difficult times.



In looking back perhaps what people in Bluebell are most proud of is their family. It gives parents great satisfaction to be able to look back at a job well done when they look at their children and their children's children. Many of these children have now moved on to other parishes, bringing with them the values they learned and experienced here in Bluebell. The hard work and sacrifices of the past have borne fruit in new life.

Our parish community produced the following 'Vision Statement': "We believe that we are called by God, to share his life to the full and to share his love in our families, in our parish and local community". In support of that vision statement our parish 'Mission Statement' says: "In an ever-changing world, we will share God's everlasting love for us".

The parish has a Pastoral Council which endeavours to make our vision/mission statement a lived reality and in order to implement this, works with all the various parish groups as well as the wider parish community.

Our Lady of the Wayside, Bluebell is one of three Oblate parishes that make up the Inchicore/Bluebell pastoral area. The other two parishes are St. Michael's and Mary Immaculate. At the recent Oblate Congress 'Living Mission together', when all Oblate parishes and ministries came together to tease out what living mission together is, Bluebell, as a parish community, pledged to try to find new ways for;

- Outreach
- Adult faith development
- Upgrading of current structures

It is our ongoing mission, to develop our local catholic community and to promote "faith for life" thereby ensuring the sacramental, liturgical and prayer life of the community.

This parish has always tried to keep the "flame of faith" alive and continues to do so in today's changed reality.

– Patricia Hannon / Margaret Alford: (Parishioners).



The Importance of John Bradburne

The missionary poet John Bradburne was killed in Zimbabwe in 1979, having refused to leave the lepers he cared for in Mtemwa, a village 100 miles north of Harare. Mtemwa is now a pilgrimage centre. Every year, on the anniversary of his death, thousands come to celebrate his life. His cause for sainthood is slowly progressing.

His fame also rests on his poetry. He wrote more poems in English than anyone else, and his achievement has been recognized by the Guinness Book of Records. Three of his themes are especially important.

His insight into the nature of the Holy Trinity is profound, providing us with images that make this great mystery amazingly accessible. The key is love. As he says in 'Logos':

*The Thought, The Word, The Voice are Persons
Three Of Love in Love with Love for evermore.*

He repeatedly affirms the centrality of Mary - a focus that complements his thought on the Trinity:

*He that is alone with The One
Whose name is Love must be
With Mary and her Son
And the blessed Trinity:
The son of Man and the Lord of light
And the Father great and Our Lady bright! ('Aubade')*

When John Bradburne's cause is successful, what will he be a patron saint of? Lepers, doubtless. But ecumenism, also. His longest work is called 'Ut Unum Sint' - 'that they may be one'. It reflects the diversity of his own spiritual background. Raised as an Anglican, he became a Catholic, frequently signed off his letters as 'Jew', and in his travels had close encounters with Islam and Buddhism. He concludes:

*Hindoos and Buddhists, Anglicans,
And many quaint Americans
And legion others, if they seek
Sincerely, are the Saviour's sheep.*

*'Tis men of Faith whom God doth choose -
And pray remember that the Jews
Of old were His own faithful race:
We are adopted by His grace.*

His vision is one in which Catholic Christianity is seen as special because of the unique role of the Blessed Sacrament. It is also a vision in which the Bible holds a central place.

Sirs, I should read the Bible through
And then decide what's best to do
And if you cannot quite be sure
Read it again.

And it is, of course, a vision which becomes a reality only through a life of service to others. 'Why is John Bradburne important?' The lepers of Mtemwa would tell you: because he provided them with their daily needs in the form of food, medicine, and loving care. It is this continual relating of the realities of this world to those of the next which is the unwavering focus of his writing and the driving force behind his cause.

You can keep up to date with the John Bradburne story, and how he continues to affect thousands of lives, through the John Bradburne Memorial Society (www.johnbradburne.com) The poems can all be seen online at www.johnbradburnepoems.com.

– David Crystal



Oblate Summer School

Spirituality for the 21st Century

with Fr. Frank Santucci OMI, Wistaston Hall, Crewe.

Do I Have a Spirituality?

Module 1: July 18th - 21st

“Spirituality” is a word that we tend to apply to saints and mystics - but never to ourselves. During these days we will explore the concept of spirituality and the key phases in its development. Then, looking at Eugene de Mazenod's life and spirituality as an example, each participant will work at expressing their own spirituality.

These events have been organised as part of the activities to mark the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Oblates.

For further information or to book a place for the above events please contact:

Mr. Kirk Jacob, Oblate Partners in Mission Office,
Denis Hurley House, 14, Quex Road,
London NW6 4PL, UK. **Tel:** 020 7624 7296
Email: kirk.oblate.partners@googlemail.com

Spirituality and Mission

Module 2: July 22nd - 24th

To have a “mission” means being a missionary, a preacher, a priest or religious - or does it? Mission, in fact, is allowing my experience of God and my spirituality to give a direction to my life, and to make a difference in the lives of others.

Starting with Eugene de Mazenod's understanding of spirituality and mission, we will see its development and significance in the past 200 years - and how this can help us to understand our own spirituality and mission.

Prayer for Vocations

Loving God, You called St. Eugene to send forth missionaries to proclaim and live the Gospel among the poor. Increase our love, we pray, for those who are most abandoned. Extend your loving call to many young people in our community and grant them the desire to give of themselves, their lives and talents to the service of Jesus Christ and the Church. May our young people answer your call as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to serve those who are in need. This we ask through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

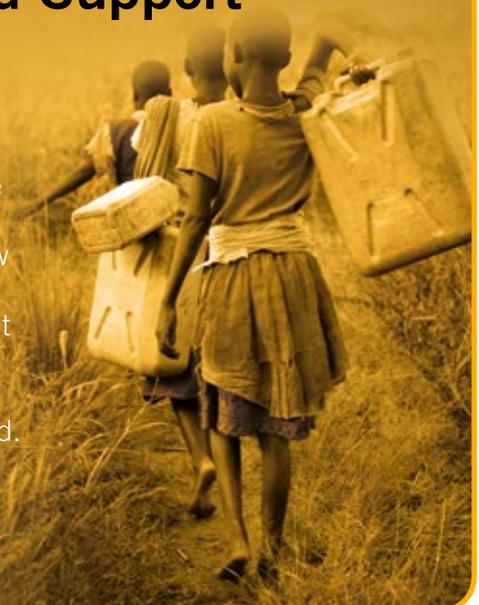
Subscribe to the Oblate Pools and Support the Oblate Missions

Weekly prizes of €300 and €150

For the past 40 years the Oblate Pools has been raising funds for the Oblate Missions overseas. The subscription for the year is €6/£30. Each subscriber receives a unique code and every Saturday the draw for the winners takes place. The winners are picked based on the results of Football matches in winter and of race meetings throughout the summer. To purchase an annual subscription please email Barbara Hogan at: mamioblate@eircom.net or write to The Mission Office, House of Retreat, Tyrconnell Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8, Ireland.

You can also subscribe online: www.oblates.ie

All proceeds from the Oblate Pools is used to support the work of the Oblate Mission throughout the world.



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If you would like to share your thoughts or ideas with us please contact: Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI, Partners in Mission Office, Denis Hurley House, 14 Quex Road, London NW6 4PL or email oblate_partners@btinternet.com



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