



# OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

NATAL PROVINCE

THE MOTHER PROVINCE OF THE OBLATES IN AFRICA

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## OMI NATAL *Update*

VOL 6 No 1-2 January-April 2009

### Top News

**Jesus is Risen, Alleluia.**

**Commitment to the Word of God Leads Us into Struggle and Suffering from Which the Ultimate Outcome Is Resurrection**

**FEAST OF FOUNDER, MAY 25<sup>TH</sup> AT GERARD HOUSE.**

Tea 10.00, Mass 11.00

*Our Focus: Oblate Education Ministries*

### RETREATS 2009.

Bluff 4-9 October: Directed Retreat;

Redacres 11-16 October: Preached Retreat Fr Donaat Bohe OMI

### PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

22-23 July, Albini Hall

**For More On These Stories See Page 5-6**

### Good News about Oblate Mission *Cebula House of Formation opened*



On February 16<sup>th</sup> the province gathered for the celebration of the 183<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the approval of our Congregation and its Constitutions. During the ceremony the newly constituted Cebula House of Formation was blessed and the new Superior Fr Callistus Khathali was installed. The picture shows the

Provincial and Fr Khathali outside the entrance of the new house.

Cebula House of formation provides three years of formation which include one year of in-house formation programmes followed by two years of formation which include a component of classes in philosophy at Cedara.

From 1948 to 1952 Cleland was the location of St Josephs Scholasticate which then moved to Cedara. In 1977 the property was redeployed as the Oblate Prenovitiate. It was first Oblate Prenovitiate set up in Africa and its programme became the model for many others.

The new Cebula House of formation allows us to provide religious formation for at least three years within a smaller community of members of the province. This has become important given the large numbers at the Cedara scholasticate and the Theological Institute have become increasingly global centres of formation and sometimes

overpower the local identity of our own candidates in formation. There is a growing trend both in our congregation and others to make changes like this as formation programmes cluster around centres of Theological education like ours.

Joseph Cebula was an Oblate formator and is thus a worthy patron of an Oblate house of formation. In addition he was a martyr who, in giving his life for the faith in the face of an evil dictatorship, witnessed for us that the power of the paschal mystery is at the centre of every Oblate vocation.

### **Good News about Oblate Mission** ***Guest Speaker at SJTI Graduation calls for more ethics components in South African Tertiary Education***

Dr Cheryl de la Rey the Chief Executive Officer of the Council for Higher Education in South Africa was the guest speaker at the Graduation ceremony of St Josephs Theological Institute. In her address she called for a greater emphasis in higher education on the promotion of values being conveyed that we hope will build a better society.

She emphasised that in a society such as South Africa it is essential that Institutes of higher education must improve the skills and technical capacity of our society but tat the same time this should be accompanied by a focus on ethics and morality which go beyond individual pursuit of gain towards a sense of responsibility for all in the society.

In a telling commentary on the values of global society she noted that “The current global economic crisis compels us to deeply reflect upon moral and ethical issues. After all, the current economic crisis is attributable to leadership behaviours motivated by the push for greater profits and personal gain without regard for ethics and morality”.

In promoting Catholic Social Teaching with its focus on the common good St Josephs Theological Institute is strongly placed to play an important role in this endeavour.

The graduation ceremony took place on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at Hilton College Theatre near Cedara. 45 degrees and 20 diplomas in Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies were conferred by Chairman of the Board, Professor Stuart C Bate

OMI. Dignitaries attending the ceremony included His Eminence Wilfrid Cardinal Napier OFM and Bishop Barry Wood OMI together with Ecumenical leaders from the partner organisations is the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions.

### **Good News about Oblate Mission** ***Oblate Healing Ministries Sustain AIDS Action Group at SJTI***

OMI Healing Ministries have been able to sustain



AIDS Action at St Josephs Theological Institute thanks to a donation from Dr Ramrath mentioned in our last edition.

This will allow the group to grow its ministry to young people promoting a response to HIV AIDS based on life style change and moral regeneration. The picture shows the Provincial handing over the cheque to Fr Raymond Mwangala OMI, Chaplain of the group together with some members of the group including Chairperson Bro Pius Musulizo OMI.

AIDS Action is a programme for schools and parishes devised by the Students of St Josephs Theological Institute. This year marks nine years since the establishment of the group. This year the group has 70 members who are very dedicated to their work. Over the last three years they have managed to conduct 46 successful workshops and we have helped more than 2000 young people and participants.

### **Good News about Oblate Mission** ***Sukumawenze Sponsored by Oblate Healing Ministries***

Thanks to the same donor, OMI Healing Ministries have also been able to make a substantial donation to the Sukumawenze place of

care in Inanda. The donation will allow this ministry to increase its response to the growing need for shelter for those in the terminal stages of the disease and for orphans left behind to support families.

## **Good News about Oblate Mission**

### ***Youth Ministries Develop***

The Oblate Youth Ministry Committee continues to work together in its efforts to drive the vision of the Province on youth matters.

### **Oblate Youth Associates**

In its evaluation of the report on the world youth day in Australia the committee expressed its support of the need to organize Youth Associates. Some members of the committee committed themselves in finding ways and means for the establishment of the Associates.

### **Leadership Training**

In the area of youth formation and empowerment we are making major in-roads. In collaboration with the St. Philomena Youth Program, a number of our young leaders are being empowered with leadership skills. In addition youth workshops and camps are being facilitated by members of the youth committee. Young Oblates are increasingly getting involved in forming and animating youth societies in their respective areas of ministry.

### **Inchanga Youth Centre**

The youth ministry project at Inchanga has met with an enthusiastic response. The vision of this project is to set up a youth centre at Inchanga mission. A youth office has been established in one of the former teacher's cottages and a further cottage is envisaged for use by Couples for Christ. The involvement of Couples for Christ in our ministry at Inchanga comes as a welcomed gesture and renders hope for the future. A memorandum of Understanding has been signed envisaging a number of areas of collaboration on the mission particularly in developing Inchanga primary School

The large Mission cross in the property will be developed as a centre for pilgrimage and prayer. The enthusiasm of young people to get involved in our ministry has been very encouraging at both Inchanga and the Umsunduzi station.

### **Ministry to schools**

In addition Fr Mxolisi is involved on a regular basis at the Inchanga primary School. The Oblates are hoping to develop this school in collaboration with Couples for Christ. In September Oblate Youth Ministries organised a second schools mission at St Benedict's Oblate School in Johannesburg

### ***Youth for Life Ministries Grow in Zimbabwe***

Oblate *Youth For Life* ministries are growing in the urban Bulawayo. Youth for life is a programme of the Oblates which runs workshops for youth. It was piloted in St Luke's mission before this development in the city Youth for Life workshops are available for all youth groups and provide leadership training and lifestyle change processes to respond to challenges facing youth in a context of poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS. . The programme begins with a 4 day workshop followed by 3 day follow up six weeks later and a second 3 day workshop six weeks after that. In 2008 a staff of two full time lay workers was appointed to help Fr Charles Nabwenje OMI who established the programme in the city. The employment of two committed young people has developed the capacity of the ministry as Oblates do not always have to be their all the time.

## **Good News about Oblates**

### ***Ewen Swartz ordained Deacon***

The 22 of February 2009, in the icy-cold frozen South of Germany covered with thick snow decorating cars, houses, and streets, saw an incredible Diaconate Ordination. Ewen Phillip Swartz OMI and Bernhard Haas OMI got ordained Deacons by the Archbishop of Windhoek, Liborius Ndumbukuti Nashenda OMI. The Archbishop challenged the two Diaconate candidates in his homily by instructing them not to "preach and serve to impress people" but to be authentic even when people turn against them and hate them for preaching and serving authentically. Archbishop Nashenda added as well that Jesus was hated and even crucified for preaching and serving authentically, because His food was to do the will of the Father. The Parish Choir (Wallfahrtskirche "Auffhofer Käppele"), a youth Group from the Parish, and Scholastics from the German Scholasticate supported the whole Liturgy with music that sounded like heaven. Br

Phumlani C Ndlovu OMI composed the Litany of Saints which accompanied the most prayerful moment of the Ordination. God has shown himself great on this day, may he complete the work he has begun in these two new Deacons of the church. The Church rejoices!

Phumlani C Ndlovu OMI, Germany 2009

### ***Alvin Tshuma makes Perpetual Profession***

On January 3 2009 Scholastic Bro Alvin Tshuma professed his perpetual vows before Fr Siphon Kunene Mission Superior of the Zimbabwe Mission. He took his final oblation at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. There was a great jubilation as the mission was celebrating the 6<sup>th</sup> born Oblate in the mission to commit himself to God and to the congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for life.

We continue to ask mother Mary to intercede for the mission that it may grow and be blessed with more vocations that can serve the Church especially in Zimbabwe.

### ***Denis Hurley Centre Launched***

The parish centre at Durban's Emmanuel Cathedral will be completely renovated over the next three years and named in honour of Archbishop Denis Hurley. The Cathedral was completed in 1904 together with this building which was the parish school until the 1950s and it became a parish centre. Since that time it has been used for religious education classes, meetings of various groups and offices.

The building has become increasingly dilapidated and on 15 February 2009, Cardinal Wilfrid Napier OFM launched a major fundraising drive to completely refurbish the building.

When completed The Denis Hurley Centre will provide a number of facilities which will respond to the needs of the poor in the area. There will be a 24/7 outreach to refugees, street people, people living with HIV/AIDS and others in distress. There will also be a coffee shop and catering facilities both for the feeding scheme and for meetings and events. The centre will also provide education and skills training for people of all ages, as well as venues for meetings, workshops and conferences. It will also offer facilities for community-building events. In addition it will provide a resource centre including a library, bookshop, museum, and exhibition space housing

collections associated with the life and work of Archbishop Hurley.

Leaders of other churches and faiths have expressed their support for the project. Recently representatives from three Muslim organisations presented a cheque to Cardinal Napier for R50000. Paying tribute to Archbishop Hurley, Noor Mohammed a representative of the Juma Musjid trust from the nearby Mosque, said "he was "a nurturing and caring man. The chairman of the Iqraa trust Mohammed Baker said: "one of my dreams has always been to initiate a venture between different faiths" A representative from the Albaraka Bank described the new centre as an innovative outreach programme with which the bank was happy to be associated"

A bronze life-size statue of the archbishop will be erected outside the centre, looking out over the recently re-named Denis Hurley Street (formerly Queen Street), and facing the freeway, where it will greet thousands of people as they enter Durban by taxi, bus or train.

### ***Transitions***

#### ***Fr Noel Coughlin OMI RIP***

Fr Noel Coughlan passed away on 19 January 2009 one month after his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. He was a remarkable man of a warm and friendly disposition with a wonderful gift of revealing the presence Jesus Christ he knew in the parables and metaphors of our time. Four were central to his ministry: The parable of the teacher, the parable of the mass rally, the parable of the theatre and the parable of money as good news

The parable of the teacher was his earliest form of evangelisation. After working in Dundee area at the beginning of his ministry during the 1940s he was sent to Lesotho to teach English from 1947-1950.

The parable of the Mass rally and public spectacle was one that consumed much of his ministry. Fr Noel was able to mediate God's kingdom through mass gatherings of the faithful. This he did at a time when these were relatively unusual for Catholics especially in Apartheid South Africa which had an unspoken policy to restrict the growth of the Catholic Church in the country. Fr Noel knew that Jesus spoke to the crowds in ways that drew them and in his own ministry he looked

for ways that would speak to the people of his time in Durban. He is particularly known for two major events. The first was his involvement in Involved in organising the Marian Year in 1952 which celebrated the centenary of the arrival of the Oblates in Southern Africa; the second was the organisation of Corpus Christi events in the Kingsmead stadium and street walks through town. In addition to these he had a vision to set up a permanent Marian shrine on the Bluff which did not come to fruition.

The parable of the theatre was perhaps his greatest form of evangelisation. Fr Noel Knew the value of theatre and drama bringing God's message to people in a way that speaks to them. He organised a festival of the Gelinou version of the Psalms which played to crowds in the city hall in Durban. In addition he founded the Durban Catholic players' guild with the aim of creating theatre using religious themes including the Passion play. This eventually led to the vision of staging a passion play along the model of the Oberammergau Passion play which has been staged since 1634 in the Bavarian village

Some 56 years on, The Durban Passion Play has become entrenched in the Durban cultural calendar and is supported by a cast numbering over 150 who work for at least seven months of the year on a voluntary basis. In 2005 it was presented for its 12th season. In 1991 Fr Noel received civic honours from the City of Durban for his work

Finally he was able to live the parable of money as good news. The bible says the love of money is the root of all evil and you cannot serve God and money

Yet the church needs finances in order to do its work and even Jesus had to pay the temple tax and also have a disciple responsible for his finances. This was Judas Iscariot and his betrayal shows the dangers faced by those who are involved with money in the service of the Lord. Fr Noel was appointed Director of the Bishops Lenten appeal in 1966 and served in that post for 36 years until 2002. He was also Southern Africa director of Caritas international. All this work was done out of a love for the poor and a wish to uplift people through improving their lives. Through this ministry millions were given for schools,

bursaries, hospitals clinics development projects and other works of ministry

In his long life Fr Noel demonstrated a wonderful amalgam of creativity, service, love of the Church and Priestly service May he rest in peace and inspire many younger Oblates by his example and perseverance.

### ***Mother of Bro Kingsley***

Fr Clement Waidyasekara OMI, Provincial of Colombo province Sri Lanka has informed us that Bro. Kingsley Cooray's mother passed away on the 13th April and that the funeral was on Wednesday the 15th at St. Joseph's Church Uyana, Moratuwa. She was 98 years of age. May she rest in peace.

## **Challenges for Mission**

### ***Mission Superior cant stay in Zimbabwe***

In March 2009, Fr Siphos Petros KUNENE OMI, Mission Superior in Zimbabwe, informed me that his application for a Temporary Employment Permit (TEP) was turned down. Consequently he is not able to stay in the country. We are trying to resolve the situation but until then Fr Kunene will remain in South Africa and Fr Claude Lukuba has been appointed acting mission Superior.

## **Oblate Events 2009.**

### ***Feast of Founder, May 25<sup>h</sup>***

This year the Celebration of the Feast of the founder will be celebrated at Gerard House. The community there feels that the house is not well known in some parts of the province and invites everyone to come to the feast especially those who have never been.

**Directions:** Take N3 North, After Pietermaritzburg, go up Town hill on N3 until the top at the **Hilton** junction Leave the highway and turn left. Drive through Hilton village on Hilton Avenue. At the Crossroads after the large Quarry shopping centre turn left onto Howick road towards Pietermaritzburg. At the second road turn right into CELTIS (there will be a sign to Gerard House from this point. Go down the hill and take first right into **Cuckoo Lane**. Gerard House is no 19 about 500 meters down this road. Tea will be at 10 am followed by the Eucharist at 11.00. There will be a special focus on our Oblate Education

Ministries at this celebration. Those in Durban are specially requested to be present at this feast

**Provincial Assembly**

Our Provincial Assembly will take place on 22-23 July at Albini Hall proceedings will begin at 8.30 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and finish at 5.30 on 23 July. All members of the province are expected to attend including the scholastics and those in the philosophy programme at Cebula House of Formation. The programme will include a review of the programmes set up at the congress and preparations for the upcoming chapter in 2010. There will also be reports from the Provincial Administration on the state of the province with a special focus on the financial and property matters. Progress on Restructuring will also be dealt with.

**Workshop for Formators**

A workshop for all formators in English speaking African units including ours will be held at Mazenod Centre in Germiston from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2009.

This will be facilitated by Fr. Santucci who will be coming from Aix en Provence. There will be about 35 participants in this workshop. These include the Formators of the two Scholasticates, Mater Jesu and St Joseph's; Novitiates, Pre-Novitiates and the Chair Persons of the Formation Committees in the units. In our executive meeting in February we recommended that the Units pay for the travelling expenses of their members to and from the workshop and the IPC pay for all other expenses. The budget of these expenses is as follows. All formators in the province including Zimbabwe should attend the workshop. Please contact Fr Vusi Mazibuko for more details ([cedara@iafrica.com](mailto:cedara@iafrica.com) or 033-3431207).

**Living a Fully Committed Oblate Life**

**Annual Retreats 2009**

Our Annual Retreats this year will follow our biennial policy of having a directed retreat at the Bluff and a Preached retreat at Redacres. This year the dates are as follows

**4-9 October: Bluff**

**3 directors: one priest, one religious brother  
one religious sister**

**11-16 October: Redacres  
Preacher Fr Don Bohe OMI**

Both retreats begin with Supper at 6.30 on the Sunday evening and end with lunch on Friday.

There are five ways to book:

1. E-mail [admin@omi.org.za](mailto:admin@omi.org.za)
- 2 SMS to 0827121047: Your name followed by BLUFF or REDACRES
- 3 Call Bridgette at the Provincial Office (031-2059321) between 8.30 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday.
4. Fax your details to Fax 031-206-0270
5. Post to PO Box 17035, Congella, 4013

Name:.....

Retreat Chosen

.....  
(Write in Bluff or Redacres)

Your contact details:

.....

**Father General's XIIth letter**

Included with this newsletter is a copy of Fr General's XIIth letter to the Congregation which examines the consequences of the Global financial crisis in our lives.

In his letter he notes that the crisis requires us to be good stewards of our critical financial resources. It encourages us to make provision to survive on a lower level of income. He reminds us that as religious with a vow of poverty all we use is not ours but the patrimony of the poor to whom we are accountable.

He calls us to a renewed exercise of the virtue of poverty in renewed confidence and trust in God's providence and a renewed commitment to solidarity with the poor who are suffering most at this time. He reminds us that we as a congregation are most at risk because we choose mission to the poor. He calls on each Oblate to "take some small steps personally and in our local communities" to respond to the crisis. These could include giving up more or less traveling, or more environmentally friendly behaviours. He calls provinces and missions to ensure greater

accountability of Oblates on all levels. He calls us to cut budgets between 8-10%, to look for ways to increase income from the pastoral and missionary activities of Oblates, to increase local fundraising and support for Oblate missions.

### Provincial's Diary

#### February 2009

- 2 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries
- 16 Feast of approval of Rule Cleland

#### March

25-26 Zimbabwe

#### April

- 2-4 IPC Meeting Sabon House
- 6 SJTI Board Meeting
- 7 Graduation SJTI
- 20 Council of Superiors Albin Hall
- 23-24 Provincial Council

|    |           |            |
|----|-----------|------------|
| 27 | M Ngcobo  | Ordination |
| 27 | S Dube    | Ordination |
| 27 | M Ince    | Ordination |
| 27 | M Madlala | Ordination |
| 28 | E Boule   | Birthday   |
| 29 | M Mchunu  | Ordination |
| 29 | S Sithole | Birthday   |

#### MAY

|    |             |            |
|----|-------------|------------|
| 01 | T Zondi     | Ordination |
| 04 | M Dlamini   | Ordination |
| 06 | C Richmond  | Ordination |
| 17 | V Mazibulo  | Birthday   |
| 23 | E Boule     | Ordination |
| 25 | A Henriques | Birthday   |
| 30 | C Khathali  | Birthday   |

Errors and omissions contact the Administrative Assistant  
([admin@omi.org.za](mailto:admin@omi.org.za))

### Dates to Give Thanks

| <u>Date</u>     | <u>Name</u>        | <u>Occasion</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>FEBRUARY</b> |                    |                 |
| 08              | S David            | Ordination      |
| 08              | A Henriques        | Ordination      |
| 09              | T Shoba (Schol)    | Birthday        |
| 11              | P Schroeder        | Ordination      |
| 12              | P Schroeder        | Birthday        |
| 14              | S Dube             | Birthday        |
| 19              | S Bate             | Ordination      |
| 19              | P Horrocks         | Ordination      |
| 19              | S Kunene           | Ordination      |
| 19              | D Corijn           | Birthday        |
| 22              | J Patterson        | Birthday        |
| 23              | P Mudzudza (Schol) | Birthday        |
| 25              | P Ndlovu (Schol)   | Birthday        |
| 26              | ZL Ngubane         | Birthday        |
| 28              | M Madlala          | Birthday        |

#### MARCH

|    |                 |            |
|----|-----------------|------------|
| 09 | M Gumede        | Birthday   |
| 16 | S Mpulo (Schol) | Birthday   |
| 22 | N Peters        | Birthday   |
| 25 | A Henriques     | Birthday   |
| 30 | H Niemann       | Ordination |
| 31 | Mxolisi Ngcobo  | Birthday   |

#### APRIL

|    |                  |            |
|----|------------------|------------|
| 01 | D Wheatly        | Birthday   |
| 05 | K Mutale (Schol) | Birthday   |
| 06 | N Nkosi          | Ordination |
| 06 | B Gumede         | Ordination |
| 10 | B Gumede         | Birthday   |
| 23 | P McMahan        | Birthday   |
| 24 | M Dlamini        | Birthday   |
| 27 | V Mazibuko       | Ordination |

### OMI NATAL Update

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