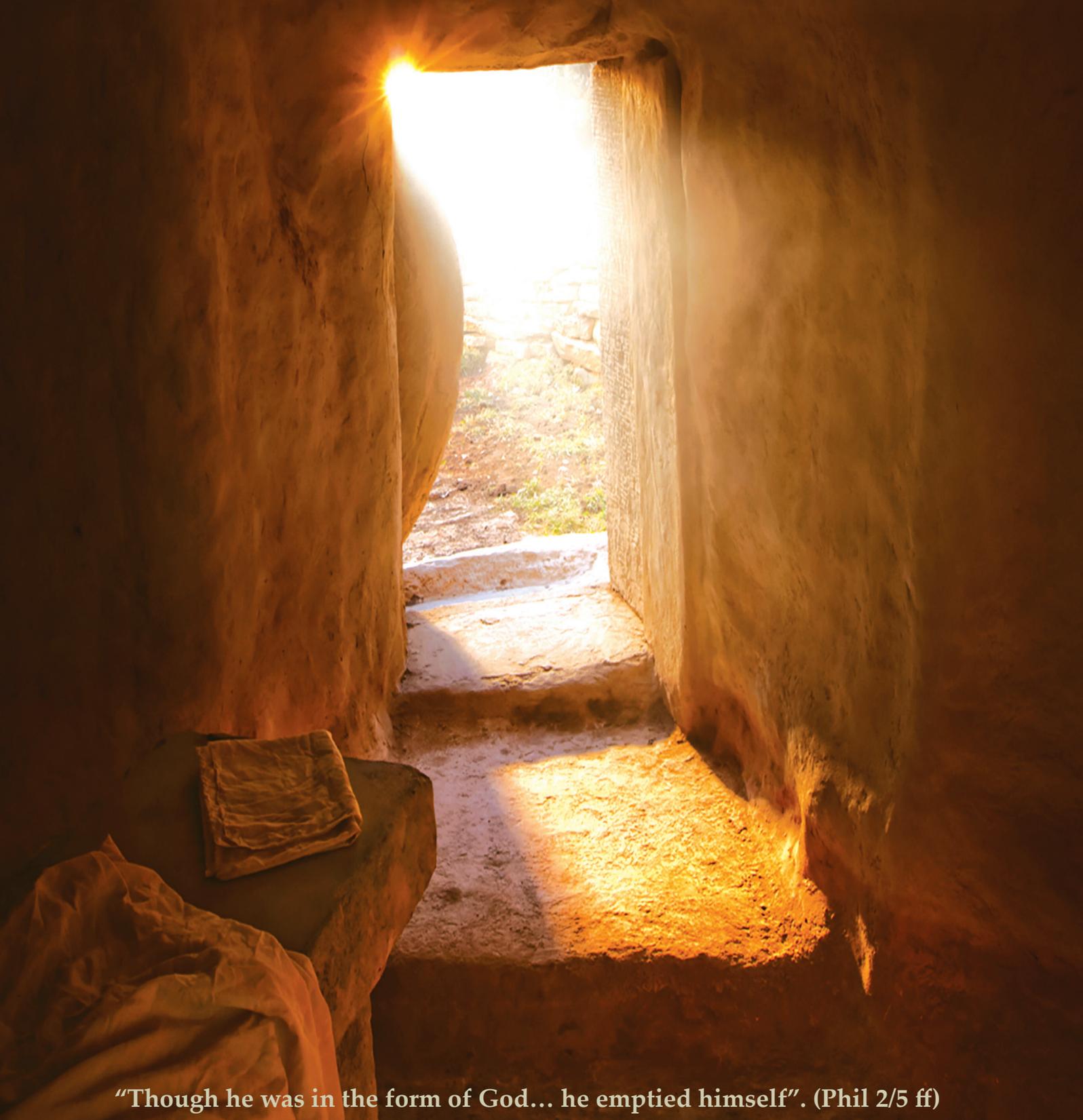


NEWS LETTER

VOL. 10 NO. 17 -MAY 2021



"Though he was in the form of God... he emptied himself". (Phil 2/5 ff)

Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Colombo Province, Sri Lanka

An experience of kenosis – heart of the Christian living and that of the Religious and priestly life

There is an invitation to us: “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). We are asked to live and imitate the spirituality of kenosis, the self-emptying of Jesus. St. Paul was stressing to the Philippians that they should be self-sacrificing, and should not have personal glory in mind as they live their life. Then, he used the Incarnation as an example. (Phi 2:1-5)

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to live and imitate fully this spirituality of kenosis. We are very much concerned about our own individual glory, interest, profit and gain. We are more prone to receive and get rather than give. We are very much individualistic. Whether in the political arena or in the religious sphere we see individuals who are very much individualistic. Thinking of the wellbeing of the other is the last thing that most of us would think of. In this individualistic culture, we prioritize or lay emphasis on the individual over the entire group or the society. We are oriented around the self, being independent instead of identifying with a group mentality. Most of us see each other as only loosely linked, and value personal goals over group interests. We emphasize on personal achievements as important. In the present world, where people harp more on personal autonomy, the demand is “respect my autonomy or I love my autonomy.” They think they have all the freedom to develop oneself, to increase one’s knowledge, to increase the number of degrees one has, to improve one’s skills and, to assume responsibility for one’s conduct. “Let the others go to hell, let the Province or the Congregation go to hell, if I am given this freedom and autonomy to fix up my life as I want that is what I want and that is enough.” “I don’t care about the Province, community life, Congregation, apostolate etc. But what I need is to go higher up, establish myself so that my future is secure. I love my self. I am self-interested”. These can be the slogans of some of the religious, Oblates. If it is so it is really unfortunate. This type of attitudes of a handful of Religious and priests and even the Oblates

have damaged community life and their life as Religious.

C. S. Lewis, a British writer and a lay Theologian once wrote; **“Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and the death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find him, and with him everything else thrown in.”** Are not these words challenging us who are so much engrossed with self?

This individualism and self-interest have unfortunately crept into the religious and priestly life too. For some religious, going higher in their religious life has become a norm. Some are very much concerned with the titles and designations that are at the end of their name: B.Ph., B.Th., S.T.L, M.Phil., Ph.D., double doctorates etc, etc. There is also an unseen competition. This we see among the disciples of Jesus; who is greatest among us. ‘Lord, allow one of us to sit at your left and the other to sit at your right.’ That is why Jesus had to bring a little child in front of them and say, unless you become like a little child you cannot enter heaven. That is why Jesus had to wash the disciples’ feet on Holy Thursday, to show us, to teach us that we must not be too engrossed with self-interest, self-ascertainment, but rather we must learn from the kenosis of Jesus.

In this holy season of Easter, let us try to come back. Come back to the original meaning of religious life. Let us try to experience a kenosis and thus the Resurrection in our own life, in our thinking, in our attitudes, in our values and in our life style. Happy Easter to you all!



Message of Fr. Provincial

We are still in the season of Easter. We were all busy with the Lenten and Holy Week liturgies. During these services we all found a person...Jesus... who sacrificed his life for the sake of others. We met Jesus who was totally other-centered. As it is written in the letter to the Philippines, “Though he was in the form of God..... he emptied himself”. (Phil 2/5 ff) He was concerned more of the other person. He was able to lose himself for the sake of the other. That is what we find in the kenosis of Jesus. He made himself nothing. As Stef Harder says, “Self-centered people have only one topic to talk about and that is THEMSELVES”. But Jesus was truly the other-centered person. Jesus was not selfish, not self-engrossed. He was not actuated by self-interest. Instead, he took responsibility for the growth, wellbeing and the development, and the happiness of the other.

Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead.



Bloody Blasts for Nation's New Life



Easter, the Resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ the Savior to the new life-giving universal divine presence is a blast, and the power of which never fades away from the planet earth until its consummation to creator's design at the end of times. What preceded Easter was the cross, pain and shedding of flesh and blood at the height of humanity's cruelty. Son of God realized that the cross was mandatory to call humankind to His truth of unity in New Life. Christ's events of the Cross and the Easter are born and reborn unceasingly in numerous and unimaginable ways to direct humankind to one unity until the world reaches the Kingdom reality. Easter blasts of 2019, an agonizing cross for the whole nation, which took many innocent lives, cry for the newness of the nation in political and religious consciousness; and for the awareness in a dire need of the 'will for common good' patriotism.

What has been getting revealed to the nation is the nakedness of the disgusting power hunger of political patriarchs. For decades they are dominant in the sphere of the frontlines of party politics. There is shameless reluctance in them to handover smoothly the elite positions that they hold to more capable and creative young minds. 'I should be assured of safeguarding my status at any cost,' is the principle implemented by them, and consequently they are deaf to their inner moral voice and do not give themselves the space to deviate from the evil ways of playing the political game. Machiavelli is no match for them by their cunning execution of the norm, 'end justifies the means'. Easter blasts should be an eye opener to the general public



for the urgent rethinking of the need of 'new life' in fresh genuine political leadership.

A confused lot in the island nation is those who are in the sphere of spiritual leadership. What they should be doing is the constant promotion of the spiritualities of their respective beliefs. Any sensible person would know that the spiritual teachings of all the transcendental or humanistic religions converge in the common area of universal values which contains justice and peace; equality and true dignity; love and forgiveness; and respect and kindness. Sadly, the continuous or occasional utterances of the persons in religious leadership imply that they are shut to the mind's contemplation to understand the need of dwelling in the sphere of universal spiritual values. The Easter blasts push for 'new life' in spiritual and religious leaders in the country who should truly show to the people of their convictions in their own beliefs.

'My country' is not just the territory, land, and not what is contained in it in terms of rivers, jungles, and mountains. It is 'my nation' and it means all the citizens who have equal rights and dignity. Patriotism is the ability to accept all, and stand by them all. True patriotism hates injustice and disharmony. In this country for decades patriots have been defined very wrongly and treacherously in relation to one's heroic deeds to boost individuals, caste, race, or creed. In such attempts, knowingly or unknowingly, one

is made to stand on the grounds of violence, whether the activity is physical, intellectual, or verbal. All the citizens of the country are in a critical need to come out of the blindness of the defective patriotism. There should be a collective effort to give birth to a perception of the 'will for common good' patriotism where everybody would be able to see the acts of injustice, hostility, and vengeance from the eye of the common will. The blood, shed at the Easter blasts is moaning for such a process of 'new life' for the nation.

The lamentations of the innocent who were murdered in cold blood – their voices - cannot be suppressed whether the events are recent or distant. The echoes of their cry for justice and 'new life' for the living cannot be ignored. More often than not peace is attempted in the hearts of the living not giving any attention to the resounding voices of the murdered and dead. There are many things more horrible than bloodshed at Easter bombing. Slaveries to selfish political agendas and to fanatical religiosities, and to the programs of personal lethargies are some of them. Martyrs killed at Easter Attacks have shed the blood and have lit the candle. We have got the responsibility to recognize the pangs of 'New Life' and actualize it. It is our worship to God with them. It is indeed the true worship.

By Fr. James Jayasinghe OMI
Vicar Provincial



“Justice for the Victims”

Fr. Rohan Silva OMI

CSR joined themselves with the Negombo Citizens’ Committee to commemorate the second-year anniversary of the Easter Attack on April 21st, 2021. Fr. Rohan writes, “We gathered together at ‘Baldhi Junction’, the turn to Katuwapitiya Church from Colombo-Chilaw main road, at 8.00 a.m. with banners and posters calling for ‘justice for the victims’ and for the ‘investigations into the main brain’ behind the Easter Attack”.

At 8.45 a.m. two minutes silence was observed with lighted candles, to remember all the victims. A ‘pasan gayanaya’, (the chanting of poems on passion) to remember the Easter carnage and the demand for Justice to the victims, composed and produced by CSR, was played and all gathered joined in singing these ‘pasan’.

Thereafter, the crowd that gathered walked in silence towards the Katuwapitiya Church carrying the posters and banners. They stopped at the statue of St. Sebastian at the church junction and sang once again the ‘pasan’. The banners and posters carried were hung there to be seen by all passersby. The commemorative event was concluded with a prayer and a strong message by the organizers demanding ‘justice for the victims’, and highlighting the paramount importance of investigations into tracing the ‘Maha Mola Karu’ (master planner) of the Easter Attack.

Those who gathered for the demonstration included priests, religious nuns, civil society activists, and members of different organizations and some concerned individuals, both men and women. At the invitation of CSR, some Oblates joined the demonstration and our presence was very much appreciated by the organizers.





Joint Council Meeting in Jaffna

The members of the Provincial Council of the OMI Colombo Province travelled to Jaffna on the 22nd of April to have a joint Council session with the members of the Provincial Council of the OMI Province of Jaffna. The Session was held at Thodarpaham, Jaffna Provincialate. It was a very fruitful and cordial meeting. Several important issues were discussed and it is worth mentioning a few.

- Sending again the scholastics of the Colombo Province to Jaffna to do their 1st year in Theology. This practice was given up due to some practical difficulties faced to keep in line with the National Seminary curriculum.
- The possibility to exchange Oblates for various ministries. Already in the area of formation there is such a practice. A formator from the Province of Jaffna is there at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya. Having a formator from Colombo Province in the Jaffna Scholasticate can be thought of.
- In the area of formation:
 - » A decision was taken to have a live-in for formators of both Provinces at Ampitiya.
 - » The need for psychological screening for our students was talked about.
 - » Choosing correct individuals for the ministry of formation was another issue discussed.
 - » The formation committees of both provinces need to discuss these matters further.
- Provincial Treasurers of both provinces met to discuss on financial issues and challenges.
- A considerable length of time was spent on discussing the forthcoming Jubilee of 175 years of Oblate presence in Sri Lanka. It was decided to celebrate this event as a joint venture. We shall declare the Jubilee year on the 27th of November 2021. The common place of celebration will be in the Jaffna Cathedral. A Jubilee Committee was appointed. There will be many common programs and events planned together and they will be communicated to the Jubilee Committee and the committee would inform the rest of the membership of the both provinces.
- Joint mission to be undertaken in Bangladesh (with indigenous people). The needs of Japan and Ghana were also discussed.
- All were in the opinion that the Oblates should be trained in the area of JPIC and the Province of Jaffna would like one of their members to get trained at CSR.
- We decided to have common fora for the young Oblates of both Provinces.
- It was mutually accepted to have our annual retreats together.

The Council members of the Colombo Province made it an occasion to visit the elderly Oblates at Amala Utpawam. They too paid a courtesy visit to the Holy Family Provincialate and met the Rev. Sr. Provincial of the Jaffna Province. On their way back Fr. Provincial and the councilors payed a visit to Fr. Leslie Sujith OMI at Kokilai and Fr. Roshan Waas OMI at Padaviya.

Unit Report of the Province of Colombo

It is customary that the Provincial Superior sends a Unit report to the General Administration. Having received the Unit Report from the Province of Colombo, the General Administration has responded to it as follows. It is good for the Oblate province, districts, communities, and individuals to take notice of these points.

- I. There is a need to explore the possibility of working together with the other units in the Asia Oceania Region in different aspects: formation, setting up an international community working for migrants/ indigenous people etc., consolidating of post novitiate formation houses, ongoing formation for superiors, preparation for final vows, etc.
- II. Call to live and work for the sustainable use of the environment.
- III. Workshops and other practical steps to implement the policy statement on the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults of the Province.
- IV. Regular evaluation of the decisions made at different levels.
- V. Working relationship with the Province of Jaffna on possible missions.
- VI. Being on alert in order to avoid having over extension of the missions and thus difficulties of providing personnel and the members living outside community.
- VII. Explore the possibility of organizing ongoing formation programs preparing the local superiors together with the Province of the Philippines.
- VIII. Assuring that no Oblate is left alone without responsibility.
- IX. Recognize the place of lay people in the mission of the Oblates.



Ongoing

The Ongoing Formation Team of the Province, which consists of Rev. Fr. Jagath Anthony OMI (Councilor in-charge of ongoing formation), Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Fernando OMI and Rev. Fr. Eric Lakman OMI conducted a number of live-in sessions of ongoing formation. Most of the communities of Oblate houses and the Oblate districts had the opportunity to pray and study together, to listen to one another and share life-mission, and to celebrate together as Oblates. Very Rev. Fr. James Jayasinghe OMI and Rev. Fr. Chrisantha Jayalath OMI were the resource persons who gave input talks on Non-violent Communication and Emotions and Healthy Life, respectively. The following Live-in sessions were conducted.





Formation

- Oblate Preachers, Nazareth Community, Wennappuwa, 9th-10th January 2021
- Oblate Community, St. Vincent Home, Maggona 11th -12th January 2021
- Oblate Parish Priests, Mattakkuliya, 18th – 19th January. 2021
- Oblate District, Colombo Central, 8th – 9th February. 2021
- Oblate Community, Marian Grove, Kohuwala, 12th April 2021
- Oblate District, Gampaha, 19th – 20th April 2021
- Oblate District, Colombo North, 26th – 27th April, 2021.

The sessions for the Oblate Superiors and Bursars, Oblate district of Uva/Kandy, and the Oblate District of Anuradhapura will be conducted in the coming months.

Our Oblate Confreres Abroad

Concerning the Oblate members who live outside their home units, the General Administrative Directory says, **“Before allowing an Oblate to live outside the geographic territory of his unit for more than one year, the Unit Superior will ask the Superior General for approval.”** It says further, **“An Oblate not formally sent on ‘mission’ by the Superior General should not live and work outside the province to which he juridically belongs without an explicit understanding, preferably written, between his provincial and the provincial of the place where he is living.”**

In the context of the ongoing renewal of the Congregation, the Oblate General Administration in Rome has repeatedly requested and insisted the leadership of the OMI Colombo Province to adhere to the above directives, and to keep in line with them the situations of the Oblates who, at the moment, reside away from territory of the Province. Hence, The Provincial administration was in constant mutual communication with the Oblates who are abroad, and with the relevant persons in the General Administration for guidance in arriving at a justifiable outcome.

The situations of three Oblates have been determined, respecting the concerns of all the parties involved. Thus:

Fr. Joseph Cooray OMI: At his request Fr. Superior General in Council has consented to grant him the indult of exlaustration for three years. His exlaustration is to end on January 31st 2023. This date is given because his first year, away from Oblate community (February 2019- January 2020), was with the permission from the former Provincial, Fr. Irwin Morais OMI. At the end of that

year, he continued to be away from Oblate community without necessary permission from the Superior General. Hence, his 3-year exlaustration is counted beginning from February 2020. Fr. Joe Cooray is expected to return to Sri Lanka before the 31st of January 2023.

Fr. Claude Perera OMI: Due to some personal reasons explained to the Administration, Fr. Claude Perera has requested for an indult of exlaustration. Fr. Claude has been away in Canada without due permission and he was away from an Oblate community. Fr. General in Council has not given him permission for exlaustration and they have informed him that he is required to come back to the Province on the 30th of September 2021. He is presently staying in a Parish of the Diocese of Hamilton, Canada.

Fr. Ajith Wellington OMI: Consequent to a personal meeting held between Fr. Superior General and Fr. Wellington on the 22nd of March 2021 in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, USA, Fr. Wellington received permission from the Superior General to extend his stay in the USA until July 2022 to bring his work which he has already begun to a successful completion. Fr. Wellington would maintain regular contact with the Oblates in Tewksbury. He is expected to be in Sri Lanka before the 31st of July 2022.

It is to be mentioned that these Oblates were sent to these countries, without any reference to the Oblates in those respective Oblate Provinces. There are a couple of other Oblates of the province in different countries, without being attached to an Oblate Community, and the Provincial Administration will take action over them too in the near future.

FROM PROVINCIAL TREASURER'S DESK

FAREWELL

- On 8th January 2021 we bid farewell to Mr. Vernon Janz who worked for the Province for 15 years as the Assistant Accountant in the office of the Provincial Treasurer. We sincerely appreciate and thank him for his dedicated service to the Oblate Province.

OBLATE ESTATES

Dampe Estate Lease Agreement

- In terms of the Provisions of the lease agreement between the OMI Colombo Province and the Arpitech (Pvt.) Ltd., the said lease agreement was cancelled on 4th May 2021. In view of the agreement effected in 27th October 2017 Richard Peiris (Pvt.) Ltd has obtained the necessary approval from the fragmentation board and there by the ownership of the OMI Dampe Estate was transferred on 4th May 2021. The Province has no claim whatsoever for the land.

Ginimanna Estate, Kurunegala

- The estate continues to give good income for the Province.
- The construction of the artificial lake, begun during the tenure of Fr. Christy Silva OMI as the Provincial Treasurer, as a solution for the scarcity of water for the cultivation in dry season, has been completed. We hope it will be a solution for the problem of water in future. We are appreciative and thankful to all who initiated this work.
- While continuing the project of dairy farming in the estate, a small-scale poultry farm has been started. The objective of these projects is to generate more income from the estate.

Blackstone Estate

- This estate too continues to give good income for the Province.
- Now there are sheep introduced to the estate in addition to goats, recommended by the knowledgeable professionals. The climatic condition of the estate has been taken into consideration. Thus, there is genuine hope to increase the income level of the estate.

RETIREMENT FUND

The Oblate Retirement Fund was reactivated on 11th October 2020 with an amount of Rs.5 million. To date the balance is Rs.7,571,924.89.

Many Oblates continue to contribute monthly towards this fund and others too are most welcome to contribute whatever possible to thrive it, for all of us are surely the future beneficiaries of the fund. You may send it directly to the Provincial Treasurer, or deposit your contribution at the following savings account:

Name of the Bank : Hatton National Bank
Branch : Mutwal
Account name : Oblate Of Mary
Immaculate Retirement Fund
Account Number : 097020202204

The objective and the goals of the Retirement Fund are apparent; it is to cover up the medical needs of the elderly and retired Oblates. We have a huge responsibility to look after the elderly Oblates and keep them joyful.

We are thankful to all who initiated the Retirement Fund and to all who are mindful to contribute.

LAST WILLS

At the last Provincial Council Meeting it was decided to renew the request to all the Oblates of the Province to complete their last wills and send them to the Provincial House. It will keep away unnecessary confusions for the Province' Administration. The process of preparing the wills will be done with the consent of the individuals, and the assistance will be given in terms of providing legal formalities. The work is attended to during the course of the year.

Suba Seth Gedara, BUTTALA - VISION & MISSION

Social justice is the primary concern of the visionary-founder of Suba Seth Gedara, Buttala, late Fr. Michael Rodrigo. It cost his life. The echoing message that has been left behind by Fr. Mike is, "Liberate humankind from all kinds of suppression and servitude for Human beings are destined to live with basic needs and rights."

Suba Seth Gedara community have revisited the mission strategies which are continued for the past 34 years after Fr. Mike's death. The principle causes for poverty and bondage of the people are identified as the lack of education both formal and vocational, and the dearth of skills – for self-help development.

MISSION PRIORITY 1: EDUCATION

- Children's Club (La.Kri.Vi.)
- English Language for School Children:
- Computer Lab
- Library
- Aesthetic Class
- Movie night with an evaluation - once a month
- Pre-School – animation
- Scholarships

MISSION PRIORITY 2: SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT

Project One – Small-Scale Sewing Centre: This is two-month training course in Juki sewing machine conducted at Suba Seth Gedara, for 20 girls/women. The training is given on industrial sewing, embroidery, batik, knitting, block cutting, making ornaments from cloth materials, and stitching floor mats, bed sheets,

and pillows. A paid instructor is hired and the classes are held in the morning hours of weekdays. Our plan includes producing clothes (T shirts and skirts) to be sold at the open market. The part of the profit will go to the worker-women; other part will strengthen the Suba Seth Gedara mission fund.

Project Two – Providing Sewing Machines: Many women are unable to find jobs. The reasons are lack of jobs or travelling constraints. Here, normal Singer sewing machines are provided for women to work at home to earn their living.

Project Three - Poultry farming: A family is given 30-layer hens. Initially we help 20 families. Condition - each family should provide 30 layers to the Centre after a year. These will be given to another deserving family. The process continues.

In all the projects, the strategy envisaged is that the beneficiaries in turn have to contribute (financially or volunteer service) as their share of participation. They are made to understand that ours is not doling out funds as acts of mercy. Acts of mercy become 'grace' when the beneficiaries participate in those acts. Our services should bring the poor to full consciousness of their dignity as human beings and sons and daughters of God (OMI Con. No.8).

Our mission at Suba Seth Gedara is not primarily a place of social work or work of an NGO in view of village development. We as Oblates require experiencing religious life and apostolic commitment in work and life. We sincerely thank our Provincial Administrative team and the generous and anonymous donors for their contributions in our projects.

Tissa Balasooriya Daham Ketha



The Provincial in Council appointed Rev. Fr. Reginald Jayamaha OMI as the Director of Tissa Balasooriya Daham Ketha at Andiambalama. He has already taken residence. Fr. Reginald returned from Australia obtaining a professional qualification as a Narrative Therapist. He has received the Master's Degree in Narrative Therapy and Community Work, the first of its kind in Sri Lanka. We congratulate Fr. Reginald on his academic achievements.

While continuing the good work done by his predecessors, Fr. Reginald will open this institution for seminars, retreats, youth apostolate, residential programs, and also as a counseling center. The Provincial Council has assigned Fr James Jayasinghe OMI, the Vicar Provincial, to reside at Tissa Balasooriya Daham Ketha for about two to three days a week assisting and keeping company with Fr. Reginald. On the other days Fr. James is available at De Mazenod House, Mattakkuliya. Meanwhile, as a new provincial councilor, Fr. James is in charge of the preaching ministry, parish apostolate, Bakthi Probodanaya magazine, and the Dev Arana (OHIL) community.



“Mazenod Aurudu Udanaya 2021”



Mazenod College Anuradhapura held her celebration of the Sinhala, Hindu New Year, “Mazenod Aurudu Udanaya 2021”, on the 23rd of April 2021 in the School premises. It was both informative and entertaining. The children were given an opportunity to vividly witness firsthand the unfolding of customs and cultural events inter-woven with celebration of the New Year.

They dramatically enacted how the new year customs were being conducted in Sinhala and Hindu cultures. Besides, there were a number of new year games conducted for all the kids. On the whole, it was a very happy day for the children and the tutorial staff of the College. Unfortunately, due to the prevailing situation of the pandemic the parents were not invited for this occasion.



Vocation Promotion

stay in ‘the secure fortress of the rectory’, but set out into the cities and villages, pausing to listen to the people he came across, taking in the desire of those who sought him out, the delusion of a failed night of fishing, the burning thirst of a woman who went to the well to get water or the strong need to change one’s life... In the same way, instead of reducing faith to a book of recipes or a collection of norms to observe, we can help young people ask the right questions, set out on their journey and discover the joy of the Gospel.”

Fr. Randil Fernando OMI is trying his best to catch many fish as possible as the recruitment director. The Provincial Council decided to strengthen his hands with a few more hands. Thus, the Council appointed Frs. Asanga Aruna OMI, Assisi Devasiri OMI, Sameera Fonseka OMI, and Brother Anton OMI to support Fr. Randil.

Pope Francis says, “Vocations promotion, which is the responsibility of every Catholic, must follow the same steps Jesus used when interacting with people. Jesus stopped and met the gaze of the other, without rushing. This is what makes his call attractive and fascinating. Jesus did not

La Kri Vi

Rev. Fr. Asanga Aruna OMI assumed duties as the National Director of La- Kri-Vi ministry on the 14th of January 2021. Given the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic all activities involving the La-Kri-Vi movement have come to a standstill temporarily. Nevertheless, even in the midst of the current pandemic the following programs were conducted for the children and animators.

- Meetings at national and diocesan level
- Strengthening the rapport with Bishops, diocesan directors, animators, and children through visits and discussions on future plans
- Mini training sessions for animators in their own dioceses
- Programs to encourage children's writing capabilities and creative thinking
- Preparations to launch a YouTube channel for La-Kri-Vi.
- Involvement in the events of the Laity Commission
- Conducting Children's programs in Kokilai, Chilaw, Rathnapura, etc.
- Sinhala-Hindu New Year celebrations



JPIC team

We are aware that true peace is not merely the absence of tension or war, but rather it is the presence of justice. We all need to be persons who are concerned about freedom, equality, justice and prosperity for all people, for creation, and for the nature. As Louis Farrakhan says, "There really can be no peace without justice. There can be no justice without truth and there can be no truth unless someone rises up to tell you the truth." Francis Bacon says, "If we don't maintain justice, justice will not maintain us." R 9a. of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules says, "Action on behalf of justice, peace and the integrity of creation is an integral part of evangelization".

Keeping to the spirit of justice, the Provincial Council deemed it important to appoint a team to bravely attend to the demands of justice. Hence the Provincial Council has appointed Fr. Rohan, (Chairperson), Fr. Provincial (Ex Officio) Frs. Dilan OMI, Jude Shalinda OMI, and Assisi OMI to form the team.

Arrivals/ Departures

Fr. Ajith Ruwan OMI has come back to Sri Lanka after his service in South Africa. Though his contract was for two years, he decided to come back with the blessings of the provincials of both countries. The present pandemic situation there has halted his movements and activities. Presently he is brushing up his knowledge of Tamil language.

Rev. Bro. Sajith Thilina OMI will be leaving soon for Italy to continue his studies at the Gregorian University, Rome, while residing in the International Scholasticate, Rome. After completing his theological studies, he will pursue further studies in Canon Law.

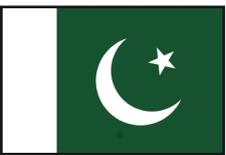


A. Bangladesh

- Taking into consideration the consultation done virtually by Fr. Provincial and taking into consideration the votes of the members, the Provincial Council appointed Frs. Subash Antony Costa OMI, Bawel Valentine OMI, and Bejoy Gabriel Rebero OMI as the Delegation Councilors of the Delegation of Bangladesh.
- The Provincial Council having gone through the bio data and the recommendations of the Delegation Council appointed Fr. Ripon Richard

Rozairo OMI as the Delegation Treasurer of Bangladesh.

- The Provincial Council approved the contract to be signed between the OMI Bangladesh and the Diocese of Rajshahi with regard to accepting of the Parish of Queen Assumed into Heaven, Gopalpur, Natore, in the Rajshahi Diocese. This contract will also be studied by the two parties and be sent to the General Administration for approval before the actual signing.



B. Pakistan

- Taking into consideration the consultation done virtually by Fr. Provincial and taking into consideration the votes of the members, the Provincial Council appointed Frs. Maqsood Nazir OMI, Thayagan Fonseka OMI, and Riaz Dominic OMI as the Delegation Councilors of the Delegation of Pakistan.

- The Provincial Council having gone through the bio data and the recommendations of the Delegation Councils appointed Frs. Pervez Raza OMI as the Delegation Treasurers of Pakistan.
- The Provincial Council approved the contract to be signed between the OMI Pakistan and the Diocese of Faisalabad with regard to accepting of Okara City Parish of the Faisalabad Diocese. This contract will also be studied by the two parties and be sent to the General Administration for approval before the formal signing.



C. Mission of South Korea

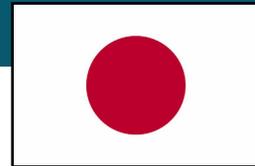
- The Provincial Council appointed Fr. Vincenzo Bordo OMI as the Mission Superior of South Korea. Vincenzo BORDO is one of the Oblates who started the mission in Korea and has worked there since the beginning. He is from Italy and was born in 1957. He has worked as the Parish Assistant in Suwon, in charge of the soup kitchen for poor elders, and of the street children program in Sungnaam. Presently he is the one in charge of 'Hanna's House' (Center for urban poor homeless and street children). Fr Bordo was honored with a Nobel Prize for his services to the homeless, to elderly people living alone, and young people on

the street; all these through a series of programs he created. These include a cafeteria and a youth center in Seongnam, and a satellite city outside Seoul. The Provincial Council appointed Frs. Maurizio Giorgianni OMI and Anselmo Liu OMI as the 1st and the 2nd Councilors repetitively.

- We thank Fr. Anselmo Liu for giving leadership to the Mission in South Korea for the last 3 years. The members of the mission love him as a person who is very kind and a mild-mannered person. He is very good at making relationships with people. Being a very welcoming person, he is very simple and a humble. Thank you, dear Father, for being so. No doubt, the members of the delegation love you much.



Delegations and Mission



D. Mission for the migrants – Toyohashi- Japan

For the last fourteen years, the Oblates have been working in Toyohashi. With the globalization of the economy, the number of Brazilians, Peruvians, and Filipinos of Japanese descent rapidly increased from around 1990. At that time, the priest who was assigned in Toyohashi welcomed foreigners coming to church and took care of their spiritual life by celebrating mass in their native languages. After a few years, he left Toyohashi on transfer in March 2006, and the Oblates at the invitation of the Bishop of Nagoya decided to take residence in Toyohashi.

Considering the situation at that time, the Oblates decided to leave Zendana, and take up the mission in Toyohashi. Ex Oblate Robinson from the Province of Jaffna too served in this part of the land. At the moment Fr. Jude Periespulle OMI from the Province of Colombo is assigned in Toyohashi, and has been working alone for the last two years.



Experience of Fr. Jude Peirispul le OMI

Fr. Jude shares his experiences in the following manner.

Before I came to Toyohashi, Frs. Gen, Eddie, Eduardo and Robinson had served this mission either as pastors or assistants. There were times when help was needed Oblates from the Delegation came here to help people. In the past, two young Oblates had their experience here.

Right now, among the many activities, our focus is to nurture different nationalities that visit this church. Every month, with the help of a few priests from outside, we have organized masses in Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog, English, Vietnamese and Japanese. I have no problem in celebrating masses in English and Japanese, but when it comes to real pastoral work as such, I feel that I lack the skills needed to serve a multi-lingual and a multi-cultural community.

Toyohashi for me is a place full of hope. We have so many children coming to church, and there is a good number for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Apart from children, there are also adults who come here seeking advice and counselling for their problems concerning family, children, marriage etc. One might think that these are only pastoral problems, but they are not. As I always say, the parish is a place where we not only meet people, but it is also a means to lead people to the society in a proper way.



AOFC

AOFC virtual meeting was held from the 22nd of February to the 25th of February 2021. The Delegation of Bangladesh organized it. The organizing team consisted of Frs. Subash Gomes OMI, Rocky Costa OMI, Ripon Costa OMI, and Ajith Victor Costa OMI. The theme of the conference was “Integral Formation and Fraternal Religious Life – Clericalism”. The resource person was Fr. Selvarathnam OMI of the Province of Jaffna. Present during the meeting were Fr. Cornelius OMI (the Assistant General for Formation), Fr. Peter Stoll OMI (Regional Councilor), formators of all the Units, and most of the major superiors of the Region. Fr. Joyti Costa, a Diocesan Priest from Bangladesh, gave an input talk on interculturality.



AORC:

It was an opportunity for and the privilege of the Province of Colombo to organize the Asia Oceania Regional Conference in Colombo. Unfortunately, given the situation of the pandemic, the Province could not organize it physically. Hence, it was held virtually at De Mazenod House, Mattakkuliya, from the 01st of March to the 05th of March 2021. The theme of the AORC 2021 was “Redefining Ongoing Formation as Ongoing Conversion”. The resource person was Fr. Selvarathnam OMI of the Province of Jaffna. Fr. Roshan Silva (Colombo) and Fr. Eugene Benedict (Jaffna) Facilitated the sessions.

Those present at the meeting were Fr. Peter Stoll (General Councilor for Asia Oceania), Fr. Christian Fini (Australia), Fr. Ajith Victor Costa (Bangladesh), Fr. Slawek Kalisz (China), Fr. Roshan Silva (Colombo), Fr. Chinnappan (India and the President of AORC), Fr. Eko Sakti (Indonesia), Fr. Eugene Benedict (Jaffna), Fr. Bardley Rozairo (Japan), Fr. Anselmo (South Korea), Fr. Paulus Khan (Pakistan), Fr. Gerry Delos (the Philippines), Fr. Caludio (Thailand), Fr. Jacques Nguyen Van Tom (Representing Fr. Emmanuel, the Mission Superior of Vietnam), Brother Gorgonio (Representing the Oblate brothers), Fr. Varam Antony (Secretary AORC), Fr. James Jayasinghe (Vicar Provincial, Colombo). The resource person was Fr. Selvarthnam OMI of the Province of Jaffna.

AOPFC

Fr. Andrias Ferando OMI of the Province of Colombo was appointed as one of the 5 members of the Asia Oceania Permanent Formation Committee (AOPFC). Those chosen members, including Fr. Andrais, need to be well qualified in the formation ministry so as to handle all formation issues in the region. This committee will function with a specific term of three years and could be renewed for another term. Thus, it makes the committee permanent. The chosen committee members even though they may not be able to stay any longer in the formation ministry due to transfers to other ministries, yet will serve in the committee being outside of the formation ministry until they complete their term of office.

Events in the Region of Asia Oceania

Few salient aspects elaborated by Fr. Selvam in his sharing are:

- » Ongoing formation is nothing but one's spiritual journey towards mysticism.
- » It is a process and lasts a life time and is integral to life and mission.
- » We are constantly called to 'become' until we reach the 'end point' that Jesus has invited all of us to. It is seeking God above all things and Him alone which is contemplation. It is a second conversion, a radical conversion of a person. It is an ongoing growth of one's affective maturity.
- » In the process one needs to convert oneself from being a believer to be a seeker. It is a pilgrimage to the only place where we can really be.
- » What is importance is transcending external identities, and finding our real identity in God (depth psychology).
- » Ongoing formation is an ongoing spiritual journey and thus it is dynamic.
- » The result of ongoing formation is a paradigm shift.
- » The Oblate of the future is called to be a mystic. A religious is first and foremost called to be a friend of the Lord (it is intimacy/ contemplation) referring to Karl Rahner, he said that future Christian is a contemplative or else everything else is useless. Without radical rooting in the experience of God, we have nothing to say to our contemporaries and we will be impotent.
- » Contemplation is the only ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world. God whom we seek is not only beyond but also deep within. We can experience him only when the mind is still (when you are present) that is feeling oneness with God. It is a state of connectedness.



AORC – Mission Committee

Fr. Eko Shakti OMI, the chairperson of the Mission Committee has tendered his resignation from the Mission Committee and thus during the AORC virtual meeting Fr. Roshan Silva (Provincial- Colombo) was appointed as the Chairperson of the Mission Committee of the Region of Asia Oceania.

At present, there are 2 missions to be undertaken; Mission to the migrants in Japan and Mission to the indigenous people in Bangladesh.

Mission for the Indigenous People in Bangladesh:

This is another Mission that the Mission Committee is trying to plan out. Oblates can explore vast area of virgin land for evangelization among these indigenous people: Tripura, Uraon, Santal, Pahari, Khuki, Murong, and tea-estates. With God's grace, support from Mission Partners, and with our effort and making use of our scanty resources, we carry out our evangelizing mission. Every year a number of indigenous people embraces Catholicism. Almost 97% indigenous people are landless in our evangelizing areas. They live

in government land either in lease or occupation basis. They are subject to eviction at any time. Oblates have initiated 2 housing projects in Sylhet Diocese. Much work still remains undone.

Seeking Missionary Support from AORC and Central Government

Mandated by the General Chapter in 2016, the AORC has taken a noble initiative for strengthening the evangelizing mission to the new faces of the poor. Bangladesh Delegation has been chosen as a venue. AORC can tangibly participate in this creative mission by supplying personnel. Bangladesh Delegation is thankful to St. Eugene Province, India, for sending two missionaries. The process for obtaining Missionary Visa is going on. Financial Support: To carry out evangelizing mission among the indigenous people we need funds. A Procurator/A Desk can be created with the help from mission partners and AORC. Chittagong Diocese is still a virgin land for evangelization among various indigenous stocks where Oblates can witness a "Prophetic Sign" as we did for the establishment of Sylhet Diocese.

by Fr. Ajit Victor Costa, OMI

Transfers

- I. Fr. Alexander Rodrigopulle OMI has been appointed the Superior of De Mazenod House, Mattakkuliya, and the District Superior of Colombo North.
- II. Fr. Maximus Fernando OMI is the one in charge of Youwn Piyasa, St. Vincent's Home, Maggona.
- III. Fr. Reginald Jayamaha OMI appointed Director – Tissa Balasooriya Daham Ketha.
- IV. Brother Anton Fernandopulle OMI has been appointed to look after the Oblate Residence at St. Vincent's Home, Maggona.
- V. Fr. Lylie Jayanth Fernando OMI was installed as the Rector of St. Joseph's Juniorate, Kohuwala. He was also installed as the superior of Marian Grove.
- VI. Fr. Jude Saparamadu OMI has been appointed as the District superior of the Oblate District of Anuradhapura.
- VII. Fr. Nilushan Fernando OMI was appointed the superior of the Nazareth Preaching Band for another term of 3 years.
- VIII. Fr. Gunanayagam OMI – Community member – Sahana Medura, Kanuwana, Jaela.
- IX. Fr. Chrishantha Thilakarathna OMI – Chaplain- De Mazenod College, Kandana.
- X. Fr. Marius Fernando OMI has been appointed as the superior of Suba Seth Gedara, Buttala, and he is also the District Superior of the Oblate District of Upper and Lower Uva. The two assessors of the District are Frs. Udara Dharmarathna OMI and Chamika Sudharshana OMI.
- XI. Fr. Savindu Dinusha OMI is appointed as a community member of the Suba Seth Gedara, Buttala.
- XII. Fr. Jude Shalinda OMI is appointed as the Director of Suba Seth Gedara Buttala.
- XIII. The Provincial Council appointed Frs. Randil Fernando, (Convener) Fr. Roshan Fernando, and Fr. Anton Grecian to coordinate and organize the 175th Anniversary of the Oblate presence in Sri Lanka. They would coopt with the Jubilee committee of the Jaffna Province.



It is very consoling to hear, that after a successful surgery, dear Father General is in the process of recuperating well and with the grace of God he would be able to recommence the duties of the Office with full vigour.



Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord !

Surname	: PERERA
Christian Names	: SYLVESTER BLASIVS LUCIAN
Name of Father	: W. SIMON PERERA
Name of Mother	: B. ANNIE LUSELINE MENDIS
Date and Place of Birth	: 3/2/1936 – MORATUWA
Date and Place of Baptism	: 12/2/1936 - MORATUWA
Parish of Origin	: MORATUWA
Place of Studies	: ST. SEBASTIAN'S COLLEGE, MORATUWA
Entered Seminary/ Novitiate	: Novitiate @ MONT EDEN, KALUTARA
First Oblation: Date and Place	: 15/8/1958 - KALUTARA
Perpetual Oblation: Date and Place	: 15/8/1961 – SCHOLASTICATE, AMPITTYA
Priesthood: Date and Place	: 21/12/1965 – ST. LUCIA'S CATHEDRAL, COLOMBO
Ordaining Prelate	: Bp. FRANK MARCUS FERNANDO



His Mission Field:

Fatima Church-Maradana, Pamunugama, Halpe, Hospital Chaplain - Colombo, Studies at Aquinas - Colombo , Cathedral-Chilaw, Moratuwa, Alagollawa, Wellawatta, Hulftsdorp, Weliveriya, EAPI - Philippines, Nikaweratiya, Nochchiyagama, Payagala, Bopitiya, DMH - Mattakkuliya, Portwayne – USA, Marian Grove - Kohuwala, Vincent's Home - Maggona, Confessor – Madu Shrine, Mannar, Avissawella, Udammitta, Resident - Maradana, Marian Grove - Kohuwala, Vincent's Home - Maggona, Chaplain Grace & Comp' Convent - Moratuwa, Resident - DMH, Retired - Kohuwala



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