

## Philippine Oblate named Cardinal

Pope Francis has named Philippine Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, OMI of Cotabato to the College of Cardinals. Cardinal-designate Quevedo represents the large island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, which experiences all the major problems facing the Philippines, including the complex and often difficult relationship between Christians and Muslims. He is well-known among Asian Catholic leaders, among other things as the chief living intellectual architect of the pastoral ideas coming out of the 42-year-old Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

Quevedo said that he will try to contribute to Pope Francis' vision of a church of the poor. "As the pope also envisioned, we need to become a humble church of the poor in the Philippines," he said.

Mohagher Iqbal, leader of the *Moro Islamic Liberation Front* (MILF), said that Muslims "hoped that a person of the caliber of Msgr. Quevedo would receive a position of prestige and rec-

ognition within the Church." For the founder of the MILF "it is good for peace in Mindanao."

In a 2003 paper titled *Injustice: the Root of Conflict in Mindanao*, Quevedo said the root cause of the Moro rebellion in the southern Philippines was "injustice" to the Moro people's "identity, political sovereignty, and integral development."

Writing in the GMA News, Fr. Jun Mercado, OMI commented, "By naming Archbishop Quevedo as the first Mindanao Cardinal of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis invites us to reflect on the role and



Fr. Jun Mercado

place of the minorities in society; and he invites us also to look at each other in all our diversities and pluralism of faiths no longer as enemies or threats to one another but as partners to build a society for all, especially for the poor and



Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, OMI together care for our environment.

"I am sure Pope Francis is aware of the peace process in Mindanao and the strategic location of the Archdiocese of Cotabato... Archbishop Quevedo belongs also to a minority that understands the Bangsamoro Question as an issue

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Above, l-r: Fr. Jim Fee, Mr. Chambers, Fr. Bill Antone.

## Chambers named Honorary Oblate

On January 12 Mr. Robert Chambers was made an Honorary Oblate. Introduced by the pastor, Fr. Jim Fee, OMI, he received the cross of Fr. Andrew Kunz, OMI from the provincial, Fr. Bill Antone, OMI.

Mr. Chambers is a long-time and very active member of Holy Angels parish in Buffalo, NY who has exhibited generous service to the Oblates. His mother, Frances Chambers, was hired by Fr. Kunz as a parish organist. She, too, was an HOMI and had carried Fr. Kunz's cross.

Chambers is a member of the newly formed Oblate Associates' group in Buffalo. He was a teacher, then principal at Bishop Timon Catholic High School.

*The province began the “Renewing the Province Mission” decision-making process almost three years ago. There was nothing extraordinary about Oblates joining together in order to discern missionary priorities and commitments, but the historical moment required more than usual energy and effort given the growing “mismatch” between personnel resources and ministry commitments.*

At this point in time, most of the decisions that the process generated have either been implemented or are on the way to being implemented. By saying that, a certain interim closure can be made on the major discernments that the process required. *How have we done? Did we make good decisions?* Time will tell.

One thing for sure, having done what we have done so far in the RPM process is only the beginning. Another summit lies ahead of us. *Perhaps the greatest challenge for us now is to discern our future missionary presence. What will it be? Is there something new that is being born?*



**Springtime.** Just as we are beginning to see *signs of spring* in the buds and blossoms and first sprouts, we can also see *signs of renewal* as a result of our efforts. Given other sometimes

pressing diminishment in our lives, we might politely smile at hearing such a statement. Those of us who have been serving for a few years in province leadership and administration also smile at hearing such a hopeful perspective as we spend most of our time trying to stay glued together as we move from challenge to challenge. Perhaps this Lenten season of spring calls us to spend more time and effort contemplating and nurturing the signs of renewal and new life in our province.



**One sign of renewal** has been what I have understood to be an overall acceptance of the “idea” of *mission centers*. These efforts in Buffalo, Lowell, New Orleans and Brownsville are only beginning, and there continue to be some challenges, but I generally hear an enthusiasm and openness to work through the difficulties and make them successful.

Parallel to these efforts to build mission centers is what has become, through the RPM process, *a clearer and more realistic definition of the overall province “platform” of mission and ministries* on which we stand and from which we are all working. This clarity will have to develop even more, but something is taking shape that will help



**Frs. John Morin, Tony Rigoli,**

us respond more creatively to future needs. This overall platform includes certain “anchor ministries” and yet, it is hoped, these anchors will provide us with opportunities for renewed outreach. An example of renewed outreach includes consideration of campus ministry in Houston. Hopefully that development can also be a sign of other doable new initiatives.

**Another sign of renewal** is our insistence and apparent acceptance of *supportive and active apostolic community life*. This pre-dates any RPM efforts we have been making, but it has been essential to the RPM process. It bodes well for a communal participation in mission.

I see signs of renewal in many other areas, including our fund-raising, JPIC ministries, vocation and formation ministries, and province communications and use of media.

**The greatest sign of renewal** is, paradoxically, the *enthusiastic perseverance* of Oblates in mission, ministry and community life (perseverance being, of course, our fourth vow!). In no way do I sense that this perseverance is simply a

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## From the Provincial

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“default” mode as in “Lord, to whom shall we go?”!

**For all its newness, the season of spring can only bring such novelty because it perseveres from year to year and through the decades. One way to value this in our province is from a “generational” perspective.**

*Our older men* who, sometimes into their 90’s, astound me—and I think the rest of us—with their energy, passion for ministry, prayerfulness and missionary experience. On a number of occasions, I have tried to highlight and honor the contribution of our older Oblates. Their sense of history is vital as we approach the future. I want to give special mention to those who in their old age or infirmity serve the province through the daily ministry of prayer.

Likewise we look *to the younger generation*, our scholastics and those in their first years of ministry as examples of renewal. It is that smaller, yet growing group of younger Oblates (and those yet to join us) who will carry a very different province into the future. A portion of the younger Oblates will meet again this August. They will be invited to take even greater “ownership” of the future province mission.

Meanwhile, a significant number of us are somewhere “*in the middle*” often picking up the sweet “smell of the sheep” in a diversity of ministries, both internal and external.

In my view, the contribution of each and every Oblate in the province is significant. The future will be what it will be, and that depends on God.

***Do these and other signs of renewal invite us to bring greater quality to our community life and missionary outreach? Can this quality be characterized by the freely-chosen conviction that,***



**Bishops Michael Sis, Joseph Vasquez, Mike Pfeifer, OMI**  
*Photo by AP Torres for Diocese of San Angelo*

***no matter the geographical area or type of ministry, we continue to be united and strong and on fire as missionaries in the United States and beyond?***

**John Morin**, an Oblate with much experience, recently said to me that we need to breathe spiritual life into this effort of province renewal and go beyond the administrative level that we can easily remain in. Hopefully the faith sharing being done in our communities during this first year of the Triennium as well as some plans to re-establish the ministry of Continuing Formation will help address this very important suggestion.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of our *Oblate bishops* who have carried a burden of leadership with great generosity. Although not directly involved in our province renewal, they have been very supportive of our efforts. On January 27 in San Angelo, TX, after 28 years in his post, **Bishop Mike Pfeifer** was able to hand over his ministry to the newly-ordained Bishop Michael Sis. On December 18, a number of us were able to accompany **Cardinal Francis George**, archbishop of Chicago, as he celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

At that Chicago event, it was a good to meet up with **Archbishop Roger Schwietz**, who continues to serve as archbishop of Anchorage.

We are proud of our Oblate bishops and are grateful for their contribution to the church and society, certainly in the line of our Founder, who himself served as bishop.

**-Fr. Bill Antone, OMI**



Among those celebrating the 95th birthday of **Fr. Jim Riley, OMI** on January 10, was Mary Kay Peine LeMay, (*right*) whose grandmother (Fr. Jim’s aunt) cared for the young James after his mother died. Also present was Patty Stevenson Levy, (*left*) daughter of a good friend whom Fr. Jim met during his years of ministry.

## Houston Oblates begin triennium sessions

All the members of the Houston Oblate community were present at the December 5 meeting to begin the triennium sessions celebrating the anniversary of the congregation's founding.

They used materials from the General Administration for the first part of their deliberations. These center on the Theme of the first year: "A New Heart: Life in Apostolic Community."



Fr. Sal DeGeorge, OMI, wrote that, "The

second part of the process...imagining new endeavors inspired by the "fanned flame" (changes in our lives that we can express through gestures or concrete signs of conversion)...was especially interesting and enjoyable."



**Displaying copies of the new edition of the OMI Rules and Constitutions distributed at the session are (standing, l-r): Frs. Sal De George, Charles Borski, Ramiro Cortez, Henry Walker, Isidore Garcia, Kevin Collins; seated, l-r: Frs. John Franko, Ed Ward, Eugene Canãs.**

## Oblate Cardinal

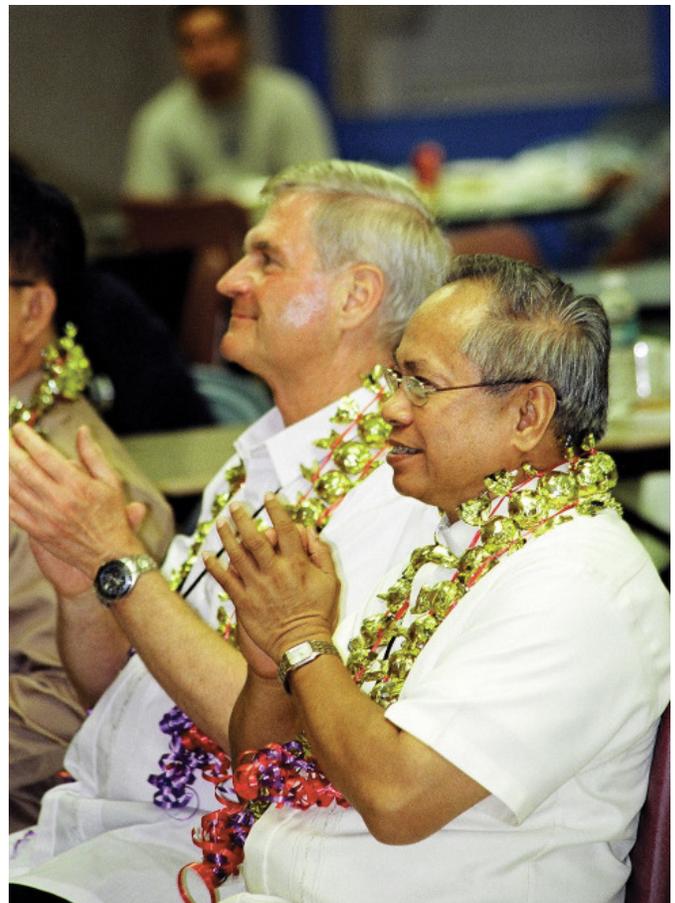
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**of injustice to the Bangsamoro – Injustice to their identity; injustice to their sovereignty; and injustice to their ancestral domain."**

Born on March 11, 1939, in Laoag, Ilocos Norte, Archbishop Quevedo made his novitiate in St. Peter's Novitiate in Mission, TX. In 1964, he completed his S.T.B. and MA in Religious Education at Oblate College (CUA) in Washington, DC, where he was ordained a priest by **Bishop Francis J. McSorley, OMI** on June 5, 1964.

He was appointed a bishop of the Prelature of Kidapawan in Mindanao by Blessed John Paul II in July 1980, named archbishop of Nueva Segovia in the northern Philippines in March 1986 and appointed archbishop of Cotabato two years later. He was inducted into the College of Cardinals in the consistory of February 22, 2014.

**Right: Archbishops Roger Schwietz, OMI and Quevedo during a 2006 meeting in Anchorage AK that sought to strengthen the partnership between the two dioceses which began in 2004. Photo courtesy of [CatholicAnchor.org](http://CatholicAnchor.org).**





**Oblates celebrating with Card. George: Fr. Jim Brobst, Harold Fisher, Bill Antone, Jim Chambers, Archbishop Roger Schwietz, (Card. George), Fr. Alex Roque, Bishop Michael Pfeifer and Fr. David Kalert. -Ebert Photography**

## Francis Cardinal George marks 50th anniversary

**F**rancis Cardinal George, OMI celebrated the golden anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood with an afternoon Mass December 18 at Holy Name Cathedral.

Six cardinals, more than 90 bishops, 200 priests and 35 deacons joined Cardinal George for the Mass, along with ecumenical and interfaith leaders, religious women and men and many laypeople.

Prior to becoming the eighth Archbishop of Chicago, Card. George served as Bishop of Yakima (1990-96) and Archbishop of Portland OR (1996-97). Pope John Paul II named him a cardinal in 1998. He was president of the USCCB from 2007-10.

## Menger renews vows as OMI

**M**atthias Menger professed vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and perseverance as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate at Madonna Residence Chapel in San Antonio on December 8, 2013, during the morning celebration of the Eucharist.

Matt had contacted **Fr. Billy Morell, OMI** a couple years

ago to discuss the possibility of re-entering the Oblates. He had left the Congregation years ago to pursue a degree in Psychology and Counseling which he used in private practice. After careful discernment and much prayer, he decided to return to the Congregation.

In his earlier years with the Oblates, he served in Laos for sev-



eral decades. **Fr. Charles Banks, OMI** served as his novice master.

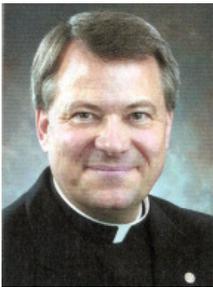
**Fr. Louis Studer, OMI** Vicar Provincial, received his vows in the name of Fr. Louis Lougen, **OMI** Superior General.

*[Holy Cross, Holy Angels](#)*

## Parishes merge under Oblate leadership

**O**n January 15, 2014, the Oblates assumed pastoral responsibility for Holy Cross Parish in downtown Buffalo, NY, a parish community neighboring Holy Angels. **Fr. Jim Fee, OMI** was named the canonical pastor.

Holy Cross is one of the principal immigrant parishes of the Buffalo Diocese, with a large multi-national Hispanic population together with numerous families from Africa: South Sudan, Republic of Congo, Rwanda and other nations from the continent, and additionally some Afro-Americans. **For details, go to: [holycrossbuffalo.com](http://holycrossbuffalo.com).**



**When Wilton Gregory** was Bishop of the diocese of Belleville, IL, I always looked forward to his weekly column in The Messenger, the diocesan newspaper.

Titled, “What I Have Seen and Heard,” his brief article centered on where he had been, what he had seen,

whom he had spoken with and what was told to him.

I plan to do the same from time to time in my article for OMIUSA.

I spent a week in January with our Oblate community in Tijuana, Mexico, and an overnight at Most Precious Blood Parish in Chula Vista, CA.

**In Tijuana, Oblate Joe Dowling invited me to accompany him to celebrate Mass at a government sponsored facility for AIDS and HIV positive patients. Ninety five men and women share dormitory bedrooms there. After Mass, Fr. Joe and I visited some of the dorms to bless the patients who are very ill and unable to attend Mass.**

We spent some time talking to one of the patients who asked Fr. Joe if he could get some laundry detergent for the facility. Fr. Joe gently responded that he would “look into” it. One of the Oblates celebrates Mass at this facility every Friday. The patients are grateful for Fr. Joe’s generosity.

**I went with Oblates Marek Stroba and Nick Harding to celebrate Masses in some of the small chapels a fair distance from the Oblate house. Negotiating the bumpy roads (though they are better than they previously were) made me a bit tired even before we started Mass. (Photos page 7.)**

After Mass Saturday evening, a parishioner asked Fr. Nick and me to visit her tiny house. Her daughter, wheelchair bound and sick, greeted us. Her mother explained that her daughter is unable to accompany her anywhere because the wheelchair is broken. “Would Fr. Nick be able to help?” she asked. Fr. Nick’s response was similar to Fr. Joe’s: “I’ll look into it.”

“Looking into” various wants but most often real needs is what Oblates Nick Harding, Peter Vasquez, Edgar Garcia, Marek Stroba and Joe Dowling spend much of their time and energy doing. Sometimes they “look into” with greater success than other times, depending on the resources available.

“Looking into” the spiritual needs of the parishioners at Most Precious Blood Parish in Chula Vista, California,

*Please remember in prayer  
our recently departed*

**Maria Mauer, 85**, sister-in-law of Fr. Elmar Mauer, OMI, died on Nov. 16, 2013, in Mayen, Germany.

**Jeannine Beauregard**, sister-in-law of the late Fr. Paul Beauregard, OMI, died Dec. 24, 2013 in Lowell, MA.

**Roland Belanger, 97**, brother of the late Fr. Wilfrid Belanger, OMI, died on Jan. 3, 2014 in Merrimack, NH.

**Pauline Breton, 78**, sister of Fr. Real Bourque, OMI, died on Jan. 6 in Middletown CT.

**Fr. Gerard Bolduc, OMI, 72**, died on Jan. 7 in St. Louis, MO.

**Ramiro G. Cortez**, father of Fr. Ramiro Cortez, OMI, died in San Antonio

**Raymond Landry, 84**, brother of Fr. Leroy Landry, OMI, died on Jan. 10 in San Antonio, TX.

**Harriet Maslowski, 92**, sister of the late Fr. John Maslowski, OMI, died on Jan 13 in St. Paul MN.

**Alex Landry, 82**, brother of Fr. Leroy Landry, OMI, died on Jan. 22 in Houston, TX.

**Paul F. Carr, 94**, brother-in-law of Fr. George Kirwin, OMI, died on Jan. 23 in Macungie, PA.

**Fred Rolheiser, 73**, brother of Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, died on Jan. 29 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

**Fr. Richard Houlahan, OMI, 81**, died on Jan. 30 in San Antonio, TX.

**Vincent P. Wilhelm, 85**, brother of Fr. Paul Wilhelm, OMI, died on Feb. 1 in Mascoutah, IL.

**Fr. Chester Cappucci, OMI, 87**, died on Feb. 4 in Tewksbury, MA.

**Maurice A Beaucage, 72**, former Oblate, died on June 10, 2013 in Lewiston, ME.

are Oblates Paul Nourie and Jim Allen. The Oblates have provided excellent spiritual leadership and guidance as indicated by almost 70 parishioners at the daily morning Mass I attended.

The Oblates will soon leave this parish but now it is spiritually enriched with capable lay leadership.

Our work as missionaries continues in Tijuana while we move on from Chula Vista. As missionaries, we continue to go where the needs are greatest, even if some of the resources needed are not always available.



**Dan Franklin (l) with Frs. Charles Hurkes and Lou Studer, both of whom taught at St. Henry's "back when." -Photo: Terry Yokota -Newsletter mailing address is 1381 Rocky Creek Court, Belleville, IL 62220. e-mail [dan@sthenrys.org](mailto:dan@sthenrys.org).**

**D**an Franklin, a 1966 alumnus of the former St. Henry's Seminary in Belleville, IL, together with his wife, Terry Yokota has taken over the task of editing the Alumni Newsletter.

Years ago, the newsletter was begun by former Oblate **Dan Miller**. On his death, it was picked up by two other alumni, **Fr. Don "Doc" Blaes '48** of the Belleville diocese and **Paul "Murph" Golliver '48**.

Dan writes in the latest issue: "Terry and I spent an enjoyable and productive week in the Oblate archives in Washington, D.C., in late October. The Oblates' surpassing hospitality was no surprise, and by the end of the week Terry was saying, 'I want to be an Oblate when I grow up.'"

## *Fr. Studer visits Tijuana*

*Clockwise: 1 & 2: Frs. Nick Harding, OMI and Lou Studer, OMI at two of the mission centers around Tijuana. The Oblates minister at 16 of these centers in and around Tijuana. Travel is very difficult for the people there so the Oblates go to them at these small mission chapels.*

*3: Fr. Paco Gomez, OMI, director of the pre-novitiate program in Tijuana, is celebrating Mass at St. Eugene Church. The parents of this sick girl, in the chair, brought her to Fr. Gomez for a special blessing.*



## Zambia delegation leaders confirmed

On January 15 Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI confirmed the re-appointments of Fr. Freeborn Isaac Kibombwe as Superior of the Delegation of Zambia and of Frs. Pat Gitzen, Valentine Kalumba, Barnabas Simatende, Chishimba Peter Chibesa and Mpundu Godfrey Sekula as Delegation Councilors.

*Right: Standing, l-r: Frs. Kalumba, Simatende, Chishimba, Mpundu, Gitzen; kneeling: Taggart, Kibombwe, Antone and Flores.*



On January 25, Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul and the 198th anniversary of the first Oblate Community coming together, **Bro. Michael Tembo, OMI**, professed perpetual vows in the Immaculate Conception Chapel at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. **Fr. Louis Studer, OMI**, received the vows, as delegate of the Superior General.

A good number of Oblates attended the vow ceremony along with the George Sexton House Community and some invited guests.

**CORRECTION** on page 10 of the January 2014 print issue the wrong picture was used with the story: *All Souls Day Mass*. to the right is the correct photo: l-r: Frs. Amador Lopez, Steve Conserva, Carlos Alarcon, Frank Wagner, Pat Thompson, Stan Zowada and Luis Valbuena. Also on that same page, Fr. Webert Merilan was misidentified as Fr. Karl Davis.



**A**t the invitation of **Fr. Francis Nallapan, OMI**, Provincial of India, on behalf of the Oblate Asia-Oceania Regional Conference, Artie Pingolt and Len Busch on behalf of the Oblate Partnership traveled to Chennai, India to deliver two workshops to Oblate leadership from India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, during the week of January 20-25. They gave an additional two workshops to local Oblate superiors of the India Province along with the women religious with whom they collaborate.

For several years, one of the Missionary Oblate Partnership's services has been "capacity-building," teaching developing-world Oblates and their collaborators "how to fish," providing workshops on grantwriting, financial development and leadership.



The General Congregation provided support via a travel stipend for Artie Pingolt to deliver the workshops. Mr. Busch

traveled from Minnesota for the workshops.

Past workshops have been provided in South Africa, Cameroun, Haiti, Peru and Sri Lanka. Additional workshops are planned for Ukraine and Brazil.



**Conferees are pictured at the site of the workshops, just below Thomas Mount, the site in Chennai where the Apostle Thomas is reputed to be buried.**



**Left-right: Maria Rosa Robinson, Tom Singer, OMI, Kerry Robinson, Greg Woodward, Emma Robinson, Ed Robinson, Bill Antone, OMI, Dana Robinson and Artie Pingolt.**

## Robinsons receive Gerard award

**E**d and Dana Robinson received the Joseph Gerard Award in New York City last October. (OMIUSA January 2014 p7)

The Award was presented, on behalf of the Missionary Oblate Partnership, by **Fr. Bill Antone, OMI** and **Artie Pingolt**.

**Dana and Ed are co-founders of the National Catholic Community Foundation and also trustees of the Raskob Foundation, which had made numerous grants to OMI, both in the US and several countries around the world.**

Dana has known the Oblates since his work as a lay missionary in Lesotho nearly 40 years ago.

# 50 years in Recife celebrated

by Fr. Lou Studer, OMI

More than 1000 people gathered in Recife on February 2 to celebrate 50 years of Oblate presence and ministry in the Archdiocese of Recife-Olinda, Brazil.

Archbishop Fernando Soburido, OSB, presided and preached at the Mass and thanked the Oblates for their work, especially with the poor.

Over 40 Oblates and diocesan priests were present for the celebration. Fr. David Kalert, OMI and I represented the U.S. Province. Several parishioners gave testimony at Mass of how the Oblates encouraged and helped them on their journey to Christ.

The Oblate Provincial of Brazil, Fr. Francisco Rubeaux, OMI, expressed gratitude for the dedication and hard work of the Oblates over these 50 years. He assured the people of the continued presence of the Oblates and made a strong request for vocations.

Responding to the call of Pope John XXIII for each religious community to send missionaries to Latin

America, the Central Province sent Frs. James Kohmetscher, Darrell Rupiper and Peter Grams to found the first Oblate community in an aban-

ern U.S. Province who had come to São Paulo, Brazil in 1945, right after World War II.

When the Oblates arrived in Recife, they faced a military dictatorship in Brazil that did little to serve the needs of the poor. Many Oblates spoke



Among those present at the 50th anniversary, Frs. Lou Studer, Francisco Rubeaux, Archbishop Soburido and Fr. David Kalert.

doned favela known as Brasília Teimosa. The three were soon joined by Fr. Ed Figueroa who had been assigned to join Oblates from the East-

publicly about this cruel injustice. A couple of them were sent to prison, one was tortured and two were forced to leave the country. Those who remained worked on the streets with the very poor.

Together with two Brazilian religious sisters who had worked with him on the streets, Fr. Figueroa founded the Community of God and Our Lady for homeless children, many of whom were disregarded by society because of mental and physical challenges. Archbishop Dom Helder Camara donated a large house for the community.

In September 2001, the City Council of Recife proclaimed Fr. Kohmetscher a *Citizen of Recife* for his many years of solidarity with the poor in their struggle for fit living conditions.



Above, l-r: Frs. Figueroa, Josenildo T. Ferreira and Lou Studer.

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## Recife celebration

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The Oblates have also met with success in fostering vocations. Presently 60 Oblates are in vows ministering in Brazil, with another 34 in various stages



of seminary formation in the province which was established in 2003.

I thanked the Oblates, the Oblate Associates, and all those with whom the Oblates have ministered over these 50 years. Their prayers, encouragement, and faith, help make

our ministry with them one of joy and blessing!

**Above: some of the 1000 people at the anniversary Mass. Left: Frs. Dave O'Brien and Lou Studer in procession. photos:Joao Alexandre**

## Prenovices join parishes in Christmas giving

**O**n December 13, 2013 the prenovices of the Bishop Fallon Residence and members of Holy Angels, Holy Cross and Our Lady of Hope parishes in Buffalo, NY hosted young children and their families for a dinner and a distribution of gifts.

The gifts were donated by members of the parishes and also through the generosity of the Men's Club from Lowell MA. **For many years these men, inspired by the late Fr. Tom Reddy OMI, have made this gift giving possible, not only in the Lowell Area but through-**

out the eastern part of the Oblate Province. The generosity of Mr. Ray Ralls and his merry elves enlivened the event.

**O**n December 19 the Oblate Associates of the Buffalo area gathered for a potluck dinner, song and fellowship. It was a bilingual affair and another opportunity for the charism of St. Eugene to take hold in the Niagara Frontier.





**Fr. Lucien Sawyer, right, with Canadian Consul General Patrick Binns, left, then-Mayor Patrick Murphy in blue shirt, and others at City Hall in 2013. (Web photo courtesy of Jennifer Myers from website of richardhowe.com)**

## ***Lowell Shrine hosts book signing event***

**by Fr. Eugene Tremblay, OMI**

**O**n Saturday, February 8, the Heritage Museum of St. Joseph the Worker Shrine hosted a “meet-and-greet” Book Signing Event publicized throughout the Merrimack Valley.

Hundreds of folks took advantage of the opportunity to purchase and have the author, **Fr. Richard Santerre**, sign their copy of his definitive chronicle of the French Canadian experience in Lowell. Fr. Santerre taught at Boston College and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst before entering the seminary. Now residing in Cambridge, he is the author of numerous works about Franco-American literature and history.

**Fr. Lucien Sawyer, OMI**, and **Dr. Clair Quintal** translated this work into English over a period of several years.

This historical work is entitled:

*St. Jean Baptiste Parish and the Franco-Americans of Lowell, Massachusetts.* It is a detailed account of



**Fr. Santerre with women who came for the book signing. Information on the mural is found at the end of this article.**

life in the enclave called “Little Canada” from the earliest days of its settlement in the mid-1800’s through the height of its impact on the life of the city in the first half of the 1900’s to its eventual decline as its inhabitants became more and more assimilated into the larger culture and/or migrated to other areas.

The story is told through the prism of the ministries and works of the largest French Canadian Catholic parish in the city: St. Jean Baptiste and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who ministered over generations to this large immigrant population.

It all began on April 18, 1868, when **Frs. André Marie Garin** and **Lucien Lagier**, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, arrived to preside over a mission held in the basement of St. Patrick’s Church. Their plans were to leave right after.

“The French people said to them, no, you have to stay with us,” **Fr. Sawyer** says.

**The book details what happened when the Oblates did stay.**

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# Oblates leave Precious Blood

After 21 years, the Oblate ministry at Precious Blood parish, Chula Vista, CA came to an end during the last week of January 26, 2014. That ministry began on Sept. 1, 1993, with **Fr. Frank Wagner** as the first Oblate pastor, and **Fr. Patrick Thompson** as associate.

Bishop Robert Brom asked the Oblates to begin Spanish-speaking ministry in the parish. Inasmuch as Fr. Pat was a veteran of some 25 years of Spanish-speaking ministry in Mexicali, he took charge of this ministry.

During the pastorate of Fr. Wagner, two other Oblates contributed three years each to parish ministry at



**From left to right: Nor Bonggat, Amy Pelina, Fr. Frank Wagner, Fr. Bill, Deacon Ruben Pelina, Fr. Paul Nourie and Deacon Rollie Bonggat. Deacon Rollie and his wife Nor Bonggat are Oblate Associates.**

Most Precious Blood Church: **Fr. Ernest Sylvestre**, and **Fr. Charles Prass**, both now deceased.

## Book signing

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Fr. Garin purchased a church for \$11,500 on Lee Street, now St. Joseph the Worker Shrine. Other Franco-American parishes followed: St Jean-Baptiste, Immaculate Conception Church, Notre Dame de Lourdes, St Louis de France, Ste Marie, Ste Jeanne D'Arc, St Andrew in Billerica and Ste Therese in Dracut, now Ste Marguerite D'Youville.

In a Lowell Sun article, Debbie



**Fr. Sawyer and Dr. Claire Quntal**

Hovanasian writes that "The Franco-American community simply thrived under the much beloved Garin's ministry, resulting in civic groups, schools administered by French-Canadian nuns and Marist Brothers, hospitals run by the Grey Nuns of the Cross, cultural offerings, French-language newspapers, a Franco-American Orphanage run by the Sisters of Charity, Ottawa, and more."

**"This 5X7 foot mural (p. 12) is the work of Wayne Morrell of Rockport, MA. The left panel is a rendition of Burlington, VT, where Archbishop Williams of Boston first met the Oblates in 1867, inviting them to Lowell to minister to French Canadian immigrants. --The middle panel shows a typical farming village of Quebec Province where workers were recruited for the textile mills of New England. The right panel is a rendering of the City of Lowell in the late 19th century. St. Joseph the Worker Shrine can be seen in the lower right corner."**

The spiritual powerhouse of the parish during those years was the Presence of the Lord in the Perpetual Adoration chapel. This gave the impetus to the corporal works of mercy, especially in the weekly feeding of the poor. A strong advocate of holiness of life, Fr. Wagner introduced the *Christ Renews His Parish* program, functioning in both English and Spanish.

The last seven years have witnessed the pastorate of **Fr. Paul Nourie**, assisted by **Frs. Thompson, Ricardo Lopez, Joseph Ferraioli and James Allen..**

Fr. Paul's expertise as plant manager was shown in the form of the solar system to lower the cost of energy.

Shortly after Fr. Paul's arrival the outside front patio entrance to the Church was developed; the interior was spruced up with repainting, installing of a newly designed and locally fabricated "Rose Window;" locally designed and fabricated outside doors and a new heating and air-conditioning system. A devotional water fountain was constructed before the Our Lady of Guadalupe statue.

## Novices celebrate Foundation Day

Once again, the Oblate community at the novitiate commemorated the beginnings of the congregation.

The day included a reflection on the official documentation of January 25, 1816, washing of feet, and a simple meal at a table of planks cut from the novitiate trees. As with other communities throughout the province, the novices are engaged in the triennium sessions preparing for the congregation's 200th anniversary.



**Above, Fr. Jack Lau, OMI leads the community in prayer.**



**Left: Fr. Rudy Nowakowski, OMI, Novice Nchimunya Haakakata, Fr. Tom Horan, OMI, Novices Paul Kunda and James Fernandes Raja singing a hymn preparatory to their meal.**

## Thousands March for Life in DC

Cardinal Francis George, OMI and thirty seminarians from the Chicago Archdiocesan Mundelein Seminary stayed at 391 in Washington, DC January 21-22 for the 41st annual March for Life.



however, proceeded as planned.

Pope Francis tweeted "I join the March for Life in Washington with my prayers. May God help us respect all life, especially the most vulnerable."

Oblates joining Cardinal George and the hundreds of seminarians, priests, bishops and cardinals at the Vigil Mass held at the Basilica Shrine of the Immaculae Conception, were **Frs. Bill Antone, George Kirwin, Charles Hurkes, and Ray LeBrun.** Frs. Hurkes and **Bevil Bramwell** also concelebrated the morning Mass with the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, principle celebrant.

## Centers present Holy Week programs

For years, the Oblate retreat centers have offered special programs during Holy Week to prepare for the Paschal Mystery. They continue to do so this year.

At **Christ the King Retreat House** in Buffalo, MN, **Fr. Bill Mason, OMI** will reflect on the theme, *Sacred Time, Sacred Meaning*, from 7:00 pm April 16 -12:45 pm April 19.

**“Dates, times, places and persons are precious in the history of any group of family.** They have influenced how we arrived at where we are and shed light on our present day experience. Holy Week does that for us. It is a precious, sacred time because of the way it illumines how God is present in our present.”  
[christtheking@kingshouse.com](mailto:christtheking@kingshouse.com)

**Immaculata Retreat House** in Willimantic, CT has scheduled two programs open to men and women.

The first, running from Sunday afternoon, April 13 to Thursday Noon, April 17 will be a silent retreat conducted by **Fr. Bill Sheehan, OMI** on the theme, *Sitting with Jesus in Jerusalem-Readying Ourselves for the Paschal Mystery*.

From Holy Thursday afternoon, April 17 to Easter Sunday, April 20, **Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI** will present the second program, centered on *Walking with Jesus in Jerusalem - Undergoing the Paschal Mystery*. For more information: [info@immaculataretreat.org](mailto:info@immaculataretreat.org).

At **King’s House of Retreats** in Belleville, IL, **Fr. Ray**



**Cook, OMI** and **Deacon Tom Franklin** will team up to lead sessions for a men’s retreat on the theme, *Rising with the Saints*, beginning Thursday, April 17 at 4:30 pm, concluding with lunch on Saturday, April 1. [info@kingsretreatcenter.org](mailto:info@kingsretreatcenter.org)



## NC Area meets in preparation for straw ballot for province leadership

From January 10-12, 2014, 19 Oblates gathered at Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, MN to prepare for taking a straw ballot for the next provincial council. **Fr. Warren Brown, OMI**, General Councillor for Canada-US, led the discussions.

**From left: counterclockwise: Frs. Jim Brobst and Harry Winter; Frs. Lou Studer and Al Svobodny, Norm Volk (in back); Standing: Frs. Harold Fisher, Lon Konold and Norm Volk; seated: Fr. John Cox.**



✓ The 10th Anniversary of the death of **Archbishop Denis Hurley, OMI** was marked by a series of events at the Denis Hurley Center in Durban, South Africa. The February 13-16 activities focused on peacemaking and reconciliation arranged by organizations closely linked with the Archbishop. For more information: <http://www.archbishopdenishurley.com>.

✓ Beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 5, St. Joseph the Worker Shrine in Lowell, MA will be presenting its Spring Program on the seven Wednesdays of Lent, centered on the theme *How to Read the New Testament*. [www.stjosephshrine.org/about-the-shrine](http://www.stjosephshrine.org/about-the-shrine)

✓ St. Patrick's Day, 2014, marks the ten year anniversary of the death of **Fr. Robert Schwenker, OMI** in the outermost periphery of Bogotá, Colombia. *Path to Poverty: From the Bronx to Bogotá in Memory of Fr. Robert Schwenker, OMI* by Daniel J. Stollenwerk is the story of Schwenker's influence upon Stollenwerk, the result of both an early 1980s South Bronx experience and a 2009 trip to Colombia, the tale of a naïve recent college graduate who desired to live the beatitudes and a mature priest who did. Available on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Path-Poverty-Bogot%C3%A1-Memory-Schwenker-ebook/dp/B00HKMYOAS>. Or contact the author directly for a Word copy: [dstollenwerk@yahoo.com](mailto:dstollenwerk@yahoo.com).



✓ **Fr. Harry Winter, OMI** has sent notification of a February 3 update of the Ecumenical website, *Mission, Unity and Dialogue*. Check it out at: <http://www.harrywinter.org>.

✓ The Council for Values and Philosophy will hold its Fall International Seminary from August 18-September 19, 2014, in Washington, D.C.: The theme of this year's seminar will be: "Religion: Key to Understanding Violence and Promoting Peace in Global Times." Contact: <http://www.crvp.org>.

✓ In the province's Pacific Area, the Oblates will be transferring to the diocese a part of the San Eugenio parish in Tijuana over the next several years. **Fr. Steve Conserva, OMI**, area councillor, reports that a permanent and larger parish church on the San Eugenio property will be constructed. Efforts will be made to integrate the surrounding chapels into a single Sunday Mass site. The Oblates will continue to serve and develop the less developed outlying chapels.



REMEMBER  
THAT THOU  
ART DUST AND  
UNTO DUST  
THOU SHALT  
RETURN

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