MISSIONARY OBLATE PARTNERSHIP

Strategic Needs List 2017

"So many people have it within themselves to do good…if they are only asked."

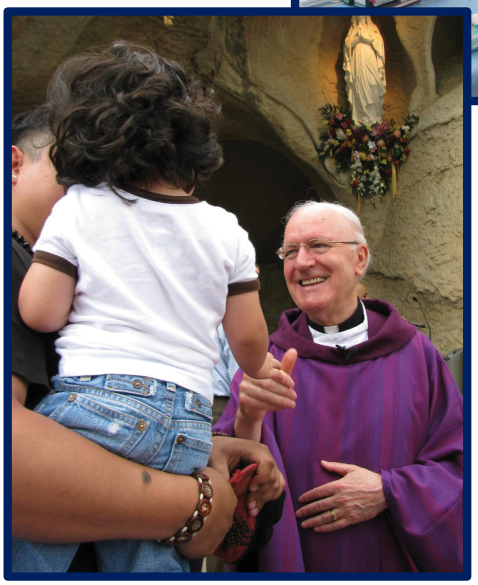
Eugene de Mazenod

The purpose of the Strategic Needs List is to identify for Partners specific and general needs that the US Province of OMI has, to either increase or maintain priority ministries in the US and around the world. Although the Missionary Oblates are present in over 55 countries, the US Oblates have unique supportive obligations with the following OMI missions: Turkmenistan, Mexico (Tijuana) and Zambia.

SNL 2017 heavily weighted toward operational support that the Oblates need to continue the ministry and support commitments they already have. People love a shiny new car, but it takes the unseen gas in the tank for the car to run. Asking for "operational" support is like the gas in the tank. Just so, OMI missions cannot run without it, but it is often only close friends who are deeply committed and understand the need for the "unseen" gift.

Strategic Needs List Summary

MISSION	TYPE OF SUPPORT
OMI Turkmenistan Mission	***Operational, Scholarship, Mission Repair***
OMI Tijuana	***Operational, Children's Programs, Family Assistance***
Partnership Mission Fund	***Direct Grant, Endowed Gift***
US Oblate Seminarians	***Adopt A Seminarian Gift, General Operational***
OMI Vocations Campaign	***Vocations Event, Vocation Director Expense***
OMI Zambia	***Operational, Used Mission Vehicle, Mission Repair***
Vance Seminary Residence	***General Gift or "House" Underwriting Pledge***
Oblate School of Theology	***Operational Support, Lecture Series, Endowed Chair***
Oblate Retreat Houses	***Scholarships for Low Income Retreatants***
Retired Priests and Brothers	***Operational***



Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, is a former Soviet-bloc country, achieving its independence from Russia in 1991. Its current government, however, is similar to the highly authoritarian model of its former master, with little regard for the civil and religious freedoms we take for granted.
The Oblates are only allowed into Turkmenistan under diplomatic cover, representing the Vatican City State.

Oblates are not allowed to publicly minister but do so quietly and where necessary, privately, to address the spiritual needs of the existing minority Christian population (approx. 9%). 90% of Turkmenistan is Muslim.

The US Oblates have increased their annual pledge of support to **$60,000** in operating support for the OMI community there, most of which has gone to repair and maintain their current mission residence and also to provide ongoing education for seminarians there.

San Eugenio Mission- Tijuana, MEXICO

The request from the US Oblates for OMI-Tijuana is the SAME AS LAST YEAR: to help underwrite the amazing work that is done through the annual operations of San Eugenio Mission.
THE CHALLENGE: Foundations will only fund specific programs or capital purchases like a van or generator. They do will NOT just give to operating expenses, but that is exactly what we need the support for. Thousands of poor families and children are assisted by the everyday operating programs of the San Eugenio Mission.

The US Oblates have pledged $200,000 in operating support. Your gift will help them reach that budget goal.

4 Oblates and 4 Sisters serve a mission population of over 200,000. This population grows each day as refugees from other parts of Mexico travel north.

Since its founding nearly 20 years ago, San Eugenio has expanded its outreach ministries to include 9 “satellite chapels” in the areas surrounding the main mission, a thriving Youth

Ministry program (250+ Youth Ministry Leaders in the parish!), medical and dental services, family and personal counseling, food and clothing relief and programs for emotionally and mentally handicapped children. In addition, Oblates have established a pre-novitiate in Tijuana for a growing number of young men from the mission interested in becoming Oblates- this year three men joined the pre-novitiate community in Tijuana. These pre-novices provide volunteer services at San Eugenio as part of their seminary formation.

New Oblates from Tijuana Mission!

Partnership Mission Fund

Thanks to a generous "starter gift" from the late Rosemary Walsh, HOMI, the Partnership now has the Partnership Mission Fund(PMF), a restricted fund that will act like a foundation, to give to various mission projects in the Oblate world, be that the US or countries around the world.

In 2017 the Partnership Mission Fund totals nearly $1.3 million and will make 10-15 small grants totaling $65,000. We have already received applications from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Haiti, Mexico and Zambia, to name just a few of the OMI mission countries around the world.

However, the needs of Oblates, who are present in THE world's poorest countries, greatly exceed that amount. We ask you to consider two types of gifts:

1. A gift to be used as a direct grant of the PMF for 2017 or 2018. The average grant will be $5,000-$10,000.
2. A restricted gift, made now or via your estate planning to add to the corpus of the PMF to generate income for permanent future grants.

OMI school for girls in Bangladesh

US Oblate Seminarians

Sponsor A Seminarian's Education: $10,000

Sponsor A Seminarian's Annual Living Expenses: $25,000

The US Province has three levels of seminarians in the US. For the three levels of seminary formation identified below, the Oblates provide **annual support of $743,000.**

Pre-Novitiate

The pre-novitiate programs, in Tijuana and Buffalo, NY, are for men seriously discerning formal entrance to the novitiate and the taking of vows to become an Oblate. This is a time of study, regular discussion with their Oblate spiritual director, and pastoral service in the local community. Currently 15 young men are in these pre-novitiate programs. On a side note, three of these pre-novices participated in the Partner-sponsored Oblatepalooza program in Zambia this summer. All operating expenses of the pre-novitiate program, with the exception of college tuition are underwritten by the US Province.

Novitiate

A novice has made an open-ended commitment to become an Oblate and at the end of the 1 year program makes formal and perpetual vows- he "becomes" an Oblate. This year includes less study and more reflection and prayer about how his life will be as an Oblate missionary. Given that an Oblate provides, on average, over 40 years of active ministry, this is a time to decide how committed one is to becoming a missionary for life. All operating expenses- room, board, health care, travel- are underwritten by the US Province.

Scholasticate

This is the four-year period when an Oblate seminarian completes his academic preparation and prepares for priestly/brotherly service to the Church and to the charisms of the Oblates. Most scholastics complete their period of study and preparation at Oblate School of Theology (OST. There are currently 14 scholastics in San Antonio.

All operating expenses, as above and including tuition costs at OST or other, are underwritten by the US Province.

Vocations Campaign

Sponsor A "Come & See" Weekend: $5,000

Sponsor A Vocation Director's Annual Transportation: $10,000

A recent study of religious sisters in the US show that 25% of Catholic women "considered" becoming a sister, but there was also little to no follow-up on this by US sisters because there was little or no connection with these women.

Because young men and women will often remain private about their interest in a vocation to religious life it is imperative that Oblates go out and "open the door" to this conversation with young men who might be considering life as a missionary but need to asked to explore this possibility.

The US Province has 3 Oblates dedicated to the vocations ministry. All inquiries about life as an Oblate, from whatever source, are directed to one of these men for personal follow-up.

In addition, programs are sponsored throughout the country- in parishes, on college campuses, at conferences- to encourage young men to come forward with interest. "Come And See" weekends, usually held at one of the pre-novitiates or other OMI venue, have been very effective in moving the inquiry process along for a candidate to become decisive about giving the Oblates a try or concluding that life as a missionary is not for them.

If the same data holds true for Oblates as the study revealed for sisters, the good news is that we don't need to "sell" or convince young men, we just need to be available and to invite them to have a conversation with us.

The US Province **cost for annual vocations efforts is $117,000.**

OMI-Zambia Delegation

Remote hut-chapel in Zambia

The Oblate Delegation of Zambia is the single greatest US Oblate expense outside of the country.

Oblate ministries and priorities in Zambia include several parishes in remote areas, a radio station covering nearly half the country, shelters/orphanages for young women, a leprosy clinic, an AIDS hospice, government advocacy for women's rights, numerous catechism programs, and a sustainability program in agriculture.

The US Province contributes **over $1.5 million each year** to this thriving mission enterprise. For its part, the Delegation cooperates with the Partnership each year in writing grants for various projects. But given Zambia's level of poverty- a number of sources now rank Zambia as the poorest country on earth- there exist few in-country opportunities for the Delegation to offset its own ministry expenses. The Delegation reaches, literally, millions of Zambians, but for the foreseeable future, they need our support to continue doing that.

General Need: Operational Support

Specific Needs: Used Mission Vehicle $8,000
Repair of Oblate Residences (2) $5,000 each

Vance Seminary Residence, San Antonio

Vance Residence will be officially completed and dedicated by mid-2018.

The Missionary Oblate Partnership's response to the US Province request for leadership in building this 5-house residence complex was nothing short of amazing. The Partnership has now provided over 50% of all funds needed to create this residence, which will house seminarians from the US, Mexico, Zambia, Canada and India!

In addition to Vivian Vance, the Chapel and 4 of the 5 houses that comprise the Vance Residence have been underwritten by Partners and an anonymous friend of the Partnership: Frank and Paul Hogan, Len and Marge Busch, Anonymous and Gee Gee and John Whitehurst. Major gifts have also been made by Muriel and Bob Klosterman and Bill Fortune. Several other Partners have made gifts toward this project and will be recognized at the Dedication.

One More House

One of the five houses has not yet been underwritten**.** A pledge of $250,000 is sought as the final major gift for this important project. Pledges can be paid off over a period of several years.

Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio

OST Continuing Education Platform

While the "day job" of OST is to educate seminarians and laypeople for masters and doctoral degrees in theology and spirituality, the Continued Ed program at OST has reached thousands of others who choose to attend a formal class, a certificate program or just an evening's lecture. The program has not only educational value, but feedback indicates that it has revitalized the faith-life of many individuals too. Finally, from a marketing/branding perspective, it adds broad-based value to OST's image in San Antonio and throughout Texas.

Continuing Education is viewed by OST as a service and ministry to the people of San Antonio and Texas but has never been able to cover the costs involved. There are several named giving opportunities within the platform.

An OST Lecture Series

As part of both Continuing Ed and its entire academic curriculum, OST seeks a donor/s to underwrite a lecture series, with a topic/theme of their choosing, that would be available to all the institution's publics and will give it the chance to show its relevance on theological issues.

Many thanks to Partners Veronica and Ruben Escobedo who made a leadership gift to underwrite a lecture series on Hispanic issues in theology.

OST Endowed Chair

OST seeks to establish endowed chairs in a number of areas of theology and spirituality, to make permanent an academic or spiritual focus that is also of importance to the donor. A chair is endowed at OST with a gift of $1 million.

OMI Retreat Centers Illinois, Minnesota, Texas

Consistent with the Oblate mission to "evangelize the world's poor," OMI retreat centers do not require that any guest pay to stay and make a retreat at one of our locations. "Suggested donations" are also priced to make any visit available to those of moderate income. In addition, OMI retreat centers make themselves available free of charge to other groups that serve their local community, such as AA or Al Anon.

It is rare for any Catholic retreat house to break even or show a surplus. Given our commitment to making the retreat experience available to all, that is even more the case at Oblate retreat centers.

The US Province provides **annual support of $434,000** to the retreat centers in the US.

Retired Oblate Priests and Brothers

The US Province has entered a period of years where support of retired Oblates is high and will continue to remain so for the next several years. This is true only because so many Oblates gave lives of service in the preceding decades. But because today there are fewer Oblates in wage-earning ministries, the financial challenge is even greater.

After an average of over 40 years in active ministry, many times in difficult physical environments, the US Province provides retirement care of its priests and brothers at various residences around the country. These include locations in San Antonio, St. Paul, Tewksbury, MA and Belleville, IL.

This care includes a place to live, food, clothing, transportation needs and health care. Many of the "retired" Oblates still remain active on weekends and part-time with various ministries such as spiritual direction of individuals, giving retreats or serving organizations such as Unbound, Food For The Poor, and The Propagation of the Faith.

Oblates do draw benefits such as social security or Medicare benefits but these are never enough. The US Province contributes millions of dollars each year to cover the total cost of all the care of these faithful men each year.