



FREE
Please Take One



Oblate Connections

Oblate Connections – No.39, 21st May, 2018

There is little doubt that there is a sense of ever growing turmoil in the world around us. We are increasingly aware of the continuing conflict in Syria and rising tensions between Iran and Israel. Closer to home we hear almost daily reports of violence in the form of knife crime and feuds among criminal gangs. At times I have heard people speak of a sense of underlying fear and concern for both the present moment and for the future. Yet as believers we are invited to witness to the Kingdom of God in the present moment while looking forward to the future with hope.

I find it consoling to ponder the multitude of emotions the disciples must have felt when they gathered in secret after the Resurrection and awaited the gift of the Spirit. They probably felt concern about the future as they faced their fears while living in a hostile environment. Yet it is this same group that would throw open the doors and proclaim the Christian message.

Reflecting on this gift Pope Francis writes, “On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came down from heaven, in the form of “divided tongues, as of fire... [that] rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages” (Acts 2:3-4). This is how the word of God describes

the working of the Spirit: first he rests on each and then brings all of them together in fellowship. To each he gives a gift, and then gathers them all into unity. In other words, the same Spirit creates diversity and unity, and in this way forms a new, diverse and unified people: the universal Church. First, in a way both creative and unexpected, he generates diversity, for in every age he causes new and varied charisms to blossom. Then he brings about unity: he joins together, gathers and restores harmony. He does so in a way that effects true union, according to God’s will, a union that is not uniformity, but unity in difference.”

We have been gifted by the same Spirit with all that we need to proclaim the Christian message in our world today. We are invited to witness to the dignity of human life from the moment of conception until we eventually return home to God. Our world needs the courage, hope, faith and perseverance of Christ’s followers. The world needs the fruits, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as Saint Paul lists them: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22).

In the various articles in this issue there are many examples of how people are using their talents to give such a witness in very diverse ways and places. Yet it is the same Spirit that binds us all together. I pray that all of us will embrace our talents and in the words of St Eugene that we “will leave nothing undared for the Gospel.”

- Fr. Lorcán O’Reilly OMI

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Seamless Garment	2
Come to the Feast	4
One moment that stands out on my journey	6
World Meeting of Families	8
A Mass in El Marsa, Sahara	10
A response to the reality of Human trafficking	12
The Final Hours of St Eugene	14
Building Bridges	16



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The Seamless Garment

– *Fr Ron Rolheiser, OMI*

John of the Cross teaches that within spirituality and morality there are no exempt areas. Simply put, you cannot be a saint or a highly moral person if you allow yourself a moral exemption or two. Thus, I may not allow myself to split off one moral flaw or sinful habit and see it as unimportant in the light of my positive qualities and the overall good that I do. For John of the Cross, you cannot be a saint and have a moral blind-spot, even if it's a minor one. A bird tethered to a rock, he says, cannot fly irrespective of whether the cord holding it is a cable or a string.

The same is true for our efforts to protect life and foster justice in our world. The protection of life and the promotion of justice are all of one piece. We cannot be an authentic prophet and have a few moral blind spots.

A huge consequence flows from this, namely, we cannot treat issues like abortion, nuclear war, lack of ecological sensitivity, the plight of refugees, racism, sexism, poverty and inequality, poor access to health care, unequal access to education, sexual irresponsibility, and discrimination against the LGBT community in isolation from each other, as if these were wholly discrete issues. Whether we admit it or not, these areas are all inextricably interconnected. To quote Cardinal Bernardin: “The success of any one of the issues concerning life requires a concern for the broader attitude in society about the respect for human life.” That’s a strong challenge for all of us, on all sides of the ideological spectrum.

Thus, those of us who are concerned about abortion need to accept that the problem of abortion cannot be effectively addressed without at the same time

addressing issues of poverty, access to health care, sexual morality, and even capital punishment. The interconnection here is not wholly mystical. It’s real. Abortion is driven more by poverty and lack of adequate support than by any liberal ideology. Hence, the struggle against abortion must also focus on the issues of poverty and support for pregnant women. As well, to morally accept killing in one area (capital punishment) helps sanction its acceptance in another area (abortion). Sexual morality must also be addressed since abortion is the inevitable bi-product of a society within which two people who are not married to each other have sex with each other.

It’s all one piece, and any opposition to abortion that fails to adequately recognize the wider perspective that more fully defines Pro-life leaves many sincere people unable to support anti-abortion groups.

Conversely, those of us who are concerned with the issues of poverty, health-care, capital punishment, ecology, war, racism, sexism, and LGBT rights, need to accept that these issues cannot be effectively addressed without also addressing the issue of abortion. Again, the interconnection isn’t just mystical, it’s empirical: Failure to be sensitive to who is weak and vulnerable in one area deeply compromises one’s moral standing on other issues that deal with the weak and the vulnerable. We must advocate for and strive to protect everyone who falls victim within our present way of living, and that includes the unborn.

It’s all of one piece! There can be no exempt areas, thus opposition to the protection of the unborn is not just antithetical to what’s central within a social

justice agenda, but it, perhaps more than anything else, leaves liberal ideology and its political allies compromised in a way that allows many sincere people to withhold their support.

Clearly, of course, nobody is asked to give equal energy to every justice issue in the world. Accepting that none of these issues can be effectively dealt within isolation shouldn't stop us from passionately working on one issue or another. But knowing that these issues are all of one piece does demand that we always recognize that, however important our particular issue, we may not see it in simple black and white, without nuance, as an issue that can be dealt with within one ideological, political, or religious silo. We must always be sensitive to the whole, to the big picture, to the intricate interconnections among all these social issues.

And, not least, we must be humble before and sensitive to our own moral inconsistencies.

We will, this side of eternity, always have them and we must forgive ourselves for them and not let perfection, that fact we can't be fully consistent, be the enemy of the good, that fact that we can do some good work that is effective. But acknowledging both our own inconsistencies and the complexities of the issues should make us more open to listening to the views of others and make us less doctrinaire and fundamentalist in our own attitudes.

All the issues that deal with justice and peace, are of one piece, one whole, one moral corpus, one seamless garment; and, like the soldiers casting dice for Jesus' clothing, we should hesitate to tear this garment into different pieces.



Do you have Creativity and Energy?

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The successful candidate will be a good communicator and relationship builder with organisational skills. They will also work collaboratively to develop innovative and imaginative responses in a rapidly changing communications landscape.

For a detailed job description, salary and contract information please email:
Fr. Lorcan O'Reilly at oblate_partners@btinternet.com

Closing date for completed applications is 30th June 2018. Shortlisting will take place in early July.





Come to the Feast

In London, located almost opposite the Oblate Parish of Sacred Heart Church, you will find Conway House, a hostel for men with a range of support needs...

Since its foundation in 1973 as part of Irish Centre Hostels, many Oblates have served in Conway House and worked hard to serve some of those in greatest need by providing shelter and support. Over the years the needs and demands on the service have evolved and today Conway House is part of Sapphire Independent Housing, whose mission is “to improve lives and value people”. The Oblate link with this work to care for those on the margins of society is being kept alive today through the involvement of the Friends of St Eugene.

Every Thursday a group of volunteers visit a local supermarket and bakery and collect ‘waste’ foods – items that cannot be sold and which would normally be thrown away. They bring these items to a kitchen in Conway House and begin the job of turning these ingredients into a delicious, home-cooked meal for the residents. This is known as the FEAST – a project that provides an opportunity for the residents of Conway House to help prepare and enjoy a communal meal with volunteers from all walks of life. No one knows what food will be donated by the supermarkets, so the ‘chefs’ have to use their ingenuity to create tasty meals each week – no one has complained so far!

Some of the Kilburn Friends of St Eugene have found that volunteering at FEAST is a ministry that reflects the Oblate charism or spirituality, helping those who are on the margins of society and who are often ignored by others. But as well as helping to prepare the food, the volunteers sit down and share the meal with those who live there, chatting with them and hearing their stories.

Albino and Stephen, two Friends of St Eugene, regularly volunteer at Feast and share some of their experiences:

My name is Albino. I am a parishioner and I also take part in the choir of Sacred Heart Church in Kilburn. About four years ago I joined, out of curiosity, one of the many groups active in the church called “Friends of St. Eugene”. We meet once a month and we learn about the works and the spirituality of St. Eugene De Mazenod, founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and how St. Eugene dedicated himself and his life with courage and determination in helping the poor while spreading the gospel.

It was at one of our meetings, at the end of last summer, that a young lady called Hannah, a person full of confidence and contagious enthusiasm, came to talk to us about volunteering for a new project called “FEAST”. I found this project very interesting and agreed, with 3 others, to go and see what it was all about.



FEAST provides access to regular meals for people suffering food poverty, the meals are made from 'waste' foods that would otherwise be thrown away, and they are made for and by the community; volunteers and service-users alike. These special meals provide a platform for vulnerable adults who live in hostels to socialise and eat a warm and healthy meal.

The intimate setting of a communal kitchen creates a family atmosphere and togetherness that is hard to replicate in other services offering meal provision, where volunteers and service-users are encouraged to befriend one another, share the space as equals, and dine together as equals on a weekly basis. "I love to coming to a FEAST! ...it brings a lot of emotion, chaos and fun to the residents of the hostel" - "it is spiritually uplifting... it creates a community connection on a personal level with less fortunate people".

My name is Stephen. I joined the Friends of St Eugene in Kilburn London nearly two years ago.

At first there was some doubt as to what these "Friends" were about, but there was no pressure from anyone, and over several months I slowly found a hidden spirituality in the group, and a realisation that individuals were serving in the ministry of the church, in different ways according to their talents without shouting about it. One member our group, Albino, asked if I would be interested helping at Conway House, a residential hostel for homeless men.

In 2015 a young lady Hannah Style started FEAST. Hannah approached Sainsbury's supermarket and a local bakery and asked them if they would donate their misshaped vegetables and fresh food that they could not sell. This food is collected each Thursday, and from what is regarded as waste, menus are created. This provides at least one good meal a week for the residents and someone to talk to. And this is what Albino introduced me to, and I enjoy knowing that in some small part we are helping, within the spirit of St Eugene, who also gave himself to serving the poor and marginalised.

There are some sad stories as to how these men came to be in the position they are in. It isn't always their choice, but rather it starts with only one incident or a feeling of failure and with no one to turn to, it can start a decline into despair and rejection, and in some cases crime.

If you are interested in learning more about the feast please contact:

Kirk Jacob, Oblate Partners in Mission Office,
Denis Hurley House,
14 Quex Road, London NW6 4PL

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7624 7296

Email: kirk.oblate.partners@gmail.com



One Moment That Stands Out On My Journey

– *Fr Ray Warren, OMI*

As I come to the end of my six years of service as Province leader, there are many moments along that journey that were significant, challenging and of course some were difficult too.

I suppose that is true for any of us as we look back over our lives but what is important is the journey itself and how learn on that journey.

I will share just one significant rare moment that I experienced and which continues to challenge me.

I attended the 36th General Chapter of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 2016. This is an event held every six years to review the mission of the Oblate Congregation throughout and to identify our response for the next six years. Oblates from every part of the world attend to pray and share together on the critical aspects of our mission today.

The most abiding memory for me was when all the Chapter delegates gathered in the Vatican's Clementine Hall awaiting the arrival of Pope Francis. He had invited all the delegates to the Vatican and wanted to offer us his support. He was delayed and this gave me time to reflect. I was thinking to myself that we had been together in Chapter for over three weeks and had identified our missionary goals for the future. Now, what was the Holy Father going to say to us? I was expecting the usual cordial expressions and predictable references to the legacy of the Founder and the Charism, but what else? Pope Francis didn't disappoint, he said;

"It is important to work for a Church that is for everyone... During these days of Chapter work, you have broadened your gaze and heart to the dimensions of the world...It is necessary to seek adequate evangelical and courageous responses to the questions of the men and women of our time..."



Perhaps he didn't write these words, but he said them! He expressed them, gave them to us from his heart. His presence with us as the Vicar of Christ, and his message to us put into context our missionary purpose for this present era.

The most important resource of the Chapter are the delegates themselves. This is the collective mind of the Congregation. What a privilege to sit and listen to the missionary experiences of these men. Particularly hearing of the suffering and struggles of missionaries in areas of the world where conflict is ever present and threatens a vulnerable society. Being together, listening to reports and discussion in the Chapter hall or in small groups at break time or in the evenings, slowly brought to my mind a deeper awareness of the one family that we call our Congregation. Naturally when occupied within my own Unit and Region, I can become insulated from the challenges and struggles of my Oblate brothers in other parts of the world. The presence and the experience many of the delegates kept in sharp relief our theme of Mission.

There were what I would call "environments of encounter" that impacted on me. The most significant one and the place we spent most of our time together was the Chapter Hall where all the main decisions were made; where we elected the General Administration and where we listened to reports and debated the issues.

The environments of prayer; the various chapels and spaces for Eucharist, oraison (silent prayer together) and other liturgies that interspersed each day. I loved, in particular the times we gathered in silent oraison each day. Having spent the day with words and languages, how refreshing it was to be silent and present before Jesus.

The environment of the 'cloud' was something new! Through the marvels of technology we received all the relevant documents, reports, daily agenda, amendments, proposals and regular up-dates directly to our various devices. This successfully and radically reduced the production of printed paper.

When the delegates entered into the main discussions from which emerged the core details of the Chapter document, I found myself in the group that helped to formulate the section on Mission and Financial Stewardship. This group, like all the others, had a very good representation from each region and our discussions were honest and sincere. Our challenges, our difficulties, our possibilities and potentialities were opened to us. I learned much about Oblates in remote and sometimes dangerous places living on a shoestring budget and about how as a Congregation the responsible use and sharing of our resources really make a difference. From the Congregation's perspective, I became more aware of my responsibility and relationship to the missionary across the world. Together we were able to say to one another: "Your needs are my needs, your community is my community."

Before we entered into the election process, we began a time of retreat and recollection. Fr Wojciech Popielewski presented his theme "Towards a future filled with hope" and he helped us to see the faith journey we were travelling. Referring to the faith of Abraham and his journey he said;

"Abraham did not sign a contract for services rendered with God. He was not employed by God by the hour. He engaged himself totally, without reserve and each day he made a decision - sometimes a very difficult one - to be with the Lord anew."

Wojciech brought us through a journey to see and connect with Oblate mission today; the new poor of secularity, the concept of man the machine, the culture of more and a globalization of indifference. But not forgetting that he was leading us to reflect on a future filled with hope he said; "We need to ask ourselves this question here and now: does this lamp of hope continue to burn in our Oblate communities? That's a question for all of us in the Oblate family. Each of us have our part to play as ministers or servants of hope, the hope that sustains one another on the journey through life. There is hope and there is a future for us Oblates! Let us never blow out the lamp of hope!

- Fr. Ray Warren OMI, Provincial

Holy Cross Mass

A Mass will be celebrated in
Holy Cross Abbey, Co. Tipperary
1pm on Tuesday 12th June

This will be an opportunity for members of our Oblate Family associated with the Lourdes pilgrimage to come together. During this Mass we will also remember those Oblates who are buried in the grounds of the Abbey.

After Mass there will be a chance to gather in the local golf club. Dinner will be available from the golf club and will cost approximately €20.

All are welcome.





World Meeting of Families 2018



What is the World Meeting of Families 2018 that's taking place in Dublin?

The World Meeting of Families started in 1994. Pope St John Paul II asked for an international event of prayer, catechesis and celebration that would draw participants from around the globe. Its aim was to strengthen the bonds between families and bear witness to the crucial importance of marriage and the family to all of society. The most recent celebration of this event took place in Philadelphia in 2015.

Dublin, Ireland, has been chosen by Pope Francis to host the next World Meeting of Families from 21-26 August 2018, guided by the theme "The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World".

Held every three years, this major international event brings together families from across the world to celebrate, pray and reflect upon the central importance of marriage and the family as the cornerstone of our lives, of society and of the Church.

The event has at its heart the following key moments:

- 21 August 2018, a National Opening of WMOF2018, which will take place simultaneously in all the different dioceses of Ireland.
- 22 to the 24 August, a three-day Congress. The theme "The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World" chosen by the Holy Father and will include an enriching programme for adults of keynote speakers, workshops, talks, testimonies and discussions; an engaging and exciting programme for young people as well as fun activities for children. The Congress will also include daily celebration of the Eucharist, prayerful activities, exhibitions, cultural events and musical performances.
- Saturday 25 August, a Festival of Families, comprising a reflective concert style event within a prayerful and joyful atmosphere, in which personal stories of faith will be shared by families from all continents.
- Sunday 26 August, WMOF2018 will close with a Eucharistic Celebration, that will gather thousands of people from Ireland and all over the world.

Pope Francis is coming to Ireland to participate in World Meeting of Families 2018. Confirmed events that Pope Francis will be participating in include:

- Saturday 25th August 2018: Attendance at the WMOF 2018 Festival of Families. Venue: Croke Park Stadium
- Sunday 26th August 2018: celebration of the WMOF2018 Final Mass. Venue: Phoenix Park

In order to register for any of the above please visit www.worldmeeting2018.ie





From the Oblate side of things

As an Oblate family we are planning on marking this very special event. On Saturday 25 August we are organising a local Festival of Families. This will include food, music, space for faith, games for children and so much more. The Oblate community based in Dublin want to use this day to welcome other members of the Oblate family who have travelled to Ireland and spend time with them.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join us. If you have made plans to come to Ireland let us know and visit us. At the moment we are expecting to welcome people from the Wales, Poland, Ukraine, England and Pakistan to name just some. If we can we will try to source accommodation locally for you so that you can stay in an Oblate parish. Your first step should be to register yourself/group at www.worldmeeting2018.ie then contact us at: padraig.oblate.partners@gmail.com

World Meeting of Families Prayer

God, our Father,
We are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son,
One family, in the Spirit of your love.

Bless us with the joy of love.
Make us patient and kind,
gentle and generous,
welcoming to those in need.
Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.

Protect all families with your loving care,
Especially those for whom we now pray:

[We pause and remember family members and others by name].

Increase our faith,
Strengthen our hope,
Keep us safe in your love,
Make us always grateful for the gift of life
that we share.

This we ask, through Christ our Lord,
Amen

Mary, mother and guide, pray for us.
Saint Joseph, father and protector, pray for us.
Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us.
Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, pray for us.

Summer Camp 2018



July 29th - August 3rd 2018

This year, why not give your child a Summer Holiday with a difference?
Young people from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, aged 12-14, will come together for 5 days of outdoor activities and teambuilding, with time for reflection and prayer each evening. The camp will take place in Lilliput OEC, near Mullingar Ireland. Chaperoned transport will be provided from Edinburgh, London and Dublin. Centre staff are fully trained, and all staff and volunteers will be Garda Vetting/DBS certified. The subsidised cost of the camp includes all travel, meals, accommodation and equipment hire.

For more information about the camp, contact:

IRELAND

Padraig Corcoran
St Michael's Inchicore,
52A Bulfin Rd, Inchicore, Dublin 8
Mobile: +353 (0)877723255
Email: padraig.oblate.partners@gmail.com

BRITAIN

Ronan Lavery,
Oblate Partners in Mission Office,
Denis Hurley House, 14 Quex Road London NW6 4PL.
Tel: 020-7624-7296
Email: lavery.ronan@googlemail.com

The cost of the camp is £225 / €225

**Bookings now
being taken
for Summer
2018**

A Mass in El Marsa – Sahara

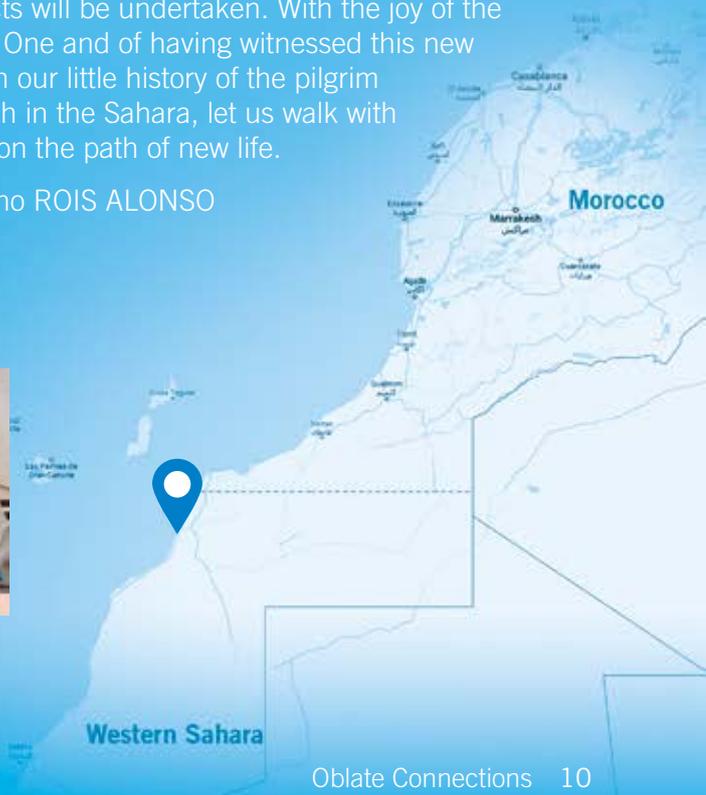


How many years has it been since Mass was celebrated in El Marsa, the Port of El Aaiún? Perhaps since 1975. A dream of several generations of the Missionary Oblates of the Sahara was to celebrate there again. A family had occupied the house and this made any celebration impossible. With the patience that characterizes life in the desert, about five years ago we managed to recover the house and the chapel in which some basic repairs were made, among other things a cross and an Oblate symbol on the floor. But we still had not been able to start holding the liturgy there.

At last we were able to fulfill our dream on Saturday, April 7, in the afternoon, celebrating the Divine Mercy in our chapel at El Marsa. One of our parishioners, a Senegalese immigrant who found housing and work in the port, was the instrument that God has used. With him and with a retired French couple travelling in their motorhome, we began again the adventure of making present the Risen and Eucharistic Christ in this corner of the Sahara. And from now on, we would like to celebrate faithfully every Saturday, hoping to gather little by little a small Christian community around the chapel.

How the Word of God resounded in the heart of each of the participants! Yes, the risen Lord wants to show his mercy and pour out his Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, here too in El Marsa. Like Thomas, we were invited to touch Jesus, to believe in him and to be his witnesses. Even in this Church of the Sahara, poor and often silent, the strength of the Risen One is opening a way. And it opens up for us new paths hitherto unsuspected. Now we have to continue working and creating friendly relations, not only with the Christians we meet, but also with our local Muslim brothers. At the opportune moment we will hold a blessing ceremony for the chapel so as to have greater visibility and the necessary structural and decorative projects will be undertaken. With the joy of the Risen One and of having witnessed this new step in our little history of the pilgrim Church in the Sahara, let us walk with hope on the path of new life.

– Chicho ROIS ALONSO



Oblate Lourdes Pilgrimage

*Lourdes,
a place of encounter;
a place of healing;
a place of peace.*

17th-22nd September

Packages Available From
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Our packages include:

- Flights
- Airport Transfers
- Full Board accommodation for 5 nights (7 nights Edinburgh)

*Assisted Pilgrims package also includes:

- Medical team on all flights
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- 24 hr medical care

For further information:

LONDON

Noreen Keenan,
T: 020 7624 1701 noreen@omiquex.org.uk

MANCHESTER

Kirk Jacob,
T: 020 7624 7296 kirk.oblate.partners@googlemail.com

EDINBURGH

Fr. Martin Moran, OMI or Kathy Barclay
T: 0131 554 2482 info@stmarysstarofthesea.org

DUBLIN

Fr. Vincent Mulligan, OMI or Barbara Hogan,
T: 01 454 2888 mamioblate@eircom.net

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www.OblateLourdesPilgrimage.com



A Response to The Reality of Human Trafficking

This article outlines one of the projects undertaken by the Friends of St Eugene to help poor and marginalised people in Birmingham. It also sheds light on the prevalence of human trafficking amongst women refugees and how it affects their integration into the UK wider society and the trauma they face.

At St Anne's Catholic Parish in Birmingham, the Friends of St Eugene are deeply rooted in the principles and values to support each other and especially the poor and marginalised through Friendship, Prayer and Service as particular projects have been taken on during Lent and Advent. During the last years, we have reached out to help many vulnerable refugees and migrants, including homeless and rough sleepers and victims of trafficking to settle and integrate into the UK after their perilous journeys.

Based on our commitment to the Oblate charism, as Friends... we have individually and collectively tried to live out the vision of St Eugene by making a difference to the lives of people who live in our local area through volunteering in the local projects – the seasonal homeless night shelter in St Anne's church; the permanent, adjacent Tabor House shelter for the homeless and also at Fatima House. This latter project, which is again on St Anne's premises, entails working with Fr Hudson's Care within the Archdiocese of Birmingham to provide accommodation for destitute female asylum seekers in Birmingham.

As we seek to deepen our relationship with Christ, we do our best to meet regularly to develop our spiritual resolve by imitating the pattern of St Eugene's life. In so doing, we have committed ourselves to not only helping to improve the lives of refugees and people seeking asylum through social and political change, we also strive to share good practice with

and between various organisations such as: St Chads Sanctuary in Birmingham, the Carmelite Monastery in Wolverhampton, Victims of Torture, The Haven, ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking) and The Salvation Army. The objective of these initiatives is to provide victims of human trafficking with safe, secure accommodation and culturally sensitive support, with counselling tailored to their individual needs.

The present challenge is urgent and immense. Hundreds and thousands of migrants, young and old, lonely or in groups, or as families, have made perilous journeys, risking their lives and leaving their motherland, crossing into Europe and becoming refugees, migrants and homeless people, facing all of the dangers and consequences at their peril.

These migrants, many of whom are victims of human trafficking, social injustice and violence, speak of desperately fleeing the devastation, poverty and wars in their own countries. They have encountered countless hindrances and obstructions to their freedom and hardly receive any assistance or protection throughout their journey.

One of the many challenges facing trafficked woman, as one person relates her experience whilst being trafficked in Europe, is her dependence on human traffickers or other illegitimate means of crossing borders. Recent research by the EU's law enforcement body found that 90 per cent of refugees have had to pay a criminal gang up to \$6,000 to enable them to reach Europe.

Consequently this not only brings suffering, abuse and exploitation to trafficked women and families, but forces many vulnerable women to perform 'survival sex' in order to pay traffickers to smuggle them across Europe's borders when they have no other option because they cannot afford the unreasonable fees being charged by the traffickers.

In discussions and listening to stories from victims of human trafficking at a local charity drop-in centre in Wolverhampton, it is believed that there is significant crossover between gangs smuggling refugees and trafficker gangs preying on unaccompanied young women for exploitative sex, work and slavery whilst crossing to Europe. Some refugee camps in Europe leave women completely unprotected, providing a perfect opportunity for traffickers to exploit these women and force them into the sex industry for their own profitable gain.

Adding to their distress, a charity supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Birmingham has recognized that women who are both victims of trafficking and claiming asylum in the UK have experienced significant difficulty in accessing the protection they are entitled to.

In dealing with questions of abuse and sexual violence that the women may have received as part of being trafficked insensitively, treating any gaps in their story may be down to trauma or unwillingness to share this information as reasons to disprove their claim to having been trafficked. If their asylum claim is also initially refused the victim may be left without access to housing, medical care and safety.

With the recent surge in refugee crisis leading to an increase in the trafficking of women it is vitally important that the UK and European governments enforce a fair and effective system to help and support these vulnerable victims. Currently female refugees are left at the mercy of human traffickers whose sole business is only to exploit, abuse, charge them unreasonably. The injustices build up against women refugees in Europe, as they face ever-increasing dangers and exploitation, a far cry from the protection guaranteed by the UK and European governments and Our Father's will... Please God that we can help and we pray to and with St Eugene for this need.

- James Omunson – on behalf of the Birmingham Friends of St Eugene

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING



The advertisement features a blue background with white text and images. On the left is a portrait of Pope Francis. In the center is the OMI logo (a globe with a cross) and the text "We are all ministers of the Mercy of God". Below this is a quote from Pope Francis: "Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you! Do not be afraid to dream of great things." - Pope Francis. On the right are two circular images: the top one shows a priest (Fr. John Mc Fadden) interacting with a group of people, and the bottom one shows a priest (Fr. Leo Philomin) interacting with a woman. At the bottom, contact information for both priests is provided, along with the website www.oblatevocations.com.

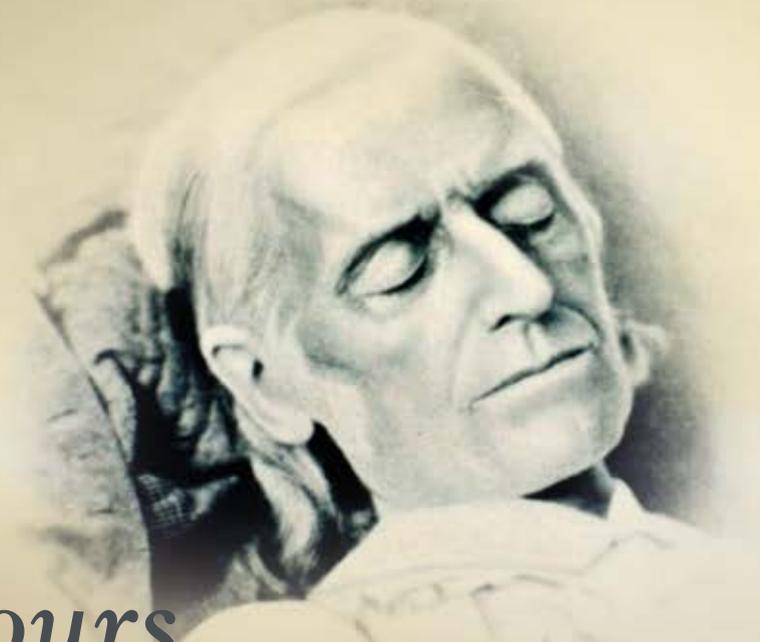
We are all ministers of the Mercy of God

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

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

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

www.oblatevocations.com



The Final Hours of Saint Eugene de Mazenod

On 20 May 1861, when Father Tempier told Bishop de Mazenod that it was now time for him to prepare himself for death, the Founder's reaction was immediate: "I want only one thing: that God's Will be done. Pray for me the prayers of the dying. But first, give me my missionary cross and my rosary: they are my arms and I don't want to be without them ever again." Then he asked for the scapular of the Madonna and the blessing of the Pope.

Later on, he renewed his religious vows and expressed his joy at having founded the Congregation. "Tell them (the Oblates) that I die happy... That I die happy because the good God deigned to choose me to found the Congregation of the Oblates in the Church." He blessed the Oblates, present and in the far-off missions, giving what we have always considered his spiritual testament: "Truly practice among yourselves charity, charity, charity... and outside, zeal for the salvation of souls."

Then he blessed the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux: "Tell them that I have much loved them, that I do love them, that I am their Father. Tell them that I want the two families to always be united, that they form a single family. They will be happy and strong in this fraternal union."

The next day, early in the morning, he said to a confrere who was going out to celebrate Holy Mass: "Oh! Ask (the good God) that His Will be done. I want it with my whole heart."

At various times during the day, he repeated to those who were around him: "If I fall asleep or get worse, wake me, I beg of you. I want to die knowing I am dying!" He said the same to the doctor: "Oh! How I would like to be aware of my own dying so as to better accept the Will of God!"

In the evening, wrote Father Fabre, "We prayed the Salve Regina which our dearly beloved Father understood and followed internally. At the words 'after this exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus,' he opened his eyes a bit. At each invocation, 'O clement, O loving,' he moved a bit; at the third, 'O sweet Virgin Mary,' he breathed his last."

Saint Eugene de Mazenod died offering his life as the perfect fulfillment of the Will of God. No one took it from him; he gave it freely, as a gift of love, to that God who had given it to him.

He died happy. He died as he had lived, fulfilling the Will of God, together with the loves of his life: his Oblate cross in his hand; his prayer to Mary; the Pope's blessing; carrying in his heart and blessing the Oblates and the Oblate family, represented by the Sisters of the Holy Family. He died surrounded by sons and daughters, like a father.

Today the company of sons and daughters of St. Eugene is as numerous as ever, scattered throughout the whole earth. To live fully our own great vocation — the will of God! — this group of sons and daughters is called to gather again around the father, to make his "loves" their own, to fulfil the testament he has left. It is the very testament of Jesus; he could not have given us a different one: "Love one another

as I have loved you ... As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 13, 34-35; 20, 20).

It is a mandate given to the whole Oblate family: at that time to the Oblates and the Sisters of the Holy Family present around his bed; today to all the Oblates scattered throughout the world, to lay people who share the charism, to institutes of consecrated life born of the Oblate charism and who with the Oblates share the mission.

A large family, once again united around their father, Saint Eugene de Mazenod. A family united by the same charity and by the same passion for the proclamation of the Gospel.

– Fr. Fabio Ciardi, OMI,
(Originally published on omiworld.org)

A PRAYER

O loving creator and sustainer of this awesome and complex universe
I thank you for the gift of my being,
and for the gift of that self-awareness that allows me to respond, however fitfully, to your generous self-revelation in your word made flesh Jesus, the anointed and promised one.

As I continue on my pilgrimage way to that destiny you have offered me in Christ may I always follow him who shows me the way in the dark moments of my life, and guides me in my search for the truth until I find it's fulness in him.

– Richard Haslam, OMI

Oblate Retreat Centre

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For information please contact Fr. Brian Maher or Sr. Catherine Lavery, Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall, 89 Broughton Lane, Crewe, CW2 8JS, England
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E-mail: director@oblateretreatcentre.org.uk www.orc-crewe.org

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– Presented by Fr. Lorcan O'Reilly OMI

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Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall, 89 Broughton Lane, Crewe,

Differences and conflicts are a normal and an inevitable part of our daily lives. They are as common as laughter, anger, love, hope, work, play and are probably no less important than any of these. How we deal with difference influences whether outcomes of our conflicts are constructive or destructive. During our Summer School we will look at what our Christian tradition teaches us and also look at some possible answers including skills like active listening and negotiation.

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Fr. Lorcán is a member of the Anglo-Irish Province of the Oblates and was ordained in 2000. He is currently Director of the Partners in Mission project in London and prior to this he was a member of the Anglesey Mission team and Parish Priest of St. Mary's Holyhead. Fr. Lorcán holds a Masters in Mission Studies from St. Paul's University, Ottawa in Canada and an Executive Masters in Non-Profit Administration from Notre Dame University, Indiana USA. While at Notre Dame University he undertook specialist studies in the area of conflict resolution and negotiation.

To book a place at this event or for more information please contact:

Kirk Jacob, Oblate Partners in Mission Office, Denis Hurley House,
14 Quex Road, London NW6 4PL

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7624 7296

Email: kirk.oblate.partners@gmail.com