

OBLATE CONNECTIONS

December 2023 | Nº58



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CONNECTIONS

At this time of year we see Christmas lights all around us. Their bright lights can help lift our spirits in the dark days of winter. For some it's a busy time of making preparations and people make huge efforts to come together and celebrate. In the midst of all our busyness it is good to pause and remember why we do what we do.

Over 50 years ago then St Pope Paul VI began a tradition of blessing little statuettes of the Child Jesus that were to be placed in their cribs at home. Reflecting on this tradition Pope Francis said, *"Preparing the Nativity display for the Infant Jesus, we learn again who our Lord is; a time to leave behind certain mindsets and prejudices about God and our brothers and sisters; a time in which, instead of thinking about gifts for ourselves, we can give words and gestures of consolation to those who are wounded, as Jesus did with the blind, the deaf and the lame."*

Perhaps during these troubled times we can take some time to pray before the cribs in our homes that our celebration of the birth of the Lord this year will bring a ray of peace to the children of our world, especially to those forced to live the terrible, sad, and dark days of war that destroys so many lives and so many children. So let us ask the Jesus the Prince of Peace to heal our wounded hearts and broken world.

In his reflection in this issue Fr. Ron Rolheiser reminds us that "Christmas also assures us that we have more than sufficient grounds to be happy, regardless of what might still be happening in our lives and in our world."

With this in mind let us ask Mary to take us by the hand as we prepare for Christmas and help us to recognize in the smallness of the Infant Jesus the greatness of God who is coming to dwell among us.

- Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI



"The theme of the pilgrimage this year was 'Pilgrims of Hope.'"





Reflection...

*This is the Christian's joy:
I know that I am a thought in God,
no matter how insignificant I may be – the
most abandoned of beings, one no one thinks of.
Today, when we think of Christmas gifts,
how many outcasts no one thinks of!
Think to yourselves, you that are outcasts,
you that feel you are nothing in history:
"I know that I am a thought in God."
Would that my voice might reach the imprisoned
like a ray of light, of Christmas hope – might
say also to you, the sick, the elderly in the home
for the aged, the hospital patients, you that live
in shacks and shantytowns, you coffee harvesters
trying to garner your only wage for the whole
year, you that are tortured:
God's eternal purpose has thought of all of you.
He loves you, and, like Mary,
incarnates that thought in his womb.*

– St. Oscar Romero



DEFYING DARKNESS WITH CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

– Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

In the days of apartheid in South Africa, one of the ways people expressed their opposition and their belief that someday it would be overcome, was to light a candle and put it in a window where it could be seen by anyone passing by. A lit candle, publicly displayed, made a prophetic statement. It didn't take long for the government to react. Placing a lit candle in your window became a criminal offense, equivalent to carrying an illegal firearm. The irony wasn't lost on children. They joked, "Our government is afraid of lit candles!"

And well they should be! To light a candle for a moral or religious reason (be it for protest, for Hanukkah, for Advent, or for Christmas) is to make a prophetic statement of faith and, in essence, make a public prayer.

Admittedly, this can be hard to read inside the glow of the millions of Christmas tree lights that we see everywhere. Why do we put up all these lights at Christmas? A cynical answer suggests that this is done for purely commercial purposes. As well, for many of us, these lights are simply a question of aesthetics, colour, and celebration, mostly devoid of any religious meaning. However, even here, there is still something deeper going on. Why do we put up lights at Christmas? Why do we light our homes and our streets with colourful lights at this time of year?

No doubt, we do it for colour, for celebration, and for commercial reasons; but we also do it because, more deeply, it expresses a faith, however inchoately this might still be felt, that in Christ a final victory has been won and light has forever conquered darkness. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it."

Our Christmas lights are, in the end, an expression of faith and in essence a public prayer. Nevertheless, we might still ask, to what end? What difference can this possibly make? Putting up lights as a symbol of faith can seem like a very insignificant and naïve thing to do in the face of the seeming overwhelming darkness of our world. We look at our world and we see

millions suffering from the war, millions of refugees on borders around the world, and hundreds of millions suffering from food shortages. As well, when we know that thousands of people every day are dying from domestic violence, drug violence, and gang violence, and when we see tension everywhere within our governments, our churches, our neighbourhoods, and our families, we might ask ourselves, what difference do our little string of lights, or indeed all the Christmas lights in the world, make?

Well, in the words of the late Jesuit Michael Buckley, prayer is most needed, just when it is deemed most useless. These are words to hang onto. Given the magnitude of our world's problems, given the magnitude of the darkness that threatens us, now more than ever, it is imperative that we express our faith publicly, as a prayer. Now, more than ever, we need to show publicly that we still believe faith works, that we still believe in the power of prayer, and that we still believe that, in Christ, the power of darkness has been forever overcome.

This is expressed wonderfully in a poem John Shea inscribed inside his Christmas card this year.

Our Christmas trees want to talk to us

*The greater darkness of December can take its toll
and strengthen what afflicts us.*

*Our Christmas trees beg to differ. Their branches
are full, leafy, strung with lights.*

The brightness is defiant.

We want a perfect world.

But that is not always what we get.

*We may experience catastrophic weather; a pandemic;
threatened health; overstressed work, dipping finances,
struggling relationships, and society and world either
slightly or wildly insane.*

Our Christmas trees glow. Their lights whisper;

*"Give all the things that afflict you their due, but do not
give them your soul.*

You are more than the surrounding darkness.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.”



While struggling to overcome apartheid in South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was sometimes confronted by military personnel who came into his church while he was preaching, flashing their guns to intimidate him. He would smile at them and say, “I’m glad you have come to join the winning side!” In saying this, he wasn’t talking about the apartheid struggle; he was talking about the forever victory that Christ has won for us. The most important of all battles has already been won, and our faith puts us on the winning side. Our Christmas lights express this, however consciously unaware of it we may be.

Karl Rahner once wrote that, at Christmas, God gives us sacred permission to be happy. Christmas also assures us that we have more than sufficient grounds to be happy, regardless of what might still be happening in our lives and in our world. We can be defiant in the face of everything that demands we be downcast. Our Christmas lights express that defiance.

Sunday Reflections



Each week a reflection on the Sunday Readings is published on our website oblates.ie

These reflections are prepared by Fr. Brian Maher, OMI who writes: “A Gospel reflection is no more than one person’s response to the Gospel. We can each respond in our own way and in our daily lives.”

If you would like to receive the reflection please sign up online or email communications@oblates.ie

If you have any comments, questions or thoughts on the weekly scripture reflection, please feel welcome to email Fr. Brian at b.maher@oblates.ie



Darndale-Belcamp Community Celebrating 50 years

Fr Eduardo Núñez-Yepez is an Oblate from Mexico who currently ministers as part of the Oblate community in Darndale-Belcamp in Dublin. Here he reflects on the parish celebration to mark 50 years of this important Oblate mission.

When I think of the Oblate mission in Darndale-Belcamp, I think of all those men and women of good will, Oblates and Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, and other congregations of women religious. In those days, this green land, was like the “promise land” for many families to have a home. Darndale was built between 1973-1976. The area began to settle quickly, with the first families arriving at Buttercup and Marigold in July 74. Along with these first families who came to the estate, there came the Oblates and the Sisters of the Holy Family, who, wanting to walk close to the people, lived for many years in the estate’s houses before presbytery was built.

We Oblates have a long history in this area dating back to 1893 when the Oblates set up Belcamp College which became a college for minor seminarians and later in the mid-1970s a Secondary School for boys living locally and during its final decade a mixed school for boys and girls before the college closed in 2005.

In 1971, responding to the spiritual and human needs of the area, the Oblates discerned the possibility of establishing a parish to walk close to the people. Darndale-Belcamp Parish was established, from Coolock Parish with Fr Jim Butler OMI, appointed as administrator and first Parish Priest. The Oblates along with the Sisters and many other community leaders began to build the Community Hall and two national schools. The new church, which is dedicated to Our Lady Immaculate, was consecrated in 1982 by Dermot Ryan, Archbishop of Dublin.



After many years, the parish community began to take shape and structure, from the administrative side to the sacramental and pastoral aspect. Thousands of people have been baptised in this Parish Community and celebrated their sacraments, the Parish Community then becomes the common home, the home of the community, and at the same time the house of prayer and the place where we go to say goodbye to our loved ones who have died. Darndale- Belcamp has been like a “promised land” the green pastures where many families made their homes.



In 1998 the New Life Centre was opened after having been partitioned from the main church. This centre was opened to respond to the human and social needs of the Parish. At the heart of the Oblate charism, the human aspect is essential. St. Eugene de Mazenod said that we must bring to the people with whom we live the mission, first to human feelings, then to present to them the Gospel proposal, which is a proposal of liberation based on the values of the Kingdom of God which is justice and peace, then finally to help them to be saints. The New Life Centre also became the common house where everyone can come and have a cup of tea, meet other people, be listened to and take part of the services offered there. The New Life Centre is over all a warm welcoming space for families, older people and young people to realise their potential.

We have recently celebrated 50 years in which God put in the hearts of Oblates, Sisters from different congregations and many community leaders the desire to "build community", although this is not an easy task, they all worked to make our Parish Community a true place where the dignity of persons in all their dimensions is respected and where the Gospel values are lived out. As we celebrate 50 years of our Parish Community, we celebrate above all those men and women who, faithful to their vocation, gave their lives and their service to our community for many years. To them go our thanks and admiration. Many of those founders of our community are still among us, they are the fathers and mothers of our community, to them we owe that our families continue to keep the flame of faith alive.

We also acknowledge the work and dedication of the different congregations of sisters who have served in our community; Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Mercy, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Our community has always been blessed by the presence of many charisms, and in the diversity of these charisms the Lord has revealed himself in a very special way. Many different talents and charisms to build the Christian community.

Celebrating 50 years of our Parish Community means "looking to the past with gratitude, living the present with passion and looking to the future with hope." Our Parish continues to be that initial dream of the founders

and foundresses of our community, to be a place where all can be welcomed with respect and mercy. Many men and women of good will continue to work to make Jesus' desire to build the Kingdom of Justice and Peace a palpable reality in our community. We are infinitely grateful to them for their dedication and goodwill.

Currently, the pastoral team is composed of Sr Lumay Thomas FMM, Sr Mary Connaire SC, Fr Michael O'Connor OMI, Fr Ned Quinn OMI and Fr Eduardo Núñez-Yepéz OMI PP. We are constantly seeking in a spirit of discernment what the Spirit of Jesus wants to say to us and how to serve in our community. We seek and want to work together in the mission that the church and God has entrusted to us today. The challenges are many, but the hope is great. We seek together, with sincere hearts, to be faithful to our calling and to allow ourselves to be evangelised by the people we serve. We are infinitely grateful to God and to this Parish Community for being close to us and for working together to bring about the Kingdom promised by God.

- Fr. Eduardo Núñez-Yepéz , OMI



Lourdes 2023

“For those who have not been, no words are possible; for those who have, no words are necessary.”

Once the aircraft has landed in Lourdes, bags collected, everyone on the fourgon – the name of the special bus that brings our assisted pilgrims to where they will stay for the next five days – the next big moment is that first glimpse of Lourdes. Eyes scan the familiar surroundings until, just before the final turn, Lourdes, or more precisely, the sanctuary and Grotto (in the distance) come into view. We're back! Once again, and by the grace of God, we can set foot once more in this sacred and special place.

This year was different. For the first time since 2019, we brought our assisted pilgrims back to the Accueil Notre Dame. And maybe here, we should translate that. After all, “Accueil” doesn't mean much to most people but if we hear the name in English, it carries a powerful message. And so to rephrase, we brought our assisted pilgrims back to the “Welcome of Our Lady” for that, indeed, is what it is to arrive there. And to make this return even more special, our arrival in Lourdes marked the 140th anniversary of the first Oblate pilgrimage to Lourdes, in 1883, and significantly for Lourdes, the first organised, English-language pilgrimage. Once more, all of us, hotel pilgrims, our assisted pilgrims, those members of the Oblate congregation, and the volunteer body, the Oblate Lourdes Hospitalité, walked again in the footsteps of Fr William Ring OMI and those courageous people who set out all those years ago, to show us the way to Lourdes.

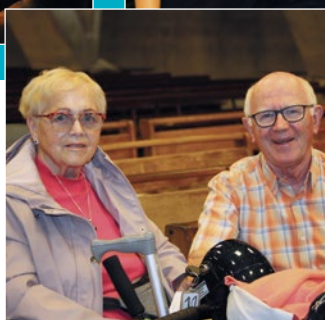
Our assisted pilgrim section was a little smaller than pre-Covid times. However, pilgrimage to Lourdes is

not about numbers. Our mission is really very simple; to make it possible for people, whether able-bodied or requiring medical care or other assistance, to visit the shrine of Our Lady where she appeared to St Bernadette in 1858 (just twenty-five years later Fr Ring gathered the first Oblate group in the very same place!). It is why we do what we do. And please God, as long as there are people who ask us to help them to get to Lourdes, the Oblate pilgrimage will continue and one day, celebrate 200 years! It is in God's hands.

The late Fr Willie McGonagle OMI used frequently quote the words of Franz Werfel, a Jewish refugee during the Second World War who took shelter in Lourdes for a while during that war. Although not a Catholic, Werfel was so overwhelmed by Lourdes, its pilgrims, and the sense of sacredness he found there that he wrote, of Lourdes: “For those who have not been, no words are possible; for those who have, no words are necessary.” These words come alive for those of us blessed to be able to go there, and indeed, more than once. On arriving home, people will ask: “How was Lourdes?” Of course, we say: “it was great” or, “we had a wonderful time” and other things. But we know that in those inadequate words, we're not really answering the question.

And so, being in Lourdes in 2023, whether for the first time or not, we can say it truly was a wonderful pilgrimage.

- Gerard Bennett



Our Experience of the Oblates Pilgrimage to Lourdes

We are both in our mid-eighties and have had the privilege of being part of the Oblates pilgrimage to Lourdes on two occasions now. We stayed in the Elesio Hotel on our first visit and found it very comfortable and within walking distance to the grotto which was lovely. Our return visit in September occurred on the 140th anniversary of The Oblate pilgrimage to Lourdes and it holds very special memories for us both. This time we stayed at the Accueil Notre Dame which is on the grounds of the shrine itself. We travelled as assisted pilgrims which meant that we were taken care of extremely well by nurses and carers. Assisted pilgrims are offered wheelchair assistance and this was a great benefit to us both, it made our daily journey to mass and other prayerful activities and especially the beautiful candle light procession much easier to access. We felt a great sense of belonging there and everyone was so helpful and friendly, we were welcomed and included in all that was going on during our time there. The theme of the pilgrimage this year was 'Pilgrims of Hope' and there was a sense of peace and a beautiful feeling of being close to Our Lady and to God who walks with us every day as we took part in daily mass, stations of the cross and visits to the grotto.

Lourdes is a very special place and we experienced a great peace and spirituality there. It keeps drawing us back now and the people we encountered were wonderful. A special part of our experience of the pilgrimage to Lourdes was participation at the daily masses and the evening torch light Marian processions to the grotto which included candle light and singing hymns and was a deeply spiritual experience for us both.

We also enjoyed a trip of approximately 20km outside of Lourdes, close to the base of the Pyrenees Mountain range where we the pilgrims were treated to a lovely lunch at a hotel. After our meal the young carers who came with us, treated us to an impromptu concert of music and song. We all took part in the singing. These young carers are a credit to their families, so caring and attentive to the needs of us older pilgrims. If God permits, and our health allows it we are planning to return for the 2024 Oblates Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

- Tom & Sheila O'Reilly





The Road to Lourdes. Our 2023 Overland Pilgrimage from London to Lourdes.

The Oblate community in London have organised an overland pilgrimage to Lourdes for the last 37 years, and this year I was lucky enough to secure myself a space on the coach. An alternative to flying, the coach trip allows you to take a spiritual journey through France across three days. What would otherwise be a long time on the road is split into shorter manageable trips stopping off at places such as Rue de Bac and Nevers along the way. This unique opportunity to take part in Mass in the convent in Nevers where St Bernadette lived, before she passed away, really deepened our connection to follow in her footsteps as pilgrims.

St Bernadette wasn't the only one who touched our journey, but also St Catherine Labouré and St Thérèse of Lisieux. Learning about their lives as we visited

Rue De Bac in Paris and Lisieux, my fellow pilgrims and I were able to draw from their unquestionable devotion to guide and support us on our own spiritual pilgrimages.

Everyone goes to Lourdes for their different reasons, whether that be to grow in faith, find peace or healing. Personally, I think this overland trip has added the gift of community spirit. I thought I would walk away with one or two friends from those who sat by me, but in reality I became lifelong friends with the entire group. Simple things such as listening and sharing our faith with one another, strengthened our friendships. We prayed the rosary together, as we were on the move, keeping in mind those who were unable to make it to Lourdes this year. This pilgrimage really embodied the meaning of community.

- Jenny Forti





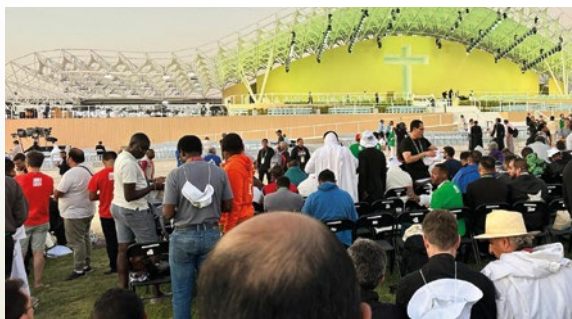
WORLD YOUTH DAY AUGUST 2023, LISBON

A group of young people travelled to Lisbon on a pilgrimage from the province for the event. It was a group that consisted of pilgrims from Scotland, Wales, England, Ireland and Denmark.

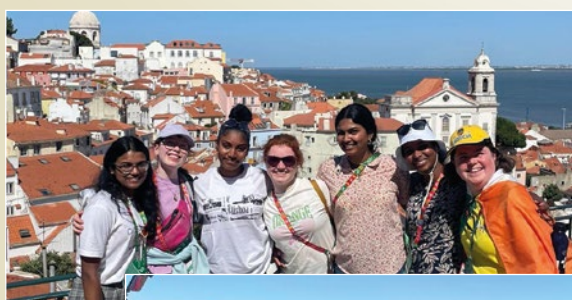
The group came together in July for the first time when we were brilliantly hosted at the Oblate Retreat Centre in Crewe, England. That weekend in the days before WYD was ideal preparation for the group. It gave the group a chance to gel for the very first time and remove any barriers before heading on a pilgrimage together.

A couple of weeks later we headed to Lisbon for the WYD events. Many of the group were hosted in Darndale parish, Dublin the night before flying out to Portugal. From the first evening exploring Lisbon the atmosphere was electric, with countless young people meeting and mingling in the city, making friends and sharing mementoes from home. We were very thankful to be hosted in a parish outside the centre of Lisbon. A school floor is where we would be laying our collective heads over the next week. The school football pitch was well used every night by many of the groups which became another meeting point for so many.

Most mornings we had catechesis with other English language groups staying in the same parish. It was a different Bishop each day, who then celebrated Mass for us. There was dancing, singing, faith testimonies, questions and listening in abundance. On another morning there was a gathering of all those pilgrims who travelled from Oblate parishes. This really was a great event and a highlight for many in the group. The leader of the Oblate family worldwide, Fr Chicho OMI, shared some inspiring words. In the afternoons, our group was able to take part in various events; from tours of local shrines (St Anthony of Lisbon was very popular), concerts with popular Catholic musicians, talks by various speakers like Bishop Robert Barron or even just taking time to soak in the atmosphere of the city. The City of Joy was a huge attraction for many who travelled to Lisbon. It included a huge reconciliation park, Eucharistic Adoration and a vocational fair. "Talks of Joy" were based on work-life balance and discovering ones vocation. There were moments also to enjoy the local cuisine which included pasteis de nata.



“This was a beautiful experience with a candlelight vigil led by Pope Francis in the evening and inspiring young people.”



On another evening there was a gathering of pilgrims who had travelled from Ireland which some of our group attended. This was another time of prayer, reflection and chat.

WYD opened with a ceremony in a huge park. The biggest events though were those with Pope Francis. At the welcoming ceremony for him, our group were right next to the path of the Pope Mobile and got a wave going past! Pope Francis spoke about “there is room for everyone in the church”. For the final Mass with the Pope, we trekked with other pilgrims outside the city to camp out overnight. This was a beautiful experience with a candlelight vigil led by Pope Francis in the evening and inspiring young people. 1.5 million pilgrims which included 700 bishops and 10,000 priests were present. It was announced that the next WYD would be hosted in Seoul, South Korea in 2027. The young people were also invited to come to Rome in 2025 for the Jubilee Year. Pope Francis said, “The Church and the world need you, the young, as much as the earth needs rain”.

After World Youth Day finished our group stayed for an extra few days to visit Fatima and reflect on what had been an unforgettable trip for everyone. An opportunity to visit Fatima was something we could not pass up. The day there was spent in over 40 degrees of heat but well worth the visit. Each person shared that the trip had brought him or her closer to other young people across the world, helping them to deepen and appreciate their faith. What more could you ask for?

– Padraig Corcoran



The Story of the Mary Man & Wakein School of Yangon

Wakein village is a large depressed slum area on the outskirts of the city of Yangon in Myanmar. People live in abject poverty in hundreds of shanties, with neither water nor electricity. These shanties are connected to each other by a muddy path that leads from house to house and ends at an ancient Buddhist monastery.

When the military junta took over Myanmar in 1964, jobs were lost, and families moved to depressed areas like Wakein. They set up temporary shelters made of four bamboo rods and a sack covering. These shacks have now become their homes. While men search for construction work, women shift through garbage, collecting discarded plastics and other items to be sold in the market.

In the nearest government school to Wakein pupils have to provide their own uniform, text books, and pay a small annual fee. The children of Wakein could not afford this expense so they have never gone to school.

In 2003, Mary Man, a young Burmese student was in senior year in the Myanmar Institute of Religious Studies, Yangon, when she saw a woman rummaging through a garbage bin. She accompanied her to Wakein where she saw the devastating poverty of the area. After graduation she committed herself to providing education for the poverty stricken children of the area.

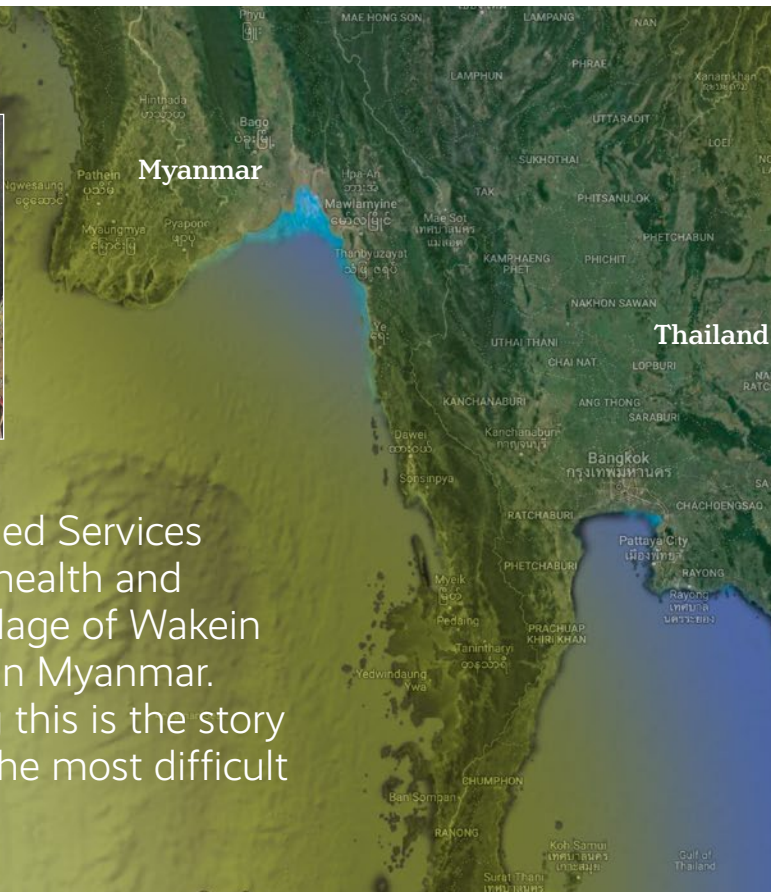
When Mary Man became directress of the program, she soon discovered that most of the children survived on only one meal a day. They needed nourishing food as well as education. At this time I was in Dublin preparing to return to Manila via Yangon when the Oblate's



surprised me with a very generous donation. With this money we began our Wakein Centre. From this donation a library with benches, books, and colourful charts was set up as well as an outdoor kitchen. Every morning the children received a nourishing snack before class and a substantial meal before going home. Soon the numbers increased, and between 300 -400 children between the ages of 3-9 years came every day for class and for food.

A Bowl for Every Gran

Zaw, a six-year old child held on to his bowl but refused to eat. His grandmother had eaten nothing that day and he wanted to share his dinner with her. To his delight, Mary Man gave him another bowl for his grandmother. By the end of the week every gran in Wakein received a nourishing meal. That meant more chickens, more eggs, more rice, and more charcoal for the fire so we went scrambling with our begging bowls to our benefactors who supported us generously again for the next number of years. As the school progressed, children's health improved with nourishment and they



The Oblates together with the Combined Services Third World Fund have supported the health and education of children in the remote village of Wakein on the outskirts of the city of Yangon in Myanmar. While it does not have a happy ending this is the story of one woman's contribution despite the most difficult of circumstances.

spent most of the day in the library with its colourful charts and books or outside playing ball by the side of the school.

As the number of children in the school increased so did the needs of the youth who had graduated. Mary Man bought a sewing machine for a 16 year old and got a seamstress to teach her to sew. She in turn, taught other teenagers.

When it was noted that Kyi a 15-year old girl was missing from the community a search went out and Mary Man became suspicious when she learnt that she was promised well paid employment. She followed the trail of her story until she was found in a safe house being groomed with other girls for prostitution. She secretly rescued her but when they got to the front door the young officer refused to unlock the door. With a gift of 100 kyats (€10) he immediately released the latch.



The 2021 Military Coup & The Sad Demise of Waken School

In 2021 there was a military coup in the country and Ang San Suu Kyi was sentenced to 33 years in jail. The military carried out a brutal crackdown on the millions of people opposed to its rule. The junta security forces carried out mass killings, arbitrary arrests, destruction of churches, torture, sexual violence and other abuses that amount to crimes against humanity. The situation continues to worsen, and many have left for Thailand or India.

A few months ago while Mary Man was preparing for class a number of strong men came in, took her wallet and phone and ransacked the school, taking with them many of the school's belongings including the kitchen pots and pans. The writing was on the wall. It was too dangerous to come to school. It had to be closed immediately. The Wakein School of Yangon had come to an abrupt ending. The parents received the news with great sadness but fortunately, a group of young French missionaries, called Children of the Mekong River provide the children of Wakein with a monthly donation for food.

It was with a heavy heart that she left the school and walked down the muddy path along the local shanties and got a rickshaw that brought her into Yangon city. Yet Mary Man can take comfort in the fact that two generations of children in Wakein can now read and write and find employment.

- Sr. Kathleen Coyle SSC

Oblate Mission Shop

www.oblates.ie/mission-shop

Christmas Novena Mass Cards

You can now obtain Christmas Novena Mass Cards and other items online from the Oblate Mission Shop. The suggested donation for each Christmas Mass card is €4.00 and your donation will help fund Oblate Missions.



Light a Christmas Candle at the Grotto Online

You may also wish to light a candle at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Inchicore for a loved one, near or far this Christmas. We will light this on your behalf and we will send you an "I lit a candle for you at the Grotto" card, or email you an e-card €5.00

Please phone Barbara in the Mission Office on: 01-4542888 or email: mami@oblates.ie
For further information please visit: www.oblates.ie/mission-shop

€1.95 Post and packaging per order



Christmas Quiz



1. Complete the famous line from John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world, that...'
2. Who did God tell in the book of Genesis 'all peoples on Earth will be blessed through you,' foretelling that Jesus would be among his descendants?
3. A prophet foretold the birth of Jesus, but what was his name?
4. Before the birth of Jesus, Mary was visited by an Angel who spoke of her miraculous pregnancy. What was his name?
5. When Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant his plan was to discreetly divorce her. True or False?
6. Which emperor of Rome ordered that all inhabitants of the Roman Empire return to their home city to be registered?
7. The Gospel of Luke describes Mary riding to Bethlehem on a donkey. True or False?
8. Bethlehem is often referred to as the City of...
9. Which of the 12 Tribes of Israel was Jesus descended from?
10. One of our carols begins, "Angels we have heard on high, / Sweetly singing o'er the plains." What did the angels sing at Jesus' birth?
11. Who did King Herod ask about where the Messiah was going to be born and what prophet did they quote in their reply?
12. What is Myrrh and at what other time was "myrrh" associated with Christ?
13. What was the name of the prophetess that the Holy Family met when presenting Jesus at the temple?
14. When Mary, Joseph and Jesus were forced to flee. Where did they find sanctuary?
15. We celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25th, but what date does the Bible actually state Jesus was born?
16. What does 'Immanuel' mean?
17. What is the meaning of the word "Noel," as in the carol line, "Noel, Noel, / Born is the King of Israel"? -
18. What carol contains the line, "Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing" and what Gospel text does it draw its inspiration from?

If you would like to share your thoughts or ideas with us please contact: Fr. Lorcan O'Reilly, OMI, Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall, 89 Broughton Lane, Crewe CW2 8JS or email pim@oblates.co.uk



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