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# Oblate Connections

Oblate Connections – No.35, 21st May, 2017

In some of the elections that have been taking place at home, in Europe and in North America over the course of the last year, there has been a sentiment that there are some people in our modern society who feel they have lost their voice. One of the consequences of this apparent disenfranchisement has been the rise of some extreme right wing ideologies. Commenting on the rise of such ‘populisms’ Pope Francis has said people should not repeat the same mistakes as in the 1930s, when they turned to “saviours” to resolve economic and political crises only to end up at war.

“Crises provoke fear, alarm. In my opinion, the most obvious example of European populism is Germany in 1933,” the Pope said. “A people that was immersed in a crisis, that looked for its identity until this charismatic leader came and promised to give their identity back, and he gave them a distorted identity, and we all know what happened.”

As a Church community we are called to offer an alternative vision and to be a voice for the voiceless wherever we live. There is no doubt that our voice will not always be welcome in the public forum especially when it challenges the prevailing political or media agenda.

Indeed we saw recently how Marine Le Pen, during the recent French presidential election, attacked Pope Francis for his focus on welcoming the immigrant. Today I continue to be inspired by the many Christians who in small and large ways are showing that they are willing to stand up for what they believe in.

We will shortly celebrate the great feast of Pentecost. Reflecting on this feast, Pope Francis reminds us, “only the Spirit can awaken diversity, plurality and multiplicity, while at the same time building unity. Here too, when we are the ones who try to create diversity and close ourselves up in what makes us different and other, we bring division. ...But if instead we let ourselves be guided by the Spirit, richness, variety and diversity never become a source of conflict, because the Spirit impels us to experience variety within the communion of the Church.”

In his time St. Eugene used his talents to reach out to the poor and marginalised of his time. As we celebrate his feast day it is my prayer that each one of us will use our individual gifts to be the voice of the voiceless and so help build God’s kingdom here and now.

- Fr. Lorcán O’Reilly OMI

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# “The Ten Major Faith Struggles of Our Age”

— Fr Ron Rolheiser, OMI

**Sometimes the simple act of naming something can be immensely helpful. Before we can put a name on something we stand more helpless before its effects, not really knowing what’s happening to us.**

Many of us, for example, are familiar with the book, *The Future Church: How Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church*, by John Allen. The things he names in this book, even when they don’t affect us directly, still help shape us for the better. As a journalist who travels the world as the Vatican analyst for both CNN television and the National Catholic Reporter, John Allen is able to provide us with a wider, global perspective on church issues than is generally afforded to those of us whose vision is more emotionally mired in our own local and national issues. Heartaches at home can make us blind to the wider concerns of the planet; just as seeing the concerns and pains of others first-hand can put our own concerns and pain into a healthier perspective. John Allen’s global frame of reference, as outlined in the mega-trends he names in his book, helps us keep our own ecclesial concerns in a healthier perspective.

So here is my own attempt to name some things: Several years ago in an interview, John Allen asked me to draw up a list of what I considered to be the ten major faith and church struggles of our time. I took this as a healthy challenge and the list that follows, no doubt less global in perspective than Allen’s ten trends (My vision, I fear, speaks more for Western and secularized cultures than for the world at large), is my own attempt to name the key faith and ecclesial struggles we deal with today.

What are the ten major faith and church struggles of our time, at least as manifest within the more highly secularized parts of our world?

1) The struggle with the atheism of our everyday consciousness, that is, the struggle to have a vital sense of God within a secular culture which, for good and for bad, is the most powerful narcotic ever perpetrated on this planet... the struggle to be conscious of God outside of church and explicit religious activity.

2) The struggle to live in torn, divided, and highly-polarized communities, as wounded persons ourselves, and carry that tension without resentment and without giving it back in kind... the struggle inside of our own wounded selves to be healers and peace-makers rather than ourselves contributing to the tension.

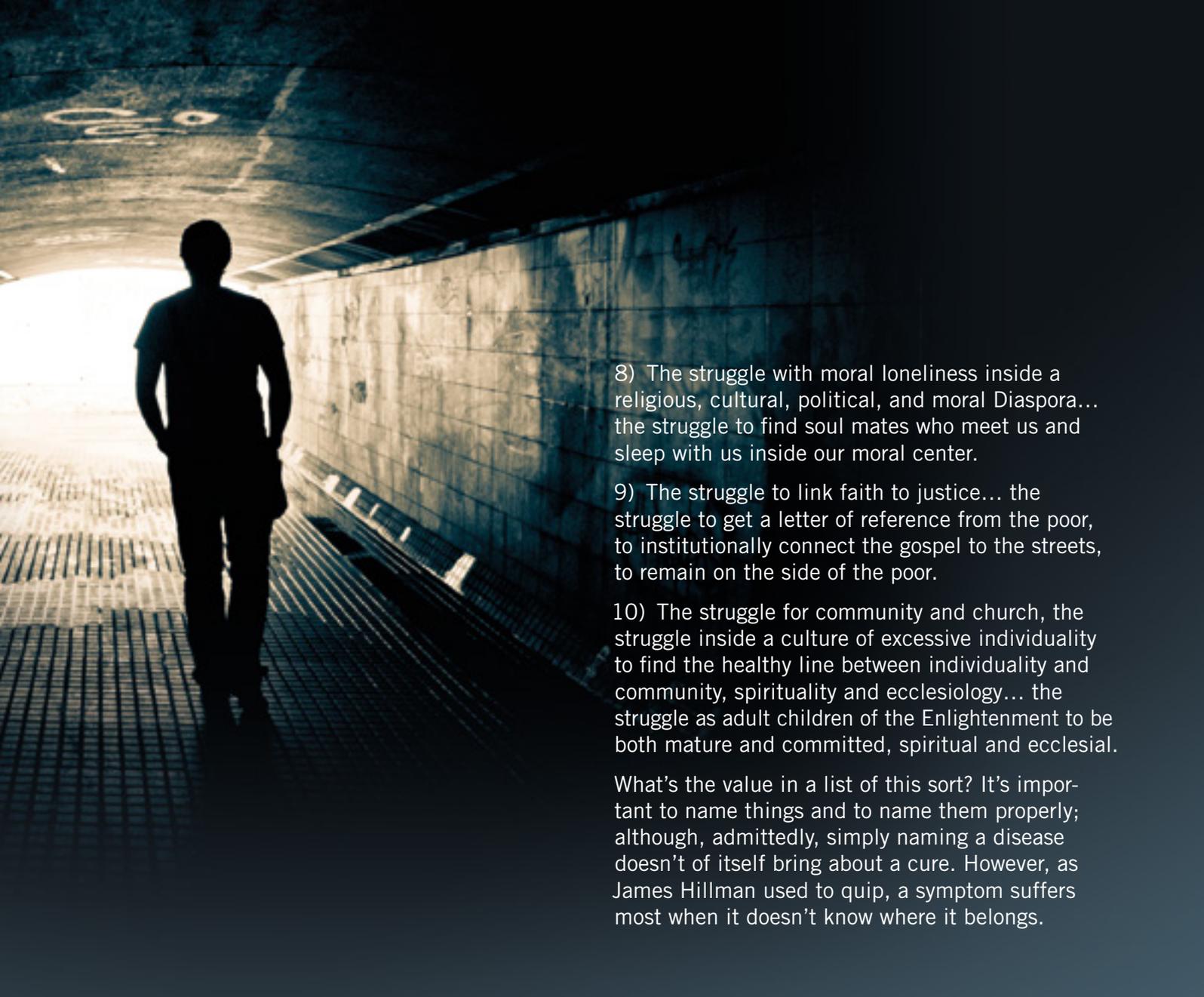
3) The struggle to live, love, and forgive beyond the infectious ideologies that we daily inhale, that is, the struggle for true sincerity, to genuinely know and follow our own hearts and minds beyond what is prescribed to us by the right and the left... the struggle to be neither liberal or conservative but rather men and women of true compassion.

4) The struggle to carry our sexuality without undue frigidity and without irresponsibility, the struggle for a healthy sexuality that can both properly revere and properly delight in this great power... the struggle to carry our sexuality in such a way so as to radiate both chastity and passion.

5) The struggle for interiority and prayer inside of a culture that in its thirst for information and distraction constitutes a virtual conspiracy against depth and solitude, the eclipse of silence in our world... the struggle to move our eyes beyond our digital screens towards a deeper horizon.

6) The struggle to deal healthily with “the dragon” of personal grandiosity, ambition, and pathological restlessness, inside of a culture that daily over-stimulates them, the struggle to healthily cope with both affirmation and rejection... the struggle inside of a restless and over-stimulated environment to habitually find the balance between depression and inflation.

7) The struggle to not be motivated by paranoia, fear, narrowness, and over-protectionism in the face of terrorism and overpowering complexity... the struggle to not let our need for clarity and security trump compassion and truth.



8) The struggle with moral loneliness inside a religious, cultural, political, and moral Diaspora... the struggle to find soul mates who meet us and sleep with us inside our moral center.

9) The struggle to link faith to justice... the struggle to get a letter of reference from the poor, to institutionally connect the gospel to the streets, to remain on the side of the poor.

10) The struggle for community and church, the struggle inside a culture of excessive individuality to find the healthy line between individuality and community, spirituality and ecclesiology... the struggle as adult children of the Enlightenment to be both mature and committed, spiritual and ecclesial.

What's the value in a list of this sort? It's important to name things and to name them properly; although, admittedly, simply naming a disease doesn't of itself bring about a cure. However, as James Hillman used to quip, a symptom suffers most when it doesn't know where it belongs.

# Taizé

**July 29th - August 7th**

In August 2017, young people aged between 15 and 17 are invited to join a group of teens from the Britain and Ireland, who will travel to Taizé in France. There, they will meet up with thousands of other young people from all over the world for a week of prayer, community, sharing and fun.

The fun of camping, of sharing life with young people from incredibly diverse backgrounds, and the unique experience of Taizé prayer, all combine to make this one of the most memorable, life changing holidays a young person could ever have.

**Full Board Cost: £225 / €265pp (ex London)**



**For more information, or to book a place on the trip, please contact:**

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# Oblates With People in The War Zone in Ukraine

Fr. Pawel WYSZKOWSKI, Superior of the Ukraine Delegation, recently traveled to the war zone in that country, together with scholastic Bro. Andryi HAVLICH. Here is his story of an ongoing crisis overlooked by much of the media.

In Ukraine, for about three years, there has been war in the East. Some call it simply a “conflict”; the Western media has stopped mentioning it, but the reality deeply touches our Delegation in Ukraine and Russia, where 31 Oblates serve in 18 parishes scattered throughout the country. It is of concern to us, even though these houses are not located within the regions torn by the war with Russia.

As missionaries, we cannot ignore that which affects so deeply and bitterly the people of our country and their families, nor the people in our parishes, some of whom are the refugees from the war-torn areas.

The Oblate house nearest to the war area is a community in Poltava (in the Kharkiv - Zaporizhzhia diocese). Although the distance from the battle area is about 200 kilometers, the Oblates could hear distant military helicopters, transporting dozens of the wounded to the overcrowded hospitals.

Quite recently, together with the scholastic Andryi Havlich, as part of the Christian Rescue Service, we set out for the battlefield to serve soldiers and civilians. Since it was not possible to drive along the bombed roads, we reached the destination by train.

We could take along only the following things: personal belongings, a cassock, oil for anointing the sick, the Blessed Sacrament, bandages, and a bulletproof vest. Other items were sent by ordinary mail. We had parcels containing items for civil population (e.g. everyday necessities, medication, food, clothing, blankets, cleaning detergents). A vehicle of the Christian Rescue Service met us at the station and took us to the place of service. It should be noted that this place is located on the front line, which often comes under heavy fire.

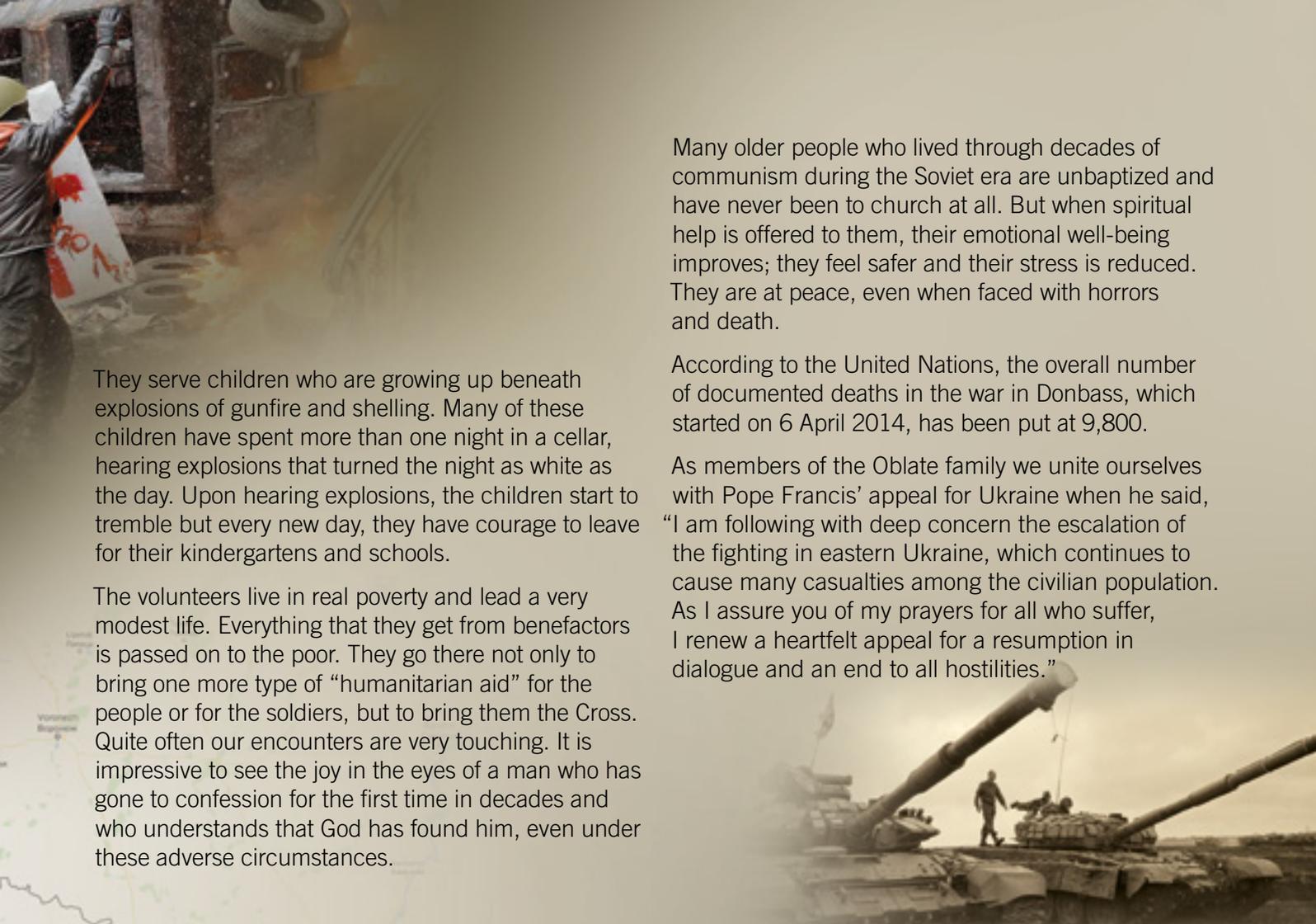
During our week there, we travelled to several places, spending just one night in a bed, sometimes on the floor, or on the ground in a tent - “as in a war.” As a part of the pastoral ministry we had conversations,



heard confessions, anointed the sick, the wounded and the dying; we celebrated the Eucharist (in huts, tents, hospital corridors, attics and when it was warm, simply in the open air).

Over the past two years the people have endured much; for more than a half year there has been neither electricity nor heating. Salaries have not been paid for a year; every day they just live “in the present” and on their lips there is only one expectation: “that at last this war will be over!” Some have suffered strokes because of the shock; others have lost their homes; others have fallen into despair that has led to alcoholism; others live in hope and anticipation of better times.

The volunteers of the Christian Rescue Service and the Christian School of Life and Evangelization provide this service to good and simple people. The volunteers are young people who have devoted their time, hearts and courage to show through the example of their own lives that the victims of war are most important to God and God will never abandon them.



Many older people who lived through decades of communism during the Soviet era are unbaptized and have never been to church at all. But when spiritual help is offered to them, their emotional well-being improves; they feel safer and their stress is reduced. They are at peace, even when faced with horrors and death.

They serve children who are growing up beneath explosions of gunfire and shelling. Many of these children have spent more than one night in a cellar, hearing explosions that turned the night as white as the day. Upon hearing explosions, the children start to tremble but every new day, they have courage to leave for their kindergartens and schools.

The volunteers live in real poverty and lead a very modest life. Everything that they get from benefactors is passed on to the poor. They go there not only to bring one more type of "humanitarian aid" for the people or for the soldiers, but to bring them the Cross. Quite often our encounters are very touching. It is impressive to see the joy in the eyes of a man who has gone to confession for the first time in decades and who understands that God has found him, even under these adverse circumstances.

According to the United Nations, the overall number of documented deaths in the war in Donbass, which started on 6 April 2014, has been put at 9,800.

As members of the Oblate family we unite ourselves with Pope Francis' appeal for Ukraine when he said, "I am following with deep concern the escalation of the fighting in eastern Ukraine, which continues to cause many casualties among the civilian population. As I assure you of my prayers for all who suffer, I renew a heartfelt appeal for a resumption in dialogue and an end to all hostilities."

## City Break with a difference

Have you ever felt the call to the Priesthood or Religious Life? Do you want the opportunity to discern that call? Would you like to spend a short break in the heart of London?

if so, why not spend a weekend with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at our retreat centre in Tower Hill, City of London?

**2nd-4th June'17**

Our call is to Prayer Community and Mission. Perhaps yours is too.

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# *The Porch at Quex Road*

*-A practical way of keeping the flame of faith alive*

At the beginning of last year, spurred on by the Pope's message of love and during the year of mercy, a group of us got together to discuss how we could help those less fortunate than us in our local community. We as a parish were already committed to helping at a shelter 2 nights a week, but we wanted to start a shelter in our church to help those in our area.

We are lucky enough at Quex road to have a fantastic community, who are always happy to give up time and energy to help others. We run many outreach programmes from the parish house, such as a parish funded food bank and more recently the porch project.

We started The Porch, in the porch of the church in October 2016. Once a week, every Thursday, a core team of 5 offered a hot meal, mainly soups and stews, tea, coffee, biscuits and a kind ear. Advertising it in the homeless magazines and handing out fliers on the street. We started off slowly opening at 7 and closing at 9, our numbers rose slowly, but we felt that every guest fed, was one less on the street going hungry that night.

In January, we moved The Porch into a small room at the back of the church, it was much warmer and afforded our guests more privacy. Our regulars kept coming and more joined our merry band, on average 15 to 20 a night and we found more often than not we had a mixture of homeless guests and the lonely from our community. When we moved in January we took a decision to open for longer hours from 5pm until 10pm, tea and cake until 7pm then offering a full hot meal, sometimes with dessert until 9pm. But always the driving force was offering a friendly ear.



We finished this year in March, as most winter projects do and are planning to start up again in October this year. Recently we were moved by the actions of the Pope, he opened a laundrette in Vatican city for the homeless to wash their clothes free of charge, so we have decided to follow his lead and turn our toilet into a wet room with washing facilities and add a washing machine and drier for those who have a need.

When we start up again in October we will be operating all day from 10 am to 10 pm, and are currently busy looking at the services we can offer. One of our volunteers has trained to be a referral agent, so we can now refer our guests to night shelters. We are also hoping to offer a barber, doctor, solicitor and chiropodist, all of which we have as members of the parish. We are currently looking for more volunteers to help us in our mission.

Primarily though, what we offer is friendship and a safe environment for our guests, with God's love and guidance we will continue from strength to strength.

- James Lewis

# A Long Awaited Day in Bambanani

**The Oblate mission in St. Luke's in Zimbabwe serves over 17 out-stations and villages. One of these communities is located in Bambanani and Saturday 6th May, 2017 was a day the people of Bambanani had been waiting for the last two years. It was supposed to happen yesterday, but when you've waited two years, what's another day?**

- Community consultation? Check.
- Needs assessment? Check.
- Survey? Check.
- Land bought, and deeds transferred? Check.
- All permits secured? Check.
- Management committee formed? Check.
- Check, check, check...

A lot of work goes into preparing for the drilling of a borehole. The community of Bambanani had been preparing for two years, and finally, the day had arrived. Dr Brendan had booked the drillers to arrive in Bambanani early on Friday morning to begin drilling for that most precious commodity- water.

The mobile drillrig set off from Bulawayo at sunrise. The first 100km to Insuza on a straight, tarred road, was trouble-free. The next 50km, however, became a battle, as they turned off the road into the dense bush. The ground was sandy, the road virtually non-existent. Many times the team had to stop and chop down trees blocking their path. Uncharacteristic rains earlier in the week turned the soft ground into a mudpit, slowing progress even further. 7 hours later, they were within sight of the drill location- just 30 metres away- when the rig shuddered to a halt. The overworked clutch had given up. They were going no further!

Thankfully, the drillers were well-experienced, and knew they had to be self-sufficient in the bush, so had the foresight to pack a spare clutch. Friday evening saw the team battle to repair the vital drill rig. As the sun fell, the rig rumbled the final few metres, ready to begin drilling as soon as the sun came up. Drilling itself finally began on Saturday morning, at 6:20am. They hit water at 8:45am, at a depth of just 25m! To ensure the integrity and long lifespan of the



borehole, they continued to drill to a depth of 60m. Within the next couple of weeks, a bush pump will be delivered and installed, and the community of Bambanani will finally have full use of this life-changing asset.

To install a borehole like this at the outstations served by the Oblates in Zimbabwe costs approximately \$10,000. Every penny for the 3 boreholes drilled so far has been raised by parishes both here in the Anglo-Irish Province, and in the USA. The generosity of people has been astounding- the Oblate communities of Anglesey have, to date, raised the phenomenal amount of £9,437.29. Sacred Heart Church in Kilburn raised over £1,200, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Washington DC has donated \$10,000 over the past 2 years and the community in Sandbach has given £5,000. Our heartfelt thanks go to everybody who has contributed in any way to the work of WEFA, and we ask for your ongoing prayers.

- Ronan Lavery

For more information, or to find out how you can help, please visit: [www.wefa.org.uk](http://www.wefa.org.uk).



# *St. Eugene de Mazenod*

## *A man for all seasons*

We live in a world where it might seem that saints are no longer fashionable. Many people question their relevance in our time. But saints are not simply to be admired; they are role models whose lives are meant to encourage and challenge us.

St. Eugene is just such a saint.

Eugene was born into a wealthy family at the time of the French Revolution. Eugene and his father fled to Italy as exiles. His mother stayed in France and consequently his parents grew apart, eventually divorcing.

At his mother's request, Eugene returned to France in 1802. France was in ruins after the Revolution. The youth were ignored and abandoned. The poor, the farmers, the workers and the servants were being exploited. Eugene felt called to respond to the many needs he saw around him. He was ordained in 1811 and wasted no time in reaching out to the poorest and those in the greatest need.

The homily he gave on Ash Wednesday 1813 gives us an insight into his passion and commitment for proclaiming the Good News to the poor. '...You Servants, what are you in the eyes of the world? A class of slaves to those who pay you; exposed to contempt, injustice and often even to abusive treatment...' 'You farmers and peasants, what are you in the eyes of the world? However useful your work, you are judged by the strength in your arms...' 'What about you poor and needy, who are obliged by others injustice or the harshness of fate to beg for your pitiful existence...' 'The world cannot bear to look at you, and so turns it back on you'.

For a priest to speak so boldly in defence of the poor was a cause for scandal among the middle and upper classes. But Eugene continued, 'Come now, he says,

'and see who you are in the eyes of faith. You, the poor of Jesus Christ, the sick and suffering, those covered with sores – all of you whom misery overwhelms, my brothers and sisters, listen to me. You are children of God, the very brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, co-heirs of his Kingdom...' 'You are kings, you are priests, you are, yes, in a certain way, gods... So lift up your heads... for once, let your eyes look inward and see through the rags you wear... you are more precious before God than all the riches of the world, than all the kingdoms of the earth, a people about whom God is more concerned than about all the governments of the entire world... Therefore, o Christian, recognise your dignity'.

This is good news, not fake news!

This homily is still very radical and relevant for today's problems. It addresses many of our world's social problems. Eugene still speaks to us and to anyone who feels abandoned, dismissed or ignored by our modern society.

Eugene and his family were forced to leave France as political exiles. How often do we see similar situations repeated every night on our televisions as we watch countless men, women and children being forced to flee war torn countries such as Syria?

His parents divorced: therefore he was familiar with the struggles of a separated family life suffered by so many people in our own parishes and maybe even our own families.

Workers today in many 'developed' countries are abused and exploited as they struggle to earn enough to stay alive. Do you know that there are more slaves in the world today than any other time in history?



Today, too many people in our society and communities are dismissed when they are no longer seen as being able to contribute to the economy. The elderly, the sick and unemployed are among those on the margins of our society who for whatever reason are often stripped of their dignity, self-worth and self-respect.

Eugene's homily still has the power to challenge and disturb us. Maybe that is why he is such a relevant saint for the church and world today.

Eugene was not born a saint. He lived a life as each of us does: he was as challenged as we are with joys and sadness, success and failure, doubt and faith. He committed and dedicated his life to two things; love of Jesus and love of the poor.

In 1825 he wrote, 'we must help people to act like human beings, and then like Christians, and finally we must help them to become saints'. This was the life he led himself. Eugene was a man of his time, but he is also quite definitely a saint with a message for us today.

Truly, he is a saint and a man for all seasons.

– Michael Moore OMI & Mary Tyrrell

#### **Prayer for Vocations**

Loving God, You called St. Eugene to send forth missionaries to proclaim and live the Gospel among the poor. Increase our love, we pray, for those who are most abandoned. Extend your loving call to many young people in our community and grant them the desire to give of themselves, their lives and talents to the service of Jesus Christ and the Church. May our young people answer your call as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to serve those who are in need. This we ask through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

## *Oblate Retreat Centre*

### **Individually Guided Retreats**

**2nd-11th July & 23-30 August**

An Individually Guided Retreat is a very special experience providing the opportunity for a person to explore and deepen their personal relationship with God.

An Individually Guided Retreat is undertaken in silence, a silence which allows the retreatant to find an inner stillness which better enables the person to hear God speak to them: "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

In this inner journey the retreatant is guided by a trained Spiritual Director. Each day the retreatant meets their director and is invited to share, in so far as they want to, their prayer experience. The director will suggest passages of Scripture which might help the retreatant in their personal journey with God.



**For information on these and our other events please contact the Oblate Team at:**

Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall,  
89 Broughton Lane, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 8JS

**Tel:** +44 (0) 1270 568 653 or

**E-mail:** [director@oblateretreatcentre.org.uk](mailto:director@oblateretreatcentre.org.uk)  
[www.orc-crewe.org](http://www.orc-crewe.org)



# *Holy Week On The Camino*

During Holy Week 2017, eleven Oblate pilgrims from each corner of our Anglo-Irish Province headed to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago. This is the name for a number of pilgrimage routes throughout Spain, all headed to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in the Northwest of the country...

This is because tradition holds that the Tomb of the Apostle James is buried under the High Altar of the Cathedral, having been brought to Spain sometime in the first millennium. This claim has drawn countless pilgrims for over a thousand years in search of adventure and spiritual enlightenment.

Our group chose to walk the Camino Frances ("The French Way"), as it was one of the most ancient and certainly the most popular route. At its fullest this route stretches right from the Pyrenees to Santiago and is a whopping 800km! Being a little more stretched for time, we chose to only do the last leg of the route! Starting from the quaint and quiet village of Triacastela, our route covered 134km through hills and woodland to reach our destination.

This meant that we could do the journey over the course of Holy Week, allowing the prayers and readings of each day to form our experience as we walked. During the days of the Triduum, we prayed specially prepared Oblate liturgies that drew us together as a group as well as attending local Masses with other pilgrims. That way we could finish our journey on Easter Sunday with Mass at the Tomb of St James.

There was also another very important reason to start where we did. Part of the pilgrim experience is picking up "Sellos" or stamps in a special "Pilgrim Passport" from Churches and hostels along the way. At the end of your Camino this can be brought to the Santiago pilgrim office to prove the length of your journey. If you walk over 100km you qualify for a



"Compostela" certificate as proof of your quest and imparting the blessing of the Archbishop of Santiago! Part of the fun of the trip is to pick up as diverse and interesting stamps as possible.

Each morning our group set out before dawn, walking in the cool of the morning through beautiful fields and woodland. The toughest part of the walk though was the many hills along the way. Each day the group relied on each other's prayers, stories, songs and some sturdy walking sticks to conquer just that "one more hill"! Along the route we met and made friends with other pilgrims, sharing experiences and sometimes the odd blister stories!

After a long day's walk we enjoyed the sunshine and hospitality of the local area. In each town, we stayed at specially organised "Pilgrim Hostels" offering cheap and reliable accommodation for weary pilgrims. Some offered more perks than others, with one hostel lighting a wood fire in the evening and offering local liquor to all guests! In each hostel we met more pilgrims always ready to share a story or two.

# De Santiago

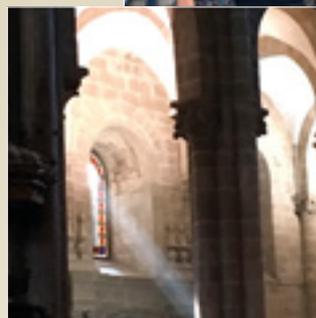
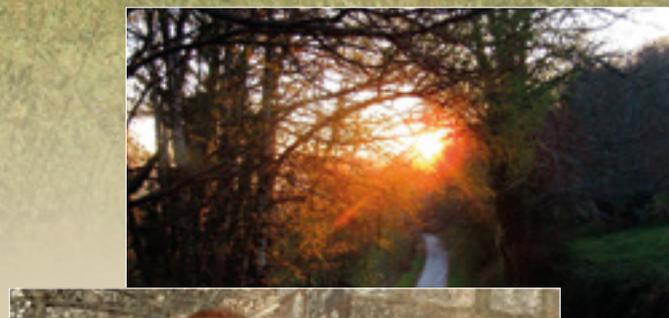
Most restaurants also offered “Pilgrim Menus”, a three course meal of hearty local food, wine, beer and bread, all for €10 at the most. Each town fed us so well that despite all the walking; the group was convinced we would all return heavier than when we started!

Each town’s local Church community also welcomed us with kindness and generosity. In the town of Sarria, at the end of Mass, the Parish Priest specially prayed over each pilgrim while the congregation sang a hymn to Our Lady for our protection. It had most of us in tears! In Palas dei Rei, the local Comboni Missionaries welcomed our Oblate Pilgrims as “fellow missionary family” and insisted we all visit again!

Finally, after a long week’s walk we finally made it to Santiago de Compostela on Easter Sunday morning. Standing in the plaza in front of the Cathedral was very emotional and we all hugged as we stood underneath its famous spires.

The atmosphere at the Easter Mass was electric, especially when the famous “Botufumerio” was used. This is the biggest censer in the world standing at 1.60km and reaches speeds of 80km/h when swing through the Cathedral. (Historically this was to deal with the smell of so many unwashed pilgrims!) The Mass was beautiful and gave us the chance to catch-up with the many friends we made along the way.

After that, we had a day to relax, explore the city and reflect on our pilgrimage. London pilgrim Erma Richards said, “The only thing I can think of to say is that for me, the pilgrimage was a journey of immense personal and spiritual value.” Despite any aches and pains, everyone was happy to be together and share this experience together. We headed home on Easter Tuesday, glad to get back, but thankful for everything we experienced.



Holyhead pilgrim Esther Pritchard said "It was an absolute privilege to walk the Camino with such a wonderful group of pilgrims from the Oblate family. They are all very special in their own way, and the young people were truly inspirational. When I wanted to spend time on my own it was fine and when I needed support it was always available. I cannot thank all my new friends enough. Gracias peregrinos!"

- Chris Cullen



# *The Varied Ministry of a Religious Brother*

*Brother Charles Gilbert, OMI*

About 51 years ago I made my first vows as a religious brother. Recently, a lady in a church foyer asked me “What’s the difference between a priest and a brother?” It’s a perennial question, but it’s been a while since I was asked so directly. In my answer I mentioned the sacramental ministry of the priests -- Masses and Confessions, weddings, etc. Brothers can do some of that, but quite often the brothers do just about everything else to keep the places of ministry functioning.

When I saw that many questions seemed to remain on her face, I found myself using what one of my South African confreres told me of his experience traveling through the many border crossings to eventually get on a plane to Rome. When other explanations failed, the idea of a “male nun” worked. He simply told the border authorities and customs officials of all the different works and jobs that religious sisters did. When he saw recognition and understanding come across their faces he told them, “That is what brothers do, too.”

You name it and just about in any job there is, a brother doing it. I know of brothers who are doctors in the streets of Manila and the mountain villages of Bolivia. There are other brothers who are mechanics, cooks, farmers, teachers and bio-nano lab techs in research laboratories. The list could be endless.

For 15 years or so I used sign language to teach deaf and multi-handicapped children about God and Jesus and his love for us. I also did outreach to senior citizens in the Catholic Deaf Community. We brothers are all answering an inner call we’ve received to share the love and caring of Jesus using the seemingly infinite gifts and graces we have received. We may simply share our presence with a willing hand or a listening ear. We share some of the intimacy with Jesus that we have acquired through our formation and years of living and praying among the people we serve and in our various religious communities.

Technology, computers and the internet for starters have made our world today smaller, and at the same time opened up and broadened new vistas I couldn’t have imagined 50 years ago. Communication has become instantaneous so now medical research around the globe becomes available to prevent Ebola pandemics and cure diseases. As a cardiac patient and a cancer survivor I humbly lift my prayers with the Psalmist saying, “How fearfully and wonderfully we are made!” Awesome! The Resurrection truly is Eternal!

“Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate!”

## **Subscribe to the Oblate Pools and Support the Oblate Missions**

**Weekly prizes of €300 and €150**

For the past 40 years the Oblate Pools has been raising funds for the Oblate Missions overseas. The subscription for the year is €36/£30. Each subscriber receives a unique code and every Saturday the draw for the winners takes place. The winners are picked based on the results of Football matches in winter and of race meetings throughout the summer. To purchase an annual subscription please email Barbara Hogan at: [mamioblate@eircom.net](mailto:mamioblate@eircom.net) or write to The Mission Office, House of Retreat, Tyrconnell Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8, Ireland.

**You can also subscribe online: [www.oblates.ie](http://www.oblates.ie)**  
**All proceeds from the Oblate Pools is used to support the work of the Oblate Mission throughout the world.**





# Oblate Lourdes Pilgrimage

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# Roberto Durette, a Life

The “Refugio San Eugenio” in Virrey del Pino, Buenos Aires, Argentina, is celebrating 10 years of service to youth. The director of the “Refugio”, Fr. Sergio MENEGONI writes about it...

Looking back, I can feel the joy of seeing that the parable of the mustard seed which the Lord invited us to consider is a reality. That little seed which God had put into our heart grew and became this tree which has sheltered, protected and sustained many youth over these years.

Our only concern was the desire to respond generously to the call to serve youth; God did the rest. He was light in times of darkness, consolation in times of discouragement, and above all, we learned to recognize him as the proprietor and the Lord of his own work: “El Refugio San Eugenio.”

The experiences that we treasure in our hearts clearly reflect all that has happened in this space. For many youth and adults, there was a before and an after, a beginning of a new journey that filled every day with hope. The key was in learning to let ourselves be loved, in learning to love, and above all, to make us aware of the great love that God has for us and which was reflected in every embrace, in every welcome, in every moment shared away from the problems that many times overwhelm us.

Only words of gratitude arise in me because every young person who came to this place taught us to treasure their struggles, their joys, their pain as something sacred; before our eyes, we had the privilege of lovingly caring for their pursuits, their dreams, their despair. All of them are great people who hope only to have an opportunity to feel alive, to feel valued in a society that often immerses them in a culture of death.

Those who have accompanied the growth of these young people have given their best, their time and talents to build family life. Many were the sacrifices made with much joy and with the certainty that only the gaze of God who is only love can bring to light the potential in the heart of each youth. Building a fraternal community and experiencing



that it is possible to live as brothers and sisters is the greatest gift the Holy Spirit has given us. Thank you to all who were and still remain part of this dream of God.

This work, inspired by the charism that St. Eugene de Mazenod bequeathed to us, has been accompanied and supported by the Oblates and by those who share a desire to put themselves at the service of the most abandoned. The arrival of the COMI to our parish and their invaluable contribution at the “Refugio”, beginning this year, has been a true grace of God.

Every youth who comes to the “Refugio” is the visit of God himself; with each of them we see reflected our frailties and greatness, our pursuits and convictions. Our main mission is to embrace their lives with the supernatural love of the Lord and walk with them. He will do his work and as an artist he will remove whatever prevents them from discovering themselves in their dignity and will enrich what we all have: our capacity to love.

# of Struggle



## Summer Camp 2017



**July 31st - August 4th 2017**

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.

**The cost of the camp is £180 / €210**

**For more information about the camp, contact:**

### **IRELAND**

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### **BRITAIN**

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Edinburgh EH6 6AW  
Tel: +44 (0) 131 555 2179  
Email: chris.oblate.partners@gmail.com

**Bookings now  
being taken  
for Summer  
2017**



# Do you have, *Creativity and Energy?*

## *Job Opportunity for an Oblate Pastoral Worker St Michael's Parish, Inchicore, Dublin*

We are seeking to appoint a full time person to join our parish team who will lead, develop and co-ordinate the various parish pastoral programmes. The successful candidate will be a good communicator and relationship builder with leadership and organisational skills.

They will collaboratively develop innovative and imaginative responses as St Michael's goes forward into the future. The successful candidate will be based in St Michael's parish, Dublin.

The post will be a 3 year fixed term contract, subject to review after the end of the contract. This position will carry a salary between €30,000 & €36,000 subject to qualifications and experience.

**For detailed job description and an application form, please contact:**

Fr. Louis McDermott OMI, Parish Office, 52A Bulfin Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8, Ireland.

**Tel:** +353 (0) 1 4531660

**email:** stmichaelsparishomi@gmail.com



**Closing date for completed applications is Wednesday, 31/5/17, and interviews will take place mid June.**

## Summer School covering a wide variety of contemporary topics

**Fri 21st July – Sun 23rd July  
(Beginning and ending with lunch)**

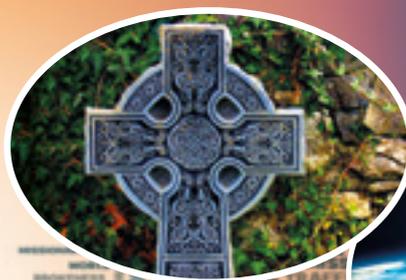
### Topics Include

- The wonder of the earth
- The Spirituality of Brokenness
- You can be a missionary too
- Celtic Spirituality - being a pilgrim
- Stop the Trafficking

Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall,  
89 Broughton Lane, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 8JS

### For more details contact:

Kirk Jacob, Denis Hurley House, 14 Quex Road, London, NW64PL  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7624 7296 | kirk.oblate.partners@googlemail.com



If you would like to share your thoughts or ideas with us please contact: Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI, Partners in Mission Office, Denis Hurley House, 14 Quex Road, London NW6 4PL or email oblate\_partners@btinternet.com



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