

Marie-Paule Malenfant
in collaboration

Pilgrimage of an Institute...



**SECULAR INSTITUTE THE OBLATE MISSIONARIES
OF MARY IMMACULATE**

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FOREWORD

Why a foreword in addition to an introduction? Because beyond the events and the persons recalled by any “History”, there is also the mysterious sense of direction given to them by God. The foreword would like to help the reader, man or woman, before the reading is begun, to open his mind and heart to the mystery that will be offered to him.

Presently, the mystery that dwells in the whole history of the Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate is totally known by the Founder, Father Louis-Marie Parent, and by the Oblates who have entered with him into the Eternal Light. They cannot give it to us to “read”, but they have the burning desire of communicating this to the heart of the people who wish to understand this wonder of God.

I had the grace of collaborating intimately for ten years with Father Parent in bringing the Institute of the Oblates to life at the beginning of its existence. I was thus steeped into the mystery that drove this man of God. This is no doubt the reason why I was asked to suggest these reflections that prepare the minds and hearts to understand what God has done with the events of the visible history of the Oblates offered to humanity for the service in the Kingdom.

It would be bold of me to think that I am able to go further than this book about the sense of the related events. Rather, I will be satisfied in suggesting to all the readers, men and women, to open themselves to the lights that will be offered to them in the secret of their heart by Father Parent, or by a particular more intimate Oblate who has returned to the House of God, our Father. They are surely greatly concerned about sharing their wonder before all that God has built with the small daily events recalled in this history.

Therefore, to open the minds and hearts to the reading of this wonder, I will be satisfied, as a foreword, with suggesting an interior reflection that could be somewhat like this :

“Father Parent,

At the moment of beginning the reading of this history of the Institute to which you collaborated with God and that now you see in all its splendor at the service of humanity, I would like to read it as you yourself read it so that I might bind myself to it as you love it and give thanks for it to the Lord with you. I unite myself as well with all the Oblates already in eternity, especially with those I knew, to look over with them this whole history that they lived and that they read over now in its richness as a work of God .”

Roger Gauthier, O.M.I.
September 2013

PRESENTATION

This history project of the Secular Institute *The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate* was planned during the preparation of the jubilee year of the 60th anniversary of its foundation in 1952, by Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I. Since we were fortunate to have the first ten Oblates still with us, we had conversations with each one of these pioneers during which they spoke of their lives during the first years of the Foundation. The fruits of this project are included in this book.

Our archives contain much information: documents, letters, photos, histories of districts and sectors where the Institute was established, and accounts of missionary activities. We still had to do the necessary research and write this beautiful story of the Love of God for our Institute. The Oblates Marie-Paule Malenfant with the help of Cécile Létourneau and Marie Martineau, accepted this challenge, in consultation with Ms Lucia Ferretti, historian, professor at the University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières. Marie-Paule assumed the responsibility for this project and drafted the text. Our deepest gratitude to each one of them as well as to all those who collaborated in this project.

The reader, man or woman, of this account will meet with an organization that is still evolving as it has done for over 60 years while being moved by the Holy Spirit in response to the signs of the times. The essential elements of the Institute were present from the very beginning of its journey. The understanding of these elements has grown in depth and, as a result, so did the way of living them.

A secular institute exists within the context of the society and the Church. The thinking of Vatican Council II on consecrated life and the mission of the people of God in the world has helped secular institutes in taking their proper place in the Church. In a multicultural and international institute like ours, the different societies and cultures in which it is inserted provides infinite possibilities for its mission.

This volume relates a vibrant history that is continuing to unfold day by day in the lives of each Oblate and in the Institute as a whole. It is a joy for us to be able to share it with you so that you may be able to know it better.

Anita H. Plourde, President
March 2014

INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the Secular Institute “The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate” celebrated its Diamond Jubilee. For already over 60 years this Institute, a cell of the Church, has adopted the mission entrusted to the secular institutes to do their part in the growth of the Kingdom of God on earth. This spiritual family “invites its members to exercise a responsible presence and a transforming action within their temporal realities to direct them in the sense of the Gospel acting like yeast in a dough¹.”

These 60 years have gone by rapidly !

But was not this jubilee an excellent opportunity for the members of this group to open their eyes mutually while revisiting the spiritual journey in which they have committed themselves, at their own pace, during these years ?

Just like the disciples of Emmaus who “searched for meaning” in their walk with Jesus, every Christian someday, unknowingly and/or after much thought, searches for meaning in his earthly journey. “Journeying”, means going and meeting the Other and others ; it means placing one's footsteps in those of Jesus and often means searching for Him from a great distance while he is close, there all aflame in one's heart.

O sole Master of time,
Jesus, you direct us,
We follow all your ways,
We all search for your face.

Strangers, pilgrims we are,
Always ready to go,
We are turning our eyes
To the Day and the Hour.

We walk in your footsteps,
You come to meet with us;
In this game of our faith,
We watch for the Unseen.²

How many important realities have followed one upon the other in this Institute in 60 years of history. Little by little, these pages will reveal some of its richness:

- by recalling, step by step, its commitment in its global nature,
- by identifying, through the years, its advances and regressions according to the risks of its experience and the social and ecclesial contexts,
- by offering its humble support in the building of the kingdom of God under all skies,
- by opening wide its heart to accept new paths in order to pursue one's journey joyfully.

1. Constitutions 1.8

2. *Prière du temps présent*, hymne du milieu du jour, Temps pascal (Liturgy of the Hours, Middle Hour hymn at the time of Easter.) With authorization from the *Commission francophone cistercienne*.

The Origins

Period of Germination

The first stage of an institute in the Church precedes its properly so-called foundation; in some way this is its prehistory and exists entirely in the heart of the one who under the movement of the Spirit is preparing its coming to life. It is the period of germination of the grace.

Every Founder or foundress, like every person who is at the origin of a spiritual movement in the Church, is a special grace granted to the world. When God chooses someone for a similar Church mission, in his great wisdom he prepares that person in a special way. He challenges that person, most often at an early age and in many ways; sometimes we can even date the divine interventions. He grants that person a particular charism like a precise gift of the Spirit directing him in the sense of the mission that grows slowly into fruits of blessings for the work to be accomplished. The charism shapes that person in such a way that his whole being, body and soul, assets and baggage, is inclined to fall under the powerful action of the Spirit. A strong and unconditional adherence guides it constantly toward the providential objective of his mission that will be clearly revealed only later, at the moment determined by the Lord. This is what we call the «charism of the foundation», a charism proper to the entrusted mission.

The Founder's Journey

The Founder's Journey¹ begins with his birth on July 12, 1910 at Saint-Camille-de-Bellechasse, province of Quebec, Canada. His parents are Adèle Jobin and Cléophas Parent. He is named Henri-Louis. His daily life unfolds in an atmosphere of living faith around the parish bells in a truly Christian family.

Cléophas worked hard to provide bread for the family. He had little education but had many talents and gifts for several trades: hotel keeper, grain, hay, and horse trader, and political organizer of his county. Adèle, his wife, a former school teacher, supported him; she kept his account books and became his daily adviser. The resourcefulness of the Founder's parents and their strong personality explain in part the variety of talents that the young Louis would reveal as he would grow up.

Here are a few events from his journey as a child and adolescent that made him, little by little and unbeknown to him, an apostle according to the heart of God. These events, trivial in

1. Chapters 2 and 3 treat the foundation and the beginnings of the Institute.

themselves, were engraved forever in his memory and guided him through the years in his precious collaboration in the birth and growth of the Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

Saved by a hair's breadth

Trials in the Parent family came one upon the other. In 14 years of marriage, 12 children were born of whom 9 died as young children, from a few days to six years of age. Only three survived. The explanation offered about these deaths is based on the bonds of kinship. In fact Cléophas and Adèle were descendants of first cousins² and people predicted that the children would not be able to survive normally. In popular words, they are called "blue children" who die from deficient breathing. When a few months old, Henri-Louis created a panic. Lying on his bed, he had already turned blue and was choking. He was revived thanks to the poise and skill of an employee, Madeleine Labrecque, who practiced artificial respiration on him for over one hour.

With faith, coincidences are the divine thread that God uses to assemble his wills and thus fulfill his plan. The child was brought back to life, but his health remained frail until the age of ten. The Founder considered Madeleine's intervention to be a grace as real and credible as the saving of the little Moses discovered in a basket in the quiet current of the Nile by a princess who found him and saved his life. She thus placed him on the way to a mission that she herself could not have imagined. It was only later in life, when he was over 70 years old, that Father Parent learned about this intervention. He would have liked to meet her but she had already passed away.

Going from One Misery to Another

In 1913, at the age of 37, Cléophas Parent died after only a few days of illness. The cause of his death remains unknown: typhoid fever or a heart attack? The mother remained alone, with a business in full expansion, a stable filled with horses, bills to collect and four children of whom the eldest, Rolland, was four, Henri-Louis three, Cécile two and the baby Toussaint, aged 28 days, who would die nine months after the death of his father.

The people in the neighborhood were concerned about this little family and, without too much delay, several suitors became interested in the young widow. One young widower of 31 years, from a neighboring village, was strongly recommended to her. The wedding occurred in 1915 and from this union a son Fernand Gagnon was born. But very soon, the two became aware that they were not made to live together. A year later, close to the end of 1916, even those who had supported this union could only approve the separation.

This was a most difficult period for the whole family and especially for the mother. In this unpredictable venture, however sound it had been at the moment of the death of Cléophas, the financial security of the family was destroyed. Adèle decided to sell off the remaining possessions and found somewhere to relocate at Daaquam, not far from Saint-Fabien-de-Panet, where the family had a lot from the government not yet registered in her name. The owner was held to a few months of residence on this lot to possess it legally and be able to sell it later. This land was far from the village, located in the forest.

2. Onésime Parent, father of Cléophas was first cousin with Marie-Ange Carrier, mother of Adèle Jobin.

Later, thanks to an exceptional inner strength, Adèle found the way to bring her family to Quebec in the parish of Saint-Sauveur. To meet with the needs of her family, she worked as a cleaning lady in families and offices that required her services, she who was nonetheless a teacher!

His Vocation Taking Root (childhood) – a few facts:

At the Age of Four

When still very young, Henri-Louis was thinking of handing over his life to God. When they were still living at Saint-Camille, his mother as a widow was still welcoming passers-by in the hotel and sometimes there were priests among the clientèle. It was in this hotel milieu that, at the age of four, he had the idea of becoming a priest.

Two Capuchin fathers staying at the hotel would tease the two boys and one of them invited Henri-Louis to come with him to save souls ... This invitation was literally a call for the child. He told himself that to save souls one must leave... His decision was made in his head and in his heart, and he responded affirmatively to Jesus, for he was ready to go to the end of the world for Him.

At the end of preaching this retreat, the Capuchins came back to the hotel. Henri-Louis watched for the moment they would leave, grabbed a small suitcase, – which was empty, – and stood close to the missionaries who were waiting for a car to return to their monastery. So then, a Capuchin asked the little lad where he was going! OUF! His project fell through! In vain, his mother tried to dissuade him... But with one hand he held on to his empty case and with the other held on to solidly the cord that the Capuchin wore on his belt. They had to use force to make him lose hold and let the Capuchin leave with his cord. Since he had not understood that this was said in jest ... this was one of the great trials of his childhood.

At the Age of Seven

During the year 1917, after the hotel was closed, the small family settled temporarily, deep in the forest at Daaquam, not far from Saint-Fabien-de-Panet. One day, Georges, one of his mother's brothers, brought the two boys to a forest worksite. The cook, taking out his cookies from the oven, asked the two boys if they felt like working like him later. Henri-Louis's reaction was spontaneous: "When I grow up, I won't be baking cookies that I will distribute, but hosts."

On his way back, his uncle Georges asked him if he was serious! His answer was affirmative as it had been when he was four, and his uncle went on telling him that being a priest is something great and that he would have to study for a long time. He advised him to pray and God would help him.

At the Age of Eight

As soon as he came to Quebec, Henri-Louis went to mass every day and, every year, the family went on a pilgrimage to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. At the school of Saint-Malo, all the classes went to church for the first Friday of the month. There was time for confessions, adoration, mass and communion. In the confessional, he shared his desire to become a priest. The confessor explained to him that a priest is a man who gives everything to serve Jesus. He told him: Ask Jesus for this grace every day, He is the one who chooses his priests.

At the Age of Nine

One day, Father Émile Turgeon, newly ordained, was celebrating his first mass at Saint-Malo. After the mass, he blessed his mother, his brothers and sisters. Henri-Louis had attended at this solemn celebration and he felt the call of Jesus in his heart: “Someday, it will be your turn”. From that day on, he had the inner certitude that priesthood was opening up to him. This was his secret. He often spoke of it to Jesus in his evening prayer.

At the Age of Ten

At this time, Henri-Louis was going to the chapel Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, not far from his home. This chapel was ministered by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the parish Saint-Sauveur. He had a great affection for Father Évain, a missionary of the North. Sometimes he would walk behind him and follow him to the rectory meanwhile asking God for the grace to be a missionary like him. He would place his feet in the priest's footprints and had to take longer strides to walk at the same pace as this missionary. One day, the two brothers became engaged in a conversation:

Rolland : “Why do you take such long strides ?”

Henri-Louis : “Because the other one has long legs and I want God to make me a missionary like him.”

Rolland : “You do not walk with someone else’s legs, you walk with your own legs.”

At this age, already in earnest, he would pray during his comings and goings. He would talk to God, consult him, ask him questions and provide the answers for himself, read missionary periodicals and biographies of saints. Henri-Louis had a quick mind, was cheerful, a tease and full of life.

Laval Patro: for a Leader in Constant Growth (adolescence)

A teacher by career, Madam Parent had a great desire, that her two boys be registered in a good school to catch up in the delay of their schooling brought on by the disturbing events in their years of early childhood. Indeed, the events of his childhood were such that Henri-Louis was able to begin his primary schooling for good only at the age of nine.



Henri-Louis and his mother before his entrance into the “Junior Novitiate” of the Brothers of Saint-Vincent de Paul.

At school, Henri-Louis was restless for his attention was directed especially to sports that he found to be more important than studies. The extremely authoritarian attitude of his professor, a young brother, developed in him a disgust for studies. At the end of the year, he barely passed his tests and was awarded a small shovel and a pail as a consolation prize. His mother, an educator, had a personal way of transmitting her messages. One evening, in the presence of her two sons, she simply said that she was far from being worried about Louis's future, for he was already preparing his tools. He already had a shovel and a pail, later he would acquire a horse and a tipcart to haul some coal. Henri-Louis did not know what to say...

One day, someone showed him the route to go to the Laval Patro under the direction of the Brothers of Saint-Vincent de Paul. Every holiday, winter and summer, Louis and his brother Rolland took part in the activities of the Patro and Louis would invite the young people of his district to join them. These activities of the Patro were a wonderful substitute for many of the fights going on between the street gangs in their district. Louis's leadership qualities developed very rapidly. That was the best school for him, a school made to measure, a formation school for a leader to be, and especially a choice grace for him.

Vocational Discernment

At about the age of twelve, he confided to his mother about his plans for his vocation. Madam Parent was most happy that one of her two young men was being chosen by God to become a priest, for a priest is a grace for the family. She encouraged him to prepare himself right away by doing well everything he would have to do. She suggested that he ask the Blessed Virgin to help him become a holy priest.

Henri-Louis sent his request to enter the Oblates in the Juniorate of the Sacred Heart at Ottawa. He received no answer. When he completed his 7th year with the Brothers of the Christian Schools at Saint-Sauveur of Quebec, Father Tremblay supported his request to study with the Brothers of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. This suggestion was received as a thoughtful attention on the part of Providence for him.

From 1925 to 1929, he studied at the Seminary of Quebec, the first two years as a boarder "at the Junior Novitiate" of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. Then, while living with his mother, he pursued his seminarian studies as a day student.

For his leisure activities, he registered at the Laval Patro. At fifteen, he was frail, delicate, quick, agile like a cat especially in hockey. He was perceived as a small student, slightly muscled, exhausting himself to produce results. He lacked energy to study and had too much for the games. Sports were always of great importance in his life. During his studies he belonged to three different hockey teams and he sometimes played five hockey games in the same weekend. At twenty, he was even offered a post in an American baseball club.

Henri-Louis was in a dilemma: he wanted to be a priest, but he loved sports. He decided to consult a man of God, Father Victor Lelièvre, the apostle of the Sacred Heart, at the Jésus-Ouvrier mission at Quebec. He arrived at lunch time without any appointment. Informed of his presence, Father Lelièvre sent someone to tell him to go to the chapel, that he would see him as soon as possible. Young Henri-Louis had time to estimate the length of his devotion and patience. He prayed, dozed off, reviewed his life. At 3:00 pm, thinking that

he had been forgotten... he came out of the chapel and knocked on the door of Father Lelièvre's office. The latter invited him to go back to the chapel and pursue his prayer.

Finally, at 5:00 pm, Father Lelièvre entered the chapel and knelt down close to Louis in front of the tabernacle. The Father held Weber's «The Four Gospels in one » in his hand. After addressing Jesus in the tabernacle, he sat down close to Henri-Louis who briefly told him his story. They both prayed at length. Then he placed his closed Gospel in Henri-Louis's hands, pushed down his Oblate's crucifix in it and read this Word of God:

“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple». Lk 14:26-27.

Father Lelièvre placed his crucifix back in his sash and told him: «Be generous, the Sacred Heart wants you to be a priest, and remember, Henri-Louis, that a vocation is something you never lose.”

Henri-Louis did not stay for the evening meal and returned home, happy like the disciples of Emmaüs after the breaking of the bread.

His Journey as an Oblate

At this stage of the journey, he felt the need to develop more interest in his studies and devote more time to them. He agreed to have a private professor's help to raise him intellectually to the same level as that of the classmates of his age. Henri-Louis made great efforts to succeed. Nonetheless, his health remained delicate all through his studies, his fear of failing required such efforts that he was physically affected.

His Stages of Formation

The Oblate formation was demanding for he came from a home where his mother was most often absent because of her work. His undisciplined humor, his freedom of expression made him conspicuous among the other novices.

In 1931 his itinerary was pursued among the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He began his life as an Oblate at 21 years old at Ville La Salle. When he entered the Noviciate it was noted that, by mistake, he had been confirmed under the name of “Marie”. From that day he joined the name of Marie to his name. This is what he did when he arrived in the Canadian West, in 1938. After his scholasticate at Richelieu (4 years) and at Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts (4 years), he made his final commitment through his perpetual vows among the Oblates on September 8, 1935, at Ottawa.



**Madam Parent and her children:
Rolland, Cécile and Henri-Louis.**

His Ordination

At Sainte-Agathe, Henri-Louis was ordained to the priesthood by Mgr. Joseph-Eugène Limoges, on 23 May 1937. For him, being a priest was to enter with all his belongings into a supernatural life. He wanted Christ to live in him and through him in all the people of his entourage. Since he really wanted to live the Will of God, he willingly wrote on his ordination card this motto: YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

His mother, his brother Rolland, his sister Cécile and a few members of the Jobin family were present at his ordination. When they came out of the chapel, his mother reminded him of this question he had asked thirteen years earlier: “Why did God come to get our father? We needed him.” She went on: “At the time, I had no answer. Today, during mass, the Lord gave me some light. If your father had lived, you would never have been a priest. Your father, a business man, was proud of his two little boys; as he looked at you, he was already making plans for the future. You would have become his associates...”



Maurice RATTÉ, photographer – 1937

Henri-Louis Parent, O.M.I.

**Ordination on 23 May 1937 at Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts
by Mgr. J.-E. Limoges, bishop of Mont-Laurier.**

His Missions

Then began the great apostolic adventure. From 1938 to 1953, he was at work in the vicariate of Grouard in Alberta.



At Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, on 23 May 1937, Father Louis-Marie Parent was ordained priest. His great adventure began in the Vicariate of Grouard in Alberta. Here he was a missionary and a priest- colonizer. He traveled from east to west in Canada for a few years to recruit settlers.)

When he arrived in the vicariate, on 21 November, feast of the Presentation of Mary, he changed his name HENRI-LOUIS to LOUIS-MARIE. He wanted to be closer to Mary in his ministry and entrust his missionary work and his spiritual journey to her. On that day, he was healed and never felt any of his former discomforts again.

Here is a summary of the different posts he filled:

- Secretary of the Bishop (4 months).
- Curate at Falher and at missions attached to the centre (1939-1942).
- Parish priest of Tangent and the district (1942-1944).
- Took part with a few young girls from Montreal in the foundation of a contemplative community of women « The Recluses » (1943).
- Parish priest at Falher, the Recluses moved there as well (1944).
- Missionary-colonizer to recruit people from Quebec who would come to strengthen the small group of French speaking men and women in the Peace River District (1945-1953).

His Foundations

1943 : Collaborates in the foundation of a contemplative community of women religious:
The Missionary Recluses.

1952 : A secular institute of women: The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

1958 : A secular institute of men : The Voluntas Dei Institute.

He also set up a group incorporated into the Institute “The Oblates” (This group is now called: Volunteers of God)

An Active Retirement

Father Parent always remained very active. From 1960 to 1995, he lived at 7535, boulevard Parent, Trois-Rivières (then the Headquarters of the Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate). He wrote his memoirs, directed retreats, accompanied groups in pilgrimages.

From 1995 to 2005, he lived at the OMI’s at 580, rue Notre-Dame east, at the Residence Reine-des-Apôtres at Trois-Rivières, district of Cap-de-la-Madeleine, (the former House of the Pilgrim). A service for the sale of his books is located on the Dumoulin Street.

From 2005 to 2009 he resided at 460, 1^{ère} Rue, Richelieu, (Residence Notre-Dame-de-Richelieu), at the infirmary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He would describe himself as being in the waiting-room of heaven. He was 98 years and 10 months when he died on May 17, 2009.

A Whole Legacy as a Gift

The portrait that Father Parent wanted to leave as a legacy of his life, he kept in his most intimate self as a personal gift from God to which he was attached as to the apple of his eye.

“I centered my life on the 5 attitudes of the soul.

I promoted seeking the positive in persons, events and things.

I also preached on the present moment.

I believe that this is the memory I will leave when I go.”

LOUIS-MARIE PARENT AT THE AGE OF 71 YEARS.³

**This pilgrim thirsting for God,
day by day,
under the breath of the Spirit became
an apostle with a heart ablaze.**

³. Gauthier, Roger, O.M.I., BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES – Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I. 1910.

He remained the little boy of his childhood, with a wide open heart, and the Spirit was able to trace his path of growth by inserting himself as he wished into the two main components of his personality. For in his being, we find again God showered numerous and varied gifts on the one upon whom society inflicted deep wounds during his youth. His long pilgrimage that could have been a way of sorrow, was nonetheless an experience without any inner drama thanks to his simple intimacy with a God in whom he believed with his whole childlike heart. He could have turned on himself and indulged in self-pity over his misfortunes! He chose to do the opposite: he invested his strengths in a life of bold decisions that nothing could have stopped.

It was in the depths of his misfortunes and failures that God gave him the most beautiful gift of his whole life. He discovered this gift little by little according to the way events occurred, and one day he expressed it clearly; he adopted it to manage his existence, he invested himself in it totally with the certitude that his life would be a success, he risked failures with the assurance that God would use them for his project and he passed on this gift to the men and women following him who would be ready to accept it in their lives and share it in turn in all directions! Still, for him, this was so simple: living the present moment as the only place to meet with God who is working on his project on the universe.

Steps Leading to the Foundation of the Institute

After his ordination on 23 May 1937, Father Louis-Marie Parent waited for the authorization from his physician to launch himself at last body and soul into his great apostolic adventure. His obedience led him to the province of Alberta, Canada, in the Vicariate of Grouard under the direction of Mgr. Ubald Langlois, O.M.I. From 1938 to 1953, Father Parent held different positions in this Vicariate.

Upon his arrival, he was named diocesan director of the Company of the Priests Adorers. He accepted this nomination in earnest and asked the priests of the diocese to make one hour of night adoration a week. Several accepted, but others could not because they had to go regularly on long trips in the country to accompany their faithful spiritually.

Father Parent who was never short of ideas asked laypersons to replace in adoration the priests prevented from making this night adoration. The idea germinated and, a little later, during his long missionary rambles, “*packsac*¹” on his back, he kept thinking of founding a community of people entirely dedicated to adoration. In 1943, he thus collaborated in the foundation of a religious community of contemplatives «the Recluse of Jesus Mary» who became “the *Recluses missionnaires* (r.m.),” their Mother-House being presently located on Boulevard Gouin in Montréal.

“Having the Holy Eucharist
made nothing less than a castle
of that thatched- roof hovel.”



**Fr. Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I.,
and the first “shack” of the Recluse,
December 1943.**

1. Packsac : Knapsack, In French Canadian slang



**The first five Recluse,
February 1944.**



**The group of Recluse of Jesus and Mary
with His Excellency Mgr. Ubald Langlois, O.M.I., in 1948.**

The Triggering Elements

A Bewildering Prophecy

In 1945, a few months before his consecration to the episcopate², Father Henri Routhier, O.M.I., Father Parent's Superior, knowing little about the Recluse and their work but noticing the needs of the Vicariate of Grouard, expressed frankly one day his point of view to Father Parent.

Father Routhier could see another type of community for the vast destitute and wild regions of the Canadian West, another style of apostles. The criteria he used to describe this new community were somewhat close to the present criteria of the secular institutes or of the consecrated persons living in the midst of the world and devoting themselves to evangelization through the Christian testimony lived in a secular way. These people act like the yeast in the dough. He could already see Father Parent, as the instrument of Providence, carry out a work of this type to a successful conclusion.

Unbeknown to him, Father Routhier had just prophesied what the Church would approve two years later, in 1947, through Pope Pius XII in the Apostolic Constitution *Provida mater ecclesia*, that opened to the entire world a new form of consecration, the secular consecration: the conversion of the world by the people of the world.

Father Routhier had just given a direction to the whole life of Father Parent to create a new foundation. In fact, Father Parent accepted this conversation with his superior as the expression of a Will of God that to him appeared indisputable. In his mind everything was clear and in his heart: “The seed would sprout and grow without him knowing” Mark 4:27.

Aspiring to a Different Commitment

From 1945 to 1953, Father Parent was named colonizing-missionary with the objective of recruiting families from Quebec to consolidate the small group of French speaking men and women settled in the Peace River District in Alberta. He thus came regularly to Quebec to visit parishes to awaken the people's Interest in this project.

During all these years, Father Parent wished to give a spiritual purpose to these pilgrimages through Canada, going and coming from east to west. Besides finding families for the Canadian West, he preached retreats in parishes, in teachers' colleges and in schools of nursing students. He noticed that many young girls wished to consecrate themselves to God, but felt no attraction for the existing religious communities.

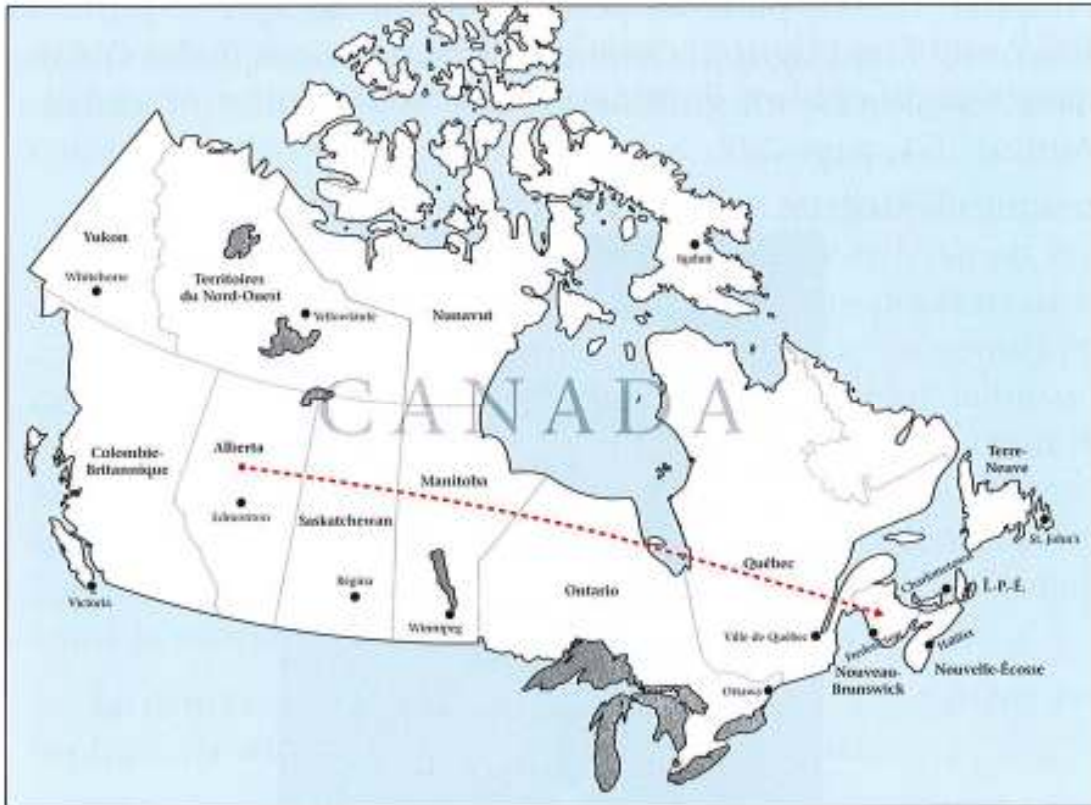
At this time, the movements of Catholic Action were flourishing and most formative with their method of SEE – JUDGE – ACT. Before becoming Oblates, several young girls had the experience of being members or animators of the Catholic Student Youth and/or of the Catholic Working Youth.

Father Parent's awareness concerning the feminine youth of Quebec, connected in his mind with Mgr Routhier's prophecy proclaiming a new form of life at the service of the Church: a new type of commitment based uniquely on charity and the gift of self, these same values that were equally promoted by the spirituality of the Catholic Action movements of

2. Mgr. Henri Routhier was consecrated bishop of Grouard, Alberta, on 8 September 1945.

the time. In the head and heart of the Founder, the pieces of the puzzle were quietly falling into place.

During this period, Father Parent made four trial foundations of the *secular institute type* not yet knowing clearly what that would yield. The first three were failures; the fourth was a resounding success.



Following an intervention of his superior, the idea of a foundation of the type of a secular institute was born in Father Parent's heart. On the *fourth trial*, a timeworn hospital was the Providential event that triggered off the beginning of the Institute in New Brunswick. Grand Falls became the cradle of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

A Providential Event

A Providential event triggered off the beginning of the Institute of the Oblates. The hospital of Grand Falls (Grand-Sault), the only Catholic hospital within a radius of 70 kilometers, old-fashioned and in a most dilapidated condition was on the point of being closed definitively by the government of the province of New Brunswick. His Eminence Joseph-Roméo Gagnon, Bishop of Edmundston, as well as the parish priests of the region hoped to keep it open by asking various communities to take it in charge. They all refused.

Ms Luce Lacombe, a nurse by profession, journeying along with Father Parent, heard the challenge from Bishop Gagnon for nurses to take charge of the hospital. She spoke about it to Father Parent who accepted the project and met Bishop Gagnon. The latter “accepted the Society of the Oblates in his diocese by scribbling hastily an officious approval”. Annex 1-1, page 207.



**His Excellency Mgr. Roméo Gagnon,
Bishop of Edmundston
1949-1970.**

A path was clearly taking shape for a foundation in the near future. Father Parent's dream would become a reality. God had given Father Parent, the particular gift of never losing courage, of keeping an acceptable humor and of developing the cult of the present moment... This, at least, is what his confreres of the time say of him.

Source of inspiration

The Founder drew his inspiration from the Church documents to define the nature and mission of the new Institute. It was in 1948, three years after Father Henri Routhier's challenge that Father Parent learned about the document *Provida mater ecclesia* (PME) published by Pope Pius XII in 1947. For Father Parent, this was one of the most beautiful days of his life. He read the document, reread it, knew almost all of it by heart. Then, the apostolic letter *Primo feliciter* (PF) from the Pope brought him real pleasure. He said to himself: "There, I think like the Church."

There exists a difference of approach between the two documents. In the Apostolic Constitution *Provida mater ecclesia*, we note expressions linked to the traditional forms of the states of consecrated life and a certain fear of the dangers of this new state of perfection lived "freely" in today's world. Moreover, the mission is presented more as a supplementary role of the religious families. On the other hand, the motu proprio *Primo feliciter* affirms the newness of this vocation in comparison with the previous ones and places the emphasis on the secular character of the entrusted mission, secularity being the essential means of exercising this mission.

Father Louis-Marie Parent gradually became familiar with the traits proper to the secular institutes:

"The secular institute is an institute of consecrated life in which the Christian faithful living in the world strive for the perfection of charity and work for the sanctification of the world especially from within³."

3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 928.

“...the members of these institutes share in the Church's task of evangelization, *‘in the world and from within the world,’* where their presence acts as *‘leaven in the world.’* *‘Their witness of a Christian life’ aims ‘to order temporal things according to God and inform the world with the power of the gospel’.*”

Consecration – Secularity – Apostolate (Mission) are the 3 essential and inter-related elements; they are part of the nature of secular institutes.

The secular condition lends its color to the apostolate that “must be exercised faithfully not only in the world, but also, so to speak, by means of the world and, consequently, by professions, activities, forms, in locations, circumstances that respond to this secular condition⁵.”

Father Parent, this Oblate with a heart of fire, was motivated by Christ's charity, by the availability of the Virgin Mary and a boundless fidelity to the Church. These profound motivations would colour in a special way this secular institute that was coming to life.

The Founder’s Motivation: Charity

The Founder had in his heart a motivation that made him tenacious and persevering. He bore within himself a great desire: that of gradually reaching the point of LOVING as Jesus loved in his Gospel. This desire was anchored in him and he wanted to transmit it to those around him. A mystique commonly called the 5 points matured in the heart of the Founder. These 5 points were considered to be the most practical means for personal sanctification and constituted the nerve of the spiritual life of the group being formed⁶. It is the basis of the foundation of the Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

What is the origin of these 5 points?

The idea came to him when he was preaching retreats in several religious communities. He noticed that in some religious communities the important virtues were practiced quite well but that the “little virtues” were less so. Criticisms and complaints were constantly made. He then sought to find a remedy for this deplorable situation that totally paralyzes the complete exercise of charity in communities.

Father Parent found the remedy for this evil in the thought of the presence of God. Whoever lives in the presence of God lives continually in the light of faith. On the contrary, criticism is the work of darkness, destroys the work of God and paralyzes the enthusiasm for sanctification. Living in the presence of God enables one to respect the neighbor in whom one sees God.

On the other hand, he had noticed that many complained about their work or the conditions in which they lived. Their deep-seated selfishness made them groan over their fate and depressed the most zealous hearts. The antidote: forming the being of service and stimulating the gratuitous devotion for the neighbor who must be perceived as a member of the body of Christ. This practice develops rather the sense of wonder and enables one to serve without complaining. And the fruit of these gospel attitudes is peace within the group.

4. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 929.

5. Primo feliciter, n° 6, in The Secular Institutes – Documents.

6. Journal CARITAS, n° 1, page 2.

At first, this was about 5 attitudes in the way of living but later the mystique of the 5.5.5 took its place in the life of the Oblates.

So, for him, an Oblate was a person living in the midst of the world in a group accepted by the Church and who, day by day, like the Virgin Mary, found her motivation in living charity in all places where Christ has rights.

The first chapter of the Constitutions of the Institute reveals the inspiration and the apostolic ambition of the foundation:

“Living Christ’s charity, like Mary Immaculate, to spread it *in all places where Christ has rights.*”

CONSTITUTIONS 1.1

Under Mary’s Gaze

Already in the very beginning of the Institute⁷, the Founder wanted Mary to be always there... present to the Oblates at the same time as their accompanying presence, their mother, their guide and their model to live through all the hard blows of life and to readjust their charity constantly, as she did in her life milieu at Nazareth. He gave a motto to the Oblates “*Caritas Christi per Mariam Immaculatam*”. The charity of Christ through Mary Immaculate.

On February 21, 1953, the Oblates arrived at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec. They lived close to the Shrine of Notre-Dame-du-Cap at 555, rue Notre-Dame (in the house where the first Jesuits lived at the beginning of the colony).

The Mystique of the “5-5-5”

Father Parent proposed to the Oblates what he called the mystique of the three five's. This is how this simple and realistic mystique of the “5-5-5” was born:

five periods of prayer,
five attitudes in life,
five acts of charity.

The goal targeted in this spirituality was to acquire Christ's mentality to live and be a witness of his charity in all the places where he had rights.

The first 5

Eucharistic celebration,
Meditation – Mental prayer,
The Divine Office (at the beginning of the Institute was the visit to the Blessed Sacrament),
Rosary,
Review of the day.

7. The Institute was known under three names during its history. The first, The Missionary Oblates of the Immaculate (1952-1964). The second, on November 26, 1964, The Oblates of Mary Immaculate and, from December 29, 1964, The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate. Letters patent of the Institute.

The second 5

- Presence of God
- Absence of destructive interior and exterior criticism
- Absence of useless interior and exterior complaints
- Being available for service⁸
- Being a peace maker⁹

The third 5

Charity in action is manifested in all the contacts and develops a unique movement of love of God and neighbor.

These attitudes of life (second 5) are nourished from the life of prayer (first 5) and are manifested concretely in action (third 5). During the years until today, ‘the five points’¹⁰, while keeping their profound meaning, have found a terminology that must no longer be changed and which is inserted in the Constitutions of the Institute approved by Rome.

The richness of the mystique and its value strike instantly. “Father Parent proposed a typically lay itinerary of holiness that any Christian may adopt because it is not tied to particular structures or conditions of a way of life. Jesus is the model of life for every Christian, ‘through his Incarnation, He becomes a specialist of the ordinary life’. Precisely in ordinary life, in the life of each day, one can live this plenitude of charity that makes people holy¹¹”

This small program of life is drawn directly from the Gospel and expressed in terms understood by everyone without the need of any theological explanation. Whoever really strives to live it, will see that such a program of spiritual life implies exigencies, death to self and a glow of enthusiasm for evangelization. It is a realistic itinerary of holiness. It is the program of a whole life.

The Love of the Church

At the very beginning of the foundation, the tasks of the members of the Institute were attributed according to the demands of the bishops, while taking into account the needs of the Church and, obviously, the aptitudes of the Oblates. Still today, the directives and the guidelines of the Church are priorities. Moreover, in the evangelical line and in line with the spirituality of the O.M.I.’s, the Institute always keeps a preference for the poorest of the poor and for the most marginalized milieus.

The Founder always sought the Will of God in decisions and guidelines of the Church and was never weary of guiding the group in fidelity to and respect for the Church. He wrote In the Constitutions of the Institute:

-
8. At the beginning of the Institute, Father Parent spoke of «the acceptance of all devotion to duty requested by the legitimate authority».
 9. The «never to be the cause of a voluntary problem» of the beginning was replaced by «Peace Maker».
 10. ‘The five points’ is an expression frequently used by the Founder to present the attitudes in life.
 11. Ciardi, Fabio, O.M.I. Doctor in spirituality: A Project of Holiness for all. Preface of the book *Sur les pas de Jésus* (In the Footsteps of Jesus).

“The Oblate, child of God, Daughter of the Church and temple of the Holy Spirit, loves God with all her heart, considers herself as a loving daughter of the Church, and earnestly seeks to live according to the promptings of the Holy Spirit¹².”

The Institute had to make its way into society and in the Church and sometimes borrow the routes traced by the religious communities such as to have precise works and share life under the same roof. During the years, the pioneering members came to know about the guidelines concerning the secular institutes and apply them.

Among the expressions describing what the Institute is, we find:

- ♦ “a caring presence to the world and its temporal realities¹³,”
- ♦ a “mission of transforming the world from within through charity¹⁴,” in the way of a leaven,
- ♦ a cooperation in the regeneration of humanity.

The commitment to the heart of the world is a way of human and spiritual growth as Madeleine Delbrêl expresses in other words:

“There are people that God takes and sets apart.
There are others that he leaves in the mass
that he does not ‘withdraw from the world’.

They are these people who perform an ordinary task,
who have an ordinary home or who are ordinary celibates.
People who have ordinary illnesses, ordinary bereavements.
People who own an ordinary house, ordinary clothes.
They are the people of ordinary life.
The people we meet on any street.

We, the people of the streets
believe with all our strengths that this street,
that this world where God has placed us
is for us the place of our holiness.

We believe that we lack nothing that is necessary,
for if we lacked what is necessary,
God would have given it to us.”¹⁵

12. Constitutions OMMI, page 46.

13. Constitutions 1.3

14. Constitutions 1.4

15. Delbrêl, Madeleine, *Nous autres, gens des rues*, (We, the People of the Streets) Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1966, 336 p.

The Charismatic Age

(1952-1968)

Already in the first years of the foundation of the Institute, the spiritual inspiration of the participants was noted for its great fervour. The pioneering members took on great challenges like sharing their goods to assure the survival of this new group that was coming to life in this twentieth century. They let themselves be filled by the Spirit who made them bold and guided them through the variety of his gifts. During this charismatic age, trust in God was intense and communicative.

Ecclesial Context

During the 1960 years, a special ecclesial event marked the life of the Institute and its members in the understanding and especially in the experience of their commitment in the midst of the world: The Vatican Council II (October 1962 to December 1965), as it defined in a new way the relationship of the Church with the world in the pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes (the Church in the world of this age)*, shed some light on the understanding of the Christian relationship with the world.

In the documents of Vatican Council II, *Perfectae caritatis* alone mentioned the secular institutes in number 11. However, several documents of Vatican Council II had a strong influence on the initiative of the Institute and its members in their quest for a better understanding of their secular identity and mission. Moreover, these documents were a help in the general assembly of the *aggiornamento*, in 1968.

On the other hand, the decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* gave a new impulse to the vocation of the members of the secular institutes. We read in its foreword that the role of the laypeople was “appropriate and absolutely necessary” in the mission of the Church.

The document *Lumen gentium* on the Church also dealt with the mission of the laypeople in the midst of the world.

The Beginnings of the Institute

Grand-Sault¹, New Brunswick – The Cradle of the Institute

A request for an approval, in due form, was presented to Mgr. Gagnon, the local bishop. This request described the goal of the future institute, its works and its ambitions. Mgr. Gagnon made an act of faith; he took a risk, he assumed the role of a prophet by setting up the group as a Pious Union. This document ratifying the agreement taken on that day and making the existence of the secular Institute of the Missionary Oblates of the Immaculate official was confirmed on May 8, 1952 by Mgr. J.-Roméo Gagnon. Annex 1-2, page 208.

With the strength of the approval of His Excellency Mgr. Gagnon, godfather of the Institute, Father Parent regrouped the first young ladies interested and the Institute was launched on July 2, 1952, feast of the Visitation, the official date of the foundation. On that day, seven young ladies took possession of the direction of the hospital of the Assumption of Grand Falls.

At the end of the day, the group went to the first house of the Oblates (“the henhouse” as it was called) and Father Parent determined their functions. It was normal to entrust the direction to a qualified nurse: Ms Luce Lacombe was thus named director of the hospital and foundress of the Institute; Ms Isabelle Delisle, co-foundress; Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh, responsible for training.

This was a fourth trial... but the right one this time! At last the Institute was born and it was full of vigour.



**Hospital of the Assumption,
Grand Falls, N.B., cradle
of the Secular Institute The Oblate
Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.
The house beside bears the
nickname “Henhouse”.**

On July 22, 1952, twenty-two young girls were together at Edmundston in the house of closed retreats of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) for the opening of the retreat for the pioneers of the Institute. The Institute was already grouping Canadians from four different provinces: Quebec – New Brunswick – Ontario – Prince Edward Island as well as some Franco-Americans.

1. The town’s English name is Grand Falls.



**Group of Retreatants at Edmundston,
N.B., July 1952.**

Mrs Adèle Jobin Parent, mother of the Founder, was part of the first group of Oblates and shared the joys of its first days with her son. Madam Parent lent him a hand in this epic event of the foundation of the Institute. While her son was attending to his responsibilities in the Canadian West or at Grand Falls, she was welcoming, informing and housing young ladies interested in the Institute in her apartment on the rue Marquette at Quebec. Through her natural psychology, she knew well how to discern a vocation from the very first contacts.

In his personal journal, the Founder related some obstacles he met with at the beginning of the foundation of the Institute, a foundation that puzzled many: “At certain moments, I wondered if I could be the only one to have faith in the future. Everyone would bring me mountains of objections and prove to me, history in hand, that there were too many foundations in the Church... Nothing affected me, I felt that the grace of God was most powerful and my supernatural instinct was telling me that God wanted this foundation and I did not worry about the future, I was working in the present moment, for daily sorrow is sufficient unto itself, If God wants success he will give it, if he wants failures he will give me the strength to bear with them. At the present time, he is asking me for this type of work, I do it the best I can and the future will judge its worth.”

On August 28, 1952, Father Parent presented a synthesis of the life of the Oblate to Mgr. J.-Roméo Gagnon, with the purpose of making this project of the Institute known among his confrere bishops of Canada. The Founder defined the Oblate vocation in this way:

“Officially recognized by the Church, the Oblates commit themselves to live the evangelical counsels through vows renewed every year and thus make the complete gift of their lives to procure glory to God, allow each member to achieve a personal sanctification, while exercising an apostolate in the world, using the means of the world.”

In the heart of the Church our Institute was born

The Spirit moves where he wills and when he wills.

In 1952, it was under the Spirit's guidance that Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., sought God's will in view of starting a new foundation. The founder, who was filled with burning apostolic and missionary zeal, set out to work without exactly knowing the outcome of the movement which was being born. Through faith and courage, he overcame many difficulties and misunderstandings.

From the very beginning, the Institute was made up of a dynamic group of young enthusiastic women who were called by the Spirit to live this wonderful project.

In the beginning, there was fear... and God created audacity! As the group quickly developed, a few women generously accepted responsibilities such as the general direction of the group, the formation of members and the growth and expansion of the Institute. These challenges were met by Luce, Isabelle, Aline, Reine-Aimée and Céclie who welcomed the Spirit's radical invitation to open new roads and to step forward into the unknown.

Père Parent

Luce Lacombe

Isabelle Delisle

Aline Robitaille

Céclie Bellevue

Reine-Aimée Welsh

Obviously, Grand Falls was considered as the Central House of the Institute and several Oblates came in turn for a short session, to know the spirit of charity that must enliven each one's heart.

Between July 15 and December 15, 1956, there were 16 new foundations: 8 in Canada, 3 in Haiti, 2 in the United States, one in Bolivia, one in Chile and another one at Panama.

The Institute numbered 3 Canadian districts:

- ♦ District of Edmundston, province of New Brunswick
- ♦ District of Three-Rivers, province of Quebec
- ♦ District of Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, province of Quebec

The Institute numbered 3 vice-districts:

- ♦ Vice-district of Chile-Bolivia
- ♦ Vice-district of Haiti
- ♦ Vice-district of Rouyn, province of Quebec

Two houses were attached to the Central House: Panama and the United States.



The staff of the Hospital of the Assumption, Grand Falls, N.B. and a few Oblates passing through at the time of the blessing of the hospital, December 8, 1952.



A short time later, in 1953, the Institute takes root in Quebec, close to a shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary at Cap-de-la-Madeleine.



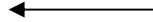
**Hospital N.-D.-des-Neiges, Ste-Agathe-des-Monts – 1954.
The Oblates, hands on their Founder's cross of the Oblate Fathers,
promise to live in the most perfect charity among themselves.**



**House of the Oblates on rue Principale
Grand Falls, N.B.**



**20, rue du Sanctuaire,
Cap-de-la-Madeleine.**



**555, rue Notre-Dame,
Cap-de-la-Madeleine.**



Pilgrim's House, Cap-de-la-Madeleine.

Cap-de-la Madeleine – Province of Quebec (under the eye of Notre-Dame-du-Cap)

On Saturday, February 21, 1953, a day dedicated to the Most Blessed Virgin, some Oblates arrived at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, to manage a Marian bookstore in this place of pilgrimages.

This foundation quickly became, in God's plan, a source of graces for the Institute. Hundreds of members worked there in succession close to the National Madonna, especially during the summer season. They were secretaries, telephonists, organists, caretakers of the pilgrims' houses, cooks, laundresses, sacristans, housekeepers, hostesses and guides of groups or individual pilgrims. They even agreed to become actresses to animate the pageants² that would stimulate the devotion of the pilgrims who would stroll slowly and prayerfully around the artificial lake Sainte-Marie carrying burning candles. Ms Marguerite Bilodeau, French-speaking, and Ms Thérèse Gagnon, English-speaking, were part of the first group of hostesses and several Oblates followed one another in this service from 1954 to 1972.

Hundreds of young girls found near Notre-Dame-du-Cap the desire, the strength and the dynamism to consecrate themselves totally to service in the Church. Oblates radiated from the Sanctuary to all of Canada and the ends of the world.

In 1955, Father Parent moved his office from Grand Falls to 20 rue du Sanctuaire, at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. The year 1957 was an important year in the growth of the Institute. The registered office and the offices of the Generalate were also transferred to the same address³. The Service of "Help to the Missions" was created.

During these years, the Founder wrote some hundred songs on current melodies, and dedicated them especially to the pioneers. Most of the time, these songs were reflections on the spirituality of the 5 points and they proved to be most stimulating, like the *Holy-Today*:⁴

*Oblates, let us live the today just so
Let us simply respect the present moment.
Let us eliminate the past,
It can no longer sanctify.
It would like to paralyze us.*

For Father Parent, an Oblate was someone who played regularly on the keyboard of the verb "to give". The Oblate was a gift of God who served as a vehicle to move charity in all places where Christ has rights. It was a gift that *gives itself* and *gives*, who, with perseverance, *gives itself again* and often *forgives*... and so freely *hums* her joy.

As early as 1958, the Institute was already international for it consisted of 16 nationalities: American, Belgian, Bolivian, Canadian, Chilean, Spanish, French, Haitian, Hungarian, Italian, Laotian, Mexican, Panamanian, Slav, Swiss, Vietnamese.

2. Pageant :grandiose ceremony (style of open-air theatre).

3. This house was demolished in 1984 to provide space for a parking lot for the Sanctuary.

4. Song to the tune of « Chante ta joie. », drawn from the book Vol. 4. n° 89.

Trois-Rivières – Province of Quebec (under the eye of Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette)

After 1952, a few young men asked Father Parent to help them form a group similar to that of the Oblates. In spite of some fruitless attempts, Father Parent kept his love of the Church very much alive in his generous heart and the desire to fulfill faithfully the will of God.

In the spring of 1958, his Superior General Father Léo Deschâtelets told him: “You are going to found a secular institute for men.” This challenge left Father Parent taken aback. He set to work and on July 2, 1958, they were twelve at the meeting place! Father Parent named this group “Voluntas Dei Institute”. For him, this group was really wanted by God, by virtue of a will expressed by his superior.

The group settled at the Rochons in the suburbs of Trois-Rivières; Mgr. Georges-Léon Pelletier entrusted the shrine of Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette to the Voluntas Dei Institute. The Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate supported this initiative of Father Parent and provided the Voluntas Dei with the necessary help on the material and academic levels. As for Madam Parent, she called them “her boys!”



Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette.

Then the Oblates moved ...

On February 9, 1960, the administration of the Institute was transferred from Cap-de-la-Madeleine to the mission of Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette in the suburbs of Trois-Rivières (at the Rochons), R.R. n° 2⁵, 15 kilometers from Cap-de-la-Madeleine.

The new Central House was blessed on March 2 by the Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Father Léo Deschâtelets, O.M.I..

On July 2, 1960, the Pious Union of the Oblates Missionaries of the Immaculate was established canonically as an *Association of perfection* by the bishop of Trois-Rivières. Annex 1-3, page 209.

People were often worried about the survival of this new institute. During a conference, in November 1960, Father Parent expressed himself as follows:

“I have always acted like a child, living day by day, letting events happen, knowing well that that Institute, ultimately, is much more the work of God and the Holy Spirit than mine!”

Important Events

February 2, 1962, was a great day for the Institute as this article from the periodical “Around the Institute” proves:

“Magnificat! Exactly 15 years after the official document *Provida mater ecclesia* appeared, published on February 2, 1947 by His Holiness Pope Pius XII; 10 years after the foundation, the Sacred Congregation of Religious authorized His Excellency Mgr. Georges-Léon Pelletier to establish canonically this institute as a secular Institute of diocesan right. God wants us, the Church proves it. What joy and what power for us.” Annex 1-4, page 211.

July 1962 – Great feast at Cap-de-la Madeleine with two days of celebration: the 1st to highlight the 25th anniversary of Father Parent's ordination to the priesthood and July 2 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the secular Institute *The Oblate Missionaries of the Immaculate*. About 800 Oblates were present. A scenic play “Comme un filet d'eau dans l'herbe haute” (Like a trickle of water in the high grass) written by Father Roger Gauthier was played by some Oblates at the Calvary situated on the grounds of the Central House.

On April 3, 1967 the Constitutions of the Institute as a Secular Institute of diocesan right *The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate* were approved by Mgr. Georges-Léon Pelletier, bishop of the diocese of Trois-Rivières. Annex 1-5, page 213.

5. Later this route was named Boulevard Parent.

July 1967 – Mgr. J. Roméo Gagnon, sponsor of the Institute, as well as Mgr. Georges-Léon Pelletier, bishop of Trois-Rivières, were present for the fraternal celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute.



Bridge of the Rosaries, 1962 – 10th anniversary of the Institute.

The Commitment in the Midst of the World

There were no major changes in the nature and mission of the Institute during these years; the latter was constituted according to *Provida mater ecclesia* and was at the service of the Church to perform her works of apostolate realized “with the means of the present world”, individually or as a team. Preference was given to the poorest milieus.

Since the beginning of the Institute, there were, on average, for 7 to 8 years, requests to join the Institute every 2-3 days. A shower of requests came from every possible horizon. At first, there were two categories of members: the interns and the externs.

Without any doubt, there was, in the eyes of God, the same dignity between the intern and extern members. Their annual retreat and their team meetings according to their availability preserved the bonds among themselves and with the Institute.

The Intern Members

They would leave their families and come to live in the houses of the Institute and devote themselves to their works. It was not a matter of living a properly so-called common life. They lived under the same roof, under rules necessary for living as a team. The life of prayer and leisure was left to each one's initiative, except for the evening prayer done together.

On the Canadian soil, for a few years, the Oblates adopted an official costume for the Institute: a white blouse, grey skirt and a navy blue blazer. This was the traditional uniform worn by the student girls in high schools. The coat of arms of the professed sisters was worn on the left pocket of their blazer: white cross against a blue background under a white star above and their motto: “Caritas Christi per Mariam⁶” below. The hat worn at first was replaced by a beret.

On February 28, 1961, Father Parent accompanied by Mss Reine-Aimée Welsh, Marthe Fournier and Denise Archambault had an audience with Pope John XXIII. The latter noticed the blazer and the grey skirt worn by the Oblates and said to Reine-Aimée “the Oblates are dressed like laypeople, this is fine, but there must not be any uniform costumes...” The Oblates were informed about the Pope's wish and, the change was made gradually.

The intern members devoted themselves in varied works: hospitals, schools, classical colleges, dispensaries, secretariats, social services, homes for young girls, for convalescents or for the elderly, bookstores, - service in rectories, placing orphans in refuge families, day-care centers, welcoming pilgrims, home care for the ill, domestic science schools, etc...



**Coat of arms
Probanist – Professed**

The Institute did not limit itself to a particular type of works. Those responsible for the Institute strived to call persons according to their potentials, their capacities, skills, taking their aspirations into account. On the financial level, the intern Oblates pooled their salaries.

One of the main typical traits of the Institute, on the apostolic level was their adaptability: being able to adapt themselves to all situations, the present and the future ones.

6. Translation of the motto of the Oblate Fathers « Charity of Christ through Mary ».

The Extern Members

The extern members exercised various professions or trades: secretaries, factory workers, teachers, home management, social assistants, family mothers (widows), milliners, responsible for Catholic action, etc. They lived the same ideal and pronounced the same vows as the intern members, but without leaving their milieu where they kept on exercising their profession or trade. They did not wear the official uniform.

So these were particular circumstances: – family or social obligations, an important apostolic commitment in their milieu – that dictated the choice of this modality of commitment. They administered their possessions by informing their Assigned Directress periodically.

The Institute Open to Everyone

At this time, what must we say about the immeasurable charity of the Founder that would drive him to shelter adolescents, people of frail health, the marginalized. All had their space in the houses of the Oblates and shared the same lifestyle. Father Parent's goal was to foster studies and skills to enable everyone to face life in a better way. The only criterion to be accepted was to love God.

Father Parent also invited persons interested in living a missionary experience to join the Oblates. After a particular formation, these “lay missionaries” would give a few years of their lives to work in other countries. They would live with the Oblates, share their works, the spirituality of the 5 attitudes of life and their motto of Charity. In 1957, in the Villa Caritas Christi at Cap-de-la-Madeleine the School of the Smile was formed. It later settled at Deschambault, province of Quebec. This missionary service lasted 20 years and came to the help of several countries in South America, Africa and the West Indies.

Among the parents of the Oblates, the people around them and the friends of Father Parent, many were drawn by the 5 attitudes of life and wanted to live them without desiring necessarily a consecration. Father Parent founded for them a group called the « auxiliaries » of the Institute. This form, at first accessible to women ... then later to men, included for a while the “Young Volunteers” and, at last, later the associated group Volunteers of God.

In the spring of 2012, there were 1212 members of the Volunteers of God living in several countries in every continent: Africa: 7, North America: 485, South America: 112, West Indies: 428, Asia 52, Europe: 45, the Indian Ocean: 83.

Mary and the Oblate

The Founder's wish from the beginning of the Institute was that every Oblate would strive to live like Mary. A name of the Virgin proposed on the day of the first vows would become like a way that would lead straight to Jesus. The first Oblates thus bore a name of the Blessed Virgin.

Evening Prayer:

Marian litany: The first 50 names made up a litany recited together every evening, to which they would respond “I love you”...

To the conquest of the charity of Christ
R : Through Mary Immaculate

Prayer:

We beg you, O sweet and loving Virgin,
grant us by the blood of your divine Son
the grace to be the auxiliaries of the priests,
to understand our sick people to nurse them,
our students to instruct them,
our elderly persons to lead them to heaven,
our works with young women
so that purity and charity may be the ornaments of their souls.

To you alone belong our works,
you alone are the bond of charity that unites all the Oblates to one another.
As well once more, we hand over to you our intelligences,
our wills, our hearts, our talents,
our desires for apostolate and sanctification
to be your joy in this world and the gems of your crown in the next. AMEN

Invocations:

Holy Spirit, God of light, enlighten us.

Holy Spirit, God of strength, sustain us.

Holy Spirit, God of wisdom, pacify us.

Mary, « pilgrim Virgin », guide the Institute from one province to the other... from one city to the next and, afterwards, from one country to the other. Everywhere the Oblates pass, they invoke Mary: Our Lady of the Assumption, Notre-Dame-du-Cap, Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette.



Statue Notre-Dame du Cap in the small shrine.

Expansion to the Four Corners of the World

During this period of the CHARISMATIC ERA, the Institute expanded rapidly first in North America. Founded in New Brunswick, Canada, in 1952, it was also present in Quebec, Ontario, Prince Edward Island then in the United States In 1954. Subsequently, the presence of the Oblates was required to assume the direction of schools, hospitals and of different works in most of the dioceses of the province of Quebec. The Institute established itself quickly in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon and in the North-West Territories.

Father Louis-Marie Parent was strongly motivated by the publication of the document *Provida mater ecclesia* (Pope Pius XII in 1947) and stimulated by the new guidelines of Vatican Council II. From 1955 to 1968, like a pilgrim, he made many trips throughout the world. He traveled in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe. He met many bishops to make known this new form of “secular consecration in the midst of the world” and especially to evaluate on the spot the aptness of establishing the Institute in their country.

Moved by the Spirit ... and love for the Church, national boundaries exploded! And the overflow of the youthful zeal made it so that many young ladies: Oblates and lay missionaries said a generous YES to a mission under other skies. Annex 2, page 219.

The members of the central council perceived the necessity of reflecting on the possible implications of the Institute in countries outside Canada.

To commit herself to work in other countries, an Oblate could:

- ♦ join an organization of international solidarity for a determined period of time
- ♦ express her wish to the authorities of the Institute
- ♦ respond to a request from the Institute for some work outside her country
- ♦ go to establish the Institute in another country.

Establishment of the Institute:

Establishment means the development of the Institute with native members in a given country.

By establishment, we mean:

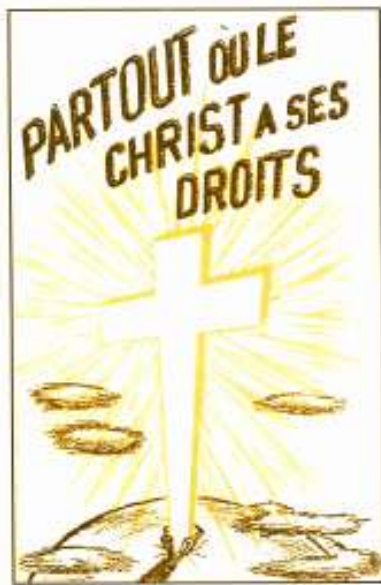
- ♦ an idea of permanence
- ♦ some native members
- ♦ a minimum of candidates allowing them to function as a group.

Conditions for an establishment in a country:

- ♦ discernment of the possibilities of establishment by the Institute itself
- ♦ capacity of the Institute to respond with a staff adequate enough to assure the establishment.

Motives of the establishment of the Institute:

- ♦ need of the Church
- ♦ need in the world (testimony)
- ♦ objective of the Institute, its nature and goal
- ♦ charism of the Founder considered
- ♦ fostering the accessibility to the oblate vocation to a larger number of persons.



Wherever Christ has rights



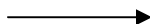
Departure of the first three missionaries for Chile,
December 10, 1954.

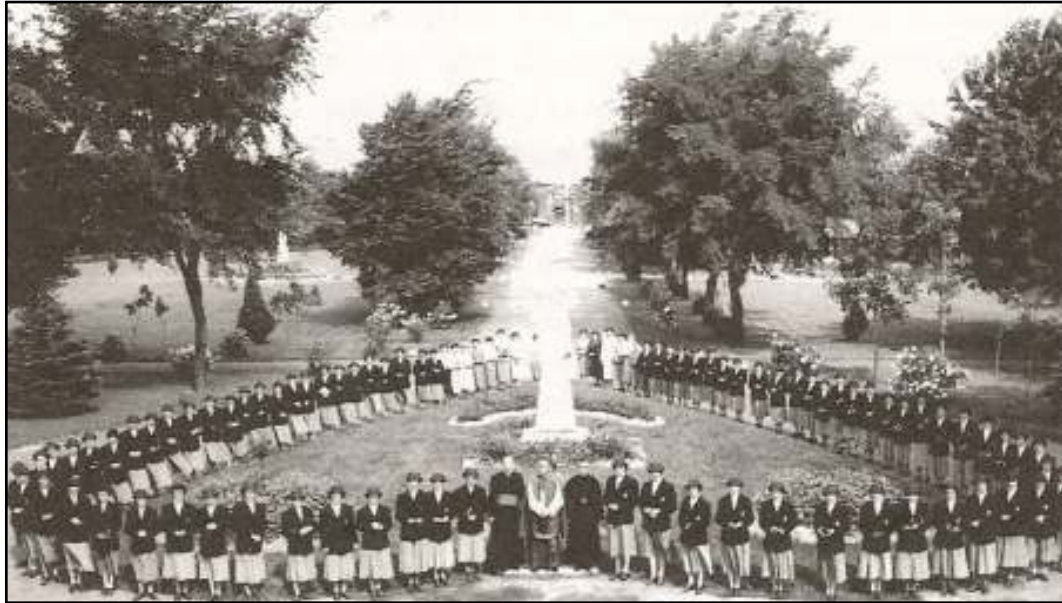
Marie-Claire Fortin, Marguerite Desharnais,
Anne-Marie Tardif and Luce Lacombe, directress
general.



Bridge of Rosaries,
Studio Notre-Dame, 1956.

Departure of the Oblates for Latin America
and Laos.





**One Hundred Oblates at the House Jésus-Ouvrier for their Annual Retreat. Seeing the Virgin surrounded with affection by these young persons filled with joy and surrender, Fr. Victor Lelièvre, O.M.I., exclaimed:
“My little Louis look at the heart of the Virgin Mary. It is so beautiful!”.**



Hostesses at Cap-de-la-Madeleine.

Visits

The members of the Central Council shared their visits to support the members in their commitment:

In Canada, Madams Reine-Aimée Welsh, Cécile Béliveau and Annette Trudeau visited the Oblates in Schefferville, Mont-Laurier, Montréal, Edmundston, Ottawa, Trois-Rivières, Rouyn, Laurentides, Attawapiskat, the Northern district, the vice-district of the Iles-de-la-Madeleine.

In the United States, visits were made at Lowell, Louisiana, Hartford, Lewiston, Willimantic, Woonsocket, Cleveland, by Father Louis-Marie Parent and by Madams Reine-Aimée Welsh, Gabrielle Lachance and Cécile Béliveau.

Visits were made

- ♦ to study the possibility of establishing the Institute,
- ♦ to consolidate the foundation,
- ♦ to encourage the missionaries in place,
- ♦ to discern signs of vocation in the aspirants to the Institute.

In Asia: Laos, India and Ceylon by Father Louis-Marie Parent

in Africa: Lebanon, Natal, Rhodesia, Tchad, Transvaal by Father Louis-Marie Parent and Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh ;

in South America: Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Peru, Panama by Madams Luce Lacombe, Marie-Anna Richard, Reine-Aimée Welsh as well as by the Fathers Louis-Marie Parent and Roger Gauthier;

in the Caribbean: Cuba, Haiti, Honduras, the Dominican Republic by Fathers Louis-Marie-Parent, Roger Gauthier and by Madams Gabrielle Lachance, Reine-Aimée Welsh and Cécile Béliveau ;

in Europe: Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy by Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh and Father Louis-Marie Parent who visited Ireland as well.

Madams Luce Lacombe and Marguerite Redotté visited Belgium as well.

The foundations outside Canada were generally and until the end of the years '80 the responsibility of the Canadian Oblates. It was between 1964 and 1968 that there were the greatest number of them: 155 Oblates were missionaries in 25 countries.

During this same period, 1 German, 4 Americans, 2 Belgians, 1 Colombian, 1 Dominican, 4 French, 1 Honduran, 1 Italian and 1 Vietnamese committed themselves outside their own country as missionaries or in voluntary service.

The Formation

The formation of the members was made in action for there was no house especially designated for this purpose. The formation did not exclude the exercise of one's profession, much to the contrary, since it was in this apostolic life that each one would learn to give oneself, to sanctify oneself and to radiate.

Formation in action requires an education in sound personal convictions and in the use of one's freedom. The need for a professional formation as perfect as possible is a must in all professions and trades. The Institute had 310 interns and 25 externs doing studies from 1953 to 1958 inclusively. On the one hand, the Institute opened a school for the academic formation of its own members. On the other hand, several studied in teachers' colleges, family institutes, nursing schools, sewing schools, culinary arts, in secretariats, etc. Eventually, this considerable effort had an impact on the style of presence in the world of the members, especially because of the diversity of the professions represented.

The spiritual formation was dispensed intensively from 1952 to 1968 through documents, conferences, accompaniments proper to the Institute. Then was seen the necessity of referring to the documents of the Church on secular institutes, especially in what concerned interior life and the apostolate in the midst of the world.

Favoured Means

Life as a Team

From living as a team, the members learned to share, to respect, to listen, to forgive, to help one another and to love fraternally. At first, the team consisted in Oblates living under the same roof, but later, the team became a grouping of Oblates meeting each month.

Weekly Meetings

The spiritual discussion was a personal meeting with the one responsible for the team, (every week at first). The purpose was to maintain an atmosphere of joy, of mutual trust. It was the opportunity to take stock of the situation of what was lived, of the difficulties encountered in the team, in the work, in the oblate life and the search for avenues to bring about a human and spiritual growth in order to continue to grow in joy and be a witness of the Love of Christ in daily life.

Conference of the Founder

Father Parent recorded conferences on the following themes among others: The 5.5.5, the vows, life as a team, the theological virtues, the beatitudes, the duties of state, the Virgin Mary, the Church, etc.

From 1957 to 1967, Father Parent wrote "Spiritual Letters" addressed to all the Oblates several times each year; most of them were taken from his conferences. And from 1953 to 1971, at the beginning of the year, he would give a "slogan"⁷ to guide the reflection and stimulate to action. This "slogan" would become an assembling element for all the Oblates of all the corners of the world.

7. The list of « Slogans » appears at the end of the book. Annex 3, page 222.

Throughout his whole life Father Parent wrote a great deal, it was another means for him to deliver the Word of God. A list of his publications appears in the annex 6, page 235.

In 1957, in collaboration with Father Roger Gauthier, O.M.I., he wrote a small guide of life entitled: “Oblate Missionary of the Immaculate”⁸.

* * *

Contribution of Father Roger Gauthier, O.M.I.



From 1957 to 1967, Father Roger Gauthier extended a hand to Father Parent. As a faithful collaborator, he contributed to the spiritual formation of all the Oblates through conferences, animated retreats and spiritual direction. He had full possession of the spirituality and the mission of secular institutes, but he thought it important and, rightly so, to favour the integral formation of the whole person. He took care more particularly of the members of the extern modality by collaborating with Ms Madeleine Desrosiers, person in charge, and Ms Nicolette Michaud, secretary.

Father Gauthier prepared very precious documents: studies in groups were deepened by the Oblates, individually or in small groups. We find elements of formation and animation under the following aspects:

- ♦ The Eucharistic mystery
- ♦ The consecration through vows
- ♦ The mystery of the Church
- ♦ General guidelines of the oblate spiritual life
- ♦ Spiritual guidelines of the Volunteers of God.

Documents entitled “The Encounter of God with Man” deal with:

- ♦ God's attitudes before Man
- ♦ Man's response to the Lord
- ♦ How to unify one's interior life.

He also introduced the “great recollection⁹” to help the members who wished to study in greater depths their commitment with the Lord in relation with their personal life.

On occasion, the Institute required Father Roger Gauthier's competence in spiritual direction for the members in districts and sectors of North America and in different countries as well.

8. « Oblate Missionnaire de l’Immaculée », Éditions CARITAS CHRISTI, 20 rue du Sanctuaire, Cap-de-la-Madeleine.

9. A type of thirty-day retreat according to St. Ignatius.

Annual Retreats

So that all the Oblates may:

- ♦ hear the same explanations;
- ♦ grasp the depth of this new style of consecrated life in the midst of the world;
- ♦ discover the dynamism of the spirituality of the 5-5-5 ;
- ♦ perceive the importance of team life,

a decision full of wisdom was taken regarding the preaching of these annual retreats: Father Louis-Marie Parent officially reserved for himself the preaching of all the annual retreats and asked for the collaboration of Father Roger Gauthier, O.M.I.

The annual retreat of five days was important and obligatory. Throughout the year, the Oblates would receive their formation in action: in the center of their daily life.

These annual retreats during the summer season would usually take place at Pointe-du-Lac¹⁰, fully in nature, in a place organized as a summer camp where all the services were provided: chapel, cafeteria and for the night, small lighted but not heated motels. A magnificent place, with an artificial lake, favouring rest, reflection, prayer and relaxation. It was also the mosquitoes' paradise...

Sessions and Studies

According to the needs and interests expressed by the members, participation in sessions and studies related to the apostolic and professional commitment of the Oblates was authorized by those in charge of the Institute.



Chalet Pointe-du-Lac – motels.

Renewal Resources - Conferences

Competent persons were invited to give conferences on precise topics, for example, on the relationship of help, in psychology, and very often on the issues of the society: the new age, the misinformation, etc. These conferences were addressed especially to the Oblates who had responsibilities in the Institute on the level of formation and animation. On the other hand other groups were also favoured with conferences adapted to their work: secretaries, cooks, teachers, etc.

10. Pointe-du-Lac is located at about fifteen kilometers from the Central House

Means of Adapted Formation

On January 23, 1953, Father Parent met a friend, Father Wilfrid Cyr, who gave him a *Tape Recorder* or a recording machine. An avant-garde means that would enable all the teams to benefit from the conferences that were being given at Grand Falls and preserve the absolutely essential unity for the survival of the Institute in its early stages.

Each team therefore received its tape recorder and the spiritual conferences recorded on magnetic tapes - circulating from one house to the next. As early as March 1954, a list of 25 tapes – that is, 50 conferences had their place in a well-organized system of rotation.

To assure unity in the group and maintain a spirit of solidarity and fraternity, a bulletin of internal management of the Institute was created. The first issue of this monthly publication “CARITAS” appeared on February 11, 1953¹¹.

At this time, Father Parent took part in the meetings of the Central Council. Taking the young age of the new directress general into account, she was only 30 years old when she was named for this function, Father Parent was most present at the administration of the Institute in the beginning of its foundation.

Administration of the Institute

Management

The Institute was managed by an administration on three levels:

- At the head of the Institute, there was the Directress General with the council members: five members in all.
- The Institute was divided in districts (and vice-districts or districts in formation). At this time each District Directress was in charge of her district with the members of the council (3 members in all).
- The districts were divided in houses or groups. Each group had a directress as its head with or without a council, according to the size of the group.

The terminology of the secular Institute differs from that of religious communities. People use:

“directress” instead of superior,
“districts” instead of provinces,
“aspirant” instead of postulant,
“probation” instead of noviciate,
“stability” instead of perpetual vows.

In the Institute vows remained annual.

* * *

11. See the list of the Publications in the Institute at the end of the book. Annex 4, page 223 and following.

Obediences

Every year, in June, Father Parent and the members of the council would meet to prepare the list of obediences that were given generally at the time of the annual retreat during the summer season before the beginning of the school year.

Sometimes, on a period of two days, the obedience of an Oblate could change two or three times; that led one of them to say: “We have to remain seated on the corner of our suitcase and on the corner nearest to the door.”

Yes, indeed, the Oblates needed to be most flexible and available and have a great love of the Lord to accept in joy and on the spot to serve the Church where the needs seemed most urgent.

Drawing Up of the Constitutions

In 1952, Father Parent had handed over to the Oblates of the first group a document entitled: “The Secular Institutes”. This document had guided the pioneers in the early days of the Institute.

In 1954, began the official drawing up of the Constitutions. This 1st outline was followed with a 2nd in 1955; by a 3rd in 1956 and a 4th in 1959. In 1963, the Constitutions were reworded in view of their being approved.

All these outlines were drafted by the Founder, Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I. with the collaboration of the Oblates, the contribution of Father Dorio-Marie Huot S.S.M., doctor in canon law and Father André Guay, O.M.I. who was working at the Vatican.

Special Assemblies

(December 27-28-29, 1958)

As it happens sometimes, some foundresses abandon their group. In 1958, Ms Luce Lacombe withdrew from the Institute: forming a new council became necessary.

A mini-general assembly was held at 20, rue du Sanctuaire, at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. This mini-assembly gathered the Oblates of Canada who, at that moment, held an important responsibility in the Institute. There were 26 Oblates with the members of the Central Council and Father Louis-Marie Parent, Founder

The agenda was as follows:

- Report of each one's activities in relation to her responsibilities,
- Study of certain problems and a search for solutions,
- Election of the Directress General,
- Nomination of a general counsellor.

On December 28, 1958, Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh was elected unanimously Directress General and Ms Marie-Marthe Laroche was named General Counsellor.

August 22 to 27, 1959

The Assembly grouped 30 Oblates: the members of the General Council and the directresses of the Institute. Seven countries were represented: Canada, Chile, Bolivia, Haiti, Laos, France, the United States.

December 16-17, 1967

Meeting of the General Council and the directresses of North America: 22 Oblates

The First Councils of the Institute

The Earliest 1953	July 2, 1957	December 27-28-29, 1958
Luce Lacombe Directress General	Luce Lacombe Directress General	Reine-Aimée Welsh Directress General
Isabelle Deslisle 1 st Assistant	Reine-Aimée Welsh pro-Directress General	Cécile Béliveau 1 st Counselor
Aline Robitaille 2 nd Assistant	Annette Trudeau Secretary General	Annette Trudeau 2 nd Counselor and Secretary
Reine-Aimée Welsh 3 rd Assistant	Blanche Lussier Assistant General	Blanche Lussier 3 rd Counselor
Anita Côté Secretary-Treasurer 4 th Assistant	Cécile Béliveau Assistant General	Marie-Marthe Laroche 4 th Counselor
Cécile Béliveau replaced Anita Côté	Gabrielle Lachance Assistant General	
Source: CARITAS September 1953 – page 1	Source: CARITAS XTI July 1957 – page 5	Source: DELICIOSOS 5 5 5 January 1959 – page 1

According to the minutes of the meeting of the council on December 17, 1953 Ms Anita Côté was not present at this meeting nor at the subsequent meetings and Ms Cécile Béliveau acted as secretary.

General Assembly

June 23 to August 13, 1968

First general assembly summoning the participation of the delegates of each district. After the Second Vatican Council, at the request of the Church, the Institute held a general assembly of *aggiornamento on the Constitutions* (even if these had just been approved in 1967 by the bishop of Trois-Rivières). Delegates of each district took part.

Study of the guidelines of the Institute in:

- ♦ Its nature and goal
- ♦ Its spirituality (formation)
- ♦ Its apostolic activities
- ♦ Its lifestyle (secular character)
- ♦ Its areas of action (giving up group work)
- ♦ Its governance.

This general assembly was the occasion for a great turning point in the Institute. At the time of the elections, Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh passed the torch of Directress General to Ms Gabrielle Lachance.

A few years later, Madam Welsh expressed herself as follows:

“In July 1968 the first official general assembly was held. I passed the torch to a competent person, fully qualified to effect the turning point that was necessary, that is to move from adolescence to adulthood. Moreover, given our almost religious lifestyle, our work in changing the mentalities to become what we wanted to be: “a secular Institute” and that, at the moment when The Second Vatican Council was coming to an end, when the Church had to question herself again and open very wide Its windows to the world.”

Quite a Challenge!

(1968-1974)

The Church offers a new experience to the world, a secular consecration, enabling lay people to consecrate their whole lives to the Lord in the midst of temporal realities. This was entirely new! It was QUITE A CHALLENGE! There were no preconceived models for the good functioning of this type of institute.

Let us recapitulate!

Founded in 1952, the Institute grew at an extraordinary pace in North America and throughout the world. Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., remained the directing soul of this foundation. For some years, he is assisted by Ms Luce Lacombe, foundress and Directress General.

Later, in 1958, Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh becomes Directress General. In her way, not wishing to put any obstacle to the Founder's charism, she supports him by respecting his intuitions. She carries the torch with dignity in guiding the Institute in its journey for over ten years. She gives herself over to the service of the Lord to realize this project and constantly remains close, attentive and understanding to each of these young women called to join the group throughout all these years.

Several young girls, drawn by this commitment offered by the Institute, came from Catholic Action movements that were very popular at this time. Others who had been members of religious communities wanted to consecrate their lives to the Lord but within a structure that would not isolate them from the rest of the world.

The members were formed while living out their daily activities, not withdrawn from the world, but fully in the world! A fraternal solidarity would develop among them; together they would find the enthusiasm to develop their potential. Life as a team forms them to the mission, in Jesus' wake, and leads them according to the founder's expression, "in all places where Christ has rights". They agree with generosity to pool their income from their work thus enabling the Institute to be established in different countries.

The Second Vatican Council made the Church enter into a whirlwind of major changes blowing over the world. Quebec was not shielded from that... It was the quiet revolution... In fact, between 1959 and the 70's Quebec proceeds to effect and accelerate modernization of its economic and social structures: it increases the number of social laws, takes charge of the networks of health care, of education and social services that formerly was the responsibility of the Church, etc. It was the conjunction of these movements that shook the Church and the State and that contributes to make the Institute evolve so that it becomes what it should be: "a secular Institute".

The Thinking of the Institute Becomes More Specific

There is a great stirring of ideas in the Institute during the General Assembly of *aggiornamento* in 1968 and, at the time of the two General Assemblies held in 1971 and 1974, there were several modifications and additions to the Constitutions of 1967 of the Institute.

Nature and Purpose of the Institute

The chapter on the nature and purpose of the Institute is modified: the addition of the secular character of the mission according to *Primo feliciter* and the withdrawal of the mention of the apostolic works by the Institute, works so much desired by the bishops.

Mission of the Institute

Particulars for the realization of the mission are clarified:

- The mission must be carried out in the world, starting from the world, and in all the areas of temporal life.
- The Institute would no longer assign “obediences”, name given to a task or mission assigned to the Oblate by the authority as the way to practice the vow of obedience. Henceforth, it would acknowledge and assume the life and work milieu of each member as her proper field of apostolate. This was a new way of living the vow of obedience: having her apostolic project approved by the authority of the Institute would confirm her choice as a mission assigned by God.
- The affirmation of the lay character of members and their role in the Church-world relationship.
- Work as the usual mean of presence in the world and the obligation of paying taxes, the tithe, etc.
- The adaptation to a truly secular life (for example, the abolition of all distinctive signs: wearing the uniform and the initials OMMI after one's name, and the possibility of living in an apartment, etc.).

Consecration

On the level of the consecration in the wake of the chaste, poor and obedient Jesus, members are invited to live in a spirit of incarnation, in close solidarity with the human family.

The plan voted in 1968 acknowledged that the vocation, the apostolic mission and the spirituality of the members of the two modalities¹ are identical. In 1974, there arose a first questioning on the modality of the extern members with regard to the vows of poverty and obedience.

1. Intern and extern members.

Formation

The teams are places of apostolic and missionary formation that takes the needs of the milieu into account, respected mentalities and favors each one's personal autonomy. As early as in the aspirant stage, the theme of formation refers to the demands of the life of a consecrated person in the world, notably the necessity of earning one's living.

Administration

During the General Assembly held in 1968, a new Central Council is elected in a democratic way for six years (1968-1974).

The Oblates, members of this council, are:

Ms Gabrielle Lachance	President
Ms Marthe Lavergne	Vice-President
Ms Marthe Fournier	Counselor
Ms Gisèle Baril	Counselor and Secretary General
Ms Doris Majeau	Counselor and Treasurer General.

They are all originally from Quebec, Canada. It was only during the intermediary general assembly of 1971 that a new structure of administrative management, closer to the reality of the Institute, is voted.

During this period (1968-1974), Father Louis-Marie Parent made a few visits:

To the West Indies: Haiti – Dominican Republic;
in Europe : France;
to the United States: Los Angeles;
to Canada : Attawapiskat (Ontario).

The members of the Central Council also made visits from 1968 to 1971:

Ms Gabrielle Lachance: Mauritius – India – Ceylon – Thailand – Laos – Vietnam – Bolivia – Chile – Honduras – Cuba – Dodge City in the United States – the Western Canada and Yukon as well as the district of Trois-Rivières.

Ms Marthe Lavergne: Bahamas and the district of Montreal.

Ms Marthe Fournier: Portugal – Spain – Italy – France and the district of Ottawa (Ontario).

Ms Gisèle Baril: The district of Quebec and the Interprovincial district.

* * *

In 1969, Ms Gabrielle Lachance, then president of the Institute, collaborates actively in setting up the Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes, (CCSI) with its instigator, Mister Paul Demers of the Pius X Institute.

In 1970, Madam Lachance presides over a preparatory commission of 15 persons in view of drafting the statutes for a World Conference of Secular Institutes (WCSI). In 1972, the WCSI is founded and Madam Lachance becomes a member of the executive council until 1976. Subsequently, she contributes several years to various activities of the Conference (articles in the periodical *Dialogue*, conferences at the time of two general assemblies, drafting the study booklet of the general assembly 2000 on globalization of the economy and human rights. The office of the WCSI was in Rome. After Madam Lachance, most of the Oblates who had responsibility for the Institute took an active part in the vitality of the CCSI and the WCSI.

The creation of the World Conference of Secular Institutes enables the latter to hear again the voice of the Church. In his addresses, Paul VI insists strongly on the twofold realities of Secular Institutes: consecration and the secular character that are *coessential* aspects and serves as foundations to the nature and particular mission of these new institutes. He affirms the lay character² of the members, urges them to respect the temporal realities and exhorts them to develop not only a form of external life, but equally an *interior attitude* face with its secular character. Finally, Paul VI mentions that Secular Institutes are realizing concretely the way in which the Church wants to work in the transformation of the world.

* * *

The Crisis (1968-1974)

The torch passes under the responsibility of the new Council and Madam Gabrielle Lachance sketches a picture of the social and ecclesial situation prevailing in Quebec at this time:

“When I am elected President on July 2, 1968, the Institute is 16 years old. It is an adolescent. In Quebec, a wave of change, initiated since the Second World War, is greatly amplified by the new theological and pastoral ideas of The Second Vatican Council and the openness to the world brought on by the World Fair 1967 in Montreal. We are fully in the quiet revolution: a cultural revolution that disrupts as much the economic and political frameworks as the social ones to modernize them. At this time, the population of Quebec questions a great deal the ways its institutions functioned as much on the government as on the Church levels.”

This situation has a strong effect on the society of Quebec; the religious practice of the population in general is greatly weakened. Defections are numerous in religious communities and it is so in the Institute. In 1968, the women of Quebec are the majority in the Institute. They live these upheavals that have repercussions on the Institute as a whole,

2. There exist, however, some secular institutes that group together priests as well.

for several of them held posts of responsibility as missionaries, responsible for districts or sectors in Canada and countries abroad. A current of major changes in the Institute follows and several members left: about 125 did not renew their vows on August 15, 1968.

Several reasons can explain these withdrawals from the Institute: the influence of a society that is putting to question the value of consecrated life; the bond between consecration and life in the midst of the world being difficult to reconcile; the awareness that the secular consecrated vocation was not made for them.

* * *

The members of the Central Council, commit full time to the service of the Institute, reside at the Central House, in a wing transformed for that purpose above the offices of the General Administration.

Along the way, some, for personal reasons, left their post in the Council and also withdraw from the Institute. The Central Council being most weakened, it becomes urgent to renew it.

The Council's Preoccupations

From 1968 to 1974, the council's concerns are strongly crystallized around three poles: the adaptation of the Institute to its secular nature; the consolidation of its identity; the renewal of its structures.

The Adaptation of the Institute

The Institute in Quebec did not have the choice to adapt itself, for the whole society was evolving very rapidly. The state of Quebec having taken over the direction of the schools, hospitals and social services during the years 1960, the Institute was receiving fewer and fewer demands to take charge of these services that were so important for society. From 1968 on, the Institute gradually did not renew the collective contracts and asked the intern members to commit themselves individually in the various milieus of work according to their convenience and skills. Thus the era of assigning obediences comes to an end.

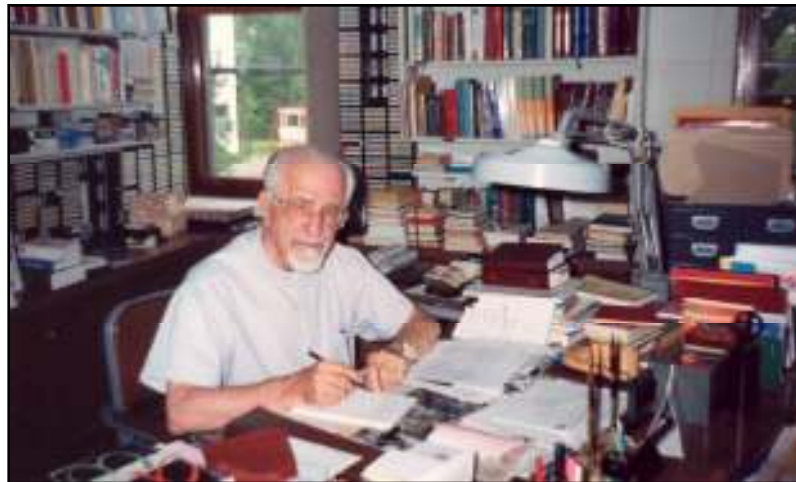
Taking into account the number of persons living under the same roof, there had to be a minimum of rules in the teams to assure a harmonious life for each one. We note more or less flexibility in the rules according to the places and persons living there! The new Council gives no precise guidelines in this sense, but invites the members to make themselves personally responsible for their choices, take the reality of their personal situation into account.

The Consolidation of Its Identity

In 1968, the spirituality of the 5-5-5 is put in question again by some in view of the sarcastic expression “spiritual mathematics” used by some priests around them. Others wondered why the spirituality of the Institute did not satisfy the profound aspirations of the members. Why did they seek satisfaction in the new spiritualities? The intermediary assembly of 1971 would study the question.

The Renewal of Its Structures

Father Parent is still living at the Central House. He no longer attends the Council meetings since 1968, but he assures his entire collaboration to Ms Gabrielle Lachance, President, and to the newly elected Council. In Quebec, particularly at the beginning of the Institute, Father Parent has been the main resource person for the spiritual renewal. But now the Institute is 16 years old, the age of adolescence. Father Parent always remains a resource person, however, he is no longer as much in demand. This is a trying transition for the founder. Still, the President keeps him regularly informed about the principal decisions and everything important that happens in the Institute.



Father Parent at his desk.



**The headquarters of the OMMI
7535, boulevard Parent, Trois-Rivières.**

From 1968 the Central Council functions autonomously.

To meet with the needs of the time, a revision of the structures of the Institute and the way it functions is necessary. The members of the Central Council drafts the proposition of an administrative structure to replace the one of five members elected for six years with an Administrative Council of eleven members elected for three years, from which would be formed an executive council of five members. This way of functioning would be accepted by the intermediary General Assembly of 1971 and would become more in conformity with the ways of doing things in the secular milieu. After Ms Doris Majeau and Ms Marthe Lavergne left, the Council was reduced to three members until 1971.

From the early days of the Institute, the Central Council named Secretary Generals: Madams Cécile Béliveau, Annette Trudeau, Gisèle Baril and Marthe Fournier.

On the financial level, there were Treasurer Generals: Madams Anita Côté, Marie-Anna Richard, Marie-Marthe Laroche, Madeleine Olivier and Doris Majeau; the Treasurer post was abolished on May 10, 1971 with the resignation of Ms Doris Majeau who was not replaced. Nonetheless, the Institute proceeds to hire a Financial Director. He enters into the service of the Institute on December 1st, 1969 with clear mandates from the Council. From 1972 on he takes care of the investments of the Institute. He was assisted by an accountant.

In August 2010, the post of Treasurer General was re-established with a new job description and Ms Denise Desrochers was named for this post.

Intermediate General Assembly

June 5 to 20, 1971

This Assembly began with a day of reflection on the meaning and significance of consecrated life, directed by Mister Raymond Truchon, theologian.

The General Assembly 1971 works at rediscovering the importance of the 5-5-5 for the Institute, the very heart of the life of the Oblate. The members realized that without the 5 attitudes of life and the 5 acts of charity, the Institute no longer had its own proper characteristic.

By going back to its sources, this intermediate General Assembly allowed the consolidation of the basic founding principles of the Institute and its identity, the modernization of its structure and its functioning as a collegiality and the acceptance of its temporary constitutions.

The Assembly elects the first Administrative Council (1971-1974) with 11 members of whom five formed the Executive Council. Most of them are from Canada but a few are from Europe and Asia:

Ms Gabrielle Lachance	President-Directress General
Ms Lucile Authier	(missionary in Thailand)
Ms Burneice Carr	
Ms Marcelle Carton	(Belgium)
Ms Anne-Marie Chénard	Executive Council
Ms Marthe Fournier	Executive Council

Ms Louise Lalonde	
Ms Carmen Lehoux	
Ms Colette Lehoux	Executive Council
Ms Blanche Lussier	
Ms Françoise Tremblay	Executive Council and Secretary General temporarily.

In this new structure, the Secretary General is not a member of the Administrative Council. Ms Françoise Tremblay assures the work temporarily before Ms Fernande St-Onge is named for this post at the end of August 1971. She takes up her post on the first of January 1972.

The experience with the new management set up in 1971 proves to be valuable. All the members of this Council remain in their posts until the end of their mandate. In that respect, the Executive Council was functional and productive.

The Administrative Council met at least twice a year for its internal management. The eleven members of this Council represent the Institute as a whole and sought constantly the will of God on the Institute as acts of fidelity to the Constitutions and to the thinking of the Church. The Council keeps watch over the unity and the vitality of the Institute as a whole in view of fostering the realization of its mission. It is responsible for the application of the decisions of the General Assembly.

At its first meeting, the Administrative Council forms its Executive Council consisting of five members: the President, the Vice-President and three Counselors chosen among the members of the Administrative Council.

The Executive Council meets twice a month; it sets up the mechanisms needed to transmit to the whole Institute the guidelines and decisions of the General Assembly and of the Administrative Council. It assures the services necessary for the life of the Institute and named the members of the district and sector councils providing them with the fraternal support needed in their mandate.

In due course, each district and sector would send to the Administrative Council the pertinent documents illustrating the life of the members and the vitality of the Institute in their territory:

- planning the animation of the year / evaluation of the year;
- yearly budgetary estimates / yearly financial report;
- particular situations experienced in the Institute, in the local Church and in the pace of life in their country and continent.

Thus the members of the Administrative Council are in a position to follow through and to seek, with the members concerned, avenues of solution for the well-being and the realization of the mission of the Institute in all the corners of the world.

According to the needs, for an important decision making, an Oblate of a sector could be named “consultant”, bringing her fraternal support to the one who was responsible for the sector.

Revitalizing Phenomena

(1971 a 1974)

Thanks to the collaboration of Father Jean-Paul Bellemare, Jesuit, professor of management at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, the General Assembly 1971 defined:

- ♦ an objective for the Institute: “TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE CHARITY OF CHRIST”
and
- ♦ a sub-objective: “TO LIVE OF THE CHARITY OF CHRIST”.

The definition of the objective and sub-objective of the Institute raised a new enthusiasm and dynamism in the whole Institute.

* * *

1952-1972

20th Anniversary of the Institute

The celebration of the 20th of the Institute, July 2, 1972, also came to gather hearts and uplift energies.

20 years later ... Meeting of 25 pioneers: they came from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, the United States.

Twelve countries are represented at this celebration of the 20th anniversary: souvenirs, testimonies, popular choruses were part of the celebration. “Since the Spirit blows where he wills, He made the first Oblates rush from everywhere to collaborate in this beginning of twenty years ago.”

* * *

Changes That Arose

Following the General Assembly 1971, several changes arose.

Change of Modality and Year of Reflection

Several members of the intern modality asked to be changed to the extern modality. After some time, that became a way toward an exit. So the Council decides to introduce a year of reflection for the one who did not have "stability" (permanent incorporation). She would obtain an extension to enable her to make an enlightened decision to opt for a change in modality, either to remain intern or to withdraw from the Institute.

The Oblate who had her stability and who in her personal journey did not feel able to renew her commitment through vows without being able to opt for a withdrawal from the Institute could obtain a year of suspension. It was granted after the stability, when her commitment through vows was questioned fundamentally (at the vocational level).

Team Life

Team life had to be restructured. Teams were invited to reorganize themselves in a way so as to integrate the Oblates of the two modalities. An animation follows to stimulate the apostolic objective at the same time as the spiritual dimension.

Delegation

The President directs her visits especially to the foreign districts. Very rapidly, the members of the Central Council and, later, a few members of the Administrative and Executive Councils are delegated to visit the regions where the Institute is established. This is an opening for until then, these visits were always reserved for Father Parent and the Directress General.

Visits

From 1971 to 1974, the new Administrative Council makes visits to the members:

Ms Gabrielle Lachance: Honduras – Chad – Spain – Italy – Zambia – Mauritius – India and Sri Lanka.

Ms Françoise Tremblay: Dominican Republic – Bahamas – animated a retreat in Haiti.

Ms Louise Lalonde: Southern United States.

Ms Anne-Marie Chénard: Cuba – Chile – Bolivia – Los Angeles (the United States).

Ms Marthe Fournier: France – Belgium.

Formation Sessions

The members of the districts of Ontario and Quebec having functions within the Institute receive an appropriate formation: intensive training in animation, sessions of work as a team and different styles of animation, etc. These sessions of formation are given by the *Centre Interdisciplinaire de Montréal*.

Committee of Spiritual Animation

With these changes that had come up, it becomes urgent and important to give priority to formation and spiritual animation. To do this, a committee of 4 Oblates is formed³ “Operation Truth”.

3. This committee consists of Madams Angèle de Montigny, Denise Lalancette, Suzanne Roy and Odélie Rondeau. This service did not last in its first form. It became the responsibility of a member of the executive council.

Communications Service

The “Information Service”⁴ is set up and in May 1970 and becomes the “Communications Service”, with a broadened mandate. Its role is not only to inform the members but equally to make the Institute known.

International Missionary House of Hospitality⁵

This service was created in September 1969 for the missionaries who would come back for a few months' holiday, a sabbatical leave or a definitive return. This service had its foothold at 4287, rue Saint-Hubert in Montréal. When this house was sold, the *Accueil International* was established on rue Henri-de-Salières at Montreal in 1992.

Drafting of the Provisional Constitutions

Following the General Assembly of 1968, the Constitutions had to be rewritten. A committee⁶ was formed on August 8, 1968 with the mandate to include the decisions of the last assemblies. The Provisional Constitutions, having more of a spiritual flavour than a code of guidelines was handed to all the Oblates on December 8, 1971.

General Assembly

July 1st to 16, 1974

Besides studying what was examined in 1971 in greater depths, this assembly turned its attention to the nature of the government, its responsibility, its structure, its mode of functioning, to the objective and the sub-objective.

Moreover, this assembly opened new avenues

- ♦ a reflection in depth on the meaning of the secular consecration
- ♦ a questioning on the intern and extern modalities
- ♦ the bond of the Institute with the group Volunteers of God.

* * *

4. Ms Gisèle Routhier was the first coordinator of this service that did not last in its first form. It became the General Secretary's responsibility.

5. Ms Thérèse St-Onge was the first one responsible for it.

6. This committee consisted of Madams Blanche Lussier, Dolorès Perreault and Fernande Legault.

Members elected in the Administrative Council (1974 -1977):

Ms Anne-Marie Chénard	President Directress General
Ms Marcelle Carton	(Belgium)
Ms Marthe Fournier	
Ms Denise Gagné	Executive Council
Ms Gabrielle Lachance*	
Ms Blanche Lussier	Executive Council
Ms Gertrude Roy	Executive Council
Ms Louise Savard	Executive Council
Ms Rose-Aimée Savoie	
Ms Monique St-Vincent	(missionary in Haiti)
Ms Ton Nu Gia Hieu**	(Thérèse) (Vietnam)
Ms Fernande St-Onge	was renamed Secretary General

* Ms Françoise Tremblay was named in 1975 to replace Ms Gabrielle Lachance.

** Ms Irène Trépanier, missionary in India, replaced Ms Ton Nu Gia Hieu, deceased in November 1975.

* * *

The Institute pursued its pilgrimage. The General Assembly 1974 was adjourned until the following year. The route was long but the courage is there!

“Lord,
Pilgrims are watching for signs of your presence
in the fog of their doubts.

Pilgrims are eager to resume their route
in the days after the storms...

Pilgrims who have no other guide
but the One who shows them the way of Life.

Pilgrims who know that your kingdom belongs
to those who follow you on the ways of service.”⁷



7. Ginette April-Daigle – Prayer drawn, adapted and translated from “Pèlerins en marche” (Pilgrims on the way) 2003 n° 2. (Quarterly periodical of the Movement of the French Cursillos of Canada).

Period of Study in Depth (1974-1981)

Long Search for Adjustment

In July 1974, Ms Anne-Marie Chénard is elected President Directress General (Chief executive officer). As President, she presides over the meetings of the General Assembly, of the Administrative Council and of the Executive Council; she represents the Institute at the various organizations or delegates this function. As Directress General, she is the first administrator of the Institute.

The PDG is always the first responsible for the Institute and the members of the A.C. remain members of their respective district. With the decision to apply the principle of collegiality, at the General Assembly of 1971, authority is exercised uniquely by the A.C. and the E.C. as well as by the District Councils. There is no more personal authority. Each member must address herself to her District Council.

This means that at the level of her personal life, the President Directress General is under the authority of the District Council of Trois-Rivières, where the headquarters are located. A somewhat contradictory situation!

* * *

During this long search for adjustment, the members of the Institute must place all their assurance in the person of Jesus-Christ... for, *how could one claim to be working at the transformation of the world without acting in close union with the One who has come to implement Himself "these new heavens and this new earth"?*

Keeping this objective quite alive, they hoped that, progressively, a happy synthesis between consecration, secularity and apostolate will establish itself in the heart of each one and throughout the whole Institute.

“Pilgrims of the world
I walk with you every day
Abide in me in love
Pilgrims of the world”¹

Madam Chénard is President from 1974 to 1977. At the General Assembly 1977, the mandate of the PDG is extended from 3 to 4 years. Madam Chénard is re-elected for a second mandate from 1977 to 1981. During these seven years, a long reflection is pursued

1. Collection of songs Sanctuaire Notre-Dame-du-Cap, n° 202 – Adaptation of the song “Pèlerins du monde” (Pilgrims of the World) Authors: Paul Arsenault and G. Giroux.

by the two councils (A.C. and E.C.) and a great deal of documentation becomes necessary in view of the preparation of the three General Assemblies that will take place from July 12 to 23,1975², then from July 4 to 22,1977 and finally from July 5 to August 1st,1981.

Study in Depth

First of all, let us make a brief overview of the various important elements of the Institute about which the General Assemblies will have to come to a decision. These decisions will help all the members of the Institute adjust themselves more and more to the reality of their lived experiences as «consecrated secular women» in the midst of the world.

Constitutions

From 1968 until 1981, the Constitutions are “*ad experimentum*” and modifications are made at the General Assemblies of 1971, 1974 and 1975. This state of things generated difficulties during the deliberations of the Councils (A.C. and E.C.) for there is no unanimity about fundamental aspects like the vows, secularity, and the intern and extern modalities.

The Administrative Council decides that a complete revision of the Constitutions has to be made so that they will come to a definitive approval. Seven committees work to realize this project: Extern modality – Life of the members – Life of the Institute – Secularity – Nature and goal – Government – Formation.

Each of these seven committees prepares its document with a leading theme: everything is reviewed in relation to secularity. This conferred a value of prime importance on the General Assembly 1981. Don Mario Albertini, then Secretary of the section of the Secular Institutes in Rome, attends this General Assembly and leaves with the documents, so impressed by the depth of the work accomplished. Subsequently, the General Assembly 1981 provides the necessary data for the drafting of the Constitutions, which are then sent to Rome for approval.

Statute of the Members (Intern – Extern)

The General Assembly 1974 is carried on into 1975 and it clarifies the nature and the form of the vows of poverty and obedience. To define the vow of poverty, the orientation that takes shape for the members of the General Assembly is the following: living a greater evangelical radicalism. This puts to question again the identity of the extern Oblate as well as the legitimacy of having two modalities of commitment in the Institute: intern and extern.

The General Assembly 1977 did not manage to resolve this question. A tendency however advocates one sole modality, the intern modality. One can understand the hurt lived by the extern members during these years for the Assembly takes the decision of not accepting new Oblates in the extern modality between 1977 and 1981 and not to authorize the change of the intern modality to the extern modality during these same years.

A committee works for four years to help all the members to study in depth their mutual knowledge, as much for the intern modality as for the extern one. One must say that since 1968, almost anywhere in the world, the situation of the intern and extern members changes progressively. The living conditions of the intern members become more and more like that

2. This assembly was the prolongation of the General Assembly 1974.

of the extern. The criteria of admission in the Institute are the same, the teams, the resources and the meetings are equally open to all. The questioning concerning the two modalities creates insecurity among the members. From 1974 to 1980, the number of extern members went from 233 to 155 while the number of intern members went from 463 to 458.

During this research, the experience of the group of Oblates from Cuba sustains the possibility of integration and growth of the two modalities in one and the same Institute. In this country, the presence of the two modalities does not create any particular problems. They receive the same animation and the responsibilities are entrusted to the members, according to their competence, irrespective of their modality.

* * *

Collegiality

The General Assembly of 1971 adopts collegiality as a mode of management for the Institute as well as subsidiarity. During the subsequent years, the Council works at assuring the understanding and the application of this form of collegiality that includes the Institute as a whole. It is not well understood, but it is there! As for subsidiarity, this concept is forgotten. Much effort is made concerning the understanding and the application of collegiality on all levels.

Ideally, the collegial authority is borne equally by the three or five members of the District Council; as well as by the eleven members of the Administrative Council.

The members are concerned on the levels of information and participation. With collegiality, the groups in authority have to seek the pertinent information from the members in order to make enlightened decisions. We consider that the Holy Spirit inspires not only the members in authority but that He also conveys his light through all the Oblates, and that is where collegiality becomes a principle that bears truth. Consultations allow a better adaptation to new situations for they are the expression of the particular needs of the members.

Collegiality is seen as a means of arousing interest and developing the personal responsibility of each one before her commitment and before the Institute. This mode of collegiality assures decisions that were more consequential with the objective of the Institute and the good of the members. To be sure, this ideal is not reached but fortunately adjustments come a few years later.

Let us talk a little about the team:

It is good to recall that at the beginning of the Institute when intern members lived under the same roof, the leader had a personal responsibility with regard to each of her team members. She was also responsible for the residence and, in the line of the administrative structure, she was answerable to the one Responsible for the district or the one Responsible for the sector.

A change occurred: the team is no longer part of the governing structure of the Institute for it is a regrouping of members of the same district or a same sector who do not necessarily live together, but who meet at regular intervals for their spiritual and apostolic growth. The team is always placed under the responsibility of a leader who would see to its good functioning without having any authority over its members, nor the power of decision on the administrative level.

At this time the team is the place where the Oblate submits any important project for discernment; then this project is presented to the District Council. That is not applied in all the teams. The collegial management brought about many adjustments to the life of a team and the General Assembly 1981 clarified its role.

The fact of no longer having a personal bond with a person in authority was the cause of much suffering. For the practice of the vows, the Oblate had to refer to a Council. Experience demonstrated that within the Councils, the ideal of an authority borne equally by three members of equal status was not always lived in this way. This was a deficiency to be corrected for this way of exercising authority over each member was not in conformity with the tradition of the Church. The General Assembly 1981 re-established the service of a personal authority over the members taken individually and this was the setting into place of the Assigned Directress having a personal authority over the members she accompanied.

Formation

At this time, the objective “To bear witness to the charity of Christ” and the sub-objective “To live the charity of Christ” serves as criteria of evaluation and action at all levels of decision making as well as for the individual Oblates.

Each one is asked to present her apostolic project (her commitment to the mission) to her District Council for approval to assure that each one's action is well integrated in the mission of the Institute. There are annual retreats in the districts and sectors just about everywhere throughout the world.

A priority is granted to the formation of the members of the District Councils in the exercise of their function. Taking advantage of the international gathering during the General Assemblies, a meeting is often offered (a day or two) to those responsible for the formation in the different districts and sectors to share experiences.

There are sessions for basic and intermediary formation at the chalet of Champlain for those progressing on their way (North America). Several Oblates devote weekends for the preparation and the animation of these meetings³. Formation is seen as a process starting from the lives of the persons, so that through their lived experiences there may occur the discovery and integration of the values advocated by the Institute.

From 1974, at the level of the whole Institute, the program of on-going formation presents various themes of animation in view of studying at greater depths the consecration through vows, the secularity, the apostolate and the mission of the Institute.

* * *

3. Madams Paulette Chénard, Denise Gagné, Huguette Hurteau, Marie-Paule Malenfant, Monique Piché, Louise Savard, Berthe Surprenant, Irène Trépanier and several others were part of those responsible for formation.

As it develops the documents of animation, the formation committee sees the necessity of clarifying the charism of the Institute:

“Being like Jesus, available to the will of the Father to exercise in all places where Christ has His rights, and in His charity, all forms of apostolate in the midst of the world.”

But this came too soon! Still, the Holy Spirit kept on blowing in the same direction during the General Assemblies of 1993 and 1997. Since then, the charism of the Institute is named as follows:

“A constant availability to the will of the Father to live everywhere the charity of Christ through service, with the help of Mary.”

* * *

After visits to the different districts and sectors of the Institute, the Administrative Council decides there would be no more ecclesiastical assistants as permanent resource-persons at the level of the districts. The members of the District Councils are responsible for the animation of their district. They could turn to resource-persons according to their needs; however the latter are requested every time the Council judges it to be right and on a topic determined by the Council. Thus the permanent presence of an ecclesial assistant comes to an end in the districts outside Canada.

“That was yesterday, and that was fine,
and today,
it is up to us to invent something else⁴...”

Missionary Activity

The missionary dimension has always been present and most important in the Institute. The International missionary house of hospitality is located in Montreal to lodge the missionaries on holiday; they would come there for periods of renewal on the level of their profession or of the Institute and for time to rest. Many, most of them ex-missionaries, were responsible at this place after Ms Thérèse St-Onge who opened this service⁵ on September 1st, 1969.

* * *

4. Robert Riber.

5. Madams Thérèse St-Onge, Angèle Jacob, Lucile Authier, Thérèse Sénécal, Yolande Perron, Monique Gagnon, Aline Morency, Doris Trépanier, Madeleine Côté, Pauline Tassé were responsible for the International missionary house. Several were cooks there or gave their help: Madams Monique Goulet, Gabrielle Marcoux, Georgette Deraspe, Annette Dionne.

A missionary commission is formed to assure an on-going reflection on the missionary aspect. After two years of operation, the activities of the Commission are suspended because of the preparatory work for the General Assembly 1981. This Commission nonetheless had time to provide judicious elements for an answer to a very important question:

Must we keep on establishing the Institute in new countries
or
work rather at the consolidation of the districts already existing?

This is going back to the sources in a discernment of the elements essential to the missionary vocation in the Institute. This discernment is carried out with a will to be faithful to the Church in the evolution of its thought with respect to the role of the consecrated laypeople in the world as well as fidelity to the charism of charity that presided over the foundation of the Institute.

If circumstances are favorable, the Administrative Council is not opposed to the establishment of the Institute in new countries but it gave priority to the consolidation of the existing districts. Annex 5, page 231.

The Institute set up realistic guidelines to deal with certain concerns regarding countries other than Canada:

Concern: Financial Organization

- ♦ Create a reserve fund to assure a long term missionary activity of the Institute.
- ♦ Encourage districts of other countries to plan the security of their members when that was possible.

Functional Concern

- ♦ Encourage Oblates who are missionaries in countries abroad to transfer the direction of the animation and formation to native Oblates.

Concern: the Missionaries

- ♦ Encourage missionaries to commit themselves in non-governmental organizations.
- ♦ Favour a year of refresher activities in their native country after a few years of service abroad.
- ♦ The President is encouraged to visit the districts and sectors of countries abroad to respond to the expectations of the Oblates wishing to know her.

Visiting the members

In 1975, Father Louis-Marie Parent visits members of India and Sri Lanka⁶. There he animates a session of almost fifteen days in human formation.

In 1978, he went to the French Guyanas, in Haiti and in the Dominican Republic. Then, in 1979 in Haiti and in Cuba in 1980.

6. Sri Lanka is the new name of Ceylon.

Visits made by the members of the Administrative Council from 1974 to 1977:

Ms Anne-Marie Chénard: Dominican Republic – Spain – Western Canada – Philippines – Thailand – India – Sri Lanka – Chile – Bolivia – Italy – France – Belgium – Mauritius – Zambia – Chad – Cuba – Laos accompanied by Ms Lucile Authier.

Ms Gabrielle Lachance: Northern United States.

Ms Louise Lalonde: Southern United States.

Ms Marcelle Carton: Spain.

Ms Fernande St-Onge: Italy.

Ms Blanche Lussier: Haiti (renewal, 20th) – Dominican Republic.

Ms Marthe Fournier: France – Belgium.

* * *

Certain events become bearers of very clear messages with respect to the future of the Institute.

For example, in 1975, the political situation of Laos forced the Canadian missionaries to leave the country definitively. Most of them came back to Canada, one went to Chad and another one to Haiti. We were unable to see this situation coming and the Laotian Oblates experienced a difficult period.

There is also the closing of the boundaries of Vietnam and its consequences: a Vietnamese remains alone for several years. The President Directress General of the time suggests to her that she join another Vietnamese Institute. She replied: “As long as I live, the Institute will be present in Vietnam”.

Geographical Structure

At the very beginning, the geographical structure of the Institute consists of “districts” and “vice-districts”. The structure of the vice-district is abolished. The norm of fifteen members was fixed to form a district⁷ and we called “sector”⁸ any determined geographical milieu where lives at least five members. Thus the administrative council erects into sectors: Belgium, Mauritius, Western Canada, the Dominican Republic, Chad, Thailand, Vietnam and Zambia.

Given the particular political situation of Laos and to favour a greater autonomy of management, the Administrative Council kept the status of district for this country even if the number of fifteen was not reached.

From 1974 to 1981, there were no official visits to the districts in Eastern Canada. However, the members of the Administrative and Executive Councils participated actively in the animation in the Canadian districts.

7. District: geographical regrouping of fifteen Oblates or more under the direction of a District Council of three persons.

8. Sector: geographical regrouping of at least five Oblates under the direction of the one Responsible for the Sector.

Secular Character

In its animation concerning secularity, the Council insists on the work as the place of the actualization of the mission of the Oblate. In Quebec, more and more Oblates are competent in the exercise of their profession or trade and each one is responsible for her commitment on the labor market according to her skills. The Institute does not take charge of works.

The Oblate can live alone or with others. Each one manages her salary, makes her annual budgetary provisions, the amount she pools with the Institute, her financial report, submits everything to the competent authority.

* * *

The Canadian Federal Government acknowledges the service “Aid to Missions” as an organization of charity having the power of issuing receipts to the donors and thus enables them to reduce their income taxes⁹.

The Administrative Council authorises the sale of properties of the Institute that no longer meets with its mission nor with its needs. So properties are sold in Canada, Bolivia, France and Haiti. One house is bought in Belgium and another in Italy.

Volunteers of God

Since the years 1960, the group Volunteers of God¹⁰ has a marked influence on the young people of Quebec and the neighboring provinces (Ontario and New Brunswick) especially on the campus of universities and by the realization of missionary projects in some countries of the Caribbean Islands. The “Young Volunteers” are set for action, many of them, supported by a team of dynamic Oblates and by Father Gérard Aubut, O.M.I..

During the General Assembly 1974, the Volunteers of God were the object of a particular attention for the group was riding full sails and is, henceforth, open to all, men and women. The Institute explains the interest it has in this group that is aggregated to them, having the same objective as their own: “Testifying to the charity of Christ”. The Institute assumes none of the material responsibility nor the financial one, with regard to the members but commits itself to see to the organization and the animation of the group by sharing its spirituality and by offering a place for its secretariat. Some financial support helps the group to function well.

A consulting committee is named and made up of Volunteers of God and Oblates. They meet with the one responsible for the Volunteers to plan the theme of the animation for the year and the large annual rallies.

The District Councils raises an interest among their members for the group of Volunteers and several assume the responsibility of forming and leading groups in their milieu.

9. Aid to Missions (Missionary procuracy) is the responsibility of Ms Marie-Anna Richard for many years; later this post is transferred to the Financial Administration of the Institute.

10. Volunteers of God is the group aggregated to the secular institute of The Oblates missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

Important Events

25th Anniversary of the Institute, July 2-3, 1977

During the summer of 1977, the Institute highlights the 25th anniversary of its foundation. This celebration is prepared more particularly by prayer for vocations. Celebrations take place in each of the districts and sectors. Thus, every month, there are celebrations on some corner of the globe.

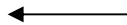
The great gatherings take place at Cap-de-la-Madeleine and Trois-Rivières. There we find a large number of Oblates, the civil and religious authorities of Trois-Rivières, friends and benefactors of the Institute. Members of other Canadian Secular Institutes as well as several Volunteers of God also take part in this celebration of thanksgiving. A symbolic well is set up in front of the Central House with the inscription “July 2, 1977”.

Moreover, an exposition illustrating the history of the Institute¹¹ in each country where the Institute is present was set up at the Carrefour¹² and a souvenir booklet “Witnesses of love” is distributed to all the Oblates and friends of the Institute. This event is lived in a climate of thanksgiving and fraternal communion. At the time of this anniversary, 19 pioneers of the Institute were still there...

“The One who began in you an excellent work will pursue it”. This was the certitude dwelling in the heart of the founder, Father Parent.



Exposition at
the Carrefour.



Fabienne Rinfret
and the map of the world
she made.



11. Ms Ghislaine Allard was the only one having worked, from 1976 to 1994, at the service of the “History of the Institute”.

12. Carrefour: house of renewal for the Oblates and the public in general located close to the Central House at Trois-Rivières.



Well, 1977.



**Mass of the 25th anniversary
at the Calvary.**

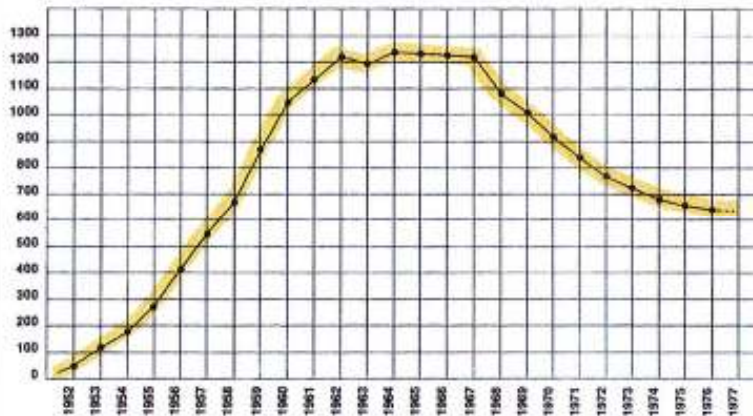


**Mass at the basilica Notre-Dame-du-Cap:
Flora Joseph of India presents the offerings.**



The Oblates celebrate at their Central House at Trois-Rivières.

Mise en graphique du nombre des Membres:



Pays où l'Institut se trouve présentement:

Algérie
 Angleterre
 Bahamas
 Belgique
 Bolivie
 Brésil
 Canada
 Chili
 Colombie
 Cuba
 États-Unis
 France
 Haïti
 Île Maurice
 Inde
 Italie
 Laos
 Luxembourg
 République Dominicaine
 Sri Lanka
 Tchad
 Thaïlande
 Vietnam
 Zambie

Origine des Membres actuels:

<i>Allemande</i>	(2)	<i>Haïtienne</i>	(18)
<i>Américaine</i>	(29)	<i>Hongroise</i>	(1)
<i>Autrichienne</i>	(1)	<i>Indienne</i>	(12)
<i>Belge</i>	(4)	<i>Italienne</i>	(15)
<i>Bolivienne</i>	(6)	<i>Irlandaise</i>	(2)
<i>Canadienne</i>	(458)	<i>Laotienne</i>	(8)
<i>Cingalaise</i>	(4)	<i>Luxembourgeoise</i>	(1)
<i>Chilienne</i>	(12)	<i>Mauricienne</i>	(5)
<i>Colombienne</i>	(1)	<i>Mexicaine</i>	(1)
<i>Croate</i>	(1)	<i>Péruvienne</i>	(1)
<i>Cubaine</i>	(25)	<i>Philippine</i>	(1)
<i>Dominicaine</i>	(1)	<i>Thaïlandaise</i>	(3)
<i>Française</i>	(39)	<i>Vietnamienne</i>	(3)

Supervision du projet: Conseil Exécutif des O.M.M.I.
 Choix des textes: Ghislaine Allard
 Maquette du projet: Gérard Tremblay, c.m.i.

Statistics to July 2, 1977.

General Assembly

(July 4 to 22, 1977)

Seventeen countries are represented at this assembly. Research on the commitment by the vow of poverty is pursued (criteria of validity concerning the appropriation of possessions) and of obedience (necessity for a personal authority for each Oblate). The delegates reflect also on the pertinence of a revision of the Constitutions.

* * *

Members elected for the administrative council (1977-1981)

Ms Anne-Marie Chénard	President Directress General
Ms Lucile Authier	Executive Council
Ms Marcelle Carton	(Belgium)
Ms Denise Gagné	
Ms Blanche Lussier	Executive Council
Ms Claire Nantel	(Italy)
Ms Yolande Perron	Executive Council
Ms Gertrude Roy	Executive Council
Ms Monique St-Vincent	(Haiti)
Ms Louise Savard	
Ms Irène Trépanier	(India)
Ms Lise Jacques	was named Secretary General.

Visits to Members from 1977 to 1981:

Ms Anne-Marie Chénard: Cuba – Haiti – Dominican Republic – France.

Ms Yolande Perron: Chad – Cuba – Chile – Bolivia – Colombia.

Ms Lucile Authier: Thailand – Visits and retreats: Southern United States – Western Canada.

Ms Irène Trépanier: Italy – Zambia – Mauritius – Chad.

Ms Blanche Lussier: Belgium.

Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant: Thailand.

* * *

Congress of Secular Institutes in 1980

“THE SECULAR INSTITUTES: A CHALLENGE IN THE MIDST OF THE WORLD”¹³, such is the theme of the first Canadian congress of Secular Institutes and of the Associations of Secular Consecrated Life. This congress takes place in Quebec City on May 17 and 18, 1980 under the chairmanship of Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes and Mgr. Fernand Lacroix, C.J.M., bishop of Edmundston, New Brunswick. Don Mario Albertini, Secretary of the Congregation, accompanied the Cardinal.

Ms Françoise Tremblay, president of the Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes saw to the organization of this first congress, well supported by the Secular Institutes of Quebec. A most stimulating meeting to move forward with courage.

This meeting regrouped about five hundred members from various provinces of Canada: Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec, representing some thirty groups of Canadian and European foundations.

During his speeches, Cardinal Pironio refers to the Paul VI's document *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975) that affirms the secular character of laypeople and confirms their mission in the midst of temporal realities. The Cardinal highlights certain important elements of Paul VI's last speech (1976) :

- ♦ the vitality of Secular Institutes is bound to their participation in human history,
- ♦ the invitation to an experimental research of the relationships Church/world,
- ♦ the importance of the professional competence of the members and of a prayer anchored in the reality of the world to fulfill the mission.

Cardinal Pironio invites the participants at the congress to open new avenues, to have a better understanding of earthly realities and to discover and promote the plan wanted by God:

“To remain standing, but not in the same location.
Hope means to walk always and to walk together.
You must go to the world because the world is waiting for you,
you must go to the world because Christ is sending you,
you must go to the world because the Holy Spirit is investing you with his Power.
Ask Him to be faithful to your mission¹⁴”.

“Your mission as consecrated and secular persons is the following:
Transform the world from within, building a new world in truth, freedom, justice,
love and peace¹⁵”.

* * *

13. Les instituts séculiers UN DÉFI AU COEUR DU MONDE - Actes du congrès national canadien des Instituts séculiers et des associations de vie consacrée séculière. Conférence canadienne des instituts séculiers, 1980.

14. Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, in *Les Instituts séculiers : un défi au cœur du monde*, op.cit. pages 117 and 120.

15. Ibid.– page 47.

General Assembly July 5 to August 1st, 1981

At this assembly, 15 countries were represented.

Members elected at the Administrative Council (1981-1985)

Ms Lucile Authier	Directress General
Ms Julienne Bergeron	
Ms Denise Desrochers	Executive Council
Ms Bérangère Flieller	(France)
Ms Lise Jacques*	Executive Council and named Secretary General
Ms Rose Mathieu	(Cuba)
Ms Claire Nantel	(Italy)
Ms Yolande Perron	Executive Council
Ms Monique St-Vincent	(Haiti)
Ms Françoise Tremblay	Executive Council
Ms Irène Trépanier	(India)

* Ms Cécile Létourneau was named Secretary General in January 1984 to replace Lise Jacques.

* * *

Finally, a question being asked since 1974 finds an answer in 1981. This question is linked with the two categories of members forming the Institute since its foundation: intern and extern members.

As a follow-up of the deliberations of several General Assemblies (1974-1975-1977) and, without any doubt, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the Assembly 1981 abolishes the terms intern and extern. From then on there will only be Oblates, all equal in dignity, able to live their commitment to poverty according to the vows as defined during this last assembly. The assembly explains and acknowledges two modalities for the way of living the vow of poverty. Henceforth, at her first commitment by vow and again at stability the Oblate discerns between the two ways of living the vow of poverty: modality A or B.

In the **modality A**, she keeps the ownership of her goods and looks to assure her future financial security.

In the **modality B**, she renounces the ownership of her salaries and revenues in favor of the Institute that looks to assure her financial security.

This proposition is satisfactory, for it grants an equal value to the two modalities. After a discernment made according to the established criteria, each member opts for either modality A or modality B taking into account her profound motivations and her real situation.

“Go to this world, seek to be the light... seek to be the salt!”¹⁶

16. Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, *Secular Institutes: A challenge in the midst of the world* - Page 19.

Period of Interiorization

(1981-1989)

After a long period of structuration and of restructuration, including a search for models from companies functioning with an objective and a sub-objective, the Institute lives a period of interiorization from the sources of the spirituality of the 555. Rediscovering what gave it its character: this “mystique of the five points” seems welcomed at that moment. Therefore, the animation, the retreats, the visits in the various countries take on once again, for Madam Authier, the importance of this return to the sources.

There is also the study in depth of the writings of the Founder to discover there the fundamental spirit. From there comes the publication of the book *Where Your Treasure Is (Là où est ton trésor...)*¹. We find there clearly again the spirit of the Institute.

The Founder rejoices over the expansion of the Institute and he expresses this joy many a time:

“The Oblate [...] must become ‘all to all’; she must penetrate all milieus in all their different varieties..., ‘wherever Christ has his rights’. [...] We must ‘christify’, that is, we must construct everywhere abodes for Christ.

[...] God has chosen us to make us ‘leaven’, but when leaven is made it must not be left on the shelf but must be mixed into the dough. In the dough, the leaven we are must not remain wrapped in the cellophane of our selfishness where it may preserve longer but where it would produce nothing. The envelope of selfishness must be torn open to allow the leaven to permeate the dough in order to raise it and give it all its flavour and have it reach its own ideal. [...] To have Christ loved and to allow him to become embodied in the masses.²”

And Life Goes On...

The Institute is already 30 years old; on June 1st, 1982, it has 611 members working in 23 countries: Algeria, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the United States, France, Haiti, India, Ireland, Italy, Laos, Luxemburg, Mauritius, Philippines, Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka, Chad, Thailand, Vietnam, Zambia.

The members are of 25 nationalities: German, American, Belgian, Bolivian, Canadian, Chilean, Colombian, Croatian, Cuban, Dominican, French, Haitian, Hungarian, Indian, Irish, Italian, Laotian, Luxemburger, Mauritian, Mexican, Peruvian, Filipino, Sri Lankan, Thai, Vietnamese.

1. Quoted from Matthew 6:21. “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

2. Parent, Louis-Marie *Where Your Treasure Is*, chapter VI, pages 39-40.

The number of members grew from 610 on December 31, 1981 to 628 in December 1993.

In 1984, the Institute counts 39 missionaries in 10 countries, of whom 8 in Chad. The Institute establishes itself in a permanent way in Peru in 1983 and a Cuban Oblate is working in Nicaragua from 1986 on. Others are present in Cameroon from 1985 to 1993, in Ecuador from 1988 to 2002. Another one, with a personal contract is working at Cape Verdean, Africa, from 1988 to 1992.

Ms Lucile Authier elected as Directress General³ in 1981 is re-elected at the General Assembly of 1985 for a second mandate ending in 1989. With the members of the Administrative and Executive Councils, Madam Authier sees that the decisions taken during the General Assemblies are being carried out:

- ♦ revision of the Constitutions and presentation to the Holy See for approval;
- ♦ decision concerning the vow of poverty: the two modalities A and B;
- ♦ decision concerning the vow of obedience: personal authority (role of the Assigned Directress);
- ♦ organization of various special events.

In short, the issues studied at the meetings of the Administrative and Executive Councils are of another order in this period of stability in the Institute's pilgrimage.

Important Events

1982

During the year 1982, several events worth being highlighted are registered in the life of the Institute.

The 30th anniversary of the Institute

On July 11, 1982, there is a garden celebration at the Calvary, on the campus of the Central House that enables the members to meet in an informal way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute. On this occasion, the book *Where your treasure is...* is published and handed to each member. Ms Lucile Authier, Directress General, presents the *raison d'être* of this small book⁴:

“Today marks the Institute’s thirtieth anniversary, and our hearts rejoice. A number of ideas were brought forward as to how we should celebrate this happy event.

3. As the assemblies went by the term designating the Oblate at the head of the Institute varied: 1953-1956: President General – 1956: Directress General– 1956-1958: pro-Directress General (in the prolonged absence of the Directress general) –1958-1968: Directress General – 1968-1971: President – 1971-1981: President Directress General– 1981-1993: *Responsable générale* (Directress General or General Directress in English)– 1993-2010: President Directress General– – 2010: President.

4. July 2, 1982 – Introduction of the book *Where your treasure is...»* by Ms Lucile Authier, Directress General of the Institute, in *Where your treasure is..., op. cit.*, pages 1-2.

I believe that we have retained one that will please you: that of offering every Oblate a sampling of our Institute's spiritual treasure.

The small volume you are now holding contains excerpts from the writings or conferences of Father Parent, spanning the years from the Institute's beginning until now.

... These [words] offered for your reading pleasure or your meditation represent the master-ideas that are like a leitmotiv with him and that embody the spirit of the Institute.

This spirituality of the Institute was already alive in the heart of God as in its source before springing forth from Fr. Parent; and since then, it has always been the same fundamental vision that has directed the life of the Institute.

If the Lord has called forth this providential man who is Fr. Parent, is it not for the reason of interpreting for our times and in a new way the perennial Gospel ideal? [...]

May you discover within the covers of this volume the requirements of the Gospels as well as the needs of the Church and the world as understood by our Founder.

I take this opportunity to offer our homage to Father Parent who this year celebrates his 45th year in the priesthood [May 23, 1937] and his 50th anniversary of religious profession in the Oblates of Mary Immaculate [July 21, 1932]. In the name of all the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, I reiterate our attachment to him, as well as our gratitude.”

During the homily, Father Parent expresses the essential⁵:

“The spirit of the Institute is rooted in our baptism and it is manifested in our consecration. I am more and more convinced that our lives are worth neither more nor less than our motivations, than the objectives we strive for. ‘Remember, where your treasure is, there your heart is also’ (Mt 6:21).”

A few days later Fr. Parent celebrates his 72nd birthday (July 12, 1910).

This garden celebration came from a suggestion made by a group of Oblates. Later, because of its success, it becomes an annual event. It takes place in open air, at the Calvary, close to the Central House, when the atmospheric conditions are favorable. Along the years this celebration takes place at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Champlain or Trois-Rivières...

1984 – Approval of the Constitutions

From the decisions made at the General Assembly 1981, a complete revision of the Constitutions is made. Later, some Oblates⁶ spend much of their time and energy in drafting the Constitutions. A most special attention is given to the feminine gender. Ex: the terms: “brothers”, “men”, “artisans”, etc. would no longer be found.

The Constitutions are approved officially by the Church on March 24, 1984; they are received with a very great joy by all the Oblates, for an inestimable spiritual richness emanates from them.

5. *Where your treasure is...* page 4– Message of Fr. Louis-Marie Parent, Founder.

6. This team consisted of Madams Bérangère Flieller, Annick François, Louise Savard and Irène Trépanier.

In the preface of the Constitutions, the Founder expresses himself as follows:

“What Saint Paul was saying to the Corinthians also applies to the Oblates: ‘*You show that you are a letter written... not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God*’...” (2 Corinthians 3:3.)

The Constitutions are a “gift of God”. I would like each one of you to develop a particular attention so that this code of holiness remain not a dead letter but that it be a stimulant absolutely necessary for the spiritual progress of each one.”

Taking into account the experience of the Institute, its insertion in many countries as well as its adaptation to different mentalities, the complete revision of the Constitutions of 1984 provides many precisions for the vitality of the Institute.

1984 – Acknowledgement of Pontifical Right

Of diocesan right since 1962, the Institute is acknowledged as an Institute of “pontifical right” by the Holy See, on March 24, 1984. Annex 1-6, page 215.

The institutes are of “diocesan right” by a decree from the Bishop of the diocese (by the Bishop of the diocese of Trois-Rivières in the case of the Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate). The institutes are of «pontifical right » by a decree from the Holy See.

* * *

Some thirty years later after the foundation, this “new look” enriches the points of anchorage that motivated Father Louis-Marie Parent to found the Institute. This renewal gives dynamism to the members and solidifies the young districts and sectors that are being developed more and more beyond the Canadian border. Annex 5, page 231.

Here is a summary of a few aspects of the Institute that rebounded during this journey through the revision of the Constitutions.

The Mission

The secular mission becomes clearer with the themes developed in the Institute since the beginning: the meaning of the responsibilities, competence, the universal dimension everywhere, at all times and in every location.

The mission of the secular institutes remains present at the heart of the Institute. Here and anywhere, the members, according to their charism, work ardently at the transformation of the world by an attentive and responsible presence at the heart of all temporal realities, like leaven, to direct them in the sense of the Gospel. They are invited to assume more and more their full responsibility as citizens in their country and as laypeople In the Church.

The Institute continues its active presence at the heart of the World Conference of Secular Institutes (WCSI) as well as at the Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes (CCSI) through different activities: presidency, secretariat, organization of the Congresses, surveys, etc. In several countries some Oblates are also committed within their Conference.

Participation in the mission of the Church is expressed by a commitment in the way of the laypeople, within social and ecclesial structures. In certain milieus, the members are urged to be discreet about their belonging to the group.

The Spirituality

The spirituality is imbued with the main elements of the apostolic mission with an emphasis on the presence in the world and the attentive listening to the world

The life of the Oblate is moved by a sole movement of the love of God and of others. There are always two poles to keep on an even keel: God and the world. In her daily action, she would offer God to the world by inserting the Gospel values in her work and life milieus and by living intensely the 5 attitudes of life. In her periods of prayer, she would offer to God this world that she frequented in her comings and goings.

The rhythm of her prayer would be adjusted daily to the context of her commitment fully in the world. Her secular prayer would be prolonged in her life and her life would become prayer.

The consecration

No exterior sign would make the consecration visible except the radiant charity in each of the members. It would be lived in the world and would not change the lay condition of the members.

The vow of chastity would become a way of putting love at the service of those around her and of the Kingdom to be built together.

The vow of poverty would incite them to submit themselves to the common law of work and to collaborate in the construction of a world that is more just and more human through the solidarity and the concern for the most marginalized and the poorest of the poor.

The vow of obedience is a constant call to seek the will of God, in all things and in all circumstances. The decisions concerning important projects are to be made by the Oblate after discernment with her Assigned Directress.

The Formation

Formation is viewed as a collaboration with the action of the Holy Spirit, the principal agent of formation. It is at the integral and unified development of the person, according to her human and spiritual capacities.

The Oblate, guided by the Spirit, would always remain the first one responsible for her formation; she would adjust herself to the demands of her mission to be carried out fully in the midst of the world. Her formation would always be realized in action. The Oblate in formation would be accompanied by a companion in all the stages of her formation:

Basic formation

The stage of the aspirant (one or two years)

This is the period of identification of the call and an initiative to learn the values and the spirituality of the Institute.

The stage of the probation (two to four years)

This is the period of initiation to secular consecration.

Intermediary Formation (five to seven years)

The stage of first vows until that of stability is a period to study in depth the secular consecration and to intensify the sense of belonging to the Institute.

Stability is, at the end of this stage, the act of definitive incorporation by which the Institute would acknowledge in the Oblate the signs of an authentic Oblate vocation and consider her as a permanent member of the Institute.

On-going Formation (period after stability)

This formation would be pursued all along her life through programs of animation and team life. For example, from 1981 to 1985, the Oblate spirituality is put to the service of the mission in the midst of the world in the programs of animation. It tends to develop the sense of the responsibilities of each one in her commitment. On the other hand, the purpose of the program launched in 1985 is to help study in greater depths the secular consecration for the mission.

* * *

A specific formation is planned for the missionaries and for those called to work in the service of the Institute.

The team is a place of renewal that would support the commitment, favor the sharing of apostolic experiences and enable one to develop the sense of responsibilities.

* * *

Visits made by the members of the administrative council from 1981 to 1985:

Ms Lucile Authier: Belgium – France – Italy – Zambia – Mauritius – India – Sri Lanka – Thailand – Philippines – Cuba – Haiti – Dominican Republic.

Ms Irène Trépanier: Belgium – France – Italy – Laos – Philippines – Thailand – Western Canada

Ms Yolande Perron: Bolivia 25th – Chile – Colombia – Cuba.

Ms Lise Jacques: Southern United States.

Ms Claire Nantel: Italy.

Ms Françoise Tremblay: Haiti.

Ms Cécile Létourneau: India. (delegated Oblate)

Ms Anne-Marie Chénard: Bolivia (animation of a retreat) – Chile. (delegated Oblate)

* * *

Administration

There exists three funds on the financial level:

- ♦ Administration funds,
- ♦ Security funds for the members of the modality B,
- ♦ Mutual help funds for the countries abroad.

Lands belonging to the Institute are sold. At this time the interest rates are high. As a response to many requests for help, the Institute is most generous, sharing in many cases, especially with the most destitute.

* * *

1985 Volunteers of God

On June 1st, 1985, the Executive Council accepts a particular status for its aggregated group The Volunteers of God. Here are a few excerpts⁷:

So that the number of witnesses to the charity of Christ may grow, the secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate offers everyone who wishes, the possibility of studying in depth his baptismal commitment and share his spiritual ideal.

Baptism is the sacrament of admission into the life of faith and charity. The commitment of the Volunteer is set in the Church. It is neither a surplus nor a substitute for the ordinary Christian life. The calls of the Lord and the Church are addressed to all the Christian men and women, therefore to all the members Volunteers of God who are sons and daughters of God and members of the Church.

The commitment of the Volunteer of God acts in such a way that one's whole life evolves in a

“dynamic movement”
of love of God and neighbor
and availability to the will of God.

The Volunteers group together men and women, celibate or married, young and adults, who wish to study their baptismal commitment in greater depths. This commitment provides realistic means to deepen their Christian life, nourish their life of faith, act in such a way that the Gospel passes more in their daily living by their testimony of charity.

The group's objective is the following: “Living and testifying to the charity of Christ”. That is done by means of the 5 attitudes of life:

- ♦ Presence of God
- ♦ Absence of inner and exterior destructive criticism
- ♦ Absence of useless inner and exterior complaints
- ♦ Being of service
- ♦ Being Peacemakers

7. Quoted from the document “Do you know the Volunteers of God?” April 1985. The established rules of the group aggregated to the Institute were acknowledged and accepted on June 1st, 1985.

And also by CHRISTIAN CONTACTS. The Volunteers of God who are able to do so assemble at least once a month with the purpose of renewing themselves, as much on the fraternal as on the spiritual level. We find them In Canada, the United States, Latin America, Europe, Republic of Mauritius, Africa, and Asia.

* * *

General Assembly

from July 7 to 20, 1985

The theme of this assembly: "Mission of the Oblate within the world"

Overall objective: "Turn the attention of the Institute to what the Lord wants us to bring to the world."

During these meetings, different topics were studied:

- Orientation of the mission
- Bond of belonging
- Recruiting
- Assigned Directresses

New Council Elected (1985-1989)

Ms Lucile Authier	Directress General re-elected
Ms Denise Desrochers	Executive Council
Ms Bérangère Flieller*	(France)
Ms Céline Girard	Executive Council
Ms Lise Jacques**	Executive Council
Ms Denise Mathieu	
Ms Rose Mathieu	
Ms Yolande Perron	
Ms Ruth Salinas	(Bolivia)
Ms Irène Trépanier***	
Ms Mariette Vallières	Executive Council
Ms Cécile Létourneau	renamed Secretary General

* Ms Giovanna Piccini (Italy) elected on the A.C. to replace Ms Bérangère Flieller, June 6, 1986.

** Ms Claire Nantel elected on the A.C. to replace Ms Lise Jacques, November 3, 1985.

*** Ms Irène Trépanier named on the E.C. to replace Ms Lise Jacques November 3, 1985.

* * *

Visits made by the members of the administrative council from 1985 to 1989

Ms Lucile Authier: Bolivia – Chile – Peru – Belgium – France – Italy – Haiti – Dominican Republic – the United States – Thailand and several districts in Canada: Montreal – Ottawa – Western Canada – Quebec – Rouyn – Trois-Rivières.

Ms Irène Trépanier: India – Southern United States – visit and animation of a retreat in Northern United States.

Ms Céline Girard: Cameroon – Mauritius / Rodriguez – Chad – Zambia.

Ms Claire Nantel: Italy 25th – Ireland

Ms Yolande Perron: Cuba

Ms Rose Mathieu: Haiti

Ms Thérèse Sénécal: Thailand (delegated Oblate)

Father Louis-Marie Parent went to Cuba In 1987.

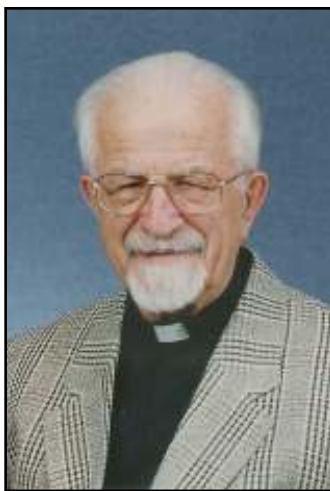
* * *

Celebrating Our Joy

(July 11-12, 1987)

On July 11 and 12, 1987, great celebration in honor of Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., a colorful man and a great manager of projects of which several were realized in the Canadian and the universal Church. Fifty years of life in the priesthood, that is worth celebrating! Fifty years in the service of God and humanity, that is worth celebrating and worth preparing.

In fact, as early as the summer 1986, the Institute in collaboration with the Voluntas Dei Secular Institute called upon a few persons to carry out this project to a successful conclusion. This central committee⁸ formed several sub-committees to take advantage of the many known talents in the two institutes.



Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I.

8. List of the members of the central committee for the celebration: Madams Lucie Dorais, Lucille Laplante, Marie-Marthe Laroche, Béatrice Marcoux; and Rev. Raymond Gendron and Marc Laroche.

July 11, 1987 – The Great Day Has Come

On July 11, 1987, during breakfast, the members of the Administrative Council are the first to wish a happy birthday to Father Parent. They offer him a magnificent bouquet of flowers each one has a special significance: that is either the mystique⁹, or the vows or the international aspect of the Institute.



Symbolism of the bouquet

**The birds of paradise:
our mystique of the five points,**

**the anthuriums:
our consecration through the three vows,**

**all the flowers:
the variety of Oblates of the Institute**

**who are in Europe, Africa, Asia
and in the two Americas.**

The campus of the Central House (7535 boulevard Parent, Trois-Rivières) is in a festive mood. A large big top is set up for the unfolding of the activities of the day. Mother Nature, on her part, offers two splendid and warm days. A welcome committee is at work and 400 persons, members of the two institutes arrive as early as 9:30 a.m.

Animation of the Day

Father Jean-Paul Chiasson, priest of the Institute Voluntas Dei, opens the celebration:

“Today we have a few reasons to celebrate our joy. The cause is evidently [...] Father Parent. We also have other reasons: the 35th foundation anniversary of the Oblates and the 15th foundation anniversary of the Voluntas Dei's Canadian District.

We should not also forget that one of the important reasons is each of us! We are part of the same spirit. We have a common spirituality and I believe that our fraternal meeting together as Institutes is a first in the records of our two Institutes...”

The theme: The 5-5-5 and the secular consecration.

The theme song: “If you want to serve in joy¹⁰”.

The reflection in workgroups of 10, with different themes: the world of work – the life milieu – my relationship with God – my sense of belonging to the Institute.

9. The word mystique corresponds to the elements 5-5-5 that constitute the spirituality of the Institute.

10. Song composed by Ms Violaine Couture. The speeches quoted in this chapter were translated then in the booklet *Let us celebrate our joy!*

Eucharistic Celebration

Joy of being together again, friendships constantly renewed along the years, joy of the fraternity, foretaste of the Kingdom.

Yes, let us celebrate our joy...
How great are your works, O Lord!

The Eucharistic celebration takes place under a big top, in late afternoon. Father Gérard Michaud, member of the first group of *Voluntas Dei*, presented Father Parent in his introduction as a man of the Word.

“The ‘Word’ was made flesh... and I believe Father Parent has incarnated the Word. He has nourished us with this Word. He has led us, challenged us to go further so that we can live in faith, in a fraternity, while seeking the will of God. Yes, he is a man of the Word.”

Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh, member of the founding group of the Oblates thanked the Lord for the life given to Father Parent.

“Thank you Lord for his faith in life. Thank you for having given him the charism of discovering the strengths and the aptitudes of every one, so that they could develop them through very specific mandates. Thank you for the international and missionary outreach given to his works.

Virgin Mary [...] keep your eyes fixed upon your Oblate of Mary Immaculate. Be his star, his support and his comfort. With you, Mary, we sing the song of the Magnificat.”

Festive Evening

This wonderful day comes to an end with an entertaining evening to be spent celebrating with joy and gratitude.

For two hours, approximately one hundred and fifty persons told the story of how Father Parent's life had encircled the earth somewhat like the Milky Way. During the evening, brief glances are cast to the telescope thus making real certain brush strokes from the life of Father Parent as much in the East as in the West...

The two excellent leaders of the evening were Ms Colette Désilets and Father Marcel Forest. In a litany of the Virgin Mary, Ms Françoise Tremblay offers brothers and sisters of the entire world during the procession of the pennants representing the countries where the members of the two institutes were and are still working.

By means of film strips on cellulose acetate, the life of Father Parent is related starting from his ordination to the priesthood. His stay in Western Canada is mentioned as well as the foundation of the Recluses in 1943. Then his return to Acadia for the foundation of the Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate at Grand Falls, New Brunswick, in 1952. Then the birth of the Institute *Voluntas Dei* at Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette at Trois-Rivières in 1958.

What a journey around the world with stops here and everywhere to sing with the Haitians, to dance to the rhythm of the tam-tam with the Africans, stopping over in Europe, in Asia! Time to catch one's breath and now in Latin America with a stopover in the United States and again in Canada to unveil the gift offered to Father Parent: an icon representing the Virgin and the Child. Time to recollect oneself and sing together the *Salve Regina* and receive the blessing from Mgr. Dionne, Bishop of Edmundston, of Father Parent and of all the priests present. And as things should be, the celebration concludes by sharing a birthday cake in honor of the 77 years of Father Parent... in a few hours... on July 12.



Before the residence – Trois-Rivières.

50th of ordination of Father Louis-Marie Parent.



Headquarters – Trois-Rivières.

July 12, 1987 – at the Basilica Notre-Dame-du-Cap

Eucharistic Celebration

The celebration goes on more solemnly at the Basilica with a concelebration of many bishops and Oblate confrères of Father Parent and Voluntas Dei priests. Father Noël Poisson, O.M.I., rector of the Sanctuary, highlights the meaning of the celebration. Father Mario Laroche¹¹ wishes a warm welcome to the large audience, then Bishop Gérard Dionne, of Edmundston, is invited to proclaim news received from Rome. The Voluntas Dei Institute has just been declared an Institute of pontifical right. What a beautiful gift from the Lord on this memorable day!

Ms Lucile Authier delivers the homily during this celebration. The theme of the Gospel could not have been better chosen to mark the occasion: the sower and the seed. All through his life, Father Parent had well received the Word of God in his life and had generously cast its seed in many hearts throughout the world.

Fraternal Feasts

The celebration continues at Le Sapineau restaurant at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. The guests present, seated in three halls, follow the speeches of the dignitaries during the meal. Ms Gabrielle Lachance acts as master of ceremonies. Then, tributes are expressed by Attorney Roger Bellemare, representing Mister Gilles Beaudoin, mayor of Trois-Rivières and by Rolland, Father Parent's brother.

Several Oblate confrères speak: Father Fernand Jetté, former superior general of the Oblates (O.M.I.); Father Gérard Laprise, O.M.I., Counselor General for Canada and Father Mario Laroche, Director General of the Voluntas Dei Institute. Then, the hero of the celebration expresses himself with great emotion:

“For having preached the positive way of life, all my life, I must say that you have made me swallow quite a dose! I thank everyone for having helped me thank God. The gratitude has been enriched for having been shared with you. My "thank-you" along with yours now becomes a "thank-you" that makes sense!”.

* * *

**Cap-de-la-Madeleine,
July 12, 1987.**



11. Director General of the Voluntas Dei Institute.

General Assembly

from July 2 to 16, 1989

Theme: "Formation for the mission".

Overall objective: "To provoke more audacious personal dynamism for the accomplishment of the mission"

One of the subjects having priority is the formation on all levels and in all aspects of consecrated life fully involved in the world: human, social and spiritual formation.

The General Assembly 1989 named its Administrative Council:

Ms Denise Desrochers	General Directress
Ms Anne Bédard	Executive Council
Ms Claudette Cyr	(the United States)
Ms Céline Girard	Executive Council
Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant	
Ms Hilda Matheu	(Cuba)
Ms Rose Mathieu	(Dominican Republic)
Ms Ruth Salinas	(Bolivia)
Ms Berthe Surprenant*	Executive Council
Ms Marie-Annick Toussaint**	(France)
Ms Mariette Vallières	Executive Council

Ms Cécile Létourneau was renamed Secretary General.

* Ms Eileen McBrearty elected to the A.C. and named on the E.C. on June 25, 1990 to replace Ms Berthe Surprenant.

** Ms Marie-Annick Toussaint elected on the A.C. at the General Assembly 1989, resigned on April 20, 1992. She was not replaced.

The unity of the Institute tends to become realized, day by day, and more and more through each one's bond of affection for the spirituality which is the profound source of life for the fulfillment of the mission.

"To the four corners of the Institute
Lord, you call them to continue your mission
and to become living witnesses
of the Good News."¹²

12. Book of songs Sanctuaire Notre-Dame-du-Cap, adaptation of song n° 22. Authors N. Colombier and J.S. Bach.

In Search of the Charism (1989-1997)

In July 1989 Ms Denise Desrochers is elected Directress General of the Institute. She already has had experience in all the services of authority in the Institute besides having been part of the committees of study. She has already served two terms of four years, as much on the Administrative Council as on the Executive one.

Secretary by profession, Madam Desrochers had improved her skills in business administration: financial management, marketing, life insurance. Her understanding and experience in these different work milieus are precious assets to fulfil the mandates entrusted to her by the General Assembly.

At the closure of the General Assembly Madam Desrochers expresses herself in these words:

“During the last two weeks, we experienced an international fraternity and focussed on two main topics: the specific and ongoing formation and the Assigned Directress.

[...] Thanks to Lucile [Authier]! I am not sure what has been bequeathed to me, but on the whole, I sense serenity in the Institute. The earth has been prepared. It is ready to accept the new breath of the Spirit.”¹

Major Guidelines² of the Institute

Formation for the Mission

All this formation to be pursued requires conversion and its share of saying “yes”, a “yes” filled with love and bold faith. Each Oblate would ask herself these questions:

What is my motivation in pursuing my formation, day after day?

What will help me be more daring?

What are the available resources In my area?

Who can help me?

Will it help me live out the mission?

1. *Around the Institute*, pages 25-26 – September 1989.

2. *Ibid.*, pages 24- 25

Role of the Assigned Directress

The General Assembly clarified the role, the nature and the attributions of the Assigned Directress who fulfills a service of personal authority to the Oblates assigned to her. Moreover, the Assembly clarified other points linked to the Assigned Directress: the attitude of the Oblate, the spirit, the content and the frequency of the meetings, the climate that could facilitate this faith initiative.

* * *

Important Event: Meeting in Rome – 1991

From April 22 to 27, 1991, five days of meetings at the General House of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) assemble members of congregations and institutes for which several Oblate Fathers have been instigators of foundation throughout the world.

The main goals of the meeting are: sharing together the history, knowing others better, thanking God for the mutual support and enrichment, to review and renew the respective charisms.

Father Marcello Zago, Superior General of the O.M.I.s convened all the groups who had sprung forth from the Spirit in the wake of Bishop Eugène de Mazenod, founder of the O.M.I.'s. The burning spirit of Blessed Eugène de Mazenod³ had spread in a persuasive way, thus radiating his missionary breath. This breath that wanted to spread the saving love of Christ in the entire world, with a particular preference for the poorest of the poor and the most forsaken.

While Bishop de Mazenod lived, ten groups came to life, and thirty-three later after his death on May 21, 1861. Thirty-one of these groups were of women and twelve were of men. Among the latter, there were priests and laypeople and, at times, even married couples as “associates” or “auxiliaries”. The meeting is a return to the sources and raises a great deal of interest and dynamism. Of the 43 groups founded, only two no longer exist!

Father Louis-Marie Parent, co-founder of a contemplative community and founder of two secular institutes, is present at this meeting as well as Ms Denise Desrochers, Directress General of the Institute “OMMI” and Father Mario Laroche, Director General of the Institute Voluntas Dei.

April 23 and 24: each group presents itself

Ms Denise Desrochers points out the different characteristics concerning the Secular Institute “The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate”. She mentions them in her presentation of the Institute:

“The first milestones of the history of the Institute of the Oblates are marked by the support of the Oblate fathers, even if the Institute establishes itself autonomously from the beginning. Father Louis-Marie Parent, much attached to his Congregation, associates the latter to the foundation and the multicultural and missionary development of the Institute:

3. Blessed Eugène de Mazenod was canonized on December 3, 1995 by Pope John Paul II.

- the inspiration comes from Mgr Henri Routhier, O.M.I.;
- several foundations of Oblates are linked to the works of the Oblate Fathers: Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Jonquière, Maison Jésus-Ouvrier (Québec), Mississauga (Ontario), Lewiston (États-Unis), Sion (France), Durban (South Africa) and still others⁴;
- the missionary activity in Chile, Bolivia, Haiti, Laos, in Northern Canada and Northern Quebec, in Chad, South Africa and Sri Lanka, is made possible with the help of the Oblate missionary Fathers established there.

Father Léo Deschâtelets, Superior General, proves to be generous to the young Institute and its Founder. He provides him a suitable support in the person of Father Roger Gauthier, O.M.I. who shall help Father Parent in the formation of the Oblates for a period of 10 years⁵.

The Institute thanks the Congregation of the O.M.I.. It kept with it bonds of affection and gratitude. »

April 25: Account from Father Zago

Father Marcello Zago gives a most interesting account, entitled “The new evangelization in John Paul II's thinking”. This new evangelization is urgent and necessary and the charisms of the institutes and congregations must be deployed in the service of the new evangelization, according to their specific gifts.

April 26: Private audience with the Holy Father

An audience assembles thirty-six persons: the participants in the meeting, the interpreters, the animators and the observers. The Holy Father speaks of the new evangelization. Then, Father Zago introduces each person individually to the Holy Father. Father Parent, Ms Denise Desrochers and Father Mario Laroche form the only trio.

John Paul II then addresses the participants collectively, delivering to them a stimulating message:

“You who are gathered here express in some way the variety of the missionary paths, while through the particular gifts of your consecrated life, you illustrate in the Church the many faces of charity and contemplation, of the proclamation of the Gospel and of the promotion of the human person, of dialogue and inculturation. We cannot testify to Christ without reflecting his image, which becomes alive in us through grace and the action of the Spirit... Whoever has a missionary spirit experiences the same love that Christ had for the souls and loves the Church as Christ did⁶”.

-
4. It is almost impossible to name all the places where the Oblates worked in collaboration with the Oblate Fathers...
 5. Father Roger Gauthier always kept the memory of the Institute very much alive in his heart and willingly accepted the invitations from the Institute, according to his possibilities.
 6. Redemptoris missio n^{os} 87 and 89.

Ms Desrochers considers this meeting as an ecclesial event where several Church cells came to meet to share their history with their joys, their challenges and, for some, their sufferings.

* * *

Visits to the Members of the Institute (1989-1993)

In 1991, Father Louis-Marie Parent spent a month in the Dominican Republic.

Just like the ones who had preceded her in the post of being Directress General of the Institute, Madam Desrochers visits the Oblates of all the continents during her mandate. She takes advantage of her passage in Rome to experience a first totally fraternal meeting with the Oblates of Italy.

The visits of the Directress General are desired and expected by the members and are a source of vitality for the Institute. In all the districts and sectors she visits, Madam Desrochers demonstrates that she has a “missionary soul” for she is able to adapt herself most rapidly to the different mentalities.

Ms Denise Desrochers visits the Oblates of the different districts and sectors throughout the world: Cuba – Haiti – Dominican Republic – Belgium / Germany – France – Italy – Ecuador – Peru – Chad / Cameroon – Zambia – Mauritius – India / Sri Lanka – Laos – Thailand – Vietnam – Northern United States – Western Canada – Rouyn.

Madam Desrochers also delegates several visits to the other members of the Administrative Council as well as to other Oblates according to the needs.

Ms Anne Bédard: Laos – Thailand – Vietnam.

Ms Céline Girard: Bolivia – Chile.

Ms Eileen McBrearty: Southern United States.

Ms Rose Mathieu: Cuba for their 25th.
in the company Ms Yolande Perron, delegated Oblate.

Other delegated Oblates:

Ms Marguerite Bilodeau: Southern United States

Ms Jeannette Mougnot: Mauritius

Ms Madeleine Toupin: Haiti.

Ms Élise Bélanger: Laos.

* * *

Apostolic Project

At the request of the Administrative Council a working group prepares a tool favoring reflection «THE MISSION LIVED DAY BY DAY». This document would be used in the animation of the year for the main elements of the apostolic project would be found there.

* * *

Sales and Purchases

In 1991, the Institute decides to sell the house located at Limoilou, Quebec, for it no longer meets with the needs. The house on rue St-Hubert in Montreal would be sold as well since repairs that are too costly have become necessary. In March 1992, the summer house of the Institute, at Champlain, is sold also.

In 1992, a district house was bought in Quebec City at 2695, rue Lemieux and at 4301, rue de la Pépinière in Montreal. The international missionary house of hospitality is then located at 3225, Henri-de-Salières in Montréal.

* * *



Summer house on the shore of the Saint-Lawrence River, at Champlain, not far from Trois-Rivières.



Houses at Montreal



4285-4287, rue St-Hubert.



4301, rue de la Pépinière.



3225, Henri-de-Salières.

Glance at the Communication Network and the Formation in the Institute

From the first days of the Institute, communication proves to be most important to assure the formation, create and maintain bonds of fraternity and solidarity between the members. Father Parent gives conferences regularly between the hours of work; conferences recorded on magnetic tapes, then sent to the teams. Later, several of these conferences are regrouped in a collection entitled *Lettres spirituelles – le Père nous parle (Spiritual Letters - Father is Speaking to Us)* (1957 à 1967).

During the summer season, every year, hundreds of Oblates gather at Pointe-du-Lac for the spiritual retreats. Generally preached by Father Parent or Father Gauthier, all the conferences are recorded on magnetic tapes and then multiplied to reach the Oblates everywhere according to their needs and on request. Several years later, Ms Blanche Lussier had the responsibility of setting up an analysis chart to classify all these conferences according to their content. This compilation was a painstaking task and many Oblates listened to those conferences and filled out those analysis charts. Later, adopting new techniques, those conferences recorded on cassettes were cut on compact disks.

“Conscious of the demands of its mission and of the diversity of situations in which members of Secular Institutes may find themselves throughout their life, the Institute considers the formation of its members to be of prime importance⁷.”

“The Church and society offer many resources for the improvement of their members. The Oblate, then, according to her needs, takes advantage of the opportunities offered in her milieu to become a more responsible Christian and citizen.

The Oblate draws from the spiritual treasure of the Church which, in addition to the Bible and the sacraments, offers her documents among which she gives preference to those on secular consecration, social doctrine and the role of the laity.

The Institute, for its part, places at the disposal of the Oblate the means necessary for her formation according to the requirements of her vocation.⁸” “The Institute thus assures a formation:

- ♦ to the mission of the Institute and apostolate in the midst of the world
- ♦ to the spirituality of the Institute: prayer life, attitudes of life, charity in action
- ♦ to secular consecration by vows
- ♦ to fraternal communion
- ♦ to the meaning of Church and missionary spirit
- ♦ to the meaning of responsibilities of a consecrated layperson⁹.”

* * *

7. Constitutions 1.57

8. Constitutions 2.24

9. Constitutions 2.23

Opening to Progress

In 1991, the Institute acquires a FAX to assure a more efficient and more rapid communication with the Oblates scattered throughout the world. The use of the FAX also enables to accelerate the work of translation. Then, little by little, with the arrival of the internet, e-mails take their place and facilitate communication with all the Oblates.

The Executive Council asked a firm specialized in the production of audio-visual documents to produce a video on the Oblate vocation: A challenge in the midst of the world. This video, lasting 15 minutes, was meant to be a help to make the Oblate vocation known and loved. A guide in animation made the presentation and projection easier. In some districts, a committee was formed to give some attention to the question of recruitment. The vocation week was favored in some locations and others organized vocation camps.

* * *

Formation of the Service Leaders

At the Carrefour, on November 3, 1992, a day of renewal is given for the 15 service leaders committed to the good functioning of the Institute. The objective of this meeting is to enable each one to express her experience and to have a better understanding of her role in view of the mission.

The following services were represented:

- ♦ Welcoming in the districts
- ♦ International missionary house of hospitality
- ♦ Aid to Missions
- ♦ Archives
- ♦ Carrefour
- ♦ History
- ♦ Buildings
- ♦ Central House
- ♦ Secretariat
- ♦ Service for Father Parent
- ♦ Service of the management of the Institute's possessions
- ♦ Villa Parent
- ♦ Volunteers of God

* * *

The Carrefour



7515, boulevard Parent, Trois-Rivières.

The Archives of the Institute

The Service of the archives is extremely important for the Institute since its foundation. For Father Parent, this is an essential service to which he attaches great importance and, today, the Institute is indebted to him for this.

Under the responsibility of the General Secretary several persons took care to safeguard the memory of the Institute in the Archives of our Institute¹⁰.

* * *

40th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Institute

(1992)

The life of the Institute is highlighted with festivities and the Oblates keep their heart in a celebration mood. Without any doubt, this is an element that revives their eagerness to pursue joyfully their journey, year after year, in spite of the vicissitudes of life.

On November 8, 1991, a letter from the Directress General, Ms Denise Desrochers, is sent to all the Oblates. A few days later, it reaches the four continents. Several Oblates would remember, others would learn that the Institute was 40 years old, ... already !

Here are a few excerpts from this letter:

“Dear companion,

1992 marks the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute. During one year, from December 8, 1991 to December 8 1992, you are invited to 'celebrate your bond of belonging' to the Institute.

Celebrating the 'bond of belonging' is recognizing the growth and vitality of the Institute whose charism and spirituality are rooted in the Charity of Christ. Concretely, this growth and vitality is expressed by each one of us wherever we may be and whatever our personal situation may be.

Celebrating our belonging is also recognizing our own human and spiritual growth and objectively recognizing all we have received and have given since we joined the Institute.

The Administrative Council is proposing three themes to help us reflect on the celebration of the Institute's 40th anniversary. They are *conversion, reconciliation and thanksgiving*. These three themes are to be deepened individually as well as in the teams and in the districts or sectors.

10. The Archives of the Institute were set up from the beginning by Father Parent himself. Three Oblates worked at them: Madams Thérèse Leblanc, Brigitte Côté and Pierrette Lévesque. Later, the Institute called for external resources: Ms Marie Meunier, secretary and technicians in documentation: Ms Cécile Livernoche, Mister Claude Jutras, Mister Jean-Marc Flibotte.

Prayer for the 40th¹¹

Lord Jesus,
In your presence I pray.
I wish to let myself be converted,
to let myself be reconciled, and to give you thanks.

To let myself be converted...
to your ongoing and gratuitous love.[...]

To let myself be reconciled...
with myself,
with You, Lord,
with my brothers and sisters,
with nature.
Help me to become
a builder of relationships
that are meaningful
and lifegiving.

I give you thanks Lord...[...]

Lord Jesus, you can do everything, look upon our Institute's 40 years of life with love. Give us the audacity to walk with confidence towards the year 2000. May our spirituality and our commitments continue to sow seeds of transformation in this world that is yours.

Mary, may you be our source of inspiration and may you be with us now and forever. Amen.

Song of the 40th¹²

Fête, fête ! Vive la fête !	¡Canta! ¡Canta! ¡Viva la fiesta!
Fête, fête ! Vive la joie !	¡Canta! ¡Canta! ¡El Amor!
Fête, fête ! Vive la fête !	¡Canta! ¡Canta! ¡Viva la fiesta!
Fête, fête ! Vive l'Amour !	¡Canta! ¡Canta! ¡Viva Jesús!

Happy feast day ! Happy feast day !
Happy feast day ! The Lord is with you !
Happy feast day ! Happy feast day !
Happy feast day ! Peace be with you !

Everywhere in the Institute, wherever there are some Oblates, the year of the jubilee is highlighted, celebrated, prayed, photographed. An organizing committee is named by the Executive Council¹³. And the celebration is experienced in several stages in each of the districts and sectors. Two souvenir booklets immortalize these events.

* * *

11. Prayer composed by the Chilean Oblates.

12. Composition by Ms Violaine Couture.

13. The members of the organizing committee for the activities of the 40th were Madams Pauline Belleau, Ginette Faubert, Denise Godbout, Jeanne d'Arc Plamondon, Catherine Poirier.

Pioneers of 1952 with the founder and the Directress General.



**In front: Cécile D'Amboise, Thérèse Gagnon, Louise Bouchard,
Lorraine Arseneault, Aurélie Boudreau.**

**Standing: Reine-Aimée Welsh, Anne-Marie Tardif, Jeannine Coulombe,
Marie-Claire Fortin, Cécile Béliveau, Patricia Sirois, Père Parent, Denise Desrochers, Doris Plourde,
Cécile Côté, Marie-Anna Richard, Annette Dion, Fabienne Rinfret.**



**Gabrielle Lachance (1968-1974)
Anne-Marie Chénard (1974-1981)
Denise Desrochers (1989-1997)**

**Reine-Aimée Welsh (1959-1968)
Lucile Authier (1981-1989)**



The three foundations: Recluses, Oblates, Voluntas Dei.

General Assembly

(July 4 to 18, 1993)

Through the celebrations and daily activities, the General Assembly 1993 is showing up in the near future. The Preparation Committee for the Assembly is at work and different committees are working on the files that would be up for study at the gathering set for July 4 to 18, 1993, at the Carrefour, close to the Central House also called the Headquarters of the Institute.

The objective of the General Assembly 1993: “Rediscover the charism of the Institute to become better committed in the world of today.”

Several topics are studied at the time of the General Assembly 1993:

The Charism of the Institute

A research is made to put the charism of the Institute into words. To be sure, everybody knows that the charism of the Institute is centered on charity. But all the Christians in the wake of Christ are also called to live the charity of Christ... so, the Assembly proposed the following expression: “*Life-giving presence*”.

The General Assembly 1993 decides to submit the expression of the charism to the discernment of the Oblates. This discernment is carried out in all the districts and sectors of the Institute and the result of this reflection would be brought to the attention of the Assembly of 1997.

Future of the Campus

For many orderly reasons administrative and structural, the need to give up the buildings of the Headquarters of the Institute located at 7535 boulevard Parent at Trois-Rivières is felt.

The Headquarters consist of several houses:

- ♦ the Carrefour at 7515 ;
- ♦ the chapel of the Salette transformed to lodge the archives of the Institute at the 7525;
- ♦ the Residence at 7555 ;
- ♦ the Oasis at 7595 consisting of premises of the Volunteers of God, the printing press, the boiler room.

The decision to sell is taken by the Assembly. The sale would be realized gradually during the years to come. That leads to major changes in the life of the Institute.

Title of the Directress General

The Institute goes back to the title “President-Directress General” because of the secular character of the Institute. Moreover, the Institute establishes the post of Vice-President-Directress General in order to assure the presence of an authority while the President-Directress General would be absent. This new post requires some time for adaptation but the experience lightens the functioning in a satisfactory manner.

Election of the new Administrative Council 1993:

Ms Denise Desrochers	President-Directress General
Ms Colette Massé	Vice-President-Directress-General
Ms Lucia Borzaga	(Italy)
Ms Pauline Charest	Executive Council
Ms Claudette Cyr	(United States)
Ms M.-Denise Dubé*	Executive Council
Ms Simone Huneault	(Bolivia)
Ms Flora Joseph	(India)
Ms Marie Martineau	
Ms Hilda Matheu	(Cuba)
Ms Eileen McBrearty	Executive Council
Ms Cécile Létourneau**	was renamed Secretary General.

* Ms Denise Dubé resigned from the E.C. in June 1995 (not replaced), but she stayed on the A.C.

** Letter of resignation July 5, 1995. Cécile was replaced by Georgette Leclerc in January 1996.

* * *

Campus: The Carrefour and the Residence

The Carrefour, building of the Institute located close to the Headquarters, was built in 1965. In the very early days, this house was used especially for holding the Great Recollections¹⁴ for the members of the Institute and, later, for sessions and open retreats according to the needs of Institute and the public at large. This building ceases its activities on June 1st, 1995 and is sold on August 23, 1995 to the Maison Carignan, a rehabilitation organization for drug addicts.

The Residence, right close to the Carrefour, is rented to different groups or organizations during the years 1993-1997. Initiatives are taken for its sale as well as that of all the other buildings of the campus.

Visits of the Members of the Institute (1993 – 1997)

Ms Denise Desrochers visits Haiti – Dominican Republic – Belgium – France – Italy – Bolivia – Chile – Ecuador – Peru – and Laos -Thailand -Vietnam (with Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant)

Northern United States (with Ms Eileen McBrearty)

Some districts in Canada – Montreal – Ottawa – Trois-Rivières

Ms Eileen McBrearty: animates a retreat in Haiti – visits India and the district of Montreal.

Ms Colette Massé: Mauritius / Rodriguez – Québec.

14. Special retreats for the Oblates after several years of commitment in the Institute.

Other delegated Oblates:

Ms Irène Trépanier: intermediary formation in Mauritius.

Ms Yolande Perron: animates a retreat in Chile

Ms Lucile Authier: 25th in Thailand.

Ms Simone Huneault: animates a retreat in Cuba.

Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant: formation Laos – Thailand.

Ms Cécile Létourneau: formation India and Sri Lanka (1996-1999)

The members of the Administrative and Executive Councils work hard to carry out the decisions of the Assembly, particularly that of 1993. Those years, lived in a vision of the future, in prayer and discernment, urged us to question ourselves in depth about our charism, implying the beginning of a call to have a better grasp of our specific mission. From there as well, arose important considerations about our material properties. This period 1989-1997 leaves an incomplete mandate: that of the sale of the Headquarters, which for all sorts of reasons could not be carried out. These eight years come to an end with a call to continue the journey and take up other challenges related to the future of the Institute.

* * *

General Assembly

(July 5 to 20, 1997)

For the very first time, given that the Carrefour was sold, the General Assembly of the Institute is not held at Trois-Rivières in one of the buildings of the Institute, but at the Villa Saint-Martin, on the boulevard Gouin in Montreal, in a building belonging to the Jesuits.

Charism of the Institute

Since the General Assembly 1989, the initiative of discernment to name the charism is undertaken by all the members and pursued.

After deliberations, the charism, a gift of the Spirit, present since the foundation of the Institute to fulfill the mission, was stated as follows:

**“A constant availability to the will of the Father
to live the charity of Christ everywhere
through service, with the help of Mary.”**

Change of Name

At the time of the General Assembly 1997, the change of the name of the Institute is considered from the point of view of the civil incorporation as it exists in some countries where the Institute is present. In France and Belgium the Institute is incorporated civilly under the name of “Service and Culture” and it kept the title “The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate” within the Institute.

Vocational Promotion

The vocational promotion is a theme of great concern for the Institute. The challenge of the subsequent years would be the search for new means or promotion; the latter became a priority for the pastoral work for vocations.

Throughout the Institute, a reflection on the world of young people of diverse mentalities becomes imperative: What attracts them? What motivates them: The secular aspect? Spirituality? Openness to what is international? The multicultural dimension? The missionary experience? The fraternity lived in community? The solidarity with the destitute? The possibility of various initiatives? A flexible framework? Perhaps a bit too much dust on the treasures of the Institute? Perhaps no one calls them to follow Jesus?

Election of the New Administrative Council (1997-2001):

Ms Simone Huneault	President-Directress General
Ms Colette Massé	Vice-President-Directress General
Ms Lucia Borzaga	(Italy)
Ms Pauline Charest	
Ms Claire Demers	Executive Council
Ms Flora Joseph	(India)
Ms Marie Martineau	
Ms Hilda Matheu Donates	(Cuba)
Ms Eileen McBrearty	Executive Council
Ms Anita Plourde	(the United States)
Ms Réjeanne Vidal	Executive Council
Ms Georgette Leclerc*	Secretary General, she left in May 2000.

* Denise Desrochers was named Secretary General and took up her post on April 1st, 2000.

“God come light up the way
of the long paths where we walk
and his word guides us
like a lamp in the night¹⁵”.

15. Collection of songs Sanctuaire Notre-Dame-du-Cap, n° 204 – Author: Hervé Aubin.

A Wind of Change

(1997-2005)

The General Assembly of 1997 has produced a busy agenda for the new team. Ms Simone Huneault, president directress general, takes over and the following files are progressing:

- To continue the sale of the campus buildings,
- To undertake a process leading to the naming of the mission of the Institute,
- To clarify the links of the Institute with the group Volunteers of God,
- Long-term preparation for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Institute,

All of this in a very special context... the entry into a new millennium.

Ms Huneault began her Oblate life as a missionary in Bolivia where she also lived for nearly thirty years. After her nomination, she returns to her country of adoption to express her farewells and retrieve a few personal belongings that she had left before coming to Canada as a participant in the General Assembly of 1997.

The paths of God are unfathomable and, without knowing it, Bolivia had collaborated in the enrichment of Ms Huneault to fulfil the mission that the Lord entrusted to her for the whole Institute.

The Bolivian Oblates as well as her friends and members of the Basic Ecclesial Communities whom she had trained as a member of a national team, welcomed her with open arms. All were happy to see her once more, nonetheless somewhat saddened to see her leave definitively. Still their pride prevailed...for they knew her to be able to pursue her mission of leadership and enrichment at the level required by the whole Institute. Within a celebration of the Word, they organized a missionary send-off by giving her the mandate of serving the Institute with the same zeal that had spirited her during the years spent in their country.

Throughout her first mandate, Ms Huneault visited all the Oblates in their respective countries. She wished ardently for the spontaneous creation of networks of fraternity and solidarity among the Oblates from all corners of the horizon.

Signs of the Times

(1997)

Social changes and a more refined understanding of the consecrated secularity lead to changes within the heart of the Institute. The Institute makes efforts in comprehending such changes so as to fulfill its secular mission and to be evermore present in all environments where the Oblates are inserting themselves to become “leaven in the dough”.

Here, in a few words is the way that the Institute in Quebec has concerned itself regarding the elderly Oblates and how it adapts its decisions to fulfilling its mission in the midst of the world.

First of all a return to the past is needed. In May of 1967, which is, some fifteen years after the foundation of the Institute, the authorities at that time in Quebec put in place a convalescent home permitting them to meet the needs of the Oblates who were advancing in age and whose health condition required a step back from active life. This service of the Institute had its beginning in the Centre of Quebec, more precisely in Princeville where the Oblates acquired a house from the Institute *Voluntas Dei*.

The house in Princeville is sold in September of 1979, and this implies moving to Loretteville, to the Villa Parent¹ at 19 *rue de l'Hôpital*, near the hospital Saint-Ambroise. Be it in Princeville or in Loretteville, several Oblates², permanently or occasionally, give their time and energy fulfilling diverse tasks in accordance with their profession and charisms.

This experience is also applied in Montreal for a few years as well as in other districts and sectors of the Institute where the need is felt.

In the beginning of the years 1990, a reflection on the sense of the vocation of an institute in the midst of the world is made by the Administrative Council. It opts for the relocation of the elderly Oblates to residences that already exist for retired persons in the cities and villages of their social environment. In this way they would pursue their mission and discreetly be bearers of the human and Christian values that always dwelt in them. On December 29, 1997, the Institute decides to sell the Villa Parent. Gradually, the Oblates are led to residences that meet with their needs. The Villa Parent is sold on December 15, 1999.



House of Princeville.

-
1. In about the years 1958-1959 the Villa Parent was built especially to lodge the Oblates who had assumed the responsibility of the Hôpital Saint-Ambroise at Loretteville, close to Quebec. Later, in 1979, the Villa Parent changed vocation to welcome the retired Oblates for almost twenty years.
 2. Here are the names the names of a few Oblates who devoted themselves in this service of the Institute for the elderly and/or ill Oblates: Madams Françoise Déry, Cécile Côté, Germaine Arseneault, Rita Otis, Gabrielle Marcoux, Rita Lépine, Micheline Drouin, Germaine Morisset, Lucie Caron, Céline Bourque, Yvette Laberge and several others...



Villa Parent – 19, rue de l'Hôpital, Loretteville, Quebec.

Most of the elderly Oblates willingly accept this change and continue their journey at their own pace and according to their personal charisms. They are more integrated in the world and develop a positive interior attitude before its realities. They love being fully in the world, this world, that they had never left and they hold a vision in the manner of God by detecting the positive values that mingle with its falsities and its illusions. Positivism and spirituality lead the present moment into mindfulness; the Oblates into serene daily life. They engage in making others happier and the world more beautiful.

* * *

In 1999, approaching the imminent entry into the 3rd millennium, an effervescent wind blows into the world with the will to modify its life conditions, among them, its ways of communication. In order to embrace the technological experiences adopted in society, the Oblates are searching to adapt the communication circuits of the Institute.

Around that period, within the Institute the communication is well established to support the training, the distribution of information and the administration. Rightfully, the contacts are frequent between the Administrative Council, the Executive Council and the District Councils and those responsible for various Sectors:

- ♦ Visits and *ad hoc* meetings ;
- ♦ The networks of D.C./S.R. ;
- ♦ The paths of animation for district and sector meetings ;
- ♦ the written press releases (letters, faxes, electronic mails) ;
- ♦ the planning, the evaluation, the minutes ;
- ♦ the video cassettes ;
- ♦ telephone calls ;
- ♦ the translations.

Every Oblate is also kept informed by:

- ♦ The bulletin *Around the Institute* ;
- ♦ visits and personal meetings ;
- ♦ working groups and consultations ;
- ♦ paths of animation for the teams ;
- ♦ various communications (letters, faxes, electronic mails) ;
- ♦ the gatherings ;
- ♦ the address book ;
- ♦ the booklet of anniversaries ;
- ♦ the translations.

However, the network of communication outside the Institute appears only a little developed especially in its social dimension. The Institute has therefore called upon itself to create the necessary means of promoting the institute's secular identity and to participate in the issues of society. Certainly, there are brochures available introducing the Institute, advertising in periodicals, videos, etc. but the Institute sees the necessity to update itself by using new means of communication.

The idea of the Website makes its way. It will become a reality at the dawn of year 2000 and will allow many persons almost everywhere in the world to get into contact with the Institute. Its objective is to reach a public of young adults who are coming from various horizons. It is also inscribed in several other web search engines thus allowing the Institute to be more accessible. This site increased tenfold its development during the 60th anniversary of the Institute in June, 2012. Several Oblates invested time and energy for this realization of the website³.

* * *

3. Tens of oblates, following Ms Gabrielle Lachance, put in hours and hours of labor in order to get the website under way. At the present, Ms Paulette Chénard took the reins assisted by Mss Réjeanne Mathieu, Louise Fleury and Annie Beauchemin.

The Institute Logo

(August 1999)

SECULAR INSTITUTE
THE OBLATE MISSIONARIES OF MARY IMMACULATE



Logo of the Institute

A logo is a graphic description that is stylized, simple, symbolic. It speaks through colour, forms, symbols without a need of explanation. This logo speaks to us about the Institute: its nature, its spirituality, its charism, its mission, etc.

- **The feminine silhouette and the cross** indicate that we are women of faith consecrated to the Lord, engaged to live the evangelical radicalism in the midst of the world.
- **The two colours** of the silhouette express the twofold aspect of our vocation: consecration and secularity. The shade and light symbolize the call to conversion: the Oblate is always journeying towards holiness.
- **The open hands** can represent a welcoming attitude, openness to others as well as availability to the Lord and to our brothers and sisters.
- **The earth** reveals the multicultural dimension of the Institute and our presence in 20 countries. In the Church, in solidarity with one another, our field of apostolate is at the heart of the world, wherever Christ has rights, in the conditions of existence of our contemporaries.
- **The “5”** which stems from the cross and reaches the lines of the earth represents our spirituality incarnated. Centered on the charity of Christ, our spirituality, currently called the “5-5-5”, is applied in a life of prayer (5 privileged moments of prayer during the day), by a creative positive mentality (5 attitudes of life) and by charity in action (5 conscious acts of love towards others).
- **The dominant blue** reflects, as our name indicates, that we are proceeding with the help of Mary, in the footsteps of Jesus, to manifest the unconditional love of God the Father to everyone by revealing the signs of His presence at the heart of daily life.

Visits of the members of the Institute

(1997-2001)

Ms Simone Huneault visits almost all regions and - areas of the Institute : Cuba / Nicaragua – Haiti – Dominican Republic – Belgium / Germany – Italy / Spain – France – Bolivia – Chile / Colombia – Ecuador – Peru – Republic of Maurice – India / Sri Lanka – Laos- Thailand- Vietnam – Montreal – Western Canada – Quebec – Ottawa – Rouyn – Trois Rivieres – South and North of The United States with Ms Eileen McBrearty.

Ms Colette Massé visits: Republic of Mauritius – France

Furthermore Ms Huneault visits in Quebec the Oblates living in distant regions: Gaspésie – Iles-de-la-Madeleine as well as in New Brunswick.

Other Oblate delegates:

Ms Denise Desrochers: Italy.

Ms Céline Bourque: Haiti.

Ms Cecile Létourneau: Sri Lanka, accompanied by Ms Salasteen Mary Raphael

Ms Rose Mathieu also accompanies Ms Simone Huneault in Nicaragua.

* * *

Announcement of a Jubilee Year⁴

(June 2001)

In June 2001, Ms Simone Huneault, then President Directress General of the Institute, announces the jubilee year for the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute:

July 2, 2002, marks the 50th anniversary of foundation of the Institute. Taking into consideration the extent of such an event and the international dimension of the Institute, the Administrative Council, inspired and animated by the spirit of the Jubilee Year 2000, decided to proclaim a JUBILEE YEAR in the Institute. "You will declare this fiftieth year a year of jubilee..." Lv. 25, 10

The jubilee year will begin on the July 1st, 2001 and will end on July 2, 2002. Therefore, the official opening will be celebrated July 1st, with Father Parent, the Oblate delegates to the General Assembly, members representing the associated group "Volunteers of God", Oblates who are passing through and those from Canada and the United States who are usually invited to take part in the feast-day of the Institute each year. [...] The spirit of the festivities of the Jubilee of the Institute is found in the theme:

MAY OUR HEARTS SING

FOR YESTERDAY, TODAY and TOMORROW.

4. Extract from *Around the Institute*, Volume 44, no 2, June 2001, pages 31-32.

Opening of the Jubilee Year

(July 2001)

The jubilee year opens at the house *Jésus-Ouvrier (Québec)*. This home belongs to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) and is part of the history of the Institute; a multitude of memories come into sight in the heart of Father Parent and in that of several Oblates in this occasion. It is in this home that Father Parent had received the confirmation of his sacerdotal calling. It is the joy of reunions, of fraternal love, of new acquaintances, of the pride of belonging to a big family united in the name of Jesus Christ.

The presence of the Volunteers of God reminds us that the history of this group is attached to the history of the Institute and our hearts sing for the fraternal links and distribution of spiritual gifts which unite us. The general meeting of the Institute which will begin shortly after the festivity is meant to strengthen these links so that the mercy of Christ pervades the world more and more profoundly.

May our hearts sing, for yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Here is the climate which lives in the heart of Oblates in this year of celebration of the 50th birthday of the Institute:

Our heart to celebrate...
Hearts dancing joyfully...
The heart is expecting, so full over-flowing...

There are thousands of reasons to sing while looking at this Institute which, in faith, carried its radiance in the heart of, and around the world.

*Theme song*⁵ Let our hearts sing

Refrain: Our hearts celebrate as we sing our history.
Let's live for today with hearts dancing joyfully.
The heart is expecting, so full over-flowing
With hope we shall walk (repeat)

1. In the heart of the Church, our Institute was born
With a most gentle breeze.
Becoming so strong rushing forward with the wind
It blew around the world.

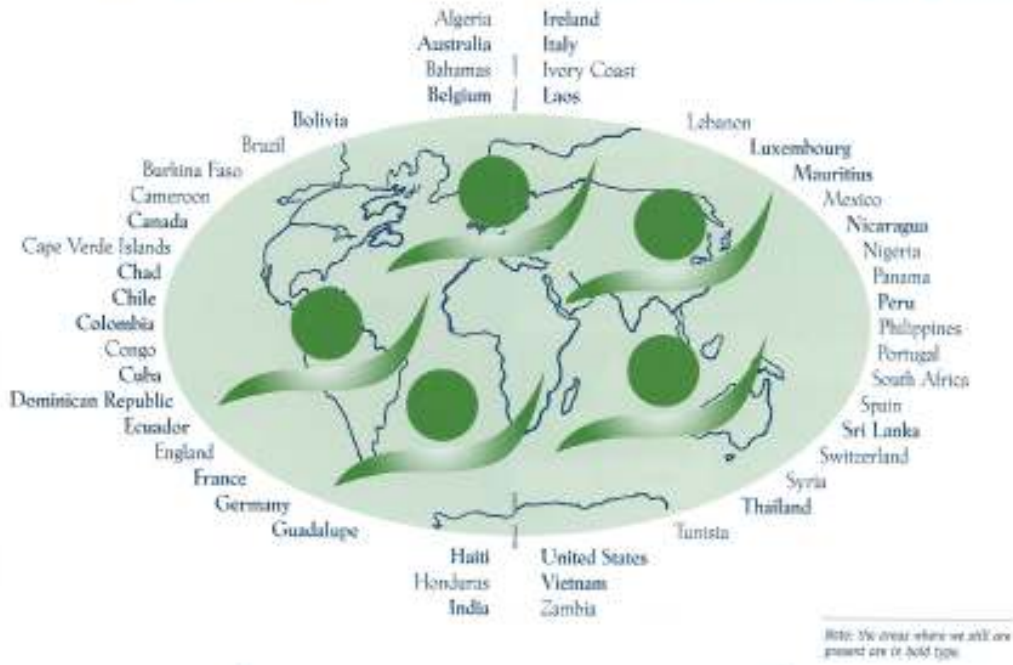
It blew around the world...⁶

Algeria — **Australia** – Bahamas – **Belgium** – **Bolivia** – Brazil – Burkina Faso — Cameroon – **Canada** - Chad - **Chile** – **Columbia** – Congo — Cuba – **Dominican Republic** - Ecuador – England - **Germany** - France – **Guadeloupe** – **Haiti** – Honduras – **India** – **Ireland** – Islands of the Green Cape – **Italy** - Ivory Coast – **Laos** – Lebanon – **Luxembourg** – **Mauritius-Rodrigues** – Mexico – **Nicaragua** – Nigeria – Panama – **Peru** – Philippines – Portugal — Republic of South Africa - **Sri Lanka** – Spain - Switzerland – Syria – United States– **Thailand** – Tunisia – **Vietnam** – Zambia.

5. Text and music by Ms Rosanne Roy and musical transcription by Ms Irène Lemay.

6. Countries in bold print, places where the Institute is still present in 2002.

Rushing forward with the wind it blew around the world



Using our hands, we will sow on all pathways...

The Oblate strives to develop a spirit of total availability in order that her whole life become a continuous service and thus contribute to fashion and shape the world according to God in a more just and humane order.
(Constitution 1, 56)



2. Let's live out our mission
By the strength of our charism along every road
Full of life we'll sow the joy of our lives
as we live out our lives.

We'll sow the joy of our lives with hands

which create... which pray... which comfort... which work... which heal... which guide...
which cultivate... which serve... which receive... which teach...

The Oblate tries to develop in herself a more complete and total availability so that all of her life becomes service and contributes in configuring the world according to God in a more just and humane order⁷.

3. With the heart so audacious
for beauty so spacious for love we will strive
The Spirit to witness what's new we will dare
That life will prevail.

Heart so audacious for beauty so spacious

Let us create spaces where, nourished by an embodied spirituality, we shall be able still, tomorrow to:

open our eyes

to acknowledge the most urgent needs in our time

open our ears

to hear the suffering and misery of those without a voice

open our hands

to welcome the other with all his / her differences

open our mind

to courageously engage oneself unto paths that have yet to be explored

open our hearts

to live our prophetic mission in the manner of Christ.

That each of our gestures be a Gospel page,
space of life and light in the heart of the world to come.

In the prayer of thanksgiving for the 50th we find this request to the Lord:

"At the beginning of this new millennium,
we ask you to give us the grace of fidelity
so that it be visible, by our testimony,
your unconditional love towards our brothers and sisters."⁸

* * *

7. Constitutions 1.30

8. Excerpt from the prayer of thanksgiving for the 50th – OMMI, district of Chile – Souvenir Album, OMMI 2001.

General Assembly

(2001)

Certainly, the heart is festive in this jubilee year of the 50th of the Institute, but already, the time has arrived for the important conferences of the General Assembly for the Oblate delegates. This one is held at *the Centre de spiritualité des Ursulines* in Loretteville, a suburb of Quebec City.

Mission of the Institute

To come to an enlightened decision on the wording of the mission of the Institute, the members of the assembly have several means at their disposal:

- ♦ A file had been drawn-up by the Preparation Committee which had been transmitted to them some months prior to the assembly. This contains three chapters :
 - the mission of institutes of consecrated life,
 - the mission,
 - the missionary life of the Institute in history.
- ♦ The results from the consultations with Oblates supplemented the file.
- ♦ The many tasks of the assembly, in workshops and in plenary sessions, consider the aspects which are necessary to take into account in the wording of the "Mission Statement": *why ? how? for who ? where ?*
- ♦ A consultation with a theologian to go over the theological aspect of the mission of the Institute.

Taking into account that the mission of our Institute as that of all secular institutes contributes to the transformation of the world and that it has at the same time an apostolic and prophetic function, in a spirit of spiritual discernment, the assembly enunciated the mission of the Institute as follows :

**"Like Christ,
to manifest the unconditional Love of God the Father
to everyone by revealing
the signs of His presence at the heart of daily life".**

* * *

The associated group "VOLUNTEERS OF GOD"

By way of preparation on this important subject offered for study in assembly, the delegates and the representatives have on hand a file:

- ♦ short history of the group
- ♦ thoughts from Father Parent
- ♦ opinions of a canonist(s) and a theologian

- ♦ reports among the Institute and the Volunteers of God
- ♦ reports of consultations with the Volunteers of God and with Oblates
- ♦ Some proposals.

Following the work accomplished in workshops and in plenaries, along with canonical and theological illumination received during the assembly, some proposals are voted.

The 2001 General Assembly decided:

- ♦ On maintaining the existence of the group Volunteers of God, who receives its purpose from the Institute.
- ♦ The associate group is an extension of the mission of the Institute; this permits a greater number of individuals to deepen their baptismal engagement by sharing the unique spirituality of the Institute.
- ♦ It is the group as such that is linked to the Institute and not every member taken individually. This group will have to take into account the formulation of the mission of the Institute to elaborate the mission of the Volunteers of God.

For training and animation purposes the members of the associate group "Volunteers of God", the Institute reasserts the importance of acquiring the mentality of Christ to live by charity and to develop the five attitudes and Christian contacts which they are the expression of.

It is proposed that the prayer⁹ of the Volunteer of God be left to its own responsibility, in accordance to his/her own progress; this with the intention of receiving the person of goodwill where he or she is in spiritual development.

Some admission criteria are established:

- ♦ To have the desire to follow in the Footsteps of Jesus (Christian ideal) to build a civilization of love and peace;
- ♦ To cultivate a positive approach vis-à-vis persons and events;
- ♦ To be capable of caring relationships;
- ♦ To communicate with other Volunteers of God and participate in team meetings inasmuch as possible;
- ♦ To accept to go through the stages of formation for the mission and the spirituality of the group.

Criteria are specified for persons who want to commit themselves:

- ♦ Any person (woman or man) considered of age in his or her country;
- ♦ Be Catholic and wish to deepen their baptismal vocation;
- ♦ That the annual promise, official method stating commitment in the group Volunteers of God, be proposed to those individuals wishing to take part.

9. The form and contents of the prayer vary from one person to another. All are invited to meet the Lord in a personal prayer adapted to his/ her condition and aspiration.

Following the General Assembly, the Administrative Council sets up a team composed of five persons (Oblates and Volunteers), of whom one Oblate will have a multicultural vision. This team will be linked with the Institute through an intermediary, a member of the Executive Council, and it will present its working report to the Administrative Council every six months as well as a final report during the 2005 General Assembly.

The mandate of the team is as follows:

- to ensure service to the Volunteers of God : training, animation and information;
- to ensure the link between the Volunteers and the Institute;
- to explore and propose an adequate structure of services for the coming years (long term);
- to accomplish a study concerning the issues of such a structure, on the mission, on spirituality and financial issues.

* * *

Mandate of the Sale of the campus buildings

The previous Administrative Councils of (1993 and 1997) had been given the mandate of selling the houses on campus; the *Carrefour* is sold in 1995. In 2001, purchasers show interest in the remaining buildings.

The General Assembly entrusts to the next elected Administrative Council, the mandate of selling the campus buildings.

On the 19th of November 2001 the headquarters of the Institute are sold. The Institute rents the ground floor of the right wing for its offices and the rooms on the upper floor. This lease will be renewed in March of 2013.

* * *

Name of the Institute

Among the subjects presented by the members of the Institute at the 2001 General Assembly, is the name of the Institute.

Since 1990 the question of a possible and eventual change of name for the Institute has been put forward a few times. It had been first brought to the attention of the Administrative Council in 1990. It was then forwarded in 1993 to the General Assembly, but was withdrawn before the end of the Assembly due to other considerations such as the study of the charism, studies and decisions requested by the General Assembly regarding the sale of campus buildings. At the 1997 General Assembly, the subject was considered solely from the perspective of civil incorporation, in the same manner that the Institute is in existence in other countries.

The 2001 General Assembly proposes and adopts a resolution that would initiate a committee that would study the three following possibilities: changing of name of the Institute; keeping the present name of the institute; adding a second name where it would be necessary.

This committee has the task:

- ♦ to explore the advantages and inconveniences, the impacts and the ramifications involved in the three possibilities (previously named);
- ♦ to communicate the results with the Oblates for consultation;
- ♦ to complete the study with suggestions received by the Oblates;
- ♦ to provide recommendations to the 2005 General Assembly.

* * *

New Administrative Council 2001-2005

Ms Simone Huneault	President-Directress General
Ms Annette Grand'Maison*	Vice President-Directress General
Ms Winifred Burman	
Ms Annick François	(France)
Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant	Executive Council
Ms Claire Nantel	
Ms Anita Plourde	(United States) Executive Council
Ms Odette Riverin**	
Ms Madeline Vas	(Republic of Mauritius)
Ms Réjeanne Vidal	Executive Council
Ms Eugenia Yáñez Rivera	(Chile)
Ms Denise Desrochers***	Secretary General

* Annette Grand'Maison deceased 16th November 2004.

** Odette Riverin by interim on EC., during the sickness of Annette Grand'Maison.

*** Denise Desrochers, resigned April 1, 2002. Ms Claire Nantel is named on April 1, 2002.

Follow up to the general assembly

Immediately after the General Assembly, the Administrative Council publishes a booklet with the objectives of informing the members of the Institute of the result of the studies, to help the reflection on the life of the Institute and also to be an instrument of information and animation during meetings in the districts and sectors of the Institute.

* * *

In the framework of the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Institute

Pioneers meeting

A meeting proposed by Ms Reine-Aimée Welsh brought together on the 3rd and 4th of October of 2001, twelve of the fifteen Oblates who had joined the Institute in 1952. This gathering was held at *Maison de la Madone* at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, in an ambience of thanksgiving, fraternity and exchanges of happy memories.

Father Parent presided the Eucharist and gave the homily with the same enthusiasm as at the beginning of the Institute.

The Oblates present were: Mss Lorraine Arsenault, Cécile Béliveau, Louise Bouchard, Aurélie Boudreau, Cécile Côté, Jeannine Coulombe¹⁰ Cécile D'Amboise¹¹, Thérèse Gagnon¹² Doris Plourde, Marie-Anna Richard¹³, Anne-Marie Tardif¹⁴, and Reine-Aimée Welsh. Three companions could not come: Annette Dion, Fabienne Rinfret¹⁵ and Patricia Sirois¹⁶.

Here are some expressions of these pioneers during the gathering:

"We talked about the early beginnings of the Institute, how God's grace carried us, how the Lord prepared the way, even though we thought at the time that we were the ones taking the initiative..."¹⁷

"The little Sanctuary that remains the same and that has been a faithful witness of the growth of the Institute is a point of stability for us. What changes since 1952! Fifty years later, the past extends a hand to the present to lead us into the deep. *Duc in altum!*"¹⁸

"Looking back over the last 50 years is proof enough that we need only to love as Christ loves to live the fullness and to let it spring forth everywhere... Such a celebration of our origins renews us in God's free action of grace, the one that remains a mystery in the hands of God, over and beyond what we may have been able to accomplish."¹⁹

Before the departure and the return into their respective living environments, the pioneers are invited into the Archives section to admire the international exhibition.

10. Ms Jeannine Coulombe deceased September 18, 2006.

11. Ms Cécile D'Amboise deceased on 26th July 2010.

12. Ms Thérèse Gagnon deceased on 7th of February 2004.

13. Ms Marie-Anna Richard deceased on 22 September 2011.

14. Ms Anne-Marie Tardif deceased on 26th of February 2013.

15. Ms Fabienne Rinfret deceased December 1st, 2012.

16. Ms Patricia Sirois deceased 27th December 2010.

17. *Around the Institute*– Volume 45, no 1 – January 2002, page 49 – Lorraine Arsenault.

18. *Idem* – page 50 Lorraine Arsenault

19. *Idem* – page 50 Cécile Béliveau.

International Exhibition 2001-2002

An international exhibition arises in the quarter of the archives, previously the chapel of de la Salette, near the Headquarters, from the 2nd of July till the autumn of 2002. It is prepared with great care by generous Oblates, using their time and their talents. It was a huge job over a period of more than nine months²⁰.

The Exhibition displays hundreds of small pieces from countries where the Institute is involved. The appearance has an air of a map of the world. Four continents are represented. Canada, founding country, has the greater number of members and occupies a fifth of the space.

An impressive mural of 1 x 2 meters displays the list of places where the members of the Institute were "a presence of service" in the midst of the world. This document indicates the year of involvement of the Oblates in the mentioned localities.

Hundreds of visitors benefited from this historical exhibition.

International formation meeting 2002

Ms Cécile Létourneau suggests to the Executive Council to take on the responsibility for the organization of an international formation meeting for Oblates in intermediate formation (before stability) in the Institute. The first goal is to give a new outburst to these young Oblates in their commitment. The fact of meeting other young persons in formation from all countries will provide them with an opportunity to realize that they are not alone going through such formation stages. The theme of this encounter: "Roots and Wings".

Development

The training session was held between the 7th and 9th of July 2002, at *Maison de La Madone*, at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. As agreed, Ms Cécile Létourneau assumed the responsibility for the project, along with the collaboration of several Oblates on hand for the animation, the translation and the general organization. Around thirty persons participated: 18 Oblates-in-formation from 10 countries : Bolivia, Canada, Chili, Cuba, Haiti, India, Italy, Peru, Dominican Republic, Thailand and Oblate interpreters for the 5 languages used: English, Creole, Spanish, French, Thai.

For The Oblates-in-formation from various countries, the two instances of meeting with Father Parent were times of grace. Ms Fernande St-Onge commented on the video she had realized in 1990 in collaboration with Ms Simone Aubin and Isabelle Lamarche relating the life of Father Parent, thus permitting the Oblates knowledge of Father Parent under different times. He shared his fervor and enthusiasm, what motivated him 50 years ago and that still enlivened (or animated) him. With the eloquence for which he was known, Father Parent then 92 years old) spoke with them for nearly 45 minutes.

Conferences of Ms Gabrielle Lachance concerning consecrated secularity were extremely appreciated. Participants realized even more how much the Constitutions are part of Oblate life and that it is important to come back often to them. Ms Lachance gave a

20. Ms Georgette Deraspe is in charge, assisted by Pierrette Blais and Yvette B.Frigon. Ms Georgette Bisson helps as seamstress and Ms Janine St-Pierre as cinematographer.

lecture in French, one in English and one in Spanish. The interpreters particularly appreciated her linguistic competence.

The conversation with Ms Simone Huneault, President-Directress General, testified that we are at any time in a position to decide, that Jesus Christ, that the Institute are rare pearls that should be cherished. All our life's decisions serve to polish these precious pearls. By relying on the Constitutions, Ms Huneault, explained the functioning of the Institute and the service of authority.

Sending off rite

At the end of the Eucharist, on the last day, every participant presents herself for the sending off rite (...):

An engaging gesture: she lays her hand on the Constitutions that are held by Simone who then says: "Go with the strength that animates you to fulfill the work which God entrusts you."

A gesture of blessing from Father Parent who imposes his hands by saying: « Yes, it is God who blesses you and sends you; He will always be with you."

A souvenir of The Virgin Mary: a rosary²¹ is given to each one by Cécile who then says: "Mary will accompany and guide you all throughout your days."

After this session, a few of the Oblates in formation participated at the World Youth Day in Toronto.

* * *

WYD Toronto 2002

In July of 2002, on the invitation of Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day was held in Toronto, Canada. The Institute seized the opportunity to be present by sharing a booth with the Institute Voluntas Dei and with the Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes. In a rotating manner, the groups present were: 2 Voluntas Dei, 5 Oblates²² and one Volunteer of God from Toronto to complete the team. Our presence was important, since at this great youth gathering, there was no other booth representing Secular Institutes.

These bilingual Oblates assured an uninterrupted presence on the field during the days of this meeting. They distributed more than 10,000 leaflets pertaining to the Institute and the five attitudes²³. WYD permitted the propagation of the spirituality while making contact with numerous youth, the bishops and many representatives that came from all corners of the world. Several anecdotes could be told...such as a bus leader who wanted a bookmark of the five attitudes for everyone to help make the trip a happier one... or of this bishop from the United States wanting bookmarks for all his priests... or of these young people who, when leaving the booth in the rain would sing *You are my sunshine*...

21. All rosaries were made by Ms Lorette Richard, Oblate from New Brunswick and blessed by Father Parent.

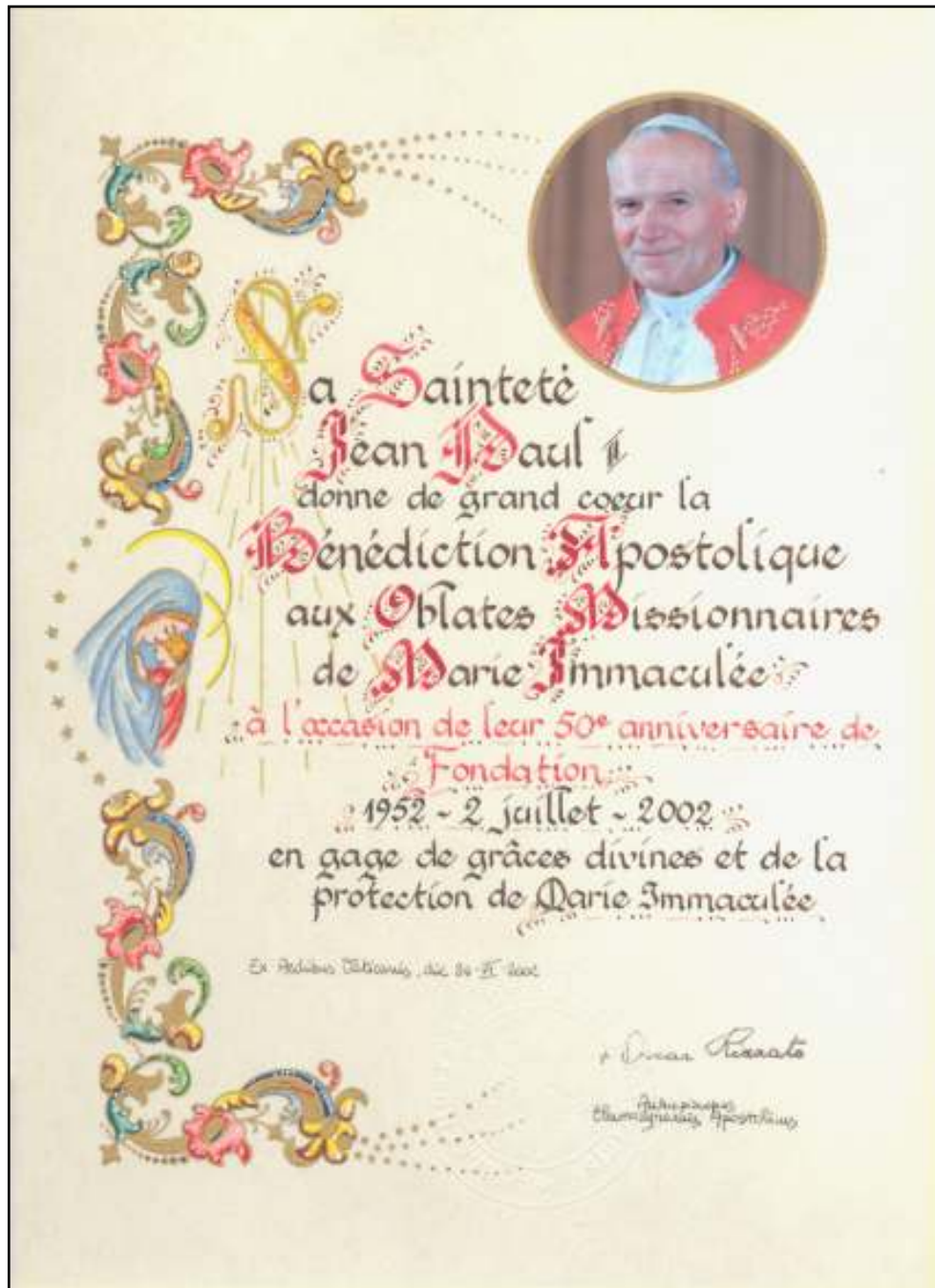
22. This team was made up of 5 Oblates: Mss Winifred Burman, Germaine Deslandes, Cécile Létourneau, Monika Okrugic, Louise Royer.

23. See Web site: www.ommi-is.org

Providence dictated that the booth be located among a full human dough, right beside the pizza booth, placed appropriately to serve as a reminder to the long lines of those waiting, that the withholding of complaints and criticisms was in order and that it was important to appear as good Christians there.

It was a faith experience, of confidence, of enthusiasm, endurance... as much for the youth as for the Oblates present, all marching pilgrims.

* * *



AMICALE 5 – 5 – 5C²⁴ (ALUMNI 5 – 5 – 5)

On October 12th, 2002, always as part of the 50th anniversary of the Institute, the Oblates invited the "ex" who had shared life within the Institute during several years. Certainly, they quit along the way but the spirituality remained much alive in their hearts. Numerous are those who participated in this gathering; it was a strong moment of renewal in the basement of the Basilica, within the look of Our Lady of the Cape. And it is there that the group AMICALE 5-5-5 germinated.

Less than a month later they had created a council and the first meeting was held on November 2, 2002 in the pastoral hall of Cegep de Trois-Rivières. The group had already 88 members. Ms Cécile Béliveau, Oblate, was chosen as "godmother" to the alumnae.

The first meeting of the alumnae was organized in Montreal, on May 31st, 2003. Since then, every year, friendship unites them in May for sharing of reflections, joy and friendship.

* * *

Festive gathering 2001~2002

All along the jubilee year, festive gatherings happened in the 9 sectors and 12 districts of the Institute. At a date of their choice, Oblates celebrated in their milieu the gift of the Institute with much creativity and pride.

24. Translation of an extract from *Amicalement vôtre*, april 2013, Vol 7, no 3 – Amicale 5-5-5.

Celebration of the 50th at Our Lady of the Cape Basilica

July 6, 2002

It is a great joy to be with each other, Oblates arriving from all continents, to give thanks to the Lord close to Our Lady of the Cape, in His basilica.

These 50 years of pilgrimage inspired by the Spirit, to tell again today that the Institute is truly a gift from God to the Church for the world. Tomorrow, the Institute will continue to reach out, to be open to the unexpected in this new millennium, aided and inspired by Mary Immaculate, with the values of its origins and its roots steeped in the charity of Christ.

May our hearts sing for yesterday, today and tomorrow!

Accompanied by Father Louis Marie Parent o.m.i., by Most Rev. Louis-Marie Ling, I.V.Dei (Bishop of Pakse, Laos); by Most Rev. Peter Sutton o.m.i. (Archbishop of Le Pas, Manitoba); Rev. François Hamel, Director General of Voluntas Dei Institute, of Rev. Claude Champagne, o.m.i. Provincial Superior, and of numerous other celebrants, Most Rev. Martin Veillette, Bishop of Trois-Rivières, presided the Eucharistic celebration and gave the homily:

“Yes, the Church is grateful to you who have given the best of yourself, who give the best of yourself again. The Church is grateful. When I say the Church it is not necessarily the bishops or the ordained ministers, but it is the people of God, men and women of all ages, from all walks of life, from all categories.

Yes, God's people are grateful for the testimony that you have given for the past 50 years, for that presence that you wanted to live with, a presence that could be said of a particular spiritual quality today. Your often discreet, humble presence, even hidden and in other times more conspicuous, more visible, and an action to the measure of your means contributed to building the kingdom of God in this world.”²⁵

Offertory Procession – Presentation in three stages

YESTERDAY... Coat of arms of the motto “Charity of Christ through Mary Immaculate”, program of life of the Oblate



25. Excerpt from Most Rev. Martin Veillette’s homily – Album, December 2002.

TODAY... The flags of the countries where the Oblates are present.

A bouquet of exotic flowers and fruits representing the diversity of environments and commitments of the Oblates.



TOMORROW...The candle representing the spurting flame at the heart of the Church for over 50 years.



The Oblates are invited to continue to carry this flame in the heart of the world, so that the mission is actualized (fulfilled).

The young Oblates have been commissioned to carry the torch of the Institute into their respective environment. This missionary mandate to spread the fire of God's love around the world has greatly impressed them.



The Banquet

Homage to Father Parent

At the reception banquet, Ms Colette Massé offers welcome and Ms Simone Huneault honors Father Parent, founder of the Institute:

"Dear Father Parent,

I have the great honour of paying homage to you on behalf of our Institute. But, what a challenge! No one could possibly enumerate all the reasons for our gratitude, our admiration and our love. However, I can try to tell you how happy we are to have you as GOD'S MAILMAN, as you like to sum up your vocation and mission.

First of all, a mailman is a messenger.

The mailman is always on the move.

The mailman is close to persons : mailman of growth and of fidelity in our vocation; mailman of communion and of love between God and persons, between brothers and sisters.

In a good mailman, freedom and availability live in harmony.

Mailman of God, you are mailman of the coming of the Kingdom, here and elsewhere. Your ministry goes beyond the Institute. Therefore, I do not claim to have painted a picture of your whole life; 92 years of life, 65 years of priesthood, 70 years of religious life, as founder, cofounder and what not... this is quite a feat! Father Parent, all I can say and proclaim is: How good, oh how good is the Lord!"²⁶

Homage to the Jubilarians

Ms Annette Grand'Maison addresses herself to the pioneers of the Institute:

"If we are here today, it is because of you, who were there at the first hour. Thank you for your constant fidelity. Today, we from all countries, of all cultures and of all languages are grateful to you for having paved the road through all the continents and for having made of our Institute, an international Institute.

You, the first Oblates, learned to put your trust in Christ at the Source of the Gospel. A missionary thrust was urging you to progress on the road of the Gospel where the only true value is to love others as God himself loves us. You drew your hope and charity in the spirituality... Seasons have gone by and each one of you, pioneers, have left your unique and personal mark on the course you have followed. You have been instruments in bringing to term this extraordinary spiritual work. Let our hearts sing for totally offering your lives and for being available to realize God's will!"²⁷

26. Souvenir Album OMMI – December 2002.

27. *Ibid.*

The Jubilarians express thankfulness

Ms Reine Aimée Welsh thanks in the name of the jubilarians:²⁸

"True, we needed faith to launch ourselves into God's adventure that was still so new within the Church. This project was daring and, like Abraham, we too were asked to leave our milieu, our own securities in order to follow the Will of God without knowing where it would lead us.

However, the pioneers who are being celebrated today would like the tribute offered to them to be shared with all those who contributed to the birth and to the growth of the Institute.

I would also like to express our sincere thanks to our families, for it is there that our vocation germinated and was strengthened due to the faith transmitted by our parents.

We wish to thank God for our prophetic founder. Thank you Fr. Parent, as God's builder, you carried through this visionary project inspired by the Spirit.

Thank you also to the Oblates of all generations. The good accomplished by the Institute is due to the many "yesses", great and small, that each one has said daily.

To you, Lord, on this day of homages to us, we turn our thanksgivings to you, for having loved us and for having led us by your grace all along these 50 years. "



Back row: Annette Dion, Fabienne Rinfret, Cécile Côté, Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., Cécile Béliveau, Doris Plourde, Aurélie Boudreau, Cécile D'Amboise, Annette Grand'Maison, Vice President-Directress General, Simone Huneault, President-Directress General.

Front row: Patricia Sirois, Louissette Bouchard, Anne-Marie Tardif, Marie-Anna Richard, Jeannine Coulombe, Lorraine Arseneault, Reine-Aimée Welsh.

28. *Ibid.*

Tribute of the associate groupe Volunteers of God²⁹

Ms Pierrette Baril, coordinator of the working team of Volunteers of God, warmly thanks the Institute.

"Our hearts are filled with gratitude to Fr. Parent for having given us the five attitudes of life as the source of our spirituality.

We thank the Institute for their support and for having invested a great deal of energy to maintain the vitality of its associate group "Volunteers of God" throughout this last half century. We are happy and proud to collaborate in the extension of the mission of the Institute wherever we live: in our families, working milieus, parishes and social involvements.

It is our hope that together, Oblates and Volunteers, we will accomplish the work of evangelization for today and tomorrow in a spirit of charity."



**In 2014, the Central team
of the associate group Volunteers of God
Carmel Murray, Rose Mathieu, France Robitaille, Marcelle Fortin.
Absent: Danielle Roberge, secretary.**

* * *

29. *Ibid.*

Homage to Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I. (2003)

A gathering in honor and in gratitude to Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., is held November 16, 2003 at *Maison de la Madone*, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec.

This meeting prompted by the Executive Council of the Institute wants to underline the contribution of Father Louis-Marie, O.M.I. in the history of each of the following groups:

- The Recluse Missionaries,
- The Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate,
- The Voluntas Dei Secular Institute,
- The associate group Volunteers of God,
- The Friends of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

In his youth, Father Parent worked on the foundation of a contemplative religious community. Subsequently, he shares a dynamic spirituality in two secular institutes and with a lay associate group; then in his “prolonged youth”, in another religious community.

Each group briefly took the floor and expressed their gratitude and attachment to Father Parent, this commissioner of God, who gave without measure, the best of himself for the Kingdom of God to come into our world. It opened avenues to various styles of vocation.

“By your teachings and your whole life, you transmit happiness to us, that of living in the Presence of God. For some it is to be in perpetual adoration and for others, it is by the practice of a spirituality that strives to sow love at the heart of the world.”³⁰

Then Father Parent then aged 93, in turn sharing his *joie de vivre*:

“God is the one who continues to live through you, to breathe through you and to give to others through you. I am pleased to be a witness, and I would say a delighted witness, a joyful witness of the action of God through you.”³¹

* * *

30. Ms Simone Huneault, President Directress General’s words or greeting – Gathering in gratitude to Fr. Louis-Marie Parent, November 16, 2003, page 2.

31. Louis-Marie Parent, *Ibid.*, page 10.

Visit from the Institute members

(2001-2005)

During this period, there were several important gatherings within the Institute: The General Assembly In 2001 - the 50th anniversary of the Institute in 2002 - However, the visits with members proceeded all the same:

Ms Simone Huneault in The Dominican Republic with Ms Hilda E. Mateu Donates; in Vietnam with Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant; in India with Ms Réjeanne Mathieu.

Ms Huneault also visited Cuba- France- Italy- Bolivia-Chili-Peru- Trois-Rivières district.

Ms Ruth Salinas : animates a retreat in Chili.

Ms Maria Eugenia Yañez: Peru

Ms Annette Grand'Maison: Haïti

Ms Odette Riverin: Ottawa.

Ms Madeline Vas: India.

Ms Annick François: Montreal district.

Ms Winifred Burman: United Sates.

Ms Anita Plourde: Western Canada

Ms Claire Nantel: Republic of Mauritius / Rodrigues

Ms Réjeanne Vidal: Quebec district.

Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant: Rouyn sector, and with Ms Pauline Tassé, Belgium / Germany – Vietnam – Laos – Thailand.

Other delegated visits

Ms Marie Martineau: Peru.

Ms Denise Desrochers: France – Italy.

Ms Yolande Perron : animation in Cuba – Haïti – Dominican Republic.

Ms Céline Bourque: Haïti.

Ms Réjeanne Mathieu and Ms Salasteen Mary Raphael to Sri Lanka.

The networks in the Institute

The members of the Institute are looking for, more or less consciously, new ways to come together to strengthen their solidarity. The vision of the networks emerges as this century's tool of vitality of the Institute. In one of her Christmas letters, Ms Huneault mentions that there have always been networks in the Institute.

Everything starts with informal networks (spontaneous links). Members create opportunities and meeting places, sometimes exceeding the limits of districts and sectors, from the felt needs of spiritual life, from a greater sense of belonging to the Institute, or for support in their commitment in the heart of the world.

In 1997, the General Assembly opens the door for a more interactive means of communication between members. The Institute wishes there could be the possibility of meetings between each continent and between districts and sectors with similar concerns and interests. Interested countries would submit their request to the Administrative Council, which itself, would support them at all levels as needed.

Experiences

North America

District Councils and Sector Directresses of North America have had the experience of working in collaboration for the planning of their activities, spiritual animation, the annual festivities of Oblates celebrating their 50th, and their annual evaluation. In this network were the following districts: The United States, Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec, Trois-Rivières and the sectors of Western Canada and of Rouyn.

In the course of its mandate, the Executive Council held meetings with this group.

2002: "Together, responsible for the mission": Mr. Denis R. Viel, trainer- consultant, was the resource person.

2003: "How to live human relations which are good?" Ms Jeannine Giguère, psychologist, was the resource person.

2004: "Assigned Directresses" and formation of the network of Oblates- in-training and the Formation directresses for North America.

The experiences in networking were beneficial.

The West Indies

During a visit in Cuba, Ms Huneault sees the possibility of creating a network between the members of the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

2003: A first meeting takes place in November, 2003 with some Oblates of these three countries. Ms Yolande Perron, missionary in Peru is the animator for this meeting and the theme is: "The Assigned Directress".

* * *

Administrative Council Initiative

The Administrative Council follows through with the evaluation / annual planning by writing to District Directresses / sectors regrouped into networks of communications.

ASIA: India/ Sri Lanka, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Republic of Mauritius.

EUROPE: France, Belgium/ Germany, Italy.

WEST INDIES: Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic.

SOUTH AMERICA: Bolivia, Chili/ Columbia, Peru

NORTH AMERICA: Canada, United States.

The Administrative Council notes that the networks stem from shared responsibility and that where they begin taking form, they are appreciated and show their usefulness for the greater good and vitality of the Institute. The experience is conclusive: it calls upon the complementarity of the members and brings them a mutual enrichment in their consecrated secular life and the realization of the mission.

These experiences paved the way, leading to the decisions of the General Assembly of 2010 which would establish the regions.

* * *

2004 Committee: Formation Booklets³²

At the invitation of Ms Huneault, a special committee begins the work of elaborating basic and intermediate formation booklets for new members of the Institute in the various countries. This team first started by reflecting then sharing the composition of 17 booklets. It is a long-drawn-out task which continued until 2009.

We can find in it an important source of all fundamental aspects of our Institute. Annex 4, page 223.

* * *

32. The committee for the Formation booklets is formed of Mss Louiselle Beaupré, Winifred Burman, Theresa Cademartori, Gertrude Garand, Louise Lalonde, Marie-Paule Malenfant, Louise Savard, Pauline Tassé.

Marching toward the General Assembly

(2005)

The theme of this assembly is a Word of God drawn from the Prophet Isaiah:

“See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light; can you not see it?”
Isaiah 43:19

Documents introduced to the assembly:

Associate group

The Administrative Council of the Institute introduces the document "The links between the Institute and the associate group". This document consists of three parts.

Part 1: Description of the life of the associate group Volunteers of God.

The Volunteers of God, men and women, form a group which is linked to the Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate which offers them a spiritual life style, characterized by the five attitudes of life, the concern of Christian contacts and of a specific mission.

Part 2: Mutual enrichment with the aim of the mission.

The interrelationship of the Institute and of its associate group brings enrichment by the mutual services offered by both groups.

Part 3: Sustaining the life of the Volunteers of God with a framework.

Finally we find:

- the role of the Institute with the associate group;
- the role of the associate group with its members;
- the administrative relations between the two groups.

Moreover, the central team of the associate group Volunteers of God and the team's representatives worked very hard from 2001 till 2005. In the course of these years, important documents were elaborated and introduced for approbation at the General Assembly.

The working team submits the <functioning mechanism> to experiment with in the course of the coming years.

* * *

Committee: The Name of the Institute

It is with concern of fully incarnating all specific characteristics of Secular Institutes that members wondered if the present name of the Institute helps them or not to live their reality of dedicated seculars in the midst of the world.

The report of the committee as well as the proposed recommendations were given to each of the delegates and representatives months prior to the General Assembly.

* * *

2005: Decisions of the General Assembly

Associate group

The General Assembly approves the introduction and content of two documents regarding the associate group Volunteers of God: its links with the Institute; its mechanisms of functioning.

The assembly wishes that the associate group continues working with a central team and that such a team be named jointly by the Institute and the associate group.

It is proposed and adopted by the assembly that a committee be formed for the elaboration of the statutes of the associate group Volunteers of God and that the statutes be introduced for approval at the following General Assembly of the Institute, in 2010.

Name of the Institute

The Institute is dispersed all over the world and its name is translated into several languages. Before approaching the change of name, the assembly tried to specify how, according to the different environments, the name influences the understanding of the following aspects: identity, secularity, mission, promotion - vocational, etc.

Considering that the name of the Institute constitutes a part of the heritage and that there is not unanimity on the question of a change of name, it was suggested and adopted by the assembly to keep the status quo, that is to say, to keep the actual name of the Institute: *Les Oblates missionnaires de Marie Immaculée* (The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate).

The members of the assembly do not see the pertinence of coming back on the name of the Institute at every assembly except if a significant evolution of the name is perceptible over the years.

However a will is expressed at all workshops: that the subject continues to be animated with all members on the identity of the Institute, as a Secular Institute, and on secularity, on the basis of Church documents, on the Constitutions, on the lived experiences of the Oblates and on the mission of the Institute.

Mission of the Institute

It was proposed and adopted by the assembly to confirm the enunciated mission specific to the Institute as voted in 2001; this wording will be integrated in the chapter of the Constitutions as number 1.9. It is the entire chapter "Mission and Apostolate in the midst of the world" numbered 1.7 to 1.11 that describes the mission of the Institute.

Formation of a Commission

The Institute is living a turning point in its history (studies completed on charism, the mission, the name of the Institute), considering the richness and the quality of the documents produced since the beginning of the Institute on its identity, on secularity, the mission, consecration, etc., the 2005 General Assembly sees the relevance of grasping the interrelationship that exists between the elements found in these documents as well as in the lived experiences of the Oblates.

The Assembly recommends and accepts that the Administrative Council set up a commission composed of Oblates and people from outside the Institute, who being aware of secular institutes, with expertise of analysis and able to prepare appropriate instruments, enabling the Institute to have an overview of its identity. This commission will submit succinctly to the administrative Council the results obtained.

Frequency of the General Assemblies

The Assembly wanting to encourage the formation of networks and regional meetings therefore proposes that general assemblies be held every 5 years *ad experimentum*.

Priorities for the next few years

In light of the considerations made in workshops and in plenary sessions, the Assembly determines the following main priorities:

- stimulate the formation to commitment in the world to realize the mission of the Institute;
- support the setting up of networks and promote regional meetings;
- intensify the promotion of vocations.

New Administrative Council (2005-2010):

Ms Claire Nantel	President-Directress General
Ms Mariette Vallières	Vice-President-Directress General
Ms Judith Alvarado Peralta	(Bolivia)
MS Marguerite Bilodeau***	
Ms Theresa Cademartori****	(United States)
Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant**	Executive Council
Ms Thresiamma Mathew	(India)
Ms Réjeanne Mathieu	Executive Council
Ms Jeannette Mougnot*	(France)
Ms Odette Riverin	Executive Council

Ms Madeline Vas

(Republic of Mauritius)

Secretary General: 2005: s Claire Nantel, replaced by Ms Jacqueline Dufort (between December 1, 2005 and November 14, 2006).

- * 2006: Ms Jeannette Mougenot, Secretary General between November 14 2006 till June 22,2010, remains on the Administrative Council.
- ** Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant (for health reason leave of absence between January 7.2007 and June 25, 2008.
- *** Ms Marguerite Bilodeau (temporarily nominated to the Executive Council on January 10, 2007 till June 25,2008.
- **** Ms Theresa Cademartori, (decease July 16, 2009, no replacement).

* * *

Pilgrim, hit the road!³³

Just as in 1952, in 2005 the Institute seeks its path
The Pilgrim still has choices to make...
The Institute still has choices to make...
It is necessary to opt for one path or another!

The road is intriguing!
We could say it walks, it advances, it even runs!
It appears to be active, welcoming, attentive, lively...
But it remains motionless!

Take your bag and your smile.
And hit the road!
Have a good eye, rhythm in your steps, hair to the wind.
Have courage!

The road is waiting for you!
Be it under the wind, the sun or the rain!
At every turn, at every stage, at every step...
The road will surprise you.

It is large... and then tortuous
It is clear... and then obscure.
It is cheerful... and then hard on the feet.
Increase your pace... and then slow it down and smile!

The road is discreet.
It sees you running and walking, sitting and getting up
smiling and crying.

Pilgrim go your way! You are guided.

33. Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant

Adaptation period to the realities of the 3rd millennium (2005-2010)

Ms Claire Nantel, new President Directress General of the Institute, had an impressive work experience in Rome where she was Secretary of the World Conference of Secular Institutes (CMIS) from 1970 to 1981. She was replaced in 1981 by Ms Georgette Leclerc who remained in office until 1993.

Previously, it should be mentioned that Ms Gabrielle Lachance was one of the main instigators in 1969 of the Canadians Conference of Secular Institutes. In 1970, she drew up the statutes for a World Conference of Secular Institutes (CMIS) which was founded in 1972. Ms Lachance became a member of the Executive Council of this conference until 1976.

Over the years, several presidents of the Institute have also worked within the CMIS: Ms Anne-Marie Chénard was a member of the Administrative Council; Ms Lucile Authier was President; Ms Denise Desrochers, member of the Administrative Council; Ms Claire Nantel member of the Administrative Council during her term as President of the Institute.

Therefore, the members of the Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate played a very active role in the birth and expansion of the conferences directly affecting all secular institutes around the world.

* * *

Through her experience Ms Nantel is the person most qualified to revise and adapt the reality of the Institute at the beginning of the 3rd millennium.

Regarding civil matters, letters patent constituted the incorporation of the Institute "LES OBLATES MISSIONNAIRES DE L'IMMACULÉE" in accordance with the *Part III* of The *Québec Companies Act*, this document given on April 7, 1956 was registered May 15, 1956.

An amendment was made to change the name of the Institute. (Another group was (registered in Rome, under the same name.) November 19, 1964, the Institute took the name of "Les Oblates de Marie Immaculée" and the document was registered on November 26, 1964. Subsequently, on December 16, 1964, the Institute took the name «Les Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée" and this document was registered on 29 December 1964.

Between 2005 and 2009, the letters patent were also revised and adapted to the reality of the 3rd millennium and the Corporation was registered on February 2, 2009. On the religious level, on March 23, 1984, the Institute became of pontifical right.

In 2005, the head-quarters of the Institute are still located at 7535 Parent Boulevard in Trois-Rivières. It is true, the building was sold on 19 November 2001; however the Institute remained as a tenant, its offices located in the right wing of the ground floor. It also occupies the upper rooms. The area of the archives of the Institute is found in the place that previously served as a chapel.

Ensuring the follow-up of the General Assembly

2005

Position of the Secretary General

Ms Claire Nantel, Secretary General of the Institute since April 1, 2002, was elected President Directress General at the General Assembly 2005. The Secretary General's position remained vacant for a few months during which time Ms Jacqueline Dufort ensures the interim period from December 2005 to November 2006. Ms Jeannette Mougenot, member of the Administrative Council, came from France to take charge of the secretariat from 2006 to 2010. Ms Ellena Brelu-Brelu came from the Republic of Mauritius in April 2010 to take over (in June 2010) this essential task for the proper functioning of the Institute, a task which must be borne by a member of the Institute.

The archives of the Institute

The 2005 General Assembly has left several priorities for the new Council. For her part, Ms Nantel carries a project of great importance: the safeguarding of official documents of the Institute. From the very beginning of her term as President, two events: a water damage stemming from a room above the archives and the beginning of a fire in the nearby laundry room, have clearly demonstrated the precariousness of the premises where the archives of the Institute are assembled. At the first meeting of the Administrative Council, the decision is taken to build a security location as soon as possible to safeguard the archives. The construction is to be carried out in autumn 2006 on land belonging to the Institute, not far from the present headquarters, at 7625 Parent Boulevard.



Headquarters – 7625 boulevard Parent, Trois-Rivières.

Formation of a Commission¹

After 54 years of existence, at a time where the Institute intensifies its search of its unification, a commission is formed following a decision by the General Assembly. The Administrative Council gives to the Commission the following mandate:

- ♦ to review and consolidate the basic elements of the Institute (Constitutions, animation documents, formation, general assemblies, texts on identity, secularity, the mission, etc.) and, to do so,
- ♦ to seek the experiences of the Oblate and their way of exercising the mission of the Institute in their respective environments, then,
- ♦ to gather the given data and to see how they are linked together,
- ♦ draw from this, a view of the whole and, finally,
- ♦ submit to the Administrative Council succinctly, the results obtained.

The commission is called "Commission for study and research on secular life." It meets for the first time on November 11, 2006 and is composed of:

Ms Claire Nantel	President
Ms Gabrielle Lachance	Research Directress ²
Ms Louise Lalonde	Commission Member
Ms M-Denise Dubé	Commission Member
Ms Jeannette Mougnot	Secretary
Ms Solange Lefebvre, Ph.D.	Consultant ³

The commission begins its task. Along the way, through consultation, members of the Institute are invited to express themselves on various aspects of their commitment as consecrated seculars in the midst of the world:

- ♦ What is their vision of the world today?
- ♦ Today, how do they define themselves as a secular institute?
- ♦ How do they foresee the future of the Institute?
- ♦ Is the world a theological space which informs the mission?

Precious documents prepared from the responses of the members are now part of our heritage and are particularly used to raise awareness of the companions in basic formation.

* * *

1. *Around the Institute* volume 49, number 2- May 2006 - pages 38-39 and volume 50, number 1, January 2007- pages 32-33-34.

2. Ms Gabrielle Lachance participated in a seminar on consecrated life at Concordia University on January 25-26, 2013.

3. Ms Solange Lefebvre, theologian, occupant of the Chair in Religion, culture and society at the Faculty of Theology and science of religions at the University of Montreal.

Associate group

The associate group Volunteers of God looks into the preparation of its statutes, as requested in 2005 by the General Assembly, in order to submit them for approval to the General Assembly of 2010.

* * *

Visit of members of the Institute (2005-2010)

Ms Claire Nantel visits the majority of districts and sectors of the Institute:

- ♦ to Laos -Thailand with Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant,
- ♦ to Laos with Ms Lucile Authier,
- ♦ to Vietnam and India with Ms Cécile Létourneau
- ♦ to Belgium/ Germany with Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant and Pauline Tassé,
- ♦ to Cuba-Haiti-Dominican Republic-Bolivia with Ms Réjeanne Mathieu
- ♦ to the United States with Ms Marguerite Bilodeau (animated a retreat),
- ♦ to the Rouyn sector with Ms Mariette Vallières,
- ♦ to the district of Ottawa with Ms Odette Riverin.

Ms Nantel also visits: France- Italy- Haiti-Chili-Columbia-Peru, the districts of Québec-Trois-Rivières, and Western Canada sector.

Other visits delegated:

Ms Judith Alvarado Peralta: Peru.

Ms Mariette Vallières : Mauritius / Rodrigues.

Ms Rose Mathieu : Dominican Republic– Cuba (40th and animated the retreat).

Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant : Haïti (retreat).

Ms Réjeanne Mathieu et Ms Gabrielle Marcoux : Peru.

Mss Simone Huneault and Rose Mathieu : Dominican Republic

Mss Madeline Vas and Thresiamma Mathew : Vietnam.

Mss Marie-Paule Malenfant and Pauline Tassé : Germany/ Belgium.

Mss Marie-Paule Malenfant and Élise Bélanger : Laos –Thailand – Vietnam.

Mss Marie-Paule Malenfant and Madeleine Côté : Haïti (session).

Mss Céline Bourque and Martine Poulin : Haïti.

* * *

Some questions

During their two annual meetings, the members of the Administrative Council are questioning the future of the Institute. A search for the adaptation of the reality of the Institute engages itself and the members of the Administrative Council through the intervention of the internet share their thoughts, their suggestions and their hopes.

The Institute on March 31, 2008 statistics clearly demonstrate inescapable realities. The young Oblates of the first years are now elders in their seventies, octogenarians, nonagenarians.

The Institute has 538 members of whom

- ♦ 336 of modality B and 178 of modality A.
- ♦ 13 probationist and 11 aspirants.
- ♦ 309 Oblates live in Canada and 229 in the other countries.

In the entire Institute, in reference to age groups, the Oblates are represented as follows:

- ♦ 57 are less than 50 years of age or 11%, 49 are in their fifties or 11%.
- ♦ 135 are in their sixties or 25%, 297 are more than 70yrs of age or 55%.

* * *

The Oblates in responsibility are more and more aware of the demands of the current structure of the Institute in its international dimension. It becomes more and more important to focus on the core values of the Institute to encourage human and spiritual growth of the members and ease up or lighten their march toward the Lord.

* * *

The mission has no age to be greeted from the bottom of the heart and has no age to be made real in the heart of everyday life. Within the Institute, taking care of the elderly and infirm companions, is also to reassure them. It is a manifestation that one has need of them and reaffirms them in their mission. In a homily televised February 2, 2014, the Bishop of Moncton, Most Reverend Valéry Vienneau reminded consecrated persons who complain of the small number of vocations: > Continue to be carriers of the light in our midst. It must be remembered that it is the flame which is important, not the candle. It is not the length of the candle, nor the color, nor the composition of the wax that are important, it is the flame. Whether it is a new candle or one coming to its end, the flame remains always lit in each of your lives.

In John, chapter 4,1-42, Jesus opens up new horizons for the Samaritan woman, he wanted to be in need of her, requesting a service: 'Give me something to drink!' Needing her, Jesus gives her back her human dignity. She becomes important for someone who goes beyond her weaknesses and calls to the best of herself to send her on a mission. Jesus mission is still current, it will not pass! The message of Jesus about love speaks to all races, all nations, all generations, all situations and to all ages of life.

Advancement in age invites the person to live many new situations⁴. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus and being in communion of heart with Him, the passage from doing to being of the elders of the Institute is done gradually. The following table illustrates this:

from DOING	to BEING
searching God's Will	entering in the today of God
achieving projects	surrendering to the Lord
placing one's security in production	place gratuitously one's own confidence in God
seeing to the transformation of creation	to be marveled by creation
seeing the performance of others	seeing the interior values of others
rendering services to others	demonstrating attention to others
relying on self-efficiency	relying on ones interior inspirations
asking for attention	offering love

The Institute on Pilgrimage...

“Institutes of Consecrated Life are thus invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their founders in response to the signs of the times emerging in today's world. ⁵”

Over the last years, research work was done in reference to (the) history and the functioning of the Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, and this, from the beginning, from the time of its foundation. The Administrative Council (2005-2010) manifested courageous faith in daring to undertake such an approach in reviewing the organizational structure of the Institute. At this stage in its history, it was important to verify if the current structures were conducive to the accomplishment of the mission. Taking into account the secular and international reality of the Institute, it seemed important to have a new look at the structures and to bring them up to date in the context of today's world.

To ensure the functioning of the Institute, with its so-called 'centralized' structure, it became difficult to find Oblate(s) capable of assuming the responsibilities which were intensifying.

4. Inspired from the book written by Roger Gauthier, omi. *La grâce de vieillir*, Novalis.

5. *Vita Consecrata*, n° 37

After careful consideration, the members of the Administrative Council found it necessary to initiate a committee to study the opportunities of streamlining the functional structures of the Institute and to make proposals in this sense to the 2010 General Assembly.

Formation of an International Committee

An international Committee is set to work with the task of thinking of the “Future of the Institute”. Ms Céline Girard accepts the responsibility of this committee and she is joined by Ms Denise Gagné and Ms Marie Martineau, all three of them from North America. Céline held to have consultants from each of the regions: Ms Hilda E. Mateu Donates representing Latin America / Caribbean, Ms Ellena Brelu-Brelu representing the Asia / Indian Ocean, Ms Maria Carmela Proietto representing Europe. A network of communication comes to life between the Oblates, gratefully from all continents, with its spokespersons who participate in many meetings, physically at times, but more often via Skype. As a member of the Administrative Council Ms Odette Riverin is the connecting person for this committee.

The Administrative Council provided the following mandate:

The completion of a study on the possibilities of reducing and / or altering the structures of the Institute and to make proposals in this sense to the Administrative Council for the 2010 General Assembly.

Diverse Consultations

The International Committee appealed to resource individuals throughout its mandate to ensure that the research is always consistent and rigorous. The members of the Committee took advice from experts in management and organizational structures, in psychology of organizations and changes, in theology and in canon law.

Consultations have been made with other Canadian secular and religious institutes who have made such changes over the past years:

- ♦ Présence et Vie Institute and Voluntas Dei Institute,
- ♦ Daughters of Wisdom and the Sisters of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

The Involvement of Members of the Institute

Consultations were made to members of the Institute who have had or who lived at that time the experience of authority at various levels: President, Vice-President, members of the Administrative Council, Executive Council, District Directress, Sector Directress. In order to establish an enlighten diagnostic, responses to the long questionnaire allowed and provided a critical look at the present and to highlight the main problems. Some suggestions have led to an insightful path of hope.

The collaboration of a great number of Oblates worldwide was very comforting and supportive of the efforts of the international Committee. Members of the Institute, spontaneously gathering in small groups, have brought concrete and realistic suggestions for the reorganization and functioning of the Institute. This commitment of all the members in the process of discernment has created a wind of hope and a lot of dynamism and enthusiasm within the reflection team.

Information Meetings

Just about everywhere around the world, information meetings are held, animated by one or -another delegate of the International Committee or by a member of the of the Administrative Council. Thus, all countries were reached and all the Oblates have been informed.

Anchor Points

When we begin important changes, it is advisable to insist on what characterizes a group, what constitutes its identity, what is untouchable. Thus, each individual within the group to which it belongs has insurance that the losses and changes felt, do not touch the essential. It will be recalled that at the very beginning of the foundation, the inspiration and the apostolic ambition have permeated all identity values: *“Live the charity of Christ, in the example of Mary Immaculate, that she may be known wherever Christ has His rights.”*

This is why the Committee recalled the identity values of the Institute. It has invited the General Assembly, held in August 2010, to agree on the basic principles that guide and direct changes to achieve. The identity values of the Institute which have been retained are as follows:

- ♦ **Charism** – *“A constant availability to the will of the Father to live everywhere the charity of Christ through service, with the help of Mary”*.⁶
- ♦ **Mission** – The Institute embraces the mission entrusted to Secular Institutes to be a fully responsible Christian presence in the world, exercising a transforming action within temporal realities to guide these realities according to the gospel in the manner of heaven. More specifically: *“Like Christ, to manifest the unconditional love of God the Father to everyone by revealing the signs of his presence at the heart of daily life”*.⁷
- ♦ **Secular consecration** – The consecration is a gift from God for the transformation of oneself and of the world. The vows of chastity, poverty and obedience incorporates the Oblate into the Institute and, in so doing, unites her more profoundly to the Church to a new title. The vows are renewed annually with a desire of permanence in His gift.
- ♦ **Spirituality** – It is summarized by the founder in the synthesis commonly referred to as the “5.5.5.” formula: 5 moments privileged prayer, 5 attitudes of life⁸, and 5 conscious acts of charity.
- ♦ **The team** – The communion is lived from the start, in the style of Jesus with His disciples. The team is the place where one practices the attitudes of life in order to live them in other environments.

6. Constitutions, 1.2

7. Constitutions, 1.9

8. The five attitudes of life are : Presence of God – abstention from destructive criticism interior and exterior – abstention from useless complaint interior and exterior – being of service – peacemaker Constitutions 1.26.

The basic principles to keep and / or to apply with precision and discernment are:

- Collegiality,
- Subsidiarity,
- The delegation of responsibilities and tasks,
- Accountability (accountable)
- Communication (transparency - trust - perception),
- Co-responsibility,
- Interdependence.

Options of the General Assembly

2010

Theme of the Assembly:

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us”

(JOHN 1:14)

It is in a great outburst of communion that members have opted to form five regions throughout the world in order to “decentralize the current administrative structure.” Concrete orientation for the implementation of the regionalization process have been adopted.

The election of new people in authority confirmed in a concrete and visible manner one characteristic of the Institute: it is international and multicultural, since it is present in more than 20 countries!

Ms Anita Plourde	(United States) President
Ms Simone Huneault	(Canada – Ontario) Vice-President
Ms Theresa Olsheskie	(Canada – Ontario) North America West
Ms Pierrette Fortin	(Canada – Quebec) North America East
Ms Flor Angélica Acuña Ríos	(Peru) Latin America /Caribbean
Ms Mercy S. Savariyaradimai	(India) Asia /Indian Ocean
Ms Graziella Falbo	(Italy) Europe

Leadership Committee:

Ms Anita Plourde	President
Ms Simone Huneault	Vice-President
Ms Ellena Brelu-Brelu	Secretary General
Ms Denise Desrochers	Treasurer General (upon invitation)

Provisional Decisional Committee:

Ms Anita Plourde	President
Ms Simone Huneault	Vice-President

A member of the A.C. of the region concerned by the decision to take.
The Secretary General

* * *

Furthermore the position of Treasurer General is created (this position had been abolished on May 10, 1971).

* * *



**Delegatess
General Assembly
Loretteville, Quebec, Canada**

May 17, 2009 Event: Death of the Founder

“Father Parent died as he had lived: a man of surprises. Relatively in shape, he falls suddenly, fractures a hip, is operated on and died a few days later. It was Sunday, May 17, 2009.

On Friday, May 22, 2009, a magnificent funeral is held at Basilica Notre-Dame-du-Cap, filled with people: four bishops, 116 priests (Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Voluntas Dei, diocesan), some Recluse Missionary Sisters, Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, lay Voluntas Dei, some Volunteers of God married and single, and many other friends. Most Rev. Martin Veillette, Bishop of the Diocese of Trois-Rivières, presides over the concelebration and Father Mario Laroche, I.V. Dei, gives the homily.

The burial occurs in Sainte-Marie-Madeleine cemetery, in the Institute’s lot, next to his mother and his half-brother⁹.”

Life is a voyage

Each 24 hours of a human life
is a voyage that can be
made only once.
Although day follows day,
not one of them can be reassembled

What we have left behind,
what we will produce in the future,
have less importance
than what we are doing right now
for our own development and for
the development of others.¹⁰

Following the death of Father Parent, the Administrative Council has published a souvenir book of one hundred pages: *Un apôtre au Coeur de feu!* (an apostle with a heart of fire). This book briefly describes the life of Father Parent, his funeral, and relates several testimonies given on this occasion.

Here is an extract:¹¹

“Father Louis-Marie Parent has passed in our lives by seeding widely into the wind, all the love of the Lord, which fired his heart of Apostle. He remains very present in each and every one of us who have known and loved him. The testimonies received clearly indicate that presence, the way of being and the way of doing of Father Parent has reached countless individuals who for a long period will remember.

Indeed, during his earthly life people have appreciated his presence; were marked by his rich personality, shared his spiritual inspirations; worked as a result of this witness of Jesus. Today, so many people remain inhabited by the same dynamism as his, to continue to embody his face that is now invisible for us but present in the heart

9. Translation from : Gauthier Roger o.m.i., Richelieu, QC.

10. Parent, Louis-Marie o.m.i., *The Present Moment*, 1990, page 80- 81.

11. Extracted from *Un apôtre au cœur de feu!* Printed by Marquis Imprimeur inc., 2009. Presentation by Ms Marie-Paule Malenfant

of God.

Speaking of his relationship with God, Father Parent said: "We always did everything together!" Throughout his life he was focused on searching God's will in the concrete reality of the present moment.

Yes, Father Parent, this inspired Apostle, has left a legacy to distribute to the world, for his following and with him always living! Give thanks to the Holy Spirit for this simple and dynamic spirituality that is accessible and beneficial to anyone of good will.

Thank you for the 5-5-5 spirituality that he has bequeathed to the Church:
to us the joy of living and giving simply what we have freely received".





**The religious service was celebrated Friday, May 22, 2009, at 3 p.m.,
in the Basilica of Notre-Dame-du-Cap.**



Aspersion.



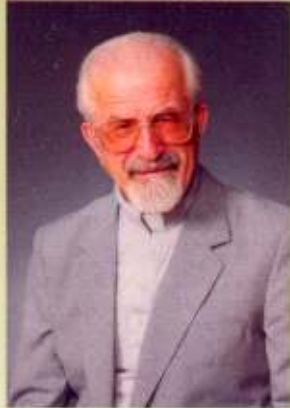
**Signing of the registries
Claire Nantel, Jean-Paul Chiasson
Jean-Claude Gilbert, Mgr Martin Veillette.**



Burial at Sainte-Marie-Madeleine cemetery.



Funeral monument of Father Parent.



*Père Louis-Marie
Parent, o.m.i.
décédé le
17 mai 2009
à l'âge de 98 ans*

*Vivre le moment présent,
c'est accepter le plan de
Dieu sur soi.*



*La spiritualité
donnée par le père
Louis-Marie
Parent, o.m.i.*

*Fondateur
de deux Instituts séculiers :*

- *Les Oblates Missionnaires
de Marie Immaculée*
- *L'Institut Voluntas Dei*

Présence de Dieu

*Absence de critique
destructive
intérieure et extérieure*

*Absence de plainte inutile
intérieure et extérieure*

Être de service

Artisan(e) de paix

Reflection¹²

The text of Isaiah 49, 5-6 seems very appropriate in drawing a picture of Father Parent and his activity in the Church and in the world, considering the mission which has been entrusted to him and the role that he has been called to play in the lives of so many people:

“Now the LORD speaks, He who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to Him and Israel gathered to Him; Yes, I am precious in the sight of the LORD, and my God is now my strength! It isn’t enough, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and return the survivors of Israel: I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

Has he not been preserved and saved during the first years of his life?

Has he not brought many people to the Lord during his ministry?

Was he not a grand prize in the eyes of the Lord?

Was not his only strength the Lord?

Had he not been the instigator so that the Word of God - and The Institute - reach the extremities of the Earth?



**Entrance to Sainte-Marie-Madeleine cemetery
where rests Father Parent.**

12. Ms Cécile Létourneau.

The Institute celebrates 60 years of existence

June 30, 2012

Under the gaze of Mary

The 60th anniversary of the Institute was magnificently held under the gaze of Mary at the Sanctuary Notre-Dame-du-Cap. The temperature is perfect throughout the day. A marquee is in place to welcome the Oblates and their guests, who wholeheartedly, pay tribute to the pioneers from the very beginning of the Institute. With one voice, praise to the Lord is given. Robert Lebel, member of the Voluntas Dei Institute, also present for the occasion, has composed a theme song for the Institute: In full voice.

The 60th theme song

IN FULL VOICE,
UNITE OUR HEARTS
TO GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD!

1.-

We were told: "What is this wind
That makes you those ardent flames
And makes your hearts incandescent
From a Presence so loving?
This fire that runs and spreads
Like a flash... of Pentecost,
Already reaching continents
Embracing apostle's hearts!"

2.-

To contemplate the living Jesus
In the heart of time, in the heart of the
world,
Let us go to Him... by serving Him
In all these people we meet.
Go also... as leaven
In the heart of daily things...
Transforming them in the Holy Spirit,
That they be more just and more humane!

3.-

In a desire to give of ourselves...
Keeping the mind and hands free
We choose to share
From a joyous and available heart.
There, in this universal heart,
Open to all differences,
Love is no longer conditional
But it thwarts indifference!

.

4.-

We do not have a better time.
We do not have a better place...
Than to live the present moment
To welcome it as a grace.
While seeking the positive,
The beautiful, the good in people,
That our love to be attentive
To the clamor of our world.

5.-

In the manner of Mary
Who is really our model?
We receive within us the Holy Spirit
Who surprises us... and calls us.
Women of faith and challenge,
We wish with all our being
To offer like her our life
To the good desires of our Father.

WITH MARY,
UNITE OUR VOICES
TO GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD!



2 voix égales

À PLEINE VOIX

Écrit pour Les Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée
À l'occasion du soixantième anniversaire de la fondation.

Paroles et musique: Robert Lebel

C F C G G^F Am /G F C Dm⁷/C/F G C

9 Couplets **A** C F/C C G C

1. On nous di - sait: «Quel est ce vent Qui fait de vous ces flammes ar - den - tes Et rend vos
plér Jé - sus vi - vant Au cœur du temps, au cœur du mon - de, Al - lons à

14 F/C C G E/G#

coeurs in - can - des - cents D'u - ne Pré - sence aus - si ai - man - te? Ce feu qui
lui... en le ser - vant Dans tous ces gens que l'on ren - con - tre. Al - lons aus -

19 Am E/G# Em G4 G C F C/E /D A/C#

court et se ré - pand Comme un é - clair... de Pen - te - côte, At - teint dé - ja des con - ti -
si... comme un le - vain, Au cœur des cho - ses quo - ti - diennes... Les trans - for - mer dans l'Es - prit

24 Dm C/G /F 1. Gsus4 G 2. Gsus4

nents Pour em - bra - ser des coeurs d'a - pô - tre! 2. Pour con - tem - mai - nes!
Saint, Qu'elles soient plus justes et plus lu -

29 Refrain **B** G F/A F /A /G F C/E Dm⁷ G C E?

À plei - ne voix. U - nis - sons nos coeurs Pour ren - dre grâce au Sei - gneur! À plei - ne

34 Am F /A /G F C/E A/C# Dm C/G G7 C

voix, U - nis - sons nos coeurs Pour ren - dre grâce au Sei - gneur!

38 F C Dm⁷ C/F G C D.S.

Message from the President

*Ms Anita Plourde clearly defines this profoundly inspiring celebration by presenting succinctly the spirit of the Institute.*¹

“In 1952, Father Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i is inspired by the Holy Spirit to found a secular Institute, a novelty in the Church. With the momentum of the founder's charism, he spontaneously invites young women to participate in this foundation.

The only specific plan presented to the founding group is the embodiment of values which, little by little, will become particular to the Institute: Live the charity of Christ everywhere, listen to God's Will, become committed to a fraternal life together and to be missionaries in the midst of the world. In addition, for Father Parent one element is very clear: the spirituality of the Institute inspired by the Gospel, to live God's presence, like Christ, the unconditional welcome of others and the joyful acts of serving and of sowing peace.

Thus our pioneers, feeling the call to this vocation in a unique project of God, made a big leap of faith, like Mary who said 'yes' without having a single point of reference to support her decision. On the contrary, everything seems to contradict human logic. But, already, the gift of charism is taking root in the heart of the group so that the mission of the Institute takes its meaning and its color in the daily realities managed with courage, total trust and generosity by our companions of the early days.

Without delay, they leave for other countries to share the values of the Institute with other young women, happy in turn to actualize the Gospel among their people, with these very particular values.

Naturally, everything has not always been simple and easy but the love of God and of one's neighbor, faith without turning back and the sense of belonging to the group have conquered the hearts and stimulated the momentum of youth needed for a total commitment.

We wholeheartedly thank these Oblate companions who have wagered all for all to develop with Father Parent the foundations of our Institute! We admire their perseverance, their certainty in responding to a very personal call, their living experiences of the values of the Institute and their example of fraternal life in their joy and in their sorrow. Today, we are happy to celebrate them, to carry the torch with pride and commit ourselves to arouse a greater awareness of our Institute and attract new vocations.

Sincere thanks to our companions who share with us such a treasure of their experiences in the foundation of the Institute.”

Reflection at Sainte. Marie Island

The invitation is launched and all present move to the small lake where Sainte Marie Island is located. The youth of Cap Jeunesse have agreed to offer a time of reflection by mimicking certain gospel passages in connection with the 5 Attitudes of life of the Institute.

1. Extract from the document -JUBILEE - Secular Institute of the Oblate Missionaries of Marie Immaculate – testimony of the early days of Foundation, page 1, Headquarter's Secretariat, Trois-Rivières, Québec. June 30, 2012.

Gospel text²**Attitudes of life**

Luke 1:26–38	Annunciation	Presence of God
John 8:3–11	The adulterous women	Absence of criticism interior and exterior
Luke 10:38–42	Martha and Mary	Absence of useless complaint
Luke 9:10–17	Multiplication of the loaves	Being of service
John 20:19–22	Appearance to the disciples	Being a peacemaker

What memories... over and over again, the Oblates have offered pilgrims moments of prayer on the grounds of Our Lady of the Cape Shrine and have also mimed evangelical scenes on this same island during several seasons of pilgrimage.



**Group *CAP Jeunesse*:
Young people involved in animation
at Our Lady of the Cape Shrine.**

2. Texts suggested by Ms. Rose Mathieu, Oblate

God's love forever I sing.

PSALM 89:2



Theme of the Jubilee.



Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I.

The seasonal dinner under the big top

The seasonal dinner takes place under the big top, where the reunion of the members of the Institute, the Volunteers of God and guests, come from all points of the horizon for the celebration. The responsibilities are shared. Prepared with a careful hand the Jubilee was a success. Impossible to name all those who have been involved in the realization of this major project. Foreseeing everything from the hostesses, the meals, the Eucharistic celebration, animation, information kiosks on the Institute, sound systems, the speakers, videos, photos, accompaniment of the Jubilarians, attendants for emergencies and medical care, etc...

Thank you to all the staff of the Basilica Our Lady of the Cape which has greatly facilitated this day under the gaze of Mary. Thanks to all those from near and far who have contributed to the beauty and splendor of this wonderful day.³

3. The preparation and supervision of the Jubilee was accomplished by Ms Ellena Brelu-Brelu, Secretary General with the collaboration of Ms. Paulette Chénard and Ms Denise Godbout.

Eucharistic Celebration⁴

In unison of heart and mind with all the Oblates from around the world.

I will sing forever of the steadfast love of the Lord.

PSALM 89:2

The Eucharistic celebration was presided by Bishop Gérard Cyprien Lacroix⁵ in the Basilica of Notre-Dame-du-Cap. Note the presence of Mgr. Martin Veillette, Bishop emeritus of Trois-Rivières, Father S. James Dunstan, Director General of Voluntas Dei Institute, his colleagues and several Oblate and diocesan priests.⁶

This celebration is a vibrant tribute in thanksgiving for the pioneers who have lived 60 years in the Institute, they who lived in faith from the very start. Thanks to them and to all those that have followed, even today, the Secular Institute THE OBLATE MISSIONARIES OF MARY IMMACULATE is always there!

In the entrance procession the pioneers come forward and they are followed by representatives of the 5 regions of the Institute who offer, in confidence, their approach of regionalization to the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord has always guided the Institute in its pilgrimage. Is not the past a guarantee of its future?

“All that I am, all that I live
I offer it with this bread.
All that is beautiful, all that is less beautiful
Lord, this I am, all that I live.”

“All that I am, all that I live
I offer it with this wine.
All that is beautiful, that is less beautiful
Lord, this I offer with this wine, oh Lord.”⁷

This Jubilee was an opportunity to glorify the Father together for the gift of the Institute which transforms the Oblate life and that of the world where He sends them. The final wish of Bishop Lacroix is a stimulation towards the future:

“... your mission of presence, your charity in action, remain relevant today or in today’s world» That your Institute continue its mission in the heart of the world. The world needs it greatly, the Church also.”



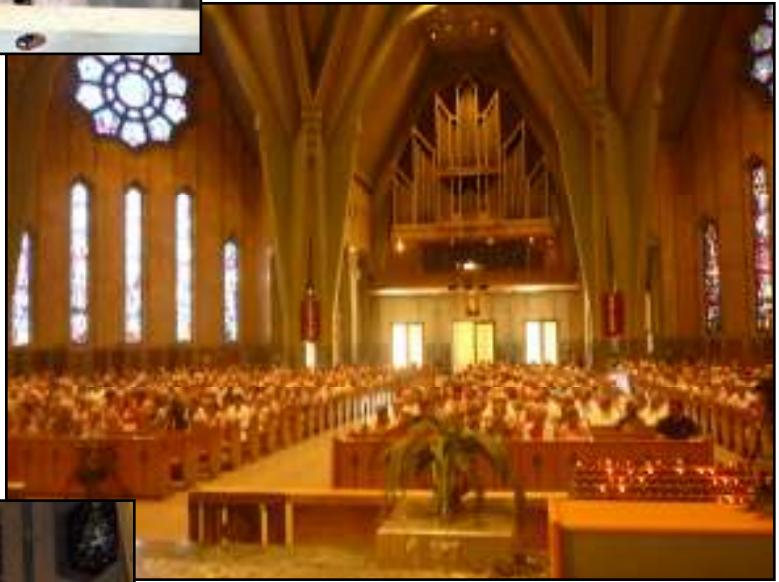
-
4. Mss Ginette Faubert, Céline Girard, Raymonde Haché, Marie Martineau collaborated in the preparation of the Eucharistic celebration.
 5. Quebec diocese’s Archbishop Gérard Cyprien Lacroix, is the liaison bishop between the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes. He is a member of the Pius X Secular Institute.
 6. Fr Roger Gauthier, O.M.I. unfortunately was impeded to take part in the 60th Jubilee because of illness.
 7. Translation of an offering song – original in French by Robert Lebel I.V.Dei



Gesture from Ms Annie Joseph, from India.



Ms Anita Plourde



Father James Dunstan



Bishop Gérald Cyprien Lacroix





Poem from Ms Rosanne Roy.



**Ms H el ene Lessard
and Reine-Aim ee Welsh.**



**Ms Colette Mass e,
Denise Gagn e and Minerve Marcellus.**



Former presidents: Anne-Marie, Claire, Lucile, Simone.



The "actual" with the "first".



**Former presidents and actual:
Gabrielle, Denise,
Reine-Aimée, Anita.**



**Brother Marcel Lafrance, F.I.C.,
Anita Plourde, President.**



The Administrative Council of the Institute.

Fraternal Agape

To close this celebration, the final banquet takes place in the basement of the Basilica Notre-Dame-du-Cap in an atmosphere of fraternity and joy. A violinist circulates from table to table and the atmosphere is relaxing... the hearts are in a festive mode. Photos are taken, interviews are carried out with calmness, just like the entire day. The roles are shared, everything takes place in serenity.⁸

During the evening, M. Marcel Lafrance, f.i.c, representative of consecrated life in the diocese of Trois-Rivières, addresses a few words and gives to Ms Anita Plourde, President of the Institute, a magnificent artwork by J. Durocher, s.a.s.v.. Subsequently, Ms Rosanne Roy recites a poem she had composed in connection with the Jubilee, which, coincidentally, very well illustrates the painting that had just been offered to the Institute.

When the heart becomes flower

When the heart becomes flower,
many petals of love slide over time.
On their passage, shoulders straighten
tears disappear, smiles are reborn.

What scent of youth, when the heart becomes flower!
A comforting wind blows stronger and stronger.
It emanates a farandole, a dance, a flight or sending.
A song of hope offers everyone its chance.

And we hear, from all present moments
“The love of God, forever I sing it.
The joy of God with Him I dance.”

SINCE MY HEART BECOMES FLOWER.

ROSANNE ROY.
JUNE 30, 2012

* * *

What a magnificent Jubilee!
The Institute is in feast and the heart of each is made a flower!

Some expressions:

Annie (India) is joyous:

“My heart leaps with joy, admiration and pride. I feel how great our Institute is.”

Réjeanne (Canada) is grateful:

“Our Institute is rich in its internationality, a foretaste of heaven of so many benefits.
What a magnificent celebration!”

8. Ms Pauline Tassé accompanied the media staff of *Salt & Light* throughout the day for interviews.

Flor (Peru) can't get over it:

“Who am I to see so much wonder!” « ¿Quién soy para ver tantas maravillas? »

And Marie (Canada) is filled with hope:

“Keep in our hearts those wonderful moments that are as a springboard propelling us forward in order to continue radiating the love, the joy, the fraternity that characterize us.”

* * *

Over the years, the members of the Institute, by their prayers, their missionary commitment and their sharing of resources, ensured the life and mission of the Institute “everywhere where Christ has rights.”

Throughout this Jubilee, some seem to have found a renewed energy to continue the road. Others affirm receiving the fuel necessary for fruitful success of the current REGIONALIZATION project in the 5 regions.

Indeed, since the General Assembly 2010, the regionalization process is ongoing. The challenges are great, the obstacles are important! When, in a region, we are in the presence of several countries, several historical events or wars having put in opposition peoples and cultures, one might think that it is mission impossible. When languages and morals are different and we need to learn to understand each other and find other ways of working together, yet again here, we might believe the mission is impossible. Yet! Hope and the will of each individual are up to this challenge, as is also this great friendship that unites all the Oblates!

Everyone knows the recipe:
SOLIDARITY in COMMUNION.

Everyone has a good reason to be proud of these 60 years of vitality, since in the course of its 60 years of existence, the Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate faced other changes so as to adapt in the modern world. So it is with the cooperation of everyone and especially being assured of the presence and the power of the identifiable values of the Institute (charism, mission, secular consecration, spirituality, and team) that the Oblates achieve!

“Our Institute is going through a very important period,
since the decisions and actions we take
will be decisive for the Institute in the coming years.

The Holy Spirit guides the Institute
in this spiritual and structural transformation.

The Holy Spirit is the only one able to supplement our weak human love
and to create a greater unity
within our Institute.”⁹

9. Anita Plourde, President of the Institute, September 6, 2011.

Each of the 5 regions will hold its first regional meeting in the year of 2013 or 2014. Each region as each country may add an important page to its history and make the pilgrimage of the Institute "The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate" continue in accordance with the good Will of the Father.

I WILL SING OF THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE FOREVER.

PSALM 89:2.

Reminiscences

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Foundation

As of the 25th anniversary in 1977, there were 19 pioneers. In 2002, there were 15. In 2012 there remained 10 for the 60th, all older than 80 years. Following Father Parent, each of them may say to the Lord: "You have chosen me".

You have chosen me

Lord, you have chosen me, you have set me apart
so I could live all your wishes
as and when they are known,

so that I could live intensely Christ's charity
by reproducing daily, in my life
the five attitudes of the soul

so that I refrain myself from all
destructive criticism, either interior or exterior,

so that I avoid any unnecessary complaints,
either interior or exterior,

to be of service,
aware, like Christ,
of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in me
who wishes full liberty of action,
who wants me to adopt his rhythm,
using me as a docile instrument

to become a peacemaker,
a stable element of peace, a builder of peace.

Will of the Father, charity of the Son
instrument of the Holy Spirit
at the permanent school of the Virgin, model of fidelity,
that is what I am
by vocation, by mission, by testimony.

Therefore, O Father that is how you made me
and thanks to your rescue,
this is how you want me every day.

Amén.



Tribute to Our pioneers!

**Cécile Côté, Lorraine Arsenault, Aurélie Boudreau, Doris Plourde,
 Louisette Bouchard, Anne-Marie Tardif, Annette Dion, Reine-Aimée Welsh,
 Cécile Béliveau. (is not present in the photo: Fabienne Rinfret).**

Here are different facets from the perceptions of the first years of ten pioneer Oblates; extracted testimonies from the booklet published June 30, 2012, on the occasion of the Jubilee.

Reine-Aimée Welsh

The spirit of the Institute at the beginning was centered on the motto: CHARITY OF CHRIST THROUGH MARY IMMACULATE. We did our best to remain available, to live charity among ourselves and with everyone. We need only remember the song: *“There are dirty dishes to wash; charitable souls will come and wipe them...”* We serve in the Pilgrims’ House, worked on the grounds of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Cape, assured the perpetual rosary, etc.. Those who worked at night often slept in the beds of those who worked during the day... Later, I noticed that those who worked jovially persevered. This was a means of formation in charity and mutual help. The cook, Gabrielle Marcoux, a cook at the Pilgrims’ house used to say, *“Here, we love God warmly!”* as she worked around the kitchen stove. (page 4)



During a visit by Father Parent to Cardinal Paul - Émile Léger in Montreal, he asks directly the question: "Who leads in this Institute? " Is it Father Parent or Ms. Welsh? 'I replied quickly: “Excellency, it is neither one nor the other, it is the Holy Spirit!” I am convinced that this hadn’t come from me... (page 5)

I have always done my utmost to foster the expansion of the charism of the founder, leaving him all the space. I never saw myself as a founder and I told myself: “It is Father Parent who received the grace to be the founder not I.” When I was visiting the companions

I told them: “Do what Father Parent said to you...” I wanted each Oblate to respect Father Parent. At the end of his life, Father Parent told me: “Reine-Aimée, I thank you for what you have been to the Institute, I was always sure of you and able to count on you.” And this sentence reached my deepest feelings: docility to the charism of the Institute in the person of Father Parent; it was my way to serve as in Mary’s way. (page 6)



Lorraine Arsenault

Father Parent visited us regularly. He gave us advice and sowed optimism. The children loved him and he suggested that I teach them the “5” points of the mystique. Little by little, I did so with enthusiasm. (page 10)

What is your fondest memory in your heart, the most beautiful moment in the Institute? The approval of the Constitutions in 1984: the most beautiful moment was when Father Parent handed me the Constitutions. It was an outdoor celebration under sunny skies in La Salette, near the Calvary. We were many to receive this important book. It was Father Parent’s birthday. The joy was intense, a summit event! (page 11)

(Lorraine has deceased April 27, 2015)



Aurélie Boudreau

Approximately one month after I arrived in Grand-Sault (Grand Falls), we gathered in Edmundston at the retreat house to make our first retreat. Many came from all over to join us. Many had already been prepared by Father Parent to join the Institute. We were eighteen in all. Father Wilfrid Cyr came to give a talk. If I remember well, this is when Fr. Parent chose the name of *Oblate Missionaries of the Immaculate* for the Institute he had newly founded. Everyone seemed happy. (page 13)

I will not make a list of all the places where I have worked as it would be too long but in Haiti, I worked in a clinic in Les Cayes and Terrier-Rouge and looked after ten little orphans in Les Cayes. When I returned to Canada, I worked at the hospital in Loretteville for seven years and then, two years at the Bishop Roy retirement home in Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce.

I can sincerely say that the Institute responded to my aspirations. I have never regretted giving my life to the Lord even when times were tough. I thank Him for having called me at His service. I ask him for the grace to persevere until the end of my days. (page 14)



Doris Plourde

On July 22, 1952, Father Parent gathered thirteen persons for a retreat held at the bishop's palace. Bishop Roméo Gagnon was the local Bishop. Father Parent preached the retreat to the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph who were caring for the sick. He made a special retreat for all of us. The first Oblates, Aurélie Boudreau, Lorraine Arsenault, Luce Lacombe and Reine-Aimée Welsh were working at the so called Eymard Hospital in Grand Falls. The first week after the opening of the hospital, we had no patients. We continued to do some housecleaning and to stock up on the bedding and the dishware that was required. We were the only ones to look after the patients. Luce Lacombe was the supervisor. (page 15)

We bought a housing unit separate from the hospital and this is where we slept. Later, we bought a large house. The first year, we were about sixty. Many came from the province of Quebec and thirteen came from New Brunswick. In the group there were teachers and nurses. A few left to go teach in the Magdalen Islands. 45 remained in Grand Falls. (page 16)



Anne-Marie Tardif

When and how did you find out that a group was to become an Institute? Tell us how it happened:

A parish friend told me about a group that intended on becoming an Institute. She had met Fr. Parent in Montreal. At that time he needed secretarial help for his correspondence. I did have to move to Montreal because Fr. Parent moved to Quebec City to live with his mother. To my surprise, both she and Fr. greeted me at the ferry in Lévis. This was how I first met Fr. Parent. Then we went to his place, where he spoke to me about *Provida Mater Ecclesia* and offered to lend me this document. He invited me to take time to read it and to get in touch with him later. I gave him back the document and told him what I understood of it and what I wanted to do in life. I was interested in this way of life because it was a secular group. (page 18)

We were only a handful and all of us lived in the hospital building. Everything was new to us and we were eager to learn more. Father Parent used to gather us in the small living room to give us nightly talks. We would ask him questions and the clear answers he gave us helped us to understand Secular Institutes and the specific mystique of our Institute. (page 19)

I was ten years in Chile. This was a beautiful experience. It opened my eyes to the good and beautiful things done elsewhere. I always felt at ease in that country. I adapted quickly. I learned Spanish. I loved the people. For me, it was great. That was a beautiful experience! It is the most wonderful time I spent in the Institute. (page 21)

(Anne-Marie deceased on February 26, 2013)



Cécile Béliveau

During a meeting, Fr. Parent explained to me that he was forming a new group: a secular institute in Grand Falls, New Brunswick. Bishop Gagnon, the local bishop had approved. Twenty two young women were there to put a rundown hospital back into operation. Fr. Parent said that he would be going to Grand Falls in ten days and he invited me and a few others to go with him. We were on September 7, 1952, in Cap-de-la-Madeleine. I was not very interested. (page 23)

Fr. Parent had to buy a new house on Broadway and some of the Oblates who were living in the house nicknamed “*chicken coop*” moved there. Fr. Parent had a room next to mine. He often received long distance phone calls and one night I heard him say to the parish priest of Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, “*Do not be afraid, on March 15 you will have Oblates.*” The next day he said, “*We are going to gather everyone together to tell them that we are going to establish a foundation in Sainte-Agathe; Cécile will be in charge. Cécile, choose 15 women among those you want!*” I chose some and then I heard someone say, “*Are you trying to break-up our choir?*” They began singing, “*It’s too bad, we no longer have a choir and the best ones are leaving.*” 15 of us left for the new foundation in Sainte-Agathe on March 15, 1954. (page 24)

The early beginning of the Institute is beyond comparison in its thrust, newness, dynamism and renewed growth through a fresh wind of Pentecost. We will never thank God enough for the ways in which He succeeded in attracting so many people to take part in this project. It was as though the Spirit of God was waiting for this and it was accomplished through Fr. Parent’s vocation and our own vocations. (page 27)



Annette Dion

Fr. Parent spoke to us about spirituality and of the '5' points which were already very clear in his mind. He asked us to attend daily Mass and to do other spiritual exercises. He even asked us not to wear lipstick, which was the style, and this was difficult because it set us apart from other students. Nonetheless I was interested in this project because I was taking a nursing course to become a missionary. (page 28)

I have good memories of the group life in Grand Falls. We worked hard but we were in good spirits. One of my best memories of those early days in the Institute was when I attended the first missionary departure of the three pioneers on December 10, 1954. It gave me hope that I would follow them. (page 29)



Cécile Côté

What kept me holding my breath is the fact that Fr. Parent would come for regular visits to give dynamic conferences. This is how we overcame the difficulties in our work and team life. I packed my bags, ready to leave, on three occasions but Fr. Parent always arrived on time to convince me to continue the journey with the “5-5-5”. This was God’s plan for me and my valiant companions who wholeheartedly committed themselves on this daily path of sanctification.

In harmony with Fr. Parent’s inspirations, orientations and decisions, we were convinced that his project of foundation came from the Holy Spirit. We lived our joys and sorrows in solidarity with one another. Our audacity resembled that of St. Paul. *“Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried... There are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.”* (Romans 8: 35-38)

That time of foundation will forever remain in my heart. We knew that Fr. Parent’s dream was sacred and that it corresponded to the will of God for the world and for our time. We identified ourselves to the founder’s boldness and opted for the life of the Institute. This universal path of the “5-5-5” taught us to live the Gospel in daily life, with availability and simplicity.

When our Institute was recognized by the Church, it confirmed to us that our Institute had its reason for being for the world of yesterday, today and tomorrow. I am proud of our Institute! (page 31)



Fabienne Rinfret

My older brother used to receive the magazine *Notre-Dame-du-Cap* (Our Lady of the Cape) and that is how I learned that a new Institute has been founded. I wrote to Fr. Parent and he invited me to come and try. He added: *“If you do not like it, you can go back home”*. On October 7th, 1952, by train, I came from Roberval to Quebec City at Fr. Parent’s mother’s house - Ms. Adèle Jobin Parent. A few other young women were there with Nurse Luce Lacombe. They had come to meet Fr. Parent and then were going to Grand Falls.

Everything began very humbly. Nurse Lacombe knew that it was possible to take the auxiliary nursing course by correspondence, but the course was in English. She translated it and gave it to us. We, her six students, passed our exams and made a practicum of one year and a half. Everything went well and we proudly received a certificate and a medal. I still keep them preciously. (page 32)

We were getting trained in the spirit of the Institute while working. The pediatrics department was on the first floor close to the room where we used to listen to the talks on tape. It was easy for me to work and to drop in to listen to the talks. Every night we had to listen to a long talk on a magnetic tape. (page 33)

I worked at the hospital of Canapé Vert, in Haiti, for two years. In all the hospitals where I went, I always used to work in the same departments: laboratory, X-ray, sterilization... But here, I was also asked to drive the ambulance. I drove only in the city services; a Haitian

man accompanied me. This man used to work as a caretaker in the hospital and he served as my guide whenever I needed. While in Haiti, there was an attempt to overthrow the Government. A curfew was set up for about one week. No one dared to venture out, but I would pick-up the employees and drive them home. I used to drive the ambulance using flashing lights only, no sirens... It was quite impressive!

Something happened that was both amusing and frustrating... I was fascinated by the bugs in Haiti. I used to pick them up, collect them and put them on the windowsill in the laboratory. There were huge spiders with big bellies and bugs that we never see in our country. One day, the caretaker said to me: "*I did beautiful cleaning, mam'zelle, beautiful cleaning...*". "Uh! Yes, he had thrown all my bugs away... (page 34)

(Fabienne has deceased December 1, 2012)



Louise Bouchard

Foundation of the Guay Retirement Home in Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts: we founded a home for the elderly using a former dance hall. The first night, the toilets were not working well and we spent the night holding the release latch. We did not know what to do. The night was long... but we were young.

We wanted to continue in the Institute even though we did not know where we were heading. We had committed our lives to follow Christ and to please Him. We trusted practicing our beautiful spirituality and walking in prayer and faith was the path to follow.

The fraternity that we experienced and shared with such dedication is unforgettable. It helped us to keep going and to make the best effort to continue this foundation. (page 37)

The Oblate is a ...

Gift WHO gives of herself (all faculties).

Gift WHO gives (each act of each faculty).

Gift WHO keeps on giving (perseverance in the gift of each act)

Gift WHO forgives (eliminates any obstacles to the gift of self)

Gift WHO abandons (eliminates all resentments)

Gift WHO hums its joy (the Oblate is always happy).¹

This is the definition of an Oblate that I learned when the Institute was founded. I adopted this definition during the course of my lifetime and it is as current as ever.

One of the memories of the heart that I cherish and consider as a very special time in the Institute is the confidence that Fr. Parent had in us. His faith taught me to go beyond myself for the last 60 years. Fr. Parent had the faith to transport mountains and he was grateful for everything. (page 38)

* * *

1. In Chapter 3, page 38, there is mention of the importance given to the word "gift" and its derivatives for the members of the Institute. The words in French are: *don qui donne, redonne, pardonne, abandonne, fredonne.*

In memory of deceased Oblates

June 30, 2012, during the Eucharistic celebration in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Cape, there was mention of 10 pioneering Oblates, who in this Jubilee year, would have completed 60 years of life in the Institute:

Mss Jeannine Coulombe, Cécile D'Amboise, Marie-Claire Fortin, Thérèse Gagnon, Olia Lacombe, Adèle Jobin Parent (FatherParent's mother), Marie-Anna Richard, Patricia Sirois, Albertine St-Onge, Teresa Sirois Sullivan.

“Leap with joy!
Since your names are written in heaven for ever!

Leap with joy!
Since your names are written in the heart of God!”

July 1952 to December 2013, we have 258 deceased Oblates and an associate missionary:

Latin America / Caribbean – 24 Oblates

4 Bolivian,
5 Chilean,
7 Cuban,
5 Haitian,
2 Peruvian,
1 Dominican.

“Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ...” (Romans 8:35)

FLOR ANGÉLICA ACUNA RÍOS, A.C. MEMBER

Asia / Indian Ocean – Africa – 17 Oblates, 1 associate missionary

3 Canadian,
1 Mauritian,
3 Thai,
3 Indian,
2 Vietnamese,
6 Laotian.



“The deceased companions inspired us by their simple way of life and the richness of their spiritual life.”

MERCY S. SAVARIYARADIMAI, A.C. MEMBER

Europe – 10 Oblates

3 Belgian,

1 Italian,

5 French,

1 Luxembourger.

“It is their faith which allowed the Institute to develop in a movement of love and to respond to the needs of the Church.”

GRAZIELLA FALBO, A.C. MEMBER

North America East – 123 Oblates

121 Canadian,

1 Irishwomen,

1 American.

“Our companions carried love, peace and hope
everywhere they lived the mission
to which the Lord had called them.
They have returned to the Father and to the Virgin Mary.
They watch over us constantly.
Let us not be afraid to pray to them.”

PIERRETTE FORTIN, A.C. MEMBER

North America West – 84 Oblates

21 American

1 Belgian,

61 Canadian,

1 Cuban.

“Thank you for responding to God’s call and using your talents to make your milieu a better place. Rest in peace!”

THERESA OLSHESKIE, A.C. MEMBER



At the end of their earthly pilgrimage...
The Lord was waiting for them at the threshold of His house ...

* * *

What are you expecting from me?

Lord, what are you expecting from me?

I'll stay silent and listen:

“I only expect your love. I have done everything to get your attention: I created you, and in abundance, I deposited in your being all that can make you a saint. I gave you intelligence, a will, senses, a heart, an extraordinary capacity of love, of understanding; I gave you the sense of responsibility, a great determination, lots of autonomy and maturity.”

“Through baptism I called you to become my child, I gave you an elder brother, Christ, so that you may serve Him. He is the path that leads to Me, He is the Truth that secures, He is life beyond death. He leads you, if you want, to contemplation, He nourished you by His Eucharist and leads you to the resurrection.”

“I gave you a mother, Mary, whose mission is to inspire you to keep your gaze fixed on Jesus, to watch over your heart to accommodate my own Spirit. I'm looking at you, you have done a lot so far, but you do not give me everything, you are still not abandoned enough [...]”

*“I open my arms to you, why are you waiting to throw yourself in them?”
Amen, thank you Lord.*

(TRANSLATION OF: LOUIS-MARIE PARENT, O.M.I. – JE T'ACCUEILLE – PAGE 169)

Since the 2010 General Assembly

Establishment of Regions

As we saw in Chapter 9, the 2010 General Assembly provided the Institute with a new direction in the creation of regions. After the General Assembly all of the Oblates involved committed themselves to the new operation. It is understood that the anchor points of the Institute, i.e. the charism, the mission, the secular consecration, spirituality and the team (identity values) remained the same, all felt reassured and have agreed to start building their region.

It is in a great spirit of communion that the members of the General Assembly 2010 formed five regions around the world in order to “decentralize the current administrative structure.” A long discernment was made regarding the inclusion of the Caribbean within the formation of the Latin American region.

Information sessions were held in the various environments and the future of the Institute was committed to new paths.

Here, again, are the names of those who have been appointed to the Administrative Council until the next General Assembly.

Ms Anita Plourde	(United States) President
Ms Simone Huneault	(Canada – Ontario) Vice-President
Ms Theresa Olsheskie	(Canada – Ontario) North America, West
Ms Pierrette Fortin	(Canada – Quebec) North America, East
Ms Flor Angélica Acuña Ríos	(Peru) Latin America/Caribbean
Ms Mercy S. Savariyaradimai	(India) Asia/Indian Ocean
Ms Graziella Falbo	(Italy) Europe



**From left to right, 1st row: Flor, Theresa, Anita, Simone
2nd row: Ellena, (Secretary Gen.), Graziella, Pierrette, Mercy, Denise (Treasurer Gen.).**

Leadership Committee

Due to the new structure, having dissolved the Executive Council, it was thus necessary to establish a Committee to respond to the daily activities of the Institute. The Management Committee is comprised of: Ms. Anita Plourde, President, Ms. Simone Huneault, Vice President, Ms. Ellena Brelu-Brelu, Secretary General and Ms. Denise Desrochers, General Treasurer for treasury activities.

Ms. Ellena Brelu Brelu finished her term as General Secretary with the Administrative Council meeting in June 2013 and she returned to her country, on the Island of Mauritius. Madame Louise Royer, Canadian, was named Secretary General, during this same Administrative Council session, and assumed her function on the first of July 2013.

Provisional Decisional Committee

In addition, a decision-making Provisional Decisional Committee is established to make decisions regarding the activities of the Institute and the needs of members from each of the regions. The Provisional Committee is formed with: Mss. Anita Plourde, President, Simone Huneault, Vice-President and the A.C. Member of the region that is concerned by decisions to be taken.

This committee remains active as long as the Regional Assemblies have not elected their Regional Leaders and their council.

Regional Meetings

In each region all Oblates have been invited to a regional meeting to become better acquainted mutually, and to share their visions and wishes for their region. Subsequently a preparation team was formed for the Regional Assembly (PTRA); the team prepared documents and process for a consultation on the election of delegates to the Regional Assembly. They would elect the Regional Leader and the Regional Council.

Ms. Simone Huneault, Vice-President of the Institute, collaborated on the regionalization process and participated in the five regional meetings.

Regional Assemblies

Ms. Anita Plourde, for her part, is present at all regional meetings. The two regions of North America held their Regional Assembly in 2013 and the region of Latin America / Caribbean held its Regional Assembly in 2014.

The election of the Regional Leaders and of the Counselors is ratified by the Administrative Council of the Institute.

North America West Region

Encompasses the older districts of Montréal, Ottawa, United States and the section of Western Canada and Rouyn

The region is made up of three groupings:

A: Anglophone group including the United States, Ireland, the Oblates from Ontario and Western Canada.

B and C: two French groups from the region of Montréal, including Gatineau and Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Ms. Adrianna Delisle is elected Regional Leader and Mss. Pauline Labbé, Marie-Jeanne Aucoin and Ginette Faubert, Counselors.

Their mandate is for a period of five years.

North America East Region

This includes the older districts of Trois-Rivières, Québec and includes all of the eastern part of Québec and New Brunswick.

Resulting from the elections, Ms. Denise Dubé was elected Regional Leader for the region and Mss. Claire Demers, Marie Martineau and Réjeanne Mathieu Counselors with a mandate of five years.

Latin America / Caribbean Region

Is formed by the following South American countries: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru and from the Caribbean: Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic.

The region held its assembly in January, 2014. The Regional Leader is Hortensia Garcia Acosta, Cuban and the elected Counselors are: Rosa Poblete Prado, Chilean and Laérianne Dalusma, Haitian, also with a five year mandate.

Asia / Indian Ocean Region

includes India, Laos, Mauritius Republic, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. This region /held its Regional Assembly in July 2014, in Bangalore, India.

Europe Region

Consists of Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Italy. Their regional assembly was held in July 2014 in Paris, France.

Visits to the Members of the Institute

(2010-2014)

In keeping with the Constitutions that specify that visits must be made to Oblates during each mandate. Ms. Anita Plourde continues the tradition and visits the Oblates throughout the world. She also delegated this role:

2010:

Transmission of information following the 2010 General Assembly:

Dominican Republic: Ms Hilda Matheu.

Peru: Ms Judith Alvarado Peralta.

2011:

Haiti – Ottawa – Western Canada: Ms Anita Plourde.

Rouyn: Msss Anita Plourde and Solange Côté.

Haiti: Mss Simone Huneault and Germaine Deslandes.

Thailand, Laos, Vietnam: Mss Lucile Authier and Trân thi Chuyên.

India/Sri Lanka: Mss Denise Desrochers and Réjeanne Mathieu.

2012:

Mauritius/ /Rodrigues – Ireland – France: Ms Anita Plourde.

Italy 50th – Belgium/Germany: Mss Anita Plourde and Georgette Leclerc.

2013:

Colombia – Chile – Bolivia – Peru: Mss Anita Plourde and Réjeanne Mathieu.

United States: Mss Anita Plourde and Adrianna Delisle, Regional Leader for North America West Region.

Dominican Republic – Cuba 50th: Mss Anita Plourde and Rose Mathieu.

Thailand – Laos – Vietnam: Mss Anita Plourde and Lucile Authier.

2014:

India and Sri Lanka: Mss Anita Plourde and Réjeanne Mathieu.

* * *

Each year the Institute produces statistics concerning the members, the last ones appearing in annex 7, page 237.

To complete this historic document on the Institute and to have a better understanding of the entire scope of the Oblate vocation, a question is required... It sheds light and will continue to illuminate the lives of all these women willing to dedicate their lives to the Lord.

Today, in the world is it still possible to fully live a Consecrated Secularity?

Over the years, the consecrated life has taken new directions. It became possible canonically to attach a genuine consecration to God in a life lived in the realities of the world. In secular institutes "... the Christian faithful, living in the world, strive for the perfection of charity and seek to contribute to the sanctification of the world, especially from within."¹

For more than sixty years, the Spirit awakens a new vocation for the Church and the world of our time. Lay citizens in the city are called to dedicate their lives to God. This consecration is necessarily secular, and in the Institute of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, it requires a commitment through the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

Entering God's plan
Risking the road where we must walk.
Entering the scheme of God
Seeking the well from which we could draw. ²

But... from which distinctive traits is a member of a secular institute recognized?

"Nothing really, and it is true. A member indeed keeps her living conditions as they were prior to being a member of the Institute, at the utmost one assumes them with a new heart, that is to say with more love, more disinterestedness."³

The consecrated seculars of The Institute The Oblates Missionaries of Mary Immaculate directly involved in the world, search out, cultivate, and testify to the presence and the intimacy of God in their midst. Jesus, himself, has concretely expressed these two aspects of consecrated life, He, who lived amongst humans of his time, bringing light and life, and He who also looked on the other hand for solitude, for contemplation and prayer in intimacy with his Father.

1. Code of Canon Law No. 710

2. Soyons ce que nous devons être ! », Song by Robert Lebel, I. V. Dei

3. Anne Dubois, « Pour un discernement vocationnel », Revue Vocation, « Vie consacrée dans la foule des hommes », n° 2, April 1973, p.37

Let us be what we must be
And we will see forthcoming future seeds
Let us be what we must be
And we can then be reborn from the breath of the Spirit! ⁴

Is Consecrated Secularity still a voice in today's world?

In this third millennium, it is in a secularized world
that the Oblates walk in the steps of Jesus.

“Secularization is a grace since finally we will cease to look into the air and seek only the sacred of things. We must be down to earth because it is where God manifests himself and this is also where Salvation is manifested by our action and our way of being.”⁵

Pope Paul VI has elaborated on the subject of Consecrated Secularity. ⁶

“Your chastity tells the world of a selfless and fathomless love that is drawn from God's own heart, and of a joyful devotion to all without being bound to anyone, yet being concerned especially for the most abandoned.”

“Your poverty tells the world that it is possible to live with this life's good things and that we can make use of what makes for a more civilised life and progress without becoming slaves to any of it.”

“Your obedience tells the world that a man can be happy without digging in his heels over the things which just suit him, and can be always completely open to God's will as seen in the daily grind, in the signs of the times and in the world's need, here and now, of salvation...”

Super ideal! But... is it possible?

The life experience of the Consecrated Secular is exalting since the call of the Lord invites over-achievement and the total gift of self. His gaze rests on one's daily reality in a positive way and adopts the pedagogy of the “present moment” so dear to the founder. Pedagogy to the rhythm of nature: Is it not little by little that the bird makes its nest? So, long live the technique “of small steps!” - “one day at a time!”

The Oblate is, throughout her life, always in formation, and this formation is at the heart of daily life. It is supported by the testimonies of the lives of her companions and thus guided in her formation.

A bond of belonging weaves itself between the Oblate and the Institute all through her journeying. Such a bond has two inseparable dimensions: the relation to God and the relation to others.

4. « Soyons ce que nous devons être ! » song by Robert Lebel, I. V. Dei.

5. Gravel, Raymond, *Paraboles* magazine.

6. “A new and original form of consecration”, To the Heads of Secular Institutes, Pope Paul VI, 1972; translation: CMIS (except for the 2nd part of “chastity”, from the French)

It is growing in the garden of God
By taking root where we are seeded
It is growing in the garden of God
To be on His vines with stems well branched. ⁷

The heart of the Oblate guides itself toward the Lord and searches His will by the means offered by the Institute.

- ♦ Vows, relationship of authority, fraternal support.

For the Oblate, the consecration renders her bond of belonging increasingly precious. Continually she is reborn by the love of the Father and the love of Christ inhabits her more and more, giving sense to all the living forces of her being. The Holy Spirit guides her heart towards an inner freedom capable of channeling her desires for possession and power. In addition, knowledge and the practical implementation of the Constitutions are essential in guiding her daily life.

Within the structure of the Institute, each member benefits from a personal link of authority. An oblate, named Assigned Directress, provides this direct link of authority with regard to commitments by vows. The encounters are always made in an amicable and sisterly dialogue, and tinged with discretion.

The Apostolic project, i.e. the commitments of each to achieve her mission in the world and in the Church, is also presented to the Assigned Directress who will embrace it. By doing so, the personal mission of the Oblate (the apostolic project) fits into the mission of the Institute which makes it its own.

The Oblates come together around and in the name of Jesus. Under the responsibility of an animator, the team is a place of spiritual growth and support to live the mission. The role of the team is of great importance:

- helps to deepen and to live the spirituality,
- arouses and maintains a fraternal charitable bond between all teammates,
- favours sharing of experiences,
- stimulates the life of the apostolic project,
- drives the life of the Institute,
- develops a sense of belonging,
- favours human growth,
- encourages development of positive values.

- ♦ Constant concern for one's formation

In order to respond to her vocation and mission, the Oblate tends, at all levels, to her formation: personal - spiritual - professional. In the Institute the daily review is an opportunity to view lucidly one's own day and to verify the lived experiences within the apostolic attitudes. She becomes aware of her formation needs and there finds answers in order to effectively exercise her commitments and responsibilities with the aim of having a positive influence in her workplace and life.

7. « *Soyons ce que nous devons être !* », Song by Robert Lebel, I.V.Dei.

Occasionally, in sector, district and now in region, formation, information and animation sessions are provided by the leaders of the Institute or with resource individuals.

- ♦ Attention to the needs of the Institute

Depending on the needs, it happens that the authorities of the Institute do call upon the Oblate's services and talents so as to take on responsibilities at the level of the Institute.

The heart of the Oblate opens to fraternal charity towards all members of the Institute and is in solidarity with all of mankind.

- ♦ Fraternity and Spirituality of Charity

As did Saint John, Father Parent spoke of the love of God everywhere, planned or unplanned: in his writings, in the composition of his songs, in his retreats, in his homilies, in his scheduled or spontaneous encounters. It is not surprising that the Constitutions, in each page, speak of the love to be lived in the Institute, in all circumstances and in all environments. "Live the charity of Christ, as did Mary Immaculate, in order to spread it 'wherever Christ has His rights', such was the apostolic inspiration and ambition of the foundation."

Members of the Institute feel the need to help and support each other. Each is a link in the chain. It is the force of each link that ensures the strength of the chain, since the weakness of one link has an influence on the whole. The five attitudes of life of the spirituality of the Institute are the means which have been proven almost everywhere in the world. They are still to be discovered and exploited for their effectiveness and their richness. The members of the associate group, in the four corners of the world, are also living this spirituality.

- ♦ Solitude towards all members

Simply stated, the Oblate, depending on her availability, surrounds the sick and elderly companions with a discreet and comprehensive presence; supporting them during difficult passages of life. With great respect and affection, she keeps in the memory of her heart the souvenirs of deceased Oblates and lets herself be inspired by their life given to the Father.



The OBLATE...
must become "all things to all people";
she is open
to all milieus
and is called
by vocation
to go "wherever
Christ has rights".

Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I. Const. OMMI, p. 2



A unique movement of love

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the life of the Oblate is oriented by a unique movement of the love of God and neighbor. The charity of Christ inspires her to be constantly preoccupied by taking concrete action in solidarity, giving meaning to her link of belonging to the Institute. Throughout the years, underlying experiences of all kinds, from the bottom of the pilgrim's hearts, as they walk the roads of the world following Jesus, a spirituality of the incarnation takes root and grows.

The spirituality of the Incarnation is a spirituality whereby its presence exercises an influence. It implies a positive appreciation of the world and a self-insertion into the world in order to sanctify it. Inserted into the realities of the world, the Oblates are committed to serve, heal, animate and to devote all this to God in Christ.

Regarding the shortage of vocations in following Jesus, it is essential to maintain a firm trust in Him who does not tire as He offers his Love. In our world, in this third millennium, the Institute still attracts women of all ages - from 20 years into a more advance age... Hearts become available for a spiritual adventure encompassing their entire lives. In each of the regions of the Institute, even in our days, 'yes' is said, and pilgrims are seeking their ways and some commit to live life as Oblates.

Do we not see them?

Pilgrim with Mary

As do all women who are listening to the needs of others and of the world, as soon as she is aware of Elisabeth's situation, Mary did not hesitate a moment and leaves. Yes, she will help her cousin during the last months of her pregnancy, but also, and above all, she will share with her and Joachim the inner richness that inhabits her. Mary thus inserts herself into tangible service.

This is why the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a unique model for each Oblate in her service to others.

Pilgrims of the world

When the day passes into the night
Within the intimacy of my heart,
Taking the time for a face to face,
Having a one to one heart with Christ.

It is time to listen to Him in his Word,
It is time to review my way of being and of doing,
during the day and to touch with a finger
The quality of my presence and my action.

When the day passes into the night
Within the intimacy of my heart
Taking the time for an attentive look
At current worldwide human activities.

It is time to welcome
The thirst and hunger of the world
With a finger it is time to touch
There where Christ's hope
Is on the rise or in decline.

When the day passes into the night
Within the intimacy of my heart
I offer all the thirst and
All the world's hunger to Christ...

Yes, pilgrim of Christ
It is in the intimacy of your heart
That the world is consecrated to God
I make contact with Christ...

It is with Him that I see the world
I offer them to one another in the same outburst
I offer Christ the world
Through strikes, riots in Syria or elsewhere
I offer Christ to the world
In through my "have mercy" – "To You I give thanks" – "Bless you".

In this nocturnal heart to heart
Within the deepest secret of my being
Christ and the world are intertwined
Christ becomes more present to the world
And the world becomes more present to Christ.

Without indifference,
But thanks to Him, in full confidence
I fall asleep
Tomorrow expects from me
A responsible presence and a transforming action
And to achieve this there are two poles to maintain:
The love of Christ and the love of the world.

"Pilgrim people
Continue your voyage
Further than the uncertain
and what mirages!
The world is a road!
Earth a passage!
Pass while offering a hand
Love and bread!"⁸

8. "*Peuple de pèlerins* », song by Robert Lebel, I. V. Dei

**Address of His Holiness Pope Francis
to participants in the General Assembly
of the Italian Conference of Secular Institutes**

**Consecrated life: in the heart of the world
with the heart of God**

“... Never lose the momentum of *walking the streets of the world*, aware that walking, even with an uncertain step or limping along, is always better than standing still, withdrawn in your own questions or sense of security. The missionary passion, the joy of the encounter with Christ that urges you to share with others the beauty of faith, reduces the risk of becoming stuck in individualism. The line of thought that proposes man as self-reliant, guided only by his own choices and desires, often vested in the seemingly beautiful garment of freedom and respect, threatens to undermine the foundations of consecrated life, especially of lay people. There is an urgent need to re-evaluate your sense of *belonging to your vocational community* which, precisely because it is not founded on community life, finds its strengths in its charism. For this reason, if each of you are a precious opportunity for others to meet with God, it is about rediscovering the responsibility of being prophetic as a community, to seek together, with humility and patience, a word of sense that can be a gift for the country and for the Church, and to bear witness to it with simplicity. You are like *antennas* ready to receive the smallest innovations prompted by the Holy Spirit, and you can help the ecclesial community to take on this gaze of goodness and find new and bold ways to reach all peoples.

Poor among the poor, but with a burning heart. Never still, always on the move. Together and *sent out*, even when you are alone, because your consecration makes of you a living spark of the Church. Always on the road borne along by the virtue that is of pilgrims: joy!”⁹

Pope Francis
May 10, 2014

9. See annex 8, page 241



Under the tent of Abraham,
with our backpack and other symbols,
to go where God will lead us.

The Lord does wonders.
We are in joy.

MAGNIFICAT !



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Annex 1

Constitutive Documents of the Institute

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------|
| 1.1 | Requesting Recognition to Bishop Joseph-Roméo Gagnon from the Association The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate | May 8, 1952 |
| 1.2 | Decree of Erection as Pious Union by Bishop Joseph-Roméo Gagnon | May 8, 1952 |
| 1.3 | Decree of Erection as Association of Perfection by Bishop Georges-Léon Pelletier | July 2, 1960 |
| 1.4 | Decree of Erection as Secular Institute of Diocesan Right by Bishop Georges-Léon Pelletier | February 2, 1962 |
| 1.5 | Approval of The constitutions by Bishop Georges-Léon Pelletier | April 3, 1967 |
| 1.6 | Decree of Erection as Secular Institute of Pontifical Right and approval of the Constitutions for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Rome | March 24, 1984 |

Approval of the Association "The Oblate Missionaries of the Immaculate"

LES OBLATES MISSIONNAIRES DE L'IMMACULEE.

Les quelques jeunes filles dont les noms suivent sollicitent de Votre Excellence l'approbation de leur Association appelée Oblates Missionnaires de l'Immaculée. Ce sont Mesdemoiselles

Lucie Lacombe
Isabelle Delisle
Aline Robitaille
Païne-Aimée Welsh
Claire Beaulieu
Anne-Marie Tardif
Marguerite Bélanger

Les Oblates Missionnaires de l'Immaculée veulent grouper des jeunes filles désireuses de travailler à la gloire de Dieu, et aussi, d'atteindre la perfection chrétienne, par la pratique des vertus chrétiennes, en vivant aussi les conseils évangéliques dans le siècle.

Chaque jour, à cette fin, elles assisteront à la Messe, feront Oraison, réciteront et méditeront le Saint Rosaire, feront l'examen particulier, et elles ne négligeront ni la lecture spirituelle ni la visite au Saint Sacrement.

Les Oblates Missionnaires de l'Immaculée groupent des jeunes filles désireuses d'exercer l'apostolat dans le siècle. A cette fin, elles se proposent d'apporter à l'Eglise et aux âmes des aides multiples et efficaces. Elles fonderont des hôpitaux, des dispensaires, des foyers pour jeunes filles, pour vieillards, pour orphelins. Elles tiendront des hotelleries dans les lieux de pèlerinages, fonderont des patronages pour jeunes filles et des centres récréatifs, elles s'occuperont d'enseignement, particulièrement chez les pauvres, dans les campagnes, dans les banlieues de villes, et elles se spécialiseront pour l'enseignement du catéchisme et la formation de catéchistes adultes en pays de missions. Elles organiseront des bibliothèques missionnaires et mariales pour diffuser la pensée de l'Eglise et faire connaître et aimer davantage la Très Sainte-Vierge. Elles fonderont aussi et recruteront des membres pour les Sociétés d'Enfants de Marie et pour les Légions de Marie. Elles s'occuperont de mouvements sociaux, d'organisations d'ouvrages pour les pauvres, de visites pour les pauvres et pour les malades à domicile. De plus, elles organiseront des écoles d'orientation de vocations où des jeunes filles s'initieront à la vie religieuse et étudieront leurs aptitudes; elles formeront leur caractère pour ensuite se diriger vers une communauté de leur choix, soit contemplative ou active; aussi elles acceptent des demoiselles de quinze et seize ans. En un mot, elles iront partout où la charité du Christ les demandera par la voix de l'autorité légitime. Elles sont donc les auxiliaires du clergé et les auxiliaires des différents mouvements d'Action Catholique.

Ces jeunes filles prient humblement Son Excellence Monseigneur l'Evêque d'Edmundston, de bien vouloir approuver leur dessein et de les constituer en Union Pieuse, selon les Normes du Droit Canonique établies pour ces Associations de fidèles.

Vue et approuvée ce 8 mai 1952.

+ Joseph Roméo Gagnon,
Evêque d'Edmundston, P.S.

DECRET D'ERECTION
de la Pieuse Union des
"OBLATES MISSIONNAIRES DE L'IMMACULEE"

Nous, Joseph-Roméo Gagnon, par la grâce de Dieu et du Saint-Siège Apostolique, Evêque d'Edmundston, approuvons la Pieuse Union des "Oblates Missionnaires de l'Immaculée".

Considérant que cette fondation a comme but la sanctification personnelle de ses membres et l'apostolat le plus adapté aux nécessités de ces temps difficiles,

Connaissant et approuvant les intentions de ses membres et leur volonté de fonder plus tard un Institut Séculier,

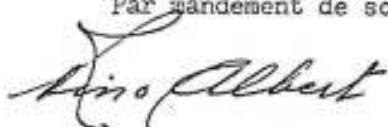
Nous érigeons par les présentes, "La Pieuse Union" des dites "Oblates Missionnaires de l'Immaculée" et les approuvons canoniquement dans notre diocèse, au sens du canon 708 du Code de Droit Canonique.

Nous constituons son siège canonique provisoire en la Maison de Grand Sault, Nouveau-Brunswick, Canada.

Donné à Edmundston, sous Notre seing, Notre sceau et le contre-seing de Notre Chancelier, le 8 mai 1952.


évêque d'Edmundston

Par mandement de son Excellence:

 Chancelier.



Georges - Léon Pelletier

Par la grâce de Dieu et l'autorité du Siège Apostolique
Evêque de Trois-Rivières



A Nos chères Filles, les Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée, salut et bénédiction en Notre-Seigneur.

Vu l'érection canonique en pieuse union de l'association des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée, effectuée en date du 8 mai 1952, par Son Excellence Mgr J.-Roméo Gagnon, évêque d'Edmundston, où l'association a pris naissance;

Vu l'organisation de l'association susdite visant à la formation et à la sanctification de ses membres d'après les normes de la Constitution Apostolique "Provida Mater Ecclesia";

Vu le nombre sans cesse croissant et de ses membres et de ses oeuvres, de telle sorte que la dite association compte déjà presque mille membres exerçant leur apostolat dans plus de cinquante diocèses des Amériques et de l'Indochine;

Vu la supplique à Nous adressée par le Révérend Père Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i., fondateur de la susdite association, demandant qu'il Nous plaise d'ériger en Association de Perfection cet organisme qui a transféré sa Maison Centrale du diocèse d'Edmundston au diocèse de Trois-Rivières;

Vu la faculté à Nous déléguée par un rescrit (N. prot. I S 206/58) émis en date du 12 mai 1960 par la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux, à l'effet d'ériger en Association de Perfection l'association des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée;

Avons décrété et décrétons ce qui suit:

Est érigée canoniquement en Association de Perfection l'Union pieuse des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée avec les effets canoniques suivants:

page deux

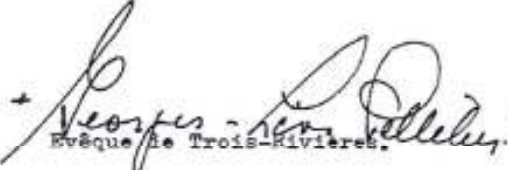
1- Toutes les maisons (i.e. "les centres") déjà existantes, où qu'elles soient, font partie de la susdite Association;

2- Cette Association de Perfection peut être reçue par les Ordinaires des lieux dans leur diocèse respectif, conformément aux constitutions soumises à la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux;

3- En pratique, cette Association est régie par les mêmes normes que toute société ou congrégation de droit diocésain.

Nonobstant toutes choses contraires.

DONNE à Trois-Rivières, en Notre Palais épiscopal, sous Notre seing et sceau et le contresseing de Notre Chancelier, le deuxième jour du mois de juillet de l'an du Seigneur mil neuf cent soixante, en la fête de la Visitation de la B.V.M.


Evêque de Trois-Rivières.

Par mandement de Son Excellence Révérendissime
Mgr l'Evêque de Trois-Rivières.


Chancelier.



Georges - Léon Pelletier

Par la grâce de Dieu et l'autorité du Siège Apostolique
Evêque de Trois-Rivières

A Nos chères Filles, les Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée, salut et bénédiction en Notre-Seigneur.

Vu l'érection canonique en pieuse union de l'association des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée, effectuée en date du 8 mai 1952, par Son Excellence Mgr J.-Roméo Gagnon, évêque d'Edmunston, N.B., où l'association a pris naissance;

Vu l'organisation de l'association susdite visant à la formation et à la sanctification de ses membres d'après les normes de la Constitution Apostolique "Provida Mater Ecclesia";

Vu le nombre sans cesse croissant et de ses membres et de ses oeuvres, de telle sorte que la dite association compte déjà plus de mille trois cents membres exerçant leur apostolat dans soixante diocèses de l'Europe, de l'Asie, de l'Afrique et de l'Amérique;

Vu l'érection canonique de la dite association, dont la Maison Centrale est maintenant située au diocèse de Trois-Rivières, en Association de Perfection par Nous effectuée, en date du 2 juillet 1960, en vertu d'une faculté à Nous déléguée par un rescrit de la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux (N. prot. I S 206/58), émis le 12 mai 1960;

Vu la supplique à Nous adressée par le Révérend Père Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i., fondateur de la susdite Association, demandant qu'il Nous plaise d'élever au rang d'Institut séculier cet organisme;

Vu les pouvoirs à Nous accordés par la Constitution Apostolique "Provida Mater Ecclesia", art. 6, par. 1 et 2, et le "Nihil obstat" de la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux donné dans un rescrit portant le No prot. I S 206/58, en date du 18 janvier 1962;

page deux

Avons décrété et décrétons ce qui suit:

- Art. 1- Est érigée canoniquement en Institut séculier de droit diocésain l'Association de Perfection des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée.
- Art. 2- On devra apporter le plus tôt possible les corrections demandées par la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux aux Constitutions du susdit Institut.
- Art. 3- Les membres de l'Institut qui auront fait précédemment, en l'Association, des voeux, temporaires ou perpétuels, devront les renouveler le plus tôt possible après la présente érection. Le temps passé dans l'Association de Perfection des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée comporte tous ses effets canoniques pour les membres du nouvel Institut séculier.
- Art. 4- Copie de ce décret devra figurer en tête des Constitutions, et devra être adressée à tous les Ordinaires où se trouvent présentement des Centres organisés d'Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée.

Nonobstant toutes choses contraires.

DONNE à Trois-Rivières, en Notre Palais épiscopal, sous Notre seing et sceau et le contreseing de Notre Chancelier, le deuxième jour du mois de février de l'an du Seigneur mil neuf cent soixante et deux, en la fête de la Purification de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie.


Evêque de Trois-Rivières.

Par mandement de Son Excellence Révérendissime
Mgr l'Evêque de Trois-Rivières.


Chancelier.



Georges - Léon Pelletier

Par la grâce de Dieu et l'autorité du Siège Apostolique

Evêque de Trois-Rivières



A Nos chères Filles, les Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée, salut et bénédiction en Notre-Seigneur.

VU l'érection canonique des "Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée" en institut séculier de droit diocésain, par Nous effectuée, en date du deux février mil neuf cent soixante-deux, en la fête de la Purification de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie, après Nous être muni du "Nihil obstat" de la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux, en date du dix-huit janvier mil neuf cent soixante-deux;

VU la clause, par Nous insérée dans l'acte d'érection susmentionné, à l'article 2, lequel se lit comme suit: "On devra apporter, le plus tôt possible, les corrections demandées par la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux, aux Constitutions du susdit Institut";

VU les modifications aux susdites Constitutions, récemment présentées par les Révérends Pères Dorio-Marie Huot, s.m.m. et André Guay, o.m.i., respectivement président et membre de la Commission des Instituts séculiers auprès de la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux, rendant ainsi les dites Constitutions conformes aux exigences des normes qui régissent les Instituts séculiers, ainsi que de celles du Décret conciliaire "Perfectae caritatis";

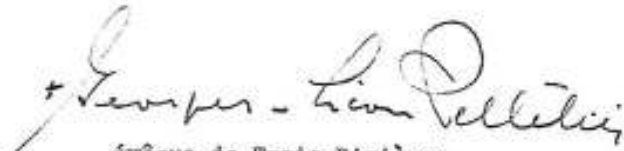
VU la lettre de Son Excellence Monseigneur Paul Philippe, O.P., secrétaire de la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux, à Nous-même adressée, en date du treize décembre mil neuf cent soixante-six, se réjouissant des modifications apportées aux susdites Constitutions, conformément à la demande de la Sacrée Congrégation des Religieux;

VU l'obligation que fait l'Eglise aux Instituts séculiers, d'avoir une règle de vie qui soit conforme à ses enseignements, pour leur permettre de mieux atteindre leur but, qui est la sanctification de leurs membres;

Par les présentes et en vertu de Notre autorité ordinaire, Nous approuvons les Constitutions des "Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée", Institut séculier de droit diocésain, d'après le texte adjoint au présent décret, et dont un exemplaire est conservé aux archives de Notre Curie épiscopale.

Nonobstant toutes choses contraires.

Donné à Trois-Rivières, en Notre Palais épiscopal, sous Notre seing et sceau et le contresseing de Notre Chancelier, le troisième jour du mois d'avril de l'an du Seigneur mil neuf cent soixante-sept, en la solennité de l'Annonciation de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie.


évêque de Trois-Rivières.

Par mandement de Son Excellence
Monseigneur l'Evêque de Trois-Rivières.


chancelier.



SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO RELIGIOSIS
ET INSTITUTIS SAECULARIBUS

Prot. n. IS 206

D E C R E T

L'Institut des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée, fondé par le Révérend Père Louis-Marie Parent, o.m.i., en 1952, a été érigé en Institut séculier par l'Evêque de Trois-Rivières (Canada), Mgr Georges-Léon Pelletier, le 2 février 1962.

Dès les débuts, l'Institut connut une expansion missionnaire, et aujourd'hui il est implanté dans de nombreux pays d'Amérique, d'Europe, d'Asie et d'Afrique. Dans la plupart de ces pays, il comprend des membres autochtones avec des responsables également autochtones.

L'esprit de l'Institut est marqué par un élan spirituel et missionnaire qui pousse les membres à vivre la charité du Christ, à l'exemple de Marie Immaculée, pour la répandre partout à travers le monde. L'Institut tâche de donner une formation spirituelle profonde, en toute soumission aux directives de l'Eglise, et dans la fidélité à la vocation spécifique de consécration séculière. Il veut aussi promouvoir la perfection chrétienne des Oblates afin qu'elles collaborent à la transformation du monde à la manière d'un levain selon le dessein d'amour du Père.

Récemment, l'Institut a présenté la demande d'approbation pontificale. Cette demande a été fort appuyée par l'Evêque actuel de Trois-Rivières, Mgr Laurent Noël, et recommandée par de nombreux Evêques qui font éloge de l'Institut pour le dévouement apostolique de ses membres et pour leur sens aigu des nécessités de l'Eglise universelle et locale.

Après un examen attentif, le Congresso de la Congrégation pour les Religieux et les Instituts séculiers, réuni le 10 mars 1984, a estimé que l'Institut mérite d'être compté parmi les Instituts de droit pontifical.

Avec bienveillance, le Saint-Père a donné son approbation le 23 mars 1984. En conséquence, conformément au can. 589, la Congrégation pour les Religieux et les Instituts séculiers, par le présent décret, déclare de Droit Pontifical, avec tous les droits et obligations qui en dérivent, l'Institut séculier des Oblates Missionnaires de Marie Immaculée, et elle en approuve les Constitutions selon l'exemplaire authentique conservé dans ses archives.

Nonobstant toute chose contraire.

Donné à Rome, en la Solennité liturgique de l'Annonciation
du Seigneur, le 24 mars 1984,
Année Sainte de la Rédemption.

+ Augustin Mayer O. S. B.
Sec.

E. Card. Sinisi, Pref.



SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO RELIGIOSIS
ET INSTITUTIS SAECULARIBUS

Prot. N. IS 206

Decree

The Institute of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, founded in 1952 by the Reverend Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I., was erected to the status of Secular Institute by the Bishop of Trois-Rivières (Canada), the Most Reverend Georges-Léon Pelletier, on February 2, 1962.

From the very beginning, the Institute expanded to include mission countries and has taken root in many countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa. In most of these countries today the members in positions of authority are native-born.

The spirit of the Institute is characterized by a spiritual and missionary impulse that inspires its members to live the charity of Christ as did Mary Immaculate to spread this same charity throughout the world. The Institute imparts to its members a deep spiritual formation faithful to the specific vocation of secular consecration and in keeping with the teachings of the Church. It also endeavors to promote the Christian perfection of the Oblates thus enabling them to collaborate in the transformation of the world in the manner of leaven according to the loving design of the Father.

Recently, the Institute presented its petition for Pontifical approbation. This request was strongly endorsed by the present Bishop of Trois-Rivières, the Most Reverend Laurent Noël, and recommended by many Bishops who praise the Institute for the apostolic zeal of its members and for their keen awareness of the needs of the local and universal Church.

After careful examination, the Congress of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes at its meeting of March 10, 1984, deemed that the Institute deserved to be counted among the institutes of pontifical right.

The Holy Father willingly gave his approbation on March 23, 1984. Consequently, in conformity with Canon 589, the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, by the present Decree, declares as being of Pontifical Right the Secular Institute of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, with all the privileges and obligations that derive therefrom and approves the Constitutions of this same Institute as presented in the authenticated copy kept in its archives.

Nonobstant all things contrary.

Given in Rome on the Liturgical Solemnity of the Annunciation, March 24, 1984, Holy Year of the Redemption.

E. Card. Sinisi, Pref.

*+ Augustin Meyer
Sec.*

Annex 2

Expansion of the Institute

The establishment of the Institute, in the different countries of the world, was not made by snapping fingers, from one day to the next. The breath of the Holy Spirit was present for the mission *ad gentes* to sprout in the hearts of members of the Institute. It took much ripening stages in the life of each Oblate to find the generosity of saying 'yes' to this call which will shake up her life completely; from `` top to bottom``.

All Oblates are missionaries in their soul. Everywhere in the world, on all continents, we find them motivated by a same spirit of service

- to be the leaven in the dough in the heart of the world,
- to be of service to the poorest among the poor,
- to collaborate within the Church in announcing the Gospel,
- to work in accordance with their personal charism to the development of their milieu.

Over the years, more than 300 Oblates have made the choice of leaving their country for mission in other countries and more than 80 associate (“Lay”) missionaries have collaborated with them in these different missions. Bonds of fraternity and friendship have woven between them and the collaboration sprang from all sides.

North America

From the very foundation of the Institute, the Canadian and American Oblates shared their experiences on their own land, and without too much ado, they went out to other skies. However the rise of the Institute beyond the seas has not prevented them of furthering their expansion from East to West and from North to South of North America and to Nunavik and Texas! They were also present and supportive of the First Nations people.

Country	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
Mexico	4	–

Central America

Countries	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
Panama	4	–
Honduras	14	11
Nicaragua	1	–

South America

Countries	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
Bolivia	29	10
Chile	25	9
Brazil	2	–
Colombia	1	–
Ecuador	1	–
Peru	6	–
Guatemala	1	–

Caribbean Islands

Countries	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
Haiti	58	40
Dominican Republic	15	2
Cuba	3	–
Bahamas	8	–

Africa

Countries	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
South Africa	8	–
Chad	26	6
Zambia	16	1
Democratic Rep. Congo	1	–
Algeria	2	–
Nigeria	1	–
Tunisia	2	–

Rep. of Mauritius Rodrigues Island	6	–
Burkina Faso	1	–
Ivory Coast	2	–
Cameroon	3	–
Rep. Cape Verde	1	–

Asia

Countries	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
Laos	27	1
Siria	1	–
Libya	4	–
Vietnam	2	–
Thailand	6	–
India	5	–
Sri Lanka	1	–

Europe

Countries	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
Belgium	3	–
France	3	–
Italy	9	1
Spain	6	–
Portugal	4	–
Great Britain	3	–

Oceania

Countries	presence of Oblates Missionaries	presence of Lay Missionaries
Australia	1	–

Annex 3

List of anual SLOGANS (1953 ~ 1971):

- 1953: “The Presence of God at all times”. 1st attitude.
- 1954: “The Oblate is a gift who, gives, regives, pardons, abandons and hums her joy”.
- 1955: “Not more, but better”.
- 1956: “Forgetting oneself to please”. 4th attitude.
- 1957: “Not my will, but yours Lord!” Luke 22:42.
- 1958: “Let us be guided by the Holy Spirit”. Galatians 5:16.
- 1959: “Come and follow me!” Matthew 19:21.
- 1960: “Being a source of peace by the gift of ourselves to God”. Luke 2:14. 5th attitude.
- 1961: “Do all that He asks of you”. John 2:5.
- 1962: “We are one!” John 10:30.
- 1963: “God’s Will, is your sanctification!” 1 Thessalonicians 4:3.
- 1964: “All that is mine is also yours”. John 17:10.
- 1965: “In My presence march and be perfect!” Genesis 17:1.
- 1966: “He who searches God lacks nothing!” Psalm 33:11.
- 1967: “I stretch out my hands to your beloved commandments, I meditate on your Will”.
Psalm 118:48.
- 1968: “Lord, you know everything, You know that I love you”. John 21:17.
- 1969: “Seekers of God... that your hearts live”. Psalm 68:33.
- 1970: “Truth will set you free”. John 8:32.
- 1971: “Truth has set you free, let charity make you a servant”. John 8:32;
Colossians 3:23-24.
- 1971: Objective: “Testify to the charity of Christ”
Sub-objective: “To live the charity of Christ”

Annex 4

Publications in the Institute formation tools - through the ages -

1963-1968

Within a few months after the foundation of the Institute, the first official bulletin: **CARITAS** was published in Grand Falls, New Brunswick, from February 1953 until December 1953.

On the front page of Caritas bulletin, one could read the following introduction:

“As it was in the beginning

Our group begins to increase in a prodigious manner. We must at all costs find ways of communication. Each group recognized as an official house of the Institute will have its recording device, in order to benefit from all conferences held in Grand Falls, or in other respective houses. Thus it will be possible to maintain the absolutely essential unity for our survival, as a future Institute. Everyone should send us news on her own existence, or influence in her milieu...

This little journal has no objective other than helping us live united. We will call it ‘CARITAS’, since this word synthesizes our motto: “Charity of Christ through Mary.”

Over the years, **CARITAS** journal will change name often: it will become Caritas XTI, *Délicieux 555*, *555*, *Digeste des O.M.M.I.*, *Around the Institute*, and finally, *Present*, followed by *Nouvelles...News...Noticias...* and again returning to **Present...**

From the 6th edition in 1953, it is indicated that the bulletin is reserved for Oblates only. In 1954 **CARITAS** become **CARITAS XTI**; published in Grand Falls (New Brunswick), from January 1954 until, March 1954, then published in Cap-de-la-Madeleine (Québec), from April 1954 until December 1958.

Following this, the name is changed for **DÉLICIEUX 5-5-5**; published in Cap-de-la-Madeleine (Québec), from January 1959 until October 1960, followed by the bulletin **5-5-5** published in Cap-de-la-Madeleine, from November 1960 to February 1963 and in Trois-Rivières from March 1963 to December 1963.

A transformation is in the works: It is now printed as a booklet. The bulletin **DIGESTE des O.M.M.I.** is published from January 1964 to June 1968, and reaches a greater following outside of the Institute. From Trois-Rivières it is sent to families, friends and benefactors. In each edition, we would find a message in the form of a chronicle from Father Louis-Marie Parent, entitled “Father speaks to us”. In the second part of the bulletin, there would always be news from the Voluntas Dei Institute. Different aspects of the Institute’s spirituality “5-5-5” are expanded, relating to the commitment of the laity in the world. The fraternal love chronicle guides the discernment of the Oblates in formation.

Then comes **Around the Institute** beating all records since it is published for all members during 51 years, from September 1957 to May 2008.

* * *

1970-1979

Parallel to this information bulletin, the Institute has seen fit to publish another bulletin whose aim was to convey lengthy information, from which all Oblates could take advantage from. **DOCUMENTATION**, on various subjects was published 18 times. This series of an inestimable value became part of the heritage at the level of formation.

1 – **June 1970 – French, English, Spanish**

- Research results for the Communications Service, by Ms Gisèle Routhier.
- Information on a school project in Chad, by Ms Céline Girard.

2 – **August 1970 – French, English**

- Consecration and Secularity by Mr. Mario Laroche, I.V. DEI in collaboration.

3 – **October 1970 – French, English**

- International meeting of Secular Institutes in Rome, September 20-26, 1970 by Ms Gabrielle Lachance.
- Pope Paul VI Address at the first world Congress of Secular Institutes.

4 – **February 1971 – French, English**

- Presentation by Mr. Vincent Therrien I.V. Dei for members who are in their first stage of life in the Institute, December 27-28, 1970. Conference during the International meeting of the Secular Institutes, September 20-26, 1970 by Ms Jeanne Mètge.

5 – **April 1971 – French**

- Reflection on the occasion of the world day of social Communications.
- Proceedings of a meeting of some members of the Communications Service, particularly interested in the mass media.
- List of Diocesan Directors of communications Offices.
- Collection “studies and research papers”.

6 – June 1971 – French, English, Spanish

Intermediate Assembly 1971.

- Speech by Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I.
- Assembly's opening speech, by Ms Gabrielle Lachance.

7 – October 1971 – French, English, Spanish

Intermediate Assembly 1971.

- General view of the discussions.

8 – May 1972 – French, English, Spanish

- Speech by Paul VI. to the heads of S.I. , in honor of the 25th anniversary of Provida Mater Ecclesia, Rome, February 1972.

9 – December 1972 – French, English, Spanish, Italian

Assembly of the Heads of Secular Institutes.

- World conference of Secular Institutes by Ms Gabrielle Lachance.
- Crossroads introduction by Ms Jeanne Mètge.
- Homage to the Holy Father by Gabrielle Lachance.
- Address by Paul VI to the Heads of S.I.

10 – February 1973 – French, English, Spanish

- Collegiality in Religious Governance (research extract) by Germain Lesage, O.M.I.

11 – April 1973 – French, English, Spanish, Italian

- In search of an identity (extract from a conference in the General Assembly of S.I., June 20, 1971) by D. Fernando Sebastian.

12 – March 1974 – French, English, Spanish, Italian

- New perspectives in missionary pastoral, by Mgr Dondeyne.

13 – January 1976 – French, English, Spanish

Second session of the General Assembly 1974

- Obedience (extract from the research paper, prepared for the delegates).

14 – March 1976 – French, English, Spanish

Second session of the General Assembly 1974

- Poverty (extract from research paper prepared for the delegates).

15 – October 1976 – French, English, Spanish

General Assembly of Heads of S.I., Rome, August 1976

- Introduction by Ms Gabrielle Lachance.
- Activities of the Executive Council of CMIS (World Conference of Secular Institutes).
- Account of studies on:
 - .· Secular consecration and mission by Ms Gabrielle Lachance.
 - .· Formation by Ms Maria Teresa Cuesta.
- Presentation on prayer by Giuseppe Lazzati.
- Address by the Holy Father Paul VI.

16 – March 1978 – French, English, Spanish, Italian

Evangelization in the modern world.

- Introduction by Mario Laroche, I.V. Dei.
- General presentation by Fr. Roger Ébacher
- Study questionnaire

A society in need of rebuilding- pastoral message from Catholic Bishops of Canada.

17 – November 1978 – French

Conference of the Vice-president of the National Council for the Laity.

- The role of the laity in the Church in light of the theology of Vatican II, by Most Rev. Lucas Moreira Neves.
- Vocation of the laity (questions, achievements, prospects), by Most Rev. Lucas Moreira Neves.

18 – December 1979 – French, English, Spanish, Italian

Document on chastity

- In the footsteps of Christ by Aloysius Kendl, O.M.I.
- Chastity, fullness of life by Fr. François Coudreau.
- Consecrated celibacy by Yves Raquin, s.j.
- Celibacy by Marc Oraison.
- Bibliography.

* * *

The publication of **DOCUMENTATION** came back between 2006-2010, to help the animation teams to complete the material offered by the 2006-08 orientations. The editorial committee, at the cutting edge of the realities of secular institutes, gives a dynamic impetus to our Institute¹ by stimulating the commitment in the world for the achievement of the mission.

- The world (March 2006)
- Secularity (November 2006)
- Laity (March 2007)
- Changing the world (November 2007)
- A world of hope (March 2008)
- Christians with others (November 2008)
- Official documents on Secular Institutes (January 2010)²

* * *

At the beginning of the years 2000s, **AROUND THE INSTITUTE** takes a new turn by its objectives and its content as directed by the new editorial committee.³

“In the fall of 2002 took place the first meeting of the newly formed Editorial committee assuming responsibility for the Institute’s publication *Around the Institute*. The Executive Council had left us lots of freedom as to the external invoice and the contents of the official newsletter of the Institute, whose objectives remain unchanged.”

“Rather than renew the presentation of the bulletin, we decided to focus our energies on the content. The May 2008 editorial summarizes well what we wanted to achieve. Over the past five years, we searched extensively constantly highlighting our Constitutions in connection with our daily experiences and newsworthy themes. The requirements of our mission as consecrated seculars, the richness of our charism and our spirituality were lighthouses throughout this process.”

“These publication objectives have materialized by the choice of a theme that was presented in the editorial, developed in well-nourished reflection and illustrated by testimonies of members from various countries. It was a way to publicize the Institute through its spiritual and apostolic experience present in members on four continents”.

¹ Members of the editorial committee of **DOCUMENTATION**: Mss. Gabrielle Lachance, Louise Savard, Françoise Tremblay.

² This document was prepared by the Secretariat of the Institute

³ For 2002-2008, the members of the Editorial committee of *Around the Institute* are: Mss. Céline Bisson, Gabrielle Lachance, Louise Savard, Françoise Tremblay and Pauline Tassé, secretary.

The themes developed in the editions from May 2003 to May 2008:

05-2003 From the heart to our hands - Updating the mission.

09-2003 Building peace.

01-2004 The earth, our heritage.

05-2004 Live the mission in a multicultural world.

09-2004 Consecrated life in link with the mission.

01-2005 Power: a service.

01-2006 Responsibility and solidarity.

05-2006 Charity as expressed in the 555, and lived in daily life.

09-2006 Beauty.

* * *

September 2008, the bulletin **PRESENT** replaces *Around the Institute* and this until December 2009.

* * *

In 2010, a new publication temporarily called **NEWS** makes its way onto the internet, seeking a name, in the computing field. And so takes life **NOUVELLES... NEWS... NOTICIAS...** Reaching Oblates around the world in French, in English or in Spanish. This new form of communication is the responsibility of the Secretary General.

* * *

As a result of the ongoing organizational change for the functioning of the Institute a new electronic newsletter is on the horizon:

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS starts in September 2011. This bulletin in Volume1, Number1 provides news from the Institute's 5 regions:

- North America East

- North America West

- Latin America / Caribbean

- Asia / Indian Ocean

- Europe

Prior to March 2013 there had been 5 bulletins of the regions.

* * *

Formation Booklets

Starting in 2004⁴, basic and intermediate formation booklets, for the new members of the Institute are elaborated. Here is the list of booklets available in several languages: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Laotian, and Vietnamese.

- The Virgin Mary – (3 booklets)
- Consecrated secularity for the mission
- Mission and apostolate at the heart of the world
- Spirituality of the Institute
- Spirituality of the Institute: Proposed texts
- The Founder
- Introduction to consecrated life
- Poverty: the Way to Love and Freedom
- Your life in the wake of Jesus, chaste
- Obedience “Here I am!”
- The Incarnation of Jesus
- Jesus, my Redeemer
- The sacraments: a source of vitality for my vocation
- Bonds of belonging to the Institute
- Life – a sacred Gift from God

* * *

Several districts and sectors have written formation materials suited to the mentality and the understanding of the Oblates of their countries. These are reviewed regularly and are still used by the Oblates in formation. The Administrative Council approves strongly all of these initiatives in animation and formation that bring a new lease on life for all members of the Institute.

* * *

There is no doubt that the Oblates are favored in their formation! In addition to the documents mentioned above, they benefit from access to background documents and articles published by the World Conference of Secular Institutes (CMIS). The journal **DIALOGUE** of the CMIS communicates official documents of the Magisterium of the Church on secular institutes, the assembly’s reports and different background texts written by members of the secular institutes. In 2010, to complete the 3rd edition of the book published by CMIS in 1993, the Institute took the initiative of collecting documents published from 1993 to 2007 and sent them to all Oblates in training as well as to all Oblates who desired them.

* * *

⁴ Members of the Formation Booklets’ Committee: Mss Louiselle Beaupré, Winifred Burman, Theresa Cademartori, Gertrude Garand, Louise Lalonde, Marie-Paule Malenfant, Louise Savard, Pauline Tassé.

In addition, the Canadian Conference of secular institutes, periodically organizes reunion days, for all institutes present in Canada, and invites resource persons from whom it is possible to update oneself on the life of the Church and meet and fraternize between institutes. Naturally, the Oblates take full advantage of these replenishing days.

Secular institute conferences also exist in other countries: the United States, Asia, Latin America / Caribbean as well as in several European countries and particularly in Italy.

Annex 5

OMMI presence in countries

1952-2014

Bold characters indicate the year of founding and a current presence.
 the regular character indicates the number of years presence in the country.
 an asterisk indicates that the Institute is firmly established (16 countries).

From 1952 to 2014, the Institute was present in 50 countries throughout the world in 5 continents around the world.

In 2014, there is an Oblate presence in more tan 21 countries.

North America

Country	date of foundation
* Canada 1952-07-02	1952-...
provinces	foundation – presence
New Brunswick	1952-...
Quebec	1953-...
Saskatchewan	1956-1968 ; 1972 ; 2002-2014
Alberta	1958-...
Ontario	1958-...
Manitoba	1957-...
Nova Scotia	1966-1971 ; 1975-1976 ; 1981
British Columbia	1969 ; 1974-1975 ; 1994-2001
Newfoundland and Labrador	1976-1979
Prince Edward Island	–
territories	presence
Northwest Territories	1963-1973 ; 1975-1977
Yukon Territories	1964-1969 ; 1976-1977
Nunavik	1972-2013

Countries	date of foundation
* United States, north linked	1954-...
United States, south	1959...

Central America

Countries	presence
Mexico	1962 ; 1963-1969 ; 1987-1988
Panama	1956-1957
Honduras	1961-1974
Nicaragua	1986-2011

South America

Countries	foundation – presence
* Bolivia	1956-...
* Chile	1954-...
Brazil	1971-1977 ; 1991-1992
Colombia	1972-...
Ecuador	1973 ; 1988-2002
* Peru	1983-...

Caribbean

Countries	foundation – presence
* Haiti	1956-...
* Dominican Republic	1959-1960 ; 1961 ; 1966-...
* Cuba	1964-...
Bahamas	1965-1977
Guadalupe	1993-2003

Africa

Countries	foundation – presence
Morocco	1959
Republic of South Africa	1961-1970 ; 1991-1996
Chad	1961-2001 ; 2008-2012
Zambia	1962-1993
Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire)	1963-1964
Algeria	1965-1982
Nigeria	1968-1971
Tunisia	1968-1973
* Republic of Mauritius linked Rodrigues Island	1968-...
Burkina Faso	1971-1974
Ivory Coast	1973-1974 ; 1992-1997
Cameroon	1985-1993
Cape Verde	1988-1992

Asia and Oceania

Countries	foundation – presence
* Laos	1957-...
Syria	1963
Lebanon	1963-1967
* Vietnam	1964-...
* Thailand	1966-...
* India	1967-...
Sri Lanka (Ceylon) linked with India	1967-...
Philippines	1969-1970 ; 1973-1987

Europe

Countries	fundación – presencia
* Belgium	1958-1959 ; 1960 ; 1964-...
* France	1958-...
* Italy	1961-...
Germany linked with Belgium	1961-1963 ; 1982-...
Spain	1963-1975 ; 1995-2001
Switzerland	1963-1964 ; 1967-1970 ; 1974 ; 1990-1991
Luxembourg	1964-1967 ; 1970-2013
Portugal	1967-1969
Great Britain (England)	1969-1970 ; 1979-1980 ; 1984-1986
Ireland	1970-...

Oceania

Countries	presence
Australia	1999-2013

Annex 6

Publications by Father Louis-Marie Parent, O.M.I.

Father Parent wrote extensively throughout his life. From 1957 to 1967, he published in French, English and Spanish "Father speaks to us" for members of the institutes that he founded. For more than 20 years, from 1965 to 1985 he was responsible of the publication *Collection Volontaires de Dieu*. In all 200 leaflets - 10 per year- on subjects related to the spirituality of the Institute- union with Christ- the 5 attitudes of life- a life in prayer- life within a team- the present moment. By focusing his writings on the positive he favoured human growth, solidarity-autonomy- self-knowledge- acceptance of self and others-a balanced life- learning to relax, etc.

These brochures, bounded by year remain helpful for Oblates and anyone who wishes to improve his / her behaviour.

He is also the author of several books:

- *In the footsteps of Jesus* (1978)⁵ published in French, English, Spanish, Italian, Malayan, Tamil and Vietnamese.
- *It is possible to get along with others!* (1989) published in French, English, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- *Je t'accueille* (1982 then in 1989) in French, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- *In Intimacy with Jesus* (1987) in French, English, Spanish, Italian and Vietnamese.
- *Un cœur sur la main : Jean-Louis Collignon, o.m.i. Bishop in Haiti.* (1988) published in French.
- *The present moment* (1990) in French, English, Spanish, Italian and Vietnamese.
- *Victor Lelièvre, un homme branché sur le Sacré-Coeur* (1993) in French.
- *Tu es à moi.* (1994) in French and Italian
- *Suis-je moi-même?* (1976) in French

Also two very special and precious publications:

- Biographical essay 1910-1938- *En route vers quelqu'un* (1997) in French and Vietnamese.
- Autobiography 1938-1957- *En route avec quelqu'un* (1999) in French

“His accurate memory, supported if needed by personal archives (agendas, letters, newspaper articles), could relate even more and more... but I can see him saying in the hope of leaving these years in the shadow of the past: “*It is already too much... let's turn the page...*”⁶”

5. This book stands out since it is entirely dedicated to the teaching of the five attitudes of life and their link with the Word of God.

6. Ms Fernande St-Onge, secretary and collaborator on Father Louis-Marie Parent's publications

Father Parent has always been a great communicator and has always encouraged the conservation of archives documenting the life, the development and the achievements of the Institute around the world. He constantly invited the members to communicate among themselves and their circle, by being vibrant carriers of messages. By being attentive to people, is this not the way of helping them to be happy? In brief, “to live charity in action” the 3rd 5.

“A message is a transmission of something, it is a communication, a content of something revealed. The attentions are messages; they impart their content within humans. These messages can influence a life, give it a rightful or wrongful impulsion, whether they be positive or negative.

Positive messages have beneficial repercussion, not only on the one providing or receiving them, or registering them, but also on the whole of society.”⁷

7. Louis-Marie Parent, Collection Volontaires de Dieu, October 1979, page 8.

Annex 7

Statistic Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate

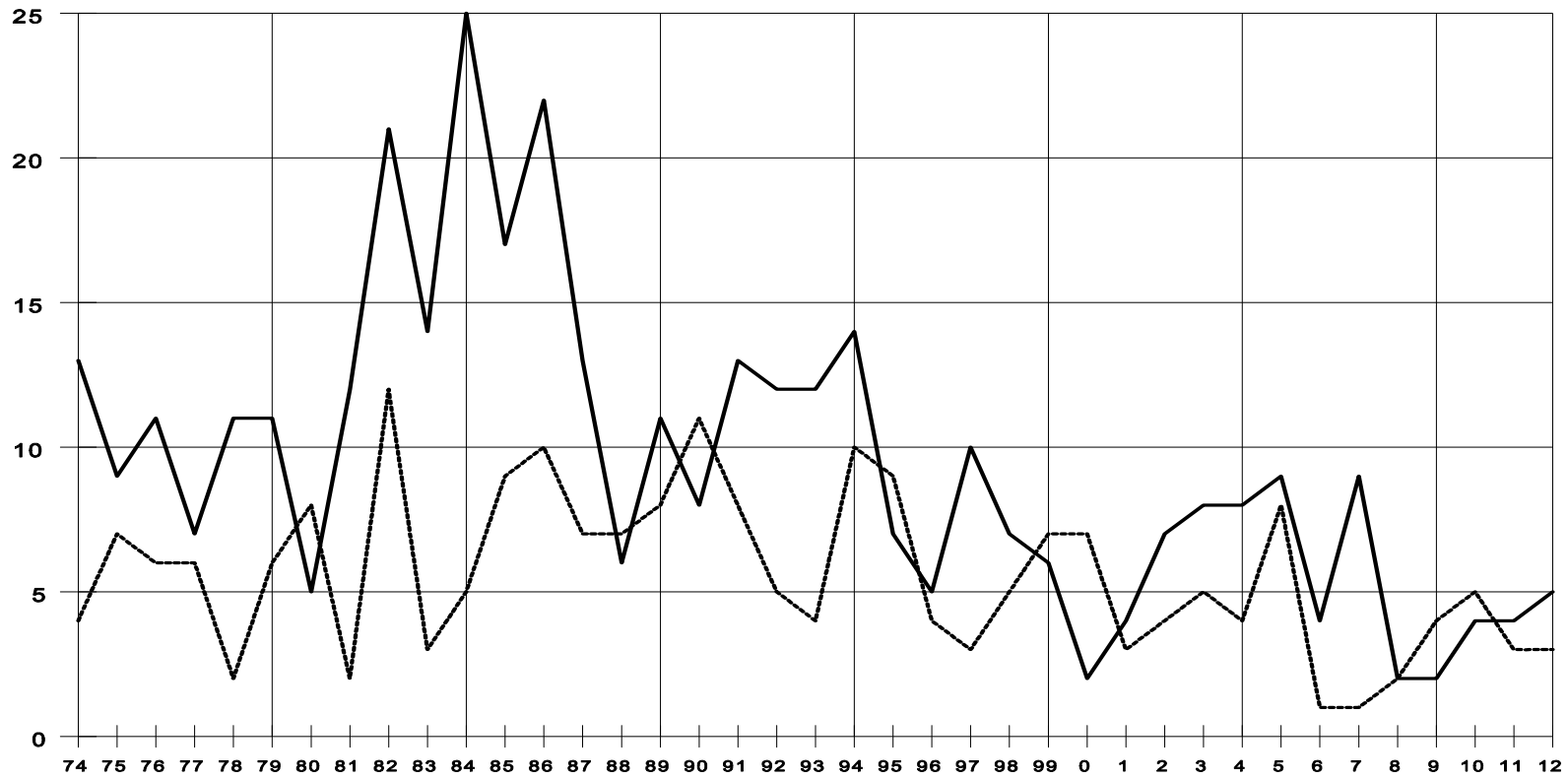
- 7-1 Evolution on the numbers of members.
- 7-2 Admissions and first vows.
- 7-3 Statistics on Oblates and Volunteers of God as of December 31, 2013.

Secular Institute The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate
Evolution on the numbers of members

	1952	1957	1962	1967	1972	1977	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012
Professed interns	5	250	709	789	491	427							
Professed externs		26	199	228	216	172							
Numbers of members*	10	451	1 220	1 229	780	635	619	644	636	610	579	542	482
Canada	10			813			383	385	375	363	336	310	268
Other countries	-			416			236	258	262	247	243	232	214

* The number of members generally includes aspirants, members in probation, and professed members as well as these having a temporary suspension from vows. Nevertheless, in 1952 and 1957, aspirants are not counted.

ADMISSIONS AND FIRST VOWS
(December 31, 2012)



_____ admissions
----- first vows

The Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate

(December 31, 2013)

Country of residence	Members with incorporation		Aspirants and in probation	Members of the Associate group
	temporary	definitive		
	1	2	3	4
North America				
- Canada	-	258	4	376
- United States	-	13	1	78
South America				
- Bolivia	-	8	-	3
- Chile	1	15	-	54
- Colombia	1	2	-	12
- Ecuador	-	-	-	33
- Peru	1	1	-	9
Antilles				
- Cuba	-	19	1	316
- Haiti	5	25	1	119
- Dominican Rep.	-	9	-	23
Africa				
- Benin	-	-	-	1
- Burkina Faso	-	-	-	3
- Cameroon	-	-	-	1
- Kenya	-	-	-	1
- Mauritius/Rodrigues	2	4	1	82
- Togo	-	-	-	2
Asia				
- India	3	21	1	-
- Japan	-	-	-	1
- Laos	2	7	2	26
- Sri Lanka	-	1	3	-
- Thailand	-	3	-	7
- Vietnam	1	4	2	18
Europe				
- Germany	-	1	-	-
- England	-	-	-	1
- Belgium	-	2	-	33
- France	-	19	1	7
- Ireland	-	1	-	-
- Italy	-	22	1	8
Total	16	435	18	1 214

Annex 8

Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to participants in the General Assembly of the Italian Conference of Secular Institutes¹

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you on the occasion of your Assembly and I greet you saying that I understand and value your vocation! It is one of the most recent forms of consecrated life the Church has recognized and approved, and perhaps that is why it is not yet fully understood. Do not be discouraged: you are part of that poor Church which goes out and which I dream of!

As a vocation, you are lay and priestly like others and among others, you lead an ordinary life, free from outward signs, without the support of community life, without the visibility of an organized apostolate or specific works. Your only wealth is the all encompassing experience of God's love and thus you are able to understand and share the toils of life in its many expressions, infusing them with the light and power of the Gospel.

May you be a sign of that Church in dialogue of which Paul VI speaks in his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*: "Since the world cannot be saved from the outside", he stated, "we must first of all identify ourselves with those to whom we would bring the Christian message like the Word of God who Himself became a man. Next we must forego all privilege and the use of unintelligible language, and adopt the way of life of ordinary people in all that is human and honourable. Indeed, we must adopt the way of life of the most humble people, if we wish to be listened to and understood. Then, before speaking, we must take great care to listen not only to what men say, but more especially to what they have it in their hearts to say. Only then will we understand them and respect them, and even, as far as possible, agree with them. Furthermore, if we want to be men's pastors, fathers and teachers, we must also behave as their brothers. Dialogue thrives on friendship, and most especially on service" (nn. 90-96).

The theme of your Assembly, "At the heart of human events: the challenges of a complex society", indicates the scope of your mission and of your prophetic scope. You are in the world but not of the world, carrying within you the essence of the Christian message: the love of the Father who saves. You are at the heart of the world with the heart of God.

Your vocation makes you *interested* in every man and in his deeper issues which are often left unexpressed or masked. By the strength of the love of God which you have

1. **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ITALIAN CONFERENCE OF SECULAR INSTITUTES**, *Consistory Hall Saturday, 10 May 2014*: Libreria Editrice Vaticana
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140510_conferenza-italiana-istituti-secolari.html

encountered and come to know, you are capable of sympathy and tenderness. Thus, you can be close enough to *touch* the other, his wounds and his expectations, his questions and his needs, with the tenderness that is an expression of care that erases all distances. As the Samaritan who *passes by, sees and takes compassion*. This is the action to which you are committed by your vocation: pass by every man and make yourself a neighbour to every person you meet. Because your permanence in the world is not simply sociological, it is a theological reality that calls you *to be* aware, attentive, that can perceive, see and touch the flesh of his brother.

If this does not happen, if you are distracted, or worse still, if you do not know today's world but you know and experience only the world which suits you best or that you feel more drawn to, then conversion is urgently needed! Yours is an *outward reaching* vocation by nature, not only because it brings you into contact with others, but also and especially it demands that you live where every man lives.

[...] You are a leaven that can produce good bread for many, the Bread for which there is so much hunger: listening to people's needs, aspirations, disappointments, hopes. Like those who have preceded you in your vocation, you can restore hope to young people, help the elderly, open roads to the future, spread love in every place and in every situation. If this does not happen, if your ordinary life lacks witness and prophecy, then, I repeat to you, there is an urgent need for conversion!

Never lose the momentum of *walking the streets of the world*, aware that walking, even with an uncertain step or limping along, is always better than standing still, withdrawn in your own questions or sense of security. The missionary passion, the joy of the encounter with Christ that urges you to share with others the beauty of faith, reduces the risk of becoming stuck in individualism. The line of thought that proposes man as self-reliant, guided only by his own choices and desires, often vested in the seemingly beautiful garment of freedom and respect, threatens to undermine the foundations of consecrated life, especially of lay people. There is an urgent need to reevaluate your sense of *belonging to your vocational community* which, precisely because it is not founded on community life, finds its strengths in its charism. For this reason, if each of you are a precious opportunity for others to meet with God, it is about rediscovering the responsibility of being prophetic as a community, to seek together, with humility and patience, a word of sense that can be a gift for the country and for the Church, and to bear witness to it with simplicity. You are like *antennas* ready to receive the smallest innovations prompted by the Holy Spirit, and you can help the ecclesial community to take on this gaze of goodness and find new and bold ways to reach all peoples.

Poor among the poor, but with a burning heart. Never still, always on the move. Together and *sent out*, even when you are alone, because your consecration makes of you a living spark of the Church. Always on the road borne along by the virtue that is of pilgrims: joy!

Thank you, dear friends, for what you are. May the Lord bless you and Mary keep you. And pray for me!

Rome, May 10, 2014

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