



OMI Zambia

A Newsletter of the Zambia Delegation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
To establish and maintain a vital and culturally integrated missionary presence in Zambia

FROM THE DELEGATION SUPERIOR



Fr. Freeborn Kibombwe, OMI

Dear Oblates, Associates and Prenovices,

I greet you once again from the "chilly" but the warm heart of Zambia - Lusaka. Lusaka the Capital City of Zambia is celebrating 100 years this year since its foundation in 1913 by Settlers. Having been born and raised in Lusaka, I have seen tremendous changes. Changes ranging from the number of people, houses, businesses, schools, Universities and even cars. It has become a fast paced city like any metropolitan city anywhere in the world. The trip from my home in Kabwata to the city center used to take about 15 minutes, now amazing it takes me over an hour and half depending on which time of the day. The tiny trees that were planted along Burma Road when I was in my 3rd Grade at Burma Primary School having become "aged" over twenty years ago I have seen them grow. Such changes actually say more about me than the trees in terms of age.

The Lusaka experience is an opportunity to reflect on where we have come from and appreciate the changes that come with it. However, despite the positive changes, hundreds if not thousands of Lusakans deserve better accommodation and basic necessities on which to live. As we see multi-national companies and shopping malls emerge, I can only hope that it benefits the founders or the owners of the city in a real developmental way. The city is challenged in many ways in terms of taking care of solid wastes. It is the City Councils task, but much more it is also a challenge to the attitude people have in terms of disposing of used plastic containers and shopping plastics to mention but a few. It is our mandate to inculcate values of preservation and clean environment.

I guess this centenary is also a reminder of our own growth and development especially as Missionaries or men of faith. Challenges abound in our missionary endeavor just as the City of Lusaka has experienced. The City has grown in the last three censuses (1980, 1990, and 2010) to a record of 3 million people from just under or over a million in 1980. The growth in terms of population will continue by the next census in seven years time. More space is needed and more tolerance among the city dwellers. I marvel at the simple gesture of drivers giving way to each other just for one or two vehicles to squeeze in without complaining. The flash of hazards blinking is now a sign of "Thank you!" for motorists.

Enough of Lusaka City. I had a visit to two Oblate Communities that is the Jack Joyce Community (known as JJ Community) responsible for radio and youth ministry in Mongu Diocese as well as the Lukulu Oblate Community. The visits were to be done in the early part of the year but due to the inter-chapter and also inter-provincial gathering in USA and School I was unable to. Nevertheless, visits are my favorite part of being Delegation Superior; it gives me an opportunity to link up with my brothers especially those who

are outside Lusaka. It is a learning experience as one goes through the joys and even challenges in the ministry. It is good to know that our ministry and presence is appreciated by many people.

I look forward to my visit with Shangombo Community.

Enjoy the articles presented in this edition, I find them to be thought provoking especially from our novices' reflection in the USA.

Congratulations once again to the City of Lusaka.

Blessings!

Fr Freeborn Isaac Kibombwe, OMI
Delegation Superior

BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD

By Musonda Chipili

Parishioners of Mary Immaculate parish are proud of their efforts in building the Lord's house of worship. One of the major sources of money is the 'Annual Prayer Breakfast' which keeps getting better response in monetary pledges.

This year's prayer breakfast was graced by Hon. Geoffrey Mwamba, the Minister of Defence. The minister congratulated the parishioners for the works done in the past nine years and also urged them to continue soldiering on in building the house of the Lord. The prayer breakfast was held under the theme, "Running the race, keeping the faith, completing God's house together".

Fr. Vincent Sakala, OMI, the parish priest for Mary Immaculate parish said the structure is raised and all roofing sheets and insulation have been put. He further said that the next thing on the parish plan is the floor which will cost not less than \$ 1,000.



Fr. Vincent Sakala, OMI, (3rd from left) and next to him is Hon. Geoffrey Mwamba, who was the guest of honour,



Parishioners and guests at the prayer breakfast.

Putting of windows will be the next step.

Fr. Sakala, OMI, also said that the faithful of Mary Immaculate parish are very generous and dedicated in this noble cause. He further revealed that the 2013 prayer breakfast raised more money in ticket sales and in pledges than in the previous years; this he said is a tremendous improvement.

The parishioners of Mary Immaculate have been patient and dedicated. Since 2004, they have moved from the open sky, to a canvas tent, to multipurpose shelter and into the current place of worship, a hall. The hall comprises of offices, library, a chapel and the main hall where mass takes place.

Fr. Vincent Sakala, OMI, was recently involved in a car accident and had travelled to India for an operation which was successful.

MALAWI MISSION VISIT

By Fr. Freeborn Kibombwe, OMI

The second week of February, 2013 saw the four of us: Fr. Godfrey Sekula, OMI, Fr. Vincent Sakala, OMI, Fr. Valentine Kalumba, OMI and I leave for Malawi to visit with the Most Rev. Remiste-Marie, the Archbishop of Lilongwe Archdiocese.

Two years ago while on vocation promotion in Malawi with Bro. George Mandona, OMI and a prenovice from Malawi, the Archbishop invited the Oblates from Zambia to set up a mission in his Archdiocese. Since then there has been communication back and forth through emails and "snail" mail. At different sessions of our Delegation Council we have discussed this issue at length as well as with the US Province Administration. At different Delegation Assemblies, I have given reports on this possibility. In short, this proposition is still being studied at the Delegation, Province as well as General Administration level.

Our task of visiting Malawi was to find out exactly where the Archbishop intends to locate Oblates if this vision is realized. The mission church is just across the Mwami border between Zambia and Malawi (East of Zambia). The area is an outstation of the main parish of St. Guilleme. Guilleme has a number of schools for boys and girls with a number of activities. The outstation is called Kamangilira with about nine other churches that make up Kamangilira Zone. Kamangilira has a big church built by the people through self-sustainability and a parish hall with some offices. But most importantly, the people are jovial and full of life. We were well received by the Village Headman - Kamangilira, despite not being Catholic. We were shown around the property and he even offered more land for farming activities.

Kamangilira Mission Zone alone has a total of 21, 000 Catholics. It's a rural population and most people are

full time farmers, most of the food they grow is both for consumption and commercial. It's good to note that the faith of the people is impressive and they are also warm hearted and very devoted to the Church.

The local speak the Chichewa language which is spoken in Zambia too. The mission is about 16Kms from the main road (Malawi to Zambia) and about 30Kms from Mwami Boarder and about 600 from Lusaka (Center House). The roads are passable throughout the year and all the stations are reachable. Generally the Church is very active and dynamic in Malawi, very inculturated with a strong sense of self-reliance. The bishop made mention of the fact that he does not sponsor any of the parishes in his diocese.

We commit this discernment to the most Holy Trinity and Mary Immaculate our mother.

ELEVEN MONTHS OF THE NOVITIATE JOURNEY

By Bro. Sidney Sakala, OMI

After spending three years, six months in the Pre-novitiate in Zambia, time came to make the big step in my formation journey. I arrived in the U.S.A on August 14th, tired but ready to begin Novitiate. August 17th 2012, marked the day when my Novitiate year began. We were eight in our class coming from

various parts of the world; Mitchell Johns (Australia), Bradley Clark (Canada), Victor Patricio (Mexico) and Rigoberto Valdivia (Mexico), John Barrientes (Texas-USA), Sergio Gonzalez (Texas-USA), Eugene Mule (Zambia) and I. We were introduced to three Oblates to direct us along the Novitiate

journey, Fr. Thomas Horan, OMI, Fr. Rudy Nowakowski, OMI and Fr. Jack Lau, OMI.

Desert Phase

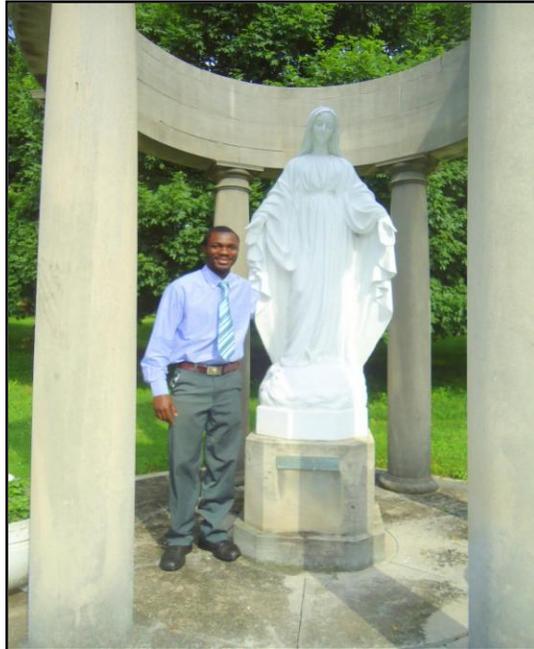
The first ten months of my Novitiate experience were a period of intense prayer and a journey into the "self." During this period we had 24 hour periods set apart for total

silence every two weeks. This was accompanied by a variety of prayer exercises to which we were introduced through the different classes we had on spirituality. We learnt different prayer forms such as Centering prayer, Taize, Lectio Divina and many other prayer forms. My favorite prayer form is contemplation and reflection with scripture.

Meeting with my spiritual director has nourished my spiritual life. I met with my spiritual director every two weeks. This was very helpful to me considering the seriousness of the commitment that lay ahead. It helped me to be attentive to the Holy Spirit working in my life everyday and to see more clearly the invitation of God as he continues to invite me to follow the religious vocation with the Oblates.

Apart from having an intense prayer life, we also had to do some work. We spent our Fridays and Saturdays doing work within and around the house. Our manual labour built in me a deep sense of custody of the beautiful property and made me grow in my feeling "at home" in the new environment. Working around the house gave me the opportunity to "make" it into what fed my spiritual and communal life. For example, taking care of the chapel gave me an opportunity and challenge to decorate in ways that expressed my faith. Our work in different areas of the house expressed diverse and very personal devotions in the community and in this way we enriched each other within the community.

We lived as a community and every week we met to share with each other how we were doing and how we were feeling. Twice every month we



Sidney Sakala, OMI

had a meeting with formation directors to share on how we were moving on the Novitiate journey. There were also meetings that were guided by a professional psychologist every two weeks to help us build our community life and to help us grow as individuals in community.

It was in the desert phase that we also had our *Peer Evaluations* and *Self Evaluation*. During this process, half way through the Novitiate year, each Novice wrote a reflection about his brothers focused on the relationship they had. Mid-year goals were then set in line with what was reflected in the peer evaluations and the self evaluation. This was helpful for me to see where I was as an individual in my community. It was also helpful for me because it gave me lots of insights into my own growth progress.

What further helped me in the process of getting in touch with "self" were the classes we had with Novices from other congregations. This community of different congregations is called the *Inter-Community Novitiate (ICN)*. We met every Wednesday for classes on human growth, religious life and spirituality. We also had classes within the house on *Oblate Spirituality, Human Development, The Life of St. Eugene* and the *Constitutions and Rules*.

Apostolic Phase

This phase of the Novitiate journey was structured to provide us with an experience of a ministerial setting. After spending ten months of deep spiritual and community living preparation we were sent to do ministry. I believe this clearly reflected what the life of an Oblate really entails; it involves deep personal prayer periods before plunging into service. I continued to deepen my spiritual life as I engaged in ministry and I came to realize how the ministry enriched my spiritual life.

Our ministry was at Hope Center, which is a *Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen*. People who had low income jobs and those who were homeless came in to collect food and had meals. In addition, the setting was arranged not only to meet the material needs of the people; there was also time for the people to share on matters their spiritual wellbeing as they came in to collect their food. I had the opportunity to share in this aspect of ministry and I also worked in other areas of the Center, depending on what area was in need of an extra

pair of hands on a particular day.

We visited the Hope Center four days in a week. On Thursdays we usually had class on *Oblate Spirituality* or visited the *Local City Jail* to do ministry. The afternoons on Thursdays during the Apostolic Phase

were spent in Theological Reflection. This is the time we spent reflecting on particular encounters during ministry and how they reflected the Gospel to us and the Oblate values that we had been appropriating and making a part of our lives during the Novitiate journey.

I have seen how both these Novitiate phases blended together to give me a concrete experience of the life of an Oblate. They brought to light the importance of having a strong prayer life, good community life, and good self knowledge in the life of an Oblate.

MY REFLECTIONS ON THE URBAN PLUNGE-CHICAGO MAY 2013

By Bro. Eugene Mwape Mule, OMI

The Urban Plunge is a program run by the 8th Day Center for Justice, a non-governmental organization founded in 1974 by different Catholic men and women Congregations. Today, the center is supported by 35 different religious communities including the Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate. Its mission is to act as a critical alternative voice to oppressive systems and its works towards changing those systems. The

center's staff has strong research, networking and advocacy programs throughout Chicago area and beyond. They partner with many groups working for a better world reflecting God's kingdom.

Every year, the Oblates send novices to attend this program of social justice formation and awareness. This year I was blessed to be part of the program with many young religious from all over the world.

Upon attending the Urban Plunge, it became evident to me that our societies are corrupted by envy and selfish ambitions. As a consequence, there are all



First row on the left- Eugene Mule, OMI. Second row on the Right- Sidney Sakala with other novices

sorts of injustices, disorders, wickedness, violence and oppressions that plague our people and the earth community itself.

For us who know what God requires; we pose the question: what is our role? Perhaps the answer would simply be "to do justice and to love kindly and to walk humbly with our God" (...Micah 6:8), but then how do we do that? One way we learned to do justice was through the practice of social analysis. Why social analysis? It is because every person is in one or many ways part of a certain society. Since we enter into society from a particular system (either through political,

social, economical, ecological, cultural or religious), these very systems for us in our work at the Urban Plunge became our personal starting points. The methodology of the Urban Plunge invited us to look at these four tools in our analysis of various social and justice issues:

a) **Lived experience of the people:** this aspect involves going to the people and listening to their real and lived experience of a

particular system to which they belong. For example, we heard from a city farmer whose two acres of urban farming is in the middle of down town Chicago.

b) **Social analysis:** after having listened to the people's experience we then applied another tool of social analysis. This is where we took a critical look at the experience including the social interrelationships and how the experience developed in time, what values were currently being perpetuated in the experience.

c) **As analysis was shared and discussed:** we then went into theological reflection. At this stage we strove to give meaning and answers to the problem at hand in light of

faith and how as the community must respond to the given problem or injustice. In Conclusion, when all is said and done, we see that even

though the Urban Plunge was done in Chicago, the tools we learned from the process can be applied everywhere and I am

most grateful for having attended the programme.

A DOCTOR OF MINISTRY FOR THE DELEGATION

By Musonda Chipili

After a total of seven years of writing, Fr. Freeborn Kibombwe, OMI, received the Doctor of Ministry Degree from the Oblate School of Theology (OST) in San Antonio, Texas.

His doctoral dissertation focused on the applied theology in the context of evangelization and media. The theme of the research was entitled: *'Interactive Catechetical Instruction (ICI) for Children Through Radio In the Diocese of Mongu, Zambia'*.

Fr. Freeborn, OMI, used the interactive radio initiative methods to create an interactive catechetical instruction for children with the help of Oblate Radio Liseli. One of the challenges the Church has had in the rural setting of the Diocese of Mongu is that catechesis especially for children lacks uniformity. Great efforts have been made by different parishes and the Catechetical Commission but out stations have been disadvantaged due to lack of material nor catechists, particularly trained catechists. The terrain also makes it difficult especially during flood season to reach out to some of these outstations or mass centers.

Fr. Freeborn, OMI, said such factors, made him zealous to design a program that could be used by many of the disadvantaged children. With the design team of about 9 experts, programs were created using the Apostle's Creed divided into five parts. These lessons were to be used for five weeks and each of the lessons were monitored in Kalabo, Lukulu and Namushakende. Children were divided into two groups and were sometimes tested on the lessons.

After each lesson, children were tested by the respective catechists who had been trained in interactive methods and skills. Based on the responses, they were tabulated and compared to how each child performed in the previous lessons.

The thesis proposes the fact that learning interactively has a

lot of positive results on



In mimicking a graduation ceremony, Fr. Rene Talabo, OMI, presents a diploma to Fr. Freeborn Kibombwe, OMI.



L-R: Fr. Sakubita Like, OMI and Fr. Freeborn Kibombwe, OMI, during the celebration at Oblate Center House in Lusaka.

children. Children learning catechesis via radio seemed to grasp the material much better than those without. Using both religious and contemporary education methods, this literature supports the learning method using the creativity of the child and media as a relevant

tool for success and faith development.

The thesis also concludes by propositioning the design of a computer software that would translate the actual lesson from radio into a program called the One Laptop Per Child. These are simple laptops being developed in Miami, Florida (USA). The researcher proposes that these computers could be

incorporated as part of the future development of interactive learning for children using these computers at their door step. They are simple, solar powered, and portable with a protective shield of rubber around it. The software developments is being carried out by Fr. Freeborn, OMI and another computer expert before it is tested widely for mission churches.

In celebrating Fr. Freeborn's achievement, a celebratory meal was held at Center House in Lusaka. Apart from his Oblate brothers, the event was also attended by members of his family, MAMI members, friends and delegation members of staff.

NEW CARETAKER FOR OUR LADY'S HOSPICE

*Fr. Freeborn Kibombwe, OMI
Hospice Trustee/Board Chairperson*

On June 3rd, 2013, Our Lady's Hospice in Kalingalinga, Lusaka opened a new chapter when the Trustees/Board of Directors signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Congregation of the Holy Cross Sisters as the new managing agents.

Since the hospice's inception the Franciscan Missionaries Of Divine motherhood (FMDM) sisters, have managed the institution with dedication and commitment until two years ago when Sr. Catherine O'Neil, FMDM, (who is the immediate past administrator) and her Congregation opted to offer a different group the task of being managing agents.

The Holy Cross sisters are established mainly in the Diocese of Mongu, Ndola, Livingstone and Lusaka.



L-R: Sr. Hildah Chilufya, HCS, and Fr. Freeborn Kibombwe, OMI signing the MOU.

They are specialists in schools and health centers. The hospice will be the first health institution they will render service to in the Lusaka Archdiocese besides having been supportive in many other ways.

The MOU was signed on behalf of the hospice by me, in my capacity as the Trustee and Board Chairperson and the Provincial of the Holy Cross Sisters, Sr. Hildah Chilufya, HCS, on 3rd June, 2013.

The signing was witnessed by the members of the Board of Trustees and members from the Holy Cross Congregation.

Sr. Emmanuela Mwansa, HCS, has been appointed as the incoming Administrator effective 24th July, 2013. She will transition with the current Administrator Ms.

Haripriya Eswaran who will end her two year commitment from the Overseas Volunteer Services (OVS) of UK this coming September. Ms Haripriya is a volunteer from India.

We look forward to working with the Holy Cross Sisters as the Board as we prepare to re-open the wards and provide much needed services for the people of God.

OMI GARAGE - UP AND RUNNING

By Musonda Chipili

The OMI garage moved from its old premises to the new building in October, 2012. The new garage premises comprises an auto mechanical repairs section, spray painting booth, auto spares store room and a foreman's office, where vehicles are received and recorded. A waiting shelter where clients can wait for their vehicles while they are being worked on is also available. The garage has good parking space which can accommodate 10 vehicles or more.

One of the machineries the garage has is a 'Four Post Car Lift'. At the moment the equipment is only used for checking the suspension on vehicles as it is not complete. A computer is needed so as to enable the mechanics to check



Mr. Masautso Banda operating the 'Four Post Car Lift'

the alignment and balancing of the wheels as well as. As a result, wheel balancing and wheel alignment is done elsewhere. More machinery such as tyre mending and changing equipment are needed. Despite this, the garage is well equipped in a number of mechanical works. At the moment, only an auto electrician is out sourced.

The number of clientele keeps growing. One of the new clients is a Government Department which has appreciated the panel beating and spray painting works done on their vehicles so far. A contract is yet to be signed between the garage and the same department.

It is our hope that, the garage will be able to sustain itself and also to supplement the Delegation's income. So far, there are tangible signs of the garage being able to sustain itself.

Mary Immaculate Church building



Inside Mary Immaculate church building under construction



Rear view of the church building

ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

April			May		
Fr.	Sauti. L	4	Fr. Katongo. K		3
Bro.	Litiya. G	14	Fr. Mutale Nebby		5
Sch. Bro.	Makunka B.	12	Sch. Bro. Mumba Belatus		8
Bro.	Mandona G.	25	Sch. Bro. Tembo Michael		5
Sch. Bro.	Kasonde Michael		Fr. Sakubita L.		18
			Bro. Mbulo Theodore		24
June					
Sch. Bro.	Mwamba. E	10			
Fr.	Kang'ombe. J	25			

Final Vows

May			June		
Fr.	Nacidze. S	4	Fr.	Lubinda. K	2
Sch. Bro.	Choongo. G	1	Fr.	Sampa. K	12
Fr.	Kayuni. L	1	Fr.	Phiri. J	02
Fr.	Walker. R	31			

Ordination to Priesthood

May			June		
Fr.	Chibesa. C	5	Fr.	Sekula. M	04
Fr.	Mwangala	08	Fr.	Mutale. N	02
Fr.	Mwansa. V	08			
Fr.	Walker. R	27			

ASSIGNMENTS

- **Fr. Jean Rene Talabo, OMI**, has been assigned to Oblate Center House. He will be involved in chaplaincy ministry and assist at Mary Immaculate parish. Fr. Talabo, OMI, moves from Oblate community of Shang'ombo.
- **Fr. Sydney Musonda, OMI**, has been assigned to Center House Lusaka with full time ministry at Mary Immaculate Parish. Fr. Musonda, moves from De Mazenod House of formation in Makeni.
- **Fr. Barnabas Simatende, OMI**, has been assigned to De Mazenod house of Formation in Makeni. He moves from the Center House.
- **Bro. George Litiya, OMI**, has been assigned to Kalabo Oblate Community with ministries at St. Michel's Catholic Church. Bro. Litiya, OMI, moves from Jack Community in Mongu.
- **Sch. Bro. Felix Nyambe Bwalya, OMI**, has been assigned to Lukulu Oblate Community for regency.

CONDOLENCES

- To Fr. Kelvin Lubinda, OMI, on the death of his mother, Imelda M. Munalula, who died on 17th July, 2013 and was put to rest on 20th July, 2013.

OMI Zambia Newsletter

Our newsletter aims at informing on the happenings in the Zambia Delegation, with a view of connecting people in the Oblate world and its Associates. Our articles focus on the church, justice, peace and development.

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NEWSLETTER ARTICLE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Information Office is appealing to each community to submit articles on the activities that have been going on in your respective communities. As Oblates you have been doing good ministry and sometimes your efforts go unnoticed. The Information Office would like to share with other Oblates and Associates on your ministry. Please submit any articles accompanied with pictures.

For more stories and photos, visit our website on omizambia.org