



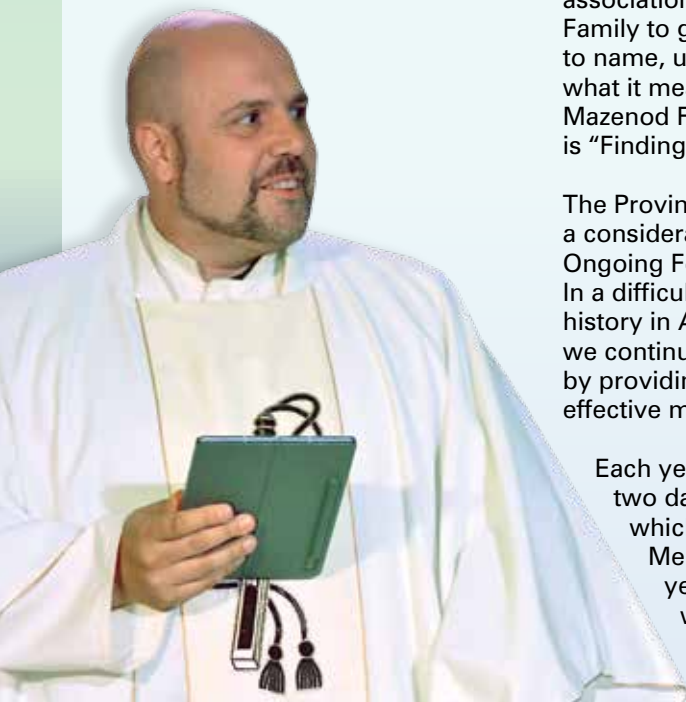
Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

Provincial Update

The De Mazenod Family Gathering held in August last year in Fremantle to mark the 125th Anniversary of the arrival of the Oblates in Australia, provided the ideal opportunity to reflect on the past, take account of our current reality and prepare for the future.

During this gathering involving 25 Oblates and 40 partners in our mission, I became even more confident that the Australian Province has a bright future with many opportunities to proclaim the Good News and re-evangelize our Church. These are exciting times with many opportunities and we have something to offer the broader community.

After this gathering the Provincial Council reflected on five important areas to focus on: Ministry Visitation, the De Mazenod Family Association, Ongoing Formation, Vocations and Ministry with Youth.



The Ministry Visitation program which commenced last year, is a friendly annual visit to each parish or ministry by a member of the Provincial Council to help understand each community including its strengths and challenges. These visits were well received in 2019 and I certainly look forward to officially visiting the other half of the Province this year.

Since the De Mazenod Family Gathering the Province has employed two part-time De Mazenod Family coordinators to work on developing the proposals arising from the gathering. To keep up to date with the ministries and be aware of the strengths of each ministry as well as the challenges, you can sign up to our fortnightly "De Mazenod Chat", an electronic bulletin, <https://www.oblates.com.au/de-mazenod-family>.

We hope to develop a formal association through our De Mazenod Family to give you the opportunity to name, understand and celebrate what it means to be part of the De Mazenod Family. Our theme this year is "Finding your place in the family."

The Provincial and Council have made a considerable investment in the Ongoing Formation of the Oblates. In a difficult period in the Church's history in Australia, it is important we continue to support our priests by providing them with tools to be effective ministers and evangelists.

Each year the Oblates gather for two days of Ongoing Formation which this year will be held in Melbourne. Over the next two years all our parish priests will attend the Divine Renovation Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

It is our hope that the Divine Renovation ministry with its conference, books, coaching and resources will encourage our parishes to renew themselves. It is an opportunity to inspire and equip every parish ministry leader to move their parish from maintenance to mission.

The opening of our new St Mary's Seminary in February 2019 was very much a decision to continue to form young men in the Australian context, to serve our Province and to be missionaries overseas. Please pray for vocations and don't forget, a personal invitation from you to a young man to consider the priesthood and religious life might be the voice of God that they were waiting to hear.

Our Colleges and Oblate Youth Australia are powerful ministries for young people. Our renewed ministry with youth will lead young people toward their integral growth and help them recognize their great dignity and that of others. This ministry strives to lead young people to experience and share the love of God in Jesus Christ crucified and to mature in faith in order to actively participate, as a community, in the mission of the Church. We hope to help them live as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ through the Oblate charism, and to discover and respond to their vocation.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support for the Oblates and our missions through prayer and practical support. I invite you to find your place in the De Mazenod Family and become more active in the exciting future in the Australian Province as we focus on Ministry Visitation, the De Mazenod Family Association, Ongoing Formation, Vocations and Ministry with Youth.

continued...

From the Director

Usually as I write to you my thoughts are on our Oblate Missions throughout the world. In recent weeks it is the coronavirus in China and the many other countries effected by the drought, the fires and the floods throughout Australia. The first weekend of January is the annual MAMI Appeal in our parish of Sorrento/Rye/Portsea. This year as I drove to Sorrento the radio was a constant source of information regarding the fires. My feeling was that this was not the time for a Mission Appeal. Supported by the local Oblate Community it was decided that the collection would go to those in Australia who were devastated by the fires. I trust that in deciding how to share your available resources you have not forgotten those in Australia who need your support.



The Australian Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate web page is a regular updated source of information about the missions of the Australian Oblates at home and overseas. It also contains a link to the web page of our General Administration. It is an excellent source of all things Oblate.

30th April 2020 MAMI will have a new Director Fr. David Francis OMI. I am sure Fr. David will introduce himself to you in the next MAMI newsletter. When Fr. Christian Fini OMI became Rector of Mazenod College Victoria I volunteered to look after the Missions Office. Now in my 84th year it is time to move back to my home State of Queensland where for the next twelve months, I will assist in the parish of St Eugene's Burpengary/Deception Bay and also be chaplain to St Eugene's College – a new mission to keep me young!

It has been spiritually enriching to have been the Director of MAMI. The prayers and financial support of so many has been an inspiration to me. PIMs our partners in mission, is the name we use for those who go overseas to work with us. However, all of you who spiritually and financially support our missions and the education of our seminarians are indeed PARTNERS IN OUR MISSION. As a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate I say THANKS for all you do to work with us and support us. You are and will be in my prayers. A special word of thanks to Sandra Dwyer, Luisa Amati and all at the Provincial HQ and Janet Boschen our graphic designer.

Fr John Sherman OMI

PROVINCIAL UPDATE

...continued cover article

DE MAZENOD FAMILY.

To help all, whether Laity or Religious who consider themselves members of the De Mazenod Family, there is a specialist course available. Fr. Frank Santucci, OMI, of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas is offering a specialist course on St Eugene de Mazenod. It is a "non-academic" course intended for a wide audience of people connected with his charism. For more information please see:

<http://www.eugenedemazenod.net/?p=4168>

Blast from the Past.

Did You Know...?

The Oblates reportedly operated the FIRST Catholic School bus in Australia. The story begins with the blessing and official opening of St Joseph's Primary School in Sorrento, by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Daniel Mannix on 24 January, 1932. In order to transport

students to the school, a second-hand utility was purchased by the Oblate parish priest, Fr. Thomas Hayes for 100 pounds with money provided by the Archbishop. For the first five years the driver of the "Archbishop's Bus" as it was affectionately known, was an Oblate Father whose job was to collect about 15 to 20 students from various locations around Sorrento and transport them to St Joseph's every day.



"The Archbishop's Bus" – First Catholic School Bus in Australia

WE REMEMBER

Fr. David Shelton OMI



It is with great sadness that the Australian Province announced the death of Fr. David Shelton, OMI on 12 December, 2019. Fr. David had suffered a form of lymphoma and had just been admitted for chemotherapy when he died suddenly but peacefully in hospital.

Fr. David was a missionary from the Anglo-Irish Province and a great gift to the Australian Province and Church. Born on the 25 June, 1941 in Stourport, UK, he had one sister and was educated at St Mary's Colwyn Bay, Wales.

He joined the Oblates in 1958 at Cahermoyle, Ireland, then studied at Belmont and Piltown, and was ordained on 11 February, 1968 in Birmingham. His first obedience was to Australia where from 1968 to the end of 1970 he was the assistant priest at Hillcrest Parish, South Australia.

In 1971 he went to Indonesia as one of the first four Oblate missionaries and with Kevin Casey, Pat Moroney and Pat Slattery worked in Purwokerto East, before moving to Cilacap with Kevin Casey.

In 1983, he returned to Australia to be the assistant priest at Our Lady of Fatima, Rosebud, Victoria, before assisting at Sefton, NSW until early 1987. He then went on to be an assistant priest at Dernancourt, Adelaide for two years. For the next six years he was the Sorrento parish priest and then spent a year assisting at St John Vianney's, Springvale North.

Fr. David settled in Western Australia in 1998 as a prison chaplain based in Fremantle. Fr. David excelled in this ministry for 20 years through his great compassion and care for the poor and often built lasting relationships with prisoners while assisting them and their families.

Fr. David had two big interests – tennis and Formula 1 racing. He travelled following F1, from Melbourne's Australian Grand Prix to overseas races. In March 2016, while

he was leaving the Australian Grand Prix, he suffered a major heart attack putting him out of action for the remainder of the year.

Fr. David had a big heart shown by his little acts of kindness to people such as the homeless and is remembered as being loyal, with a wicked sense of humour. The Australian Province thanks God for the gift of Fr. David Shelton, OMI.

Fr. Christian Fini OMI

Fr. Tony Maher, OMI, a great friend of Fr. David wrote at the time of his Golden Jubilee of Priesthood:

"Fr. David is a generous man with a big heart. He is never afraid of work and helping others out. This is very much evidenced in his work with prisoners and their families. David is known for his defence of prisoners and their families. This interest extends beyond the prison walls, as he works for the resettlement and material well-being of released prisoners and shows them his continuing friendship. As Fr. Nanni once brilliantly described him – "He seems at times a little rough, but he has a soft heart of pure gold"."

For more than 100 years the Oblates have provided a full-time chaplain to prisons in Western Australia. Because of failing health Fr. David retired from the Prison Ministry. Although the Oblates still assist with this ministry, a shortage of staff mean we are unable to provide a full-time chaplain at this time.

Fr David was anxious to share a reflection on this ministry. The following was found among his papers:

A VOICE BEHIND BARS.

After 22 years as prison chaplain here are some reflections on my ministry, a very challenging, rewarding and enjoyable experience. As chaplain to both staff and prisoners it took two to three years to be trusted and accepted by both. There is the sacramental side to make sure their spiritual needs are fulfilled while the personal contact is the principal of this ministry. Two highlights were approval for the WYD Cross in the prison for Mass and being a McKenzie friend for a prisoner in court. The saddest was the dismissal of a Catholic chaplain for not following prison rules.



As a chaplain working across three prisons from remand through high-security to a minimum-security prison farm, the sheer dilemma was that the harder you tried and the more dedicated you were, the less you seemed to achieve.

The sacramental side is very important and appreciated. The principal area of ministry was the personal contact with prisoners and staff. Walking through the various areas of the prison mixing freely with them and having a cuppa or meal, is all part of the initiation into prison life. It takes time for them to accept, trust, and eventually seek you out to talk about their personal, family and spiritual lives.

The majority of my work was trying to get them to understand the wrong they had done and its effect on others. Some did understand their crimes were wrong but to get them to understand why was a long and painful process.

My work as a Catholic chaplain was done in the following ways:

- To extend unconditional acceptance of prisoners and their families so that there was an opportunity of healing fractured relationships.
- To offer a journey of reconciliation for those who felt shame and alienation from their family and mainstream society. This included trying to create links while they were still in prison by using church networks in their initial attempts to integrate back into society after their release.
- Affirming the role of other professionals by walking on a communal search and not short-circuiting the process to eventually finding satisfactory answers to their needs.

This ministry for me was a cutting edge as many prisoners do not have a sense of their own value. Most prisoners told me bad things about themselves but not anything good. I had to find the underlying reasons for their problems so they could be helped.

There is good in every person and making them aware of this helped them to some degree. It was a wonderful experience and once a prisoner trusted me, I could walk them through experiencing the various emotions in their life. Chaplaincy for me was being able to "Walk the Walk And Talk the Talk". The work had many blessings and many good outcomes.

Indonesia

Fr. Charlie celebrated 50 years of Priesthood in December 2019. In March 2020 he has been invited to address Rotary International on the Gold Coast in Queensland. He is seeking Rotary's and MAMI's help as he still works to lift people out of poverty.



He writes "On November 19, 2019 we opened a restaurant on the main road between Gandrung and Sidareja which is owned and run by our "key person" from the Kampung Laut area, and is financed by our "People Bank". Many of the products from our land reclamation and livestock projects will be marketed here as well as fruits and products from our reforestation program on the prison Island. This is another step in taking people out of poverty.

Our "Child Fund" unit is making this world become a "child friendly world" and they report there is a behavioural change of parents and others. This program began 10 years ago for children suffering serious verbal, physical and emotional abuse and parents admitting their mistakes and changing their behaviour."



The list of projects for the Oblate Indonesian Mission for 2020-2021 is still being prepared. The majority of priorities will come from Fr. Charlie, and we know it will be difficult to fund all he wants to do for 'the poorest of the poor'.



If you wish to make a donation to MAMI apart from the Annual August appeal, your gift is always happily received. To assist our administration and avoid confusion you might like to use this donation slip.

Please complete the donation form on the right and mail to us. Or donate online by following the below steps.

Please note that if you tick to receive a tax deductible receipt, your gift can only be used for community development projects and not religious work of the missions.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FOR **TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS** CAN BE MADE TO:
Oblate Missions Developing Countries Fund (OMDC)
NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK
 BSB NO.: **083 347**
 ACCOUNT NO.: **45500 7380**

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FOR **THE RELIGIOUS WORK OF THE MISSION** CAN BE MADE TO:
Oblates of Mary Immaculate (MAMI)
NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK
 BSB NO.: **083 347**
 ACCOUNT NO.: **45489 0669**

Please send an email to: **mami@oblates.com.au** which includes your name, postal address, EFT transfer details and Intention.

Send to: **MAMI Office**
PO Box 384
Camberwell Vic 3124

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City	State	Postcode	
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I have enclosed a Cheque/Money Order made payable to MAMI for \$ _____

or debit my credit card: Mastercard Visa the amount of \$ _____

One off payment Monthly payment

Card number

Credit card expiry date / CCV number (final 3 digits printed on card back)

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Card holder's signature _____ Date _____

I require a tax deductible receipt.

I would like further information on making a bequest in my will.

Comments/intention: _____



Bangladesh

Dear MAMI Members,

Greetings and well wishes to each one of you!

Sincerely and heartily, I thank each one of you for your prayers for us and witnessing the spirit of St. Eugene, our beloved Founder. With gratitude, I acknowledge your gifts which will help us to buy two motorbikes. These motorbikes will definitely help our Fathers in their pastoral ministries to our people, enabling them to have frequent visits to provide better faith formation.

We shall continue to pray for intentions and please pray for our intentions and for me, too. With thanks.

Fr. Ajit Costa, OMI – Leader of the Oblate Community in Bangladesh

China Mainland

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Chinese people and especially with our two Oblate communities and the poor people they work with, owing to the coronavirus.

“Greetings to all of you. We of the Beijing Oblate Community send our ‘double’ best wishes for 2020 and the Chinese New Year.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of you for your continuing support for our Oblate presence in Beijing.

A quick update on our ‘Five Loaves and Two Fishes’ migrant centre in a village on the outskirts of Beijing sees the fruits of your support.

Our presence started there in March 2012 and, thanks to God’s providence and your generosity through prayers, financial support and volunteers (PIMS), we now open Monday to Saturday with Fr. Johnny coordinating various activities.”

Fr. Giovanni and community



Vietnamese children

Vietnam

In 2020–2021 we hope to send \$15,000 to help educate young Vietnamese children

Zimbabwe

The Oblates in Zimbabwe are preparing a submission for the funding of a project and getting requests for help for two very difficult missions in the Republic of the Congo and Nigeria.

India

Already in 2020 we have assisted the Oblates working in very poor areas through the purchase of two bikes and by providing assistance to a women’s school project in Buttayaguden.

Mr. Andrew Watson, the principal of Mazenod College in Western Australia, led an immersion project for students during the Christmas holidays. He says it is part of the school’s ongoing commitment to the broader community: “Mazenod College WA has a rich tradition of providing immersion experiences for its students in Oblate communities overseas. The longest standing program has been the immersion to India, with its focus on St Eugene’s

English Medium School, Tallapadi and the Oblate parish of St Eugene in Battayagudam, both of which are located in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Five students and two staff spent 12 days with the Oblates in these two communities in early December last year. The students and staff worked in St Eugene’s School teaching English to classes in the morning while involving themselves in cultural celebrations during the afternoon.

Mazenod has supported Oblate community projects in Sri Lanka, China and India through its annual fundraising activity of Mazenod Mission Day. Funds have gone towards providing clean drinking water via a filtration system, playground equipment, school gates and classroom furniture for St Eugene’s E.M School and toilets for the homes of parishioners in the village of Battayagudam.

The immersion program has enriched our Mazenod community by bringing together groups of young men who have a deep experience of the charism of St Eugene De Mazenod, the work of the Oblates and the richness and beauty of other cultures.”



Christmas cards again set a new high:

Developmental projects	\$3,377
Education	\$8,091
Indonesia chicken project	\$7,471
Indonesia goat project	\$9,960
Indonesia tool box project	\$5,737

Total \$34,636



National Oblate Youth Encounter

From 2nd – 5th January 2020 over 100 young adults and a large group of Oblate Priests and Seminarians gathered at Healesville for the annual National Oblate Youth Encounter.



Oblate golf competition

On 14 January 2020 was the annual Moe Oblate golf competition. Fr. Brendan Hogan from the Diocese of Sale replaced Fr. Michael McMahon, OMI, as the champion.



Back; left to right: Fr. Bill Ousley OMI, Fr. Brendan Hogan. Front; Fr. Denis O'Bryan, Fr. Michael McMahon OMI

On 17 February 2020, the Oblates in Victoria gathered at Camberwell for a Eucharist, to renew their vows and celebrate the 194th anniversary of the Papal Approval for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It was also the installation of Fr. Andrew Chen, OMI, as the Rector of St Mary's Scholasticate and an occasion to congratulate Fr. Daniel Szewc, OMI, on obtaining his doctorate thesis at the University of Divinity in Victoria. We also welcomed Fr. Angelo Wijewickrama, OMI, to the Australian Province.

Vocations

On Saturday 22 February 2020, St Mary's Scholasticate welcomed Bro. Jesington Logu, OMI, from the Jaffna Province in Sri Lanka. Bro. Joshua Nash returned from his overseas pastoral placement.



Pictured left, Fr. Andrew Chen OMI, the new Rector with the community. Other new students may join the community in the coming months.

On 25–27 September, 2020, St Mary's Community is planning a 'Come and See' experience for post-secondary men. If you or someone you know would like to be invited please contact jsherman@oblates.com.au or speak to your local Oblate.



Position Changes in 2020:

Fr. Andrew Chen, OMI, Rector of St Mary's Seminary

Fr. David Francis, OMI, Provincial Treasurer, Assistant Formator and Director of MAMI.

Fr. Harry Dyer, OMI, from 30 April 2020 will be on a sabbatical and then assisting with supplies for the remainder of 2020; commencing 2021 he will be Rector of Mazenod College Victoria.

Burpengary, Queensland:

Fr. John David, Parish Administrator and Fr. John Sherman, OMI, Parish Assistant and Chaplain to St Eugene's College.

Iona Community, Queensland:

Fr. Basti Meno, OMI, Administrator of St Oliver Plunkett Parish, Cannon Hill; Fr. Joe Anthony, OMI, Chaplain to Rosies and in College Ministry and Parish Ministry.

Mary Immaculate Parish, Eagle Vale, NSW: Fr. Casmir Arul, OMI, Assistant Parish Priest.

St John Vianney's Parish, North Springvale, Victoria: Fr. Dominic Rozario, OMI, Administrator until 30 April 2020 and then Fr. Eric Alleaume, OMI, as Parish Priest.

St Mary's Star of the Sea, Sorrento, Victoria: Fr. John McGinty, OMI, Parish Priest.

St Kieran's Moe and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Newborough, Victoria:

Fr. Daniel Szewc, OMI, Parish Priest.

St Michael's Oblate Community, Camberwell Victoria:

Fr. Ian Mackintosh, OMI

St Pius X Parish, Dernancourt SA:

Fr. Mathew Raj, OMI, reappointed as Parish Priest.

St Patrick's Fremantle, WA: Fr. John Sebastian Ramesh, OMI, reappointed as Parish Priest and Rector of the Basilica; Fr. Angelo Wijewickrama, OMI, Assistant Parish Priest.



Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate

Published by the Oblate Office of Mission, M.A.M.I. Centre, P.O. Box 384, Camberwell, Vic 3124
Telephone (03) 9805 8888 Fax: (03) 9813 2696 Email: mami@oblates.com.au Web: www.oblates.com.au



Eucharist - the heart of our Mission.

Rosies team

Bishop Mark OMI on Ash Wednesday - Iona College

Fr. Irek OMI - China

Baptism - our journey of faith begins

Br. Peter's final vows

Fr. Charlie OMI - In Indonesia

Fr. Gerry OMI - in Kenya

If you are interested in knowing more about becoming a Priest or Brother as a Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, www.oblates.com.au/vocations will be helpful. Fr John Sherman OMI, the Oblate Vocations Coordinator, can be contacted at jsherman@oblates.com.au or phone 0418825701. The 'Oblates' are Priests and Brothers who live, pray and work as a team.

THE MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

Besides missioning in Parishes and Colleges, the Oblates serve in Hospitals, Prisons, Rosies Youth Missions and Universities and where they find the greatest spiritual need.

Australian Oblates are also working in China, Indonesia, Kenya and Zimbabwe and support other Oblates missions in some 65 countries.

VICTORIA

PROVINCIAL OFFICES

649 Burke Road, Camberwell, Vic. 3124
(P.O. Box 384, Camberwell, Vic. 3124)

www.oblates.com.au

Provincial: Fr. Christian Fini OMI

Tel: (03) 9805 8800

provincial@oblates.com.au

Provincial Council: Frs. M. Twigg, A. Chen, S. Plonka, J. Jeyachandran.

Executive Officer: Ms Jenny McPherson

Tel: (03) 9805 8824

Treasurer: Fr. David Francis OMI

Tel: (03) 9805 8829

Treasurer's Assistant: Mr Leon Jongebloed

Tel: (03) 9805 8828

bursar.assistant@oblates.com.au

Visas/ PIMS: Ms Luisa Amati

Tel: (03) 9805 8822

www.oblates.com.au/de-mazenod-family

Vocations Director: Fr. J. Sherman OMI

Tel: 0418 825 701

vocations@oblates.com.au

www.oblates.com.au/vocations

OBLATE OFFICE OF MISSION

Director: Fr. David Francis OMI

Tel: 0428 488 662

Mission Team: Mrs. Sandra Dwyer, Ms Luisa Amati, Ms Emma Rice.

(a) **MAMI:**

649 Burke Road, Camberwell, Vic, 3124
Mrs. Sandra Dwyer.

Tel: (03) 9805 8888

mami@oblates.com.au

(b) **Oblate Youth Aust.:**

5 Kernot Ave, Mulgrave, Vic, 3170
Ms Emma Rice. Tel: (03) 9795 5077

(c) **Rosies (Vic):**

5 Kernot Ave, Mulgrave, Vic, 3170
Tel: (03) 9795 5077

(d) **PIMS:**

649 Burke Road, Camberwell, Vic, 3124
Ms Luisa Amati. Tel: (03) 9805 8822

pims@oblates.com.au

(e) **De Mazenod Family:**

649 Burke Road, Camberwell, Vic, 3124
Ms Nimmi Candappa & Mrs Emma Hoad.
demazenodfamily@oblates.com.au

CAMBERWELL COMMUNITY

649 Burke Road, Camberwell, Vic. 3124
(P.O. Box 384, Camberwell, Vic. 3124)

Tel: (03) 9805 8877

Frs. V. Ryan (Superior) (03) 9805 8802

C. Fini (03) 9805 8815

A. Cooper (03) 9805 8811

P. Moroney (03) 9805 8801

D. Madigan (03) 9805 8803

A. Maher (03) 9805 8814

J. FitzPatrick (03) 9805 8819

I. Mackintosh (03) 9805 8817

H. Dyer.

ST. MARY'S SEMINARY

647 Burke Road, Camberwell 3124

Tel: (03) 9882 9914

Frs. A. Chen, D. Francis. Brs. N. Nguyen, J. Nash, L. Ha, J. Logu.

MAZENOD COLLEGE

5 Kernot Ave, Mulgrave, Vic. 3170
(P.O. Box 286, Mulgrave, Vic.3170)

Tel: College: (03) 9560 0911

House: (03) 8561 1177 Fax: (03) 9562 2442

Frs. K. Davine (Community leader),

E. Alleaume, G. Iollo.

ST. JOHN VIANNEY'S

23 Police Road, Mulgrave, Vic. 3170

Frs. E. Alleaume, G. Iollo.

Tel: (03) 9546 3831 Fax: (03) 9558 5308

ST. MARY'S STAR OF THE SEA

1 Constitution Hill, Sorrento, Vic. 3943

(P.O. Box 116, Sorrento, Vic. 3943)

Frs. J. McGinty, W. Ousley.

Tel: (03) 5984 4374 Fax: (03) 5984 4386

ST. KIERAN'S

2 Wirraway Street, Moe, Vic. 3825

Frs. D. Szewc, V. McGillicuddy, N. Daniel.

Tel: (03) 5127 1057 Fax: (03) 5127 8635

NEW SOUTH WALES

MARY IMMACULATE

2 Aquamarine Drive, Eagle Vale, N.S.W. 2558

Frs. S. Plonka, C. Arul. Tel: (02) 4626 3055

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ST. PIUS X

1 Avoca Street, Dernancourt S.A. 5075

(PO Box 85, Dernancourt S.A. 5075)

Fr. M. Raj. Tel: (08) 8261 2428

ST. DAVID'S

4 Vizard Road, Tea Tree Gully S.A. 5091

Frs. J. Jeyachandran, R. Jayamaha.

Tel: (08) 8264 4694 Fax: (08) 8396 1530

QUEENSLAND

ST. EUGENE DE MAZENOD PARISH & COLLEGE

72a Dunbeath Drive, Burpengary, Qld. 4505

Frs. John David, J. Sherman, B. Harris.

Presbytery (07) 3888 3973 Fax: (07) 3888 5618

Chaplain's office (07) 3491 4612

ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT

21 Beauvardia Street, Cannon Hill, Qld, 4170

Frs. M. Basti, J. Antony. Tel: (07) 3899 2837

IONA COLLEGE

85 North Road, Wynnum West, Qld. 4178

(P.O. Box 351, Wynnum, Qld. 4178)

Frs. M. Twigg (Rector & Superior), L. Keelty,

M. Basti, J. Antony (07) 3893 8822

Tel: College: (07) 3893 8888

Fax: (07) 3893 8883

ROSIES OBLATE YOUTH MISSION:

VICTORIA

Tel: (03) 9795 5077

Email: rosies.vic@oblates.com.au

QUEENSLAND

PO Box 908, Wynnum Central QLD 4178

Fr. J. Antony.

Tel: 1300 767 437

Email: manager@rosies.org.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ST. PATRICK'S BASILICA

47 Adelaide Street, Fremantle, W.A. 6160

Frs. John Sebastian Ramesh,

A. Colbert (Hospital Chaplain), J. Archbold,

A. Wijewickrama. Tel: Parish: (08) 9335 2268

House: (08) 9335 5641 Fax: (08) 9430 6076

MAZENOD COLLEGE

55 Gladys Road, Lesmurdie, W.A. 6076

Frs. M. McMahon, D. Hughes.

Tel: College: (08) 9291 6500

House: (08) 9291 1508 Fax: (08) 9291 6711

MISSION TO CHINA-HONGKONG HONG KONG

NOTRE DAME

51 Shing Tak St., Ma Tau Wei, Kowloon,
Hong Kong S.A.R. China. Frs. R. Gicalao,
W. Meng, J. Wotherspoon, J. Jacobe.

Tel: (0011 852) 2715 7263

Fax: (0011 852) 2760 0536

ST. ALFRED'S

19-21 Man Lai Road, Shatin, N.T. Hong Kong
China. Frs. S. Kalisz (Delegation Superior),
P. Shen, R. Amancio.

Tel: (0011 852) 2691 2493

Fax: (0011 852) 2693 6391

ST. BENEDICT'S

7 Kong Pui Street, Shatin Wai, Shatin, NT.

Fr. M. Serna.

Tel: (852)2637-1237 Fax: (852) 2637-0404

BEIJING COMMUNITY

Frs. L. Young, G. Zevola, J. Rakotoarisoa.

GUANGZHOU COMMUNITY

Fr. I. Dampc.

INDONESIA

CILACAP

Pastoran Katolik, Jl A.Yani,23 Cilacap 53213
Jateng, Indonesia.

Fr. C. Burrows. Tel/Fax: (0011 62) 282 533355

Office (0011 62) 282 538908

AFRICA

Fr. G. Conlan

P O Box 1542-00502, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 0011 254 (717) 784 591

<http://www.omi.org.za/kenya/index.html>

Fr. S. Douglas

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, PO Box AC 126,
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Southern Africa
Tel +27 31 2059321 Fax +27 31 2060270

VARIA

Bishop M. Edwards Auxiliary Bishop for the
Western Region, Melbourne)
email: mark.edwards@cam.org.au

Fr. P. Stoll (General Councillor for Asia-Oceania).
General House, Via Aurelia 290, Roma 00165, Italy.
(email: asiaocouncillor@omigen.org)

Fr L. Mifsud St Michael's, 20 North Street,
Nowra NSW 2541

Fr. J. McLaughlin

Mercycare, 185 Maddington Rd, Maddington,
WA, 6109. Tel: 08 9452 7700

Fr. B. O'Brien

St Vincent's Aged Care, 4 King Street, Hawthorn,
East, Vic, 3123. Tel: 03 9861 9649

Fr. J. Chai

St. Joseph's Home for the Aged,
18 Po Kin Rd, Sheung Shui, N.T. Hong Kong
Tel: (0011 852) 2672 4492/ (852) 2320 5504

Fr. M. Azrak

Asunción, Paraguay

The email of all Oblates of the Province,
except where otherwise shown is: initial +
surname (all lower case) @oblates.com.au