



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Mission Development Office

Newsletter

December 2010



*Br Daniel Kloch omi (left), accepting radio equipment from Robert Byrne
For full story, see 'Radio for Madagascar mission'*

Set up just over five years ago to strengthen links between contemporary Ireland and Oblate missions around the world, the Mission Development Office (MDO) is staffed by a team of four: Oblates, Tom McCabe and Paul Byrne, and Barbara McCauley and Carmel Byrne, liaison officer and office manager respectively. As liaison officer (LO), Barbara works closely with Mísean Cara, the company which manages that part of Ireland's Overseas Development Aid budget which is channelled through missionary congregations. She also keeps in touch with Oblates in developing countries, helping grant applicants negotiate the application process and complete the necessary reports. To date, our office has received and distributed over one million euro in grants from Mísean Cara alone. In addition, we run regular fund-raising events to support valuable projects which fall outside the scope of Mísean Cara. Here you can read stories from just a few of the projects funded through this office that show how lives are changing as a result.

Aleana's story

Aleana and the other women from her village in the Democratic Republic of Congo don't know themselves. Since she was a girl she had hated the coming of evening. That was the time, at the end of a hot working day, when the women still had the job

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of going for water – not just to the tap in the kitchen, but six kilometres away. That intimidating long walk with the real fear of snakes and, even worse, of being attacked or raped – and the long road made worse on the way back by the dragging weight of bucket handles digging into her hands, and the prospect of having to do this all over again tomorrow – and for all the tomorrows. But now her village has a new well, with sparkling clean water, and Aleana joins the other women to talk and laugh and draw water and stroll home.

Cost: €17,611

Willie's new home

Willie hated the tropical storms in Idiofa, his hometown in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Too many of them had blown down his rickety home again and again and reduced this proud man to being a beggar for shelter for his family. But then the kilns arrived and made possible the miracle of bricks — thousands of them — to make hundreds of houses. When Willie moved into his new house he began to like storms; they make him feel safe with his family inside those solid brick walls.

Cost: €70,260

Earthquake in Haiti

Being Haitian was never easy. But after 5-pm on January 12th last when the earthquake brought death and devastation on a catastrophic scale to Port-au-Prince and other cities and towns, it got considerably worse. As with all natural disasters, the poorer you are the worse the effect.

In a remarkable example of Christian solidarity and generosity, the three communities, including the primary schools, that make up Inchicore Pastoral

Area, raised €26,000 over one weekend last January. Support also came from England, where St Anne's parish community, Rock Ferry, Merseyside, collected £7,000, and St Mary's Primary School, Kilburn, London, raised over £1,000. A big 'thank you' on behalf of the many Haitians who are benefitting from your generosity.

Good Day at Foxrock

Among Haiti's poorest are children employed as servants in the homes of rich families. These latter day Cinderellas are treated abominably and often go hungry. Haitian Oblate, Fr Laudi saw a way of helping them. If he could get them to his school, not only would they get an education, he could make sure they got one good meal a day. Trouble was he had no kitchen.

He appealed to us, setting out his case with carefully worked out costings. We asked Foxrock Golf Club to help. They generously gave us the course for the day. Prizes were donated and competitors paid; the rain held off, the golf was good, the craic better. And best of all: the €12,000 profit raised on the day went straight to Fr Laudi. He now has his kitchen; the children are coming to school and eating at least one good meal a day. Many thanks to all in Foxrock Golf Club who made this small miracle happen.

Cost: €12,000

From Ringsend to Arklow

Each year missionary congregations, including the Oblates, are rostered to speak about their mission in the parishes of a given diocese. This year we were allocated parishes in the southern part of Dublin Archdiocese – from Ringsend to Arklow. It was an opportunity to raise awareness not only of Oblate missions, but also the

contribution of the whole Irish missionary movement to the developing world. This opportunity to tell the missionary story is also a valuable source of funding for Oblate missions. Four young African Oblates preached at Masses in the early days of the campaign — in themselves an eloquent testimony to the work of missionaries. Again, people have been very generous. So far, we have received €105,000 from 21 parishes and there are three to go. The money will make a huge difference to the lives of desperately poor people.

From St James's Gate

St James's Gate, today synonymous with Guinness brewery, was once the Dublin city gate from which pilgrims would set out on the long journey to Santiago de Compostella, the shrine of St James in Northern Spain.

In September, Fr Tom McCabe completed the final stage (220 kilometres) of the 800 kilometre 'Camino de Santiago', a journey he began from St James's Gate in September 2007.

This is a unique experience marked by the simple joys of walking through beautiful Spanish countryside, meeting many delightful local people, sharing stretches of the 'camino' with fellow pilgrims, and time alone to think and pray. The journey itself is important to the pilgrim, but he/she will always cherish the moment of arrival and entering the enormous Cathedral of St James in Compostella for the first time.

This year Tom had the added pleasure of knowing that his pilgrim walk had raised over €3,000 in sponsorship for an orphan care programme at St Luke's Oblate Mission, Zimbabwe.

Next September, please God, Tom will set out from St James's Gate on his second 'Camino', this time aiming to reach the halfway point in just over two weeks, and

reach Compostella the following year.

Want to be part of this by raising funds to help some of the most vulnerable people on earth?

Talk to us.

The Wicklow Way

A group of young people spontaneously offered to hold a 50-kilometre sponsored walk along the Wicklow Way, in aid of clean water projects in Africa. Tom joined them and they set out on a bright Friday afternoon from Rathfarnham walking south through the Dublin mountains to Roundwood for an overnight stay and then on down to Glendalough. Trouble was it rained — and rained and rained. A wet and bedraggled lot struggled into Glendalough on the Sunday. It had been a tough weekend but it had its own euphoria — a sort of "we did it" feeling. Because we were new at it and not as efficient at getting sponsorship as we might have been, the rain soaked Herculean effort may not have achieved the results it deserved, but it was a start.

Next year we plan a sponsored walk along the newly opened section of the Wicklow Way. Want to be part of it?

Talk to us.

Every Little helps...

Two young Cork schoolgirls cycled from Cork to Rochestown collecting €100 for Oblate missions. Their gift will help other children in another place. Is there something you could do?



Rain-soaked walkers reach Lough Dan

Radio for Madagascar

Communications is a challenge in Central Madagascar where roads and other transport networks are virtually nonexistent. The small radio network run by the Oblate mission is a lifeline in emergencies. When a seriously ill person or a pregnant woman requires urgent medical care, the Mission can radio ahead to both an emergency helicopter service and the Lutheran Mission, which builds and operates runways and helipads in the region. Thanks to the miracle of radio, they can keep in contact with these partner organisations as they evacuate the patient to the nearest airstrip. It can take up to three days to get a patient just 50 kilometres overland to an airstrip.

When their radio broke down completely, they applied to us for help. Thanks to the expertise and generosity of Robert Byrne (see main photo), they now have a new and much better radio and radio support equipment.

Three deaths in two years

The past two years have seen the deaths of three Irish Oblate missionaries in South Africa. Fr Brian Ievers (67) died suddenly in September '09 at his mission in Botshabelo Township, Free State. A natural leader, Brian was a tower of strength during the apartheid years, and a gifted priest and community leader who is greatly missed.

Fr Paddy McMahon (97) also died in September '09, not at his mission in Durban SA, but on holiday in Ireland. Only partly retired at 97, he was still heavily involved with the hospice for AIDS patients that he had cofounded 30 years earlier.

Fr Noel Coughlan (94) died at Nazareth House Nursing Home, Durban, in January 2009. Talented and creative, Noel was for many years producer/



The late Fr Brian Ievers (left) with Fr Paul Byrne (mdo), when Paul visited Brian in Botshabelo, May 2009.

director of a highly acclaimed Passion Play that attracted huge crowds to Durban. He was also a close collaborator with Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI.

Our Web site

Our website which has been in preparation for some time will go on line in time for Christmas.

You will find us at:

www.oblatemissions.ie

We welcome your comments.

If you would like further information about our work, please contact us at:

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