

De Sales says...

**“Let us always keep
our eyes fixed on
Jesus Christ
crucified and go
forward in his
service with
confidence...”**

Fall 2007
Volume 20, Issue 3

Meet an Oblate

In the Spotlight

Fr. Michael Moore, OSFS, was born in Holyoke, MA on August 26, 1940. He attended Bishop Duffy High School in Niagara Falls, NY, where he also taught after ordination in 1968. He served as the last principal of Bishop Duffy and the first principal of Niagara Catholic as a co-educational institution. He volunteered for the missions after the first graduating class of Niagara Catholic in 1979.

While in Brazil he ministered ten years in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul in formation of future Oblates. He participated in the founding of the Oblate mission in India before ministering again in Brazil for 17 years in the Oblates' home mission in the north eastern state of Bahia. He was elected the first provincial of the South American Province.

Q: How did you come to meet and join the Oblates?

A: I met the Oblates through Bishop Duffy High school in

Continued on p. 2.

Bondings

A Newsletter of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales
Toledo-Detroit Province

Province Gathering

Assembly 2007

by Jim McHugh, OSFS

The Toledo-Detroit Province of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales had our annual gathering from June 25 through June 29, at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center in Detroit, Michigan. It was good to see one another again: to visit; to talk about developments in other places and other ministries around the Province; to gather in prayer and in song; to celebrate that Salesian spirit that we treasure and share with the people in our various apostolates and ministries. It was also a time to remember three of our confreres who would not be gathering with us this year. Gathered together we said goodbye to Br. Paul Spaeder, OSFS, Fr. John O'Neill, OSFS, and Br. Albert Pietrusinski, OSFS, who died this past year.

One of the highlights of the Assembly was a visit by our Superior General, Fr. Aldino Kiesel, OSFS, and his Assistant General, Fr. Conrad Esser, OSFS. Fr. Aldino is originally from our mission area of South America (Brazil). Fr. Conrad is from our north German Province. Fr. Aldino gave a series of presentations titled, “Some Essential Elements of our Oblate Life.” It was good to revisit key charisms that drew me to the Oblates over 40 years ago.



(Where has the time gone?!) Fr. Aldino spoke about St. Francis' prayer, the *Direction of Intention*, which is such an important part of Salesian spirituality.

My God, I give you this day. I offer you, now, all of the good that I shall do and I promise to accept, for love of you, all of the difficulty that I shall meet. Help me to conduct myself during this day in a manner that is pleasing to you.

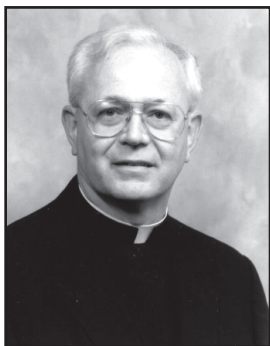
The *Direction* is a great way to start the day, start a class in school, to begin anything - so that we remember to ask for God's help but also to give God the praise for any success we have.

Continued on p. 3

Spotlight

Continued from page 1.

Niagara Falls, New York after my family left New England and moved to the Niagara Frontier.



Michael Moore, OSFS

Q: Did you ever see yourself becoming a missionary? What led you to go into the missions (and have you been in missionary work outside of South America)?

A: As I matured as a priest and Oblate and through my experience with secondary education I was touched by the theological thinking and the practical gospel-valued living expressed by the Latin American Church with its struggle to respond to human needs and suffering. I believe that our Lord guided me along a grace-filled path. I am deeply thankful for my calling to serve as a missionary.

Q: What has kept you going? What makes continuing and deepening your involvement (prior to your election as provincial) in missionary work life-giving?

A: I am who I am by the grace of Jesus. His grace has sustained me for all these years. While I value all that has happened and all I have experienced, my seventeen years ministering to the people in the *sertão* (back lands) of Bahia were significant in my formation as the person, religious and priest that I am today. In Bahia I came face to face with the many modern day Lazaruses who impelled me leave the table of the 'good life' to treat the wounds inflicted by injustice and human heartlessness. The drama of suffering is present in all

societies. It touches all people. But it is particularly cruel and evil among the poor.

To have a loved one die from cancer is to see, to feel, and to live this drama in our own life. Yet, this suffering reaches unfathomable depths when a family does not even have access to aspirin to relieve the cancerous pain of their loved one.

Q: How would you explain what an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales does as a missionary (i.e., what makes Oblate missionary work distinct -or- what defines it?)

A: Fundamental in our Salesian spirit is the discerning and the fulfillment of the Divine Will for each of us as individuals or as members of a specific group. Since Jesus' coming, God's manifest will is that the Kingdom be established. The absolute necessity for an Oblate is to make the Kingdom the object of his life. Mission places one in immediate contact with the "un-kingdom," that which must be faced and transformed so that God's Kingdom may come. There is no need for mental gymnastics, trying to 'apply' the gospel. It is there live before one's eyes.

Q: What challenges do you/have you (and Oblates you've served with) faced? What are the barriers and what are the breakthroughs you've encountered as a missionary?

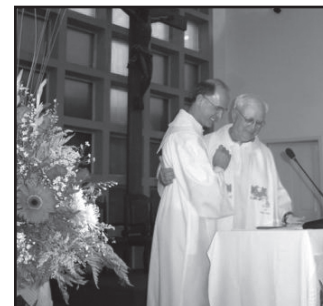
A: The missionary is a man without a country. I am no longer an American, not in any sense that I would now be if I had stayed in my native country. Yet despite my 30 years in Brazil, I am not a Brazilian. I will never be one. What am I then? I am an Oblate. I am in mission. I have left my country, my friends, my family my language – all that was and is my birth right as an American. I have done so embracing and celebrating the eternal homeland

and family which is the Kingdom that is to come here on earth as it is in heaven.

Q: How have the people and the work you do in South America shaped you?

A: One of the most significant experiences, often repeated and ever-deepening, has been the grace of living in biblical times. By this I mean that mission has led me on a life journey of discovery of Jesus' message by my immersion in a world where biblical images and truth still abound and are real as the day Jesus uttered them. I have met Lazarus. I have touched him. I have called him by name. I have struggled to free people from hunger and thirst, from injustice and corruption.

For this I, as so many others, have received the blessing of all blessings: they have threatened me, and have said bad things about me, they have placed me before judges and have persecuted me.



Michael Moore, OSFS (r), is installed as the first South American Province Provincial by Superior General, Fr. Aldino Kiesel, OSFS (l).

Q: What issues do you see as most pressing as you lead the newest Oblate province? Are there issues unique to the South American Province that you have had to face coming originally from the North American Church and culture?

A: One of our biggest challenges is to assume our role as a contributing unit of the Congregation. We were born in mission. Oblates came from Europe and America and gave their life in South America, planting the seed which is presently reaching its maturity. Now it is our turn to give by going and missioning. For this

reason we have reached out from Brazil to other countries such as Ecuador and Haiti, as well as cooperating with Congregational efforts by sending members to other Oblate ministries throughout the world.

We were also born in diversity with Oblates from Holland, Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany, Austria and the United States, living and working together. We now add Ecuadorians, Colombians, and Haitians. We have a rich heritage that we promise to keep and to spread.

Q: How does Salesian spirituality unfold among the poor and marginalized in South America? How are the people shaped by St. Francis' spirit? How is the spirit of St. Francis de Sales shaped by the South American churches and cultures

A: Our Salesian heritage - that special bonding together of gospel inspired values and virtues- I believe has a special role to play in today's Church in South America. There is a deepening thirst for the Spirit and a desire to cultivate the Spirit in one's own life. We, as Oblates, can make a tremendous contribution to this task of leading and guiding people along this path; introducing them into Kingdom based life and living. The base communities with which I have worked have been special places where the drama of living out of one's faith is wedded to concrete efforts to make the Kingdom come on earth. Humility, which is a core virtue and value in Salesian spirituality, shares the same root as the word 'humus' indicating soil or earthiness. To be humble is to embrace the world in all its brokenness and to make it a place where the Kingdom may flourish.

Assembly

Continued from p. 1

Fr. Aldino also shared a story about our founder, Fr. Louis Brisson, OSFS, and his mother. When he was a boy, Louis was speaking with his mother about his successes and failures in life. "Far from flattering her son, Louis, in his selfishness when he attained small successes, his mother taught him to treat those moments of happiness as a sign of gratitude and submission."

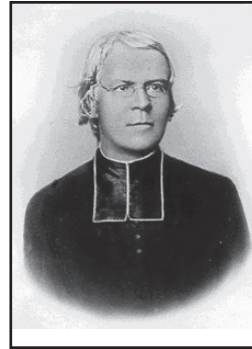
Fr. Aldino also reminded us that another element of our Oblate Life from our foundation in France in 1875 is the missionary focus that Fr. Brisson gave to us. The General said, "Our intrinsic missionary dimension makes us feel challenged: challenged to a constant openness to the needs of the Church and the current world; challenged to be continually ready to reshape ourselves, to take new paths, to set out for new Areopagus. To achieve this requires a continual process of personal openness and discernment for the will of God. This process touches deeply within us because it leads us to feel in our own flesh what it means to totally trust God."

This reminder is not just for the missionaries who traveled to far distant lands, but it is a call for all of us to go out of ourselves and serve those in need around us. Think of the parable that Jesus told of the Good Samaritan. How often do I see myself in the first two who passed by and did not stop to help? Fr. Brisson is challenging us to be the third person who stops and

serves even though we are not obligated to according to society's standards.

After Fr. Aldino had finished his reflections we began the final process of nominating a Provincial.

Fr. David Whalen, OSFS, was selected for a second term. He has served us well over the past four years. What was a bit of a surprise was the election of the Provincial Councilors. Fr. John Loughran OSFS, who edits this newsletter, gracefully declined to continue as



Fr. Louis Brisson, OSFS

a Councilor (he has served for over 20 years!!!) and so we selected someone new to serve the Province. Fr. Geoff Rose, OSFS, was newly selected along with Fr. Ron Olszewski, OSFS, and Fr. Ken McKenna, OSFS, who were selected again to serve as Councilors.

The Assembly also gave us opportunities to hear about the good work that Fr. Marty Lukas, OSFS, our Vocation Director is doing, the report of the Financial Committee, and a report about our Pastoral Plan which we adopted in 1999.

It was a spiritual, joyful, and challenging week. It was a week that reminds us of the importance of coming together to support one another and to celebrate our lives together.

Jim McHugh, OSFS, is currently a member of the faculty at Judge Memorial High School in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Arriving at Critical Masses

by Jim Roth, OSFS

“Critical mass” is a term that is in vogue these days, basically being seen as an intuitive gauge by which one ascertains whether or not an endeavor is going to fail or succeed, hence worth one’s continued effort to support or promote it. Simply put, when one employs “critical mass”, one is taking a look at an activity, movement, or event, and assesses if there are enough people present at it to excite or interest him or her to “join in” with what is going on. But there is no magic number that fits for every endeavor—it involves a *feeling*, and if the prevailing feeling is that there are enough people involved to warrant one’s own personal involvement and commitment, then odds are in the endeavor’s favor that more people will join in to be part of what is seen as being a positive and worthwhile venture. I must admit, I definitely had the feeling that, at the end of our annual Oblate Community Assembly Days (June 22-29), “critical mass” was finally evolving in our favor. To be more precise, we as an Oblate community had the true joy and grace to celebrate some very critical “Masses”—religious ceremonies that gave witness to many of our young people’s sense that our religious community is worth saying, “yes” to, and is worth embracing as a greater commitment in their lives! And as an Oblate who works directly with our younger men in formation, I couldn’t have been happier.

In two days and in three successive ceremonies, we did something I can never remember

doing as a province in such a short time: on Friday morning we welcomed *four* postulants into our community life, on Friday evening *three* novices professed their first year of religious vows, and on the following Saturday morning we celebrated the ordination of our now-youngest priest! For anyone who had the opportunity and privilege of attending any or all of these ceremonies, they were quite moving and exhilarating experiences.

It all started on Friday morning, June 29, with the reception of Erick Jorge, Bobby Lockwood, Joe Newman, and Nick Suhocki as postulants. It was a simple ceremony, taking place as part of our Assembly’s closing morning prayer, yet for these young men (and we who were present) it signified a rich *beginning*—for one year these four men will be active members within our Oblate community. Taking residence at St. Francis de Sales High School (Toledo, Ohio), and St. Mary’s Parish (Adrian, Michigan), Erick, Bobby, Joe, and Nick will live community life and minister in parish and education apostolates while discerning their call to the next step in Oblate formation, the novitiate year. For Dan Lannen, Nate Boltz, and Rudi Schwarzkopf, their novitiate year came to a close later that evening.

At 7:00 p.m. on that same Friday, Dan, Nate, and Rudi came together at Gesu Parish (Toledo) to profess, for their first time, vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. Essentially, for one year these three

young men have committed themselves to live their lives anchored by vows that bind *all* Oblates together in one common life. They will all venture to Toronto at summer’s end to begin theological



Postulants (l. to r.) Erick Jorge, Bobby Lockwood, Joe Newman and Nick Suhocki.

studies as part of their preparation for ordination to the priesthood. For Alan Zobler, his time of theological preparation and transitional deaconate came to an end the morning after the first profession.

At 11:00 on Saturday morning (June 30) Bishop Leonard Blair of the Diocese of Toledo, presided at Alan’s ordination to the priesthood. This ceremony, which also took place at Gesu Parish, boasted a large congregation and more than forty concelebrants! Bishop Blair emanated dignity and grace as he led the assembly in prayer, laying hands on Alan and calling forth the Spirit to rest upon him. Alan will remain in Toledo for this coming year, ministering at St. Francis de Sales High School as a teacher of freshman and senior religion. And given his personality, charisma, and generosity, I am sure other duties and invitations will follow!

Yes! Without a doubt the ceremonies of June 29-30 were all filled with high-energy and activity and, I am sure, more than a *little* stress, especially for those for whom the celebrations focused upon, and for those who had a direct hand in the planning and execution of them! But they also were occasions of joy, and in a sincere way, *thanksgiving*—to the parents and families of these young men

who nurtured them and supported them in their discernment, for those who guided them, mentored them, and at times *challenged them* to live their lives with commitment, for those experiences in their lives that opened them up to the possibilities of joining with us on their life's journey. But most importantly we give thanks to Erick, Bobby, Joe, Nick, Dan, Nate, Rudi, and Alan—for having trust and faith in us and our lifestyle as being *worth* their time and energy to follow, and for their faith in the one God that loves and nurtures, sustains and unites us. We pray that this same God continue to be with them and guide them in their vocational discernment, and that they may continue to exude positive example so that even *more* young people will be drawn to follow our vowed life in “critical masses”...

Jim Roth, OSFS, is the Director of Scholastics and lives in Toronto, Ontario.

Perhaps you know someone who's been thinking about life as a brother or priest? Perhaps you know someone who has qualities and abilities you think would make a good brother or priest? Invite them to consider religious life and to consider the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.

Fr. Marty Lukas, OSFS

Vocation Director

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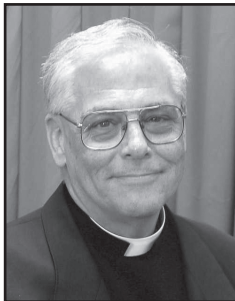
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Prov's Corner

Thank You



This edition of *Bondings* marks a very special moment in the history of our Province newsletter.

This will be the last edition for which Fr. Jack Loughran, OSFS will be Editor. With the next edition Scholastic, (Mr.) Shaun Lowery, OSFS will take over the Editor's job. In the name of our community I want to thank Shaun for agreeing to take on this task even as he continues with a full schedule of theological studies in Toronto this year.

Above all though I want to thank Fr. Jack Loughran who has been the editor of *Bondings* from the time when *Bondings* first saw the light of day way back in 1987. From the day when our community thought it would be a good idea to begin publishing something like this, Jack came forward with his incredible generosity and talent and has seen to it that *Bondings* came to you regularly all these years. Together with Mrs. Madeline Huntermark, the senior member of our office staff, who has worked with Jack on the nuts and bolts part of the publication, *Bondings* has kept us connected to you – bonded to you – all these years.

In addition to serving as editor of *Bondings*, Jack has also served on our Provincial Council for over twenty years and a slightly shorter time on the Formation Council. He has been the coordinator for our yearly Community Days

Assembly and serves as the Oblate representative on the Review Board. All of this he has done while also serving as a full-time pastor of a parish in the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan. Right now he is also in the middle of a major building project at the parish. Jack's plate is indeed very, very full.

I wish there were words to express my appreciation and that of our Province for the many, many years of dedicated service Jack has given to all these community projects but frankly I do not think the words needed for such an expression of gratitude have yet been invented. And so we are limited by those now so familiar words, “Thank You!” Jack, as you hand over some of these tasks to others please know how grateful we are and how blessed we continue to be by your dedicated and generous presence in our Oblate community and the church. Thank you, so very, very much!

David M. Whalen, O.S.F.S.
Provincial Superior
Toledo-Detroit Province



Looking to the Future

by Bob Schramm, OSFS

Eight years ago the members of the Toledo-Detroit Province voted to approve and begin the implementation of a Province Pastoral Plan. The document containing the Plan begins with a statement about our Oblate charism and spirituality, and then presents a series of creedal statements, a mission statement, and finally a group of eight commitment statements. (These texts can be found on our Province web site at www.oblates.us.) The remainder of the document lays out goals and objectives pertaining to five areas of our existence as a Province: Community Life; Vocations; Ministry; Formation; and Leadership and Government. The plan took more than four years to formulate and involved input from every province member.

In the fall of 2006, we began a review of the implementation of our Pastoral Plan. That review process will continue throughout the next ten months in each region of the Province with the help of a committee whose members are Oblates Tom Helfrich, Marty Lukas, Ron Olszewski and Bob Schramm. The committee began work last winter and made an in-depth presentation at our annual Province Assembly. We reviewed for the Province members those areas of the Plan that we believe have been successfully implemented, those where work is still needed, and some areas that may need revision because circumstances have changed. When the Province comes together in

June, 2008, we hope to finish this evaluation and again set about the process of on-going implementation.

As the Pastoral Plan was being formulated in the late 1990s five committees were formed to establish the goals mentioned above.

As they began work the committees were charged with formulating a “Declaration of Intent.” The purpose of the declaration was “to express in a literary form our best dream, our ideal.” This past year, as the Plan review committee revisited these materials we found them inspiring and that they express well what we truly believe religious life and the Oblates are to be about in the years ahead. Here are some quotes from the declarations:

COMMUNITY LIFE – The Oblates...identify the heart of community life as “the bond of love” which is the “bond of perfection.” Whether at the local, regional or provincial level, we recognize in our Salesian tradition the importance of cordiality and the insight that God is found in and through one another.

...Through our observance of chastity, we commit ourselves to one another in community. Through the vow of poverty, we throw our lot in with those with whom we share our lives. Through our practice of obedience, we strive to make God’s will our own by a communal discernment where hopes and dreams are shared, tested and brought to fruition.

Community is created and sustained by a common mission, understood and accepted by each member. Praying, working and

being together are essential, for we cannot love what we do not know.

VOCATIONS – There is one true vocation: the call to salvation and life to the full in the Lord Jesus Christ (or, in the words of our own Oblate tradition, to “Live Jesus.”)... By cooperating with God’s grace we have been led to and decided to become Oblates...

We feel that God has abundantly blessed our choice and are confident in inviting others to respond to God’s call to life in Jesus by deciding to become Oblates.

...We believe that vocations to religious life still exist among the people of God, a certain number of who will decide to live our life-style and charism... We believe that we must act upon this hope in vocations, and cannot neglect our future by being lax in our efforts to attract new members.

MINISTRY – We Oblates...believe that we exist primarily for the mission of the Church in the world and that our ministry is an outgrowth of this. Authentic ministry must flow from a sense of participation in the mission of Jesus, of the Church, of the Congregation, and of the Toledo-Detroit Province. Mission is the environment, the foundation from which our ministry flows. Unless our ministry participates in the mission of Jesus, we become simply part of the work force, social workers at best. Ministry in the Church is about becoming witnesses and disciples—witnesses by our lives to the “truth [that] will set you free;” disciples who recognize that they are teachers as well as life-long learners on the way to the New Jerusalem.

FORMATION – ...Our dream



(l. to r.) John McMenamin, Bob Schramm, Richard Morse and Bill Auth at the Assembly.

in the area of formation ...is that each and every Oblate will dedicate himself to:

- o Work toward an ever greater understanding of God's will

- o Deepen his self knowledge, by recognizing and developing his own gifts

- o Come to a responsible understanding of his own proper human dignity

- o Act out of freedom grounded in a person and interior conviction

- o Develop an increasing awareness of our commitment to the poor and of the multi-cultural and ethnic realities of our world.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT – The qualities of leadership emphasized and needed by all groups are found to an eminent degree in the life and doctrine of St. Francis de Sales. Among the qualities most desired are respect for the integrity of each person, a warm and welcoming disposition, freedom of expression and a sharing of mutual concerns and interests in mutual adult relationships.

...To make these qualities more active and evident, new forms and new styles of leadership have emerged in our day. These forms, flowing from the Second Vatican Council's teaching on authority as an evangelical expression of loving service, place emphasis on commitment to common goals, collaboration at all levels, and active participation in mission, team functioning and continuing dialogue.

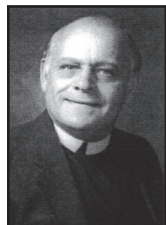
May the work of reviewing our Province Pastoral Plan help bring it from "plan" to fruition.

Bob Schramm, OSFS, is the pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Adrian, Michigan.

Obituary

Paul Spaeder, OSFS 1932-2007

Bro. Paul Spaeder, OSFS, was born on January 23, 1932,



in Erie, PA, and graduated from St. John's School and then Cathedral Prep in Erie before entering our community

in 1952. He made his first profession of Vows on his birthday in 1954, and his perpetual profession of Vows in 1959, at De Chantal Hall in Lewiston, NY.

Paul spent most of his ministry behind the scenes serving in positions at Salesianum in Wilmington, Salesian in Detroit, De Sales in Lockport, Central Catholic in Modesto, CA, Lumen Christi in Jackson, St. Francis in Toledo, and finally at St. Anthony's in Manteca, California.

Bondings is published regularly for the members and friends of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Toledo-Detroit Province. Its purpose is to enhance and develop the bond we have through our common faith and spirituality.

We have no bond but the bond of love.
-St. Francis de Sales

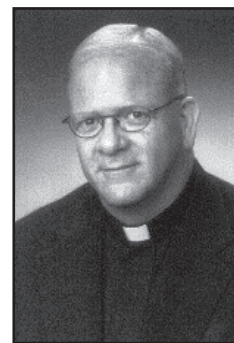
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From the Editor...

It hardly seems possible, but I actually published the first issue of *Bondings* twenty years ago this month. In that time I've been privileged to interview many Oblates, and read and publish articles written by Oblates, friends and strangers; each one generously sharing their lives, their interests and their spirituality.



All in all, this has been an enjoyable and an enriching experience for me. Now though, it is time for someone else to take over this job. It's time for me to move on to other things. It is also time for a fresh viewpoint and new energy. So, with this letter I am sending you my final issue as editor. The new editor, Shaun Lowery, O.S.F.S. will take over by the time the next issue is due.

Thanks to all who have contributed to this publication and those who have faithfully read it, or at least told me you did. I appreciated the support.

Blessings to all.

In Christ,

Jack Loughran, O.S.F.S.

Jack Loughran, O.S.F.S.



Whatever Happened to...

Ron Olszewski currently serves as the President of St. Francis de Sales High School in Toledo, Ohio.



This past summer Ron was re-selected by the Toledo-Detroit Province to serve as a Provincial Councillor. Ron serves the Province and

the greater-Toledo community in a variety of ways. Most recently he served on the committee that is reviewing the Province Pastoral Plan (see Bob Schramm's article pp. 6-7). On the weekends you'll probably find Ron either cheering on the St. Francis Knights at one of their many sporting events, participating in development projects for the school, or assisting with weekend Masses at Christ the King Parish in Toledo.

Ken McKenna carries out many responsibilities in the Toledo-Detroit Province.



Most recently Ken was re-selected to serve by the Province as a member of the Provincial Council. Ken has just finished up directing a novitiate class

which resulted in three newly professed Oblates this past June. Ken also serves as the Director of the De Sales Center in Brooklyn, Michigan, where you can find him doing everything from administrative work to cooking. Ken also finds himself helping with sacramental ministry to the Deaf. This year Ken will travel to India and Brazil to work with Oblate formators in those areas.

At the Toledo-Detroit Province Assembly in June, Geoff Rose was selected as a new member of the



Provincial Council. Geoff is currently the chaplain at Lumen Christi High School in Jackson, Michigan. Geoff spent his summer

traveling and working with Catholic Heart Work Camps. Geoff's ministry as chaplain at Lumen Christi involves him in the life of the student community, in Kairos retreats and mission trips with the students and faculty of Lumen Christi. Weekends find Geoff helping with Sunday Masses throughout the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan.

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