



Oblates of Mary Immaculate - OMI

ST. EUGENE PROVINCE OF INDIA

Pilgrims with the Poor Towards Fullness of Life



Brief History of OMI India : 1968 - 2018

- ◆ The Indian Oblate Mission was founded 50 years ago by Fr. Anthony Fernando, O.M.I. then Provincial of Sri Lanka
- ◆ Thus, the OMI congregation was welcomed to Indian soil by Madras-Mylapore Archbishop Rt. Rev. Dr. R. Arulappa in June 29, 1968 from Sri Lanka, although oblates are working there since 1847.
- ◆ The first two pioneer Oblate missionaries, from Sri Lanka, Frs. Emmanuel Mariampillai and Stanislaus Philips, set foot in India on June 29, 1968. They were officially installed in a simple ceremony by the Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore, Most Rev. Dr. R. Arulappa, on July 1, 1968.
- ◆ Faithful to the charism the pioneers declined city parishes offered by the archbishop and chose voluntarily to serve in Kancheepurm, the farthest and poorest mission of the diocese.
- ◆ The Indian Oblate congregation has steadily grown since 1968, initially as mission till 1979 and then as delegation of Colombo Province, and later in 2010 they blossomed as a Province christened as St. Eugene Province of India with Fr. Francis Nallappan as its first provincial.
- ◆ Right from the beginning our missionary vision was to be Pilgrims with the poor towards fullness of life: with pastoral activities, Indian Oblates are working for human dignity of the marginalized, the abandoned, tribal people, dalits, girls, women, empowering the different faces of the poor through education and those with special needs, in the most difficult places.
- ◆ St. Eugene province of India gives more importance to promote and defend the dignity of oppressed people, and working for the religious harmony through the promotion of interreligious dialogue.
- ◆ The Indian Oblates have made it their goal to work toward religious harmony in India. The country has long been known for its diversity, with its people grouped into thousands of sects based on religious and ethnic grounds.
- ◆ “We grow and live as ‘Indian Oblates,’ not as Oblates of Tamil, Telugu, Hindi origin or with any other divisive forces of caste, language or color,” said Fr. Francis Nallappan, O.M.I. former Provincial of the St. Eugene Province of India. “We respect and dialogue with people of all religions and cultures. This is a big calling for us as Oblates.”
- ◆ since only two percent of the people of India are Christians, we have many reasons to live out the Oblate charism to serve those who are the poorest and most abandoned, no matter their religion or culture.
- ◆ From Tamil Nadu OMI spread its missionary presence and evangelizing ministry to Karnataka (1973), Andhra Pradesh (1984), Chattisgarh (2004), Maharashtra (2005), West Bengal (2012), Assam (2012), Meghalaya (2014), and Telengana (2015).
- ◆ Vocations are strong, with over 35 Indian Oblate Scholastics, and nearly 70 students in other formation houses. At present we have 110 oblates in India, 15 Indian oblates working abroad as missionaries as per 2018.
- ◆ Our cultural diversity is truly Indian identity for the Oblates. For **OMI India, 2018** is a historical milestone. It is very significant for our life on completing 50 years of journey of a small seed that took roots in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu, as well as in a few states in India.
- ◆ We thank God the almighty for the special grace He bestowed on St. Eugene de Mazenod our Father and Founder of OMI and Bishop of Marseilles, France. St. Eugene’s Charism, Oblate Cross and identification with Bl. Mary Immaculate remain marks of our special identity in India.

Courtesy : Province Archives, & BORN, OMI India