



# SEMINARIAN SPONSORSHIP CLUB

MARCH 2024

EDUCATION AND FORMATION OF FUTURE OBLATE PRIESTS AND BROTHERS



Superior of the U.S. Province Fr. Raymond Cook, OMI, accepts the four seminarians to the congregation after they profess their perpetual vows

## Four Seminarians Profess Perpetual Vows

Four seminarians made their profession of perpetual vows as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate before the United States Provincial, Fr. Raymond Cook, OMI, on December 8, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The Mass was celebrated at the Immaculate Conception Memorial Chapel at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio.

The young men are Bros. David Peter Lombe Chisha, OMI, of Zambia; Jacques-Marie Liba, OMI, of Chad; and Joseph Anaguede Dogo, OMI, and Maximilien Kolbe Kenfack-Meizang, OMI, both of Cameroon.

Also in attendance were Fr. Jim Allen, OMI, who represented Superior General Fr. Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso, OMI. †



Brothers Maximilien Kolbe Kenfack-Meizang, OMI; David Chisha, OMI; Joseph Anaguede Dogo, OMI; and Bro. Jacques-Marie Liba, OMI, with their gold and black Oblate crosses and copies of the Congregation Ordo

# How a Woman in Tears Changed a Seminarian's Perspective

Brother Musonda Chota, OMI, was taken aback when a woman he was meeting with broke down in tears while sharing her story.

After all, displays of strong emotion in public are outside the cultural norm in Bro. Musonda's native Zambia in south-central Africa. He is from the small town of Mufulira, which is in the diocese of Ndola near the border with border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Brother Musonda is a third-year seminarian with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He is currently studying at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. At the time of his encounter with the woman in tears, he was working there with a class on the Order (previously, Rite) of Christian Initiation of Adults.



Brother Musonda Chota accompanied a candidate in the OCIA class during the Rite of Acceptance by Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller. It was in this class that Br. Musonda had an encounter that helped shape how he approaches ministry today



Brother Musonda Chota, OMI (left), learned of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate through his brother's best friend, Macario Mumba (right), in their hometown of Mufulira, Zambia

"I went back and sat in reflection and thought about what was going on," Bro. Musonda said of the experience. "What came to mind was the story of Jesus, Mary and Martha after Lazarus died and how Jesus wept. That was in public, too, and I thought about how Jesus shares in our sorrows and has such empathy."

That encounter served as a pivotal experience for Bro. Musonda and helped solidify a style of pastoring he hopes to take with him into his future as a Missionary Oblate. Brother Musonda talked about how he strives to consistently be in the current moment, regardless of whom he is talking to or what he is doing.

"It's something I'm learning as a seminarian," he said. "I want to live in the moment because once it goes, you can't bring it back."

Brother Musonda was 15 years old when he felt the call of God. It came through the best friend of his brother, Kelvin. That friend, Macario Mumba, returned to small town of Mufulira with a silver and black cross — an Oblate Cross that is part of first vow ceremonies.

Silver and black crosses are given to Missionary Oblates when they take their first vows. Gold and black crosses are given to them when they take their final perpetual vows.

The cross served as a starting point for the journey Bro. Musonda is on today. He took his first vows in 2020 and had plans to go to Rome to continue his education. Covid made the trip impossible. He spent the next year in Mongu in the Western Province of Zambia at Oblate Radio Liseli before coming to San Antonio in August 2021.

For the past two and a half years, Bro. Musonda has advanced through seminary while gaining pastoral experience at various places in San Antonio. During his time there, he has ministered at Catholic Charities, San Juan de los Lagos Parish and Shrine, and now at Our Lady of the Lake University with the campus ministry.

"The university culture can be very different from the parish culture," he said. "It is really a blessing to hear the students' experiences and hear how their worldview may be different from that of a seminarian."

Bro. Musonda said he is unsure where his future will take him but that he is open to going where the need is. He soon will be sent to a mission for a year before returning to San Antonio to finish his studies and receive his dual master's degrees in theology and divinity.

As he prepares for that future, he thinks back to the lady who broke down in tears in his OCIA class.

"It taught be something about myself that I needed to learn," he said. "It taught me to see beyond my experience to the experiences of others and about God's presence through everything." †

# "This Parish Is Preparing Me Well"

Variety and formation are the watchwords that describe the internship year of Bro. Stancovich "Stanco" Simukonda, OMI, at St. Ferdinand Parish in San Fernando, California. The parish traces its roots back to 1797 and the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate have been running it for over 100 years.



Brother Stanco Simukonda, OMI (third from left), speaking with a youth group at St. Ferdinand Parish in San Fernando, California

## A Variety of Ministries

The large, diverse St. Ferdinand Parish has presented Bro. Stanco an opportunity to serve and preach at Mass and get involved with many different ministries. "I am involved with faith formation by helping teach those preparing for Confirmation and the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (previously known as RCIA)," said Bro. Stanco. "I have found this ministry to be very important for the Church and of course for my own formation," said Bro. Stanco, "because it is through faith formation that we help people to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and lead them to holiness."

"I also work with the youth ministry, the immigration ministry, the Small (Group) Faith Community, the Knights of Columbus, the Legion of Mary, and the Eucharistic Revival campaign." Brother Stanco is also involved with a new program called "That Man Is You (TMIY)," which is a new group at the parish designed to help men learn how to be better husbands and Christians.

# Preparing Me Well Continues from page three

## Youth and Refugees

Brother Stanco noted that youth have a special place with the Missionary Oblates dating from the foundation of the order. “Actually, one of the very first ministries of our founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, was to respond to the needs of young people,” said Bro. Stanco.

“As Oblates, we want to learn, listen, and hear the needs and challenges of the youths so that we can walk together in this journey of faith. This is the reason I decided to be part of this ministry during my internship.



Father Carlos Alarcon, OMI, and Br. Stanco Simukonda, OMI, greet parishioners at St. Ferdinand Church in San Fernando, California

I desire to learn from them, and I want to help them grow in love of God to be good human beings in the community, to be good Christians and eventually to be saints as our founder desired.”

Brother Stanco also works with the immigration office at the parish’s outreach center. This ministry helps people with immigration paperwork and with material and spiritual needs. The group distributes food parcels twice a month in conjunction with a local Lutheran Church.

“More than 300 people receive food on these days,” said Bro. Stanco. “This is encouraging and enriching for my formation to be involved in the ministry that was dear to St. Eugene de Mazenod when he devoted himself to the service of the refugees in Marseilles. He actually had a better understanding of what it means to be a refugee because he, himself was a political refugee in Italy.”

## An Opportunity to Grow

Brother Stanco works with the Eucharistic Revival groups, and he trains lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. He appreciates the opportunity to experience and become involved with so many different areas of his faith and parish.

“Being involved in all these ministries I am very excited and pleased because I am being formed holistically,” said Bro. Stanco. “My human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation are deepening and challenging me to have a profound reflection, develop leadership skills, and be able to make good and informed judgements.”

The internship experience has been good preparation for his future work as a Missionary Oblate.

“This time has been an opportunity for me to grow my relationship with God and people as a Missionary Oblate preparing for priesthood,” said Bro. Stanco. “I can say that this parish is preparing me well how to be a good Oblate priest ready to work whenever my service will be needed in the Church and for the glory of God.” †



Brother Stancovich Los Angeles Preaching



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