

IMPORTANT EVENTS & DATES

(If you can't make these events, please pray about them.)

Feb 29	Mazenod College Inaugural Mass, Victoria
Mar 8 - 10	HOPs' Weekend
Mar 25	WYD Cross and Icon in Eagle Vale
Mar 30	Rosies Mass, Victoria
Apr 18-20	Antioch Weekend, South Australia
May 9 - 11	IOYE Team Meeting (Pentecost)
July 6 - 9	IOYE Set-Up (for Team)
July 9 - 12	IOYE!
July 13	IOYE Pack-Up (for Team)
July 15 - 20	World Youth Day, Sydney

FACES of OYA



L-R: Damien Keady, Fran Holt, Andrew Pinto

Damien (Damo) Keady, 24, was a foundation member of OYA, beginning his involvement through St John Vianney's (Vic) OYA community in 2000. He is Head of the Catering Portfolio for the IOYE and a Rosies volunteer. Damo has attended five NOYEs and his best OYA experience was the Final Mass at the 2002 NOYE in Gerroa, NSW- "candles filled the room, Lisa Fawkner sang with Lauren and Sarah Schade; it was amazing- Christ was truly there." He enjoys reading, writing, music, walks on the beach and poetry. Despite joking that OYA has been a "welcome financial burden", Damo says OYA has been his "port in the storm". "Through OYA my faith has been challenged, deepened and strengthened year after year, Encounter after Encounter," he says. In a typical 'Damo' analogy, he says "I have found friendships I'm sure will outlast the hairs on my head."

Fran Holt, 20, belongs to Mary Immaculate Parish, Eagle Vale, NSW. She is studying Philosophy and English Literature at University and enjoys Irish dancing, drama and music. Fran became involved with Oblate Youth Australia (OYA) four years ago when some school friends invited her to the parish's youth group. She had just arrived from South Africa. "I thought I would give it a try, make some new friends and become a part of something more meaningful than the existential humdrum of everyday life," she says. In her local OYA community, Fran has helped stage productions and host monthly Youth Masses. Fran has attended four National Oblate Youth Encounters (NOYEs) and is a member of the IOYE Team. "Oblate Youth Australia has provided me with a family of friends from all over Australia who have each, in their own special way, shaped and influenced who I am today," she says.

Andrew Pinto, 22, has been a leader of Good Shepherd Youth Group (Vic)- OYA's cousin-parish, for almost two years. He attended his first NOYE last year and is Head of the Technology Portfolio for the IOYE. Andrew is also a volunteer and Team Captain for Rosies. He is studying commerce at university and enjoys music, reading, writing and jogging. Andrew says OYA "establishes the idea of being part of a bigger family where young people like yourself can develop their faith". He describes the recent Reception of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon at Mazenod College as an "incredible" experience of community. "OYA has cast a net onto Australian Youth to explore their faith," he says. Andrew's hope is that "the IOYE will cast this net further, challenging both Australian & International youth to be a 'Witness to the World'."

'Summertime n' the livin' is easy'

The travelling diary of Victoria's Summer Rosies 2008...

The news that it was going to be a hot week came as no surprise. The team was quality, not quantity. But that's nothing new to us. It wasn't a holiday and it wasn't paid work- It's friendship.

The cliché quote is 'A friend in need is a friend indeed;' idealistic perhaps but the meaning will always remain real and true...a reason to keep returning to the world of night, loneliness and illness perhaps.

'So, the seaside came as a relief'... **Day One**

The smell of barbecued meat, salty air and fresh, cut vegetables helped blow away the cobwebs of our inland routine. The sun warmed the hearts of our makeshift beach cricket team...

'Because a hotdog just ain't a hotdog without tomato sauce, American mustard and cheese'... **Day Two**

We went to the boatsheds of the Yarra in a nameless yet unforgettable street. There we found a sheltered space, a resting place to dish out the food, set up our pitch, and bat and bowl the night away...

'Let's bring them an exotic island getaway'... **Day Three**

PIZZA and tropical punch~Aloha! We enjoyed a summer evening with 'Everybody's Going Surfin' playing and leis around our necks...

To our regular Wednesday Night... **Day four.** And then coming in at a scorching 41 degrees, **Day Five** was the hottest gig yet!

Still the crowds flocked in and so did the Jazzy sounds of band 'Alex Anonymous' as we commenced our last themed night of the summer spell... a night to remember! The heat in the end was no match for cheese and crackers, chilled fizzy drinks galore and enough ice blocks to make the North Pole seem irrelevant.

On **Day Six** we enjoyed a well-deserved dinner before heading out on street... thank god it's Friday!

- Kath Card



envision

OBLATE YOUTH AUSTRALIA UPDATE

Christian Community Challenging 'i-syndrome'



For Christmas this year I received an i-dog. You might ask yourself as I did, 'what exactly is an i-dog?' Basically, it is a speaker for your i-pod, or if you are a rebel, your 'MP3 player'; which is in the shape of a dog and dances to the music with flashing light to boot. As you could imagine, it was at the top of my list of Christmas gifts as a Catholic priest, thanks all the same, Mum and Dad.

If we take a few moments to stop and look around us, we discover that we are becoming an i-world. Apart from the fact that anything that's new is called an 'i-something' for marketing reasons, I couldn't help noticing that 'i' is the focus. As an 'i-society' we are becoming increasing individualistic, independent, inhumane, intolerant and isolated. I am sure we could spend a great amount of time reflecting on the subsequent accumulative effect of the 'i-syndrome' felt throughout society in areas such as depression, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, to name a few.

The more important question is: as people of faith, what do we have to offer the 'i-world'? The very nature of christian community is an antidote for the 'i-syndrome'. When we build and participate in a genuine christian community, we become a counter-cultural community. As a christian community, we share companionship in place of individualism, we accept co-dependency in place of independency, compassion in place of inhumanity, compromise in the face of intolerance and genuine concern for others in place of individualism.

The christian message lived through community is a radical message of hope in our 'i-world' today. WYD is a reminder that we have an opportunity to share this counter-cultural message with the entire world. The Oblate Charism of community is something which we will celebrate in a particular way at the International Oblate Youth Encounter in July.

- Fr Christian Fini, OMI



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FAITH
MISSION
COMMUNITY

"Through the eyes of Christ... we see the world."
"Through the eyes of Christ... we see the world."

An invitation to the parents of OYA

An invitation to the parents of OYA



The World Youth Day Cross was entrusted to the young people of the world in 1984 by Pope John Paul II with the words, "My dear young people... I entrust to you the sign of this Jubilee Year: the Cross of Christ! Carry it throughout the world as a symbol of Christ's love for humanity..." Since then the cross has been carried to all corners of the globe, voicing the promise of redemption and hope in places of death and division around the world; smuggled behind the iron curtain, Ground Zero in New York, through the Brandenburg Gates in Berlin and most recently to the border of North and South Korea and places ravaged by the Boxing Day Tsunami.

In 2003, John Paul II gave young people a second symbol of faith to accompany the WYD Cross on its journey - the Icon of Our Lady. He said, "It will be a sign of Mary's motherly presence close to young people who are called, like the Apostle John, to welcome her into their lives."

On their pilgrim journey at the International Oblate Youth Encounter (IOYE), in the days preceding World Youth Day in Sydney, the young Oblate family will gather around their own cross and icon, echoing the journey of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon. For the Oblates, the Cross is a significant sign of God's love for the world, as it was before the cross that St Eugene de Mazenod felt the love of God and was called to be a messenger of that love in the world. Alongside the Oblate Cross will stand a Marian Icon, commissioned for the IOYE. After the IOYE has concluded, this Icon will be passed into the hands of the young people of Oblate Youth Australia (OYA), as a reminder of the witness of the IOYE.

All supporters, friends and parents of OYA are invited to contribute to this lasting legacy, this image which will remain with Oblate youth for many years to come as an image of parental love and compassion. We invite you to be a part of OYA history...

If you would like to contribute to the purchase of the OYA Marian Icon, please download a brochure from www.oblateyouth.com or www.oblates.com.au

OYA IN SA

It took a red light on The Golden Way, Golden Grove for me to realise the impact the World Youth Day Cross and Icon had on the community. On November 16th 2007, the World Youth Day (WYD) Cross and Icon made an appearance at Gleeson College in Adelaide and a handful of Oblate Youth from Tea Tree Gully provided the music for the Reception. I was in the car on my way back from the Adelaide airport heading to Gleeson College for the Reception with Frances Holt and Lauren Schade in tow. A large group of policemen on motorbikes passed through the intersection which made me believe it was another Chasers stunt. What else would draw so much attention? Then I saw it... perched on the back of a flat tray Ute was the WYD Cross which I had heard so much about. The three of us screamed with delight and as soon as the light went green, I used my precision driving skills to catch up with the Cross and Icon cavalcade that meant so much to us. It amazed me that they had so much protection guiding them through the city. These simple symbols of our faith literally stopped traffic as they made their way towards us from various parts of the world.

It wasn't an Oblate event, but this was my first encounter with the WYD Cross and Icon and it really shook me and prepared me for what was to come. Even though Colonel Light bet him to it, Fr Christian Fini wanted Oblate Youth to put Tea Tree Gully (TTG) on the map; and we did. It started with a Reception and Handover of the Cross and Icon at Dernancourt Parish, which then led into a retreat day and mass at St David's Church in TTG. In the evening following a roast dinner at Greenwith Community Centre, musicians from TTG tried their hand at hosting a musical extravaganza for the family and friends of Oblate Youth Australia (OYA). It was really amazing to see such an awesome turnout; people coming from Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and all over South Australia. A day full of joy, praise, prayer, reflection, and celebration is something that only OYA could put on so magnificently.

So what's in store for OYA in South Australia now? A large portion of Oblate Youth in TTG are members of Antioch, so the upcoming Antioch weekend bears on the horizon for many of us (April 18-20 if you're interested!). Preparation for the Antioch Weekend kicks off within weeks, as does the celebration of 25 years of Antioch in TTG. With as many as 30 people from South Australia attending the International Oblate Youth Encounter (IOYE), many of us will be busy for the next 6 months or so. It looks like there'll be plenty to do for a while, whether preparing the Antioch weekend, recruiting participants and learning songs and dances for IOYE or writing some of the many prayers that will be said during that week in July. It's easy to see that we're all getting to see what excitement OYA will bring us in 2008.

- Melissa English, SA



"We're all in this together"

From Thursday 17- Sunday 20 January, a team of over 60 young people gathered at Mazenod College, Victoria to prepare for the International Oblate Youth Encounter (IOYE). The Team comprises youth from every state in which Oblate Youth Australia (OYA) has a presence. It was truly inspiring to see so much enthusiasm and talent coming together from far and wide. The attendance of around 10 Oblates, including the Provincial, Fr Harry Dyer, OMI was also an encouraging witness of the Province's support of our endeavours.

This preparation 'weekend' was a great chance for the HOPs (Heads of Portfolios) to put some of their plans into action and complete practical tasks alongside their teams. It was a chance to further strengthen our community of committed and spirit-filled team-members and reaffirm the relevance of Ben Lee's lyrics, "We're all in this together." With staff from Mazenod College and some parishioners from nearby St John Vianney's Parish present to support the Team, the importance of our Oblate family was evident to all.

With a mixture of prayer, practice and planning, the Team prepared to 'Witness to the World'. On Saturday (19 Jan), we were privileged to welcome the World Youth Day Cross and Icon to Mazenod and spend some quiet time before these symbols at a Youth Retreat. Later that night we hosted a reception liturgy which was attended by local parishioners, Mazenod students and of course, Oblates.

- Alisha Johnson



IOYE will be held from 9-12 July this year at Mazenod College, Victoria before World Youth Day in Sydney.

If you're keen to join the Oblate Pilgrimage which includes IOYE and World Youth Day, secure your place now! Registration Packs for Australian pilgrims are available at www.oblates.com.au. Final payments for this once-in-a-lifetime journey must be made by 14 March.

Also, there are exciting and rewarding opportunities available for adults to get involved in the journey! For information about registering as a Pilgrim Host or Adult Volunteer, Expression of Interest Forms are available at www.oblates.com.au.

For further information, please contact Oblate Youth Ministries: (03) 9795 5077 or ioye08@oblates.com.au

"Witness to the World"

IOYE Prayer



Loving God,

You create, redeem and mission us as your Oblate community to be a witness to the world.

Inspired by St Eugene de Mazenod, we follow the call to leave nothing undared for your kingdom.

As we prepare to gather as one in Australia at the International Oblate Youth Encounter, may we all hear, accept and share in the call to see the world through your eyes.

Amen.

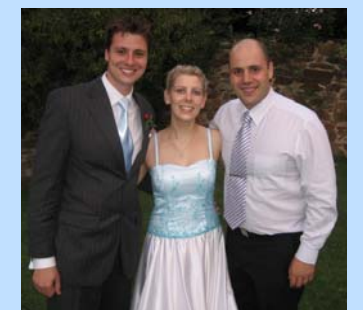
St Eugene de Mazenod... pray for us.

Congratulations to Ben Stevens and Vanessa (Ness) Van de Weyer, married Saturday 2nd Feb

Ben and Ness have been involved in Tea Tree Gully's Antioch group and parish for many years.

They are both on Team for IOYE and Ben will be an MC for the event.

We wish you all the best for your life together.



R-L: Ben, Ness, Fr Christian

