

China China China

On the 24th of August Petrina Rinkin and Georgina Ahern, the newest participants in Partners in Mission, arrived in Beijing. They will work with China Little Flower taking care of handicapped children as well as teaching English in the local primary school.

They want to share with us why they are in Beijing and why they want to make a difference, no matter how small, to another person's life.

At 26 years of age, and an only child this will be my first time away from home (Sydney, Australia) where I have been a part of the Oblate Youth Group in my local parish for 6 years as both a leader and participant. Saying goodbye to my family, friends and job for something completely new and challenging has been quite daunting. However from my experience with the Oblates, I don't see it as leaving behind family and friends, but merely extending on those I already have. In today's society it is difficult to find the opportunity to put the words we are taught at mass each week into action. While being at youth group we are continuously challenged to 'leave nothing undared' and to be a 'witness to the world'. This is why I chose to participate in the Partners in Mission Program.

Petrina Rinkin

I am a 22 year old graduate nurse who has never wanted for anything. Growing up in a loving family who have helped me and supported me through everything I did during my life such as reading me bedtime stories, putting a band aid on my knee when I fell over - these are simple things that we in the "lucky country" take for granted.

I was raised a Catholic, but until this experience I have never felt as if I have truly demonstrated my faith. I studied nursing at the University of Notre Dame and there learnt of the China Little Flower mission. This seemed to me the perfect way to demonstrate the Catholic faith and to help pass on all the gifts that my family has given to me. It may seem like a small thing to sit and read a book, or give a hug to a child crying but these are the fondest memories I have of childhood and to think of children going without these basic necessities breaks my heart. Because of this we are here in China, doing what we have always been taught: "to love one another" and hopefully make a difference, no matter how small, to another person's life. We hope to continue in the footsteps of other Christians, like Mother Teresa, who spend their lives serving the poorest of the poor.

Georgina Ahern



envision

OBLATE YOUTH AUSTRALIA UPDATE

THE BEATITUDES

I am sure you have all heard of the Beatitudes and might even be able to quote at least a few. Within our faith tradition there are many things we hear over and over again. Sometimes they become so familiar we take them for granted. Conversely, there exist grey areas, which are vague and tend to confuse us.

The word 'Beatitudes' comes from the Latin *beatitudo* meaning 'blessedness.' The phrase 'Blessed are...' in each of the Beatitudes implies a current state of happiness or well being. They are simple, yet profound statements. They guide, point and teach us. They show us the values that Christ most cherished. If these values are truly lived they can only bring peace and happiness.

"The pursuit of **real** happiness' was chosen as the theme for our next National Oblate Youth Encounter (NOYE) in January 2010. In the context of the Beatitudes, the NOYE will focus on those values which pertain to the areas of personal, social and environmental ethics. We hope that the great liturgies and community building time will empower participants to explore 'real happiness' in their own lives and share it with the world.

There have been a number of developments and blessings within the OYA community. Recently, we have been blessed with two new communities; one at Burpengary Parish (QLD) and the establishment of a new senior group for over 25 year olds based at St Mary's (VIC). In late August, Petrina Rinkin, a long standing member of our community and Georgina Ahern, left for the Oblate mission in China to be part of our Partners in Mission (PIM) program. Petrina and Georgina are currently in Beijing, working in an orphanage and migrant school. Please keep Petrina and Georgina in your prayers. Closer to home, we have had Damien Keady and Veronica Holt participate in our PIM program based at Oblate Youth Central. PIM Mulgrave is a joint project between Rosies and OYA. Active members will be able to live at Oblate Youth Central for a minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 2 months and offer 15 hrs of work a week to contribute their skills to Oblate functions and their local parish communities.

Once again, many exciting things are happening around the country, with the renewal of some groups and establishment of new groups.

Keep praying and supporting one another.

God bless

Fr. Christian Fini omi



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



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Encounter 2010

Known for his drawling American accent, Forrest Gump is oft quoted in various contexts. He is a character of great inspiration, which despite his intellectual limitations, was determined to make his mark on the world. He is renowned for his philosophy: "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get." This is indeed true of life and it cannot be denied that most of us are constantly reaching into a box and fumbling around for something we like. Sometimes we are disappointed, yet at other times we are pleasantly surprised.

At the beginning of this year, I reached into the chocolate box, unsure of what to expect and was pleasantly surprised. In January, I attended my first National Oblate Youth Encounter, in Melbourne. Although I had been a member of the Oblate community in Sydney, Eagle Vale, for a number of years I was still nervous about attending the event. A hundred insecurities flooded through my head about whether I should go or not. A few weeks before the event, I found myself staring at a computer screen having just discovered a flight bargain on Virgin Blue. I must have contemplated the screen for a while because it suddenly went blank and a bubble flashed before me, notifying me that my time had expired. Stupidly, I felt that notice had been a sign telling me to abandon my search and stay at home. I felt oddly sad. My melancholic mood must have pervaded the house for some time, for the week after my mother strode into my room and wordlessly handed me my flight itinerary to Melbourne. My face must have betrayed my anger, because she retreated very quickly. It is strange how we live life forwards, yet understand it backwards, for it is only now that I truly appreciate my mother's actions.

As you probably have guessed, I went to Encounter...I didn't really have much of a choice -thanks mom! But I am so grateful that she pushed me to go. The people I met, the friendships I made and the friendliness of the Oblate community was overwhelming. The time I spent there allowed me the opportunity to deepen my own faith and remind me why I was a Catholic, because it is so easy to forget. The theme, *Harvest*, for this particular Encounter was extremely significant for me as it seemed to have been designed specifically to provide answers to my own personal gripes and struggles. Over the weekend, in line with this theme, we were encouraged to use and share those gifts and talents which had been endowed to each of us, something which I had failed to do in the previous months. There is little doubt that everyone on this camp gained something, whether it was through the workshops, liturgies or community time.

I cannot promise that your chocolate tastes are similar to mine. Yet I believe that Encounter is designed to cater for all personalities and needs. If you are unsure about what to expect, remember, what Forrest said, essentially that is what life is all about. I implore you to reach into the box and rummage around, because you may be pleasantly surprised with what you get.

Veronica Holt

Burpengary Youth Group QLD
Burpengary Youth Group QLD

On Monday the 25th of May, the Oblate Youth Group for St. Eugene and Christ the King, along with Fr. Tony, occasionally Fr. Paul and most recently Fr. David, celebrated their first official meeting! After a brief visit and helping hand from Fr. Fini, the three girls managed to pin down a date and time and we were off and running. Naturally, things were a little rocky to start with, what with working around school, work and university timetables and because the meeting was scheduled at 7.30 pm some poor individuals missed their dinner! But we had a plan and dealt with empty stomachs, as members brought a plate of food or some drinks, which gave us all a chance to unwind, catch up with one another and see how everyone's week had been and how they were going. Our little group of three has grown to twelve and we have been very blessed with the help and guidance given to us by Fr. Tony who has been a wonderful mentor and has braved our questions and queries armed with his wisdom and sneaky humour!



After the Gospel reading and reflection we have a *Food for the Soul* activity that either echoes the Gospel reading or helps to initiate a deeper faith exploration.

Socially, we have had a few trips to the movies and are looking forward to *Carols by Candlelight* in December. At the moment we are in the process of planning and implementing fundraisers to help aid us financially so that we are all able to go to the next National Oblate Youth Encounter!

Raska Flux

Faces of Oblate Youth



David Glynn, 17, is a student at Iona College in Brisbane, Queensland. Whilst David has been a part of the Oblate family through his affiliation with the school, it was only at the beginning of 2009 that he attended his first National Encounter. As a newcomer, David was unsure of what to expect, and indeed felt fairly ambivalent about the prospect of joining a youth group. He has, however, been positively affected by the experiences gained through Encounter and thus attended the Pentecost celebrations in May. David is actively involved in his schooling life, and is particularly interested in Basketball and was recently made captain of the 1st Team. He is also a conscientious student, dedicated to his studies and committed to spreading the Oblate Charism through his amiable and friendly nature. His addition to the Oblate Youth family has been extremely positive and we hope he will continue to be actively involved.



As a member of Mary Immaculate Oblate Youth Group in NSW, Eagle Vale, Emma, 22, has recently become the state co-ordinator. Emma's active involvement and participation has had a colossal effect on the youth group and has seen it grow and develop exponentially. Emma has been involved in all facets of Eagle Vale Youth Group, from organising camps, to running liturgies and youth masses on weekends. Currently Emma is employed at Mount Carmel High School as part of its Youth Ministry Team and is assisting young students with their religious and spiritual development. In 2009, Emma assisted Kim Brady with the running of a highly efficacious workshop on *Oblate Charism* at the National Encounter. Hopefully, she will continue aiding Oblate Youth through her experience, dependability and commitment to the group.



Joshua, 18, recently became state co-ordinator of Oblate Youth in Adelaide, SA. His appointment was made in light of his acute leadership qualities and his ability to co-ordinate and organise events. Joshua is studying Law and International Studies at the University of Adelaide. Although Joshua has only been involved in Oblate Youth for a year, he has made his mark through his active participation and indispensable leadership skills. The catalyst for his involvement in Oblate Youth is a consequence of the many friendships which he has gained and the gentle nurturing of spirituality and faith which occurs through the flexibility of the youth group: Joshua observes, 'I like Oblate Youth because it is less structured than other youth groups, allowing the youth to take on more responsibility and explore their faith more openly.'

Important Dates and Events

3rd-4th Oct NOYE Planning weekend

27th-28th Nov Burpengary formation weekend

10th-14th Jan (2010) NOYE South Australia

