Anglo-Irish Province – Younger Oblates meeting.

PRESENT: Michael Moore, Tomasz Koscinski, Lorcan O'Reilly, Martin Moran, Kevin McLaughlin, Irvin Morastil, John McFadden, Leo Philomin
APOLOGIES: Ray Warren, Terry Murray

We met 29th Feb to 2nd March 2012 in our Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall, Crewe, England. Eight of a possible ten Oblates who are aged under 50 years met. We come from varied ministries. Two of our members are on loan to our mission, Tomasz is from Poland (having been on mission in Turkmenistan for many years) and Irvin from the Philippines Province. Kevin is completing a Masters in Environmental Studies. John is currently working as a Prison Chaplain in Edinburgh, Scotland and lives in our Centre of Mission in Leith. Lorcan is the Director of our Partners in Mission project and is involved in promoting the Oblate charism and Mazenodian spirit. He also works closely with the Oblate Youth Service and supports MAMI. Martin is the director of our retreat centre in Crewe. Irvin, Thomas and Leo are involved in parish ministry in London for Irvin and in Dublin for Tomasz and Leo. Ray has been appointed our new Provincial. He is presently on a short sabbatical and returns to take the helm at our June Assembly. Terry has been on a sabbatical in America and we hope to see him back among us in September.
This is our first meeting and we hope to have another meeting before the end of June to finalise our reflections on Oblate life and mission in the Province.

1. Reflection on the planned meeting in Pozuelo

General reflections of the group to the Pozuelo meeting in November:

1. **Positive views:** The theme is fitting and it is good for the Oblates of Europe to meet and reflect together on our Oblate life and mission, on our challenges and struggles, on the opportunities that are open to us to work together. They days together give space for personal time and sharing and there is a freedom in not trying to come up with something new, with the last day of the gathering open to possibilities. Reconnecting with other Oblates in Europe is good for collaboration, networking and internationality. The preparation for Pozuelo is internal not just external. The personal reflections (on my joys and hopes, struggles and opportunities) will help us to check-in as to where I am in myself and in my mission.Good to talk of our struggles and blocks to oblate life and mission, especially when living with Oblates who are older or who have no interest in the "Oblate" identity in mission. Pozuelo is an opportunity to create a space for Oblates to encourage, challenge and call each other to mission. It is good to reflect on our life and mission using the sources of scripture, Oblate values and the Mazenodian spirit. Pozuelo is a "hope-filled" encounter - because we can grow through "cross fertilisation" - sharing our hopes, dreams, interests .... "What we dream alone will remain always just a dream, but what we dream together can become a reality."

2. **Critical views:** Can we really find common ground in Europe? There is such diversity - North and South, East and West. Why limit the meeting to European Oblates only? The need to revitalise is an international call. Don't miss out on the contribution of Oblates from other regions who are in mission in Europe. However, Europe has its own particular challenges and will require a unique response to its present needs. As an Anglo-Irish Province we have more in common with our Oblate brothers in USA, Canada, Australia. Some ambiguity in terms of the aims of this meeting. Is this an accelerated move to create a European Province?.

2. SCRIPTURE TEXT shared by the group:

1. John 2:1-11 « Marriage of Cana - "Do whatever he tells you"
1. John 1:39 « Jesus invitation to the disciples - "Come and See"
1. Ephesians 3:14-21 « " may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong.."
1. John 11 « Lazarus and the faith in Christ, "eternal life"
1. Job 38 « "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world."
1. John 8:29 « "The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone."
1. Matthew 16:24 "If anyone wants to follow me… renounce yourself, pick up your cross and follow me."