

Report of the Oblate International Congress on Ministry with Migrants

Together on a Journey of Hope

Mississauga, Ontario, June 8-12, 2009

When I was a stranger, you welcomed me. (Mt 25:35)

Impressions and Observations:

- There is much enthusiasm for the issue of migration and ministry with migrants/immigrants because of increased mobility and movement of people on a global scale.
- The Symposium is very well organized and the speakers are outstanding for their professionalism, knowledge and ability to communicate.
- The issues and concerns related to this topic were similar worldwide.
- The issue of culture is extremely important, both for self-identity and sense of personhood and the medium for one's expression of faith:
 - o We are not called to assimilate the migrant/immigrant into the dominant culture, but to engage the migrant through greater communion in the church and in their new social context and to promote human rights.
 - o We serve the migrant/immigrant in the cultural and social situation he or she finds himself or herself in, a situation that is continuously evolving, even up to future generations.

Recommendations:

- That we re-affirm the importance of ministry to, and mission with, migrants and immigrants as a congregation, and suggest that this issue be a major theme discussed at the upcoming General Chapter of 2010.
 - o That focus groups prepare the theme for the Chapter.
- That this ministry be affirmed and supported by the local community and the Congregation as a whole, particularly Oblates called to work with migrants/immigrants who are most in need.
- That this ministry be part of the program of first formation for Oblates.

- That the opportunity for specialized studies in this area be made available to Oblates.
- That (a) networking hub(s) be developed in which information is coordinated and disseminated for all those concerned with the particular situation of the migrant/immigrant.
- Given that the clergy/religious of the Church are not involved in passing legislation, but are called to work as advocates for migrants/immigrants, this will involve helping to inspire new and better legislation by evaluating social/political policy on the basis of the Gospel as outlined in magisterial documents.
 - o Oblates are encouraged to engage lay collaborators as an integral part of our ministry.