

Southern Africa Trip, Fall 2012

Mary O'Herron

My husband, daughter and I visited Southern Africa to revisit the area where she was born in the late 1960's. While they went on a safari in Botswana, I spent a week in Durban. I stayed at Emmanuel Cathedral where Oblates have served since its inception until very recently. There is even a little chapel marking the graves of Oblates who served there.

<http://emmanuelcathedral.org.za/category/projects/>



Chapel marking the graves of Oblates

I learned more about the Denis Hurley Centre (www.denishurleycentre.org) inspired by the life and work of Archbishop Denis Hurley, OMI, which is alongside the Cathedral. It does amazing work and would like to do more. The building housing the Centre is over 100 years old, in poor condition and no longer able to serve the needs of this busy, poverty-ridden area. To this end, plans and fundraising for a new

building are underway. The area near the Cathedral is a busy transport hub with over half a million people coming through each day affording many opportunities to help those with needs relating to poverty.

Programs include:

- A food and training program that assists those who are homeless.
- Welcome and care for newly-arrived refugees.
- A clinic that screens for HIV-AIDS and Malaria giving medical care as needed.
- Training for those who are unemployed and help with their job searches.
- Religion education at all levels.
- Community building efforts.

I also joined a group of about 20 Durban religious leaders (including the granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi) from a variety of denominations including Christians, Muslims and Jews that met with the Premier Dr. Zelig Mkhize of Kwazulu-Natal to discuss issues of concern to them and what plans might be forthcoming.

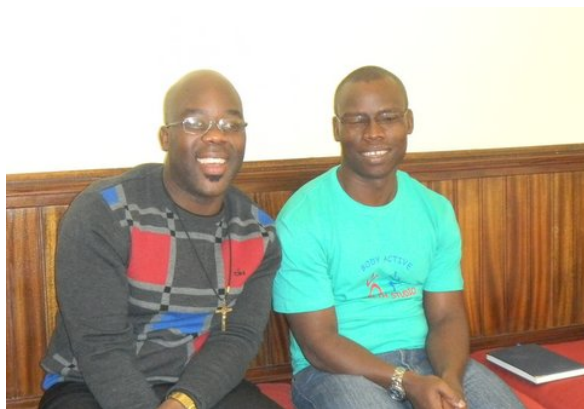


Meeting of Premier of Kwazulu-Natal and religious leaders

Adding to the richness of my time there, I met several Oblates in the Durban area including Fr. Siyabonga Dube, OMI, and Fr. Albert Danker, OMI at St. Anne's Church in Durban and was inspired by their enthusiasm and love for what they do. Later in the week enjoyed a remarkable conversation with Bishop Barry Wood, OMI. In addition, I met with Fr. Vusi Mazibuko, OMI, Provincial, Fr. Nklanhla Nkosi, OMI, Fr. Siphon Kunene, OMI, who described the work they do and who were very kind to me.



Fathers Fr. Vusi Mazibuko, OMI, Siphon Kunene, OMI and Nklanhla Nkosi, OMI



Fathers Siyabonga Dube, OMI and Siphon Kunene, OMI

After meeting up with my husband and daughter in Botswana and then travelling to Johannesburg, we happened to go to Mass at an Oblate parish with a friend of ours -- Blessed Sacrament Church. There we met Fr. Tony Daniels, OMI, who is the very enthusiastic pastor there.

