

Oblates at Vatican II: An Initial Survey (from *Oblatio* I [Nov. 2012, 3]:335-53)

By Harry E. Winter, O.M.I.

The first session of the Second Vatican Council began on Oct. 11, 1962 with 33 Oblates listed as “Fathers of the Council,” 5 as periti (experts) and 6 as theologians accompanying individual bishops.¹ The number of “Fathers” would change only slightly during the next three sessions, but the number of experts would significantly grow, as each Council Father would change his expert for each session, so more priests could experience the Council. It is my contention that of all the Oblates who participated in Vatican II, one archbishop, two priests, and the superior general significantly influenced the Council.

Since much has already been written of the impact of Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI on the Council, I will simply present the main author below. Leo Deschatelets, Oblate superior general, kept extensive journals in French. I will sketch what is currently available in English, and hope that someone with access to his journals, will excavate his contribution. Andre Seumois OMI wrote principally in French, and again, I hope a French-speaking Oblate can make those sources known to the rest of the Oblates. John King OMI served not only as a private theologian during the first session, but became (for the third and fourth sessions) one of the English-speaking team of theologians who met regularly with the media during the Council. I will explore at length his role during and after the Council.

It is quite possible that some would place Thomas Cooray OMI, archbishop of Colombo, among the influential, especially because of his elevation to cardinal on Feb. 22, 1965, between the third and fourth sessions. I hope that someone more familiar with the Asian scene will explore this. Nor do I wish to minimize the impact of Leo Laberge OMI, whose two articles on the inside workings of the preparation and first two sessions are invaluable.² Hopefully they will soon be translated into English.

We should not forget the heavy lifting which several other Oblates did to prepare for the Council: Johannes Rommerskirchen OMI, Director of the Pontifical Missionary Library from 1958-72, had the task of filing all the responses that came to the Vatican from bishops, priests, etc. when they received a request to submit an agenda for the Council. He was named to the Preparatory Commission on Missions, and is listed by Laberge as Librarian at the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and Professor at the Missionary Institute for the Propagation of the Faith. (Seumois was also a member of the Preparatory Commission on Missions).³ Other Oblates worked with Rommerskirchen: Nicholas Kowalsky OMI, (archivist and note-taker for the Preparatory Commission on Missions, then named an expert) and Josef Metzler OMI.⁴

Among Laberge’s conclusions in 1963, probably written at the end of the first session, is this significant one: “An established insight, quite revelatory: Oblate representation, at the heart of the Commission for Missions, both in the preparatory phase and at the Council itself, seems to give an exact picture of what one would expect from the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate at the Second Vatican Council.”⁵

I..Archbishop Denis Hurley (1915-2004)

There were times when it seemed South Africa’s apartheid system was indestructible, and could crush its opponents. Older Oblates know Archbishop Hurley as the persistent Catholic voice, who with the Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu from outside the prison walls confronted the system with Nelson Mandela inside the walls. We may not realize what he did to prepare for the Council. During the Council, he became especially known for revising seminary training. And he worked hard to implement the Council, continuing up to his death to lead the English-speaking world in the challenge of liturgical language.

When Archbishop Hurley was named to the Central Preparatory Commission of 101 members in 1961 (including one other Oblate, then Archbishop Cooray), Oblates became aware that he might have an important role at the Council. His main biographer, Paddy Kearney, writes movingly of Hurley's first audience with John XXIII, in July, 1960, and of Hurley's detailed submission, after the deadline, of his agenda for the Council. Kearney's book, *Guardian of the Light*, gives all the sources and thoroughly covers Hurley's contribution. I hope it will be extensively remembered in our scholasticates and ongoing education during the 50th anniversary of the Council.⁶

II..Father Leo Deschatelets (1899-1974)

One of the most widely traveled Fathers of the Council was our superior general, Leo Deschatelets. He had been elected the eighth general in 1947, at age 48. Because of World War II, our missions had not been visited for many years, and so he began an extensive visitation of the Oblates especially in the mission countries.⁷

He was a very respected member of the Union of Superiors General. At one of their meetings before the Council was convened, it was noted that requests for agenda items had been sent to all diocesan priests, but not any religious order priests. Deschatelets was asked to bring this up with the cardinal in charge of the Congregation of Religious. He told a group of us that when he asked about it, the cardinal's jaw dropped; he stammered that no one had remembered to include the religious order priests, and immediately sent out the requests.⁸

By letter of Oct. 3, 1962, Deschatelets was invited to take part in the Council as a "Father," which meant that with the other 20 superiors general so invited, he had a full voice and vote.⁹ He was quickly appointed to the Commission on Missions, and helped prepare the *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes)*. He had studied Missiology in Rome before World War II, and helped the Institute of Missiology at the University of Ottawa, Canada, survive and thrive. He brought a wealth of experience to the commission.

Hosting over 30 bishops and a growing number of experts at the OMI General House wore on Deschatelets. He took longer vacations during the summer, spending more time at our summer house in Roviano, near the Abruzzi Mountains. But one evening probably during the second or third session, we heard in the scholasticate that he really had enjoyed himself. Archbishop Emmanuel 'Mabathoana OMI, from Lesotho, and Bishop Edmund Peiris OMI, from Sri Lanka were both skilled in the music and dance of their cultures. So they engaged in a dance competition, in which each was the elephant of their native culture. The scene of these two rather large men, stomping on the marble floor of the General House, certainly gave Deschatelets a respite.

After the Council, Deschatelets took very seriously his responsibility of convincing Oblates that the Council's changes were necessary and authentic. He visited Oblate College (Scholasticate), Washington, DC from Nov. 16-18, 1966. "Fr. General explained what a difficult time he had in changing his concept of the unchangeable rule. Brothers (scholastics) clapped; Fathers listened in absorbed silence....Fr. General wows the Board of Regents (laity) Thursday noon; impresses with speech at Banquet in Sheraton Thursday night."¹⁰ Before the Council, everything in religious orders was viewed as unchangeable. Deschatelets was now teaching that history, the Church and religious orders are full of change.

We urge those with access to his journals and memoirs of his visits to make known what he did to prepare for the Council, what he did during the Council, and how he spent the rest of his life implementing the Council.

III..Father Andre Seumois (1917-2000)

Seumoï is probably the least known of the four in the English-speaking world, but every so often, a glimpse of his importance shines through. Calling it “the best missiology ever written by a Roman Catholic scholar,” the Dutch Protestant missiologist Jan A. B. Jongeneel praised Seumoï’s *Introduction a la missiologie*.¹¹ David Bosch, in his classic work on Missiology, *Transforming Mission*, cites Seumoï twice.¹²

Trained in Belgium, at the Scholasticate of Velaines, he was ordained to the priesthood there on Dec. 22, 1940. In the evaluation made by his superior, Daniel Albers OMI, it was noted that he had a gift for languages, had begun studies in Missiology, and wanted very much to serve as a missionary in the Canadian Arctic. World War II prevented that, but after the war ended, from 1945-48, he studied Missiology at the Urban University in Rome, obtaining a doctorate. He then taught in the Faculty of Missiology at the University of Ottawa, and during Christmas vacation, 1950, he even went out to the mines and sawmills of Abitibi.¹³

In 1951, he was called by Deschatelets to come to Rome to assist one of our first missiologists, Albert Perbal OMI. First he filled in for the Introduction to Missiology course at the Urban University (1951-52), then he took over the course from 1952-69, became “Extraordinary” Professor in 1969, and “Ordinary” Professor 1973-87. From 1955-57, he also taught Missiology at the Regina Mundi Institute (established for sisters in 1954).

Seumoï’s service on the Preparatory Commission on Missions was followed by his being named an expert and a member of the Council’s Committee on Missions. We do have an extensive analysis of the *Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes)*, and there is a general agreement that the document is the second least effective of the sixteen Vatican II documents (the *Declaration on Christian Education* being the least). Heinrich Suso Brechter states: “the conciliar Missionary Commission never in any phase of its existence formed a unity or became an effective working team.”¹⁴ The reason: “In the commission itself the unbridged and unbridgeable differences flared up again.”¹⁵ Since Deschatelets was also a member of this commission, it would be interesting to discover how Seumoï and he influenced each other.

When Brechter analyzes chapter one, he explains: “Two attitudes and views stood confronted, ultimately originating in two schools of missiological thought: 1) the concept of the missions held by the Munster school (J. Schmidlin) and 2) the curial-canonist concept (P. Charles, A. Seumoï).”¹⁶ The two schools did agree enough that the Decree could use “the lapidary principle...The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature (article2).”¹⁷ Pope Paul VI’s appearance before the Fathers, on the behalf of the decree (the only appearance he made in the aula) and Bishop Fulton Sheen’s “brilliant rhetoric and glowing enthusiasm . . . addressing the fathers ‘Church and mission are one—what God has joined together let no man put asunder’” enabled the Decree to receive the vote of 2394 yes and only 5 no, the highest number of yes votes of all the 16 documents.¹⁸ The differences between the two schools seem to have been papered over, perhaps brilliantly.

From 1964-69, Seumoï also taught Missionary Law at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, where Vatican diplomats are trained. When one considers the many men, and some women he taught Missiology over the years, his influence is serious.

In 1970, Seumoï published *Oecumenisme Missionnaire*.¹⁹ It caught my eye as the first book, and one of the few ever, to give concrete examples of the impact that efforts at Christian Unity have on Missiology. As we began the General Chapter of 1972, I wrote Seumoï to see if he would comment on a report on Ecumenism that the USA Region had submitted to the Chapter, and whether he would be part of the Chapter’s work in missionary ecumenism. He examined the report, calling it a “very good working paper with many indications for new orientation in the Congregation.” He then gave three insights for improvements of the report, adding a general observation about what the new administration could hope to accomplish in missionary ecumenism.²⁰ By his praise of the report, and his

probable contact with Father Rene Motte OMI, the French editor of the Chapter's landmark document "Missionary Outlook," he had a direct influence on the Chapter, even though he was not a delegate.²¹

In June, 2012, I was searching for the actual title of John King's doctoral thesis (see below), when the internet alerted me to a 1983 doctoral thesis on Seumois. Oblate historians had written that a 1996 thesis (see below) was "the first work of its sort dedicated to the work of Fr. Andre Seumois."²² The 1983 thesis, by Father James Ferguson CSC, examines the Missiology of both Seumois and Walbert Buhlmann, and underlines Seumois' ecumenical contribution, noting "the association of the words 'ecumenism,' and 'missionary' is not a common one."²³

PDF copies of this valuable thesis are available on the website www.omiusa.org, useful links, Oblate Ecumenism, Oblate Missiologists page, and at our archives in Ottawa, Rome, Washington, DC, and the library of Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, TX.

On October 19, 1996, a Congolese priest, Galumbula F. Mwanama, defended a doctoral thesis at the Gregorian University, Rome: *Missionary Dynamism of the Local Church in the Post-conciliar Missiology of J. Masson and A. Seumois: a Contribution towards a Missionary Awakening*. Seumois' influence continued to grow.

Oblates should consider in depth his major writings, and the influence he has had on several generations of missiologists. May someone with access to his French writings give us a concise presentation of his accomplishments.

IV..Father John King (1928--)

Look Magazine was a very popular, general interest bi-weekly magazine published in the USA from 1937-71. Many Oblates were probably very surprised, even shocked, to find the views of Father John King discussed in its May 10, 1960 issue. Two prominent Protestant leaders, Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake and Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam were examining the candidacy of John F. Kennedy for the presidency of the USA, and they were following closely the inter-Catholic debate on how Kennedy could reconcile his religion with his political duties.²⁴ King had come down on the side which would ultimately lose in the Vatican II discussion resulting in the *Declaration on Religious Freedom*. We will see that King underwent a profound change during the Second Vatican Council. King's long term memory is very poor; he remembers nothing from his Vatican II days. A search of our Roman archives reveals no documents or notes; in the USA archives at the Washington, DC headquarters, there is only one folder.²⁵ Those who may have experienced King's views during his official visitations as assistant general, or who lived with him when he was superior of the International Studium will do a great favor by sending either me or our Roman archivist your recollections.

Because of this dearth of records and notes, I have included more of my personal contact with this important Oblate, than is usual. Where possible, I give the source of my recollections.

John J. King was born on July 2, 1928, in the Belvedere section of the city of Lowell, MA. Since his family attended the Oblate staffed Immaculate Conception Parish of Lowell, he grew up in one of the most Oblate dominated cities of the world.²⁶ After attending the parish grade school, he was awarded a four-year scholarship to Keith Academy, a Catholic high school that many other Oblates attended.²⁷ However, upon graduation he did not approach the Oblates to study for the priesthood, but attended Loras College, a Catholic college in Dubuque, IA from 1945-47, then the foreign missionary society of Maryknoll from 1947-49, receiving an BA in philosophy. He had hoped to become a Maryknoll priest, but stomach problems forced him to leave. He entered the Oblate novitiate in Ipswich, MA on September 7, 1950, making his first vows on Sept. 8, 1951, his perpetual vows on Sept. 8, 1954, and being ordained

to the priesthood in Washington, DC, on December 18, 1954, by Bishop Arsene Turquetil OMI, who had retired to the Washington, DC scholasticate after his years at Hudson Bay, in the Canadian Arctic. When Turquetil died in Washington, DC on June 14, 1955, King wrote a very moving article about him: "There Was a Party in Paradise," noting that Turquetil had ordained during his retirement over 70 Oblates for the then Eastern US Province alone.²⁸

In the autumn of 1955, King began doctoral studies in theology at Catholic University of America, across the street from Oblate College (scholasticate). The dean of the School of Theology, Monsignor Joseph Fenton, directed his thesis and King was awarded the highest honors for it: *The Necessity of the Church for Salvation in Selected Writings of the Past Century*.²⁹

King has a wry sense of humor, and in asking the provincial bursar to pay for the printing, he noted that it had taken one of the thesis assistant directors "eleven months to read the manuscript—that must be some kind of a record in reverse."³⁰ During his doctoral studies, he traveled to Rome, Fribourg, Louvain and Paris. However, no dates have been found, nor courses followed.³¹

King served as professor of Dogmatic Theology at Oblate College, beginning in Sept. 1957. His main courses were Ecclesiology and Catechetics. Probably as a result of his connection to Msgr. Fenton, he served as "theological secretary" to the apostolic delegate to the USA, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Egidio Vagnozzi, from 1960-66. In 1961 he began writing speeches and articles for the delegate.³² This work tended to defend the status quo against the renewal movements which would emerge in Vatican II, particularly those on the interpretation of Scripture. Aided by one of the Scripture professors at Oblate College, Father Gerard Kennedy OMI, King wrote in his own name about intellectual freedom in the Church, objecting to a leading Jesuit Scripture scholar, Father John L. McKenzie S.J., whom he singled out. McKenzie responded very quickly, and the resulting debate, in the pages of the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, led King to tell his fellow Oblates that McKenzie fought dirty.³³ It also led to King's reputation as a very intelligent defender of the status quo, something which came to the attention of the Oblate general, Father Leo Deschatelets OMI, and Oblates close to him. Laberge puts it this way: "Beginning in the year 1960, the unjust campaign against the Biblical Institute in Rome found some defenders among Romans who were not of Italian origin, and had some very particular echoes in the United States, in Washington, DC among other places."³⁴ Deschatelets would now begin a process to move King to the center (see the Deschatelets article above for his visit to Washington, DC, Nov. 16-18, 1966).

From June, 1961 to June, 1963, King had five articles published in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, which at that time was being edited by Msgr. Fenton at Catholic University of America. All five dealt with priests and the teaching authority (magisterium) of the Church.³⁵

In the spring of 1962, King's life took a sudden leap forward, as the apostolic delegate asked him to be his personal theologian for the Council, all expenses paid, perhaps arriving only in December. King checked with the provincial and the scholasticate staff, and began making arrangements to be absent for the autumn, 1962 semester. He viewed this as an honor for the staff.³⁶

King made it to Rome for the opening session, and sent a post card to one of the Washington, DC scholastics, of the scene inside St. Peter's with this message: "This was the appearance of St. Peter's basilica for the opening session of The Council—truly one of the most glorious moments in the life of The Church—I was fortunate in having a place in the transept very close to The confessional altar."³⁷

King now began publishing extensively. *The Thomist*, a quarterly published by the USA Dominicans, featured a study by King on the Church in its April issue of 1963.³⁸ The much more widespread *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* published six of King's articles on Vatican II from April, 1963 to March, 1966.³⁹

A very significant request was received by King to be part of an interreligious panel. Following the first session, he wrote on May 22, 1963 to the provincial, explaining the request from the Archdiocese of Washington to "participate in a 'colloquium' at Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church here in Washington on the evening of May 27. There will be three other participants: Dr. McKay of Princeton University; Bishop Jackson of the Sion A.M.E. Church and Dr. Reeb, a local Unitarian minister."⁴⁰

When Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963, King was asked to give the sermon at the memorial Mass at the Immaculate Conception Church, Lowell, MA. The account in the city paper reproduces his entire text and notes that there were Protestants present, another sign of the changing times in this Irish Catholic parish.⁴¹

During the summer of 1963, he enrolled in L'Institute Catholique, Paris, for French language studies, living at the former procure for the three French Provinces, on rue de l'Assomption. Three of us from the International (Roman) Scholasticate were also given the opportunity to do this: Heinze Hunke, from Germany, David Kalert from the former Central USA Province, and myself. A newly ordained priest, William Reinhard, who was doing missiology studies in Rome, also enrolled, as did a young Italian priest Fortunato Muffolini. King expressed very strongly his reason to us for coming to the language course: he had difficulty understanding the writings of Yves Congar OP. He wanted to improve his French so he could rebut Congar. The first vocabulary given to his class included the French word for toad, crapaud. King came to lunch that day furious about this non-theological vocabulary and dropped out of the course, spending the rest of our time there studying French on his own. He also mixed very well with us scholastics, something which priests did not always do at that time. When the three of us were discussing one morning how we would have to get up very early to attend Mass before going on a trip, King made it quite clear to us that his generation would never miss the opportunity to offer daily Mass, no matter how early one need to rise. He also made a point of taking the four Americans out for dinner to celebrate our graduating from the course.

Just before leaving for the Paris course, King seems to have attended the annual meeting of Catholic Theological Society of America. He wrote from Paris to the provincial: "At the theological convention in St. Louis, the President asked me to give a paper next year on the relation of Freedom and Obedience."⁴²

The superior general telegraphed King's provincial on Sept. 30, 1963: "BADLY NEED FATHER JOHN KING RIGHT MAN SUPERIOR STUDIUM GENERALE IMMEDIATELY STOP UNDERSTAND BIG SACRIFICE WASHINGTON STOP GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY KING UNBROKEN ECUMENICAL EXPERIENCE ROME."⁴³ King would now meet and mentor Oblate priests from all over the world, who would be members of the academic community he headed on the grounds of the general administration. Continuing as the expert for Archbishop Vagnozzi, he had access to all the Council documents.

For Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28, 1963, King obtained a rare permission to take me out for Thanksgiving Dinner, at the Hilton Hotel, on Monte Mario. Since summer, I cherished any opportunity to meet with King. However, the rules were strict that scholastics and priests were not to disturb each other, so permission had to be sought each time, and King was very conscientious not to abuse a privilege. Towards the end of the meal, King spotted another cleric, excused himself, chatted at the cleric's table, and then brought me over to meet him: Cardinal John Ritter, of St. Louis, one of the more outspoken USA church leaders at the Council. King said to me as we left the hotel: "We don't

always agree, but we respect each other." The Voice of America radio broadcast of the late John F. Kennedy's Thanksgiving address that morning also made it a memorable day.

At the beginning of the third session (Sept. 14-Nov. 21, 1964) King was appointed to the US Bishops Press Panel. Initially he was part of a group of eight theologians, who met with the media after each public session of the Council, to brief them and answer their questions.⁴⁴

November 19, 1964, the 126th General Congregation of the Council, became "Black Thursday," when it was announced that a vote would not be taken on the text of the document on religious liberty. I will never forget meeting King by chance on the path at the General House as he returned from St. Peter's. He and many of the English speaking bishops were furious that the Italian and Spanish bishops had asked for more time to study a very new text. I pointed out to him that in our undergraduate course in canon law, it was still taught that when Catholics become a majority in a country, we are obliged to make Catholicism the country's official religion. (We also knew that in the graduate course, the newer proposals of the council were being taught).⁴⁵ King reluctantly agreed with me that the text proposed in the third session needed more reflection. When the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* was approved at the fourth session, it truly revolutionized our relationship with Protestants, and the world's religions. And King had radically revised his position.

At the end of the third session, the editors of the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* observed as a preface to his article that as "a member of the American Press panel and a Council peritus, Father King is in a unique position to objectively evaluate the proceedings and results of the Council."⁴⁶ King opened the article by stating "The decree on ecumenism, promulgated at the end of the third session, is another of the monumental achievements of Vatican II." After listing the decree's features, and reporting on the furor of the 19 last minute amendments to the text, he concluded: "History will have to decide whether the last minute amendment of the text was a terrible blunder or a necessary move to correct a text which remained deficient. We know only that its reasons were obscure and that it was difficult to accept. But we must go on."⁴⁷

During the fourth session, from Sept. 14-Dec. 8, 1965, King came into his own on the press panel. From only four explanations in the third session, the *Council Daybook* lists twenty-two for King during the fourth session, covering many, many fields.⁴⁸

King returned to Washington, DC for the autumn, 1966 semester at Oblate College. We were in the middle of one of the worst times for seminaries in the USA. The effort to introduce the changes in seminary formation requested by the Council had split faculties and bewildered seminarians. Our younger Scripture professor left the Oblates, for the diocesan priesthood because of the fighting. As we approached ordinations to the priesthood in spring, 1966, and spring, 1967, about half of each class decided to withdraw.⁴⁹ King was a rock of stability for me.

One of the issues that divided us was the contact between faculty and seminarians. The superior, Fr. Martin Walsh, after much discussion, decided there were to be times when the seminarians were by themselves, times when they were to have the faculty in their rec hall, and times the seminarians could be in what before had been only faculty areas. King was one who joined me at bridge in the seminarian rec hall. He had two unforgettable sayings at bridge. When he would bid and play a low hand: "This is like kissing your sister." When he would see a hand in the dummy which didn't fit with his: "Sicker cows than this have lived." And I shall never forget the first time I deliberately and instinctively underplayed a card, and set him. The look on his face!

King also advised me not to push for certain changes in liturgy and schedule, to go slower than I would have preferred to go.⁵⁰ He presented the retreat to the community on Feb 16, 1967, for Founder's Day: "Distinction between the primary and secondary scandal of religious life: first proper to us, unavoidable, to be loved. Second [is] part of human condition, but can be eliminated quite a bit. Greatness of being alive in this re-birth of congregation with new rule."⁵¹ Before the Council, it was rare to hear of any mention of scandal regarding religious life. King was continuing to teach and adapt what he had learned at the Council.

In 1968, King was appointed assistant general, to fill out the term of Thomas Reddy, who had been named provincial of the former Eastern USA Province. The only reference I have found to the courses he had taught in Washington during his 1966-68 stay, is a reference to a Hebrew course.⁵² He had obtained a Bachelors in Sacred Scripture from the Biblical Commission during his time as superior of the Studium. He did express to me, probably during the 1972 General Chapter, that he felt the administration at our Washington seminary had not taken advantage of his experience at the Council. During his two years in Washington, he did play a major part in the effort to extend philosophy courses into the theology program, and to extend theology courses into the philosophy program. Such an effort did not sit well with many of the students.

During the seven years he served in the general administration (four as assistant general from the USA under Leo Deschatelets, and three as regional councillor for the USA under Richard Hanley), he made visitations of different provinces. But these records are inaccessible. However, when the then five provinces of the USA held the "First American Regional Conference on Mission and Unity," in Natick, MA, from Oct. 14-18, 1974, King had a major role in organizing and leading the conference. The report contains King's role in the evaluation session on the final day. "For Fr. John King, Regional Councillor, it was a joyful experience, but not without pain and ambiguity; as one participant had remarked earlier, ambiguity is increasingly recognized as part of the life of the poor and, therefore, of Oblate life also. Looking over his seven years as Councillor, Jack observed that the Spirit is certainly at work in the Congregation, adding that he now found more support and less façade in the Oblates of today."⁵³

The fourth and last resolution voted by the Conference was "That Fr. John King be thanked and commended for the leadership he has given to the American Region over the past seven years."⁵⁴ Considering that those seven years included the two of Richard Hanley's leadership, and tragic resignation, King had seen the changes from Vatican II produce both good and evil.

King returned to the USA in early 1975, and was probably the most influential of the first group of Oblates to minister in Puerto Rico. He made sure that the Washington, DC scholastics and staff were involved, and that community life was a priority. From 1975-79, he served as pastor of San Antonio de Padua Parish, Ceiba, and then when the bishop begged the Oblates to take a second parish, Our Lady of Fatima, Daguao, he served as its pastor from 1979-81. He used every argument in the book to persuade the provincial to accept this "abandoned, neglected territory where the faith is rapidly disappearing."⁵⁵

In 1980, he was named to the Provincial Council of the former Eastern USA Province, and served until 1986. In 1981, King left Puerto Rico, being named as director of the Hispanic Ministry Center in his hometown of Lowell, MA. During Hispanic Week at the University of Lowell, the *Lowell Sun* called on Hispanics to "assimilate," as "our Portuguese-Americans have done," while not forgetting "their traditions and their native language." King found the editorial offensive, and sent a very strong letter to the editor.⁵⁶

In 1983, he spent a sabbatical at the Lebh Shomea House of Prayer, Sarita, TX and began to experience a strong desire for contemplation. He asked the Superior General if such an experience, perhaps leading to an eremitical life,

would mean he would have to leave the Oblates. Fr. Jette responded no, but that it would be an unusual Oblate calling.⁵⁷ After spending 1984-85 as an associate in a small Oblate parish in West Virginia, he returned to Lebh Shomea as a hermit from 1985-87. Then he was assigned to the national novitiate in Godfrey, IL as a hermit from 1987-89 and since 1989, he has been the hermit chaplain to a group of contemplative nuns, in Livingston Manor, NY.

I was able to visit him on Sunday, March 22, 1992, driving the last part of the trip on a terrible mountain road. His facilities were very primitive, but they have been improved since then. I found him very happy and concelebrated the liturgy for the nuns and a few visitors with him. His twenty-three year chaplaincy would seem to indicate that he has brought the nuns the kind of spiritual leadership that Vatican II requested.⁵⁸

In late September, 2013, health issues forced King to resign the chaplaincy and move to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence (Infirmary), Tewksbury, MA.

One of the great discoveries, or rediscoveries of Vatican II is that the Church is the Pilgrim People of God. John King certainly embodies the pilgrim aspect of Catholicism. In times of incertitude and searching, may the search he has undergone give us each courage and direction. Pilgrims know their destination, but the route is often obscure.

When one looks at the four Oblates whom I believe influenced Vatican II the most, please remember: they represent "a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1). As we seek to comprehend what Vatican II means, may the example of every Oblate who participated in one way or another, encourage us.

- L. LABERGE, *Les Oblats au premier et au second Concile du Vatican*, "Etudes Oblates" 22 (1963), p. 175-77.
- LABERGE, *Commission de theologie et Commission doctrinale (1961-1963). Point de vue d'un scribe*, "L'Eglise canadienne et Vatican II," G.ROUTHIER, directeur, FIDES Heritage et projet 58, 1997, p. 335-57; LABERGE, *Theologiens a Vatican II. Notes et Carnets, Temoins de L'Experience Vecue a La Commission Doctrinale*, "Vatican II, Experiences Canadiennes," Ottawa: Presses de L'Universite D'Ottawa, 2011, p. 378-413.
- LABERGE, *Etudes Oblates* 22, p. 174.
- LABERGE, *Etudes Oblates* 22, p. 174; W. HENKEL has explored the work of these Oblates. N. KOWALSKI wrote a short presentation of his own work at Vatican II, in *Bibliographia Missionaria* 30, Vatican City, Pontifical Urban University, 1966.
- LABERGE, *Etudes Oblates* 22, p. 178-79, translation mine.
- P. KEARNEY, *Guardian of the Light: Denis Hurley* (NY: Continuum, 2009), chapter 11 (pp. 106-24), ch. 14 (pp. 144-61). Kearney contributed *Denis Hurley: Courageous and Consistent Witness for Social Justice*, ed. H. WINTER, *Oblate Missiologists*, Washington, DC, Oblate Center for Mission Studies, 1997, p. 5-23, which gives a very good overview of Hurley's ministry, but only two paragraphs (pp. 10, 11) on Vatican II. It may be googled on the internet.
- H.WINTER, "Leo Deschatelets," *Oblate Missiologists*, Washington, DC, Oblate Center for Mission Studies, 1997, p. 24-28; internet edition, 2011, p. 24-28.

- Deschatelets' account of observing to the cardinal that he had missed the religious order priests is included in *Oblate Missiologists* above, p. 26. So far I have not found the actual time and place when I heard this from him. A quick search at the Oblate Archives, Ottawa, has not found it, due to "a huge amount of documents by Deschatelets" (e-mail, A. DUBOIS to WINTER, June 24, 2012). My thanks to Dubois for making the search.
- LABERGE, *Etudes Oblates* 22. p.175; see also I. TOURIGNY, *Leo Deschatelets*, Rome, General House, 1976, p. 91. TOURIGNY'S booklet is 153 pages. The French original is 62 pages and is available on the Oblate International website www.omiworld.org, Oblate Library page.
- 10. H.WINTER, *Quaderno Journal*, "Fr. General, Rec Hall, Washington, Wed., Nov.16,1966," pp.80-81.
- J. JONGENEEL, *Thirty Books That Most Influenced My Understanding of Christian Mission*, "International Bulletin of Missionary Research" 35(2011), p. 170; A. SEUMOIS, *Introduction a la Missiologie*, Schoneck-Beckenried, Administration der Neuen Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft, 1952. For more on Jongeneel, see H. WINTER, "Seminarians in Rome during Vatican II," Bossey, summer 1964.
- D.BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1991, p. 228, 491. G.ANDERSON, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1999, includes Seumoio among the 2400 short biographies.
- This biographical material is from a two page document mainly from "Information OMI" 394/2000, p. 3, sent to me on June 7, 2012 by our archivist Maciej Michalski OMI; mention is also made of five boxes of course notes, personal documents, etc. My thanks to Michalski, and to Ron Laframboise for helping me with the translation about Abitibi.
- HEINRICH SUSO BRECHTER, *Commentary on the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, in H. VORGRIMLER (gen. ed), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, NY, Crossroads, [1989], IV, p. 93.
- BRECHTER, IV, p. 94.
- 16. BRECHTER, IV, p. 118.
- 17. BRECHTER, IV, p.114. Several times Brechter mentions Xavier Seumoio,
 - a priest of the African Missionaries, who was an expert too in the commission. I have been unable to discover if he was related to Andre Seumoio: D. POWER OMI, to H. WINTER, March 4, 1995, Seumoio file.
- 18. BRECHTER, Pope Paul's visit, IV, p. 96-97; FULTON SHEEN, IV, p. 99, n. 29; final vote, IV, p.111.
- 19. A. SEUMOIS, *Oecumenisme missionnaire*, Roma, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1970.
- 20. H. WINTER to A. SEUMOIS; SEUMOIS to WINTER, n.d., almost certainly around April 11, April, 1972, one page, my Seumoio file. The report is mentioned in WINTER, *The 1972 General Chapter's Work in Missionary Concern for Christian Unity*, *Etudes Oblates* 31 (Oct.-Dec. 1972, #4): 265, n. 15; Seumoio's book is cited 262.
- 21. For the working together of the French editor, Rene Motte, and the English editors, Francis George and William Reinhard, see WINTER to M. ZAGO, Dec. 9, 1997, my Zago file.
- 22. "OMI Information," 352/1997, p. 3.

23. J. FERGUSON, *Salvation and the Mission of the Church: A Comparative Study of the Writings of Andre Seumois and Walbert Buhlmann*, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America, 1983, p. 18. Ferguson was also at Bossey in the summer of 1964 (note 11 above).
24. E. BLAKE and G. OXNAM, "A Protestant View of a Catholic for President," *Look Magazine*, May 10, 1960 (24), p. 33.
- I'm very grateful to Sr. Ann Diehl CSJ, USA provincial secretary, and Fr. George Kirwin OMI, USA archival researcher, for their assistance.
 - Both the former Eastern US Province, sometimes called the Irish-American Province, and the former Northern Province, sometimes called the Franco-American Province, drew many vocations from Lowell.
 - *Lowell Sun* newspaper, Lowell, MA, Dec. 15, 1954, "Ordination of Fr. John King, OMI," p. 10. His BA in philosophy item comes from the *Lowell Sun*, June 11, 1963, p. 12
 - J. KING, "There Was a Party in Paradise," *Oblate World* (1955-56), p. 30. For more on Bishop Turquetil, see H. WINTER, *Oblate Missiologists*, 1997 (hardcopy), pp. 62-63; 2011 (internet), pp. 19-21.
 - J.KING, *The Necessity of the Church for Salvation in Selected Writings of the Past Century*, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America, 1960.
 - J. KING, to C. BERGSTROM, May 4, 1959. Because of this delay, it seems the effective date of the degree is June, 1960.
 - The places visited are mentioned in the biography given for several articles King wrote in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, for example 60 (Sept. 1960, #12):1109; 61 (Feb., 1961, #5):433.
 - J. KING to W. RYAN, (then provincial of the Eastern USA Province), April 6, 1962, describes this activity as beginning in August, 1961.
 - J. KING, "Father King Replies to Father McKenzie," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 61 (Feb. 1961, #5):433-41. McKenzie later left the Jesuits and was incardinated into the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, where he continued his work in Scripture. King's remark is a personal recollection, probably from the summer of 1963 (see below). For McKenzie's pushing the envelop, see H. WINTER, *Dividing or Strengthening: Five Ways of Christianity, Supplement*, Buffalo, NY, Oblates of Mary, 2003, p. 93; also on internet, www.harrywinter.org.
 - LABERGE (translation mine), *L'Eglise canadienne et Vatican II*, 351.
 - J. KING, "The Priest's Need for Theology," AER 144 (June, 1961, #6),361-71 (the first); "The Duty of the Magisterium to Condemn Error," AER 148 (June, 1963, #6): 380-88, (the fifth). AER ceased publication in 1975.
 - KING to RYAN, April 6, 1962.
 - KING to R. LYNCH, OMI, Oct. 12, 1962.
 - J. KING, "Towards an Adequate Concept of the Church," *The Thomist*, special issue *Vatican II: The Theological Dimension*, 27 (April-Oct. 1963), 11-29.

- J. KING, "Vatican II," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 63 (April, 1963), 567-74 (the first); "Religious Liberty," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 65 (Feb. 1965), 388-95 (the sixth).
 - KING to RYAN, May 26, 1966. McKay was John MacKay, President of Princeton Theological Seminary from 1936-60; Bishop Jackson's church was probably Metropolitan Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, and Reeb was James Reeb, assistant minister at All Souls Unitarian Church, murdered in Selma, AL, March 11, 1965 while demonstrating for civil rights.
 - *Lowell Sun*, "Text of Fr. King's Sermon at Papal Mass," June 11, 1963, p. 12.
 - KING to RYAN, July 7, 1963. No paper has been found. But the provincial's response was humorous: "best to you, Bill (Reinhard) and Harry (Winter). Sounds like a song from Tin Pan Alley" RYAN to KING, July 12, 1963.
43. L. DESCHATELETS to RYAN, Sept. 30, 1963, slightly edited.
 44. F. ANDERSON, ed. *Council Daybook, Vatican II, Session 3*, Washington, DC, National Catholic Welfare Conference, p. 13.
 45. ANDERSON, *Council Daybook, Session 3*, p. 285. J. RYAN and J. BOLAND, *Catholic Principles of Politics*, New York, Macmillan, 1940, p. 313-21 was widely quoted by Protestants; it advocated precisely the position revised by the council.
 46. EDITORS, "On Ecumenism and the Jews," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 65, (1965), p. 481.
 47. J. KING, "On Ecumenism and the Jews," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 65, 481, 486-87.
 48. ANDERSON, *Council Daybook, Session 3*, p. 362; *Session 4*, p. 408.
 49. R. VINCENT to WINTER, March 28, 1967, 3 p., personal King file. The description of this turmoil for the USA Jesuits by Joseph M. Becker SJ, *The Reformed Jesuits, A History of Changes in Jesuit Formation During the Decade 1965-75*, San Francisco, CA, Ignatius Press, 1992 (1), 1997 (2) is one of the saddest books ever written, and applies to most religious orders during this time.
 50. H. WINTER, "He strongly counseled me not to speak frankly of #III (comparing Vatican II's recommendations to our Washington practice)," "Marty (Walsh)," 2 p., personal King file, n.d., probably spring, 1967.
 51. H. WINTER, *Quaderno Journal*, "Fr. King Retreat Day," Feb. 16, 1967, p. 81.
 52. *OMI Documentation 57/75*, April 15, 1975, p. 4. Many letters from King to Winter, and reports of phone calls, personal King file.
 53. D. CRAHEN to WINTER, e-mail, June 27, 2012, personal King file.

- ⁵⁴. *OMI Documentation 57/75*, April 15, 1975, p. 5. The USA *Oblate Communications* 21/Dec. 25, 1974 contains more details, such as the explosive final day: p. 3-5.
- ⁵⁵. KING to G. CROFT, Sept. 11, 1978, p. 3. His Washington, DC file contains five letters from Nov. 23, 1977, to Sept. 11, 1978 regarding the Puerto Rico Mission.
- ⁵⁶. Lowell Sun, Oct. 24, 1981, p. 2, 4; Oct. 29, 1981, p. 7 (King's reply).
- ⁵⁷. KING to FRAN and GEORGE (provincial Fran Hassett and vicar provincial George Kirwin), April 11, 1986, 4 p. with accompanying letter from Kelly Nemick, May 10, 1986, 2 p. (either King or Nemick has the month wrong).
- ⁵⁸ The nuns live an experimental rule, blending elements of Carthusian monastic spirituality with Eastern Christianity. Founded in 1950, "The Monastic Family of Bethlehem and of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary" had grown by 2007 to 650 members in 33 monasteries. H. WINTER to MOTHER SUPERIOR, June 18, 2012; SISTER AMENA, Prioress, to WINTER, July 12, 2012, personal King file.

Summary (composed by Fabio Ciardi, editor Oblatio): Oblates had a very strong influence on the Second Vatican Council, whose fiftieth anniversary begins Oct. 11, 2012. After indicating sources for information about Oblate participation, four Oblates are proposed as the most important: Archbishop Denis Hurley, Very Rev. Leo Deschatelets, and Fathers Andre Seumois and John King. Some information is given about each, but even more importantly, a plea is made for Oblates in every region to help gather data not only about the four, but about many others who participated in the Council. (This summary is then made in French, and Spanish).