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27 July - 2 August 2026

Bishop Daniel Verstraete Omi 102 Years Of Following In The Footsteps Of The Spirit. Plus 5 more stories: Vatican News; Oblate news from Latin America, Europe.



LEAD STORY

Bishop Daniel Verstraete Omi 102 Years Of Following In The Footsteps Of The Spirit

Bishop Daniel Verstraete, OMI, marked his 102nd birthday on July 31, making him the oldest Oblate bishop and the last living Council Father from the Second Vatican Council. Born in Oostrozebeke, Belgium, in 1924, he was ordained a priest on February 19, 1950, and soon after was sent to the Transvaal region of South Africa. In 1965, he became apostolic prefect of western Transvaal and later served as the first bishop of the Diocese of Klerksdorp after its establishment in 1978, choosing the motto “We must continue to follow in the footsteps of the Spirit.” After retiring in 1994, he continued his ministry through the South African Catholic Bible Society and the Bible Institute in Johannesburg. He returned to Belgium in 2012 and now lives in Waregem, where Bishop Victor Hlolo Phalana visited him in 2024 to celebrate his 100th birthday. [Read more →](#)



The Pope's international charity: A helping hand to the world's suffering (Photo: Vatican News)

Pope Leo XIV marked the start of his apostolic journey to Spain on 6 June by visiting the Cedia 24 Horas social project in Madrid, where he told staff and beneficiaries that “charity cannot be delayed.” Through the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, he has sent food, medicine and humanitarian aid to people in war-torn Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Bangladesh and beyond, guided by Archbishop Luis Marín de San Martín’s reminder that solidarity “must reach wherever there is suffering.” In Cyprus the Holy See supports a Sant’Egidio project for asylum seekers, while in Georgia funds complete a home for disadvantaged boys begun under Pope Francis. In Syria, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Roberto Cona will distribute 2,000 food parcels in the coming days. [Read more →](#)



Medjugorje parish condemns vandalism, urges prayer and forgiveness (Photo: Vatican News)

The parish of Medjugorje condemned overnight vandalism that damaged several places of prayer, including black paint smeared on the image of Our Lady on Apparition Hill and a fire set at St. James Church’s outdoor altar, which was quickly extinguished. Police arrested a man in Ljubuški on suspicion of involvement, while investigators assess his possible connection to the incidents and motives behind the

acts. The parish urged Catholics to respond with prayer, fasting, and forgiveness, praying for the conversion of those responsible and appealing for peace in every heart. Despite the damage, the shrine remains open, with cleaning and repairs underway and regular prayer programs continuing, following a September 2024 nihil obstat from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith permitting public devotion.

[Read more →](#)



Pope Leo XIV: Technology must serve truth and the common good (Photo: Vatican News)

Pope Leo XIV, in a message signed by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, urged communicators at the Seventh International Seminar on Church Communication in Santiago, Chile (July 27–28) to use technology, including artificial intelligence, only in ways that serve truth and the common good. The seminar, held at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, brought together Church leaders and experts from Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss the ethical and religious implications of AI in light of the Pope’s encyclical *Magnifica humanitas*. Cardinal Fernando Chomalí Garib of Santiago opened the gathering by calling social media “truly human” spaces and proposing four criteria for Christian communication: truth, goodness, beauty and usefulness. He stressed that the encyclical’s core concern is human dignity, not technology alone, and warned against letting AI undermine fraternity and community.

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Regional Activities

Latin America



Guatemala Delegation Grateful For 38 Years Of Missionary Life (Photo: OMI World)

The Oblates of Guatemala gathered in Chicamán, Quiché, on July 2 to celebrate 38 years of missionary life in the country, marking the anniversary of the first five Oblates' arrival. During their assembly, they prayed, shared joys and challenges, and renewed their commitment to mission, giving thanks for the support of martyrs, lay communities, and fellow religious. The delegation, though young within the Province of Mexico, has been intercultural from the start, with Oblates from 12 nations serving alongside the local Church. They concluded the celebration by entrusting their future to God, praying for new vocations and continued faithfulness to St. Eugene de Mazenod's charism. [Read more →](#)

Europe



The celebrations of our 200th Anniversary in Rome Continue (Photo: OMI World)

This morning in Rome, Oblates celebrated Mass at the tomb of St. Peter and later paid tribute to Pope Leo XII at his tomb in St. Peter's Basilica, marking the 200th anniversary of his approval of the Oblates' Constitutions and Rules. Standing around his simple grave, they recalled St. Eugene de Mazenod's first audience with Leo XII on December 20, 1825, when he called the pope "a benefactor and the father of our Society." After praying for fidelity and generosity in today's mission, the Oblates entrusted their future to Mary Immaculate, invoking her protection as they continue their journey in communion with Pope Francis and the universal Church. [Read more →](#)

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- **Bishop Daniel Verstraete OMI 102 Years Of Following In The Footsteps Of The Spirit** invites us to reflect on how the Spirit guides even in small, faithful steps, as seen in Bishop Verstraete's lifelong motto: "We must continue to follow in the footsteps of the Spirit" (**Galatians 5:25**).

"If we live by the Spirit, let's also walk by the Spirit." ([Galatians 5:25](#))

- reminds us that charity must be immediate and practical, reaching those in need without delay, as Pope Leo XIV's Dicastery for the Service of Charity demonstrates daily (**James 2:15**).

"And if a brother or sister is naked and in lack of daily food," ([James 2:15](#))

- calls communicators to use every tool wisely, ensuring technology serves human dignity and the Gospel, not division or deception (**1 Corinthians 14:26**).

"What is it then, brothers? When you come together, each one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has another language, or has an interpretation. Let all things be done to..." ([1 Corinthians 14:26](#))

SAINTS OF THE WEEK

- **29 July**, Sts. Martha, Mary and Lazarus
- **30 July**, St. Peter Chrysologus
- **31 July**, St. Ignatius of Loyola
- **1 August**, St. Alphonsus Liguori

OBLATE VALUE OF THE WEEK

Brothers, from the Dictionary of Oblate Values.

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