

The Holy Father Appoints Rev. Fr. Paweł Janusz KUBIAK, O.M.I., as Superior of the Mission sui iuris of Turkmenistan

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The Holy Father has accepted the resignation from the pastoral governance of the Mission sui iuris of Turkmenistan, presented by Rev. Fr. Andrzej MADEJ, O.M.I.

The Holy Father has appointed Rev. Fr. Paweł Janusz KUBIAK, O.M.I., until now Superior of the house and Economist of the Mission sui iuris of Turkmenistan, as Superior of the Mission sui iuris of Turkmenistan.

Curriculum vitae

Rev. Fr. Paweł Janusz KUBIAK, O.M.I., was born on 8 February 1974 in Turek (Poland). He

began his formation as an Oblate on 7 September 1994 and completed his novitiate at Święty Krzyż on 8 September 1995. He made his perpetual profession on 8 September 1999 and was ordained a priest on 23 June 2001 in Odra (Poland).

He received his first obedience in the Delegation of the Polish Province in Ukraine and Russia, where he remained until his departure for Turkmenistan in 2023. Since 1 September 2023, he has served as Superior of the house and Economist of the Mission sui iuris of Turkmenistan.

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Holy See Press Office

OMIWORLD

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

New Secretary General

The Superior General in Council has appointed Father Thomas BANG as the new Secretary General of the Congregation.

A native of Cameroon, Fr. Thomas is a deeply respected Oblate known for his enthusiasm, dedication, and spirit of service. Since taking his first vows in 2004, he has built a distinguished academic and pastoral career. He holds both a Licentiate and a Doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Gregorian University, where he also specialized in the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

Fr. Thomas brings a wealth of experience to this role. In addition to his parish ministry, he has served as a professor of Canon Law at various Catholic institutes in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. His leadership journey includes serving as a formator at

the Yves-Plumey Scholasticate in Yaoundé and as a member of the Provincial Council of Cameroon. Currently, he serves the Congregation as the person responsible for Safeguarding the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

In his new capacity, Fr. Thomas will assume significant administrative responsibilities, providing essential support to the entire congregation. Beyond his administrative duties, he will coordinate our global ministries, oversee communications, and ensure that the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod continues to flourish in our daily operations. This appointment reaffirms our commitment to the unity, diversity, and inclusion that define our Oblate family.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Br. Noel GARCIA, who has resigned from office for health reasons, for his dedicated service as

Secretary General since 2023. We pray that God may continue to bless him in his future ministry.

OMIWORLD

FROM THE REGIONS

ASIA AND OCEANIA

OMI Indonesia: Journeying With the Native Javanese

For years, the Oblates of Indonesia have been accompanying the followers of the native Javanese religion in their search for civil recognition as an “official” religion. The Oblates have given them land for their house of worship and joined them in their civic celebrations, as a testament to the Oblates’ preference for standing with those on the margins of society.

A Long Road to Recognition

For many years, the Oblates have fought alongside the followers of the Native Javanese religion in their pursuit of recognition as a religion. Currently, the Indonesian government historically placed them under the Department of Education and Culture rather than the Department of Religious Affairs because it regarded their belief system as folklore rather than a living faith. Some years ago, the Oblique Community financed a delegation for them to travel to Jakarta to present their case. This delegation was successful because, with this visit, their marriages gained legal validity through the civil registry office. Then, with the help of open-minded religious leaders, they also welcomed them into the Forum of Communication between Religions (FKUB). In addition, as a small contribution to their resilience, the Oblates deeded them 560 m² of land so they could have a permanent home to gather and pray, and construction of their place of worship is now underway.

Sitting on the Floor

This community is a guardian of the Javanese culture and moral values. Recently, the local Lady Regent, the head of the local district government, recognized their place in society and invited them to celebrate the close of Suro, a Sacred First Month of Prayer and Quiet Reflection in the Javanese religious calendar, inside the official Regency Hall. During this elevation, an Oblate was invited to participate and say a few words. The protocol at the Official Regency Hall has prepared two elevated chairs: one for the Lady Regent and one for the Oblate. In Javanese custom, gatherings take place on the floor, so taking an elevated seat felt wrong when our whole purpose was to honor their customs and be near them. Sitting on the floor, he knew it would be difficult, but he was willing to do it if someone would help him get up. Diablo took off his sandals, leaned against the pillar, and sat on the floor as a sign of embracing the Javanese custom.

A Time of Prayer and Fellowship

Seeing this gesture, the Lady Regent, the head of the Interfaith Forum, and representatives from the army, navy, police, and judiciary all did the same together. They sat shoeless on the floor, prayed, and shared a meal. It was a small gesture, but a moving moment of joy for a small community of believers who can finally celebrate their faith openly among supportive neighbors.

Charlie BURROWS, OMI

EUROPE

Joint Session Bucharest 2026: Daily Report – Day IV

Joint Session of the Central Government and the European Region Snagov, Romania | 15–21 June 2026

Day IV – Thursday, June 18 Formation

It was a packed day, full of timely issues that challenge us and invite us to make concrete decisions.

We started by facing the sharp decline in Oblate vocations across Europe, which brings up an urgent question: where and how do we support young people who feel called to the Oblate life? And for those already in formation, where will they continue their journey?

With the Vermicino Scholasticate closing its doors at the end of June and the one in Obra moving to Poznań, a major question comes up: is it possible to envision a single Oblate Scholasticate for all of Europe?

These issues naturally point right back to the root of Oblate vocations: youth and vocation ministry. The commission in charge shared their work, the hurdles they face, the hopes driving them forward, and the different initiatives they run with and for young people. Instead of getting discouraged by the tough reality so many youth face today, they're working to maintain a realistic yet hopeful outlook that helps these young people discover and live out their calling. After all, we know young people need adults who can be true role models on their journey.

The Lay Commission is also doing some heavy lifting across Europe. Through regular virtual meetings and a network connecting laypeople from different countries, they continue to strengthen our community and shared mission. The laity who share the Oblate charism are a massive sign of hope and a vital driving force for the life and mission of the Oblates. In the end, we are all called to be missionary disciples.

L A T I N A M E R I C A

Baja California: Among the Indigenous Communities

On August 7, 2026, the Oblate missionary expansion in Ensenada, B.C., Mexico, celebrated its second anniversary. Within these two years of Oblate presence, the community has come to experience firsthand the wisdom behind the 37th General Chapter: "Renewing the commitment to accompany Indigenous communities in their education."

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Chaplaincy, known locally as "El Zorrillo," ministers to four communities rich in cultural heritage, each with its missionary challenges. This community is multicultural, including the Mixtec, Triqui, Zapotec, Wixárika, and P'urhépecha peoples, among others.

We are grateful to our provincial, Fr. Ray Cook, O.M.I., of the United States Province, whose moral and financial support has made it possible to establish an Oblate presence in these lands. We are equally grateful to the many donors who support us with their prayers and generosity. Thanks to their constant support, we have already begun to see the fruits of this work in fostering stronger families and church life.

We are also grateful for the missionary zeal of our Superior General, Fr. Chicho, O.M.I., for sending our dear friend Fr. Kapena, General Councilor for Africa-Madagascar, to visit us on August 18 and 19, 2026. Fr. Kapena's visit is intended to assess our work in the mission in Baja California, Mexico, and to discern the future direction of the mission work of the U.S. Province.

Eleazar MANUEL LÓPEZ, OMI

CANADA AND UNITED STATES

Canada: After 106 Years, an Oblate Returns as Bishop

Bishop Kenneth THORSON, O.M.I., has been ordained Bishop for the Diocese of Prince Albert in Saskatchewan, Canada. He becomes the Diocese's ninth bishop and only its second Oblate bishop, following Bishop Albert PASCAL, O.M.I., who guided the local church from its earliest days, first as Apostolic Vicar of Saskatchewan in 1891, then as its first bishop once Prince Albert became a diocese in 1907.

From the First Oblate Bishop

When Pope Leo XIV appointed him on May 28, 2026, to succeed Bishop Stephen Hero, who was named Archbishop of Edmonton, the diocese's history returned to its starting point. It has been 106 years since its first and last Oblate bishop, Albert Pascal, who served until his death in 1920. That century-long stretch has seen the diocese grow and change alongside the province of Saskatchewan and the Church. Thorson's arrival reconnects the diocese to the congregation that first carried the Gospel to this part of Canada and accompanied its people through difficulties and the still-unfinished business of evangelization in the region.

Formed in the Oblate Charism

Born to Chester and Joanne Thorson, he made his first profession as an Oblate in Arnprior, Ontario, in 1993. His Oblate formation would take him through Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Rome, and Toronto. After his ordination, he served in Saskatoon, Birmingham (UK), and Ottawa. From 2013 to 2025, he served first as Vicar Provincial and later as Provincial

Superior for the Lacombe Province. During those years, he gave himself to Truth and Reconciliation ministries, which placed him directly in dialogue with Indigenous peoples and with the Church's own history in the region. That experience accompanies him into a diocese whose territory and history remain closely tied to Indigenous peoples and missionary endeavors in Western Canada.

An Oblate Among Brothers and Friends

Before the liturgy began, Bishop Thorson was outside Sacred Heart Cathedral, welcoming his brother Oblates, Oblate Associates, clergy, and lay faithful who had traveled to be part of the celebration. He was just an Oblate greeting people he considered family and friends. Several Oblate bishops from Canada and one from the Philippines were present as a quiet reminder that the day was as much a gathering of the wider Oblate family as a diocesan milestone. It placed one diocese's new bishop within a much larger, ongoing missionary zeal that extends to every part of the world.

Through the laying on of hands, the prayer of ordination, the anointing, and the presentation of the episcopal symbols, an Oblate missionary assumed a new form of service to the Church. The diocese that began with an Oblate bishop now welcomes another. The celebration closed with an invitation to grow in faith, hope, and love. After more than a century, the Oblate circle in Prince Albert opens a new chapter for a diocese shaped from its very beginning by the missionary charism it now welcomes home.

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

OMI INFORMATION is an unofficial publication
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Via Aurelia 290, 00165 Roma, Italy
Fax: (39) 06 39 37 53 22 E-mail: information@omigen.org
www.omiworld.org
Editor & Webmaster: Bonga Majola