

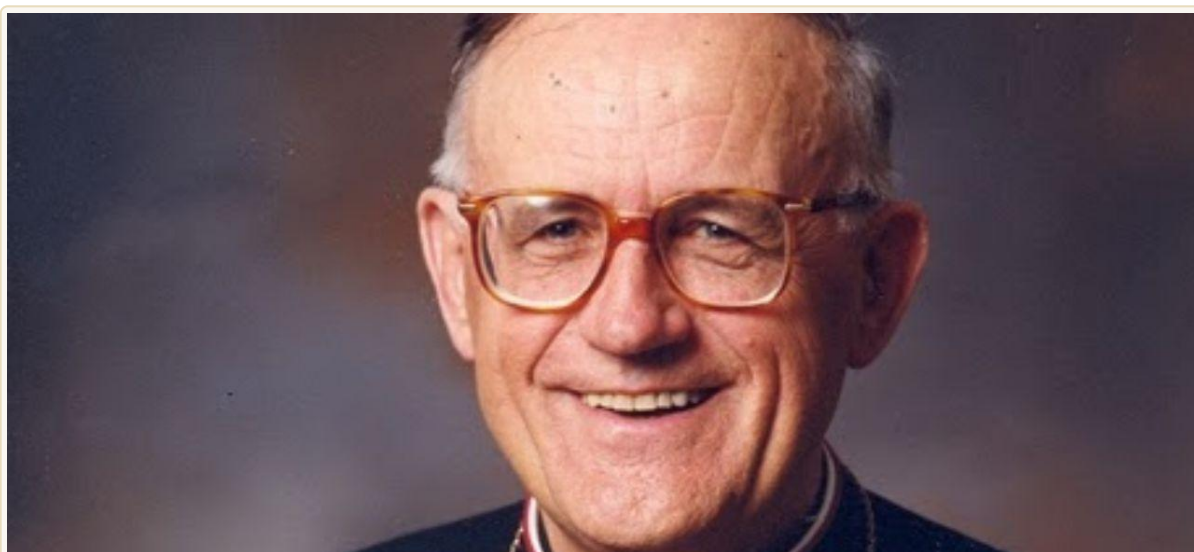
OMIWORLD

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23 FEBRUARY-1 MARCH 2026 (WEEK 9) | 12TH DAY OF LENT

23 February - 1 March 2026

Remembering Father Marcello Zago, OMI: A Heart Open to the World. Plus 7 more stories: Vatican News; the General Council; Oblate news from Africa and Madagascar, Asia and Oceania, Europe.



LEAD STORY

Remembering Father Marcello Zago, OMI: A Heart Open to the World

Father Marcello Zago, OMI, is remembered 25 years after his death for his lifelong dedication to interreligious dialogue and global mission. In December 1959, he arrived in Singapore after a three-week sea voyage, reflecting on the legacy of Saint Francis Xavier. At the Shrine of Mary, he observed people of different faiths, Protestants, Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, praying together, learning that Mary is the Mother of all humanity. As a young missionary, he prioritized charity, visiting sick villagers before sharing the Gospel, recognizing that care often opens hearts more than words. Struck by the absence of the Church in the Buddhist-majority culture, he immersed himself in Buddhist practices, spending years studying and documenting its expressions. Under the influence of Vatican II, he concluded that mission in Buddhist contexts required deep cultural engagement, not just traditional methods, aiming to be a transformative presence among people.

[Read more →](#)

Vatican News

Polish faithful gathered to mark the 116th anniversary of the birth of Sr. Maria Dulcissima (Helena Hoffmann), born in Zgoda (now Świętochłowice) on February 7, 1910. They prayed and gave thanks for her spiritual legacy, seeking her swift beatification, as children, religious, and laypeople joined the celebration. Helena joined the Sisters of Mary Immaculate in 1927, taking the name Sr. Maria Dulcissima, and embraced profound suffering as a path to holiness. She died in Brzezie nad Odrą on May 18, 1936, at age 26, after taking perpetual vows in 1935. [Read more →](#)

On February 16, Bishop Barani Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala of South Sudan issued a Lenten appeal for peace and healing amid ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in the country. Recent clashes between government and opposition forces since December 2025 have displaced at least 280,000 people in Jonglei State alone, worsening food shortages and disease outbreaks. The Bishop highlighted local struggles including tribal divisions, violence, and poverty, urging reconciliation and solidarity among communities. He emphasized faith's role in fostering dialogue and hope as South Sudan seeks lasting peace. [Read more →](#)



Indonesian Church strengthens fight against human trafficking (Photo: Vatican News)

The Catholic Church in Flores, eastern Indonesia, has intensified efforts against human trafficking after 13 women rescued in January 2026 from a nightclub in Sikka Regency reported severe abuse. The victims, aged 17 to 26 from West Java, are receiving shelter and support at a safe house run by TRUK-F, a network backed by the SVD and SSPS. On 9 February, the Sikka Human Rights Network organized a protest in Maumere, led by priests, religious, and activists, demanding stronger investigations and enforcement of anti-trafficking laws. Sister Fransiska Imakulata, SSPS, highlighted repeated trafficking cases since 2000, noting patterns of exploitation through false job offers, particularly targeting women and poor migrant workers. [Read more →](#)

Activities of the General Council



Letter of the Superior General to the Communities of Rome and Aix-en-Provence (Photo: OMI World)

On 24 February 2026, the Superior General wrote from Rome to the Oblates at Via Aurelia 290 and the Mother House in Aix-en-Provence, thanking them for their service and fraternity during the bicentennial celebrations of the pontifical approval, which renewed joy in their vocation and strengthened family unity. He noted how the events inspired Oblates worldwide and deepened communion with the Church, including a personal meeting with Pope Leo XIV. Looking ahead, he urged renewed generosity, highlighting a planned year of animation on the vow of poverty for the whole Congregation in 2027. [Read more →](#)

Regional Activities

Africa and Madagascar



Bicentennial in Idiofa, Congo DR: "Do Not Abandon Us" (Photo: OMI World)

On February 8 in Idiofa, Congo, the Missionary Oblates celebrated two centuries of their Constitutions and Rules during a gathering at Saint Charles Lwanga parish. Bishop Joseph Moko of Idiofa thanked the Oblates for their 93 years of service since taking over from the Jesuits in 1931, urging them to remain faithful to their founding charism and not abandon the diocese. Provincial Superior Fr. Constant Kienge-Kienge highlighted the bicentennial as a moment to renew the Oblates' commitment to their Rule of Life, emphasizing their role as "men of the Church" at the service of bishops. He also requested "perpetual parishes" in Idiofa and Kikwit, in addition to the novitiate parish in Ifwanzondo. [Read more →](#)

Asia and Oceania



Rekindling the Flame: Colombo Province Celebrates 200 Years of the Rule (Photo: OMI World)

On 17 February 2026, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Colombo Province marked the 200th anniversary of the papal approbation of their Constitutions and Rules with a Jubilee Eucharist at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Maradana, Sri Lanka. The liturgy centered on the theme “Rekindling the Flame: 200 Years of Living the Rule, Walking with the Poor,” renewing vows, blessing a Jubilee Flame, and entrusting Samata Sarana, a ministry founded in 1988 by Sr. Bernie Silva, SCJM, to the Oblates as a missionary outreach. Provincial Fr. Roshan Silva urged fidelity to the Rule and deeper closeness to the poor, calling the Jubilee “not a memory, but a mission.” The flame was then installed in permanent honor, and the assembly was sent forth to carry the Gospel to those in need. [Read more →](#)

Europe



COMI Congress: Renewing the Gift of Mission (Photo: OMI World)

From 13 to 15 February in Rome, the COMI Secular Institute marked 25 years since the approval of its Constitutions with a formation congress on the theme “Called to Renew in Ourselves the Fire of the Missionary Vocation.” The gathering, open to the Oblate Family, included Katharina Ramrath, Fr. Javier Montero Infantes OMI, and Fr. Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso OMI, who presided at Mass on 14 February. Speakers Sr. Tiziana Merletti FSP and Fr. Giulio Albanese highlighted the Church’s teaching and the urgency of mission today. COMI’s President called the congress an “extraordinary enrichment” and said participants returned renewed and ready to serve. [Read more →](#)



POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- **Remembering Father Marcello Zago, OMI: A Heart Open to the World** reminds us that encountering people of different faiths at the Shrine of Mary in Singapore taught Father Marcello that Mary is the Mother of all humanity, not just Christians, echoing **Revelation 12:17**.

“The dragon grew angry with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep God’s commandments and hold Jesus’ testimony.” ([Revelation 12:17](#))

- shows how Sr. Maria Dulcissima embraced prolonged illness as a hidden path of holiness, uniting her pain with Christ’s and praying, “My soul, Jesus, give me life,” as she lived **John 12:24**.

“Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.” ([John 12:24](#))

- calls communities to reject division and violence, restore broken relationships, and extend concrete support to the vulnerable, reflecting the call of **Ephesians 4:32** to be kind and compassionate to one another.

“And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you.” ([Ephesians 4:32](#))

SAINTS OF THE WEEK

- **23 February**, St. Polycarp

OBLATE VALUE OF THE WEEK

Holiness, from the Dictionary of Oblate Values.

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