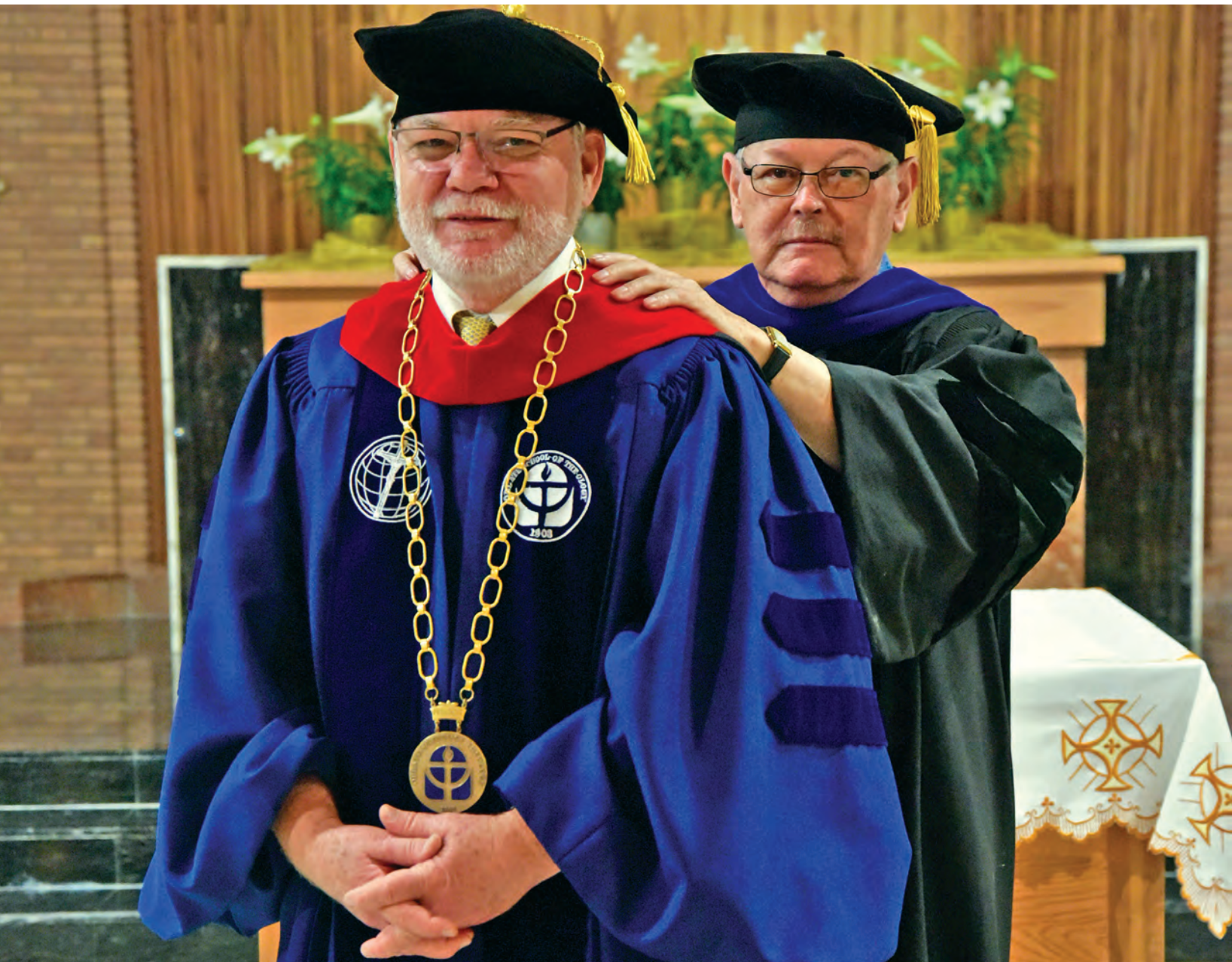


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Message from the President

Reconnecting

While we were in the midst of the pandemic and waiting impatiently for a Covid-19 vaccine, I asked my Mother what it was like when my siblings and I first received the polio vaccine in the early 1960's. How did it happen? Was it big news? It may have been, but she had no memory of it. Neither did my Father.

My memory of that event is one from 60 or so years ago — faded and somewhat unreliable. I recall lining up to receive the sugar cube with the drops of vaccine on it. Exactly where it happened or if it ever happened, is debatable.

Likely our memories of coming together as a Church are more vivid than mine of the sugar cube. Many people have walked through this time without being able to come together for special events such as funerals or weddings, or ordinary experiences of Sunday Eucharist. The available vaccines have reopened things gradually — stores, restaurants, concerts, schools — and allowed people to begin reconnecting to family and friends that were blips on a screen for months.

Reconnecting is the way I like to express what has to happen with the Church. The Church never stopped being, never ceased business as happened with baseball games or restaurants. The Church kept going since it is the People of God not the building. Now, we are beginning the process of reconnecting as the People of God.

Reconnecting will take more than a simple statement. Just like visiting family again or meeting with friends, it requires an invitation. This we call Evangelization.

Catholics, on the whole, have a rather distinctive understanding of evangelization. It's just a part of our ordinary life. Pope Paul VI writing in 1975 in *Evangelization in the Modern World* said Christians "radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live...."

This describes what I heard from Bp. Wenceslao Padilla of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia a few years ago. I asked him how he went about spreading Christianity in a place that has almost no recent memory of the Christian religion. He replied, "We build schools and homes for street children; we build homes for pregnant women; we care for the poor as much as we can. Last year we brought over 500 into the Church."

The invitation comes through how we live. Sometimes, we are the only gospel anyone will ever read.

Dr. Scott Woodward

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The OST News is a free publication of the Institutional Advancement Department of Oblate School of Theology for the alumni, benefactors, and friends of the OST community.

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Note: Cover picture of Dr. Woodward and Fr. Rolheiser was taken after both were fully vaccinated for Covid-19.

Photo on page 8 by Jeanne Smith.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Online Learning was a Gift in the Covid-19 Storm for IFP Students

When Oblate School of Theology announced it was shutting the campus down in March 2020 due to Covid-19, faculty and staff had one week to transition to online learning. Initially, that transition did not go as smoothly as Ana Frietze, Oblate Director of Lay Ministries, would have liked.

Frietze reached out to her Instituto de Formación Pastoral (IFP) students using the WhatsApp application, letting them know that their classes were moving online, and found that of her 18 IFP students, four did not have computers. The four were in their 60s and 70s. While the four students did have cell phones with online access, it turned out that their service was inadequate for online learning via Zoom after repeated attempts to access their classes resulted in being dropped.

Frietze reached out to Dr. Renata Furst, Associate Dean of Hispanic Engagement, and that department's executive committee for help, and the committee reached out to IT. IT was able to reconfigure four computers not being used and outfit them with monitors and speakers for the students' use.

Some students had children at home to show them how to access their classes, but those that did not Frietze had to walk through Moodle step-by-step.

The age range of the class is 20–70. Some of the older students thought they were not capable of online learning. They were afraid that they were going to break the computer. Frietze encouraged them and showed them that they were capable of learning online.

"Some of them told me that they did not know if they could continue in the class. It has been like an epiphany for those students who thought their age would prevent them from learning online," says Frietze.

"It is hard to believe that it has been more than 12 months since we shifted to online learning," says Frietze.

IFP students Juanita Flores and Miguel Chavarria agree with Frietze's assessment.

"At first, it was kind of confusing, but once I was able to access Moodle, I could find all the information I needed,



including the PowerPoint," says Flores, who lives in Corpus Christi.

"It has been a great experience. It has been great just having to log into Moodle, whereas before I had to drive for two hours to San Antonio and two hours to get back home. I usually got home about 1:00 – 2:00 a.m. Online learning is great for people who have to travel, but there is nothing like face-to-face classes," says Flores.

Chavarria says that online was good but that he prefers to be in the classroom with the instructor. "Sometimes we run into problems with the internet or computer and waste time, but it is still good doing the class online because we are still getting the information we need."

"In the beginning, for a couple of weeks, I ran into a problem and could not get in. I think I was not doing it right. The other problem when we had the cold weather, some people were not able to log in. We had problems with that too," says Chavarria, who, along with Flores and their 16 other classmates, will graduate in a few weeks.

Frietze says online learning was a challenge, but at the same time, it was a gift.

"It has been a journey, and it has been an opportunity to stretch and grow. This journey shows that when we are stretched beyond our comfort zone, we recognize that we are capable of that which we thought we were incapable of doing," says Frietze.

"There is a level of confidence in the students because of having been placed in a situation like this.

"I call it (online learning) a gift in the storm or the gift of Covid-19," says Frietze.

Donor Spotlight

Gee-Gee Whitehurst has Fond Memories of OST MtM Program

Some at Oblate School of Theology may remember Gee-Gee Whitehurst as a volunteer teacher in the Ministry to Ministers Sabbatical Program. She was asked by Fr. Bill Meyer, SM who was in charge of the program at the time to come help, as the person teaching the nutritional component of the program could not continue. That was the beginning of a number of years during which Gee-Gee continued to be a part of the program. "I had fun teaching in the MtM program. I taught a course on Healthy Living that included nutrition and exercise. I met many great people from all over the United States as well as other parts of the world making it an unforgettable experience."

The OST MtM Program offers men and women active in church ministry from across the globe the opportunity to step back and take time for themselves often after many years of ministry with little rest. The Fall Session runs from August to December, and the Spring Session from January to May. All activities are coordinated and directed by OST faculty and other specialists providing a holistic experience for all.

Gee-Gee says one of her fondest memories was seeing the changes in each woman and man as they experienced this special time. "By the end of the semester, at the final gathering before they began to leave, they looked so happy and energetic. It seemed to me that there was a glow about them that was missing when they came. They were so exuberant and thankful. It was a special and wonderful experience to have had."

Ministers in need of renewal can greatly benefit from the MtM program, but may not have the means. For this



reason, a scholarship was established by Gee Gee and her husband, John. The purpose of the scholarship is to provide an opportunity for sabbatical to dedicated priests, sisters and brothers who otherwise would not have an opportunity to attend such a program. Scholarships can help participants from Africa, Asia, Pacific Islands, the Philippines, poorer regions/ congregations in Europe and the U.S. (in cases where the financial need is great). Their hope is that this will encourage others to do likewise. It is a way to help those who have given so much to help others.

“Professor Bonnie” Abadie Wears Many Titles

Her colleagues and students at Oblate School of Theology know Bonnie Abadie, Director of Theological Field Education, to be a dedicated and compassionate professor, talented guitarist and songstress, published author and poet. To one group of students, the Sankofa Scholars, she is known as “Professor Bonnie.” To another group of students, however, she is lovingly known as “Auntie Bonnie.”

Abadie chuckles at the name, explaining that it was given to her by a group of Redemptorist seminarians studying at Oblate. “When they (the Redemptorists) first came to Oblate, they looked like deer in headlights,” recalls Abadie. The students were from many parts of the world to include Ukraine, Bolivia, Mexico, the United States, Vietnam, the Caribbean, Canada, China and Ireland.

Abadie is a member of St. Gerard Catholic Church, where Redemptorists run the parish. She took the seminarians under her wing upon their arrival to Oblate. “I told them that I wanted to be their touchstone,” says Abadie.

No doubt this is the type of exemplary service, dedication, and commitment that probably caused her pastor, Fr. Donald Willard, to nominate Abadie for the Lumen Gentium Award. The award presented annually by Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, is given to Catholic laypersons who actively participate in the Church's mission to bring Christ's light to all. Additionally, persons selected for the award use their talents in a way that deepens the life of their Church parish. She was one of 122 individuals in the Archdiocese of San Antonio to receive the prestigious award in February 2021.

Abadie has a wealth of experience and holds the distinction of being the “first” in several categories. She was the first layperson to declare a major in Religious Studies at Our Lady of the Lake University. In 1977 she received her Bachelor's degree. She was the first layperson to serve as the Catechetical Director for the Archdiocese of San Antonio.



“When someone asked me what I was going to do with my Religious Studies degree, I had to admit that I did not know, but I believed and trusted that God would direct my path. Moreover, he has done just that. Abadie worked in a parish for two years, taught at her alma mater — Providence High School from 1979–1986. In 1986, Fr. Gerry Barnes, then the Catechetical Director, invited Abadie to work for the Archdiocese of San Antonio. That invitation would kickoff 18 years of service to the Archdiocese — seven of which she worked as the Associate Director and 11 as the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Center, an agency within the Department of Educational Formational Services.

Abadie is now in her 17th year at OST. Her first 13 years she served as the Director of Pastoral Lay Formation programs — Lay Ministry Institute (LMI), Instituto de Formación Pastoral (IFP) and Pastoral Formation Institute (PFI). She is currently in her fourth year as Director of Theological Field Education (TFE).

Abadie has a Master of Theological Studies from Oblate and is now completing her Doctorate of Ministry (DMin) here at Oblate.

The unassuming Abadie is the author of *Believing While Grieving: A Journey to Find Blessing in Brokenness*, a book of poetry published in November 2019 following the deaths of her father, husband and mom – all within three years.

Abadie says writing poetry was just what she needed at the time. “I could write poetry when I was supposed to be writing a DMin proposal,” Abadie recalls. “It (the book) was my way of expressing the reality of my life, of working through the pain of loss and dealing with my new circumstances,” writes Abadie in the book’s Forward. Abadie did not begin writing to publish the poetry but was convinced to do so after sharing her writings with several colleagues and friends. Abadie says she was told several times her words and artwork included in the book might have the power to help others. “They told me that I had to get this out there,” says Abadie. Undoubtedly, Abadie’s willingness to use her talent to help others in dealing with loss was another factor leading to her award nomination.

Covid-19 has not slowed Abadie down or dampened her spirit and commitment one bit. She and Fr. Roger Keeler, TFE Co-Director, have “walked with and guided” some

60 students this academic year in the Theological Field Education course, where students gain practical hands-on experience doing ministry. She admits, though, it has not been easy. “Theological Field Education has been very challenging. At the beginning of the academic year, I was concerned that we might have to put TFE on hold because we rely on organizations to allow our students to come into their offices and spaces to do ministry. Unfortunately, some companies and organizations did close because of the pandemic,” Abadie says, adding, “I placed it in God’s hands. I prayed God, this is Your work, and You are going to reveal to me how this is going to work.”

“We surveyed supervisors, and we were surprised at the number of individuals who said they were willing and able to accommodate our students’ ministries. When possible, some of the field education has been virtual, however when it has not been possible, we have ensured that CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines are followed,” she says.

At the end of this semester, “Auntie” Bonnie will find sheer delight when five of her “nephews” graduate.

What is a Donor Advised Fund?



- ✦ **A DONOR ADVISED FUND (DAF)** is a simple, flexible and tax-advantaged way you can make charitable donations, so you make the biggest impact. You can quickly and easily designate a grant from your DAF to the Oblate School of Theology through your financial institution’s website (such as Fidelity or Schwab Charitable). You can also locate our organization by using our Tax ID # 74-1357323.
- ✦ A donor-advised fund is like a charitable investment account, for the sole purpose of supporting charitable organizations like the Oblate School of Theology. When you contribute cash, securities or other assets to a donor-advised fund at a public charity, like Fidelity or Schwab Charitable, you are generally eligible to take an immediate tax deduction. Then those funds can be invested for tax-free growth and you can recommend grants to an IRS-qualified public charity.
- ✦ Donor-advised funds are very popular and are the fastest-growing charitable giving vehicle in the United States because they are one of the easiest and most tax-advantageous ways to give to charity. You can also consider leaving a legacy gift from your DAF to continue bringing the Word of God to the most abandoned.

If you have any questions about how to give from your Donor Advised Fund to bring the Word of God to the most abandoned, please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at 210-341-1366 ext. 285. You can also email Claudia Garcia, VP of Institutional Advancement, at claudia.garcia@ost.edu for more information.

Social Distancing Does Not Mean Isolation for OST Continuing Education Students



Participants in the Oblate School of Theology Continuing Education program understand that social distancing because of the pandemic does not have to mean living in isolation.

School administrators, CE staff and facilitators decided to keep its planned offerings on track via Zoom despite the pandemic. Donors underwrote the cost for some programs while staff lowered the cost for other programs.

CE staff emailed surveys to all participants to gather feedback about their perceptions of the offerings. Overwhelmingly, responders were appreciative to the school for the programming, with many saying it (the offerings) provided them with the community they have lost temporarily because of the pandemic.

“Thank you for keeping the CE offerings available on Zoom during these challenging times. They are a great

source of support and encouragement,” wrote one responder.

“This has been such a wonderful experience this summer, especially in the midst of the pandemic! You have been doing for us, who are largely “immured” at home, a great favor by keeping alive for us our connections to our wonderful spiritual guides and journey mates through OST,” writes another survey responder.

Nearly 250 participants responded. Participants were from right here in Texas, the East Coast, West Coast, Mid-West and other countries.

“The entire experience was enriching. I would like to mention how much I appreciated our gathering's international components – having voices from different countries was so affirming. I felt a sense of a supportive

global spiritual community. That was unique for me," writes a responder.

Several responders appreciated how facilitators utilized virtual group rooms to create a sense of community and spaces for small group discussions and sharing.

"This was a wonderful experience — not too much material jammed into the session. Time in small groups built a sense of community and increased understanding. I am grateful," says another responder.

Several responders noted that for them, Zoom was the perfect platform because of their inability to travel.

Then others mentioned how appreciative they were for the lower cost of attending.

"Although the pandemic has been a suffering for many, one positive thing is that Oblate has made many of its programs available virtually at an affordable cost. When they were in person, I could seldom take advantage of many of the offerings."

Still, others were appreciative because they say the offering addressed current challenges in their lives.

"I felt this was a great gift because I have been struggling with some of the issues raised in some of the presentations. I was grateful this was an online program because I live in Hawaii, and it was the only way I could have participated. I appreciate the need and value of in-person events and the richness of spontaneous discussions after such presentations. However, given our current state of the world, I am grateful for the technology that made this possible for me to participate."

"The conference was amazing for me as a layperson and non-academic. It confirmed and expanded the things I have been learning and experiencing for the past six years of my spiritual journey. It was incredible and stretching. I am grateful for the experience and the affordability."

The hope expressed by some responders is that the school will continue to make offerings available via Zoom.

What did the facilitators think about Zoom?

Thomas C. Langham, a recent CE participant, and a teacher-facilitator, says Zoom worked wonderfully for him. During this past Lenten season, Langham presented an eight-week course on "Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton," where the focus was exploring the intersection of Lent and

Holy Week and contemplative living. Langham says he hopes to offer the course again via Zoom, explaining that some participants find it easier to talk on Zoom than in the same room with other people. Langham says preparing to teach and facilitate the course deepened his faith and helped center his daily life.

CE facilitator Rev. Mary C. Earle recalls the Spring CE classes concluded about ten days before the city went into lockdown because of Covid-19. Soon afterward, Rev. Earle and fellow Continuing Education facilitator Rosalyn F. Collier proposed offering a class over Zoom to Continuing Education Director Victoria Luna. "Covid-19 was the impetus for that proposal," recalls Earle. Earle says she and Collier did not have much experience with Zoom. She credits the Continued Education staff for supporting them and getting them familiar with the Zoom platform.

Several responders appreciated how facilitators utilized virtual group rooms to create a sense of community and spaces for small group discussions and sharing.

"I think what surprised Rosalyn and me was once people got past their initial jitters, they discovered friendships and collegiality. The Spirit created the possibility of community despite Covid-19. There have been ongoing relationships formed out of that," says Earle.

The class attracted people from across the country, says Earle. "Initially, most of the people who had signed up were in Texas or had an association with Oblate, but when word got out about the class, we started seeing people from Florida, Minnesota, California and Canada."

Earle says she and Collier were surprised by the level of vulnerability and transparency exhibited by the participants over Zoom. "We invited participants to explore and create. Some read poems they had written, and others shared artwork they had done. Sharing took courage."

Earle says she and Collier will once again offer the class on Zoom.

Oblate School of Theology is “Match Made in Heaven” for President Scott Woodward

Oblate School of Theology was the ideal union for Dr. Scott Woodward 30 years ago, and it is still a solid fit. Woodward, the newly-installed President of the 100+-year-old Catholic School of Theology and Seminary, is the first non-Oblate to serve in this capacity.

Woodward is well prepared for the position. He has worked in multiple capacities within the Catholic Church since before graduating college with a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and a Master of Arts in Religious Education from Seattle University. He received his Master of Arts in Biblical Theology from St. Mary's University with distinction and a Doctor of Ministry from OST in 2004. His practical experience includes stints before and after college serving in various ministries in the Diocese of Alexandria, LA. His home diocese in Alexandria encouraged and provided the financial means for Dr. Woodward to pursue his degrees in Seattle. “The understanding was that I would come back home after receiving my degrees and work in lay ministry there in Alexandria,” says Dr. Woodward. He served in the Alexandria Diocese for 15 years including eight years as Director of Religious Education at Sacred Heart Parish in Pineville, LA. “It’s there that I learned what ministry is about,” he says. “It’s also where my interest in ecumenical dialog began.”

During a recent interview, Dr. Woodward, husband to Dr. Cathy Woodward and father of three, describes his relationship with OST as a “match made in Heaven.” And if you think the perfect fit is because of Woodward’s degrees, experience in lay ministry or the fact that he is a lifelong Catholic, you would be wrong. Career preparation is essential, but perhaps more critical



is Woodward's zeal and commitment to the ideals and mission of the Oblates and their founder, Saint Eugene De Mazenod.

And Dr. Woodward’s commitment and zeal are not because he had a wealth of knowledge about the Oblate community of priests and brothers. He knew nothing about the Oblates until coming to San Antonio. No, Dr. Woodward’s zeal is the result of an experience he had while he was in college.

While studying in Seattle, Dr. Woodward had what he says “Protestants probably would call a conversion moment.” It was a “moment” that changed Dr. Woodward’s perspective and set him on a lifelong trajectory in working for all humankind. In Seattle, Dr. Woodward witnessed groups of people working for justice and peace. He was moved and drawn by this activism that focused on God’s love for all people. Woodward began volunteering at the Catholic Worker House, a part of the Catholic Worker Movement founded by Dorothy Day, along with others at the school. There he found the concern was not just for the physical needs but also the emotional and spiritual needs. Persons visiting the Catholic Worker House kitchen not only found the food to sustain them physically but found committed people concerned about them; granting them the dignity God gives to all. They were to be treated like guests, he was told, not customers.

“I didn’t find out about the Oblates until much later when my wife, Cathy, was offered and accepted a position as a chief flight nurse with a company here in San Antonio. And I decided it was a good idea to follow

her," says Dr. Woodward with a chuckle. Soon after that Dr. Woodward learned about a job opening at OST with the Lay Ministry Institute. He decided to apply. To prepare for his interview, Dr. Woodward began to delve into the history of the Oblates and St. Eugene De Mazenod. "I found out Oblates had served for years in a parish in Denham Springs not far from my childhood home in Baton Rouge." He was offered the position and has been at Oblate ever since.

"This (the Oblates) is a group that truly is interested in serving the poor and living the gospel. The Oblates go to or work with people that others don't," says Dr. Woodward. "We have to hear the gospel as it is reflected in lives of the poor whether they are financially poor, suffer violence, hunger, neglect or are spiritually poor. Few things are more important today."

About 12 years ago, the OST leadership asked the question: What San Antonio community are we underserving now, and how can we serve them better? The answer was the African American community. The result of that discussion — the creation of the Sankofa Institute for African American Pastoral Leadership. Dr. Woodward, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean at that time, and then-President Fr. Ron Rolheiser were driving forces behind Sankofa Institute. "We needed that voice at the table," he said.

Since arriving at Oblate in 1991, Dr. Woodward has served as a faculty member, Director of Lay Ministry, Director of the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean.

"As Dean, I dealt with the day-to-day operations of the School, and that may have included fixing the computer in room 302. As President, I am the School's biggest cheerleader, and I have to make sure we have the wherewithal to fix the computer in room 302," says Dr. Woodward flashing a big grin. "My job is about recruitment, fundraising and building relationships."

Woodward is still an advocate, as he carries on the Oblates' legacy — that of serving the underserved, neglected, oppressed and poor. "I'm most proud of the work our alumni/alumnae do in these areas. When we started a program inside the Texas prison system, it was mostly OST graduates that staffed it. That tells me they leave OST imbued with the Oblate Charism."

There is no typical day in the work of an OST President, says Woodward, who is quick to point out this is especially true because of the pandemic. The pandemic has made his work incredibly challenging, i.e., keeping the campus community going. "If we were not in a pandemic, the campus would be full of activity, and I

could be in face-to-face meetings with people from the community, donors and potential donors; having lunch at the ORC with faculty, staff and students."

The pandemic has not slowed the pace for Woodward; it only changed how he meets people. "I make many phone calls, write many emails and letters to keep in touch with people. And I try and do as many meetings as I can on Zoom. In many cases, the pandemic put the kibosh on the ability to meet people one-on-one," adds Dr. Woodward. "That's happily starting to change."

What is Dr. Woodward's vision for OST? "OST has a great legacy. It has accomplished so much in its 100+ years. "My vision first is to continue that legacy of serving the poor and moving forward with the goals established by Fr. Ron (Rolheiser) and the previous presidents. We have decades of good work forming men and women for priestly and lay ministry in the church. That is our core."

Dr. Woodward has established four initiatives that he proposes to pursue during his tenure as President.

"We have to hear the gospel as it is reflected in lives of the poor whether they are financially poor, suffer violence, hunger, neglect or are spiritually poor. Few things are more important today."

"The initiatives focus on some things we need to address so OST will be here 50 years from now," adds Dr. Woodward.

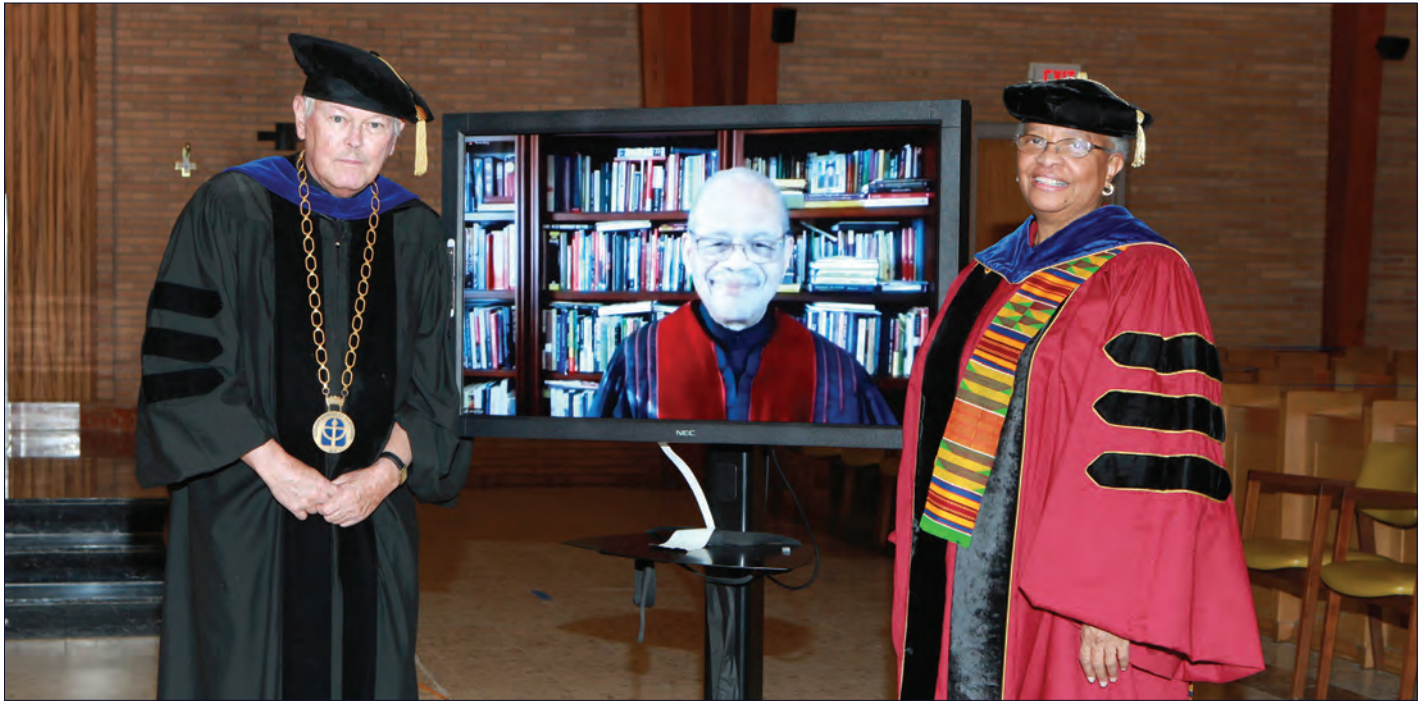
The initiatives include developing the next generation of leadership — for the School, the Institute for the Study of Christian Spirituality (ISCS), the faculty and Board of Trustees Development; establishing endowments to fund the Sankofa Institute and the ISCS; and establishing OST as a center for ecumenical study and practical theology. Each initiative includes four or five specific action items.

"OST has been a great gift. We must strengthen the Board and our relationship with the larger community

continues on page 13

OST Awards Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Sr. Honorary Doctorate

By J. Michael Parker



Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Sr., founding Chair of Oblate School of Theology's Sankofa Institute Council of Elders, calls for "an apologetic theology" that will reach people's concerns outside institutional religion.

Dr. Smith said the Sankofa faculty is challenged by "nones" who have no faith commitment and by "dones" who have been wounded and hurt by the Church and are done with it.

"They (people outside institutional religion) wonder about the Church's authenticity when there are death threats to a woman governor in Michigan and a white male governor in Virginia. Simultaneously, the state treats it in a cavalier way. The Church is often silent in responding, which seems to imply that we are complicit with such nihilistic and amoral behavior," said Dr. Smith.

The minister's assessment came on October 23 after OST awarded him an honorary Doctor of Pastoral Leadership

degree to recognize his lifetime of service, academic contribution and pastoral wisdom. Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI presented the award during the installation ceremony of Dr. Scott Woodward as the OST 19th president. Because of Covid-19 imposed limitations, attendance at the Immaculate Conception Memorial Chapel was limited to 40 people, including Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, MSpS, Sr. Jane Ann Slater, CDP, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, members of the OST Board of Trustees, faculty and administrators. Dr. Smith attended the event via an internet video connection and a monitor from his home in Oakland, California.

"Oblate School of Theology thanks you for the generous work you've done around the world, and particularly the United States, but we want to thank you in a special way for the work you've done here. You helped us vision, launch and sustain our program in African American Pastoral Leadership, our Sankofa Institute," Fr. Rolheiser told the honoree.

“That, and all the awards and the places he has taught, is why we proudly claim Dr. Smith as one of us. Oakland has a street named for him. We can’t name a street after him, but we’re going to give him the highest honor we can bestow,” Fr. Rolheiser concluded.

Dr. Smith has been involved in life on the streets of Oakland, particularly within the African American community, throughout 40 years as Senior Pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church and 10 years as Pastor Emeritus.

Long before the struggle for racial justice became mainstream, he was involved. “He’s earned respect from all sides, from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the Black Panthers,” said Fr. Rolheiser.

Dr. Smith has received more than 250 awards for his leadership in ministry. *Ebony* magazine named him one of 115 great African American preachers in U.S. history in 1993. In 1997, he received a Distinguished Author Award from Urban Ministries for his book *Falling in Love With God*. Author of 17 books, he received the Justin Press Ministry Award for Commitment to Excellence in Publishing in 2018.

He has taught at Oxford and Cambridge universities in Great Britain and supervised the opening of a mission in Sierra Leone.

“It is a signal honor to receive this honorary degree on the same occasion that Dr. Scott Woodward is being installed as the new President of Oblate School of Theology,” said Dr. Smith.

He charged OST leaders to continue supporting Sr. Addie Lorraine Walker, SSND, who directs the institute to enable it to survive and thrive. Dr. Smith quoted W.E.B. Dubois, warning, “Either America will destroy ignorance, or ignorance will destroy the United States.”

He asked rhetorically why younger generations should believe in the Christian Gospel’s viability and vitality when its leaders are inadequate in addressing burning questions of justice.

Dr. Smith challenged Sankofa to produce “daring women and courageous men who will sound the trumpet of justice in the land as it’s never been sounded.”

He promised as a member of the Oblate family to lend his weight in support of the School’s worldwide mission.

WOODWARD *continued*

in San Antonio and the United States. We have a great Board with much to offer, and I would like to see us better utilize their expertise.”

Additionally, the initiatives address the issue of maintaining the School’s faculty. “We have a few faculty members who are reaching retirement age. We need to make plans for when those folks retire,” says Dr. Woodward.

Woodward sees OST becoming critical to San Antonio’s life, and the initiatives will work toward that end. “By establishing OST as a center for ecumenical study and practical theology, we will expand our reach into San Antonio to other faith traditions. The work we have done in Spirituality and in the Sankofa Institute shows how that can bring people together.” The School will continue working in Hispanic ministry including the new Maestría de Artes en Ministerio Pastoral (Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry) program. “There has to be a

way for us to connect with people of goodwill,” says Dr. Woodward. “We want to be a place where the ‘Culture of Encounter,’ as Pope Francis calls it, is lived and taught. I see it as part of Oblate Hospitality.”

He and Cathy enjoy traveling to better understand the world around them. “Cathy does medical mission trips around the world not only caring for children but also teaching nurses how to care for critical-care patients. She taught nurses across Mongolia how to use a stethoscope. And she sought donations to provide as many stethoscopes to them as possible. I told her she had changed the paradigm of healthcare in the country. She has done similar things in Nepal.” When Dr. Woodward is not busy with his OST obligations, he may be found cooking Cajun food or barbeque; biking on area roads and trails; playing hide-and-go-seek or exploring dry creek beds with his five-year-old grandson, Ollie.

Community News

ADMINISTRATION

Fr. Jose Antonio Ponce, OMI was named Vice President for Mission and Outreach

Claudia Garcia, CFRE is the new Vice President for Institutional Advancement

FACULTY

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI has published a book titled *The Fire Within: Desire, Sexuality, Longing and God* with Paraclete Press. The book is on sale in Yolanda Garcia's office for \$10 each.

Fr. Bob Wright, OMI had an essay titled "Religious Change along the Mexican Border, 1852–1876," published in the *U.S. Catholic Historian* Vol. 39, No. 1 (Winter 2021): pages 23–48. It is a new assessment of the work of the Oblates, other French priests and religious Sisters in the first quarter-century of the Texas Catholic Church along the Lower Rio Grande, from Brownsville up through Laredo, including their work with the people and dioceses on the Mexican side of the border.

Drs. Renata Furst and Rodolfo Felices Luna collaborated with faculty at St. Mary's University and MACC to create the "The Bible and Its Tradition/La Biblia y su Tradición" Project. The project is a collaboration to promote Catholic biblical literacy locally in San Antonio and beyond by way of the internet. All workshops and resources are offered free of charge and more can be found on the website: <https://labiblia.stmarytx.edu>.

Dr. Rhodora Beaton has joined our faculty as the Director of the MA (Theology) Program and Professor of Systematic Theology. Before arriving at OST, she taught for three years at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, MO and for eight years at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. She is also the author of *Embodied Words, Spoken Signs: Sacramentality and the Word in Rahner and Chauvet* (Fortress Press) and *Illuminating Unity: Four Perspectives on Dei Verbum's 'One Table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ'* (Liturgical Press)

Bonnie Abadie received the Archdiocese of San Antonio Lumen Gentium award on January 31, 2021 at St. Gerard Catholic Church. The parish Lumen Gentium Award is bestowed upon Catholic laypeople from each parish who have demonstrated participation in the Catholic Church's mission to bring Christ's light to all.

Fr. Thomas Klosterkamp, OMI has joined our faculty as Assistant Professor of Church History. He is one of a few Oblates worldwide who have the distinction of having served as Provincial Superior of two provinces; the German Province in 2003 and the newly-formed Central European Province in 2007.

Fr. Joseph LaBelle, OMI has published a book titled *From Strength to Strength: Seven Timeless Virtues for Christian Discipleship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020). It's also available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

STUDENTS

Nathan Garcia was selected to receive the HTI/Lilly Fellowship for academic year 2021–2022. The Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) is a program to recruit and support Latino and Latina scholars in religion, providing both financial resources and a network of support, mentoring and encouragement.

Fr. Raymond Mwangala, OMI was appointed new Superior of the Zambian Delegation.

ALUMNA

Dr. Jacinta Kioko, C.P.S. will begin a postdoctoral fellowship in the Fall

Gary Janak, MDiv. '88 was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of San Antonio on April 20, 2021 at St. Mark the Evangelist Church

NEW EMPLOYEES

Dr. Maggie Meigs is the new Director of the Forest Dwellers Program. **Melonie Iglehart-Hammons** is the new Coordinator for the Sankofa Institute for African American Pastoral Leadership. **Sister Ma. Mercedes Castillo-Razo** is the new Pedagogical Assistant for the MAMP. **Beth Pocta** has taken a new position as the Administrative Assistant to the President. **Rita Mary Nicolini** is the new Administrative Assistant for the Dean's Office. **Martha Gomez-Gonzalez** is the new Administrative Assistant for the Certificate Programs. **Emmett Gonzalez** is the new Administrative Assistant for the Forest Dwellers Program. **Elvia Sanchez-Martinez** has joined the staff in Accounts Payable.



Dedication of the Grotto on Pearl Harbor Day, 12/07/41

Larissa Garcia and Maria Flores have joined the ORC staff. **Mary Jane Burke** has joined the Library staff.

RETIREMENTS

We want to wish all the best to our faculty and staff who retired last year:

Lea Kochanek, Rose Mary Lopez, Rita Velasquez, Michael Parker, Elva Barba, Bro. Tim Unser, OFM Conv, Joanne Aleman and Gustavo Ortiz

ORDINATIONS

On Saturday, April 24, 2021, Oblate Brothers **Herat Mondol, Fani Zane Nong** and **Steven Montez** were ordained to the Diaconate by Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSpS in the Immaculate Conception Memorial Chapel

Paul Abraham Melgarejo and **Edward Joseph Gonzales** were ordained priests May 15 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in San Antonio

Jose Jaime Nieto Bautista was ordained a deacon May 21 at Iglesia Católica San Rafael in Springdale, AR

Thomas Jay Jones, Joseph George Moreno, Linh Hai Nguyen and **Samuel Joseph Maul** were ordained priests May 22 at Vietnamese Martyrs Church in Arlington, TX

Daniel Wendel was ordained a deacon May 26 at Christ the King Catholic Church in Little Rock, AR

Minh Tran was ordained a deacon May 28 at Saint Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha, NE

Alexander Xavier Smith was ordained Priest May 29 at Barton Coliseum in Little Rock, AR

Rodolfo Martinez Guevara, MSpS and **Jorge Haro, MSpS** were ordained as deacons on May 29 at Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in San Antonio

Nadin Williams Ospino was ordained a deacon on June 11 at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Grand Junction, CO

Jason Moore, OFM Cap was ordained Priest June 19 at Annunciation Catholic Church in Denver, CO

Song You, CSsR will be ordained Priest July 24 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Brooklyn, NY

Alan Sanchez will be ordained Priest August 7 at San Agustin Catholic Cathedral in Laredo, TX

Jerry Gutierrez and Jose Luis Restrepo will be ordained as deacons on August 7 at San Agustin Catholic Cathedral in Laredo, TX

Thomas Fetz, OFM Conv will be ordained Priest September 18 at Saint Ita Catholic Church in Chicago, IL

PROFESSION OF VOWS

Oblate Brothers **Steven Montez, Jean Emmanuel Meloncourt, Fani Zane Nong,** and **Herat Mondal** professed their perpetual vows as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate during a Mass on Feb. 16, 2021 at Blessed Sacrament Parish Church in San Antonio, TX.



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Master of Arts in Sacred Scripture

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- Inspired by the work of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, graduates from this program will engage with the Scriptures based on sound critical methods.
- Fully online or face to face, this program is for those seeking to serve the mission of the Church from an ecumenical perspective.
- Students will become competent facilitators of Bible-based practices such as Scripture study groups, retreats and Lectio Divina.

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Ron Rolheiser, OMI , President Emeritus, Oblate School of Theology

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