

“நீங்கள் பிறந்தநாள் தொட்டு அயராத விழிப்புடன் உங்களைக் காத்துவரும் மரியன்னை, உங்கள் தொட்டிலுக்கு அருகில் குருக்களின் சபையாகிய ஒரு தொட்டிலையும் வைத்திருக்கின்றாள். அதனையும் ஒரே போக்கில் போஷித்து ஒரே விதமான அருள்களையே அதன்மேலும் பொழிந்து இவ்விதமாக அங்கத்தவர்கள் திருக்குடும்ப கன்னியரின் சகோதரரும், பாதுகாவலருமாக இருக்கும்படி ஆயத்தம் செய்கின்றாள்”.

உண்மையில் அமலமரித்தியாகிகளின் வாழ்வில் அன்றாடம் பட்டுத்தெறித்த “ஏழைகளுக்கு நற்செய்தி அறிவிப்பு” என்ற இவர்களின் அருங்கொடை மிக ஆழமானதாகும். மேலும் இவர்களின் தூரநோக்கு, தீர்க்கதரிசனப் பார்வை, எங்கும் எந்தச் சூழமைவிலும் பணியாற்றும் வீரத்துவம் வேதபோதகப் பணியில் தம்மை முழுமையாக அர்ப்பணித்து நற்செய்தி அறிவிக்கும் ஆர்வம், ஆன்ம வாஞ்சை, சாதாரண வாழ்க்கை முறை, சமுதாய உயர்ச்சிக்காக பல்வேறு அபாயங்களுக்கிடாக துணிந்து முடிவெடுக்கும் ஞானம், இருள் சூழ்ந்த வாழ்க்கையில் ஒளியூட்டக் கல்வியை சிறந்த ஓர் ஊடகமாகப் பயன்படுத்தி கிராமங்கள், நகரங்கள், பட்டினங்கள், நாடுகளில் நற்செய்தியை அறிவித்தமை, கடவுளோடு ஒன்றித்து வாழ்வைப் பக்குவமாகத் தொடங்கும் ஆன்மிகம், மரியன்னையில் வற்றாத பக்தி, ஆழ்நிலைத் தியானமும் அதனால் அனுபவிக்கும் இறைசக்தியும், புதிதாகக் கிளர்ந்தெழும் புதிய தேவைகளுக்குத் தங்களை இசைவாக்கம் செய்துகொள்ளும் சீர்மிய வாழ்க்கைக் கோலங்கள், ஆவியால் இயக்கப்பட்டு இயல்பாகவே அவருக்குள் அசைந்து முடிவுகள் எடுக்குந்திறன் போன்ற இவ்வாறான பண்புகளால், செயற்பாடுகளால் இவர்கள் இறைவனின் சாட்சிகளாகத் திகழ்ந்தார்கள்.

இத்தகைய வாழ்வு வாழ்ந்த அமலமரித்தியாகிகள் திருக்குடும்ப சபைத்துறவிகளாகிய எம்மோடு சேர்ந்து பயணிக்கவும் நாம் எம் அருங்கொடையாம் “ஐக்கியத்தையும்” ஆன்மிகமாம் “இறைவன் மாத்திரமே” என்ற பற்றறுத்தல் வாழ்க்கையில் எம் வாழ்வை நகர்த்திச் செல்லவும், சபையின் மனப்போக்கில் பிரமாணிக்கமாய் வாழவும், எம்மிலும் எம் உருவாக்கத்திலும்

துணை நின்றும், உலகில் அன்றாடம் கிளர்ந்தெழும் ஆவியின் அசைவுகளுக்கு விழிப்பாயிருந்து, புதிய வழிகளில் சமுதாயத்தின் செல்நெறிகளை நன்மையின்பால் திசைதிருப்பி, நற்செய்தி அறிவிப்பை விசைப்படுத்தி நகரவும், அமலமரித்தியாகிகள் அவ்வப்போது தம் சகோதரத்துவத்தால், அர்ப்பண வாழ்வின் ஆழமான அனுபவத்தால் கூடவே எம்மோடு பயணித்தார்கள். இன்னும் ஆழ்நிலைத் தியானத்தால் அன்றாடம் பெறும் சக்திகளால் எம் பலங்களிலும் பலவீனங்களிலும் எழுச்சிகளிலும் வீழ்ச்சிகளிலும் நாம் வேரோட்டமான வாழ்வு வாழ்ந்து ஆழ்மனத்துக்குள்ளும், அனைவரிலும் முழுப் பிரபஞ்சத்தோடுமுள்ள கடவுளோடு பயணிக்க எமக்குத் தேவையான நேரங்களில் வழிகாட்டினார்கள்.

காலச் சக்கரம் எவருக்காகவும் காத்திராமல் தன் இயல்பின்படி சுழன்றபோதும், அதற்குள் நிகழ்ந்த 30 வருடப் போர், சுனாமி, வெள்ளப்பெருக்கு இன்னும் பல்வேறு சூழமைவில் உற்ற சகோதரங்கள் போல எம்மோடு உடன் பயணித்தார்கள். எண்ணியல் (Digital) சுதேசிகள் செயற்கை நுண் அறிவு வீச்சு என்று விஞ்ஞானத்தின் புதிய விந்தைகள் உலகில் பல தோற்றப்பாடுகளைத் தோற்றுவித்து தனி மனிதர்களிலும் சமூகமாகவும் தொழில்நுட்பசாதனங்களின் அதீதப் பாவனைகளால், விளம்பரங்களின் எல்லையற்ற பெருக்கத்தால், எல்லை மீறிய தனிப்போக்கால், மாற்றுக் கருத்துக்களால், சந்ததி இடைவெளிகளால், சில வேளைகளில் ஒன்றாகப் பயணிப்பதில் சற்று தொய்வு நிலை இருந்த காலங்களில்கூட மூத்த குருக்கள், இடைநிலை வயதுள்ளவர்கள் புதிதாக வந்து சேர்பவர்களுக்குத் தம் வாழ்வுப் பிரசன்னத்தாலும் வரலாறுகளை சுருங்கச் சொல்லியும் இவ்விணைப்பை என்றுமே பாதுகாத்தார்கள்.

இன்னும் எந்த வேளையிலும் உங்களின் உதவியை நாம் நாடும்போதும் பல அபாயங்களை ஒரு பொருட்டாக நாம் கருதாமல் காலத்தின் புதிய தேவைகள் எம்மை அழைக்கும் போது அதிர்ச்சியும் அதிர்வும் ஊட்டும் செயற்பாடுகளில் துணிவுடன் (Audacious action) எம்மைக் கையளிக்கவும் பல வழிகளில் பல்வேறு உதவிகளை நல்கி இருக்கிறார்கள். எனவே, திருக்குடும்ப

சபையாக, குறிப்பாக யாழ். மாகாணமாக காலத்தால் அழியாத எம் நன்றிகளை மனமென்னும் தட்டில் நன்றி மலர்களாக ஏந்தி செப தபத்தைத் தூபமாக்கி தியாகம் என்னும் செஞ்சுடர் ஒளியில் தினமும் வாழ்வைக் கரைத்துக் கொள்ளும் அமலமரித்தியாகிகளுக்கு அன்பாக சமர்ப்பிக்கின்றோம்.

மாறாததும் மறையாததுமான நீடித்த நிஜமான நெஞ்சத்தில் ஆழமாகப் பதிந்த இவர்களின் “சகோதரத்துவ இணைப்பு” கடவுளின் கருணையால் எமக்கு அருளப்பட்ட அன்பான ஓர் அரும்பெரும் பொக்கிசமே. இது, திருக்குடும்ப சகோதரிகளாகிய எங்கள் வாழ்வு முழுவதும் தொடரும் ஒரு கதை. ஆம், அமலமரித்தியாகிகளும், திருக்குடும்ப சபைத் துறவிகளும் இச்சபையின் ஏனைய அழைத்தல்களும் இருக்கும்வரை இச்சகோதரத் தொடர்பு ஒரு தொடர்கதையாகவே நீண்டு கொண்டு இருக்கும். இறையரசுப் பணிகளில் இணைந்து பயணித்தவர்களின் நற்செய்தி அறிவிப்போரின் பாத அடிகளின் புனிதத்தை உணர்ந்து “இவர்கள் பேறுபெற்றவர்கள்” என்று மக்கள் புகழாரம் சூட்டி இவர்களை வாழ்த்துவார்கள்.

“நீங்கள் என்றும் எம் சகோதரங்களே”

**உசாத்துணை நூல்**

Sr. Justina, (தொகு), முத்தான சொத்து, 150வது அகவை நோக்கி, வட மாநில திருக்குடும்ப நிறுவனம், யாழ்ப்பாணம், 2009.

# **Present Ministries of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Jaffna Province**

**Pathinathan Sathiyaseelan, OMI**

SLT (Rome)

Superior, De Mazenod Scholasticate, Jaffna.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the Province of Jaffna are engaged in a variety of ministries responding to the pastoral, spiritual, educational, human, and social needs of the people, especially children, youth, families, the marginalized, and those most in need.

## **1. Parish Ministry**

When the Oblates arrived in Sri Lanka in 1847, they took responsibility for Catholic communities and parishes, providing sacramental, pastoral, and catechetical services throughout the Vicariates of Jaffna and Colombo.

As the local diocesan clergy was formed and dioceses became more established, the Oblates gradually handed over the parishes to the diocesan priests and moved towards specialized and missionary ministries.

Today, 15 Oblates serve in parishes in several dioceses: Jaffna, Mannar, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Badulla, Ratnapura, Galle, and Kandy. True to their tradition as “men of difficult missions,” the Oblates continue to accept challenging, rural, and remote pastoral assignments, serving the faithful with dedication and commitment.

## **2. Preaching Ministry**

### **From *Amala Utpavam* to *Amathi Aham***

The Jaffna Oblate Preaching Community is one of the significant missionary ministries of the Province. Inspired by the missionary spirit of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the community has proclaimed the Gospel among Tamil-speaking Catholics with zeal and dedication.

Beginning in the late 1940s under pioneers such as Fr. Z. N. Croos, OMI, the Oblate preachers travelled from parish to parish conducting missions, retreats, novenas, and renewal

programmes. In 1961, the community was formally established at Columbuthurai, Jaffna, under the name *Amala Utpavam*.

In 1998, partly due to the war, the preaching community was transferred to Vavuniya and renamed *Amathi Aham*. From there, its ministry expanded to Tamil-speaking Catholic communities throughout Sri Lanka.

Today, under the leadership of Fr. B. Jeyabalan, OMI, the preaching community continues this missionary tradition, bringing the Gospel, hope, reconciliation, and spiritual renewal to people.

### **3. Formation Ministry**

#### **St. Joseph's Juniorate**

The history of St. Joseph's Juniorate, Columbuthurai, is closely associated with Fr. Adrian Joseph, OMI, who became its first Rector on 23 January 1970.

The Juniorate welcomes Tamil-speaking young men from different parts of the country and provides them with education, spiritual formation, and a supportive community environment. After completing their G.C.E. Advanced Level examination, students undertake further English-language studies before proceeding to the next stage of Oblate formation.

The Juniorate continues to play an important role in fostering and accompanying young vocations to religious and missionary life.

#### ***Gnanodhayam*: Pre-Novitiate Formation**

*Gnanodhayam* was established in 2003 as an Oblate Institute for Religious Studies and a Pre-Novitiate Formation Centre, with Fr. P. Emmanuel Jesuthasan, OMI, as its first Director. The Pre-Novitiate programme, normally conducted from February to July, provides candidates with spiritual, human, and intellectual formation as they discern their vocation to Oblate religious life.

During the rest of the year, *Gnanodhayam* also provides retreats, renewal programmes, and formation courses for priests and religious. The Eugene Academy, located on the premises, provides educational support to children and contributes to their academic, moral, and spiritual development.

### **De Mazenod Scholasticate, Jaffna**

A significant development in Oblate formation took place in 1997 with the establishment of the Oblate Scholastic Theologate at Matthew's Memorial Home, *Amala Utpavam*. Fr. Jeevendra Paul, OMI, served as its first Superior.

In 2001, the Scholasticate was moved to its present location and named De Mazenod Scholasticate. The present building was solemnly inaugurated on 8 July 2001 by Most Rev. Fr. William Steckling, OMI, the Superior General.

The establishment and development of the Scholasticate marked an important step in strengthening the theological, spiritual, human, and missionary formation of future Oblates in the Province of Jaffna.

De Mazenod Scholasticate, where contextual formation is secured, now welcomes scholastics from the Province of Colombo and from other countries, including Vietnam and Zambia, for their philosophical and theological studies. As a Regional Scholasticate, De Mazenod Scholasticate is open to Oblates from different parts of the world, offering them a place for academic, spiritual, pastoral, and community formation.

## **4. Education Ministry**

### **School and Formal Teaching**

From the very beginning of their mission in Jaffna in 1847, the Oblates became actively involved in the education ministry. Over the years, hundreds of Oblates have served as teachers and principals and have established and administered numerous schools and educational institutions.

Oblates have contributed to education in both government and private schools and colleges. Great personalities like; Fr. Timothy Long, OMI, Fr. Antoninus, OMI, and Fr. N. Arulnesan, OMI are some of the notable Oblates who made significant contributions to education. This tradition continues today, with several Oblates engaged in teaching ministry in schools.

### **Annai Illam: LEBARA Education Resource Centre**

The LEBARA Education Resource Centre was established on 16 February 2013 at *Annai Illam*, Kilinochchi, with the support of LEBARA. Initiated by Fr. A. Sylvester, OMI, and currently

led by Fr. Sebamalai Perera, OMI, the Centre responds to the educational needs of children and young people affected by the civil war.

Functioning as both a library and an educational resource centre, it provides educational support and learning opportunities to more than 275 students. Through education, personal formation, and equal opportunities, the Centre continues to contribute to the educational and social development of the Kilinochchi community.

### **De Mazenod Campus: Oblate Institute of Higher Education (OIHE)**

The De Mazenod Campus – Oblate Institute of Higher Education (OIHE) in Jaffna operates with the motto “Higher Education for All.” Recognizing the increasing cost and limited accessibility of higher education, the Oblates developed this initiative to provide more affordable opportunities for higher studies.

The initiative began to take shape in 2016 under the leadership of Fr. Edwin Vasantharajah, OMI, with the collaboration of other Oblates. In 2022, Fr. Siyanstan Jenis, OMI, facilitated its registration with the Sri Lanka Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC). Since 2024, the Centre has been directed by Fr. Antonine Jeevendra Paul, OMI.

### **Oblates as Lecturers and Professors**

Throughout the history of the Oblate mission in Sri Lanka, many Oblates have served as lecturers and professors in universities, seminaries, and other institutions of higher education. As pioneers in education and seminary formation, the Oblates continue to contribute academically qualified personnel to both religious and secular educational institutions.

### ***Malarum Mullai*: Education and Human Resource Centre, Oddusuddan**

*Malarum Mullai* is a community education centre in Oddusuddan, Mullaitivu District. Initiated in 2018 by Fr. S. Anpurasa, OMI, and currently with Bro. Amirtharaj Daberera, OMI, the Centre provides free tuition and opportunities for children's educational and personal development.

In addition to academic support, children are encouraged to develop their talents through music, dance, and other skill-building activities. Under successive Oblate leadership, the Centre has expanded its infrastructure and programmes and continues to serve the local community with the support of Wilde Ganzen and Stichting Mullai – Netherlands.

***Amala Annai Anpaham Hostel: Mulankavil***

*Amala Annai Anpaham* began in the Jaffna Peninsula in the 1980s as a home for orphans and children in need, initiated by Fr. D. Vincent Patrick, OMI, and his companions. Following displacement during the Tamil Exodus in 1995, the institution was relocated to Mulankavil in the Kilinochchi District.

Due to later government regulations, it was transformed into a boys' hostel, providing disadvantaged young boys with accommodation, education, life-skills development, and personal formation. The Oblates accompanying the hostel continue to support the boys in their studies, talents, character development, and preparation for a better future.

***Amala Uthayam Boys' Hostel: Trincomalee***

*Amala Uthayam Boys' Hostel*, located at Uppuveli, Trincomalee, provides a safe and supportive residential environment for boys from economically disadvantaged families, enabling them to pursue their school education with stability and confidence.

The hostel was established in 2005 with Fr. Godfrey Joel, OMI as the warden and Fr. Jeevanadas, OMI, then Principal of St. Joseph's College, Trincomalee. Today, with improved facilities, the ministry continues under the care of Fr. Gerald, OMI, providing education, personal formation, and pastoral accompaniment to young people.

**5 . Psychosocial and Counselling Ministries**

**OBTEC: Kilinochchi**

The OBTEC Counselling Centre was officially established on 23 September 2022 at Kanagapuram, Kilinochchi, with financial support from IMHO (International Medical Health Organization, USA). Its mission is to promote psychological well-being, emotional healing, and holistic human development,

particularly among people in need. Fr. I. S. Vijendran, OMI, served as its first Director, supported by professionally qualified counsellors.

OBTEC works closely with the District General Hospital, Kilinochchi, and the Divisional Hospital, Tharmapuram, providing psychological counselling to patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals. It also offers specialized support for people affected by addiction through individual and family counselling, psycho education, relapse prevention, and long-term psychological care.

The Centre provides school-based counselling for students through individual and group sessions, life-skills programmes, and emotional well-being activities. It also serves children's homes through trauma-informed counselling, play therapy, art-based interventions, and resilience-building programmes.

In addition, OBTEC conducts early-childhood emotional development programmes, community mental-health awareness, family and parenting programmes, youth empowerment, and psychosocial support in villages and parishes. Through these diverse services, the Centre seeks to promote healthier individuals, stronger families, and more resilient communities.

### ***Amaithy Thendral: Centre for Psychosocial Animation and Value Education – Mullaitivu***

The *Amaithy Thendral* Centre was established to promote healing, peace, psychosocial well-being, and holistic human development among communities affected by the 2004 Tsunami and the civil war in Northern Sri Lanka. The initiative began in 2006 at Unnapulavu, Mullaitivu, and the Centre was officially inaugurated on 20 January 2008, with Fr. Peter Rajanayagam, OMI, and Fr. Confucius, OMI, taking the lead in establishing its programmes.

The Centre provides psychosocial and value-education programmes for children, youth, parents, teachers, families, and vulnerable communities. Since 2011, its ministry has expanded to Mannar, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, and Mullaitivu, reaching schools, villages, hospitals, children's homes, elders' homes, refugee rehabilitation centres, and communities affected by war and poverty.

Particular attention is given to widows, female-headed families, persons with disabilities, elderly people, children, youth, and teachers, helping them develop resilience, emotional well-being, peaceful relationships, and hope for the future.

Since its establishment, 67 staff members have contributed to this ministry. The Centre has been guided by successive Oblate directors: Fr. Sebastian, OMI, Fr. Amalathas, OMI, Fr. Poncian, OMI, and Fr. I. S. Vijendran, OMI.

#### ***Anjali Aham: Point Pedro***

Anjali Aham, located in Thumpalai, Point Pedro, Jaffna, was established on 22 May 2006, with Fr. S. Damian, OMI, as its first Director. Founded with the mission “To journey with wounded people in love and compassion,” it began as a psychosocial support centre and has grown into an important community development ministry serving people across the Jaffna Peninsula.

The Centre - Fr. A. Thevavasantharasa, OMI, as its director at present- provides counselling and psychosocial support to people affected by war, displacement, natural disasters, family difficulties, and other social challenges. It also supports children, youth, women, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable families.

#### ***Valarpirai (ICOF)***

The Institute of Counselling and Ongoing Formation (ICOF), founded by Fr. S. M. Selvaratnam, OMI, was one of the early counselling centres of its kind in Jaffna. It has played an important role in promoting the emotional, personal, and social well-being of people, especially schoolchildren and university students.

Today, under the guidance of Fr. Damian, OMI, the Centre continues to accompany people in need, including children with autism and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Through counselling, guidance, and ongoing support, it seeks to provide a safe, compassionate, and inclusive environment where people can find acceptance, develop their potential, and face life's challenges with confidence and hope.

#### ***Annai Illam: Kilinochchi***

Annai Illam, now functioning as the LEBARA Library and Education Resource Centre, was originally established by Fr.

E. Edmund Reginald, OMI, as a counselling centre for victims of ethnic violence. As the need for psychosocial support increased in Vanni land, the Centre also trained groups of counsellors, becoming one of the few counselling-training centres serving the war-affected Vanni region.

Through its evolving ministry, Annai Illam has contributed significantly to healing, psychosocial support, education, and community development among vulnerable communities in the region.

## **6. Hospital and Prison Ministry**

### **Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health: Jaffna Teaching Hospital**

The Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health at Jaffna Teaching Hospital has been a place of prayer, healing, and hope for more than five decades. The ministry began in 1972, when Fr. T. Thevathasan, a diocesan priest, was appointed as the first hospital chaplain. In 1973, he established a small chapel within the hospital, initially dedicated to St. Jude and later rededicated to Our Lady of Good Health (Velankanni).

From 1972 to 1979, the hospital ministry was served by priests from the nearby parishes. In 1979, the chaplaincy was entrusted to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), with Fr. Daniel Francis, OMI, becoming the first full-time Oblate hospital chaplain. Since then, numerous Oblates have served patients and their families with dedication and compassion.

The present chapel was built in 2000 by Fr. S. Anpurasa, OMI, and expanded in 2019 by Fr. A. Sutharson, OMI, and currently Fr. A. Delushan, OMI, serves as the chaplain.

The hospital ministry seeks to make present the compassionate healing presence of Christ, especially among the poor and vulnerable.

### **Diocese of Batticaloa**

On 1 August 2019, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Ponniah, Bishop of Batticaloa, entrusted the Oblates with the ministries of hospital chaplaincy and prison ministry.

Fr. Jacob Yogaraja, OMI, began this ministry in August 2019, followed by Fr. Claude Marino, OMI, and Fr. Benat A.

Singer, OMI. Their ministry includes celebrating the Eucharist, administering the Sacraments, counselling patients and prisoners, accompanying grieving families, and providing practical assistance such as medicines, transport, clothing, and hygiene items.

### **Vavuniya General Hospital and Prison**

The Oblates have served the sick and suffering at Vavuniya General Hospital since 1999, providing prayer, spiritual accompaniment, sacramental care, and support to patients and families. Currently Fr. Jenibert Croos, OMI, serves as chaplain.

The Oblates also minister at Vavuniya Prison, offering prayer, counselling, spiritual guidance, and personal accompaniment to prisoners. Through this ministry, they seek to bring hope, dignity, reconciliation, and opportunities for renewal.

### **Mannar General Hospital**

The Oblates began hospital chaplaincy at Mannar General Hospital in the early 2000s, with Fr. Jacob Yogarajah, OMI, among the pioneers of the ministry. Over the years, several Oblates including Fr. Gerald, OMI, Fr. A. Vimalanathan, OMI, Fr. Jude Carowf, OMI, Fr. Jesupalan, OMI, Fr. Anucious, OMI, and currently Fr. M. Vincent, OMI have served the sick.

### **Trincomalee General Hospital and Prison**

The Oblates in the *Amala Uthayam* Community, Trincomalee, currently represented by Fr. J. Gerald, OMI, extend their pastoral ministry to both the General Hospital and the Prison in the city.

Through prayer, sacramental ministry, counselling, and compassionate accompaniment, the Oblates offer spiritual and human support to the sick, prisoners, and their families. As in other hospital and prison ministries across Sri Lanka, this service reaches people of different faiths and backgrounds, reflecting the Oblate commitment to serving everyone, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalized.

Through these ministries, the Oblates continue their charism of being close to the poor, the suffering, and the most abandoned, bringing Christ's compassionate presence to hospitals and prisons.

## **7. Specialized Ministry**

### **Centre for Rehabilitation of Alcoholics and Drug Addicts (CRADA) – Mannar**

The Centre for Rehabilitation of Alcoholics and Drug Addicts (CRADA) was established on 10 October 2006 at Thottaveli, Mannar, to help individuals affected by alcohol and drug addiction rebuild their lives. Its roots go back to 2003, when Fr. Vincent Patrick, OMI, inspired by the context, started the “Puthiya Udhayam” (New Dawn) support group in Pesalai. Recognizing its success, the late Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar, established a permanent rehabilitation centre known as *Thiruppumunai* – ‘turning point’.

Over the years, CRADA has developed into a comprehensive rehabilitation ministry. Under the leadership of successive Oblate directors, including the present director, Fr. V. Justin, OMI, the Centre provides holistic support through medical care, counselling, psychosocial education, spiritual guidance, yoga, recreation, vocational training, and livelihood assistance. Mental-health professionals, psychiatrists, and community organizations also collaborate in the rehabilitation process.

CRADA's ministry extends beyond residential treatment. It conducts awareness and prevention programmes in schools and villages, anti-drug campaigns, women's empowerment programmes, community advocacy, and livelihood assistance for rehabilitated persons. Former beneficiaries are also encouraged to form village support groups to strengthen long-term recovery.

Through this ministry, the Oblates seek not only to overcome addiction but also to restore human dignity, rebuild families, and help individuals return to meaningful and responsible participation in society.

### **‘Thiruppam’ – Esther Rehabilitation Centre, Alcoholics Anonymous – Batticaloa**

‘Thiruppam’ – Esther Rehabilitation Centre in Batticaloa is an Oblate ministry established to respond to the growing problem of alcohol and drug addiction in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. Inspired by the healing ministry of Christ and the missionary spirit of St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Centre accompanies individuals and families affected by addiction through counselling, guidance,

rehabilitation, and community support. The Centre shares the vision and mission of Thiruppumunai (CRADA) Rehabilitation Centre in Mannar, seeking to restore the dignity, hope, and well-being of people affected by addiction and to promote healthy families and communities.

Over the years, Oblate priests, including Fr. M. A. Hubert, Fr. Philip Ranjanakumar, OMI and OMI, Fr. S. A. S. Reval, OMI have contributed to this ministry.

The Centre conducts school awareness programmes, youth formation, teacher training sessions, pastoral visits to psychiatric units, and professional counselling for individuals and families. Those requiring residential rehabilitation are referred to *Thiruppumunai* Rehabilitation Centre in Mannar for specialized treatment and continued support.

***Amathi Karankal: Wellness Centre for Amputees, Mankulam***

The *Amathi Karankal* – LEBARA Wellness Centre for Amputees, located at Panikankulam, Mankulam, Mullaitivu, was inaugurated in May 2014 as a humanitarian ministry dedicated to restoring hope, dignity, and independence to persons with amputations and disabilities, particularly those affected by the civil conflict. Fr. S. Anpurasa, OMI, served as its first Director.

The Centre is a collaborative initiative of the LEBARA Foundation, Meththa Foundation, Missio Aachen, Porticus, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and generous benefactors. It provides holistic care addressing the physical, psychological, economic, spiritual, and educational needs of amputees and their families.

A major service of the Centre is the provision of artificial limbs and orthotic devices free of charge, helping beneficiaries regain mobility and confidence. The Centre also offers counselling, psychosocial support, and motivational programmes to assist individuals in overcoming trauma and rebuilding their lives.

In addition, beneficiaries receive livelihood assistance for self-employment, small businesses, and cottage industries. Educational grants are also provided to children from amputee families and to school-going amputees, enabling them to continue their education.

Through these services, *Amathi Karankal* continues the Oblate mission of accompanying the vulnerable, restoring dignity, and helping individuals and families build more secure and hopeful futures.

### **Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (CPR)**

The Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (CPR) is an Oblate ministry established on 2 May 2005 to promote peace, justice, reconciliation, and human dignity in Sri Lanka. It was founded in response to the needs of communities affected by ethnic conflict and social divisions, with a mission to build bridges among communities and empower marginalized people to live with dignity and equal rights.

Its vision is “A just and peaceful Sri Lanka where the rights of all people are assured.” With the support of partners such as Misereor, CPR works with communities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to promote human rights, equal opportunities, social awareness, and peaceful coexistence among people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

The Centre also accompanies war-affected and marginalized communities through psychosocial support, livelihood assistance, and training in non-violent communication. Over the years, its programmes have been coordinated by Fr. Bernard, OMI, and currently by Fr. Jeevarantam, OMI. Because of its advocacy work, some Oblates have also faced security threats and intimidation.

Today, CPR continues to address important social issues through human-rights advocacy, minority rights, interreligious dialogue, women's and children's rights, gender equality, environmental responsibility inspired by *Laudato Si'*, and intercultural exchange programmes. It also conducts awareness and empowerment programmes for students and youth on issues such as substance-abuse prevention and road safety.

Through these initiatives, CPR continues the Oblate commitment to peace, justice, reconciliation, and service to the most vulnerable, helping build a more just, inclusive, and peaceful Sri Lanka.

## **Specialized Ministry to Dysfunctional Families**

Inspired by the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod and his concern for families in difficulty, the Jaffna Province launched this ministry in 2021. Fr. Stany Anthonipillai, OMI, began by accompanying single mothers, widows, and families affected by the war, particularly in the Vanni region and parts of the Jaffna Peninsula.

The ministry provides empowerment programmes, awareness sessions, counselling, limited legal assistance, and pastoral accompaniment. It also promotes Gospel values among families of different faith backgrounds, including Hindus, Christians, and Catholics.

With the support of generous benefactors, the ministry continues to provide livelihood assistance, home-gardening projects, children's nutrition programmes, and food assistance to families facing hardship. Through this ministry, the Oblates seek to restore dignity, strengthen families, and bring hope to those experiencing abandonment, poverty, and difficult family circumstances.

## **9. Youth and Children Ministry**

### **HAVONOS: Empowering Communities through Hope and Sustainable Development**

HAVONOS - OMI, supported by HAVONOS–Netherlands, is an Oblate social-development initiative serving vulnerable communities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. Currently coordinated by Fr. S. R. Satheeskumar, OMI, it responds to the needs of war-affected families, women, children, youth, and marginalized communities through education, livelihood development, psychosocial support, youth empowerment, and rehabilitation.

A major initiative is the FAITH (*Food Always in the Home*) programme, which supports women-headed families through livelihood projects, agriculture, home gardening, counselling, and women's groups. More than 775 women have benefited from these programmes.

Through *Gnanatheepam*, Youth Empowerment Centre in Ariyalai, HAVONOS provides young people with awareness

and leadership programmes addressing mental health, suicide prevention, substance abuse, life skills, and educational motivation. Vocational training, youth clubs, and leadership programmes help young people become responsible and confident members of society.

Education is another major focus. Through initiatives such as the *SieCo Centre*, *Amathikalam* Community Development Centre, and *Sieni Fund* for Children's Education, disadvantaged children receive scholarships, school supplies, nutritious meals, and educational support.

The *Nesakkarankal* Farm at Iyakachchi promotes sustainable livelihoods through coconut cultivation, goat and poultry farming, brick-making, and other agricultural activities, while also supporting local students through scholarships and educational programmes.

HAVONOS also collaborates with the Esther Rehabilitation Centre in Batticaloa in providing rehabilitation services for people affected by drug addiction and conducting prevention programmes in schools and villages.

Through these diverse ministries, OMI and HAVONOS continue to promote education, psychosocial well-being, sustainable livelihoods, rehabilitation, and social justice, helping vulnerable communities build lives of greater dignity, resilience, hope, and peace.

### **St. Eugene's Children Club**

The St. Eugene's Children Club is a parish-based ministry inspired by the spirit and charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod, dedicated to the holistic formation of children and young people. Its vision is “To nurture children into strong pillars of the faith community.”

The Club provides a safe, joyful, and faith-filled environment for children aged 8 to 18, helping them grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Through faith formation, leadership activities, service, teamwork, and talent development, children are encouraged to become responsible and compassionate members of the Church and society.

The ministry also promotes Christian values, vocations to the Oblate way of life, artistic and technological skills, care for nature, and active participation in parish and community life. Children are given opportunities to develop leadership through Children's Leadership Teams. The Club functions under the guidance of Fr. S. Roystan, OMI, Director of Children's Ministry, together with parish priests, animators, catechists, volunteers, and parents.

## **10. Spiritual Animation**

### ***Sangamam - Gnanavazhi: Kopay, Spiritual Centre, Kopay, Jaffna***

Sangamam was established after the 2004 Tsunami to care for children affected by the disaster. Later, it developed into a centre for prayer, retreats, healing, psycho-spiritual accompaniment, meditation, and renewal. Today, the *Gnanavazhi* – Path to Wisdom- programme provides spiritual animation, contemplative formation, renewal programmes, and training for formators.

### **Chaplaincy at the College of Education, Vavuniya**

Started in October 2024, this ministry provides spiritual accompaniment and formation to student-teachers preparing for their future educational mission. The chaplain also supports their personal, spiritual, and pastoral development.

## **11. Jaffna Oblates on Foreign Mission**

### **Sending Missionaries from Jaffna**

Since the Oblates arrived in Sri Lanka in 1847, they have not only served and developed the local Church but have also sent missionaries to different parts of the world. Oblates from the Province of Jaffna have served in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, China, the Philippines, Australia, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Germany, England, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and Cuba.

### **Tamil Chaplaincy**

From the 1980s, many Sri Lankan Tamils migrated to other countries because of the war and in search of better opportunities. This created a need for Tamil-speaking Catholic chaplains. The

Oblates responded by providing pastoral and spiritual care to Tamil Catholic communities in countries such as Norway, France, Italy, and Denmark.

### **Oblates Serving in Various Capacities**

Oblates from the Jaffna Province have also served outside Sri Lanka in various roles, including administration, formation, animation, teaching, and pastoral ministry. Their service has extended to places such as the Vatican city, Italy, France, England, Mexico, Brazil, the Philippines, and Kenya, continuing the missionary tradition of the Jaffna Oblates beyond the shores of Sri Lanka.

### **12. Mission through Writing, Printing, Music and Mass Media & Communication**

From the beginning of their mission in Ceylon, the Oblates recognized the importance of writing, printing, music, and media as effective means of evangelization.

A significant milestone was the establishment of the first Catholic printing press in Jaffna in 1876, known as St. Joseph's Catholic Press. It played an important role in spreading Catholic teaching and supporting Tamil Catholic literature.

Nallur Swami Gnanapragasar made extensive use of writing and publishing for evangelization. His numerous books, articles, research works, and other publications made a lasting contribution to both Tamil literature and Tamil Catholic literature.

Several Oblates, including Fr. Antoninus, OMI, Fr. P. Jesuthasan, OMI, Fr. S. M. Selvaratnam, OMI, Fr. Vincent Patrick, OMI, Fr. S. Anpurasa, OMI, and Fr. J. R. Satheeskumar, OMI, have contributed through writing in history, religious, academic, psychological, and social fields. "Naan," a Tamil psychology magazine published from the De Mazenod seholestieate for almost half a century, is a notable example of this ministry.

Music has also been an important part of the Oblate mission. Oblates such as Fr. Adrian Joseph, OMI, Fr. P. Vimalrajan, OMI, Fr. Linus Soiza, OMI, Fr. B. Jeyabalan, OMI, and Fr. Jude Caowf, OMI have contributed through the composition of sacred and religious music.