

Rev. Fr. Slawomir Kalisz OMI was our Guest Speaker at our 11th General Meeting on December 17, 2019. He spoke to us on “Promotion of Priestly and Religious Vocations.”

[Download here for a summary of the talk]

The guest speaker Rev. Fr. Slawomir Kalisz OMI was briefly introduced by the third V.P. Elizabeth Cheng. Rev. Fr. Slawomir Kalisz had worked at St. Jude’s Parish (North Point); St. Mary’s Parish (Hung Hom) and now at St. Alfred Parish (Shatin). He gave a talk on the “Promotion of Priestly and Religious Vocations”.

(A) Vocation Camps for youths

Rev.Fr. Kalisz organizes vocation camps for youths twice a year on behalf of the Oblate Order. Vocation camps are held in Hong Kong and Guangzhou where youths and their families spend time with their spiritual advisers to formulate close personal relationship.

(B) Challenges to Priestly Vocation in Hong Kong

There are unique difficulties for priestly vocation as listed below:-

- (i) Celibacy and chastity are considered “un-natural” and very controversial in Chinese cultures. The filial duty of a son is to financially support his parents and provide heirs to the family. Catholic parents pray for priestly vocations in another family, but not in their own family. It is a long term effort to convince parents to allow their own sons to enter the seminary. The vows of the Oblates are (a) poverty)
(b) Chastity) common to all religious orders
(c) obedience)
And (d) perseverance (unique to the Oblates)
- (ii) Small family size – very often Hong Kong modern-day family has only one son. This son is expected to support his parents financially when they become old. Rev. Fr. Kalisz mentioned the case of a young man who wishes to join the seminary provided that the Oblates can support his parents to the tune of HK\$10,000 per month – of course, his offer was turned down.
- (iii) Prestige for Priests is less in the 21st century. Our society has become more materialistic and people are not willing to sacrifice. The unique Ministry of the Oblates is to love the poor – and Rev. Fr. Kalisz is running a “kitchen for the poor” in To Kwa Wan.
- (iv) Late Vocations are more prevalent in our present day society and young men are entering the seminary after their university education.
- (v) Pray for Priestly Vocations – especially with the altar boys and their parents. Pray for priestly vocations in their own family – not in their friends’ family. In the past 19 years, Rev. Fr. Kalisz had come into contact with more than 40 young men in Hong Kong and managed to have 4 seminarians from Hong Kong.

This interesting talk was followed by sharing by Serrans Richard Tan, Joyce Chang, Francisca Lo, Michael Lau and Winnie Yau.