



The Lange Letter

Oblate Sisters of Providence



August 2004

Mother Mary {Elizabeth} Lange Guild News

Issue No. 39

Mother Lange Symposium Scores Big

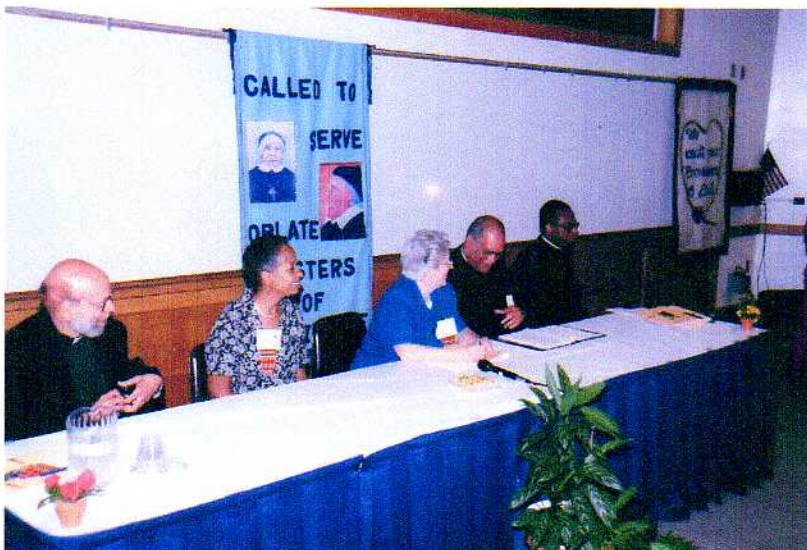
Morgan State University, Baltimore, hosted the much heralded and anticipated Symposium: **Mary Lange: Bold Legacy to Freedom...the vision yesterday, today, and tomorrow.** Sponsored by the M. M. Lange Guild, the activities of the day were brought to fruition by a dedicated committee headed by co-chairs Toni Moore Duggan (vice president) and Sister Madeline Swaboski, IHM. Blessed with picture perfect weather, the day became a treasure of informative exchange as experts shared various aspects surrounding the life and times of Mother Mary Lange and the Oblate Sisters of Providence. William Cardinal Keeler of the Archdiocese of Baltimore gave special remarks for the event and conducted the Recommitment Service for the Guild members, as well as Symposium attendees. It was a crowning moment in a spectacular day.

Offered as one of the major activities celebrating Oblates' 175th anniversary of foundation (1829 - 2004), the Symposium served as a forum of information. It uniquely gave recognition and testimony to the hand of Providence--God's continuing faithfulness in the establishment and preservation of the first congregation of women religious of color in the world. Speakers portrayed the antebellum setting as well as the social and religious climate wherein women, against all odds gifted (and continue to gift) the Catholic Church, the country--the world in service, primarily through education, to youth, the aged and the poor.

Board member Marlene Apollon served as the MC. Presenters and their topics were: Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB, D. Hist. Sci. "Mary Lange in the Millieu of Black Catholics of Antebellum America"; Diane Batts Morrow, Ph.D "Mary Lange and the

History of the Oblate Sisters of Providence"; Sr. Margaret Gannon, IHM, Ph.D. "Mary Lange: Extending the Vision...The IHM Connection"; Fr. Thaddeus J. Posey, OFM, Cap., Ph.D. "Mary Lange and Black Spirituality: Mother Mary Lange's Spiritual Gift to the Black Community"; and Fr. William L. Montgomery, Ph.D. "The Oblate Sisters of Providence: The Origins of their Mission to Latin America".

Other Panelists speaking of Oblates today and vision for the future were: Sr. Reginald Gerdes, OSP on "OSP Archives"; Lenwood Johnson, "The Mother Mary Lange Guild"; Toni Moore-Duggan, "M. L. Chapters Supporting the Cause"; Esther Sanders, "Oblate Associates"; Sr. Stephen Beauford, OSP "Vocations"; Sr. John Francis Schilling, OSP "St. Frances Academy"; Sr. Claudina Sanz, OSP, "The M. E. L. Home for Abused Girls"; Sr. Virginie Fish, OSP, "The Cause of Mother Mary Lange for Sainthood"; and Fr. John Bowen, SS concluded with a wrap up and closing prayer.



Symposium presenters: (left to right) Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB, D. Hist. Sci.; Diane Batts Morrow, Ph.D.; Sr. Margaret Gannon, IHM, Ph.D., Fr. Thaddeus Posey, OFM Cap, Ph.D. and Fr. William Montgomery, Ph.D.

These classic words spoken by Archbishop James Whitfield, Archbishop of Baltimore in 1828 sounded the clarion call for women to serve God as Oblate Sisters of Providence more than 175 years ago.

July 1st at the packed Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, several bishops, priests, sisters, students, alumni, friends, relatives, and just plain well wishers joined Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, the main celebrant, in a jubilant Mass of Thanksgiving. Bishop John Ricard, SSJ. Ordinary of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida, and long time friend of Oblates, delivered the homily. *Jubilate Deo!*

The banquet at Martin's West was held July 2nd--the official closing of a year-long celebration recognizing 175 years of service to God and God's people. It had all begun with the approval and encouragement of

"The Finger of God Is in This Thing"

mission and ministries of the

Oblate Sisters of Providence - (1829 - 2004) Serving God and God's people for 175 years. Exhibit shows Co-Founders, Mother Mary Lange and Father James Hector Joubert, SS. Ministries in which the Sisters engage are listed: Prayer, Child Care, Tutorial Services, Vocations, Social Services, Education (general), Elder Care, Hispanic Ministry, and Pastoral Ministry. (Pictures depict activities of various ministries.)



Oblate Sisters of Providence's years of service were reiterated with due recognition to the power and faithfulness of Providence throughout 175 years. Of note were observations of the dedication that has kept Oblates faithful to the charism and mission envisioned by Mother Mary Lange and Father Joubert 175 years ago: to serve God's people through education ministering to youth, the aged, and the poor.

On their part, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the world's first Congregation of women religious of African descent, renew their resolve, by God's grace, "to continue their mission ... to embrace and serve others with the same compassion with which Christ embraces us, sharing with all the unconditional love of the Suffering Jesus."

(Declaration of Mission)

The Cause of Mother Lange in Cuba

The call for personal commitment to promoting the cause of Mother Lange goes beyond members of the Guild, Board of Directors, and



Daniel Ernesto with Msgr. Carlos Baladron, Bishop of Guantanamo, seek Mother Mary Lange's footsteps.

Chapter members. It also involves YOU. Everyone is needed to bring to fruition the recognition by the Church and the world that Mother Mary Lange is a saint of God enjoying the beatific vision and still "working" to help her brothers and

sisters on earth. African Americans especially need an African American saint. You can help.

You, too, are invited to become knowledgeable about the life, times and holiness of God's servant. You are invited help organize, educate, affirm, and

promote her holy life and heroic deeds. You are called upon to labor for the glory of God in promoting the cause of Mother Lange--a woman endowed with humility, courage and an extraordinary sense of

Mrs. Andrea Quiala Vent (holding picture of Mother Mary Lange) and Daniel Ernesto, Chairperson of French Tomb (Santiago de Cuba) formed by Haitian descendants searching for data on Mother Mary



service to youth, the poor and the aged. You, too, are indeed called to see Christ in each person and "put on the amor of God" (Ephesians 6:11).



Researching data pertaining to Elizabeth Lange's early life are: Daniel Ernesto, (center) with Deacon Ramon Carreno and Father Jose Joaquin Espino, They search parish archives of Baracoa in search of data on the Servant of God, Mother Mary Lange. Mother Lange is known to have been in Cuba for a number of years, prior to immigrating to the United States. She spoke Spanish fluently.

How can you help?

Volunteer: Pray, work and contribute. For more information contact the Mother Mary Lange Guild.

