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MAY 2013

The month of April was a strange and eventful one, especially for Oblates of the Virgin Mary living in Boston. What began as a month of fun activities and light-hearted media coverage of Oblate events turned into a chaotic maelstrom as bombings, increased military presence, a bloody police chase, and a climactic lock down of the entire city became the rule of the day. The eventful month concluded with a wounded city burying its dead, healing the injured, assisting the permanently disabled, and praying to God for peace.



THE MONTHLY
MEDIA MONITOR

Fr. John Wykes, OMV
Media
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Professional



Triumph & Tragedy



Above: The first part of April featured light-hearted interviews with Fr. John Wykes, OMV (talking about his film on Indiana television) and Fr. Tom Carzon, OMV (talking to Boston.com about the free hot dog giveaway on Red Sox Opening Day).

Below: The second part of April plunged Boston into a surreal nightmare. Here, in an image taken by this author, the military stand guard at the corner of Boylston and Mass Ave, directing people away from the site of the Marathon bombings.

The month of April of the year 2013 is one that Boston area Oblates will not soon forget.

It started on an upbeat note. This author attended the River Bend Film Festival in South Bend, IN. Taking place April 3-6, the festival was screening my

film "Shot by Shot -- The Magic of Moviemaking." Local television took great interest, resulting in two interviews on WNDU television with reporter Sabrina Wu. The same time frame saw the film being screened at the Fallbrook International Film Festival in California and

being nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the Hot Media Film Festival in Washington, D.C.

Back in Boston the next Monday, April 8, Oblate priests and seminarians gave away free hot dogs as people walked to Fenway Park for the great

Triumph and Tragedy (continued)

springtime baseball event -- Red Sox Opening Day. The giveaway, coordinated by Chief Advancement Officer Tim Van Damm, was designed to greet people, offer them free hot dogs, and tell them about the Oblates and what we do in Boston. Both the Boston Globe and The Pilot covered the story. Fr. Tom appeared on Boston.com video, being interviewed about the memorable event. There was also a small "blurb" on page sixteen of The Boston Globe Magazine for April 28 about the hot dog give-away, under the feature "Boston Uncommon - Out and About."

One week later was the Boston Marathon. Weekend Masses at Saint Francis Chapel featured blessings for the many runners attending, including those at the special Runner's Mass on Sunday, April 14.

The next day offered beautiful weather for runners on Patriot's Day. The springtime weather continued into the afternoon.

Just as the OMV's Communications' Team was preparing for a three o'clock meeting, two loud explosions occurred near the marathon finish line. This startling event occurred just three blocks from St. Clement's and only one block from Saint Francis Chapel. Provincial Dave Nicgorski heard at least one of the explosions but wasn't sure what it was. Quickly the news spread of bomb explosions at the marathon. Both Fr. Tom Carzon and this author, leaving the house separately, rushed out to see if they could help.

In what became a widely-reported incident, both of us

were turned away by police. We then stayed on to help as best we could. Fr. Tom and seminarians offered oranges and extended conversations with those passing by. An emergency responder was invited to dine at St. Clement's and shared his harrowing story of helping at the scene of the crime.

Three people were killed and over two hundred sixty wounded in the attack. Many of the wounded are still recovering at the time of this writing, and many have experienced the loss of limbs or have suffered other irreparable injuries. Let us pray for them!

Later that evening Fr. Tom and I were interviewed by Justin Bell for the National Catholic Register. Later on I did a radio interview for "A Closer Look" hosted by Sheila Liaugminas on Relevant Catholic Radio. This author did yet another interview with Al Kresta on his show for Ave Maria Radio on April 18.

Later that night the tragic and surreal week became more intense as a violent shootout between terrorists and police, punctuated by both gunfire and the hurling of explosives out a car window, left one M.I.T. officer dead, another officer critically wounded, and the older terrorist suspect killed by gunfire (and accidentally run over by his brother). The younger brother got away -- and the manhunt that no one in Boston will ever forget was on.

The next morning the city woke up to a lockdown in its outlying areas. This author heard an explosion -- it was one of the terrorist's devices that had been found one block away and

was exploded in a controlled detonation by police.

Fr. Tom Carzon had just made it to the Saint Francis Chapel when the lockdown was extended for the entire city of Boston (perhaps the first time such a lockdown had been ordered for a U.S. city). Fr. Tom was told to "shelter in place" and so could not come back home to St. Clement's. He spent most of the day at the Chapel, ministering to those in the hotels and at the Hynes Convention Center. Needless to say, the people who came to the Chapel were very grateful for Fr. Tom's presence.

Eventually the Chapel had to be closed and all Bostonians huddled around their TVs and computers, monitoring the chase for a single 19-year-old male that had put the entire city on lockdown. Tweets and Facebook posts and well as many prayers (even for the conversion of the suspect) ensued. Sirens filled the streets of Boston as police followed their leads. After a disappointing announcement that the suspect had not been found, a sudden and violent shootout ensued. The young man had been found in a boat in the Watertown neighborhood that had just been searched. Within the hour, the suspect was in custody. People took to the streets of Boston to celebrate. Br. Jerry Joaquin, near the end of the lockdown, ran out to capture images of Fox News' Shepherd Smith reporting live from the Back Bay.

On April 19 the Catholic News Service ran an article entitled "Beyond medical help, physician-runner says spiritual help needed, too." The article went on to say, "After experiencing first hand the

Triumph and Tragedy (continued)

events as two bombs exploded April 15 at the finish line, Dr. Joseph Stavas, 58, stopped at the St. Clement Eucharistic Shrine in Boston's Back Bay the following day to pray and reflect on the crisis." The article concluded that such times of prayer and reflection were necessary for people to obtain a "better understanding of how this all fits together."

On Monday, April 22, exactly one week after the attacks, this author made and uploaded a short film called "Boston Strong -- Scenes from the Boylston Barricade." The next day plentiful rain drenched many of the notes and pictures left on the barricade, so the filming on that Monday was fortuitous.

Jennifer Graham writes for the "Houses of Worship" column in the prestigious Wall Street Journal. On April 24th she did two lengthy interviews, one with Fr. Tom Carzon, OMV, and one with this author. It was published on April 26th. The article was once again about the bombings and the response of the clergy to the crisis, though it had more of an emphasis on the fact that these two priests had been turned away when trying to help. "Barred from the chaotic scene at the finish line," said the headline, "priests nonetheless found ways to provide solace."

The article created quite a stir and lots of commentary. Relevant Catholic Radio called back once again, this time doing an interview with Fr. Tom on the Drew Mariani Show -- the topic being the Wall Street Journal article published that morning. People began sharing the article on Facebook, provoking a great deal of discussion of the issue.

Some people expressed satisfaction that the important issue was being addressed. Others felt that too much emphasis was being placed on the turning away by police and not enough on the good that was done that day.

Famous conservative talk show host and commentator Glenn Beck picked up on the Wall Street Journal article and placed it as a news item on his TV-show-based website, The Blaze. "Clergy Were Reportedly Banned From The Deadly Boston Bombing Scene," shouted the headline, "Here Are the Details." When asked if clergy should have been allowed at the scene, readers responded with an overwhelming "yes." Even Italy's La Stampa ran its own summary of the article, entitled, "Boston, Estema Unzione negata."

On April 30, this author did yet another interview for the National Catholic Register. This time around the reporter, Christine Williams, made it clear that her assignment was to run a more comprehensive story on the situation. This author proposed what the reporter already had

in mind -- that some sort of system could be established where certain priests could be officially designated as emergency responders by the city and could be given identification to allow them access to emergency situations. Ms. Williams said that part of her article would be to interview the Boston Police and other officials to get their take on a more cooperative approach to the incorporation of pastoral ministry into emergency responsiveness. The article is scheduled to appear on or around May 5.

It has indeed been an unforgettable April. As the Monthly Media Monitor breaks for the summer, we pause in prayer for the bombing victims and for their families and friends. We also pray for the conversion of terrorists and for greater peace and harmony among all mankind. And we look forward with great anticipation to a summer of promise and hope -- most especially to July's World Youth Day in Brazil with our new Pope Francis.

God bless and see you in September!



Still image from the video "Boston Strong -- Scenes from the Boylston Barricade." The video can be found on the omvusa YouTube Channel.