

Message of the 36th General Chapter

Dear brother Missionary Oblates,

Dear brothers and sisters of the Mazenodian family,

1. In this jubilee year of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, we give thanks to the Lord. We look to the past with gratitude, beginning with St. Eugene de Mazenod and to all of our predecessors including our living elder brothers whom we greet most especially.
2. In these times of great global changes, we respond to the call of the Spirit, as did St. Eugene de Mazenod in his Preface to the Oblate Rule, by giving a new impetus to the mission that is our *raison d'être*: being close to the new faces of the poor, the most abandoned, and sharing the Good News to which we are witnesses.
3. In this world that God loves, with all its richness and beauty, and looking upon it as Saint Eugene did through the eyes of Christ crucified:
 - We observe new forms of poverty, especially among young people: fundamentalism, individualism, materialism, consumerism, addiction to the digital world... But, we also see the suffering of families, youth, the lonely, and the elderly.
 - We recognize urgent issues which strongly speak to us such as: the situation of refugees, the homeless, and migrants who are forced to leave their countries, as well as the devastation of the environment.
 - We perceive victims of injustice and violence, especially the indigenous peoples and minorities, the victims of human trafficking, of abuse and exploitation, who cry out loudly for support and a response from us.
4. Faced with these situations, the Church strongly calls us out of our comfort zone to go to the "peripheries" and work for the fulfillment of the Kingdom. We are invited to write a new page of the Gospel with Mazenodian creativity and audacity.
 - We recognize that the poor evangelize and teach us, and we welcome their contribution to the authenticity of our charism.
 - We are committed to live in missionary communities founded on a fraternal spirit and mutual sharing, as we strive to break down the barriers that separate and divide people. We will promote interculturality at all levels in which cultures, religions, and diverse communities can dialogue and enrich one another.
 - We will give witness to the deep bonds that unite all human persons, both in our daily life and personal encounters of all kinds, as well as in the collective bodies where decisions are made. Drawing upon the charism of Saint Eugene, we will contribute to the defense of family values, of refugees and migrants, as well as of all people who are victims of injustice, violence and abuse.

- We will participate in efforts to care for the integrity of creation in the face of environmental devastation. We will continue to strengthen our commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (J.P.I.C.).
 - We are committed to the defense of minors and the most vulnerable as we have been sensitized by the recent scandals in the Church and in society.
5. Conscious of our infidelities, of our poverty, and of our own need for conversion:
- We commit ourselves to strengthen our family spirit and the quality of our community life, following the example of Jesus Christ with his disciples, as did St. Eugene de Mazenod and his first companions.
 - We, Oblate brothers and priests, hear the call to holiness, and we value the missionary religious life and accept being interdependent and responsible to each other.
 - We choose to strengthen the ways we live interculturality in international communities and in society, as we are present in close to 65 countries around the world.
 - We have decided to increase the sharing of personnel and the other resources of the Congregation, in order to foster greater fairness and generosity among our Oblate units.
 - We will take steps to prepare ourselves, throughout life, in the areas of anthropology and missiology, as well as in studies of economics and media, so as to better respond to the demands of today's world.
 - We renew our support for the preparation and empowerment of the laity to whom we are sent and with whom we share a common mission.
6. “*Missionary disciples*” of Christ, who gave himself for us, we choose to give witness wherever we live to the joy that flows from the Gospel.

Our vocation is to become missionaries of mercy and hope, ambassadors of the tenderness of the paternal and maternal face of God like the Virgin Mary, our Immaculate Mother, pondering all things in her heart. Thus, we will bear witness to God's family, a family without borders, in dialogue with the cultures and religions of our time.

Through the intercession of Saint Eugene de Mazenod and all the Oblate saints and martyrs, we are responding to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: *"He has sent us to evangelize the poor. The poor have the Gospel preached to them."* *"How vast the field that lies before us!"*

Rome, October 10, 2016
The capitulars of the 36th General Chapter