

Year of Oblate Vocations
“Come and See” (John 1, 43) Joy and Generosity of our lives

NOVENA PRAYER
FOR VOCATIONS TO OBLATE RELIGIOUS LIFE
21 – 29 MAY 2018



In his letter to the Congregation at the beginning of the Oblate Triennium, Father General wrote:

“And what did our Lord Jesus Christ do?” What do we learn from Jesus? Jesus’ life incarnated a full integrity: His life witnessed to the Good News that he preached. Jesus was a prayerful man: living out of a deep communion with his Abba, impelled by the Spirit, he prayed before choosing his disciples and told us to pray for laborers. Jesus called others by name to be with him, to follow him, and he formed them. Might that not be a template for our own ministry of Oblate vocations? Our lives must witness to the Good News we preach as we were so powerfully called by the 2010 Chapter on “Conversion.” We must be men of prayer, contemplatives in loving communion with the Father, the Son and the Spirit. We must pray for vocations. (Recently Pope Francis said that vocation ministry is a ministry of the knees, of prayer, rather than programmatic strategy.) We must invite young men by name to follow Jesus as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate...” (Letter to the Congregation, December 8, 2013)

“Oblate spirituality calls us to daily periods of silent prayer to rest in the Mystery of God. This experience makes us more generous in our vocational journey, in the way we relate to the poor and in apostolic community.” (Letter to the Congregation on the Year of Oblate Vocations, December 8, 2017)

THE FIRST DAY VOCATION - THE CALL

Leader: *Jesus said: "What are you looking for....come and see..."*

Readings:

Reading #1: From the Gospel according to John 1:35-46:



The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, "What are you looking for?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have

found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter). The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Reading #2: From the Oblate Rule

The Oblates are a Missionary Congregation. They are men set apart for the Gospel, men ready to leave everything to be disciples of Jesus Christ, Their principal service in the Church is to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned. They preach the Gospel among people who have not yet received it. Where the Church is already established, their commitment is to those groups it touches least.

The mission of the Oblates is especially to those people whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring. These are the poor with their many faces – they have our preference because of their need.

Prayer

Holy Father,
we come to you because Jesus
asked us to pray
that you send workers into
your harvest.
Therefore, send us generous
young men,
passionate for Jesus,
willing to make of their whole
life a total oblation to you,
to become close to the poorest
and most abandoned,
and to proclaim the Gospel.

May they burn with the same fire that you enkindled in Saint Eugene;
may they come to be part of his family
and, with all the Oblates, may they continue the work of Redemption.

Mary Immaculate,

Who first gave Jesus to the world, be with us as we pray. Amen

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Saint Eugene de Mazenod... Pray for us

Blessed Joseph Gerard... Pray for us

Blessed Joseph Cebula... Pray for us

Blessed Francis Esteban and his Companions... Pray for us

Blessed Oblate Martyrs of Laos ...Pray for us

Praised be Jesus Christ... and Mary Immaculate

Or

We pray, Father, that your Church would never lack for shepherds. Remember the poor, abandoned and needy. Raise up men of love and zeal to preach the Gospel to all those who are in need of the hope of salvation. Eugene de Mazenod understood your love for all your children and was generous in their service. May there be many who would share his vision and give themselves selflessly as Oblates of Mary Immaculate. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.



THE SECOND DAY VOCATION - THE SENDING



Leader: *The harvest is great, the workers, few.*

Jesus said: "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to the harvest".

Readings:

Reading #1: From the Gospel of Matthew:

Jesus said "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time".

Reading #2: Eugene de Mazenod, Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate wrote:

"If priests could be formed, afire with zeal for men's salvation, solidly grounded in virtue - in a word, apostolic men deeply conscious of the need to reform themselves, who would labor with all the resources at their command to convert others - then there would be ample reason to believe that in a short while people who had gone astray might be brought back to the long neglected duties of religion, We pledge ourselves to all the works of zeal that priestly charity can inspire... We must spare no effort to extend the Savior's Empire and destroy the dominion of hell,"

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may they come to be part of his family
and, with all the Oblates, may they continue the work of Redemption.
Mary Immaculate,
Who first gave Jesus to the world, be with us as we pray. Amen

Or

Lord God, Father, through the intercession of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, we pray that there would be many more young men willing to give their lives in service of the Gospel. Send workers into your vineyard in these days when the harvest is great but the workers are few. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Saint Eugene de Mazenod...

Pray for us

Blessed Joseph Gerard...

Pray for us

Blessed Joseph Cebula...

Pray for us

Blessed Francis Esteban and his

Companions ...

Pray for us

Blessed Oblate Martyrs of Laos ...

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THE THIRD DAY VOCATION - THE CHALLENGE

Leader: *Jesus said: "You did not choose me, I chose you... to go forth and bear fruit in abundance".*

Readings:

Reading #1: From St. Paul's Letter to the Romans

All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How are they to call on Him if they do not believe? How can they believe in Him if they have never heard of Him? How can they hear of Him unless someone preaches? And how will there be preachers unless they be sent? Scripture says: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.' Faith comes through the Word of God.



Reading #2: From Pope Paul VI's writings

Like Christ, the Church sees before her an immense multitude of people who need the Gospel and have a right to it, for God "wants everyone to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth."

The Church has a duty to preach salvation to all. The Gospel message is not reserved to a small group of the elect or privileged but is destined for everyone. There is anguish in the Church of Christ because there are exhausted crowds like sheep without a shepherd who hunger for the liberating word of God that offers hope and life. The word of God must be spoken, shared, proclaimed and lived.

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and, with all the Oblates, may they continue the work of Redemption.

Mary Immaculate,

Who first gave Jesus to the world, be with us as we pray. Amen



Or

God of joyful hope and faithful love: you call us to share fully in the mission of your Son. In this time of great promise and change inspire us to be witnesses to the power and presence of Jesus. May we love and respect all you have created and be disciples of the Good News especially among the dispossessed. Guided by the Holy Spirit, may others be inspired to leave everything for the Gospel, by becoming Oblates of Mary Immaculate. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father...

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Blessed Joseph Gerard ... Pray for us

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Blessed Oblate Martyrs of Laos...

Pray for us

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THE FOURTH DAY VOCATION - THE MISSION

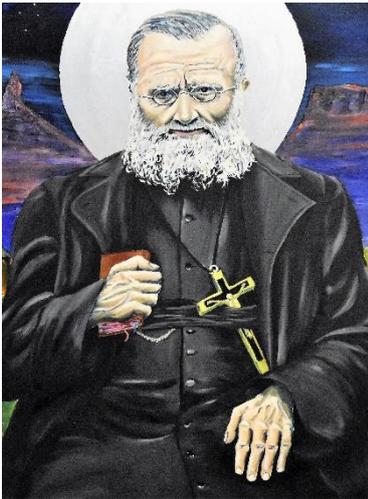
Leader: *Jesus said: "Come follow me" ...They left everything and followed him...*

Readings:

Reading #1: From the Gospel of Luke

Jesus came to Nazareth and went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. He stood up to read from the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written -"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor; to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind and to set the downtrodden free."

Reading #2: Blessed Joseph Gerard wrote:



I can picture an Oblate of Mary Immaculate in his mission: he wants to see everything with his eyes, know with his heart, give joy to everyone by his presence, be all things to all people to win them over to Jesus Christ... He is not satisfied with general relationships, where the priest is the priest of everyone, but not enough the priest to each one. He loves in such a way that each one would believe himself or herself to be uniquely loved by him. ...We must love our people, love them in spite of everything, love them always. The world belongs to the person who loves it most and proves it.

Prayer

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to become close to the poorest and most abandoned,
and to proclaim the Gospel.

May they burn with the same fire that you enkindled in Saint Eugene;
may they come to be part of his family

and, with all the Oblates, may they continue the work of Redemption.

Mary Immaculate,

Who first gave Jesus to the world, be with us as we pray. Amen

Or

God our Father, you have loved us so much that you sent your only Son to be our savior; stir up the grace of a holy vocation in the hearts of many young men. May they have the generosity and willingness to serve you with their whole lives as Oblates of Mary Immaculate and win many over to the love of your Son, Jesus Christ.

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THE FIFTH DAY VOCATION - THE GIFT

Leader: *Jesus said: "He who loses his life for my sake and for the Gospel ... will truly find it."*

Readings:

Reading #1: From the Gospel of Matthew

The Kingdom of God is like a buried treasure which someone found in a field. He hid it again, and rejoicing at his fortune, went and sold all he had and bought that field. Or again, the Kingdom of God is like a merchant's search for fine pearls. When he found one really valuable pearl, he went back and sold all he owned and he bought the pearl.

Reading #2: From the writings of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate



Every religious congregation in the Church has a spirit all its own; it is inspired by the Spirit of God to respond to the needs of the Church to work for the salvation of souls. By our particular vocation we are involved with the redemption of humanity... May we, by the sacrifice of our whole being, so cooperate as not to render His redemption fruitless for ourselves and for those we are called upon to evangelize.

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Mary Immaculate,

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Or

We pray: Stir up the flame of faith and the fire of love in the hearts of young men and inspire them to dedicate themselves to your service with unbounded confidence and zeal. Through the intercession of Our Immaculate Mother bring a great many vocations to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate so that the work of the Congregation may continue. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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THE SIXTH DAY VOCATION - THE IDEAL

Leader: *Jesus said: "If someone wishes to come after me ... He must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."*

Readings:

Reading #1: From the Gospel of Mark

Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee and he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come follow me. I will make you fishers of men." They immediately abandoned their nets and became his followers.



Reading #2: From the Oblate Rule

Our mission is to proclaim the kingdom of God and seek it before all else. We fulfill this mission in community; and our communities are a sign that in Jesus, God is everything for us. Together we await Christ's coming in the fullness of his justice so that God may be all in all.

Growing in faith, hope and love, we commit ourselves to be a leaven of the Beatitudes at the heart of the world.

Our mission requires that, in a radical way, we follow Jesus who was chaste and poor, and who redeemed mankind by his obedience. That is why, through a gift of the Father, we choose the way of the evangelical counsels.

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may they come to be part of his family
and, with all the Oblates, may they continue the work of Redemption.

Mary Immaculate,

Who first gave Jesus to the world, be with us as we pray. Amen

Or

Jesus our Lord and brother, you still extend your invitation to discipleship in our day. May there be many who would hear your call and find within themselves the generosity and faith to respond. Raise up men to service at your altar, men of hope and dedication who will follow you without reserve as Oblates of Mary Immaculate and who will serve your people with joyful love. We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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THE SEVENTH DAY VOCATION - THE RESPONSE

Leader: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord...Let it be done according to your Word*

Readings:

Reading # 1: From the Gospel of Saint Luke

The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of Most High will cover you with His shadow. Thus the Child will be holy and will be called the Son of God... There is nothing impossible with God. Mary responded: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you have said".

Reading # 2: From the Preface to the Rule

How should men who want to follow in the footsteps of their divine Master Jesus Christ conduct themselves if they are to win back the many souls who have thrown off His yoke? They must strive to be saints. They must walk courageously along the same paths trodden by so many before them who handed on splendid examples of virtue. They must wholly renounce themselves, striving solely for the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the growth and salvation of souls.



Prayer

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Mary Immaculate,
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Or

Father, you continue to call men to total service, commitment and dedication: men open to the Spirit who will bring forth Jesus in the world today through the gift of priestly ministry and religious life. May those You call hear your gentle voice and have the courage to respond with whole hearted confidence and trust. Stir up the grace of a vocation in the hearts of many generous young men so the work of the Oblates may both continue and flourish in the Church. Amen.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Mary, disciple of the Lord... Pray for us

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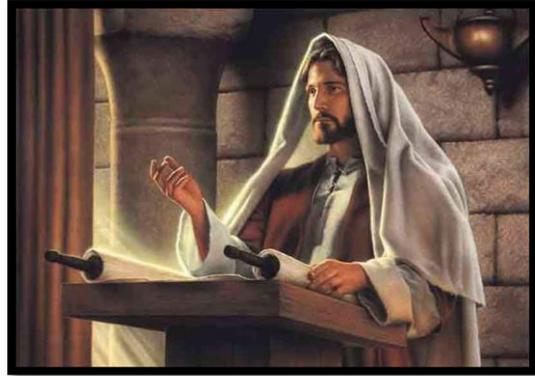
THE EIGHTH DAY VOCATION - THE CHARISM

Leader: *He sent me to bring Good News to the Poor...The Poor have heard Good News*

Readings:

Reading # 1: From the Prophet Isaiah

The Spirit of the Lord has been given me. He has anointed me. He has sent me to bring Good News to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to the imprisoned...to comfort those who mourn... He sent me to restore the ancient ruins and rebuilt the cities that had been destroyed.



Reading # 2: A Sermon of Eugene de Mazenod

Servants! Farmhands! Peasants! Poor!

Come and learn who you are in the eyes of God. You poor of Jesus Christ, you afflicted, un fortunate, suffering, infirm, diseased: all you who are burdened with misery, listen to me! You are the children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, co-heirs of His eternal kingdom, His cherished inheritance. Lift up your minds: you are the children of God.

Look through the tatters that cover you. There is an immortal soul within you made to the image of God, a soul redeemed at the price of the very blood of Jesus, more precious in the eyes of God than all the riches and all the kingdoms of this earth. Know your dignity - you even share the Divine Nature - Children of God, Children of the Most High!

Prayer

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may they come to be part of his family

and, with all the Oblates, may they continue the work of Redemption.

Mary Immaculate,

Who first gave Jesus to the world, be with us as we pray. Amen

Or

Father, you chose Eugene de Mazenod and inspired him with wonderful love for the poor and gave him the gift of touching their hearts. May the Oblate sons of Eugene continue, increase and flourish in the Church. May they never cease proclaiming the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ to the poor in imitation of their founder. Raise up zealous men of faith to the Oblate family for the glory of your name. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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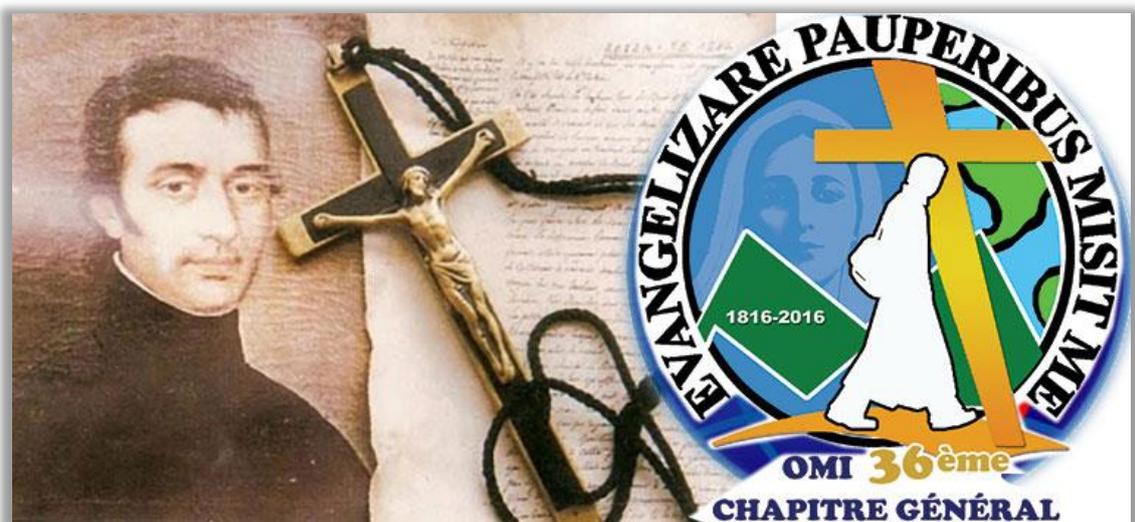
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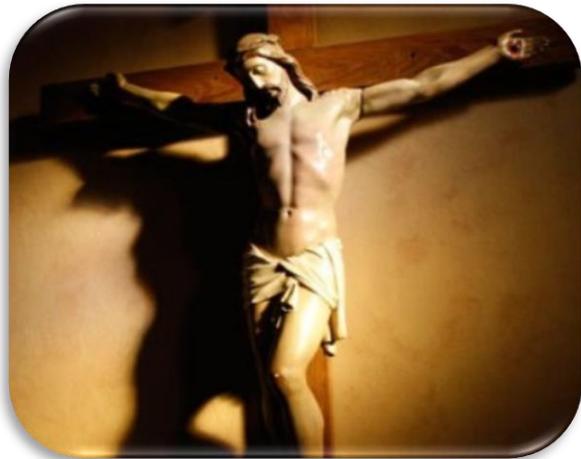
THE NINTH DAY VOCATION - THE ENCOUNTER

Leader: *We praise you o Christ and bless you...By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Readings:

Reading # 1: From St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

When I came among you it was not to preach myself but Jesus Christ... I did not come proclaiming God's word with any particular eloquence. I was determined to speak only of Jesus Christ and him crucified. As a consequence, your faith rests not on human wisdom, but on the power of God... For the cross of Christ is a stumbling block to the Jews, an absurdity to the Greeks; but to those who are called, the cross is the wisdom and the power of God.



Reading # 2: From the Oblate Rule

The cross of Jesus Christ is central to our mission. Like the apostle Paul, we "preach Christ and him crucified". If we bear in our body the death of Jesus, it is with the hope that the life of Jesus, too, may be seen in our body. Through eyes of our crucified Savior, desiring that those in whom he continues to suffer will know also the power of his resurrection.

Prayer

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Mary Immaculate,

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Or

Lord Jesus, you redeemed the world by your passion and love. The depth of your love is revealed in your suffering. May there be young men raised up in the Church who are inspired by your love to give themselves, their time and their talents, - indeed, their whole lives - to your service. May your Oblate Congregation grow in numbers and with strength and holiness as it continues to share your love with the poorest and most abandoned. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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