

**25th Anniversary of the Canonization  
of Saint Eugene de Mazenod**

# **Prayer Vigil**



**1995-2020**

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Eugene de Mazenod was born in France, in Aix-en-Provence, in 1782. As the son of a noble family, at the age of 8, when the French Revolution broke out, he had to flee to Italy. Upon his return to France, when he was 20 years old, he began to lead a frivolous life until he began a process of conversion that culminated in a deep experience of encounter of Christ before the image of the Cross. Moved by the disasters that the Revolution had caused in the Church and in the people, who had not received religious formation for decades, he entered the seminary and became a priest in 1811. After realizing that working alone would not give good results in his ardent pastoral work, he founded the Missionaries of Provence in 1816 which, 10 years later, in 1826, will be approved by the Pope with the new name of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He was appointed Bishop of Marseille in 1837 and sought to renew the diocesan life of that important city, while leading the Oblate Congregation and sending missionaries throughout the world. He died in holiness on May 21, 1861. His process of beatification and canonization began in 1926. He was beatified in Rome by Pope Saint Paul VI on World Mission Sunday, October 19, 1975 and canonized by Saint John Paul II, also in Rome, on December 3, 1995, the day of Saint Francis Xavier, patron saint of missions, and the first Sunday of Advent.

## SCHEME OF THE VIGILIA

### INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Entrance procession
- Greeting of the celebrant

### FIRST PART: **Celebration of the entry into heaven of St. Eugene and the introduction of his veneration in the Church**

- Announcement of the «dies natalis» (birth to heaven) of Eugene de Mazenod
- Reading of the canonization formula
- Procession with the relics or the image of Saint Eugene
- Invocation to the Holy Spirit

### SECOND PART: **Prayer with the Word of God**

- Psalms
  - I. Thanksgiving Psalm
  - II. Penitential Psalm
  - III. Petition Psalm
- Short reading
- Commentary

### THIRD PART: **Veneration of Saint Eugene and request for intercession**

- Veneration of the relic or image of Saint Eugene
- Oblate prayer of intercession
- Our Father

### CONCLUDING RITES

- Final prayer
- Blessing
- Salve Regina

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

*In order to maintain a prayerful atmosphere, the church or place of celebration can be in half-light till the end of the Announcement. The assembly can have candles lit, as is done, for example, during the Easter Vigil. The celebrant can light his candle with a candle that is already lit next to the Cross and, if the celebration is already taking place during Advent, it is even more convenient to light it from the Advent Wreath. Subsequently, the candlelight is passed from one to another.*

### **Greeting of the celebrant**

**C.** Dear brothers and sisters: 25 years ago, the Church proclaimed Eugene de Mazenod a saint. By doing so, She indicated to us that, if we follow in his footsteps, without a doubt we can also reach heaven. He has opened the way for us and the Church has recognized it. The Church, Our Mother and Teacher, has also presented him to us as a powerful intercessor in our needs and has asked all Catholics to pay public devotion to Saint Eugene.

In this vigil we commemorate the event of the Canonization. Three attitudes will mark our prayer today: first, to thank God for this gift, then to ask forgiveness for the times that in these 25 years we have not taken advantage of the model and intercession of our holy Founder and, finally, the request for the blessing of our Oblate family, its life and its missionary initiatives. May the Holy Spirit come to our aid so that we could pray as we ought.

## FIRST PART

### **Celebration of the entry into heaven of St. Eugene and of the introduction of his veneration in the Church**

#### **Announcement of the «dies natalis» (birth to heaven) of Eugene de Mazenod**

Approximately 188 years before his canonization, on Good Friday, the young Eugene de Mazenod, conquered by the love of Christ Crucified, discovered an enormous love to which he wanted to fully correspond as he wrote in his diary: "this time it was forever, yes forever, forever!"<sup>1</sup>. It was a response so definitive and complete that it led him to enter the seminary and become a priest in 1811, 184 years before being canonized.

The canonization was still 169 years away, when in 1816, faced with the enormous magnitude of the Church's needs, the desire to found the religious family of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate was born in Eugene de Mazenod's heart.

In 1841, 154 years after the canonization, the Congregation began to spread not only throughout Europe, but also throughout the world. During the following years Eugene de Mazenod guided the Oblates with sincere tenderness, encouraging, correcting and reminding them of all the duties of their religious life. 148

---

<sup>1</sup> *Excerpt from his Diary 1814, Oblate Writings 15, n ° 130.*

years before his canonization, Eugene was appointed bishop of Marseilles and began to live with utmost fidelity the program of life that had been outlined: "I must attach myself to this people as a father to his children [...]. I must in a word consume myself for it, be ready to sacrifice my leisure, my desire, rest, life itself for it [...]. For that above all it is necessary to work seriously at becoming a saint"<sup>2</sup>.

The canonization was less than 135 years away, when on December 18, 1860, the first symptoms of the Founder's illness appeared: severe and acute punctures in the region of the heart. He underwent surgery for a tumor located just below his left breast ... Very high fever and abundant pleurisy aggravated his health, to which he said: "I am on the cross and I am happy there. I offer God my sufferings for my dear Oblates and for the diocese"<sup>3</sup>. Contrary to expectations, he recovered from pleurisy, but the tumor, in the midst of unbearable suffering, continued its course in spite of which he told to those who went to visit him: "when you are on the cross you have to know how to be on it"<sup>4</sup>.

That evening was the evening of the blessings. The first to bless was his auxiliary bishop and, in him, his own diocese. "They asked him to bless his Oblates. "Oh yes," he exclaimed, and took up his Oblate cross, blessed all his children with it, tracing the sign of the cross to different points on the earth. "Father, one of us asked him, tell us a few words to communicate to all your children." "Tell

---

<sup>2</sup> *From his Diary 1837, Oblate Writings 15, n.185.*

<sup>3</sup> *From Rey's work vol. 11 p. 831.*

<sup>4</sup> *From the 1861 Lenten Letter of Bishop Jeancard, Auxiliary Bishop of Marseille.*

them" - he continued - that I die happy because the good God chose me to found in the Church the religious family of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. "Show us, Father, the last wish of your heart." "Practice charity well among yourselves ... charity ... charity and external zeal for the salvation of souls." One of his sons asked him again: "You will always be in heaven as you have been on earth, our Father and beloved Father, right?" "Oh yeah," he exclaimed, and his face lit up with an expression. indescribable. Late at night, he repeatedly asked, "If I fall asleep, please shake me, I want to die knowing that I die."

Still 134 years before the canonization, the most important moment in Eugene de Mazenod's life took place: his entry into heaven. On the morning of May 21, the Founder followed two Holy Masses with great attention and devotion. In the afternoon the telegram arrived with the Pope's blessing, he listened to it with clasped hands and with intense emotion. At approximately nine thirty in the evening, assisted by his sister and her son Eugene, by the Auxiliary Bishop and his Vicars General, by Father Henri Tempier, several Oblates and two Sisters of the Holy Family, he asked that the prayers of the dying be recited. Then they proposed the recitation of Compline. With expressive gestures, he accompanied the words that best suited his condition: " I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once...". "Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit." To the canticle "Now dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace ", he raised his eyes to heaven and his face was filled with joy. He followed the *Salve Regina* to the end. Hearing the words "After this exile, show us Jesus", our Founder opened his eyes a little; to each of the invocations

*O clemens, o pia*, made a slight movement; and the third time, *O dulcis, Virgo Maria*, gave him his last breath. His beautiful soul was before God»<sup>5</sup>.

His canonization was still 69 years away when, in 1926, during the mandate of Bishop Agustin Dontenwill, as Superior General of the Oblates, the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Eugene de Mazenod was opened. His canonization was still 20 years away when Pope Saint Paul VI granted permission to begin giving limited worship to Eugene de Mazenod and declared him Blessed in 1975. His canonization was still 8 years away when Blessed Eugene interceded so that, in 1987, a miracle occurred that allowed for canonization: the miraculous healing of a sick person.

### **Reading of the canonization formula**

Finally, on December 3 of the year of the Lord 1995, in the Vatican basilica, during the third year of the second mandate of Father Marcello Zago as Superior General of the Oblates, Pope Saint John Paul II proclaimed in his eighteenth year of Pontificate:

---

<sup>5</sup> *From the Circular of Fr. Joseph Fabre in which he describes the death of the Founder*



*C. For the honor of the Blessed Trinity, the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Christian life, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and our own, after due deliberation and frequent prayer for divine assistance, and having sought the counsel of many of our brother Bishops, we declare and define Blessed Eugene de Mazenod to be a Saint and we enroll him among the Saints, decreeing that he is to be venerated as such by the whole Church. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

**C.** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**R.** As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

### **Procession with the relics or the image of Saint Eugene**

*The relic of Saint Eugene is brought in procession and will be present during the rest of the celebration next to the Cross. Some previously selected members of the assembly bring the relic or image in procession. The celebrant leaves his place and stands in the place where the relics or the image of the Founder will be deposited. The person who carries the relic or the image gives it to the celebrant, who in turn leaves it in the established place. He can then incense the relic or the image if it is appropriate, and then return to the place from which he is presiding over the celebration.*



Canonization of Saint Eugene, December 3, 1995



## **Invocation of the Holy Spirit**

**C.** O God and Our Father, who by your Spirit enlightened the heart of Saint Eugene de Mazenod in charity so that he would zealously seek the salvation of the most abandoned souls and love his children with affection.

The Spirit that you poured into him gave him wisdom to know your will and to carry it out in his life and in the life of his religious family and his diocese.

With your Spirit you strengthened him to overcome all fear and all adversity and instilled in him the desire to seek you above all things and to love you with all his heart.

We ask that, now that we are ready to sing your wonders worked in your Church through Saint Eugene, that you send this same Holy Spirit upon us to enlighten our hearts so that we can pray now as it suits us and thus be able to feel justice and always enjoy your consolation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## SECOND PART

### Prayer with the Word of God

*It would be advisable to pray with gestures. For example, during the psalm of thanksgiving, some concrete and significant gifts received (in the past or recently) by the assembly could be mentioned in the introduction or in the prayer. The penitential psalm can be recited on the knees or the assembly can be asked to kneel for a moment of silence after they recited the psalm. For the psalm of petition, one person could bring to the place occupied by the cross some reality that signifies some aspect of the life and mission of the assembly or the Congregation (for example, the Statutes of the community or of the Unit, etc.)*

#### I. Thanksgiving Psalm

##### Introduction.

C. Let us pray, brothers and sisters, with this psalm that praises the wonders that the Lord has done for our salvation. Let us thank Jesus Christ because this story of salvation has continued and has come to us through Saint Eugene de Mazenod, in whom God has clearly manifested his glory and holiness.

**Ant.** I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, you have heard the words of my mouth. (cf. Ps. 137, 1).

##### **Psalm 92 (91)**

##### Praise of God the Creator

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,  
to make music to your name, O Most High,  
to proclaim your love in the morning  
and your truth in the watches of the night,

on the ten-stringed lyre and the lute,  
with the murmuring sound of the harp.

Your deeds, O Lord, have made me glad;  
for the work of your hands I shout with joy.  
O Lord, how great are your works!  
How deep are your designs!  
The foolish man cannot know this  
and the fool cannot understand.

Though the wicked spring up like grass  
and all who do evil thrive,  
they are doomed to be eternally destroyed.  
But you, Lord, are eternally on high.  
See how your enemies perish;  
all doers of evil are scattered.

To me you give the wild ox's strength;  
you anoint me with the purest oil.  
My eyes looked in triumph on my foes;  
my ears heard gladly of their fall.  
The just will flourish like the palm tree  
and grow like a Lebanon cedar.

Planted in the house of the Lord  
they will flourish in the courts of our God,  
still bearing fruit when they are old,  
still full of sap, still green,  
to proclaim that the Lord is just.  
In him, my rock, there is no wrong.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and  
to the Holy Spirit...

**Ant.** I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, you have heard the words of my mouth. (cf. Ps. 137, 1).

**Prayer:**

**C.** Lord Jesus Christ, always ready to listen to us, we thank you for your goodness, which, with Saint Eugene de Mazenod, we see admirably manifested in the saving Cross in which You, the Righteous One, have been lifted up like the tree of life from which Saint Eugene and all the saints have received abundant fruits; we ask you today that you also always renew in us the wonders of your love. You who live and reign forever and ever. **R.** Amen.

## II. Penitential Psalm

### Introduction

**C.** With this psalm that asks for God's mercy, let us also humbly acknowledge that we have not taken advantage of so many gifts and graces that God has given us in the Church through Saint Eugene de Mazenod. Let us show our repentance and our purpose for change, trusting in the abundant mercy of our Savior, of which Saint Eugene was a witness and an apostle.

**Ant** O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise (Ps. 51 [50], 17)

**Psalm 51 (50)**  
**O God, have mercy on me**

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.  
In your compassion blot out my offense.  
O wash me more and more from my guilt  
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offenses truly I know them;  
my sin is always before me  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;  
what is evil in your sight I have done.

That you may be justified when you give  
sentence  
and be without reproach when you judge,  
O see, in guilt I was born,  
a sinner was I conceived.

Indeed you love truth in the heart;  
then in the secret of my heart teach me  
wisdom.

O purify me, then I shall be clean;  
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,  
that the bones you have crushed may revive.  
From my sins turn away your face  
and blot out all my guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God,  
put a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;  
with a spirit of fervor sustain me,  
that I may teach transgressors your ways  
and sinners may return to you.

O rescue me, God, my helper,  
and my tongue shall ring out your goodness.  
O Lord, open my lips  
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

For in sacrifice you take no delight,  
burnt offering from me you would refuse,  
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit,  
a humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.

In your goodness, show favor to Zion:  
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.  
Then you will be pleased with lawful  
sacrifice,  
holocausts offered on your altar.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to  
the Holy Spirit...**

**Ant** O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall  
declare your praise (Ps. 51 [50], 17)

**Prayer:**

**C.** Lord Jesus Christ, who in Saint Eugene de Mazenod  
has left us a wonderful example of conversion, hear our  
prayers and forgive our sins so that, by your mercy, we  
may receive your forgiveness and peace together and,  
through his intercession, grant us the grace to know how  
to take better advantage of the gifts you give us through



this charism in the Church and to be able to serve you with a sincere heart. You who live and reign forever and ever.  
**R.** Amen.

### **III. Petition Psalm**

#### **Introduction**

**C.** Let us pray now, brothers and sisters, that the Lord continues to bless the life and apostolic work of our Family, so that, with the grace of God, we know how to multiply and make fruitful the gifts that God has given us through Saint Eugene de Mazenod.

**Ant.** May the favor of the Lord our God be ours.  
Prosper the work of our hands (cf. Ps. 89, 17).

#### **Psalm 67 (66)**

#### **People of all nations will worship the Lord**

O God, be gracious and bless us \*  
and let your face shed its light upon us.  
So will your ways be known upon earth \*  
and all nations learn your saving help.

**Ant.** Come, let us worship the Lord, fount of  
all wisdom.

**Or:** Come, let us worship Christ, chief  
shepherd of the flock.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.

**Ant.** Come, let us worship the Lord, fount of  
all wisdom.

Or: Come, let us worship Christ, chief shepherd of the flock.

Let the nations be glad and exult \*  
for you rule the world with justice.  
With fairness you rule the peoples, \*  
you guide the nations on earth.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, fount of all wisdom.

Or: Come, let us worship Christ, chief shepherd of the flock.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, fount of all wisdom.

Or: Come, let us worship Christ, chief shepherd of the flock.

The earth has yielded its fruit \*  
for God, our God, has blessed us.  
May God still give us his blessing \*  
till the ends of the earth revere him

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...**

**Ant.** May the favor of the Lord our God be ours.  
Prosper the work of our hands (cf. Ps. 89, 17).

**Prayer:**

**C.** Lord Jesus Christ, who through Saint Eugene de Mazenod has summoned your children to form a single

family, kindle in their hearts the fire of your love, so that, with charity reigning among us and external apostolic zeal, your blessing abundantly supplants the one that surpasses our efforts. You who live and reign forever and ever. **R.** Amen.

### **Short reading**

From the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (2, 1-5)

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

### **Commentary**

*If deemed appropriate, a brief commentary can be made, based, for example, on some of the ideas of Fr. Marcello Zago, o.m.i., Superior General, in «Renewing ourselves in the charism of Eugene de Mazenod or the homily of Saint John Paul II on the day of his canonization. Also some testimonies or Faith Sharing can be offered about the meaning in one's life of the canonization or to listen to the testimony of someone who lived the moment of canonization in a special way or of some representative of an institution or of an Oblate or ecclesial reality that arose as a result of the canonization of Saint Eugene.*

## THIRD PART

### **Eugene and request for intercession**

#### **Veneration of Saint Eugene and request for intercession**

*The faithful come to venerate the relics or the image in procession as is customary for communion. Meanwhile, an appropriate hymn can be sung.*

#### **Oblate prayer of intercession**

**C.** On this day of celebration, we turn to God, our Father, aware of our many needs, but trusting in his inexhaustible Providence with the prayers that Saint Eugene himself wanted, in 1837, to be said daily in our Oblate Family from now on:

Remember, Lord, your Church,  
– preserve it from every evil and make it perfect in your love.

Guide our Holy Father, Pope (*N...*),  
– protect and strengthen him with your Spirit.

Bless our Congregation,  
– may we preach by word and deed “who Christ is.”

Assist our Superior General,  
– may he guide the Congregation in the spirit of Saint Eugene and be a sign of unity among all Oblates.

Sustain all missionaries of the Gospel,  
– may they be faithful and courageous  
ministers of your Kingdom.

Be with our absent brothers,  
– keep them always in your love.

Call others to share our life and work,  
– send labourers into your harvest.

Reward those who make our life possible,  
– grant eternal life to all who have done us  
good for your Name's sake

*After reading these intercessions, those present could be given the opportunity to say aloud their own (short) prayers of thanksgiving, contrition, or petition. In this case, it would be convenient to use a responsory formula suitable for these 3 types of prayer, ex. "Lord, hear our prayer" or " Lord, graciously hear us".*

**C.** Accept, O Father, the prayers that we present to you through the intercession of Saint Eugene and rekindle in our hearts the fire of your charity, to make our whole life a permanent oblation pleasing to your eyes. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Our Father**

## CONCLUDING RITES

### Final prayer

**C.** O God, in your mercy, you blessed your Bishop Saint Eugene de Mazenod with the zeal of an apostle to preach the Good News to the nations. Grant that by his intercession we may be filled with the same spirit, and dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to the service of the Church and the salvation of all. Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

**R.** Amen.

### Blessing

*If there is a relic of Saint Eugene and the celebrant is a priest or deacon, he can give the blessing with the relic (lifting it and making the sign of the Cross while saying the words Father, Son + and Holy Spirit. If there is no relic of Saint Eugene, the blessing can be given with the Oblate Cross.*

**C.** May God our Father, who has brought his children together to celebrate the canonization of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, bless you, protect you and confirm you in his peace.

**R.** Amen

**C.** May Christ the Lord, who manifested in Saint Eugene de Mazenod the strength and tenderness of his love, make you authentic witnesses of the Gospel.

**R.** Amen.

**C.** May the Holy Spirit, who placed Saint Eugene de Mazenod as pastor of the Church of God and filled him with his strength to proclaim the Gospel to the poor, awaken in you an authentic missionary spirit.

**R.** Amen

**C.** And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

**R.** Amen

**If there is no priest or deacon, the celebrant says:**

**C.** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**R.** Amen

**C.** Let us praise the Lord.

**R.** And give Him thanks.

**Salve Regina**



*In the name of God,  
let us be saints!*

*Saint Eugene de Mazenod to the Oblates,  
communicating the approval of the Congregation,*

February 18th, 1826