



MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
The Superior General

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**LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL
FOR THE FEAST OF ST. EUGENE DE MAZENOD**

May 21, 2022

L.J.C. et M.I.

Dear Brother Oblates, and all our Sisters, Brothers, and Young People who live the Oblate charism,

The life and charism of St. Eugene continue to inspire many thousands of men, women, and young people to seek holiness and to live as missionaries throughout the world. In celebrating the Solemnity of St. Eugene, let us give thanks for the grace of the Oblate charism, a genuine expression of the Gospel. On our feast day, Oblates in difficult circumstances are very present in our hearts and on our minds. We remember in prayer the Oblates and people of Ukraine who are suffering so much from the war provoked by Russia. I want to thank all who have given very generously to help Ukraine, and also for the relief work being done directly and constantly by the Oblates of Poland.

In this letter for our Founder's feast day, I would like to call your attention to four important upcoming events of the Congregation. The first of these events to take place is the **"Week of Prayer for Oblate Vocations,"** from the Founder's feast day, May 21st, to the feast of Blessed Joseph Gerard, May 29th. Resources for this week of prayer have been prepared by the Internal Formation Committee of the Central Government. They are available in three languages and can be downloaded from the OMI website.

This Week of Prayer for Oblate Vocations is an expression of our faith in Jesus' mandate to pray for laborers for the harvest. We will be praying for all the various vocations in the wide Oblate Family. This Week of Prayer also reminds us that, together with prayer, we have to

get involved by assuming the responsibility to invite others to consider a vocation in the Oblate family as an Oblate Priest, Brother, Lay Associate or committed Young Person.

I am grateful to the Major Superiors who foster a culture of vocations in their Units, and who have appointed full-time Oblates with a passion for this ministry to animate and coordinate the efforts of their Units, calling everyone to participate actively in vocational animation. Essential to a vibrant vocational ministry is a team of Oblates and lay people who pray together, and who creatively craft a vision and process to invite and to accompany those who are attracted to the charism. Every Oblate and Lay Associate is responsible for this ministry.

My gratitude goes out to each Oblate who has been missioned by his Major Superior for this most difficult mission. May you be filled with the audacity of St. Eugene! The Major Superiors and their Councilors need to give full support to those designated to coordinate vocational animation in the Units. It is useless to appoint Oblates and teams to animate vocation ministry and then abandon them to work, by themselves, without the constant support and interest of leadership.

I would like to call your attention to a second event, the **2nd Oblate Lay Associations Congress (2OLAC)**. Recommended by the 2016 General Chapter, it is now nearly 3 years since 2OLAC was officially launched at the 2019 Interchapter in Obra, Poland. Even with the COVID situation that forced a postponement, the great enthusiasm, interest, solidarity and joy around this global Oblate gathering have been kept alive.

We are now a short time away from 2OLAC, which will take place on **May 27th, 28th and 29th**. The Congress can be viewed via internet in 3 languages: Spanish, French, and English. The preparation has been a synodal process, involving hundreds of Oblate lay people around the world, participating in workshops and sharing sessions, generating all kinds of ideas, possibilities, and dreams about living the Oblate charism. The Congress will bring to light many wonderful stories of witnessing to our charism in a variety of different ways. Don't miss it! You can already go to <https://omioikia.org/> to find all the latest information about 2OLAC. You will find links in your language of preference so that you can be a part of this Congress.

The **200th anniversary of the Oblate Madonna** is the third event for which the Congregation has been preparing. On August 15, 1822, our Founder had an extraordinary experience of Mary's presence, which he described in a letter to Fr. Tempier the very same day: "Would that I could share with you all that I experienced in the way of consolation on this beautiful day devoted to Mary our Queen!" This special experience assured him that his small group of missionaries held the promise of "very great virtues" and could "achieve infinite good." Mary continues to smile upon us and to bless us in our missionary challenges today. During this year, let us promote pilgrimages to marian shrines. A pilgrimage is a special way to connect with lay people and young people, to get to know them better and for them to get to know us and our charism more deeply.

August 15, 2022 will fall on a Monday. On Sunday, August 14, or on Monday at some convenient time, Oblate communities could organize festive gatherings of the Oblate family. There can be a time for prayer, (Eucharist or Rosary), with faith-sharing around the experience of living the Oblate charism, our hopes for the future, ways of inviting others to know the Oblate charism, the theme of the General Chapter, the significance of Mary in our lives, etc. A simple pot-luck supper or picnic could create a joyful atmosphere and deepen our communion. Special attention to include the poor, shut-ins, the elderly, etc. is an Oblate characteristic. Sharing a meal together is a beautiful sign of the Reign of God that Mary celebrated in her Magnificat.

The fourth congregational event to which I call your attention is the **37th General Chapter** (Sept. 14 – Oct. 14), and its theme, "**Pilgrims of Hope in Communion.**" Please be aware that, each month, very stimulating meditations on the Chapter theme have been made available on the OMI website for personal and community reflection. I am grateful to all who have contributed to these reflections.

I hope that the Chapter has been, and will continue to be, in your prayers. The Chapter is a sacred event for the life of the Congregation and fills us with expectation. We hope for a charismatic outburst of the Holy Spirit, shaking us up and calling us to more authentic religious life and mission. During the General Chapter, the Capitulars are reading the signs of the times in the light of the Constitutions and Rules, insuring that we live in creative fidelity to the charism in our present context.

After the Chapter, the important work of putting into effect the calls that the Chapter presents to us begins. We will welcome the new Superior General and Council, and we will commit ourselves to collaborate with them in carrying out the Chapter's recommendations. There are cynical or negative voices about the work of the General Chapter, and even a lack of faith that the Spirit works in and through us. Lord, help our disbelief!

We are pilgrims, journeying with vibrant hope and seeking to nurture a deep communion in all the circles of relationships in our lives. We are being drawn by God to complete fulfillment in the heart of the Trinity. The Virgin Mary stands, smiling upon us, as a great sign of hope on our pilgrimage, prefiguring God's final victory over all evil and the fullness of abundant life in the Reign of God.

Happy feast day of St. Eugene!

Louis Lougen, O.M.I.

Father Louis Lougen, O.M.I.
Superior General

Rome, May 21, 2022