

# FRATERNAL CHARITY

January 6th, 1994 - Letter to the Oblates in First Formation - Rome

We are witnesses in apostolic community through our fraternal charity. If personal relationship with Christ is the source of our life and apostolate, fraternal charity is the fruit and sign of the new life that comes with it. "May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (Jo 17, 21).

Fraternal charity is what makes us community, makes witnesses of us and makes us Oblates. It is at the core of our charism, it is an essential part of our family spirit, it is a characteristic of our identity. Fraternal charity has a Special importance in our world as well as in the life of the Congregation in these historic times.

We are indeed always becoming more of an international and intercultural Congregation. Only through charity can our multi-ethnic communities become authentic and give witness in our world. During my first visit to South Africa in April 1987, at a time when apartheid was rife, I was impressed by our formation communities. I saw in them the image of what South-African society should have been. Why? Because in them Indians, Whites, Blacks, Coloured of various cultures and ethnic groups were living in harmony. I noticed this again a few months ago. International communities are becoming more and more frequent in formation houses in Latin America, in Africa and even in North America and Europe, because modern societies are always becoming more pluralist and multi-ethnic. This situation obviously entails special challenges for an effective life in common that knows how to overcome not only clashes but the shallowness of relationships as well. It urges our communities to build themselves up on the Gospel. Our living together does not find its origin and growth in bonds of flesh or blood or culture, but in the call of Jesus Christ (cf. C 1) and in Gospel charity (cf. C 3), which make missionaries of us (cf. C 37).

## **Communion and interdependence, expressions of charity**

The capitular document of 1992 placed side by side two words that gave rise to varied reactions during the Chapter and subsequently. To indicate communitarian relationships on the local level and that of the Institute, it spoke of communion and interdependence<sup>[1]</sup>.

Communion is a theological term frequently used nowadays. Vatican II ecclesiology is centered on the theology of communion. In the wake of the Council, communitarian life is perceived as a communion of persons more than as a group of structures. The communion aspect refers to trinitarian life in which Christian life takes its origin and on which it models itself. God is communion, he is charity in himself and in relation to us. He asks us to live communion with him and with each other. He calls us to live in charity.

Interdependence indicates mutual relationships. Social experience always makes mutual bonds more evident. There is dependence between cultures, economies, groups. No one is an island. In the best of cases there is interdependence, reciprocal influence, mutual support. In a religious community, interdependence indicates the incarnation of relationships, reciprocal responsibility, mutual influence.

The bringing together of the two terms was not the result of a compromise between two mentalities present at the Chapter, but rather the bringing together of two complementary sensitivities, one illustrating especially the theological dimension and the other underlining the social needs of our life

in common. The capitular text spells out the consequences of this communion interdependence.

“On the human level, we are called to the accountability of mature adults. This accountability... commits us to live in a spirit of cooperation and initiative and calls us to genuine dialogue within community; it requires, moreover, that we mutually support each other, share with one another, and care for each other” (WAC 11). “They truthfully witness to their humanity by practicing certain human qualities such as respect for others, generosity, and empathy. They are able to accept others in both their freedom and their uniqueness” (WAC 16).

Such ways of relating must be concretized and structured to become a charity that is lived in community. “Living community in terms of communion-interdependence requires a regular rhythm of meetings and retreats to ‘praise and thank the Lord, to assess the community’s life, to renew its spirit and to strengthen its unity’ (C 38). For an active missionary group, this presupposes community planning... Financial sharing constitutes an essential dimension of our life in communion and interdependence... We are asked to be open and ready to be accountable to the community for our use of money and goods, so that together we may grow in freedom and detachment... The community plays a role in bringing about healing and reconciliation... Let communities be attentive to anniversaries and feasts, share the joys and pain of each member... Every community is called upon to develop a common missionary project” (WAC 23 passim). Speaking of first formation and quoting Constitution 39, the capitular document affirms: “A man of community learns to share what he is and what he has and places his friendship and God-given talents at the service of all” (WAC 32).

The capitular document reminds us that charity is not simply a human quality. It stems from our life in Christ (cf. WAC 9, 17). It is “Jesus the Formator who calls and gathers his disciples around himself, who builds bonds of unity and love between them, empowers them with his Spirit, and sends them out to be his witnesses” (WAC 10). “The person of Christ unites us in charity and obedience; this enables us to live again the communion of life and the common mission in his Spirit that the Twelve Apostles shared with him. From this perspective, it is clear that the objective of community is much more than merely gathering a group that functions well together; its aim is to establish interdependence and profound communion between its members” (WAC 10). Starting from this life in Christ, charity finds the depth and perseverance required by our consecration and common mission. “On the faith level, we are reminded that ‘we achieve unity in our life only in and through Jesus Christ’ (C 31). We are therefore called to a deepening of our relationship with him, both as individuals and as communities. As we mature in our responsibility for each other, we become more transparent to each other, and thus we learn to share in depth our personal histories, missionary ideals, and lives of faith” (WAC 12).

Only in this union of human and divine love, of communion and interdependence, do we become “one heart and soul our communities become more and more apostolic; by the quality of the witness they give, they bear fruit that lasts” (WAC 13).

### **In the Constitutions’ wake**

The capitular document of 1992 stands in continuity with our book of life. The Founder’s Rule made already more than 40 allusions to fraternal charity. From the very beginnings it emphasized that we are in community “as brothers” while the last articles speak of the charity with which we must treat those who have left the Congregation. The Founder wrote in the second part: “Closely united in the bonds of fraternal charity, all will be exact in the practice of holy obedience”<sup>[2]</sup>.

The new Constitutions emphasize still more the requirements of charity. They present us with an

ideal of life that is evangelical prior to being functional and structural, therefore animated by charity. The word charism is used to refer to the fraternal relationships that are animated by faith, while the word love refers preferably to relationships with God<sup>[3]</sup>, with the Church. In continuity with the Founder, the word charism is associated with that of obedience<sup>[4]</sup> to indicate a complementarity that gives meaning. The term brother or fraternal is used to refer to all Oblates<sup>[5]</sup> and their type of relationships<sup>[6]</sup>.

Constitution 37 points out the essential rapport between charity, community, witness and mission. "By growing in unity of heart and mind, we bear witness before the world that Jesus lives in our midst and unites us in order to send us out to proclaim God's reign" (C 37). Charity and witness are linked in particular to the vow of chastity<sup>[7]</sup>.

The new Constitutions mention two texts of the old ones bearing on fraternal charity. The one inserted in the section on Apostolic Community dates from 1825. It underscores reciprocal support, joyous charity, mutual respect (cf. p. 46). The other, from 1850, is placed at the end, somewhat like a synthesis of the Constitutions. It is an invitation to renewal in the spirit of one's vocation and apostolic daring. It concludes: "Mindful of these words which marvelously sum up our entire Rule, 'all united in the bonds of the most intimate charity under the direction of the superiors,' may they form but one heart and one soul" (cf. p. 141).

### **No one has loved you more than I**

Eugene de Mazenod was a man of great desires for the Congregation and the diocesan Church, a man of great love for his Oblates. We know well his parting words before dying: "Among yourselves charity, and outside zeal for the salvation of souls." Less known and yet as significant is what he charged Bishop Guibert to say in his name to all Oblates at the moment of bringing him holy viaticum: "Two things: that he had always loved us and would always love us, and that he wanted us in turn to love one another as brothers; that this mutual affection would make us happy, saintly and strong to do good"<sup>[8]</sup>. He really took to heart charity between Oblates. He saw in it the common spirit that invigorates the Congregation.

The Founder set the example by loving his Oblates intensely. Some who read him in a hurry have even been scandalized by the affectionate tone of his letters to a few among them. On the contrary, Blessed Eugene saw in this love for Oblates -- but not only for them -- a gift of God, an attitude similar to Christ's, a means of true sanctity. He wrote to Father Baret: "You are aware, my very dear son, that my big failing is to love with a real passion the children God in his goodness has given me. No mother's love comes close to it"<sup>[9]</sup>. And to Father Mouchette: "I love my sons immeasurably more than any human person could love them. That is a gift I have received from God, for which I do not cease to thank him, because it flows from one of his most beautiful attributes"<sup>[10]</sup>. Two years later, he wrote to the same Oblate: "Often I have told the good Lord that, since he has given me a mother's heart and sons who merit my love under so many titles, he must allow me to love them immeasurably. This I do in good conscience. It seems to me, dearly loved son, that the more I love someone like yourself, the more I love God who is the source and bond of our mutual affection"<sup>[11]</sup>.

In his Diary, he gave the reason for such strong feelings: "I declare that I do not know how those who do not love human persons who deserve to be loved can love God... Let him who may be tempted to find fault with me know that I little fear his judgment and that I could forcefully prove to him that I have every reason to thank God for having given me a heart that is able better to understand that of Jesus Christ our Master, who has made, animates and inspires mine better than those cold egoistic logicians who apparently put their heart into their brain, and have no love for anyone because, in the

final analysis, they love only themselves... There is no half measure, 'So this is the commandment that he has given us, that anyone who loves God must also love his brother (1 Jo 4, 21). Let us study Saint John, fathom the heart of Saint Peter and his love for his divine Master, and especially let us deeply probe all that flows from the loving heart of Jesus Christ not only for all men, but especially for the Apostles and Disciples, and then let them dare to come and preach to us a love that is speculative, without feelings or affection"<sup>[12]</sup>.

Because of his incarnate love, the Founder demanded that his Oblates regularly correspond with him; he reacted in marked tones of affection or of reproach, he conversed with them in prayer, he rejoiced in their visits, he suffered from faults against fraternal charity for which he had very harsh judgments<sup>[13]</sup>. His theoretical teachings on charity are only occasional but very rich<sup>[14]</sup>.

### **Charity, distinctive character of our family**

Father Jetté introduced his commentary on the part concerning community with an extract of the Founder's letter to Father Mouchette, moderator of scholastics<sup>[15]</sup>. Blessed Eugene recalled here the intimate relations existing between himself and the Oblates: "A relationship springing from the heart and which forms true family ties between us... this, I have not come across anywhere else... I am saying that it is this sentiment, which I know comes from Him who is the source of all charity, which has evoked in the hearts of my children this reciprocity of love which forms the distinctive character of our beloved family." Previously in the same letter, he asserted by way of introduction, "I would want all the scholastic brothers to be imbued with the family spirit which ought to exist among us"<sup>[16]</sup>. With good reason Father Jetté presents this text as the key to understanding and living our community life as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

The Founder had this vision of wisdom not only at the end of his life; in fact, this is what at the very outset he took as the basis of formation and animation for his Institute. In 1830 he had visited the community of Notre-Dame du Laus; the lack of regularity which he noted there had pained him. In the letter he later wrote from Fribourg, he returned to the subject and, recalling the observance of the Rule, he indicated the unifying principle of all our life: "so must there be a common spirit which vivifies this particular body. The spirit of a Bernardine is not that of a Jesuit. Ours also is our own. Those who have not grasped this, through not having made a good novitiate, are among us like dislocated members. They make the whole body suffer and are not themselves at ease. It is indispensable that they put themselves back in their place." To illustrate this spirit he speaks of charity in its triple expression: toward God, toward confreres and toward others. "Charity is the pivot on which our whole existence turns. That which we ought to have for God makes us renounce the world and has vowed us to his glory by all manner of sacrifice, were it even to be our lives... Charity for our neighbor is again an essential part of our spirit. We practice it first amongst us by loving each other as brothers, by considering our Society only as the most united family which exists on earth, by rejoicing over the virtues, the talents and other qualities that our brothers possess just as much as if we possessed them ourselves, in bearing with mildness the little faults that some have not yet overcome, covering them over with the mantle of the most sincere charity, etc.; and as for the rest of mankind, in considering ourselves only as the servants of the Father of the family commanded to succour, to aid, to bring back his children by working to the utmost..."<sup>[17]</sup>.

The Superiors General have returned constantly to this theme of fraternal charity<sup>[18]</sup>. Father Fabre, successor to Blessed Eugene, wrote: "The true Oblates of Mary Immaculate should be recognized by the affection we have for one another. It is the sign that will make us recognizable among ourselves and that should make us be recognized outside. So we must love one another, respect one another"<sup>[19]</sup>. "Outside let us be zealous and devoted missionaries, in our communities let us be

fervent Oblates, full of charity for each other. Let us be lenient in our judgments, loving one another with all our hearts, and in all our mutual relationships let us be real brothers. By this sign may we always and everywhere be recognized"<sup>[20]</sup>.

For houses of formation Father Louis Soullier pointed out this virtue: "May the spirit of love and charity, which must be the distinctive character of the Oblate of Mary Immaculate, always reign more and more, not only in this dear scholasticate of Rome where we have the opportunity of contemplating it in its most beautiful expansion, but as well in all houses of formation, so that from here it may spread throughout the whole Congregation to the farthest extremities. This is a point to which we give much importance at a time when, by a particular disposition of Providence, the Congregation opens its arms and its heart to children coming from all countries"<sup>[21]</sup>.

### **Charity, Oblate way to sanctity**

Charity is not an Oblate exclusivity. It is the new commandment given by Jesus to his disciples. Religious life itself was defined by Vatican II in relation to charity. Charity is the ultimate rule in the very exercise of mission, as John Paul II recalled in his missionary encyclical<sup>[22]</sup>.

So what is new in Oblate charity? The Founder wanted us, above all, to be authentic Christians, true religious, zealous missionaries. He wanted our communities to be in the image of the primitive christian community as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The expression "one heart and soul" refers us to this ideal, linked to witness and apostolic fruitfulness. He wanted that we be the continuation of the spirit and works of the suppressed religious orders. In other words, he wanted that we live the soul of consecrated life. "For thanks to God's love poured into hearts by the Holy Spirit, a religious community is a true family gathered together in the Lord's name and rejoicing in His presence"<sup>[23]</sup>. He wanted us to be zealous missionaries, that is to say, filled with active and creative love for souls loved and redeemed by Christ.

Yet, the Founder demanded something still more special in our way of living charity. This specificity is noticed by others. Those who are familiar with the Chapters and congresses of various Institutes and who come to our houses have told us that - in fact - they noticed something different in our way of living fraternity, of behaving toward each other, in a cordiality that is always simple and open, in family life. This fraternal coloring has its effect on our way of living community life. Even if we cannot say precisely what distinguishes us from other religious on a particular point, the important thing is to be ourselves and to fully live that to which we are called.

Father Maurice Gilbert, founder of the review *Vie Oblate Life* and a man with a profound knowledge of the Founder, concluded his article on Blessed Eugene's last words: "Thomas Merton... simply notes this reflection: 'The Franciscan ideal of poverty seems to have the same role in spiritual life as do silence and solitude in purely contemplative orders.' Indeed, the two ways come together at the terminal point: the purification of the soul and its union to God. We can also ask ourselves what - for an Oblate - is the road to sanctity, his way of communing to the paschal mystery of Christ. Certainly not in the silence and solitude of the contemplative nor even in the poverty of a Franciscan. Could it not be precisely his ideal of fraternal and apostolic charity? ... Taking up again Thomas Merton's phrase, we think we can say: the Oblate ideal of charity seems to have the same role in spiritual life as that of silence and solitude in purely contemplative orders. The "testament of the Founder's heart" expresses well "the soul of our soul"<sup>[24]</sup>. I agree with this conclusion by adding zeal to charity. The Oblate ideal of charity and zeal is a characteristic of our charism, it is the privileged way of our interior purification and of our union to God, it is our road to holiness, it is our way of communicating and transmitting the paschal mystery.

## **Educating oneself to an incarnate and consecrated charity**

Charity is not something automatic, spontaneous. It is not like the kind of human love that is often blind. It is the fruit of a conquest, of an asceticism. It is participation in the paschal mystery that is death and also resurrection. It is a gift of the Spirit.

When speaking of charity we can use several different terms like friendship, fraternity, empathy, intimacy, etc. Words and expressions can have different meanings, at times ambiguous and even opposite according to cultures, persons and times. Even here we can become victim of false interpretation and illusion. So a process of initiation, of discernment is needed, made in the proper context and verified with men of God. I would like to underline two characteristics of this virtue, like the two sides of a medal. Oblate charity should be incarnated and should be consecrated, that is to say, it should answer the demands of persons consecrated to God and dedicated to mission.

When I say that charity should be incarnated, I mean concrete and complete. It comprises intelligence and spirit, heart and feelings, internal and external. It should be affective and effective, sensitive and viable, attentive and inventive. It calls for reciprocal respect and appreciation, mutual help in personal growth and fidelity to vocation, the sharing of one's life, the interior as well. It becomes communion and interdependence unlimited by particular sectors, but basically open to all dimensions of our life, especially the most important like mission and consecration, the life of faith and prayer, personal development and human requirements. "I do not say to you: love each other well, this recommendation would be ridiculous. But I do say to you: take care of each other and let each look after the health of all"<sup>[25]</sup>. Paul, in the famous chapter XIII of his first letter to the Corinthians, praises charity but does not fail to speak in practical terms: "Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish: it does not take offense and is not resentful... It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes" (I Cor 13:4-7).

Then, our fraternal love should be consecrated, that is to say, its modalities should express our special consecration to God. It has requirements and expressions other than those of married people or of those who live alone in the world. To love as consecrated persons calls for letting oneself be fashioned by the Word of God that lights up and shows the way. Not only the texts on charity<sup>[26]</sup> but the whole Word of God helps us enter into Christ's attitudes. Measuring ourselves with it and cultivating a sincere friendship with Christ "will enable us to love others as Jesus loves them" (R 12). This is a progressive identification with Christ that teaches us to see "through the eyes of our crucified Saviour the world which he redeemed with his blood" (C 4), and following his example to love all men, beginning with our brothers. Oblates then become "ready to sacrifice goods talents, ease, self, even their life, for the love of Jesus Christ, the service of the Church, and the sanctification of their brethren" (Preface).

The Founder let himself be fashioned in his love by the Word of God, read daily and meditated, and by his experience of Christ renewed in constant prayer. In his first commentary of the Rule he wrote: "Closely united with Jesus Christ, their Head, his children will be one among themselves, very closely united by the bonds of the most ardent charity, living under the most perfect obedience, in order to acquire humility which is so necessary for them, "arctissimis charitatis vinculis connexi". Hence they must not sulk at one another, not sadden one another through expressions of indifference or coldness. "Arctissimis charitatis vinculis connexi omnes sanctae obedientiae sub superiorum regimine exacte subiiciuntur". This does not apply only to the Superior General. What shall I say about murmuring? What about bias?"<sup>[27]</sup>.



### **Pardon and reconciliation, demands of charity**

As far as charity is concerned, its most difficult aspects in practice are mutual forgiveness when there is offense and fraternal correction. There existed traditionally among us a community exercise called *la coulpe*. It may have fallen out of use because its profound meaning was lost. The last Chapter dwelt upon this aspect with realism and with an inspiring vision.

The document *Witnessing as Apostolic Community* indeed contained expressions which impressed many an Oblate: "Hurts springing from our life or ministry are unavoidable and that is why the community plays a role in bringing about healing and reconciliation. When this service is not provided, the accumulation of misunderstandings destroys trust and renders community relationships superficial and formal" ~WAC 23, par.4).

After meditating this extract of WAC, a group was formed at the scholasticate in Germany whose task consists in determining what hurts a community, what creates tensions and misunderstandings and obstructs rapport. The group has also to propose paths of reconciliation and ways of strengthening unity and communion in the scholasticate.

In fact, the ideal community does not exist, nor does perfect charity, not even between consecrated persons in daily communion with the Lord. Because of differing experiences and characters, lack of attention or impolite actions, as a result of events or lived incidents, of diverging opinions and ways of doing things, of diverse culture or education, there can arise within us and our confreres attitudes and reactions of incomprehension, antipathy, even enmity and rupture.

When considering the difficulties and misunderstandings that surface in a community and between confreres, the solution does not consist in ignoring the situations and closing in on oneself; nor is it to pack up and leave. In this life we all remain pilgrims and sinners. What is important is not to close in on ourselves, disillusioned with ourselves, with others and with religious life. Only one solution exists: forgive one another and set out once again with the disciples of Jesus. The evangelical way is found in reconciliation, in beginning over again to love one another as brothers. In such circumstances, what Jesus said applies to us also: "If you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit?... You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (cf. Mt 5:43-48). Then shall we enjoy still more the idyllic experiences of early times: "How good, how delightful it is for all to live together like brothers!" (Ps. 133:1).

After all, to bear the other's burden (cf. Ga 6:2), to give one's life (cf. Jo 15:13), to forgive mutually (cf. Ep 4:32), to help one another to grow and to overcome our shortcomings is an essential part of fraternal charity. The community is genuine when there is mutual help and fraternal correction. The Founder wrote to a seminary director at Ajaccio: "Let us devote ourselves to prayer and humility, and may the charity of Jesus Christ inspire us, without it we run the risk of becoming mere pharisees, well able to see the speck of dust in our brothers' eyes but unable to see the beam which afflicts our own"<sup>[28]</sup>.

### **Charity and unity of the Congregation**

In the Founder's mind charity did not limit itself just to a local community, making of it an intimate and dynamic home for mission. Charity should encompass the whole Congregation, all its members and all its communities. It should become a unity that helps overcome difficulties and makes the whole Congregation missionary<sup>[29]</sup>. In Blessed Eugene's writings there is a surprising event which reveals his sense of the prophetic. At a time when the Oblates were nearly all French and knew each

other, he linked charity and unity. Today, such unity takes on a great importance, given our geographical extension and cultural diversity.

Eugene de Mazenod wanted his Congregation to be a united family, one body, one edifice, one tree. Toward the end of his life he wrote to the Oblates in Canada: "However far away you are from the center of the Congregation, remember that you must live the life of the family of which you are a part. It is a consolation at the ends of the earth, where you are, to think that you are living the same life as and in intimate communion with your brothers scattered over the entire surface of the globe"<sup>[30]</sup>. Also, "Let us rejoice then mutually over all the good done by our brethren in the four quarters of the world. With us, it is wholly a question of solidarity. Each works for all and all for each. Oh! how beautiful, how touching is the communion of Saints!"<sup>[31]</sup>.

There exist many ways to further this unity, such as news bulletins, Chapters, visits of the Provincial and members of the General Government, various congresses and sessions at the provincial, regional and general levels, courses, personnel exchanges and especially obediences. I am happy to see that several Provinces provide for pastoral experiences outside one's country. Various Regions organize meetings of scholastics.

The Founder saw particularly in the Eucharist the meeting and unifying point of all Oblates. Among his numerous testimonies I choose one from his later years: "It is a great consolation to have a common center where we meet every day. What a delicious rendezvous is that altar on which the holy victim is offered, and that tabernacle to which one comes every day to adore Jesus Christ and speak with him of everything that concerns us. I speak to him from the effusiveness of my heart; I speak to him of all the other children his goodness has given me: I pray to him to preserve you in holy humility among the wonders of zeal, of mortification, of charity that your ministry, arduous as it is, so often gives you an opportunity of performing. I pray to him also to preserve your health so that you may be able to continue for a long time responding to your sublime vocation in gaining glory for God and salvation for souls so abandoned, which can only be saved by you, devoted servants who have no other aim in this world"<sup>[32]</sup>. The Oblate family's unity, like that of personal and communal life, finds its realization in Christ and by him<sup>[33]</sup>.

### **Charity, witness for today's world**

The community that lives in charity is an answer to our divided world, turned in on itself, dominated by egoism and injustices (cf. WAC 3 and 4). "In a prophetic way it challenges the individualism found in today's society and the arbitrary use of power that is responsible for the plight of so many poor people. At the same time our community life offers grounds for hope to this world which is struggling to overcome its disintegration and fragmentation. Like Christ's gentle invitation to his banquet, our community life speaks with the meekness of an authority that invites but never imposes or coerces" (WAC 8).

A community where charity reigns is a sign of the new life brought by Christ. Such a witness is true because it is lived by normal persons, united not by flesh and blood, psychological or ideological affinities, but by faith and love of Christ. It is the sign of the world instituted by Christ in an egoistical and divided world - a still greater sign when lived with perseverance in changing circumstances and not just from the inspiration of passing generosity.

Communal life becomes the motive of credibility in our ministry; it is an invitation to reconciliation, to the overcoming of egoism, to solidarity and justice. It normally gives rise to conversions and vocations because it allows the Lord to be active in us and around us. I conclude as did the Founder



in his first circular letter of August 2, 1853, when he summarized all his recommendations and wishes in these words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor 13:11-13): "In the meantime, brothers, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with the holy kiss. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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[1] Cf. Witnessing in Apostolic Community, 10, 22, 23, 37, 51.

[2] Part II, Chapter I, 4th paragraph, in Selected Texts, #334.

[3] Cf. CC 2, 12, 33, 34, 59, 63, 73.

[4] Cf. CC 3, 38, 81.

[5] Cf. CC 42, 71, 80, 81, 84.

[6] Cf. CC 18, 35, 53, 89, 113.

[7] Cf. CC 15, 16.

[8] TEMPIER, Circ. #2, 29 January 1861, p. 2.

[9] Letter to Fr Baret, 17 January 1851, in Letters, Vol. 11, p. 30.

[10] Letter to Fr Mouchette, 24 April 1855, in Letters, Vol. 11 p. 266.

[11] Letter to Fr Mouchette, 22 March 1857, in Letters, Vol. 12, p. 49.

[12] Diary, 4 September 1857, in Selected Texts, #327.

[13] Cf. Selected Texts, #324-326, 329-332, 341, 343-344, 349.

[14] Cf. C. LUBOWICKI, *Mystère et dynamisme de l'Amour dans la vie du Bx Eugene de Mazenod*, Teresianum, Rome, 1990.

[15] F. JETTÉ, O.M.I. - *The Apostolic Man. Commentary on the Oblate Constitutions and Rules of 1982*. Rome 1992, pp. 221-22.

[16] Letter to Fr Mouchette, 2 December 1854, in Selected Texts, #229

[17] Letter to Fr Guibert, 29 July 1830, in Letters, Vol. 7, 201.

[18] Cf. Maurice GILBERT, *La charité fraternelle chez les Oblats d'après les Circulaires administratives des Supérieurs généraux*, dans *Etudes Oblates*, 1969, pp. 60-79.

[19] Circulaire #11, 21 March 1862, p. 8.

[20] Circulaire #40, 8 December 1886, p. 3.

[21] Circulaire #55, 1 January 1894, p. 6.

[22] Cf. *Redemptoris missio*, 60.

[23] Cf. *Perfectae caritatis*, 1; cf. 15.

[24] Maurice GILBERT, *Les "Novissima verba" du Fondateur*, in *Etudes Oblates*, 28 (1969), pp. 58-59.

[25] Letter to Fr Mye, 19 June 1825, in Selected Texts, #377.

[26] Cf. Mt 5:43-48; Jo 13:17; Rom 12:9-16; 1 Cor 13; Gal 5:13-24; 1 Jo. 3: 11-18.

[27] Retreat notes, 8 October 1831, in Selected Texts, #338.

[28] Letter to Fr Telmon, 14 October 1836, in Letters, Vol. 8, p. 257.

[29] Domenico ARENA, *Unità e missione nelle lettere del Beato Eugenio de Mazenod*, Gregoriana, 1991.

[30] Letter to Frs Maisonneuve and Tissot, 24 November 1858, in Selected Texts, #350.

[31] Letter to Fr Baudrand, 11 January 1850, in Selected Texts, #346.

[32] Letter to Fr Vegreville, 25 March 1857, in Selected Texts, #268.

[33] Cf. CC 1, 3, 12, 26, 31, 33, 37, 71, 75, 81.