

NOVENA OF PRAYER FOR

Oblate Vocations



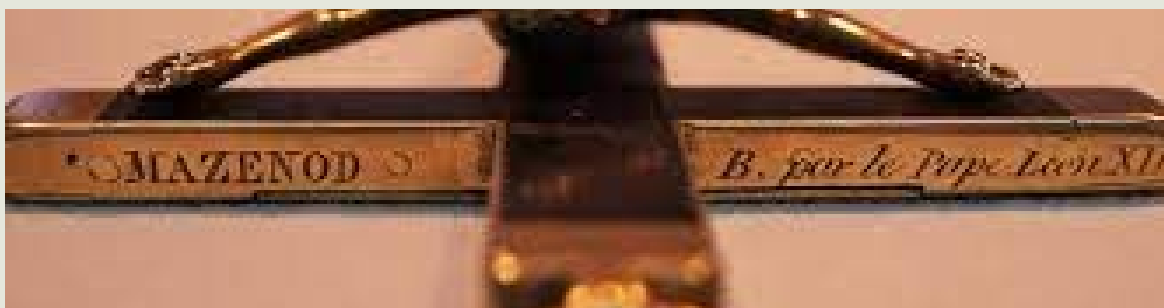
MAY 21-29, 2024

Introduction to the Novena

Jesus never ceases to call people to follow him and to proclaim the Kingdom. Some are drawn to answer that call through the joy and generosity of our lives. We must lose no opportunity to let people see how urgent are the needs of the Church and the world and come to know the way in which our Congregation responds to those needs. We will also pray and have others pray that the Lord send labourers into his harvest [Constitution and Rules, 52].

This is a novena of prayers for vocations to the Oblate charismatic family. We gather as a community of faith to pray that men and women will hear and heed the call of the Lord Christ Jesus who says in every age, every place, and to everyone, “Come follow me.”

As members of this unique family, we have ourselves heard and responded to that call, our gospel witness shaped by the charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod and as lived by Oblates and lay members.



The following nine days reflect on different ‘calls’ articulated by the 37th General Chapter, *Pilgrims of Hope in Communion*. These are the ‘signs of our times’ expressing the profound needs of the human family and of our common home, in crisis.

We know, firsthand, how the Oblate charism, incarnated in the vowed Oblates and the charismatic family, yearns to respond, with compassion and in faith, going to the edges, where these cries are most desperate. We seek generous, caring men and women willing to go out and meet the needs, take them by the hand, and walk with them.

This year, the Associates of OMI Lacombe Canada invite you to join them in the Novena prayers and reflections. We are a diverse group of nine: eight associates and one ordained. We represent, we hope, the diversity of the Oblate charismatic family in Canada and around the Oblate world. We are spread across this vast country, almost from coast to coast. We have among us teachers, social workers, catechists, health workers, retreat leaders; we are committed, vowed and ordained; celibate, single, married, widowed and separated. We are spouses, parents, siblings and friends, united by one Spirit and one charism, expressed beautifully in a diversity of vocations.

Throughout these nine days of focused prayer, we share our fervent desire that the Lord send to our Oblate family new vocations, men and women, wayfarers and pilgrims in the world, gospel-led, joining us in our pilgrimage of hope to the world.

Day 1

AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO BE PILGRIMS

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

"You [Oblates] have chosen to be pilgrims, to rediscover and live your condition as wayfarers in this world, beside the men and women, the poor and the least of the earth, to whom the Lord sends you to announce his Kingdom" [Address of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, Clementine Hall, 3 October 2022].

Scripture

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field' [Luke 10:1-3].



Reflection

What I love is their willingness to go. Jesus is their model, himself a man on the move. Along dusty streets and worn footpaths, from village to town to city, he wanders in the wilderness, clambers to the tops of mountains and sits by the seaside. He is in people's houses, banquet halls, and upper rooms, teaching and preaching in living rooms and market squares as much as in temples and synagogues. Whether walking, riding on a donkey or traveling by boat, he goes with urgency and purpose to where he is needed. "Do you not know I must be about my Father's business?" Jesus asks.

John the Baptist is equally on the move: into the wilderness and then out from it, baptizing his way across the countryside. Mary, too: hurrying to be with Elizabeth in her need; fleeing into Egypt to safeguard her son; rushing to Jerusalem when he is lost; following him to Calvary, and praying in the Upper Room. Mary Magdalene, Peter, and Paul, all on the move, going out to where good news is needed.

They heed Jesus' call, heard in the cries of the poor and the lament of the earth. Eugene de Mazenod does as well, moving from Aix to Marseilles, travelling tirelessly throughout the French countryside and sending his beloved Oblates around the globe.

The world does not need more 'seated people,' Jesuit Walter Burghardt reminds us, by which he means not more bystanders, spectators, or idle commentators. The world needs more men and women willing to be wayfarers and pilgrims, willing to get up and go to the peripheries where the Spirit of God is to be found.

We pray, Lord, that You nurture the growth of our Oblate charismatic family, that we may be counted among those who answer your call and move out to the edges where you are present.

Our Charism Speaks

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when the appointed time came, was sent by the Father and filled with the Spirit "to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (Luke 4:18-19). He called men to become disciples and share in his mission; in the Church, he continues to call others to follow him. St. Eugene de Mazenod heard that call [Constitution and Rules, Foreword].

Day 2

AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO SYNODALITY

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

"In inviting the Church to Synodality and fraternity, Pope Francis reminds us that communion is a challenge in our world so profoundly marked by divisions and selfishness. In his message to the capitulars, he said that Oblates will be pilgrims of hope only if they live in communion among themselves, in the Church, with all humanity, and the whole of creation" [IV, C, 16].

Scripture

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" [Luke 24:13-17].



Reflection

The call to synodality is the path to overcoming the fragmentation in our world today: it speaks of journeying with, coming to know the other and being known, and listening to the Spirit's call as a Mazenodian family. This theme is captured in the Emmaus story, the Synod logo, and the song, *Sanctuary*, by Scruggs and Thompson.

In the Emmaus story, Jesus enters the journey of two disciples who, in their grief, are walking away from Jerusalem. Jesus begins by asking them what they are discussing. Jesus seeks to understand those he wishes to accompany before he teaches. The call to synodality is a call to listen first.

The Synod logo captures well what journeying synodally is. At the front are the children and elders; they are the pacesetters. Pope Francis is in the middle, travelling with the people in an accompaniment leadership style. At the back are those who are able-bodied. They may want to go faster, but to stay with the community, they must go at this slower pace, giving them time to be and listen to the community for the voice of the Spirit. The call to synodality is a call to accompaniment.

The song by Scruggs and Thompson speaks of how we are to prepare ourselves for this synodal journey, “*pure and holy, tried and true,*” and how we are to be a sanctuary for Christ, “*with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.*” As we receive Christ in the Eucharist, we become more like Jesus as we allow ourselves to become Eucharist for each other and those we encounter. The call to synodality is a call to become Christ for each other.

We pray, Lord, that, as members of the Mazenodian family, we strive to overcome the fragmentation in the world by answering the call to synodality, through listening, accompaniment, and being Eucharist for each other.

Our Charism Speaks

Our efforts will be characterized by a genuine desire for unity with all who consider themselves followers of Jesus, so that, according to his prayer, all may believe that the Father has sent him (cf. Jn 17:21). Finally, in our hope for the coming of God's reign, we are united with all those who, without acknowledging Christ as Lord, nevertheless love what he loves [Constitution and Rules 6].

Day 3

AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO THE POOR WITH THEIR MANY FACES

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

“The Covid 19 pandemic, the wars in the world, climate change, the crisis of faith, etc. are signs that the world is undergoing radical changes. Testimonies from suffering countries such as Ukraine, Canada, Haiti, Sri Lanka, and others point to the concrete situation of our Oblate brothers and lay associates who are in solidarity with the poor. The cries of the poor demand of us a different way of living and a revisiting of the way we do our mission, in the footsteps of St. Eugene. This mission retains its original identity of evangelizing the poor with their many faces but in a bolder way” [II, 7].

Scripture

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” [Luke 4:16-21].

Reflection

Jesus, speaking in his hometown of Nazareth, makes the challenging words of the prophet Isaiah his own. His message, upsetting the social order, was provocative for his listeners: good news to the poor, freedom, liberation, debt forgiveness, and healing. Jesus proclaims to his neighbours that this was happening then and there in their very midst.

Many centuries later, Eugene de Mazenod in post-revolution France sought to bring good news, liberation, freedom, and healing to the poor of his day. He went further to invite others to join with him in this challenging mission as he founded a new religious community. Soon these new members were sent out to distant lands.

Today, two centuries later, members of the 37th General Chapter, gathered to (re)affirm and (re)commit to these biblical teachings and founding Oblate values. This happens as Pope Francis proclaims to the universal Church: *"each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor..."* [Evangelii Gaudium 167].

All those seeking to live the Oblate charism of St. Eugene today are called to revisit and transform our relationships with those who experience poverty. What might this mean for us? We are reminded of the many faces and diverse experiences of those living in poverty, marginalization and exclusion. Think concretely of the faces of those in poverty closest to us. Take time to listen and discern with them. What does good news mean to them? What can be my role, individually and in community, to proclaim this good news in word and deed here and now?

We pray, Lord, that we consider how to invite others to join the extended Oblate family in proclaiming and living out good news to the poor in our own local communities and building together bonds of solidarity and hope.

Our Charism Speaks

"Even when he had reached old age, the bishop of Marseilles (St. Eugene) insisted on visiting the poor and the sick. A true pastor, he was always faithful to his Oblate motto: 'He has sent me to bring the Good News to the poor' (Luke 4:18)". [Herve Aubin OMI, *The Founder of the Oblates: St Eugene de Mazenod*, p. 47].

Day 4

AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO BRING HOPE TO A BROKEN WORLD

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

“Being missionaries of hope means knowing how to read the signs of its hidden presence in the daily life of the people. Learning to recognize hope among the poor to whom you have been sent, who often succeed in finding it amid the most difficult situations. Letting yourselves be evangelized by the poor you evangelize: they teach you the way of hope, for the Church and for the world” [Address of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, Clementine Hall, 3 October 2022].

Scripture

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people [Ephesians 1:18].



Reflection

I work downtown, and every morning I walk by several people who are homeless, and my heart goes out to them. One is covered with an old and raggedy blanket while another is simply curled into a fetal position wearing every piece of clothing he owns, just trying to stay warm. There are also small groupings huddling together with shopping carts or sitting under a made-up shelter of cardboard and plastic sheets.

It is both sad and disturbing to witness their condition. And it's easier to look away from them. But if we look closely, looking with eyes of hope, one would notice that there is a certain amount of kindness and generosity among people living in the streets. It happens as they make room for each other on the crowded sidewalk that offers some protection from the rain, helping each other push their shopping cart in the back alley, or the way they protect and care for a beloved pet.

To some, my observations may sound ridiculous or overly optimistic, but I choose to see compassion, kindness, and hope rather than misery, tragedy, and despair. I choose to see with eyes of hope.

Hope can penetrate the darkest areas of our lives and restore goodness and joy. Our Oblate charism helps me to see that everyone in the world has an intrinsic value and worth. We are called to see and learn from the poor. It is only when we see each other the way that God looks at us that we can change the world.

We pray, Lord, that you open our eyes that we can see your goodness and the beauty of everything and everyone around us.

Our Charism Speaks

Through the eyes of our crucified Saviour we see the world which he redeemed with his blood, desiring that those in whom he continues to suffer will know also the power of his resurrection (cf. Phil 3:10)" [Constitution and Rules 4].

(SEE PAGES 22-23 FOR CLOSING PRAYER)

Day 5

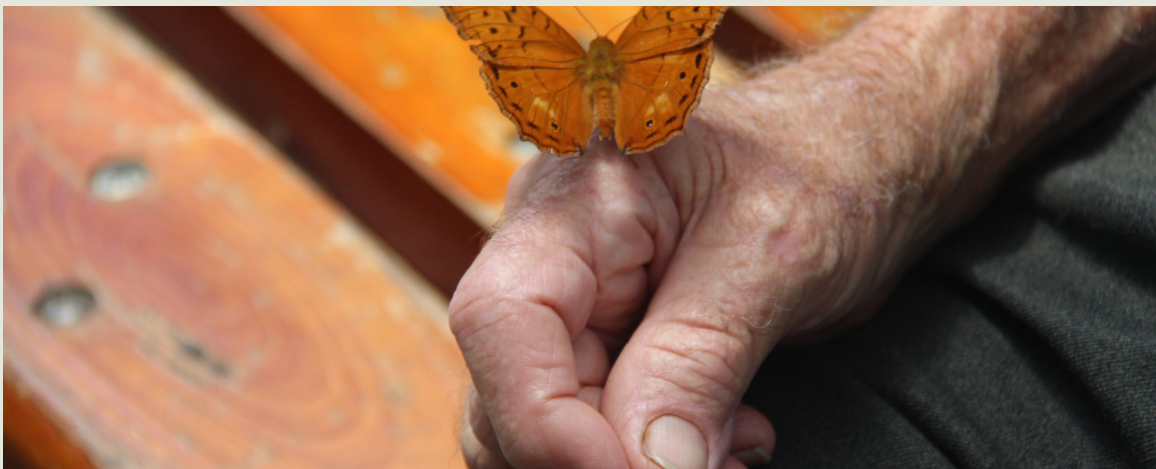
AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO CARE FOR THE EARTH

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

"Each Oblate and every Oblate community, ministry, and institution, will undertake a process of reflection and concrete action leading to a "prophetic and contemplative lifestyle" (LS 222), an "attitude of the heart" that looks at creation with the eyes of our crucified Saviour (C 4), and with Jesus' look of love (LS 226; cf. Mk. 10:21)" [V, F, 3].

Scripture

Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together. For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross [Colossians 1:17, 19-20].



Reflection

In Christ Jesus all things hold together, are beloved, and redeemed 'through the blood of his cross'.

The Oblate heart recognizes the earth as a sister and mother in Christ, as our common home, cherished within the goodness of creation. Our oblation is to care for the earth in creation – people, land, resources, food, forests, trees, plants, animals and to stand up to corruption, abuse, greed, and mishandling of the gifts of God's 'garden' where "*in him we live, move and have our being*" [Romans 17:28].

Each Oblate heart lives and cares in communion together, with and for the earth in diverse creative ways the Spirit inspires! We are called to conversion in our practices and habits towards renewing, recycling, repurposing, living simply to ensure the poor have what they need to live, advocating through public policy, or working with others in multiple organizations to effect change for the common good and especially for the poor.

In *Vade Mecum on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* from the O.M.I. congregation in Rome, we hear, "*Creation is not simply material, profane, and therefore of no interest to God. On the contrary, creation is holy; it is the first manifestation of God's mystery, it is God's first word. 'Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him'* [John 1:2-3]. *Creation is the first act of salvation history. All history is in fact salvation history, and in and through Jesus Christ, it becomes redemption history... One cannot therefore accept a separation between spiritual and temporal, between profane and sacred, between natural and supernatural, between body and soul, between Church and World.*"

Paul VI wrote: "*One cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of redemption. The latter touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored*" [Evangeli Nuntiandi, 31].

We pray, Lord, that others join us as we raise our voices in the necessary work of caring for our common home with an Oblate heart.

Our Charism Speaks

"*We must not forget that the cry of the earth is the cry of the poor, to whom we are to give preference (cf. C 5)*" [Acts of the 37th General Chapter, IV, 11.2].

Day 6

AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO RECONCILIATION AND HEALING

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

"We want to console and support all those who feel abused or offended in their being and in all aspects of their life, and to be reconciled with them. We give the first place to minors and vulnerable adults but also to all those who, through our actions and behaviour, have been offended" [II,10,d].

Scripture

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord [Hebrews 12:14].



NOVENA OF PRAYER FOR OBLATE VOCATIONS

Reflection

Eugene De Mazenod began his mission, his charisma, based on the love he felt from God during a watershed moment on Good Friday. Once he understood the depth of the love God had for him, he could not behave in the same selfish way he had been and needed to show his love for God. He was driven to get into right relationship with God.

Reconciliation is also about getting into a right relationship – certainly with God, but also with each other. This relationship is based on having an open heart, open mind, respect, trust, and love for the other individual. Historically, we have not been in loving, respectful relationships with everyone, especially those who were on the land before colonization.

As we reflect on what it means to be Oblates, ambassadors of Christ, we need to begin by recognizing the humanness in all individuals we meet. Then through our interactions, we grow together as Christians, and then finally we can see each other as saints.

As we evangelize those in our lives, we become evangelized by them. As we share our love for them with them, they share their love with us.

Reconciliation is a journey, a process, not done in isolation. It is done through starting/continuing relationship, beginning an understanding, sharing respect, growing trust, building love, and finding peace. We strive to have peace with all. We transform our desires, our energy, our focus into a gift to God, for God. Love is the gift we hope to share and receive. Hope gives us the energy and strength to better relationships, to heal, to trust, and grow together. To begin the journey of healing and stay on it takes perseverance when things get challenging or difficult.

We pray, Lord, that we might recognize the full extent of your love for us, so that love blazes from our heart at all times and with all things, leading the way to healing, reconciliation, and peace.

Our Charism Speaks

“Among yourselves practice charity, charity, charity...” St. Eugene de Mazenod

(SEE PAGES 22-23 FOR CLOSING PRAYER)

Day 7

AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO BE IN COMMUNITY

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

"Communion today is a challenge on which the future of our world, the Church and consecrated life may depend. To be missionaries of communion, it is necessary first of all to live it among ourselves, in our communities and in mutual relations, and then to cultivate it with everyone, without exception" [Address of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, Clementine Hall, 3 October 2022].

Scripture

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ...

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love [Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-13, 15-16].

Reflection

Jesus, in selecting the twelve who will be central to his ministry, chooses them to walk alongside him, learn from him and be emboldened by his words and actions. He eventually challenges them to be sent out as his messengers to announce the Kingdom [cf Mark 3:14]. What unites them in their shared mission is a shared Spirit. It is this community of the Apostles who is the model of Oblate life. Spreading the Good News drives their lives and mission, and leaving behind the community that had nourished and supported each of them must have been immeasurably difficult.

St. Eugene succinctly captures the complexity of loving and leaving: *“My God, seeing the difficulties to be met in the accomplishment of one’s duty, there is every reason to be discouraged and turn back. Nevertheless, the only way to go is forward. It is necessary to so for the glory of God. But in order to do so, I must, first of all, strive to become a saint”* [Fr. Bernard Dullier, *15 Days of Prayer with Saint Eugene de Mazenod*, p.33].

According to Dullier, God takes the initiative, calling us by name and inviting us into dynamic and loving relationships [p. 83]. It is God’s call and the presence of the Lord among us that binds the Oblate charismatic family together in community, uniting us to Him in a common mission.

To be a saint is everyone’s call – all of us, regardless of our ministry or state in life. The Oblate rules state that, *“our mission is to lead people to act like human beings, first of all, and then like Christians, and finally, we must help them to become saints”* [Oblate Rule of 1818]. This is a very tall order! But as Jesus, the apostles and St. Eugene knew, we accomplish this only in communion with one another.

We pray, Lord, that you send men and women to join our Oblate family, hearts are on fire with your Spirit.

Our Charism Speaks

“The community of the Apostles with Jesus is the model of our life. Our Lord grouped the twelve around him to be his companions, and to be sent out as his messengers (cf Mk 3:14). The call and the presence of the Lord among us today binds us together in charity and obedience to create anew in our own lives the Apostles’ unity with Him and their common mission in His Spirit” [Constitution and Rules 3].

Day 8

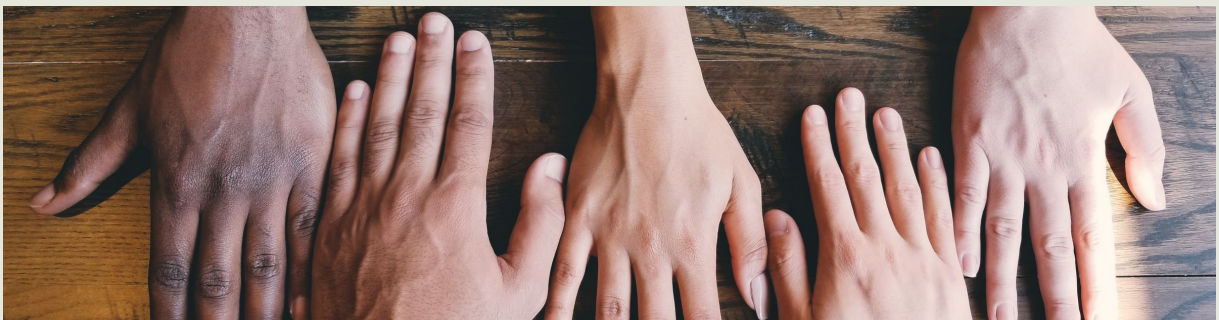
AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO INTERCULTURALITY

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

"To live communion and enrich our community life especially in international and intercultural communities, it is essential to know ourselves as Oblates to recognize each other as brothers and to be open to values other than our own" [IV, G, 17.2].

Scripture

It is through faith that all of you are God's children in union with Christ Jesus. You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus [Galatians 3:26-28].



Reflection

'Culture' (ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge) is both identity and a way of life, distinguishing one group from another. There is no single person who is without culture, and thus faith can only be lived in a cultural context. Therefore, when we speak of interculturality, we speak of interpersonal relationships that are shaped and motivated by the faith commitment of our Congregation.

The challenge facing the Oblates today is to respond, in faith, to a world that increasingly demands intercultural living. For Jesus, margins, boundaries, and differences in culture were not points of exclusion, but rather points of deep and intentional engagement. Jesus' idea of community was, and is, not only one of radical inclusion, but of explicit inclusion.

If we are truly committed to the mission of Jesus, then our community is called to kenotic living: we must die to a model of community building in which the aim is assimilation, and where inclusion is token at best. With characteristic Mazonodian audacity, we must deliberately and boldly engage with others who stand at our margins, placed there because of gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, lifestyle, or social standing.

Inviting others to become part of our community by saying, "come join us by sharing our ways and religious tradition" is a relatively safe invitation to a small mission field. It costs our community very little, and unless we change our means of engagement and inclusion, marginal outsiders merely become marginal insiders. Our message must be, "bring your voice and autonomous self, and help us together to build a new community."

We pray, Lord, that you help us heed our Founder's exhortation to "leave nothing undared", to engage, deliberately and deeply, with both identity and way of life of the 'other', lest we ourselves risk being seen as not intercultural, but countercultural, and the world sees our community, and indeed our mission, as irrelevant.

Our Charism Speaks

We will always be close to the people with whom we work, taking into account their value and aspirations. To seek out new ways for the Word of God to reach their hearts often calls for daring; to present Gospel demands in all clarity should never intimidate us [Constitution and Rules 8].

(SEE PAGES 22-23 FOR CLOSING PRAYER)

Day 9

AS MEN AND WOMEN INSPIRED AND GUIDED BY THE OBLATE CHARISM, WE ARE CALLED TO A DEEP SHARING OF MISSION, MINISTRY, AND COMMUNITY WITH ALL THOSE CALLED TO THE VISION AND CHARISM OF ST. EUGENE

From the Acts of the 37th General Chapter

"In an impassioned presentation, the Lay Associates at this Chapter stated they, along with the Oblates, recognize their mutual vocational call to the charism, their profound sense of belonging together, and their commitment to mission lived out through the charism of St. Eugene (cf. 37th General Chapter, Report of the Lay Associates, Doc. 8.11.1)" [IV, C18.2].

Scripture

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you [John 15:4, 7, 12].



Reflection

In the short space of six verses in John 15, the word “abide” appears ten times. The original vision of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and now the work of the Spirit in this time, most especially Vatican II’s the Church as People of God, form our common response to the invitation and mandate to abide.

By including others in life and ministry who are not vowed members, the Congregation’s worldwide response now explicitly invites all those who share and live the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod to be part of the community, its mission and ministries.

This was perhaps most striking at the canonization of Eugene on December 3, 1995 when it became apparent as perhaps never before that the Oblate charism belongs to the whole church, and not only to the Congregation as such.

The deepened awareness that to abide is the very heart of both community and its mission inspires and motivates the Oblate Congregation to include women and men from many walks of life and diverse callings to be part of this charismatic family.

We pray, Lord, that Associates with vowed Brothers and priests together may respond more fully to Christ’s desire that we abide in one another in a larger and deeper way, that we love one another as we are being loved, so that our joy may be complete [cf. John 15; 9, 11].

Our Charism Speaks

"It is a paternity that came from the charism of the Founder: ' God destined me to be the father of a large family in the Church' [Letter to p. C. Baret, January 4, 1856, "Ecrits Oblats", 12, p. 1].

(SEE PAGES 22-23 FOR CLOSING PRAYER)

Closing Prayer at the End of Each Day



God our Father, you call us forth
on the pilgrim road of hope,
in communion with one another
and with your Son, Jesus.

You called Saint Eugene de Mazenod
to send forth missionaries to proclaim
and live the Gospel among the poor.
Those cries, coupled with the lament of the earth,
resound in our hearts today.

Expand and grow our Oblate family who,
as members of the prophetic Church,
evangelize to bring Good News to the poor
and to care for our earth, our common home.

Pour out your Spirit
on men of faith and daring,
that they hear the call
to join the Oblate family
as priests and brothers.

Pour out your Spirit
on women and men of faith and daring,
that they hear the call to live
their baptismal witness as members
of the Oblate charismatic family.

Pour out your Spirit on us,
that our prayer and witness inspires others
to take up the work of Saint Eugene,
leaving nothing undared for the Gospel.

We make our prayer,
inspired by the life of
Saint Eugene de Mazenod,
and supported by the intercession
of the Blessed Mother.

Amen



Acknowledgments

The Associates of OMI Lacombe Canada are grateful for the opportunity to offer these Novena reflections. It has truly been a privilege.

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**St. Eugene de Mazenod, pray for us.
Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate!**