

ON OBLATE SPIRITUALITY (AN EXTRACT)

“Dear Fathers, what is Oblate Spirituality? Charity! Charity! Love! Love! Charity and love fill the pages of the life of the Founder and of the Rules, which he has given us as a guide for our lives and our apostolate. We could make many distinctions, but Oblate spirituality means love! [...]

Our spirituality makes us optimistic. Is there room for pessimism with such love of God in our soul? Are not joy and contentment the spiritual fruit of charity? Look at our history; there is nothing gloomy in it. Read the life of our venerated Founder; read his letters.... You will find optimism everywhere. The Founder was always assured beforehand of the success of his enterprises.... This optimism has made us daring. Where others were afraid to go, we gladly went. What looked too humble for some, we readily accepted. We are always heedful of and faithful to these words of our Holy Rule: *Nihil linquendum inausum ut proferatur imperium Christi*. We must do everything to extend the empire of Christ”. (L. Deschâtelets, *Oblate Spirituality*, « *Études oblates* » 8 (1949), p. 155-161).

On the Blessed Virgin Mary

Shortly after the beginning of the Marian Year of 1954, the Superior General, Léo Deschâtelets addressed a similar petition to the pope:

To His Holiness Pope Pius XII

Most Holy Father,

It is my pleasant duty to share with Your Holiness a wish expressed by our General Chapter, which was held in the month of May 1953.

By unanimous vote and with great fervor, all the Chapter members asked the Superior General of the Congregation to present to Your Holiness a petition for the designation of a liturgical feast in honor of the Universal Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

By this spontaneous initiative, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate wanted to show their loyalty to this Marian devotion, given to them in legacy as a precious treasure by their Founder, the Servant of God Bishop Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, Bishop of Marseille.

They also wanted to join their voices to those of the vast majority of Catholics who today recognize Mary Immaculate as Queen and Empress, and whom they make known as such to the crowds in the exercise of their vocation as missionaries of the poor and the most abandoned souls.

Holy Father, I am happy to make myself the official interpreter of all the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in beseeching Your Holiness to grant the prayer and the hope of more than six thousand and five hundred religious who ardently desire that Your Holiness proclaim in this providential Marian Year the Universal Queenship of the Virgin and the establishment of a liturgical feast that would every year recall this glorious privilege of the Queen of heaven and earth.

Léo Deschâtelets, O.M.I., Superior General (“*Missions OMI*”, 81 [1954], p. 182-183)