

ON PREACHING (AN EXTRACT)

What does this necessity of preaching, an absolute for our Society, mean for each member? There are so many texts in our Holy Rules: "The Oblates of Mary give their primary attention to the evangelization of the poor." - "All will strive to accomplish this ministry perfectly." - "The preaching of the divine word and the wise administration of the sacrament of penance being the great means to promote the good of souls, all will strive to become capable of performing such great works)." - "The Provincials and Vicars of missions, or on the orders of the latter, local superiors, will designate those who must go on a mission. Those who are selected will never refuse the order that has been given them in the name of obedience."

This is the duty of everyone: to do everything to worthily carry out this fruitful ministry of preaching and to be ready to obey the orders of the superiors. The motto of the missionary must always be: *Ecce ego, mitte me!* (...)

Do not forget, you younger members of the family, when looking at the various ministries of the Congregation, you have to envy the one that is the first, the one most in keeping with our vocation; you have to adapt your faculties to this divine function and keep your will open to the missions which will be given you in the name of the Rule. *Euntes, docete!*

And you who are already launched in your apostolic career, do not despair or be discouraged. Sometimes after the first enthusiasm has passed, in the face of difficulties that arise, or after unexpected failures, the apostolic soul is tempted to stop; it examines various places where life is sedentary and more comfortable, the work of the apostolate less hard; it is not content to submit its thoughts, and wishes, it insists to be granted easier ministries. These are attempts unworthy of a true soldier of Jesus Christ, who must love the corner of the battlefield where the battle is the fiercest, and must have as motto the *impendar et superimpendar pro animabus* of the Apostle. We are happy to say that these cases are fortunately rare.

Also rare were those who backed down because of dangers to their health. (...) We like to recall that if some did, at certain times, show timidity or indifference, almost all were ardent and persistent Apostles *usque ad finem*. How many have fallen, sword in hand! And it is wonderful to see, even today, veterans who have grown grey in the struggles of the apostolate repeat until extreme old age the words of St. Martin: *No recuso laborem!* (...) Hats off to these brave men! May they be models for those who will take their places in the arena of evangelical apostolate!

(Circular Letter No. 59, February 17, 1895, *Circulaires administratives*, II, p. 9-14) Soullier, *Vie du T.R.P. Louis Soullier, 3^{me} Supérieur général des Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, Paris 1907, 532 p.