

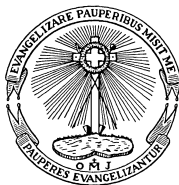
# OBLATE PRAYER



O.M.I.



# OBLATE PRAYER



Missionary  
Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Rome  
General House  
2019

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## **PRESENTATION**

On January 25, 1816, Saint Eugene de Mazenod brought together in community the first Missionaries of Provence to preach the Word of God to the poor. At the heart of this new beginning was the quest for holiness. If there were men, filled with apostolic virtue and zeal, the work of preaching the Gospel to the poor would bear much fruit in a short time. A life of regular prayer was essential to this new missionary life. St. Eugene borrowed from his Sulpician training and freely included inspiration from other schools of spirituality. A tradition of prayer and religious exercises began in our Congregation.

In this year of our two-hundredth bicentenary of our religious family, I am happy to present this new edition of "Oblate Prayer" to the Congregation. In 1986 the first Oblate book of prayer that was made after the Second Vatican Council was given to the Congregation by Father Fernand Jetté. In his presentation of 1986 edition of Oblate Prayer, Fr. Jetté wrote that it was "intended to help the growth of the Oblate's spiritual life, to facilitate the expression of that life and to promote its unity."

Those finalities continue to be the reason for this edition of “Oblate Prayer.”

The Eucharist and the Liturgy of Hours form the spiritual core of every Oblate’s daily life. This little book is a resource to help us live the spirit of prayer throughout the day. It reminds us of our Oblate feasts, prayers that are a part of our religious family’s history and customs that express who we are as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It is an aid for our private prayer and will enrich community gatherings with prayers that are part of the Oblate tradition, thus uniting us and deepening our Oblate spirit.

Throughout the Congregation and among the laity who live the Oblate charism, there is a strong desire for more resources to help us live the charism. Since the 1986 edition of “Oblate Prayer” we have been blessed to have the Founder canonized and other Oblates and lay collaborators beatified. The understanding of the charism has been deepened and many more people, vowed Oblates and lay, have been attracted to live it. This renewal of “Oblate Prayer” has been made in response to a new and deeper appreciation of our own roots, our traditions of prayer and our customs as a Congregation.

I am grateful to the prayer book committee who worked so hard to bring this edition together and to all who helped by their contributions. I invite us

all to welcome this great gift commemorating our jubilee and to make it a friend on our missionary journey. It will inspire us and help us become more prayerful, so that as we begin this 3rd century of Oblate life and mission we may be more faithful to our missionary call to preach the Gospel to the poor.

*Louis Lougen, O.M.I.*

**Louis Lougen, O.M.I.**

Superior General

Rome - Pentecost, May 15, 2016



## **PRAISED BE JESUS CHRIST AND MARY IMMACULATE**

## **LAUDETUR JESUS CHRISTUS ET MARIA IMMACULATA**

*At the beginning of his project, the venerable Founder, even before knowing what name it would have, closed all the public exercises in the Church of Aix and in the missions with a pious exclamation repeated by all those present. They sang in Provençal and with the full resonance of that language: “Eternally praised be Jesus Christ and praised too be Mary, ever Immaculate.” (Jeancard, Mélanges historiques, p. 271) The first letter written to Father Tempier, 9 October 1815, began with “L.J.C.” In the letter of 20 March 1826, after the pontifical approval, with the new name of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, for the first time Saint Eugene added to the heading, “L.J.C.”, the “et M.I.” From that time on, it became the custom to respond to the greeting “Laudetur Jesus Christus” with “et Maria Immaculata,” bringing together in that way the Christological and Marian dimensions of our Congregation.*



## **Part One**

# **OBLATE DAILY PRAYERS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**





## 1. DAILY PRAYERS

### OUR FATHER

Our Father, Who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy Will be done,  
on earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### PATER NOSTER

Pater noster, qui es in cælis,  
sanctificetur nomen tuum.  
Adveniat regnum tuum.  
Fiat voluntas tua,  
sicut in cælo et in terra.  
Panem nostrum quotidianum  
da nobis hodie.

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra,  
sicut et nos dimittimus  
debitoribus nostris.  
Et ne nos inducas in tentationem,  
sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

## MORNING PRAYER

### MORNING PRAYER TO THE BLESSED TRINITY

Blessed be the Holy Trinity now and forever.  
I adore you, my God. I adore your infinite perfections, incomprehensible to men and angels, truly known only by your Word, worthily loved only by your Spirit.

Unable of myself, Eternal Father, to honor you worthily, I offer you the praise of your Word from all eternity, the homage of his life incarnate and the reverence he now renders you in Heaven. These I make mine and with all my heart I unite myself to that love which the Holy Spirit bears for you through all who are your Church.

Grant, most holy and adorable Trinity, one God in three Persons, that in Jesus Christ, our mediator in your presence, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, I may offer you my whole life in worship this day.

## Adoration

Eternal Father, I adore you as my Creator. I revere the infinite love and goodness which moved you to create me.

Eternal Word, I adore you as my Redeemer, who, being equal to your Father, became by your Mother like unto us. You became the servant of all, living in poverty and obedience unto death, to rise again in glory, that we might so live and pass into the glory of God's children.

Holy Spirit of God, I adore you as my Sanctifier, who by the fire of your love have purged the sin in my heart and continually gives me that life of holiness which proceeds from the Father and the Son and lifts me to the fellowship of their glory.

## Thanksgiving

Eternal Father, I thank you for creating me with so much love, and for your great fidelity and forgiveness in caring for me in the midst of my sins. I thank you for protecting me during the past night and giving me another day in which to serve and honor you.

Son of God, I thank you for having saved me by the toils of your life and your sufferings unto death, and for having earned for me all the blessings that are found in your Church.

Holy Spirit of God, I thank you for offering me so many graces and for having, notwithstanding my disregard of them, so frequently renewed your life in me.

### Sorrow

Eternal Father, forgive my misuse of the life you have given me with so much loving kindness and preserved with so much mercy.

Son of God, I ask your pardon for having derived so little benefit from the example of your life, the precepts of your Gospel and the grace of your sacraments.

Holy Spirit of God, forgive me my neglect of your light and inspirations, and the remorse you awaken in my conscience.

### Offering

Eternal Father, I offer you whatever I shall do this day and renounce all search for selfish satisfaction. I confess my weakness and place my confidence in your strength and power.

Eternal Word, I offer you all my thoughts and words this day and I reject beforehand all presumption and ambition, all that may be vain and useless. In your light and wisdom only do I place my hope. Holy Spirit of God, to you I consecrate all the affections

of my heart. I renounce the disorder of my natural inclinations and desire only that holiness and love which is your gift to us.

Eternal Father, let me seek the fullness of your perfection.

Son of God, let me walk only in your light.

Holy Spirit of God, fill me with the wisdom of your love.

## ORAISON

*In the prolonged silent prayer we make each day, we let ourselves be moulded by the Lord and find in him the inspiration of our conduct. Following our tradition, we devote an hour each day to mental prayer... (C. 33)*

### **The Founder**

For Eugene de Mazenod, apostolic men had to be spiritual men. This fundamental insight appears in his first letters to Father Tempier and returns thereafter at every occasion. He knew that the interior life could be nourished by the apostolate, but he insisted that it had also to be fed by its own directly spiritual means. Foremost among these was personal silent prayer. In his first years as a priest, Father de Mazenod struggled to find a balance between contemplation and action

in his life. At first he tried to remain faithful to the schedule of a good seminarian. Then he gave himself over to frenzied apostolic activity. He deplored this: “I cannot persuade myself so easily that loving our neighbor can count for everything, take the place of meditation, of preparation for Mass, of thanksgiving, of visits to the Blessed Sacrament, of prayer, etc.” (Retreat of October, 1818). As he grew in the Lord, his attitude became simpler; the question became less a problem of balance and more a challenge to “cooperate with all his heart” with God’s Will (Retreat of 1832). To better discern that divine Will, to adhere to it passionately and with love, to know God himself personally, prayer remains a necessity.

### **Oblate Practice**

Until 1966, the Constitutions prescribed meditation together for 45 minutes before morning Mass and another half hour of silent prayer together before the Blessed Sacrament in the evening. Jesus, our Lord and Savior, was to be the normal subject of this prayer (1928 Constitutions, art. 254). The Founder considered mental prayer so essential that even those preaching missions were not to shorten the time devoted to it, despite the demands of their ministry.

Oblates have never adopted exclusively a particular method of mental prayer. Often suggested and presented to novices were the Sulpician method, that of St. Ignatius Loyola and that of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

The Sulpician method leads the prayerful person to unite himself to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, in order to worship God and to reproduce within his own mind and heart the attitude and spirit of Christ. It outlines three moments: adoration (Jesus before our eyes), communion (Jesus in our hearts) and cooperation (Jesus in our hands).

Ignatian methods of prayer can be found in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

The method of St. Alphonsus is basically a meditative reading with personal reflections and resolutions.

All methods aim to deepen our grateful awareness of God's merciful and loving presence. No matter the method, the goal of Oblate prayer is apostolic; it inspires us to speak to others of Him whom we have come to love in prayer. The subject of Oblate prayer is Jesus Christ and his way of following the Father. In the morning, Oblate prayer is made in Mary's company, acknowledged with special prayers at the beginning and end; in the evening, our prayer is eucharistic, a relaxed conversation with Jesus, a meeting of the whole family in his Heart.

**At the beginning of meditation**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

**V.** And you shall renew the face of the earth.

**Let us pray:**

O God, you teach the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit; grant that by the gift of the same Spirit, we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Mary Immaculate,  
faithful adorer of the Father,  
Mother most admirable of the Son,  
Spouse of the Holy Spirit,  
inspire within me  
the same sentiments that were yours  
while pondering the revealed mysteries  
which you treasured in your heart.  
Grant that I may ever live  
in union with your Son, my Saviour,  
together with all who, by meditation,  
give honor to the most Holy Trinity.  
Amen.



**At the end of meditation**

O Jesus, living in Mary,  
come and live in your servants:  
in the spirit of your holiness,  
in the fullness of your power,  
in the reality of your virtues,  
in the perfection of your ways,  
in the communion of your mysteries;  
have dominion over every adverse power,  
in your own Spirit,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**PARTICULAR EXAMEN*****Oblate Practice***

*The traditional form of this exercise includes five points: 1) contact with God's Word through reading some Scripture passage; 2) prayer to the Holy Spirit for grace and light; 3) silent reflection on one's interior life, often concentrating on a particular virtue or fault; 4) prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary (O Domina mea) and to the saints, mostly preachers and missionaries, honored in the Congregation; 5) prayer for the Church and the Oblate community.*

**O DOMINA MEA**

O Holy Mary, my sovereign Lady,  
into your blessed trust and special custody,  
and into the heart of your mercy, I,  
this day, and every day,  
and in the hour of my death,  
commend my whole being.  
To you I commit all my hope and happiness,  
all my cares and concerns and my whole life,  
that, through your most holy intercession  
and through your merits,  
all my actions may be guided and governed  
according to your will and that of your divine Son.  
Amen.

**THE LITANIES**

Lord, have mercy  
Christ, have mercy  
Lord, have mercy  
Holy Mary, Immaculate  
Virgin Mother of God  
Queen of our Congregation  
All you angels of God  
Saint Joseph  
Holy Patriarchs and Prophets  
Saints Peter and Paul

Lord, have mercy  
Christ, have mercy  
Lord, have mercy  
pray for us  
pray for us  
pray for us  
pray for us  
pray for us  
pray for us  
pray for us

Holy Apostles and Evangelists	pray for us
Holy Disciples of the Lord	pray for us
Holy Martyrs	pray for us
Saint Charles Borromeo	pray for us
Saint Francis de Sales	pray for us
Saint Alphonsus Liguori	pray for us
Saint Eugene de Mazenod	pray for us
Holy Bishops and Confessors	pray for us
Saint Thomas Aquinas	pray for us
Holy Doctors of the Church	pray for us
Saint Dominic	pray for us
Saint Ignatius Loyola	pray for us
Saint Francis Xavier	pray for us
Saint Vincent Ferrer	pray for us
Saint Philip Neri	pray for us
Saint Vincent de Paul	pray for us
Saint Joseph Calasanz	pray for us
Saint Leonard of Port Maurice	pray for us
Saint John Leonardi	pray for us
Blessed Joseph Gérard	pray for us
Blessed Joseph Cebula	pray for us
Blessed Oblate Martyrs of Spain	pray for us
Blessed Oblate Martyrs of Laos	pray for us
Holy Priests and Religious	pray for us
Saint Teresa of Avila	pray for us
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus	pray for us
Holy Virgins and Widows	pray for us
All you Saints of God	pray for us

Jesus, our Saviour: hear us  
Jesus, our Redeemer: graciously hear us  
Jesus, Priest and Victim: have mercy on us  
Our Father...

## **PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH AND THE OBLATE CONGREGATION**

Remember, Lord, your Church,  
– preserve it from every evil and make it perfect in  
your love.

Guide our Holy Father, Pope (N...),  
– protect and strengthen him with your Spirit.

Bless our Congregation,  
– may we preach by word and deed “who Christ  
is.”

Assist our Superior General,  
– may he guide the Congregation in the spirit of  
Saint Eugene and be a sign of unity among all  
Oblates.

Sustain all missionaries of the Gospel,  
– may they be faithful and courageous ministers of  
your Kingdom.

Be with our absent brothers,  
– keep them always in your love.

Call others to share our life and work,

- send labourers into your harvest.

Reward those who make our life possible,

- grant eternal life to all who have done us good for your Name's sake.

**Let us pray:**

O Lord, our High Priest and Victim, you refresh with your own Body and Blood those who are consecrated to you and your service. Grant that we who share in your priesthood may walk worthy of the vocation to which we are called, and may ever nourish your people both by word and by example. To us, your servants, Lord, gathered together in your Name and sharing one Bread, grant to be of one mind and to encourage one another to charity and good works, so that by the holiness of our lives Christ may be proclaimed throughout the world.

O God of Love, grant that we your children who eat at your table may bear one another's burdens in charity unfeigned, so that your blessed peace, which surpasses all understanding, may keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Angelus Domini (p. 39) / Regina Caeli (p. 40)

## EVENING PRAYER

*Father de Mazenod retained for the Oblates the evening prayers which were in general use as family prayers among the people of France.*

### ***Oblate Practice***

*Evening prayer most often begins with the common recitation of Vespers. Prayers for the living and for deceased Oblates, especially those whose anniversary of death is being commemorated, can be incorporated into Vespers.*

## **PRAYER FOR THE LIVING**

Pour down your blessing, O Lord, upon your Church, upon our Holy Father the Pope and our Bishop, upon our Superior General and Provincial, upon all our brethren, our relatives, friends and benefactors, also upon our enemies. Protect those to whom you have given authority, spiritual or temporal. Assist the poor and prisoners, the afflicted and travellers, the sick and dying. Unite all Christians and convert all unbelievers.

## PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

Out of the depths I cry to you,  
O Lord, Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my pleading.  
If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive?  
But with you is found forgiveness:  
for this we revere you.  
My soul is waiting for the Lord,  
I count on his word.  
My soul is longing for the Lord  
more than the watchman longs for daybreak.  
Let the watchman count on daybreak  
and Israel on the Lord.  
Because with the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption.  
Israel indeed he will redeem  
from all its iniquity. (Psalm 129)

### **Let us pray:**

O God, you are ever ready to forgive sins and always seek our salvation; we most humbly entreat your mercy, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, that the brethren, friends and benefactors of our Congregation, who have passed out of this world, may together enjoy

that happiness which has no end. O God, Lord of mercies, grant to the souls of your servants, whose anniversaries we are keeping, a place of refreshment, rest and happiness, and the glory of your light forever.

This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **PRAYER FOR DECEASED OBLATES**

O God, our Father, by filling the heart of Saint Eugene de Mazenod with your Spirit you led him to bring together a community patterned on that of the Apostles. As members of this community we ask you to keep us closely united to our deceased brethren, and to benefit from their example and virtues. Welcome them into the assembly of your Saints. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

## **2. PRAYER BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

*“The Eucharist, source and summit of the Church’s life, is at the heart of our life and action. We will live such lives as to be able worthily to celebrate it every day. As we participate in its celebration with all our being, we offer ourselves with Jesus the Saviour; we are renewed in the*



*mystery of our cooperation with him, drawing the bonds of our apostolic community ever closer and opening the horizons of our zeal to all the world. In gratitude for this great Eucharistic gift, we will seek the Lord often in his sacramental presence.” (C. 33)*

### **The Founder**

*Bishop de Mazenod wrote that Christ in the Eucharist was “the nourishment of my soul, the treasure of my heart; he is my support, my solace, my friend, the source of all grace and of all delight” (Rambert, II, p. 630). As Founder, he insisted that each of our houses have a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament reserved. He prescribed the custom of visiting the Blessed Sacrament before leaving an Oblate house and on returning, before and after meals and as occasion permitted during the day. As bishop, he instituted the Forty Hours devotion in the diocese of Marseilles and participated regularly at these ceremonies in each church in the city.*

### **Oblate Practice**

*Short periods of Eucharistic adoration find their place in each Oblate’s life according to the rhythm of his day.*

*Where the community's Eucharistic devotion includes benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the rite contains four elements: exposition, adoration, benediction and reposition. Hymns and prayers appropriate to each of these moments follow the customs of the local Church.*

## **PRAYERS**

We praise you Lord Jesus for the wonderful gift of your presence in the Eucharist, a permanent sign of your oblation to the Father and your love for all humanity. Transform us as we gratefully ponder your humble and gentle Presence in the mystery of this sacrament. Nourish and strengthen us to follow you more faithfully and to share in your mission more fully. Empower us with charity for one another and impassion us with missionary zeal to leave nothing undared for your Reign. O Bread of Life, we are filled with wonder and gratitude before the mystery of your Presence! Amen.

Jesus, I come before your wonderful presence in the Eucharist and your words echo in my being: "Give us this day our daily bread." You are the Bread of Life and your flesh is real food for the life of the world. I believe you are truly present in this simple sign of bread, so fragile and vulnerable, so

simple and vital. Your presence fills me with hunger for the justice of your Reign where all people will have abundant life. Abiding in you, I am in deep communion with the poor with their many faces whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only you can bring. Enable me to live generously the missionary oblation to which you have called me as a profound communion with you and with the poor. Amen.

## TANTUM ERGO

Tantum ergo Sacramentum  
Veneremur cernui:  
Et antiquum documentum  
Novo cedat ritui:  
Praestet fides supplementum  
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori, Genitoque  
Laus et jubilatio,  
Salus, honor, virtus quoque  
Sit et benedictio:  
Procedenti ab utroque  
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.

**V.** Panem de cælo præstitisti eis

**R.** Omne delectamentum in se habentem

**Oremus:**

Deus, qui nobis sub sacramento mirabili passionis tuae memoriam reliquisti: tribue, quaesumus, ita nos corporis et sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari, ut redemptionis tuae fructum in nobis iugiter sentiamus. Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Down in adoration falling,  
Lo! the sacred Host we hail,  
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing  
Newer rites of grace prevail;  
Faith for all defects supplying,  
Where the feeble senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,  
And the Son Who reigns on high  
With the Holy Spirit proceeding  
Forth from each eternally,  
Be salvation, honor blessing,  
Might and endless majesty. Amen.

**V.** You gave them bread from heaven,

**R.** Containing in itself all sweetness.

**Let us pray:**

O God, in this wonderful sacrament you left us a memorial of your passion. Grant us so to venerate

the sacred mysteries of your body and blood that we may ever continue to feel within us the fruit of your redemption who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

## **DIVINE PRAISES**

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the  
Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most  
Holy.

Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her Glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints.

### 3. MARIAN PRAYERS

*“With Mary Immaculate, the faithful handmaid of the Lord, and under the guidance of the Spirit, we enter into closer union with Jesus Christ. We will contemplate with her the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, especially in praying the rosary.” (C. 36)*

#### ***The Founder and Oblate Practice***

*From the beginning of the Congregation, Oblates have been urged to live their day in union with Mary Immaculate, our Mother, who is “the model and guardian of our consecrated life” (C. 13). Since our ministry is to reconcile sinners, Eugene de Mazenod also honoured Mary under the title “Mother of Mercy”.*

#### **HAIL MARY**

Hail Mary, full of grace.  
The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

## AVE MARIA

Ave Maria, gratia plena,  
Dominus tecum.  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.  
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus  
nunc et in hora mortis nostræ.  
Amen.

## THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

*To the meditation on the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries, or on others according to personal preference, Oblates add the litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The fifth decade of the rosary is offered for our benefactors.*

### ***The Joyful Mysteries***

1. The Annunciation (*Luke 1:26-38*).
2. The Visitation (*Luke 1:39-45*).
3. The Birth of Jesus (*Luke 2:4-13*).
4. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (*Luke 2:22, 33-35*).
5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (*Luke 2:41-50*).

***The Luminous Mysteries***

1. The Baptism in the Jordan (*Mt. 3:16-17*)
2. The Wedding at Cana (*John 2:1-11*)
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God  
(*Mark 1:14-15*)
4. The Transfiguration (*Luke 9:28-31*)
5. The Institution of the Eucharist (*John 6:51*)

***The Sorrowful Mysteries***

1. The Agony in the Garden (*Luke 22:39-46*).
2. The Scourging at the Pillar (*Mark 15:1-16*).
3. The Crowning with Thorns (*Mark 15:16-20*).
4. The Carrying of the Cross (*Luke 22:20-32*).
5. The Crucifixion (*Luke 22:33-46*).

***The Glorious Mysteries***

1. The Resurrection (*Matthew 28:1-8*).
2. The Ascension (*Acts 1:6-11*).
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles  
(*Acts 2:1-4*).
4. The Assumption of Mary into Heaven  
(cf. *1 Corinthians 15:42 ff*).
5. The Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven and  
Earth (*Luke 1:32-33, 43; Rev. 12:1-6*).



## THE ANGELUS

**V.** The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary;

**R.** And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

**V.** Behold the handmaid of the Lord;

**R.** Be it done to me according to your word.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

**V.** And the Word was made flesh;

**R.** And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

**V.** Pray for us, O holy Mother of God;

**R.** That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

### **Let us pray:**

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his passion and cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection.

Through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**V.** Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae,

**R.** Et concepit de Spiritu Sancto.

Ave Maria...

**V.** Ecce ancilla Domini,

**R.** Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.

Ave Maria...

**V.** Et Verbum caro factum est,

**R.** Et habitavit in nobis.

Ave Maria...

**V.** Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix,

**R.** Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

### **Oremus:**

Gratiam tuam, quaesumus, Domine, mentibus nostris infunde; ut qui, angelo nuntiante, Christi Filii tui incarnationem cognovimus, per passionem eius et crucem ad resurrectionis gloriam perducamur.

Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

### **REGINA CAELI**

**V.** O Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia!

**R.** For He whom you were chosen to bear, alleluia!

**V.** Has risen as He said, alleluia!

**R.** Pray for us to God, alleluia!

**V.** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia!

**R.** For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia!

**Let us pray:**

O God, you gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; grant that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life.

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

**V.** Regina caeli, laetare, Alleluia!

**R.** Quia quem meruisti portare, Alleluia!

**V.** Resurrexit sicut dixit, Alleluia!

**R.** Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia!

**V.** Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, Alleluia!

**R.** Quia surrexit Dominus vere, Alleluia!

**Oremus:**

Deus, qui per resurrectionem Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi mundum laetificare dignatus es, praesta, quaesumus, ut per eius Genitricem Virginem Mariam perpetuae capiamus gaudia vitae. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

**MEMORARE**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of

the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

*(Saint Bernard of Clairvaux)*

## **SUB TUUM PRAESIDIUM**

*The following Marian prayer is often said at the end of Oblate exercises. It is the oldest nonscriptural prayer to Mary in Catholic devotion.*

We fly to your patronage,  
O holy Mother of God.  
Despise not our petitions  
in our necessities,  
but ever deliver us from all dangers,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin.

**Praised be Jesus Christ –  
and Mary Immaculate.**

Sub tuum praesidium confugimus,  
sancta Dei Genitrix!  
Nostras deprecationes ne despicias  
in necessitatibus nostris;  
sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper,  
Virgo gloriosa et benedicta!

**Laudetur Jesus Christus –  
et Maria Immaculata.**

**SALVE REGINA**

*At these words, 'After this our exile, show us your Son,' our Founder opened his eyes a little. At each of the invocations, 'O clement, O loving,' he made a slight motion; at the third, 'O sweet Virgin Mary,' he breathed his last. His beautiful soul was in the presence of God. To keep alive in the Congregation the memory of this scene, Father Fabre decreed that Oblates sing the Salve Regina each evening after supper.*

Hail, holy Queen,  
Mother of Mercy,  
our life, our sweetness and our hope!  
To thee do we cry,  
poor banished children of Eve.  
To thee do we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping  
in this valley of tears.  
Turn then, most gracious advocate,  
thine eyes of mercy towards us;  
and after this our exile,  
show unto us the blessed fruit  
of thy womb, Jesus.  
O clement,  
O loving,  
O sweet Virgin Mary!

Salve Regina,  
Mater misericordiae,  
vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve!  
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Evæ;  
Ad te suspiramus,  
gementes et flentes  
in hac lacrimarum valle.  
Eia ergo, advocata nostra,  
illos tuos misericordes óculos  
ad nos converte; et Jesum,  
benedictum fructum ventris tui,  
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.  
O clemens,  
O pia,  
O dulcis Virgo Maria!

**ALMA REDEMPTORIS MATER**

Loving mother of the Redeemer,  
gate of heaven, star of the sea,  
assist your people who have fallen  
yet strive to rise again.  
To the wonderment of nature  
you bore your Creator,  
Yet remained a virgin after as before.  
You who received  
Gabriel's joyful greeting,  
have pity on us poor sinners.

Alma Redemptoris Mater,  
quæ pervia cæli porta manes,  
et stella maris, succurre cadenti,  
surgere qui curat, populo:  
tu quæ genuisti, natura mirante,  
tuum sanctum Genitorem,  
Virgo prius ac posterius,  
Gabrielis ab ore,  
sumens illud Ave,  
peccatorum miserere.

**AVE, REGINA CAELORUM**

Hail, O Queen of Heaven.  
Hail, O Lady of Angels!  
Hail, Root of Jesse! Hail, Gate of Dawn!  
From whom unto the world, a light has arisen:  
Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,  
Lovely beyond all others,  
Farewell, most beautiful maiden,  
And pray for us to Christ.

**V.** Allow me to praise you, O sacred Virgin.

**R.** Against your enemies give me strength.

**Let us pray:**

Grant unto us, O merciful God, strength against our weakness, that we who remember Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin, holy Mother of God, by the help of her intercession, may die to our sins and rise to new life, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



Ave, Regina Cælorum  
Ave, Domina Angelorum:  
Salve, radix, salve, porta  
Ex qua mundo lux est orta:  
Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,  
Super omnes speciosa,  
Vale, o valde decora,  
Et pro nobis Christum exora.

**V.** Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata.

**R.** Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.

**Oremus:**

Concede, misericors Deus, fragilitati nostræ præsidium: ut, qui sanctæ Dei Genitricis memoriam agimus; intercessionis eius auxilio, a nostris iniquitatibus resurgamus. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

**MARIA MATER GRATIAE**

*The Founder had requested that Maria Mater Gratiae should be sung after supper. Father Marius Suzanne died on January 31, 1829 while it was being sung. Consequently, in commemoration of him, this custom was carried on in the seminary of Marseilles, and then in our houses of formation.*

Mary, Mother of Grace,  
Mother of mercy,  
Shield me from the enemy  
And receive me at the hour of my death.

O Jesus, born of the Virgin,  
immortal glory to you,  
to the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
for all ages evermore.

Amen.

Maria Mater gratiae,  
Mater misericordiae,  
Tu nos ab hoste protege,  
Et mortis hora suscipe.

Jesu tibi sit gloria,  
qui natus es de Virgine,  
cum Patre et almo Spiritu,  
in sempiterna saecula.

Amen.

**TOTA PULCHRA ES**

- V.** All fair are you, O Mary!  
**R.** All fair are you, O Mary!  
**V.** The original stain is not in you!  
**R.** The original stain is not in you!  
**V.** You are the glory of Jerusalem!  
**R.** You are the joy of Israel!  
**V.** You are the honor of your people!  
**R.** You are the advocate of sinners!  
**V.** O Mary!  
**R.** O Mary!  
**V.** Pray for us!  
**R.** Intercede for us with our Lord Jesus Christ!
- V.** Tota pulchra es, Maria!  
**R.** Tota pulchra es, Maria!  
**V.** Et macula originalis non est in te.  
**R.** Et macula originalis non est in te.  
**V.** Tu gloria Jerusalem.  
**R.** Tu laetitia Israel.  
**V.** Tu honorificentia populi nostri.  
**R.** Tu advocata peccatorum.  
**V.** O Maria!  
**R.** O Maria!  
**V.** Virgo prudentissima.  
**R.** Mater clementissima.  
**V.** Ora pro nobis.  
**R.** Intercede pro nobis ad Dominum Jesum Christum.

## **PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

When we reach the time  
for decision making,  
Mary of the Annunciation,  
help us to say yes.

When our time for separation arrives,  
Mary in Egypt, wife of Joseph,  
in flame within us hope.

When times of misunderstanding arise,  
Mary of Jerusalem,  
increase patience within us.

When our time of suffering comes,  
Mary of Golgotha,  
help us remain at the feet of those  
for whom your Son suffered.

When our time arrives for us to await,  
Mary of the Cenacle,  
inspire us with our common prayer  
of the Eucharist.

Until the last day, when taking your hand,  
Mary of the Assumption,  
we will sleep in waiting  
until the day when our resurrection appears.  
Amen!

**LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy	Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy
Christ, hear us	Christ, graciously hear us
God the Father of heaven	have mercy on us
God the Son, Redeemer of the World	have mercy on us
God the Holy Spirit	have mercy on us
Holy Trinity, one God	have mercy on us
Holy Mary	pray for us
Holy Mother of God	pray for us
Holy Virgin of virgins	pray for us
Mother of Christ	pray for us
Mother of Divine Grace	pray for us
Mother most pure	pray for us
Mother most chaste	pray for us
Mother inviolate	pray for us
Mother undefiled	pray for us
Mother most amiable	pray for us
Mother most admirable	pray for us
Mother of good counsel	pray for us
Mother of our Creator	pray for us
Mother of our Saviour	pray for us
Virgin most prudent	pray for us
Virgin most venerable	pray for us
Virgin most renowned	pray for us
Virgin most powerful	pray for us

Virgin most merciful	pray for us
Virgin most faithful	pray for us
Mirror of justice	pray for us
Seat of wisdom	pray for us
Cause of our joy	pray for us
Spiritual vessel	pray for us
Vessel of honor	pray for us
Singular vessel of devotion	pray for us
Mystical rose	pray for us
Tower of David	pray for us
Tower of ivory	pray for us
House of gold	pray for us
Ark of the covenant	pray for us
Gate of heaven	pray for us
Morning star	pray for us
Health of the sick	pray for us
Refuge of sinners	pray for us
Comforter of the afflicted	pray for us
Help of Christians	pray for us
Queen of Angels	pray for us
Queen of Patriarchs	pray for us
Queen of Prophets	pray for us
Queen of Apostles	pray for us
Queen of Martyrs	pray for us
Queen of Confessors	pray for us
Queen of Virgins	pray for us
Queen of all Saints	pray for us
Queen conceived without original sin	pray for us
Queen assumed into heaven	pray for us

Queen of the most holy Rosary                      pray for us  
Queen of Peace                                              pray for us

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
                                         spare us, O Lord

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
                                         graciously hear us, O Lord

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
                                         have mercy on us

**V.** Pray for us, O holy Mother of God;

**R.** That we may be made worthy of the promises of  
Christ.

**Let us pray:**

Grant that we your servants, Lord, may enjoy unfailing health of mind and body, and, through the prayers of the blessed Virgin Mary in her glory, free us from our sorrows in this world and give us eternal happiness in the next. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **4. PRAYERS OF SAINT EUGENE DE MAZENOD**

### **PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN MARY AFTER RECEIVING COMMUNION**

Mary, holy Virgin Mother, I have received your Son, Jesus Christ. With love you became his Mother, gave birth to him, nursed him, and helped him grow to manhood. With love I return him to you, to hold once more, to love with all your heart, and to offer to the Holy Trinity as our supreme act of worship for your honor and for the good of all your pilgrim brothers and sisters. Mother, ask God to forgive my sins and to help me serve him more faithfully. Keep me true to Christ until death, and let me come to praise him with you forever and ever. Amen.

### **PRAYER FOR PERSEVERANCE IN OUR VOCATION**

Almighty, eternal God, you have called me, your unworthy servant, through no merit of my own, but solely out of your great mercy, to serve your divine Son in the Congregation of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Humbly I pray, through the merits of the precious blood of our divine Saviour, through the



intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without sin, and of my patron saints: grant that I may not weaken in this holy resolve through any effort of the enemy of my soul, nor be deterred by impulses of the flesh, dissuaded by love of parents or counsel of relatives, restrained by fear of difficulties, distracted by the vanity of this world, overcome by bad company; that my passions may not impede me, work not break me, nor the suggestions of Satan pervert me. You have given me your gift to begin: give me now the power to persevere according to your holy Will. O God of Love, especially give me the talents I need to reach my goal, as well as confidence in those who are my spiritual fathers. Grant that I may labour unceasingly for my own and my neighbor's salvation, and, above all, to promote your glory. Amen.

## **PRAYER TO GROW IN LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST**

O Lord, my God, double, triple, increase my strength a hundredfold, that I may love you not only to the utmost of my ability – which is a mere nothing – but that I may love you as fully as did the Saints, as fully as your Holy Mother did and still does. And yet, my Lord, this is not enough. Why should I not wish to love you to the extent you love yourself? It is an

impossibility, I know, but I can certainly wish it, and do so sincerely from the depths of my heart, with all my soul. Yes, my Lord, I wish to love you as much as you love yourself.

*(Saint Eugene de Mazenod  
ordination retreat, 1811)*

## **PRAYER TO GROW IN HOLINESS AS A MISSIONARY**

Almighty God, You send me bodily discomforts, anguish of soul, trials and adversities. I thank you for this gift, for you thereby draw me still more powerfully to yourself and, through a marvelous variety of consolation and desolation, you teach me not to be presumptuous in prosperity nor to lose hope in adversity.

*(used by Saint Eugene de Mazenod)*

## **PRAYER WITH MARY, THE SORROWFUL MOTHER**

O Lord, almighty God, you endowed the Blessed Virgin Mary with the fullness of every gift and grace; by allowing her heart to be pierced with the deepest sorrow, you crowned her merit and placed her at the head of countless legions of martyrs who,

for love of your Son Jesus Christ, have shed their blood. Through the painful martyrdom endured by this gentle Mother seeing her beloved Son dying as a Victim because of his love for us, grant us the grace to bear with fortitude the disappointments and setbacks in our life, and not to fear torment or death itself, when we are called to confess our faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

*(attributed to Eugene de Mazenod)*

## 5. STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

*“The Word of God nourishes our spiritual life and apostolate. We will not only study it diligently but also develop a listening heart, so that we may come to a deeper knowledge of the Saviour whom we love and wish to reveal to the world. This immersion in God’s Word will enable us to understand better the events of history in the light of faith.” (C. 33)*

### **The Founder**

*During his retreat of 1812, Eugene de Mazenod resolved to “read Holy Scripture for a half hour, after Mass”.*

## PRAYER BEFORE READING HOLY SCRIPTURE

Lord, who can grasp all the wealth of just one of your words? What we understand in the Bible is much less than what we leave behind, like thirsty people who drink from a fountain. For your Word has many shades of meaning, just as those who study it have many different points of view. You have colored your words with many hues so that each person who studies it can see in it what he loves. You have hidden many treasures in your Word so that each of us is enriched as we meditate upon it. Your Word is a tree of life that offers blessed fruit in abundance; like the rock gushing water in the desert it is for each of us a refreshing fountain. "All ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink." (*Saint Ephrem*)

## LECTIO DIVINA

*Lectio Divina* is a prayerful reading of the Scriptures whereby we gradually open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. The Word of God is alive and active and will transform each of us if we open ourselves to receive what God wants to give us. There are various ways of practicing *Lectio Divina*, either individually or as a community. Much has

been written on it. We propose a method of five stages.

*Lectio* (reading/listening). We read the Word of God slowly and reflectively, so that it sinks into us. Any passage of Scripture can be used for this way of prayer, but the passage should not be too long. *Lectio* leads to a desire to understand its true content: what does the biblical text say in itself?

*Meditatio* (meditation/reflection). We think about the text we have chosen and ruminate upon it, so that we take from it what God wants to give us. This stage of the prayer asks: what does the biblical text say to us? Here, each person, individually but also as a member of the community, must let himself or herself be moved and challenged.

*Oratio* (prayer/response). We leave our thinking aside and simply let our hearts speak to God, we pray the text. *Oratio* asks the question: what do we say to the Lord in response to his word? Prayer, as petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise, is the primary way by which the word transforms us. This response is inspired by our reflection on the Word of God.

*Contemplatio* (contemplate/rest). We let go of our own ideas and projects and simply rest in the Word of God. We listen, at the deepest level of our

being, to God who speaks within us with a still small voice. As we listen, we are gradually transformed from within. Like Mary, we receive Christ in order to share him with all the world (C.10). During *contemplatio*, which we take up as a gift from God, his own way of seeing and judging reality, and ask ourselves what conversion of mind, heart and life is the Lord asking of us? Contemplation aims at creating within us a truly wise and discerning vision of reality, as God sees it, and at forming within us “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16).

*Collatio* (sharing). Sharing, or putting together, our lived experiences and personal reactions to the Word of God that has been listened to, meditated and contemplated. Sharing our faith in the light of the Word of God.

*Actio* (action/commitment). It consists in letting God work through us by putting in practise His Word. It is an essential result of the encounter with God in Sacred Scripture. The Word of God transforms us. This transformation calls us to witness to others, to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ as Apostolic communities selflessly. The process of *lectio divina* is not concluded until it arrives at action (*actio*), which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity.

## 6. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

*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. (C. 52)*

### **Oblate Practice**

*Each community can decide the most appropriate moments for prayer for vocations. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, especially after the midday meal, might furnish the occasion for such prayer, as might the common recitation of an hour of the Divine Office. Local communities take part in public prayers on Vocation Sunday, proclaimed each year by the Holy Father, and on other occasions as requested by the local bishop.*

*It has become a good tradition in our Congregation that the week between the feast of St. Eu-*

*gene and the memory of Blessed Joseph Gerard (May 21st to 29th) is celebrated as a Novena for Oblate Vocations (see p. 116 May 21st)*

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS IN THE CHURCH**

Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Shepherd, you called your disciples to be obedient to the Father and servants of each other. Raise up new apostles in your holy Church. Teach them that to serve you is to reign, to possess you is to possess all things. Kindle in the hearts of your people the fire of zeal for souls. Make them eager to spread your Kingdom upon the earth. Grant them courage to follow you, who are the way, the truth and the life, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Gracious Father, who seeks to save all of humanity, grant, we implore you, through the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, to bless your Church with many priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, who will love you with their whole strength and who will gladly spend their entire lives making you known and loved by all. This we ask through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.



## **PRAYER FOR OBLATE VOCATIONS**

Lord Jesus, you yourself inspire us to implore your Father to send labourers into His harvest that is ripening. Just like Saint Eugene, we feel the immense needs of the mission which are still at its beginnings. We contemplate the image of your Son in the many faces distorted by poverty that require a response by your Church. Make many young people attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, so that they may respond generously, following the example of the Virgin Mary, the Apostles and many of our Missionary Oblates. Awaken vocations to the Oblate missionary life, priests, brothers and laity inspired by the charism of Saint Eugene. Grant that those who are called to Oblate consecrated life may find support in the many who already follow you, and especially from within their own families. May Saint Eugene de Mazenod, Blessed Joseph Gerard and Blessed Joseph Cebula, with the Blessed Martyrs of Spain and Laos, intercede for us and with us. We ask you this, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## **7. PRAYERS FOR GROWTH IN THE OBLATE VOCATION**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE CONGREGATION**

Eternal and Almighty God, we thank you for the gift of our Founder Saint Eugene de Mazenod and his first companions. They let themselves be guided by the Holy Spirit so that the Good News is preached to the poor. With this same Spirit, you always guided our religious family and the successors of Saint Eugene, spreading your graces in the heart of each Oblate. Thus many young men respond generously to the Lord's call to follow the footsteps of Eugene de Mazenod, evangelizing the poor. Lord, we ask you to bless each Oblate so he can rekindle his vocation in this time of personal and communal conversion. Create in us a new heart, give us a new spirit to dare to accept a new mission, to follow Christ wherever the Holy Spirit calls and sends us. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, so that each Oblate may renew himself in his Oblate vocation. Mary Immaculate, Mother and Patroness of the Congregation, accompany us on the paths of the mission of her Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## AN OBLATE'S PRAYER

Lord God, we believe that, through Saint Eugene de Mazenod, you called our Congregation into being as missionaries to the poor and the abandoned that they may know who Christ is and what is their own dignity in the eyes of Faith. We pledge ourselves together to Christ, as poor men, as chaste men, as obedient men, in apostolic communities, under the patronage of Mary. May we remain open and respectful to those with whom we live and to the values imbedded in their culture. May we learn to love without limit, even to the giving of our lives for their liberation and salvation, after the model of Christ, that they may discover Christ through us. Grant, that we may be men of prayer and find our strength in you; agents of change, preserving a still valid past in a present that looks to the future. Give us courage to love, courage to speak, united as one voice, building up Christ's kingdom and giving tomorrow's generation reason and hope to live. Grant that we may be worthy heirs of our Founder's thought and will. May we recapture his original inspiration and confront it with the realities of our time. May your approval of our way of life and mission, through the canonization of Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod,

confirm our Congregation in spirit and in truth,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saint Eugene de Mazenod, pray for us.

*(Father Anthony D'Alton on the occasion  
of the Founder's beatification)*

## **PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS**

Take, O Lord, into your hands my entire liberty;  
receive my memory, my understanding and my  
whole will. All that I am, all that I have, you have  
given me, and I give it back again to you, to be  
disposed of according to your good pleasure. Give  
me only your love and your grace: with these I am  
rich enough, and I desire nothing more.

## **PRAYER OF ABANDONMENT**

Father,  
I abandon myself into your hands;  
do with me what you will.  
Whatever you may do, I thank you:  
I am ready for all, I accept all.  
Let only your will be done in me,  
and in all your creatures –  
I wish no more than this, O Lord.  
Into your hands I commend my soul:  
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,  
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,  
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,  
and with boundless confidence,  
for you are my Father.

*(Prayer of Charles de Foucauld)*

## **Part Two**

# **THE CELEBRATION OF OBLATE FEASTS**



## **1. FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL – January 25**

*Anniversary of the Founding of the Congregation.*

*The founding of the Society of the Missionaries of Provence was announced in October, 1815; but only on January 25, 1816, did Fathers de Mazenod, Tempier, and probably Icard, come together in the abandoned Carmelite monastery in Aix-en-Provence and begin living in common. In February of 1816 they were joined by Fathers Deblieu and Mie. The Founder celebrated this anniversary each year. On January 24, 1831, he wrote to Father Mille and the novices and scholastics at Billens: "Tomorrow I celebrate the anniversary of the day, sixteen years ago; I left my mother's house to go and set up house at the Mission. Father Tempier had taken possession of it some days before. Our lodging had none of the splendor of the mansion at Billens... My campbed was placed in the small passageway which leads to the library; it was then a large room used as a bedroom for Father Tempier and one other... It was also our community room. One lamp was all our lighting and, when it was time for bed, it was placed in the doorway to give light to all three of us. The table that adorned our refectory was one plank laid alongside another, on top of two*

*old barrels. We have never enjoyed the blessing of such poverty since the time we took the vow."*

*Father Fabre in 1865 asked that the day be marked with "sentiments of gratitude to God and affection for our dear Congregation."*

*"The Spirit prompted the first Christians to share everything. Under the influence of that same Spirit we hold all things in common. Our members adopt a simple lifestyle, remembering that it is essential for our religious institute to give collective witness to evangelical detachment." (C. 21)*

*The Congregation never developed a specific rite for this anniversary. Its message has been incorporated into the celebration of Oblate Day, February 17. Conversion, community, poverty, and such themes as remind us of Father de Mazenod's zeal to preach God's Word to the poor, are appropriate subjects for community prayer on this day.*

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR OUR OBLATE VOCATION**

O God, we are filled with gratitude for your call to be Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This vocation, first inspired in Saint Eugene de Mazenod, is a gift for the life of the Church. By this charism



we have a special relationship with Jesus the Saviour, whose Cross reveals your unconditional love for all humanity, especially for the poor and most abandoned. Through the Oblate charism we also are brought into close communion with the poor, and we discover that we are evangelized by those to whom we have been sent. We thank you for the grace of our vocation, praying that we live it in faithfulness and joy through the intercession of Mary Immaculate and in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

## 2. THE CHURCH UNITY OCTAVE

*From January 18 to 25 each year, many Christians join in prayer “that all may be one.”*

*In his Lenten Pastoral Letter of 1860, Bishop de Mazenod taught: “Jesus Christ had to associate mankind to himself mystically so as to form one whole with it while allowing the personality proper to each person united to him to subsist. And just as there is only one person in Jesus Christ, all Christians should form with him but one body, whose head he is and whose members they are...”*

*The 1982 Constitutions reflect the more explicit ecumenical concern characteristic of the Catho-*

*lic Church since the Second Vatican Council: “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). (C. 6)*

## **PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

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. (*John 17:21*)

### **Let us Pray:**

O God of peace, who through your Son Jesus Christ proclaimed one faith for the salvation of the world: send your grace and blessing on all Christians who are striving to draw nearer to you and to each other. Give us boldness to seek only your glory and the advancement of your Kingdom. Unite us all in you, Father, who with your Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## **PRAYER FOR THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

God, our Father, through the life, death and resurrection of Christ your Son, you bring together in

your Spirit, from all nations, a people to be your own. Keep the Church faithful to its mission: may it be a leaven in the world, renewing us in Christ and transforming us into your family. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Roman Missal)*

## **PRAYER FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH**

God, our Father, in all the churches scattered throughout the world you show forth the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Through the Gospel and the Eucharist bring your people together in the Holy Spirit and guide us in your love. Make us a sign of your love for all people and help us to show forth the living presence of Christ in the world. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Roman Missal)*

## **PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH**

Mercifully hear the prayers of your Church, O Lord, that all hostility and falsehood may be brought to nothing, and that she may serve you in peace and freedom. Amen.

*(Roman Missal)*

### **3. SERVANT OF GOD B. A. THOMAS (1886-1964)**

*Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate  
Founder of the "Congregation of the Rosarians"  
Day of Death: January 26*

*Father B. A. Thomas (1886-1964) entered the Oblates in 1908 and was ordained in 1912. Since he had studied Hindu writings and Hindu classics, he started some serious dialogue with his Hindu students. In 1934 Fr. B. A. Thomas founded a congregation of local monks, the Rosarians, the first indigenous community of contemplative monks to be established in Asia. In 1948 the female branch of the Rosarians was born. Fr. B. A. Thomas established, in the Rosarian monasteries, a contemplative, ascetic life, carried out in an indigenous culture. On January 26, 1964, he died. The diocesan inquiry for the cause of beatification of the Servant of God, B.A. Thomas, closed in 2014 and was handed over to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. For his beatification, a miracle is required.*

## PRAYER

Almighty and Eternal Father, your humble servant Fr. B. A. Thomas, while he lived on earth, was truly a beautiful temple of the Most Holy Trinity and was entirely permeated by the Holy Spirit. His whole life was not only a perfect act of deep humility, but also a powerful inspiration to all around him to practice this sublime virtue. He lived for your greater glory and that of your only-begotten son and for the honor of the Queen of the Holy Rosary. It pleased you to inspire him to found the contemplative Congregation of the Rosarians to live the life of reparation through prayer and penance in loving humility, with the Holy Eucharist as source and fountain head. He dedicated his entire life unreservedly to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Mother of God. He became a fool for Christ's sake, lovingly accepting the cross and embracing the whole of humanity with heroic love. Because of this virtuous life, we humbly beg you, to grant graciously our petitions in his name. We implore you most humbly, O loving Father, to grant this favor ... through your humble servant's intercession, so that he may be deemed worthy to be among the Saints of the Church.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be*

## 4. OBLATE DAY: February 17

*Anniversary of the papal approval of our Congregation and its Constitutions and Rules.*

On February 17, 1826, Pope Leo XII approved the Congregation and its Constitutions and Rules. This decision, which blessed our way of life and gave us a public role in the Church, was received with joy and gratitude. On February 18, 1826, Father de Mazenod wrote to the Oblates: “Heart and soul we should cling to our Rules and practice with exactitude everything they prescribe... They are no longer mere regulations, nor simply pious directives; they are Rules which the Church, after very careful examination, has approved... They have become the property of the Church, for she has adopted them... We are few in number... but we have our place in the Church as definitely as the most famous Institutes and the most saintly Societies... Recognize your dignity and be very careful never to dishonor your mother... She will bring forth many children, provided that we are faithful and do not by our treachery bring upon her a shameful sterility. In the name of God, let us be saints.”

“The call of Jesus Christ, heard within the Church through people’s need for salvation,

draws us together as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.” (C. 1)

“Wherefore, while pledging themselves to all the works of zeal which priestly charity can inspire – above all, to the work of the missions, which is the main reason for their union – these priests, joined together in a society, resolve to obey the following Constitutions and Rules; by living them, they hope to obtain all the benefits they need for their own sanctification and for the salvation of souls.” (Preface)

The General Chapter of 1826 decided that “the anniversary of the confirmation of the Institute and the approval of the Constitutions and Rules by our Holy Father, Pope Leo XII, will be celebrated each year on February 17.” With the passing years, the celebration took on more elaborate form: in 1827, the ceremony included solemn Mass, the *Te Deum*, benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; in 1831, the renewal of vows was added; in 1832, the Office and Mass of the Immaculate Conception; in 1837, the singing of the *Sub tuum* after benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; in 1920, the act of consecration of the Congregation to Mary Immaculate.

*The liturgical celebration now includes the following:*

- a proper Mass of Thanksgiving, with Gloria and Creed. All Oblates offer this Mass for the Congregation.*
- the renewal of vows.*
- the act of consecration of the Congregation to Mary Immaculate, usually after Communion. This could also be done during another ceremony.*

## **RENEWAL OF VOWS**

In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of Saint Eugene de Mazenod and all my brothers here assembled, and before you, Father (N.N.), (delegate of the) Superior General, and holding in my regard the place of God, I, (N.N.), profess, promise to God and vow chastity, poverty and obedience for life (for one year).

I also vow perseverance until death (for one year) in the holy Institute and Society of the Missionary Oblates of the most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary. So help me God. Amen. (C. 62)



## **CONSECRATION TO MARY IMMACULATE**

Mary Immaculate, Mother of God and our Mother, we come together to rededicate ourselves to you. Through you we offer our persons, our lives and our work to your Son, our Lord and Brother.

We call to mind the spirit of our first missionaries, who went forth to preach the Gospel to the poor, to build the Church and to work for God's Kingdom.

We remember their trust and confidence in your protection and, united with them, we ask again that you pray for us to our heavenly Father.

We are your Oblates because God has favored us with his grace. Through this grace, men from all over the world have joined our ranks. Together now, we recall the words of Eugene de Mazenod: "Every Oblate shall cherish a tender devotion to Mary; he shall look upon her as his Mother."

Mary Immaculate, model of our faith, we ask that, like you, we may be always open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and constantly available for God's work.

Mary Immaculate, Mother of Mercy, we ask that you protect and strengthen our missionaries and help the people we serve.

Mary Immaculate, most loving Mother, through your prayers and our efforts, grant that all people may come to believe that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord.

Grant also that, with you and all the Oblates who have gone before us, we may forever praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(1974 General Chapter)*

## **5. FEAST OF SAINT JOSEPH**

### **PROTECTOR OF THE CONGREGATION AND PATRON OF OBLATE BROTHERS: March 19**

*St. Joseph was one of the Founder's patrons. He once wrote: "In Heaven, Jesus Christ, Mary and Joseph are just as inseparable as they were on earth. I believe this most certainly..."*

*(To Father Guigues, March 23, 1832).*

"We come together in apostolic communities of priests and Brothers, united to God by the vows of religion. Cooperating with the Saviour and imitating his example..." (C. 1)

“While maintaining within ourselves an atmosphere of silence and inner peace, we seek his presence... We are pilgrims, walking with Jesus in faith, hope and love.” (C. 31)

*Protector of the Congregation, patron of Oblate Brothers, Saint Joseph is a saint to be venerated by all Oblates. The 1896 Directory for novitiates and Scholasticates prescribed: “Among all the Saints which the novices are especially to honor, Saint Joseph will hold the first place, as much because of his singular privilege in being associated with the mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ as because he is the patron of recollected souls who live a hidden life... They will often pray to him... and join his name almost always with those of Jesus and Mary.”*

## PRAYERS TO ST. JOSEPH

**Holy Joseph**, we are filled with gratitude for the missionary lives of all our Oblate Brothers who are entrusted to you in a special way. They have been an integral part of our Congregation’s history of evangelization throughout the world. We ask you to continue to inspire Oblate Brothers to live the charism of consecrated life with faithfulness and originality. Their presence, witness and ministry call

us in a prophetic way to live as brothers bound by charity. Good Saint Joseph, your familiarity with Jesus is mirrored in the special closeness to the poor and most abandoned that is so characteristic of Oblate Brothers. We ask you to intercede so that our Congregation may continue to welcome young men called to be missionary Brothers. Share with them the faithfulness, generosity and joy you manifested in your life so they continue to participate in the missionary work of building up the Church. Amen.

**O glorious Saint Joseph**, remind all who work that they are not alone in their labour, their joy or their sufferings, because Jesus is by their side, with Mary, his Mother and ours, supporting them, wiping the sweat from their brow, and setting a value on their toil. Teach them to use their labour, as you did, as a supreme means of attaining holiness. Amen.

**Good Saint Joseph**, we cherish you as the Protector of our Congregation. We honor you as a man of justice, wisdom and love in your care for Mary and Jesus and in your life as a worker. We contemplate Jesus, growing in age, and grace, and wisdom sheltered in the shadow of your fatherly tenderness, your care and faithfulness. Intercede for our Congregation so that we live with creative

fidelity the charism handed on to us by Saint Eugene. Help us be true cooperators of the Saviour, living, in a special way, charity for one another, and ready to preach the Gospel to the poor in the most difficult missions. Saint Joseph, pray for us that we leave nothing undared for God's Reign and that by God's grace we may always strive to become saints. Amen.

*(Pope John XXIII)*

## LITANY OF SAINT JOSEPH

Lord, have mercy	Lord have mercy
Christ, have mercy	Christ have mercy
Lord, have mercy	Lord have mercy
God, the Father of Heaven	Have mercy on us
God the Son,	
Redeemer of the world	Have mercy on us
God the Holy Spirit	Have mercy on us
Holy Trinity, one God	Have mercy on us
Holy Mary	Pray for us
Saint Joseph	Pray for us
Noble Scion of David	Pray for us
Light of Patriarchs	Pray for us
Spouse of the Mother of God	Pray for us
Chaste Guardian of the Virgin	Pray for us

Foster-father of the Son of God	Pray for us
Watchful Defender of Christ	Pray for us
Head of the Holy Family	Pray for us
Joseph most just	Pray for us
Joseph most chaste	Pray for us
Joseph most prudent	Pray for us
Joseph most valiant	Pray for us
Joseph most obedient	Pray for us
Joseph most faithful	Pray for us
Mirror of patience	Pray for us
Lover of poverty	Pray for us
Model of all who labour	Pray for us
Glory of domestic life	Pray for us
Guardian of virgins	Pray for us
Upholder of families	Pray for us
Solace of the afflicted	Pray for us
Hope of the sick	Pray for us
Patron of the dying	Pray for us
Terror of demons	Pray for us
Protector of Holy Church	Pray for us

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
spare us, O Lord

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
graciously hear us, O Lord

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
have mercy on us

**V.** He has made him master of his house;

**R.** And ruler of all his possessions.

**Let us pray:**

O Lord, in your loving providence you chose Saint Joseph to be the spouse of your most holy Mother; grant that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in Heaven, whom we venerate as our protector on earth. Amen.

**6. HOLY THURSDAY**

*First Vows of the Founder and Father Tempier.*

*On Holy Thursday, April 11, 1816, before the Eucharistic repository in the church of the Mission in Aix-en-Provence, the Founder and Father Tempier privately consecrated themselves to God by vow, with the hope that their fellow missionaries would do the same publicly soon after. In his Memoirs, Bishop de Mazenod recalls this event: "...on the night of that holy day, we pronounced our vows with an indescribable joy. We were filled with the delight of our happiness throughout this wonderful night spent in the presence of our Lord; and we asked the divine Master, if it be his holy Will, to bless our undertaking and to lead our present companions and those who would be associated with us in the future to appreciate the full value of this oblation of one's entire self to God, when one wanted to serve him unreservedly and to consecrate*

*one's life to the spread of his holy Gospel and the conversion of souls. Our petitions were answered."*

*"They must work unremittingly to 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)*

*"We are men 'set apart for the Gospel' (Rom 1:1), men ready to leave everything to be disciples of Jesus... Our apostolic zeal is sustained by the unreserved gift we make of ourselves in our oblation..." (C. 2)*

*"Our mission requires that, in a radical way, we follow Jesus who was chaste and poor and who redeemed mankind by his obedience. That is why, through a gift of the Father, we choose the way of the evangelical counsels." (C. 12)*

*The Congregation has no common formula for commemorating this anniversary. Because priestly and religious consecration are linked in the Founder's spirituality as two means of uniting us to Jesus, who was consecrated to doing the Father's Will for our salvation, the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel can provide food for personal and communal prayer on this feast.*



## 7. GOOD FRIDAY

*The Founder's Conversion before Christ's Cross.*

Eugene de Mazenod underwent a deep religious experience during the liturgy of the unveiling of the cross on Good Friday, March 27, 1807, as he looked at Christ crucified. During his retreat of 1814 he recorded this conversion of heart: "Shall I ever forget those bitter tears which the sight of the Cross drew from my eyes one Good Friday? Ah! They welled up from the depths of my heart, and I was unable to check them... My soul was in a state of mortal sin and it was this that caused my sorrow... Never was my soul more relieved, and never did it feel happier. And it was simply because, during this shower of tears, my soul reached up... to God..."

All his life our Founder revered the cross of Christ. He declared it our only distinguishing sign as Oblate missionaries and he placed it at the center of our prayer and devotion.

"I will not leave my room without kneeling at the foot of my crucifix or without kissing the feet of Christ crucified: for the cross is the altar on which Love offered itself in sacrifice."

(Retreat notes of 1826)

*“A wooden cross and a crown of thorns instead of the robes of the president a mortier: such is the sign that I renounce the latter. It is the true expression of the secret of my vocation.”*  
(Diary, March 31, 1839).

“The cross of Jesus Christ is central to our mission. Like the apostle Paul, we ‘preach Christ and him crucified’ (1 Cor 2:2). If we bear in our body the death of Jesus, it is with the hope that the life of Jesus, too, may be seen in our body (cf. 2 Cor 4:10). Through the eyes of our crucified Saviour we see the world which he redeemed with his blood...”  
(C. 4)

“The Oblate cross which is received at perpetual profession is a constant reminder of the love of the Saviour who wishes to draw all hearts to himself and sends us out as his coworkers.” (C. 63)

*In the Congregation, Good Friday is observed as a day of communal penance. The Rule originally called for a day of silence and for a fast which permitted a midday meal of only soup and bread, to be eaten while kneeling.*

## **AN OBLATE WAY OF THE CROSS**

*Oblates make the way of the cross not only on Good Friday and during Lent, but also on retreat*

days. *The only method explicitly suggested was the way of the cross according to Saint Leonard of Port Maurice. This was used in Oblate juniorates in France.*

*The following method, based on Scripture and our Constitutions and Rules, was composed by Father Roger Gauthier, O.M.I.*

### **Introductory prayer**

Lord Jesus, your cross is at the heart of our Oblate vocation. Once again we need to contemplate your cross and suffering. Grant us the gift of living more profoundly in common the mystery of our salvation. In meditating on your passion, we also see what you live and suffer today in all our brothers and sisters. Teach us how to walk together with you in this world so that we may come to know the power of your resurrection. (C. 4)

### **First Station**

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

- “Crucify him! Crucify him” was the cry of the crowd.
- Oblates are called to be “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*)

- Oblates “hear and make heard the clamor of the voiceless”. (C. 9)

## Second Station

### JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

- “But it was for this that I came to this hour.” (*John 12:27*)
- “Called to follow Jesus, we too listen attentively for the Father’s voice so that we may spend ourselves without reserve to accomplish his plan of salvation.” (C. 24)
- “The Church, that glorious inheritance purchased by Christ the Saviour at the cost of his own blood, has, in our days, been cruelly ravaged.” (*Preface*)

## Third Station

### JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

- “My heart is filled with sorrow to the point of death.” (*Mark 14:34*)
- “He fell prostrate in prayer.” (*Matthew 26:29*)
- “We come before (the Lord) bearing with us the daily pressures of our anxiety for those to whom he sends us.” (C. 32)

- We Oblates “accept for love of the crucified Lord our personal sufferings, the various trials of the ministry and the daily demands of community life.” (C. 34)

### **Fourth Station**

#### JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

- “Near the cross of Jesus there stood his mother... ‘Woman, behold your son... Behold your mother’.” (*John 19:25-27*)
- Mary “received Christ in order to share him with all the world whose hope he is. In her we recognize the model of the Church’s faith and of our own.” (C. 10)
- “We shall always look on her as our mother. In the joys and sorrows of our missionary life we feel close to her who is the Mother of Mercy.” (C. 10)

### **Fifth Station**

#### SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

- “As they led him away, they laid hold of one Simon the Cyrenean who was coming in from the field. They put a cross-beam on Simon’s shoulder for him to carry along behind Jesus.” (*Luke 23:26*)

- “In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.” (*Colossians 1:24*)
- “Cooperating with the Saviour and imitating his example, we commit ourselves principally to evangelizing the poor.” (C. 1)
- “Our choice of poverty compels us to enter into a closer communion with Jesus and with the poor..., to proclaim the coming of a new world... open to sharing.” (C. 20)
- “The Oblate cross received at perpetual profession is a constant reminder of the love of the Saviour who... sends us out as his co-workers.” (C. 63)
- Oblate Brothers “will seek (to) encounter him in the lives of those who toil, especially among the working poor.” (R. 67a)

## Sixth Station

### VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

- “The soldiers dressed him in royal purple, then wove a crown of thorns and put it on him... continually striking Jesus on the head with a reed and spitting at him...” (*Mark 15:16-19*)
- “The sight of these evils has so touched the hearts of certain priests, zealous for the glory of God, men with an ardent love for the Church,

that they are willing to give their lives, if need be, for the salvation of souls.” (*Preface*)

- “The desire to cooperate with (Christ the Saviour) draws us to know him more deeply, to identify with him, to let him live in us. We strive to reproduce in ourselves the pattern of his life.” (*C. 2*)
- “Through the eyes of our crucified Saviour we see the world which he redeemed with his blood... those in whom he continues to suffer.” (*C. 4*)

## Seventh Station

### JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

- “Pilate delivered Jesus up to their wishes.” (*Luke 23:25*)
- “They led him out to crucify him.” (*Mark 15:20*)
- “Whatever their work, Oblates will collaborate... in changing all that is a cause of oppression and poverty. They thereby help to create a society based on the dignity of the human person created in the image of God.” (*R. 9a*)
- “When faced with the demands of our mission and the needs to be met, we may feel weak and helpless. It is then that we can learn from the poor, especially making our own their patience, hope and solidarity.” (*C. 20*)

## **Eighth Station**

### JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

- “A great crowd of people followed him, including women who beat their breasts and lamented over him... ‘Do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children... If they do these things in the green wood, what will happen in the dry?’”  
*(Luke 23:27-31)*
- “The beloved spouse of God’s only-begotten Son is torn with anguish as she mourns the shameful defection of the children she herself bore.”  
*(Preface)*
- “Our mission is especially to those people whose condition cries out for the salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring. These are the poor with their many faces...”  
*(C. 5)*
- “To present Gospel demands in all clarity should never intimidate us.” *(C. 8)*
- We Oblates welcome God’s Word with “a listening heart so that we may come to a deeper knowledge of the Saviour... (and) to understand better the events of history in the light of faith.”  
*(C. 33)*



## Ninth Station

### JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

- “Come, all you who pass by the way, look and see whether there is any suffering like my suffering...” (*Lamentations 1:12*)
- “He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.” (*Isaiah 53:3*)
- “Our principal service in the Church is to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned.” (C. 5)
- Oblates walk “with Jesus in faith, hope and love.” (C. 31)
- “Faith moves us to accept for love of the crucified Lord our personal sufferings, the various trials of our ministry...” (C. 34)

## Tenth Station

### JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

- “But I am a worm, not a man; the scorn of men, despised by the people. All who see me scoff at me.” (*Psalms 21:7-8*)
- Oblates “leave everything to be disciples of Jesus.” (C. 2)

- “We strive to bring all people — especially the poor — to full consciousness of their dignity as human beings and as sons and daughters of God.” (C. 8)

## Eleventh Station

### JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

- “There they crucified him, and two others with him...” (*John 18:18*)
- “Father, forgive them: they do not know what they are doing.” (*Luke 23:34*)
- “The leaders kept jeering at him... The soldiers also made fun of him.” (*Luke 23:35*)
- “We will spare no effort... to help them discover ‘who Christ is’.” (C. 7) “Through the eyes of our crucified Saviour, we see the world... those in whom he continues to suffer...” (C. 4) “By obedience we become the servants of all... Our work makes us dependent on others in many ways...” (C. 25) In all our ministry, but especially that of reconciliation, we will reflect the understanding, patience and compassion of the Saviour.” (R. 7g)

## Twelfth Station

### JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

- “Jesus... showed his love for them to the end.” (*John 13:1*)
- “This day you will be with me in Paradise.” (*Luke 23:43*)
- “Jesus said, ‘Now it is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and delivered over his spirit.” (*John 19:30*)
- “We strive to reproduce in ourselves the pattern of his life. Thus we give ourselves to the Father in obedience even unto death...” (C. 2)
- “In all our ministries, prophetic voices must not be stifled.” (R. 9b)
- “We dedicate ourselves to God’s people in unselfish love.” (C. 2)
- “We will hear and make heard the clamor of the voiceless, which is a cry to God...” (C. 9)

### Thirteenth Station

#### JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

- “Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus... They laid and buried him in a new tomb... Women were there, looking on from a distance.” (*Mark 15:42 ff. and John 19:38 ff.*)
- “The centurion declared: ‘Clearly this man was the Son of God’.” (*Mark 15:39*)
- “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.”  
(C. 6)

- “We will let our lives be enriched by the poor and the marginalized as we work with them, for they can make us hear in new ways the Gospel we proclaim.” (R. 8)

## Fourteenth Station

### JESUS AT THE RESURRECTION TOMB

- “What little sense you have! How slow you are to believe... Did not the Messiah have to undergo all this so as to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25-26)
- “If we bear in our body the death of Jesus, it is with the hope that the life of Jesus, too, may be seen in our body.” (C. 4)
- “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 the resurrection.” (C. 4)
- “We announce the liberating presence of Jesus Christ and the new world born in his resurrection.” (C. 9)
- Mary “received Christ in order to share him with all the world whose hope he is. In her we

recognize the model of the Church's faith and of our own." (C. 10)

### **Concluding prayer**

Lord Jesus, Christ and Saviour, we have enriched our Oblate charism through contemplating your paschal mystery; we thank you for having united us so closely to yourself. We beseech you, with the very force of our weakness and our fear, fill us with the power of your love so that we may be strong witnesses of this new world which you have revealed through your success in failure. Open us more and more to your Spirit so that we may be truly present to your Body which is today suffering and dying before our eyes. Give us also a strong awareness of the resurrection made possible through the daily work we do in hope. Amen.

### **PRAYER WITH MARY, THE SORROWFUL MOTHER**

O Lord, almighty God, you endowed the Blessed Virgin Mary with the fullness of every gift and grace; by allowing her heart to be pierced with the deepest sorrow, you crowned her merit and placed her at the head of countless legions of martyrs who, for love of your Son Jesus Christ, have shed their

blood. Through the painful martyrdom endured by this gentle Mother, seeing her beloved Son dying as a Victim because of his love for us, grant us the grace to bear with fortitude the disappointments and setbacks in our life, and not to fear torment or death itself, when we are called to confess our faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

*(Attributed to Saint Eugene de Mazenod)*

## 8. PENTECOST

*The descent of the Holy Spirit on Mary and the Apostles in Jerusalem recalls for Oblates the Founder's sensitivity to the action of the Holy Spirit in his own soul. His notes from the retreats in preparation for priestly and episcopal ordination are particularly full of such references. In 1837, before becoming bishop of Marseilles, he wrote: "I must recollect and purify my soul of all imperfections and strive to remove all obstacles to the action of the Holy Spirit. Henceforth this Divine Spirit must be the absolute Master of my soul, the unique source of my thoughts, desires and aspirations. I must listen to him first in the silence of prayer, and then obey him in action. I must avoid anything that would grieve him and hinder his influence over me."*

“Jesus ‘always loved those who were his own in the world’, and to the very end ‘he showed how perfect his love was’ (*Jn 13:1*). His Spirit inspires all Christians to constancy in their love. The same Spirit develops in us a close attachment to the Congregation.” (C. 29)

“The call and the presence of the Lord among us today bind 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.” (C. 3)

We see ourselves as apostles in the spirit of de Mazenod and in the fullest biblical sense of the word: men called to be witnesses of the living Lord to the very ends of the earth (*Acts 1:8, 21-22*); men who have first experienced in their own lives the loving kindness of God made visible in the person of Jesus (*Titus 2:11-13*); men who are driven on by this love to risk our lives for the sake of his Gospel (*2 Cor. 5:14 and Acts 15:26*); men who live apostolic poverty so as to free ourselves from all that might obstruct us from our mission (*Mt. 10:9-10*); men who celebrate our common hope in the Kingdom by breaking the bread of the Lord together in joy and simplicity of heart (*Acts 2:44-47*); men gathered together with Mary, as were the first Apostles. (*Acts 1:14*)

(1972 General Chapter)

## SEQUENCE FROM THE LITURGY OF PENTECOST

Come, O Holy Spirit, come!  
Radiant from Heaven sent,  
Shed the splendor of your light.

Come, O Father of the poor,  
Source of ev'ry grace and gift,  
Lucent shine in ev'ry heart.

Caring comfort in our grief,  
Refreshing shade in weary heat,  
Mid toil and labour peace and rest,  
Soothing solace of our soul,  
True Consoler kind and best,  
Stay with us, most welcome Guest.

O most blessed Light divine,  
Fill with truth our inmost mind;  
Lone and bare our helplessness,  
Come, we beg you, live in us.

Wash in us what is unclean,  
Waters give to deserts dry,  
Touching heal our hurting wounds,  
Softening what is stubborn still,  
Warming melt our frozen will,  
Shepherd, hear our errant cry.

Full perfection in your gifts



To your trusting faithful grant;  
Life and joy and love accord,  
Give us virtue's sure reward,  
Grant us your salvation, Lord,  
Amen. Alleluia!

## **VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS**

Veni, creátor Spíritus,  
mentes tuòrum vísita,  
imple supérna grátia,  
quæ tu creásti péctora.

Qui díceris Paráclitus,  
altíssimi donum Dei,  
fons vivus, ignis, cáritas,  
et spiritális úntio.

Tu septifòrmis múnere,  
dígitus patérnæ dèxteræ,  
tu rite promíssum Patris,  
sermóne ditans gúttura.

Accénde lumen sénsibus,  
infúnde amórem córdibus,  
infírma nostri córporis  
virtúte firmans pérpeti.

Hostem repéllas lóngius  
pacémque dones prótinus;

ductóre sic te prævio  
vitémus omne nóxium.

Per Te sciámus da Patrem  
noscámus atque Fílium,  
teque utriúsque Spíritum  
credámus omni témpore.

Deo Patri sit glória,  
et Fílio, qui a mórtuis  
surréxit, ac Paráclito,  
in sæculórum sæcula.  
Amen.

## 9. VENERABLE CHARLES DOMINIQUE ALBINI (1790-1839)

*Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate  
Popular Preacher, Professor of Moral Theology  
“Apostle of Corsica”  
Day of Death: May 20*

Father **Charles Dominique Albini** (1790-1839) was ordained a priest in 1814. In 1824 he met Eugene de Mazenod and joined the Missionaries of Provence and served as an itinerant missionary and as professor in the Oblate Scholasticate in Aix and at the major seminary of Marseilles. In 1828, he was given the spiritual care of the “Work for the Italians” in Marseilles.

*Father Albini was sent to Corsica in 1835. He was named a seminary professor and preached popular missions. He became seriously ill at the end of 1838 and died on May 20, 1839. He came to be known as the “Apostle of Corsica”. The cause of his beatification was introduced at the Sacred Congregation for Rites in Rome in 1915. He was declared Venerable in 1968. For his beatification, a miracle is required.*

## **PRAYER**

O God, who by Your Holy Spirit inspired Your servant Charles Albini to dwell in intimate union of mind and heart with You, and to be guided in his apostolic labours by You alone, grant us to abide in You always, so that all our thoughts, our desires and our dealings with others be truly inspired by Your charity. Humbly confident that You wish the merits of Your servant to shine before all people, we implore You to bestow upon us, through his intercession, the special grace of ... which we seek from Your bounty in the name of Jesus Christ Your Son. Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

## **10. FEAST OF SAINT EUGENE DE MAZENOD: May 21**

*The Founder died on May 21, 1861. Since his beatification in 1975, the date of his death has been celebrated liturgically as his feast day.*

*As he lay dying, Bishop de Mazenod said to the Oblates around him: “My only suffering is that I must leave such men as you, men I love with a heart that you cannot comprehend. All of you most certainly know that the good God has given me a heart of immense capacity and with it an immense power to love my children. When I have gone, you will have another to take my place of authority, who will esteem you according to your merit; but will he love you as I have loved you? Never!” (To Father Antoine Mouchette: cf. Notices necrologiques, VII, 91)*

*The Founder’s successor, Father Joseph Fabre, said in a circular letter after Bishop de Mazenod’s death: “In God’s presence our beloved Father will be for us what he always was during his days here below. We, who have received his moving promise from his dying lips, can tell you this: he will be interceding for his sons...” (April 29, 1862)*

*Pope Paul VI, in the homily at Eugene de Mazenod’s beatification, called him “a man pas-*

sionately in love with Christ and unconditionally committed to the Church.”

In approving our Constitutions in 1982, the Sacred Congregation for Religious expressed the wish that inspired “by the word and example of their Founder Blessed Eugene de Mazenod, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate may live ever more generously their total consecration to God and the specific mission entrusted to them by the Church.” (Decree in the book of our Constitutions and Rules, p. 6)

The liturgical celebration for this day includes a proper Mass and the Office from the common of pastors or of holy men who are religious. Three options are suggested for the second reading of the Office of Readings: Eugene de Mazenod’s Lenten pastoral letter of 1860, Pope Paul VI’s homily at Beatification in 1975 and Pope John Paul II’s homily at Canonization in 1995.

## OFFICE OF READINGS

### **Second Reading – From the 1860 Lenten Pastoral by Saint Eugene de Mazenod**

How is it possible to separate our love for Jesus Christ from that we owe to the Church? These two kinds of love merge into one: to love the Church is to love Jesus Christ and vice versa.

We love Jesus Christ in his Church because she is his immaculate spouse who came out of his opened side on the cross, just as Eve came out of the first Adam. In his Incarnation the divine Word united himself to human nature, and this union is so perfect that there is in the Man-God only one person, that of the Word. The human race, although assumed in only one of its members, in the new Adam who is Jesus Christ, was, through the mercy of the Most High, called to participate really and as a whole in this ineffable union of the divine and human natures in the Word made flesh. Jesus Christ had to associate mankind to himself mystically so as to form one whole with it while allowing the personality proper to each person united to him to subsist. And just as there is only one person in Jesus Christ, all Christians should form with him but one body, whose head he is and whose members they are.

The Church, therefore, is the prize won by the blood of Jesus Christ and the object of his infinite love for people. He loved her more than his own life, and because of him she is dear to God the Father, who already from all eternity had loved her even to the point of giving his only Son for her sake: *Sic Deus dilexit mundum ut Filium suum unigenitum daret.* (John 3:16) Furthermore, it is to her that the Holy Spirit, promised by the divine Saviour, inseparably united himself as her soul, to inspire her, enlighten her, guide and support her, and to work in her the mighty works of God: *magnalia Dei.* (Acts 2:11)

All who are members of the Church live in God's spiritual house; rather, they themselves are this house which is a huge temple into which the whole world must enter and of which all the stones are living stones. This temple is the vestibule and image of the eternal one. In both cases, the Spouse showers all the riches of his love upon the Bride. God himself has built this house out of divine cement.

Now, most dear brethren, we ask you: If we do not love as sons the Bride of Jesus Christ, her whom he wanted to give us as our Mother; if we do not love the family of the Man-God, his living habitation, his holy temple, his earthly city, image of the eternal

city, his kingdom, his flock, the society he founded, in a word, the enterprise which has been the object of all his labours and delight here below: is this not the same as not wanting to love Jesus himself? Does it not amount to disregarding the designs of his mercy, the rights of his love and of his power? Is this not tantamount to dishonoring him as Saviour, as Redeemer of mankind, as conqueror over hell and death, and as the sovereign Master “to whom all the nations of the earth have been given as heritage”? (*Psalms 2:8*)

### **Alternative Second Readings**

#### **From the homily of Pope Paul VI on the Beatification of Eugene de Mazenod, (19 October 1975)**

Your joy and ours is great at the beatification of this new hero, one who was humble and of great faith: Bishop Charles-Joseph-Eugene de Mazenod! Today, the missionary ideal moves our hearts as we remember him. Blessed Eugene burned with a passionate and unconditional love for Jesus and for the Church! In the aftermath of the French Revolution, Providence wished to make of him a pioneer of pastoral renewal. After his return to Aix right after his priestly ordination, Abbe de Mazenod



put himself at the service of the most urgent needs of his diocese: the youth, the humble people, the marginalized, the rural populations. He wanted to be the “priest of the poor”; to achieve his goal, he gathered some companions. It was the beginning of a little family: the Missionaries of Provence who would become the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Having been named Vicar General and then Bishop of Marseille, Bishop de Mazenod showed his true self: he built churches; he created new parishes; with energy and gentleness he watched over the lives of his priests; he increased the number of pastoral visits and extensive preaching (in the form of “Missions”), often in the Provençal language, calling to help him in this religious Congregation dedicated to teaching and hospitality; he defended the rights of the Church and of the Holy See. Beginning in 1841, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate began their mission to the five continents and went to the very ends of the earth. Our predecessor Pius XI said of them: “The Oblates: they are the specialists in difficult missions!” And Father de Mazenod wanted them to be perfect religious! This shepherd and this founder, an authentic witness of the Holy Spirit, has a pressing appeal for all the baptized and for all the apostles of our time: let yourselves be consumed by the fire of Pentecost and you will know missionary zeal!

**From the homily of Pope St. John Paul II  
on the canonization of Eugene de Mazenod  
(3 December 1995)**

“We are living in the second Advent of the world’s history. Eugene de Mazenod was a man of Advent, a man of the Coming. He not only looked forward to that Coming, he dedicated his whole life to preparing for it, one of those apostles who prepared the modern age, our age.

Eugene de Mazenod knew that Christ wanted to unite the whole human race to himself. This is why throughout his life he devoted particular attention to the evangelization of the poor, wherever they were found.

By patiently working on himself, he learned to discipline a difficult character and to govern with enlightened wisdom and steadfast goodness. His every action was inspired by a conviction he expressed in these words: «To love the Church is to love Jesus Christ, and vice versa». His influence is not limited to the age in which he lived, but continues its effect on our time.

His apostolate consisted in the transformation of the world by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What Saint Eugene wanted to achieve was

that, in Christ, each individual could become a fully complete person, an authentic Christian, a credible saint.

The Church gives us this great Bishop and Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as an example of heroic faith, hope and charity.”

## LITANY OF ST EUGENE DE MAZENOD

Lord have mercy	Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy	Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy	Lord have mercy
God the Father of Heaven	Have mercy on us
God the Son, Redeemer of the world	Have mercy on us
God the Holy Spirit	Have mercy on us
Holy Trinity, one God	Have mercy on us
Holy Mary	Pray for us
Saint Joseph	Pray for us
Saint Eugene de Mazenod	Pray for us
Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate	Pray for us
Creator of apostolic community	Pray for us
Defender of the poor	Pray for us
Witness to the love of Christ on the Cross	Pray for us

Preacher of parish missions	Pray for us
Apostle of the young	Pray for us
Educator of those who ignore Christ	Pray for us
Shepherd of prisoners	Pray for us
Minister of Mercy	Pray for us
Innovator in the apostolate	Pray for us
Restorer of sanctuaries	Pray for us
Missionary of Mary, our Mother	Pray for us
Preacher of the Good News	Pray for us
Evangelizer of many nations	Pray for us
Man of deep faith	Pray for us
Man of burning zeal	Pray for us
Advocate for justice	Pray for us
Missionary whose heart embraced the world	Pray for us
Well acquainted with the needs of his time	Pray for us
Consecrated Religious thirsting for holiness	Pray for us
Priest filled with daring	Pray for us
Bishop with a pastoral heart	Pray for us
Steadfast guide of the Church	Pray for us
Formator of the diocesan clergy	Pray for us
Renovator of the Church	Pray for us
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	Spare us O Lord
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	Graciously hear us, O Lord

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
Have mercy on us

**Let us pray:**

Lord, through the intercession of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, make us missionaries, especially to the poor and the abandoned. Grant us that same love of the crucified and resurrected Saviour which inflamed the zeal of Eugene de Mazenod. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

**PRAYER FOR SAINT EUGENE  
DE MAZENOD'S INTERCESSION**

Loving Saviour, we thank you for the life and intercession of Saint Eugene de Mazenod. Accompanied by his prayers, we bring to you all our personal intentions and those of our loved ones, especially the sick and suffering. We ask also that you inspire many generous persons to follow St. Eugene's missionary example by dedicating their lives to being your cooperators like he was. We ask all this with loving confidence. Amen.

## **11. NOVENA PRAYERS FOR VOCATIONS TO OBLATE MISSIONARY LIFE: 21 – 29 May**

Day 1: St Eugene de Mazenod

Day 2: Love for Christ

Day 3: Love for the Church

Day 4: Love for the Church's Mission

Day 5: Love for the Poor

Day 6: Vocations of Priests

Day 7: Vocations of Brothers

Day 8: Vocations of Lay Associates

Day 9: Blessed Joseph Gerard

### **PRAYER FOR OBLATE VOCATIONS**

Heavenly Father, who inspired Saint Eugene de Mazenod to send forth missionaries to teach and live the Gospel among the poor in many parts of the world, we give you thanks for the gift of our Oblate vocation. Increase our love and generosity for the mission. We humbly pray that you extend your loving call to many generous young people and grant them the desire to give of themselves, their lives, and their talents to serve Jesus Christ and his Church in the poor and most abandoned. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**12. BLESSED JOSEPH GERARD:****May 29**

*Joseph Gerard was born in France in 1831. At the age of 20, he entered the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Having been sent to South Africa and ordained a priest at Pietermaritzburg, he worked among the Zulu peoples. In 1862, he went as the pioneer missionary to Lesotho and spent the rest of his long life there, preaching the message of the Gospel. His hard-working love for the people, his care for the sick and the weak and his reputation as a man of prayer won for him a lasting place in the history and the memory of Lesotho. In the fullness of age, he died on 29 May 1914 and was declared Blessed on 15 September 1988 by Pope John Paul II in Maseru.*

**PRAYER**

Father in heaven, we thank you for the abundance of your blessings in the life of Blessed Joseph Gerard. Keep us faithful to his example and make us messengers of your Word, so that the Good News of our Saviour Jesus Christ may be heard and heeded in our world today. In your bounty grant to

us the special grace of ... as we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

*Blessed Joseph Gerard, pray for us.*

## **LITURGY OF THE HOURS**

### **OFFICE OF READINGS**

#### **Second Reading – From the Retreat Notes of Blessed Joseph Gerard**

I begin this retreat for the salvation of my soul and the salvation of others. I note these few thoughts:

O, my God, will it be possible to be indifferent and not to work with all my strength to prevent one single sin? It is necessary to be ardent to prevent sin, to pursue it in the poor souls who give it lodging.

There is a secret to be loved, it is to love. Also, for the Basotho, the Matebele, even the heathens, in seeing them we can ask ourselves what to do to convert them? The answer is on every page of the Gospel: we must love them, love them in spite of everything, love them always.

The good God has wanted that we do good to a person in loving that person. The world belongs to the person who loves it most and proves it.



I imagine a priest, a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate in a mission. He wants to see everything with his eyes, know with his heart, give joy to everybody by his presence, be all things to all people to win them over to Jesus Christ. His inventive charity knows how to use everything, plan everything. He is not satisfied by these general relationships, where the priest is the priest of everybody, but not enough the priest of each and every one. This priest would take the occasion to give individually to his people private and direct marks of his dedication in such a way that each one would believe that he or she is loved uniquely by him. We must not forget the principle of the spiritual life that a witness of a true love for God, of a love that is pure and perfect, is a sincere, ardent desire to suffer for God.

O our good and every beloved Immaculate Mother, in my fears and anguish for the dear souls of this Mission, for their eternal salvation, seeing so many miseries, so many necessities, I confide them to you today, I confide them absolutely all to you, children and adults. I place them under your holy and maternal protection. As you are the Mother of the Good Shepherd keep them against the enemies of salvation, paganism, heresy, devils and bad morals.

I place myself, poor sinner, under your protection. My time is near, the Good Master is coming to call

me to him. Soon I will say the last “Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart, my soul, my life.”

**Response (2 Cor. 5:18, 20)**

- R.** It is all God’s work, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ \* He gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. (P.T. Alleluia)
- V.** So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us.
- R.** He gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. (P.T. Alleluia)

**Let us pray:**

O God, Source of peace and Giver of rain and abundance, who called Blessed Joseph Gerard, your priest, to bring the light of the Gospel to the peoples of Southern Africa; grant that through his intercession, we may share his love for the poor and work for peace and reconciliation in the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**13. VENERABLE VITAL GRANDIN  
(1829-1902)**

*Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate,  
Bishop in Western Canada  
Day of Death: June 3*

Bishop **Vital Justin Grandin** (1829-1902) was a French Oblate missionary in Western Canada. He was consecrated bishop in 1859. As the first Bishop of Saint Albert (Alberta) he frequently visited his immense diocese. He died on June 3, 1902. His cause for beatification was introduced in Rome in 1937. In 1966, the official decree of the heroic virtues of Venerable Vital Grandin was promulgated. For his Beatification, a miracle recognized by the church is required.

### PRAYER

O God, who by the grace of Your Holy Spirit tempered the soul of Bishop Vital Grandin with fortitude and humility, and sent him as the bearer of Your life-giving Word to the peoples of the western plains of Canada, grant us the grace to be strong in Your faith, humbly confident in Your aid, and tireless in doing good. Bestow upon us, we humbly pray, through the intercession of this pioneer missionary the special grace of ... which we seek from Your sovereign goodness, in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

## 14. BLESSED JOZEF CEBULA: June 12

*Born in Malnia, diocese of Opole, in 1902, **Józef Cebula** joined the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate while still quite young. He was ordained a priest in 1927 and devoted himself to the formation of candidates for Holy Orders, first in the Minor Seminary at Lubliniec and later, as Master of Novices in Markowice. During that time he was also much appreciated as a preacher of the Word of God and as a confessor. It was because he persevered in the exercise of his sacred ministry, in spite of being forbidden to do so, that he was martyred in the Mauthausen concentration camp on May 9, 1941. He was beatified on June 13, 1999 by Pope John Paul II.*

### PRAYER

Blessed be You, O Christ, crucified and glorious Good Shepherd! Your strength was made known in the weakness of Blessed Józef Cebula who, by his dedication to the formation of young men for the priesthood and the pastoral care of Your people, merited to sacrifice himself to the Father in union with You. We humbly request, grant us by his

intercession the grace of ... You who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

*Blessed Józef Cebula, pray for us.*

## LITURGY OF THE HOURS OFFICE OF READINGS

### II READING

#### **(From eyewitness accounts)**

During the day, Father Cebula worked as a simple labourer, but at night he celebrated Mass and, clandestinely, helped the sick, assisted at weddings and baptized children. In February, 1941, the authorities strictly forbade him to exercise his priestly ministry. In spite of this he went to Wymyslowice to bring Communion and help the sick. That was the occasion for the decision to arrest and deport him.

An eyewitness reports that, one day, there arrived in the prison block a tall slim man. He was pale, ascetic in appearance and bore an unusual name: Cebula, which means 'onion'. It was remarked that there was a certain dignity in his appearance, as if he were in the presence of a mystery. Some moments later the soldiers charged at the priest

with the violence of a hurricane and they dragged him towards the wash-house; there, for more than an hour, they beat him with big sticks and with such violence that he lost consciousness more than once. Since he was already condemned to death, they gave him a rope to hang himself. Similar episodes were often repeated until the day of his death. Father Cebula was so weak that he could no longer eat nor raise himself into bed.

There was no limit to the tortures inflicted on him by the guards. From time to time they came to the barracks and, in order to make fun of him, they ordered him to recite prayers and sing hymns. In spite of such terrible physical and moral suffering, Father Cebula never complained. He often said to his companions in distress that he could never have imagined that men could be so cruel. After a week he was assigned to a punishment where prisoners had the hardest work to do. The punishment consisted of splitting huge stones with a hammer which was so heavy that it was almost impossible to lift. The soldiers closest to him beat him to make him lift it. As a result of these beatings his body was covered with wounds.

One day his persecutors ordered him to run to an area which was off limits. As he reached the boundary, they shouted to him to keep on going; at that point he was felled by a hail of bullets. Being hit

in the shoulders, head and neck he collapsed on the ground, but it was only some hours later that he died.

Even in death his face shone with a certain dignity and his expression reflected reverence. The workers in the crematorium were reluctant to touch his body and place it in the furnace. To them he seemed to move his hands as if to bless the world. Finally, however, his body was cremated like all the others.

### **Response – 2 Tim 4:7-8; Phil 3:8, 10**

- R.** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith; \* there is now laid up for me the crown of righteousness (alleluia, alleluia)
- V.** I consider everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ so that I may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. \* there is now laid up for me...

### **PRAYER**

All-powerful, ever-living God, turn our weakness into strength. As you gave your martyrs Blessed Jozef Cebula and his companions the courage to suffer death for Christ, give us the courage to live in faithful witness to you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **15. FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has its biblical source in the passage of the Gospel according to St. John (19:34) depicting blood and water flowing from the wound in Christ's side after his death. The Church Fathers saw these two streams giving life sacramentally in the Eucharist and Baptism. Modern devotion to the Sacred Heart dates from the revelations to St. Margaret Mary in 1675. The liturgical feast is celebrated on the Friday after the second Sunday after Pentecost; it is eucharistic and expiatory in character.

In houses of formation, First Friday devotions were part of community prayer. Oblate devotion to the Sacred Heart was strengthened by the decision of the General Chapter of 1873 to consecrate the Congregation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A special Oblate formula for this consecration was composed and was recited each year at the end of the retreat. The following Chapter, in 1879, asked that the feast of the Sacred Heart be raised in liturgical rank in the Oblate calendar. Between these two Chapters, in 1876, the basilica of the Sacred Heart in Montmartre in Paris had been given to our care. A similar national basilica was later confided



to us in Belgium, and devotion to the Sacred Heart was preached in a most effective way in Quebec by Father Victor Lelièvre during the middle decades of the last century.

Encouragement of this devotion and our own practice of it fit with Oblate spirituality. Compassion, self-sacrifice and concern for universal salvation mark first of all the Heart of Jesus, but they are characteristics also of Eugene de Mazenod. On March 31, 1839, in his diary, he described himself in these terms: "On occasion I had the temerity to tell myself that I understood the love God entertained for all of us... As I relished this idea, my soul felt happily blessed and open, reaching out in the measure that it found nourishment for this thought which was, as though by instinct, mine. In this illusion, it seemed to me that, just like God, I was able to love all mankind... I felt within myself something that was akin to immensity... Herein lies the explanation for my life's devotedness to my neighbor's welfare and service."

*"In all our ministry, but especially in that of reconciliation, we will reflect the understanding, patience and compassion of the Saviour." (R. 7g)*

**LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART**

Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy	Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy

God, the Father of Heaven	Have mercy on us
God the Son, Redeemer of the world	Have mercy on us

God the Holy Spirit	Have mercy on us
Holy Trinity one God	Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, Son of the eternal Father	Have mercy on us
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Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mother	Have mercy on us
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Heart of Jesus, wonderfully united to the eternal Word	Have mercy on us
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Heart of Jesus, of infinite majesty	Have mercy on us
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Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God	Have mercy on us
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Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High	Have mercy on us
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Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of Heaven	Have mercy on us
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Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, vessel of justice and love  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, never-ending source of all virtues  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, worthy of all praise  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, in which are all the treasures of  
wisdom and knowledge Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, in which dwells all the fullness of  
the divinity Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, in which the Father is well-pleased  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, of whose fullness we have all  
received Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, deepest desire of the human heart  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, patient and abounding in mercy  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, generous to all who call upon you  
Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, which suffered rejection for our sake

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, bruised for our sins

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, made obedient unto death

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, victim of our sins

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who hope in you

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in you

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection

Have mercy on us

Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints

Have mercy on us

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world

spare us, O Lord

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world

graciously hear us, O Lord

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world

have mercy on us

**V.** Jesus, meek and humble of heart;

**R.** Make our hearts like unto yours.

**Let us pray:**

Almighty and eternal God, look upon the heart of your well-beloved Son and the praise and sacrifice he offers you in the name of sinners; being pleased with his holy obedience, pardon those who implore your mercy and give us a share in his resurrection. This we ask in the name of the same Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.  
Amen.

## 16. VENERABLE ANTHONY KOWALCZYK (1866-1948)

Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Brother  
Day of Death: July 10

Brother **Anthony Kowalczyk** (1866-1947) was from Poland. He entered the Oblate novitiate at St. Gerlach, Netherlands, in 1891. In 1896 he was sent to the missions in Northwestern Canada. He worked at the construction of a school at Saddle Lake, where in 1897 a serious accident occurred that necessitated the amputation of Anthony's right forearm. When St. John's College was opened in Edmonton for the training of young future missionaries Bro. Anthony spent from 1911 to the end of his life there. He was an admirable example of religious lifestyle, humbly, totally and lovingly dedicated to service and, above all, to the intense search for God. Bro. Anthony died on July 10, 1947, in St. Albert. On June 1, 1979 his cause for Beatification was opened in Rome. On March 27, 2013, Oblate Bro. Anthony Kowalczyk was declared Venerable. For his beatification, a miracle is required.

## PRAYER

We praise you, Lord and Father, who in a wonderful way has led Brother Anthony along the path of your holy will. You gave him strength to imitate Jesus Christ in carrying faithfully his many crosses and fulfilling his responsibilities. I praise you, Lord, for his heroic faith and trust, which have opened the treasures of your goodness. Grant me, O Lord, the grace ... which I beg through the intercession of your Servant, Anthony. May his sanctity be confirmed and may I be ever more faithful in fulfilling your Holy Will. Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

## 17. FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION:

**August 15**

On the feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1822, the Founder blessed a new statue of Mary Immaculate in the church of the Mission at Aix-en-Provence. While praying before this statue, our Founder received a special religious favor which he described as follows: "I believe I owe to her also a special experience that I felt today... I cannot describe it too well because it comprised several things but all related, however, to a single object, our dear Society. It seemed to

me that what I saw, what I could put my finger on, was that within her lies hidden the germ of very great virtues, and that she can achieve infinite good. I found her worthy, everything pleased me about her, I cherished her rules, her statutes; her ministry seemed sublime to me, as it is indeed. I found in her bosom sure means of salvation, even infallible, such is how they looked to me.”

An oral tradition states that this statue for some instants appeared to the Founder as though alive and visibly signifying approval of him and his Congregation. It now stands in the main chapel of our General House in Rome and is referred to as “the Oblate Madonna”.

From the earliest beginnings of the Congregation, Oblates have celebrated the Assumption of our Lady into Heaven as a major feast. For many Oblates this feast has also been the day of their religious profession.

*“Mary Immaculate, in her faith response and total openness to the call of the Spirit, is the model and guardian of our consecrated life.” (C. 13)*

*With Mary Immaculate, the faithful handmaid of the Lord, and under the guidance of the Spirit, we enter into closer union with Jesus Christ.” (C. 36)*



## PRAYER

Today the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up to Heaven; rejoice, for she reigns with Christ forever.

**V.** As Mary is taken up to Heaven the angels of God rejoice;

**R.** They worship God and sing his praises.

### **Let us pray:**

All-powerful and ever-living God, you raised the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of your Son, body and soul to the glory of Heaven. Grant that we may ever be intent on things above and thus come to share her glory. This we ask through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

## 18. MISSION SUNDAY

The Church celebrates Mission Sunday each year on the second to the last Sunday of October. Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1926 at the request of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Public prayer and preaching on this day helps all Christ's faithful to recognize the missionary dimension of their baptismal calling; preachers also place before

the generosity of the faithful the needs of missionaries and of other local Churches.

On Mission Sunday, October 19, 1975, Pope Paul VI beatified Bishop de Mazenod. The yearly missionary celebration, therefore, takes on added meaning for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Along with prayer for ourselves and, in particular, for those of us who have been sent to countries outside their own, we pray also in gratitude for the Church's approval of Bishop de Mazenod's life, holiness and missionary zeal.

The Founder himself, even as he began a mission band for Provence, had foreign missions in mind. Of this vocation he wrote to Father Ricard in 1851: "This is the true apostolate of announcing the Good News to nations which have not yet been called to knowledge of the true God and of his Son, Jesus Christ... This is the mission of the apostles: «*Euntes, docete omnes gentes!*»."

*"We are a missionary Congregation. Our principal service in the Church is to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned. We preach the Gospel among people who have not yet received it and help them see their own values in its light. Where the Church is already established, our commitment is to those groups it touches least."* (C. 5)

## **PRAYER FOR THE MISSIONS**

God our Father, you will that all be saved and know your truth. Send workers into your great harvest that the Gospel may be preached to every creature and that your people, gathered together by the Word of Life and strengthened by the power of the sacraments, may advance in the way of salvation and love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

*(from the Roman Missal)*

## **PRAYER FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL**

God our Father, you sent your Son into the world to be its true light. Pour out the Spirit he promised us to sow the truth in people's hearts and awaken in them obedience to the faith. May all be born again to new life in baptism and enter the fellowship of your one holy people. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*(from the Roman Missal)*

## **19. FEAST OF ALL SAINTS:**

### **November 1**

*Anniversary of the first vows in the Congregation*

The Congregation celebrates with the universal Church the feast of all the Saints, but Oblates recall also the day in 1818 when the Missionaries of Provence first pronounced the vows of religion. The connection between these two commemorations was drawn by the Founder when he spoke of commitment to striving for personal holiness for the sake of the mission: “Half-measure virtues are not sufficient to respond to all that their holy vocation demands... They are called to an entirely different kind of perfection. They must strive for it; even more is needed: they must walk in this path to become, in God’s hands, the instruments of his mercy. They must know that their ministry continues the ministry of the Apostles and that it is nothing short of working wonders. Hence they must hasten to become saints...” (to Father Mouchette, December 2, 1854, speaking of scholastics).

When the Missionaries of Provence were asked in 1818 to accept Notre-Dame du Laus in the diocese of Digne, Father de Mazenod seized the occasion to write the principal articles of a rule in two weeks at Saint-Laurent du Verdon. To the entire Society, during the annual retreat in Aix the last week of

October, he proposed the taking of religious vows. At the end of the retreat on All Saints day, all but one member made vows of obedience, chastity and perseverance (the vow of poverty was added to Oblate religious profession in 1821). The vows were pronounced before communion. After Mass the Te Deum was sung, the litany of the Saints was recited before the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the newly consecrated religious missionaries finished by singing the *Sub tuum*.

The General Chapter of 1826 decreed that this ceremony would be repeated each year. When the annual retreat did not finish on November 1, vows were still renewed during the closing ceremony. All Saints Day was then marked only by the common recitation of the Litany of the Saints before Mary's statue and the singing of the *Sub tuum*.

Elements of this original ceremony might still serve community prayer on this day.

*"We are members of the prophetic Church. While recognizing our own need for conversion, we bear witness to God's holiness and justice." (C. 9)*

*"Mary Immaculate, in her faith response and total openness to the call of the Spirit, is the model and guardian of our consecrated life." (C. 13)*

## **PRAYER TO GROW IN HOLINESS AS A MISSIONARY**

Almighty God, You send me bodily discomforts, anguish of soul, trials and adversities. I thank you for this gift, for you thereby draw me still more powerfully to yourself and, through a marvelous variety of consolation and desolation, you teach me not to be presumptuous in prosperity nor to lose hope in adversity.

*(used by Saint Eugene de Mazenod)*

## **PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF HOLY OBLATES**

*“The Postulator General... promotes... the causes of those who are a special source of inspiration not only for the Congregation but for the whole Church.” (R. 149c)*

O Lord, our Saviour we come to you in prayer. Among the Oblates now with you in the Father's house there are some whose holiness you have chosen to make more manifest. We ask you to show even more clearly the marvelous work you achieved in them during the days of their earthly existence. Grant your Church the light to present them to all

people as men who have lived fully the love you offered them. O Mary, Mother of Mercy, intercede with us before your Son, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## **20. COMMEMORATION OF OBLATES WHO HAVE DIED: November 3**

The Congregation began, early in its history, to celebrate a community Mass for all deceased Oblates on November 3 or within the week after All Souls Day.

The Founder's first emotion, when he lost to death his sons and companions, was desolation; consolation followed with a sense of their continued presence to us in the Lord: "Now we have four in Heaven; this is already a nice community. They are the first stones, the foundation stones of the edifice which must be built in the celestial Jerusalem; they are before God with the sign, the character proper to our Society, the common vows of all her members, the practice of the same virtues. We are attached to them by the bonds of a particular charity, they are still our brothers, and we are theirs; they dwell in our motherhouse, our headquarters; their prayers, the love which they keep for us, will draw us one day to them so as to dwell with them in the place

of our rest. I presume that our community must be placed quite close to our Patroness; I see them at the side of Mary Immaculate and, consequently, close to our Lord Jesus Christ whom they have followed on earth and whom they contemplate with delight.”

*(To Father Courtes, July 22, 1828)*

*“We will keep alive the memory of our deceased and not fail to pray for them, faithfully offering the suffrages prescribed on their behalf.” (C. 43)*

The community Mass on this day includes special prayers for those members of the local community and/or Province who have died in the last year. If the Oblate house is near a cemetery in which Oblates are buried, a community visit for prayer at the graveside would be appropriate.

## **PRAYER FOR DECEASED OBLATES**

O God, our Father, by filling the heart of Saint Eugene de Mazenod with your Spirit you led him to bring together a community patterned on that of the Apostles. As members of this community we ask you to keep us closely united to our deceased brethren, and to benefit from their example and virtues. Welcome them into the assembly of your Saints. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.



## 21. SERVANT OF GOD OVIDE CHARLEBOIS (1862-1933)

*Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate  
Bishop in Western Canada  
Day of Death: November 20*

Bishop **Ovide Charlebois** (1862-1933) joined the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1883 in Canada. He was ordained to the Priesthood in 1887 and sent to the missions of Western Canada. Named Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin, Manitoba, Ovide Charlebois received his Episcopal Consecration in 1910 and resided in The Pas where he remained for the rest of his life. Apart from his missionary activity, Bishop Charlebois was the instigator of the process which led to the proclamation of St. Theresa of Lisieux (1873-1897) as Patron Saint of the Missions. The bishop laboured at the difficult task of organizing his vast vicariate with patience and courage, until he died on 20 November 1933. The cause for Beatification was introduced in Rome in 1979. The *Positio super virtutibus* was handed to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on April 28, 2001. For his beatification, a miracle is required.

**PRAYER**

O God whose servant Bishop Charlebois strove with admirable fortitude, patience and humility to bring Your reign of love into a wilderness, make us like him, steadfast in virtue and grant us through his intercession the special grace ... which we ask of Your infinite goodness. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

**22. BLESSED FRANCISCO ESTEBAN  
AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS:  
November 28**

**Brief history**

The three-year period from 1936 until 1939 was a time of bloody martyrdom for the Church in Spain. During this religious persecution, there were thousands of people who suffered violent death. Within this general climate of hatred and antireligious fanaticism, one may justly place the martyrdom of 22 Oblates: priests, brothers and scholastics from Pozuelo de Alarcón (Madrid). Their religious activity began to worry the revolutionary committees (socialists, communists and the radical lay labour unions). On July 20, 1936, socialist and commu-

nist youth took to the streets and began to burn churches and convents, especially in Madrid. On July 22, a large contingent of armed militia attacked the Oblate house. The Oblates were made prisoners in their own house. On the 24th, at about three in the morning, there were the first executions. Without an inquest, without an indictment, without judgment, without defense, they called out seven of the religious: Fr. Juan Antonio PÉREZ MAYO (29), professor; Sc. Manuel GUTIÉRREZ MARTÍN (23); Sc. Cecilio VEGA DOMÍNGUEZ (23); Sc. Juan Pedro COTILLO FERNÁNDEZ (22); Sc. Pascual ALÁEZ MEDINA (19); Sc. Francisco POLVORINOS GÓMEZ (26); Justo GONZÁLEZ LORENTE (21). Without any explanation, they were loaded into two cars and taken to their martyrdom. The rest of the religious stayed at the Oblate house and dedicated their waiting hours to prayer and preparing themselves to die but, on the next day, after filling out some forms, they were unexpectedly let go. But in October, they were hunted down again, captured and imprisoned. Among them, there reigned a spirit of charity and an atmosphere of silent prayer. On November 7, two of them were executed: Fr. José VEGA RIAÑO (32), formator; Sc. Serviliano RIAÑO HERRERO (30). On November 28, it would be the turn of the 13 others: Fr. Francisco ESTEBAN LACAL (48), Provincial

Superior; Fr. Vicente BLANCO GUADILLA (54), Local Superior; Fr. Gregorio ESCOBAR GARCÍA (24); Sc. Juan José CABALLERO RODRÍGUEZ (24); Sc. Publio RODRÍGUEZ MOSLARES (24); Sc. Justo GIL PARDO (26); Bro. Ángel Francisco BOCOS HERNÁNDEZ (54); Bro. Marcelino SÁNCHEZ FERNÁNDEZ (26); Sc. José GUERRA ANDRÉS (22); Sc. Daniel GÓMEZ LUCAS (20); Sc. Justo FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ (18); Sc. Clemente RODRÍGUEZ TEJERINA (18); Bro. Eleuterio PRADO VILLARROEL (21). They were taken from the jail, driven to Paracuellos de Jarama and executed there.

## PRAYER

Almighty and eternal God, to Blessed Francisco Esteban and his companions you gave the grace of sacrificing their lives for Christ with a bloody oblation. Help us in our weakness. Through their intercession, and by following their example, may we too stay firm in the faith, witnessing to the world who Jesus Christ is. Give us also, through their intercession, the grace ... we ask of you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

*Blessed Oblate Martyrs of Spain, pray for us.*

## **LITURGY OF THE HOURS**

### **OFFICE OF READINGS**

#### **II READING**

Deposition of Father Felipe Diez Rodriguez, witness to the Office, who had direct knowledge of the Servants of God. He lived with them throughout the time of their persecution, detention and hiding. (Session XXXI, 20-Sep-1999 proc. P.444)

The socio-political environment that existed in Madrid around mid-July, 1936, was almost unknown to us because we did not travel to Madrid nor were we reading the newspapers. We only listened to conversations and, from these conversations, we could infer that things were very bad. There was an atmosphere against the Church in general and us in particular.

We had to stop taking strolls because of the insults and serious threats uttered against us. Also, being in the same convent, we heard these same insults and threats from passersby as they passed in front of the convent. We had the feeling that something was brewing against the Church and, more specifically, against ourselves.

The day, July 19, 1936, I heard noises, and people running by the convent; that seemed strange to

me and what a surprise that when I opened the door there was someone with a revolver pointed at me. They told me “to go to the garden”. And as I walked in the direction of the garden, at the door I found someone that caressed the butt of the gun and said to me: “Don’t go out. Get in there! Face the wall with your hands up. This is about to end.” So, I went in, I did what I was told and found two scholastics in the same posture; I, placing myself next to one of them said to him, “Isaac, the time has arrived to go to heaven.” At that moment Father Vega passed by and said: “Make an act of contrition and I’ll give you general absolution”. At that point, I wanted to pray the “My Lord Jesus Christ” (the act of contrition) but the words would not leave my lips, what did flow forth were prayers for love of God, forgiveness toward those who we thought we were going to shoot us and the offering of our lives for those who were going to murder us, and for the Church and for Spain.

In that room where I was, they brought in all the members of the Community. After a while, in that room and in the stifling heat, they sent us out into the garden, already detained and thus deprived of any freedom of movement.

That night we were ordered to the dormitory, but with orders not to get out of bed nor were we to look out the

windows, for members of the militia were watching us. We woke up the next day and went directly to the chapel. Mass was not celebrated that day though we consumed all the consecrated hosts. The saddest thing of all was when the Superior, Father Vicente Blanco, gave us the blessing, he began to cry. He had to be assisted by Father Monje and Father Vega who shared the same pain. He said, "And what will become of this house without Jesus in the Eucharist and what will become of these young people whose parents have placed them in our custody!"

We proceeded down to the dining room, always under the watch of the militants and under the threat of their arms. There, in the dining room we were kept prisoners all day long. At about two in the morning, we woke up; we were lined up and frisked. At that moment, six scholastics were called out, along with Father Juan Antonio Pérez.

These community members were joined by the layman, Candido Castán, who had been arrested and taken to the convent as a prisoner.

The seven cited members of the Community along with the lay person were taken, without us ever knowing anything more about them. The rest of the community returned to the dining room which had been converted into a dormitory.

The only reason for our arrest by the militants was that we were religious. We did not know of political issues nor had we ever devoted our time and attention to these.

The community was then transferred from Pozuelo to the General Office of Security in Madrid. There, upon entering, they processed us and rigorously took our personal data. At that time, we stated our status as religious students and priests, superiors and professors.

We were led into the dungeons where we joined other detainees, other members of religious communities. We spent the night huddled together and the next day, early, we were released. The superiors told us that if anyone had relatives or acquaintances that were waiting, they were to leave with them. Those who had no relatives or acquaintances, the Fathers were to take responsibility for them and take some of them to the Provincial House.

I heard from other colleagues who were staying in a guest house on San Jerónimo Street, that Father Francisco Esteban, Provincial Superior, visited the Oblates and women religious of the Holy Family of Bordeaux in the different places where they had taken refuge; my colleagues had warned him that it was dangerous for him to go out and expose his life



to peril, yet he replied that he had to promote and encourage the faith and the virtue of the brothers of the Congregation that appeared to be lost. His word “encourage” has remained with me.

We learned that there had been a “raid” and that they had detained (again) the Oblates who had found refuge.

Even though the prison conditions that they found themselves in were atrocious: suffering hunger, filled with lice, they always remained firm in the faith and maintained a true spirit of charity toward one another.

I want to emphasize their behavior, especially the charity and the mutual aid that existed between them in jail and for others. This support was also given to the extent possible by those of us who were not detained. We all remained united in prayer.

From the first moment we were detained, in each one of us, there was a presentiment that we would be assassinated because of our status as religious. Yet, within us, all that transcended was the spirit of forgiveness on the one hand, and on the other, the desire to offer our lives for the Church, for the peace of Spain, and those whom we thought were going to shoot us.

The only motive that guided us was supernatural, since humanly we were to lose everything. We knew that if we were killed, it would be because of hatred for the Christian faith.

As for the place of martyrdom, the first seven of Pozuelo, I have already stated that we do not know where they were killed; of the others, we know they were murdered in Paracuellos de Jarama. At the time of their death, I heard that there was someone, who by their description matched that of Father Esteban, who asked permission to give absolution to the companions. And whose last words were: "We know that we are murdered because we are priests and religious. We forgive you. Long live Christ the King!"

I can give witness; because I have I lived with them these moments. We were all predisposed to suffer death and be delivered fully to God. So much so, that I heard Father Delfín Monje (another survivor) utter these words: "I was never better prepared to die." This phrase I also have said personally and the other surviving brothers have expressed the same thought. This sums up the spirit in which we lived.

When we were "savoring" the moment in which we were going to be killed, we wanted to utter a prayer but none would leave our lips; nevertheless, what we did spontaneously voice, were feelings of

love for God, of affection for our brothers and of love towards those who would kill us along with sentiments of forgiveness for others, as well as, a request for God's mercy and forgiveness for our sins, weaknesses, imperfections, etc.

This I declare from personal testimony and I'm sure the servants of God kept these sentiments until the moment of their death, because never was there the occasion to back down from their faith nor has it ever been heard or reported that any of them denied the same.

## **23. SERVANT OF GOD VICTOR LELIEVRE (1876-1956)**

*Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate,  
"Apostle of the Sacred Heart"*  
Day of death: November 29

### **Short Biography**

*Father **Victor Lelievre** (1876-1956) entered the Oblates in France in 1896. Ordained a priest in 1902 he was sent to Quebec, Canada. His first assignment was to the parish of Saint-Sauveur in Quebec. There he organized a monthly hour of adoration to the Sacred Heart. With the talent of Fr. Lelievre, the participation increased*

*to 1,000 or more participants. More and more he dedicated himself to the “Apostolate of the Sacred Heart”. Every year he invited the Catholics of the city of Quebec to a procession on the feast of the Sacred Heart. Sometimes 50,000 people would take part in the procession. In 1923 he founded the retreat house “Jesus-the-Worker” where he would meet thousands of men and young people. He died in Quebec on November 29, 1956. His cause of beatification was opened on the diocesan level on November 7, 2003. In 2006 the cause moved on to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. The Positio super virtutibus was handed in in 2006. For his beatification, a miracle is required.*

## **PRAYER**

O God, because you are always close to those who are most abandoned, you called Victor Lelievre to be your missionary and to dedicate his life to the welfare of the workers of Canada. He made your Son Jesus Christ known and loved as Saviour through spreading devotion to his Sacred Heart. We pray that the Church may recognize and proclaim the life of this Oblate as an example to help others to know you, to love you and to become missionaries in turn. Through

his intercession may we obtain the favor ... we ask from you with confidence. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

## **24. SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: December 8**

*Patroness of the Congregation*

Father de Mazenod founded our Congregation to preach the Gospel to the poor, but he saw this goal enhanced by preaching devotion to Mary, a devotion which marked his own spiritual life. In 1826, after we received the name “Oblates of Mary Immaculate”, he wrote to Father Tempier: “May we really understand who and what we are! I hope the Lord will grant us this grace with the help and protection of our holy Mother, Mary Immaculate. In our Congregation we must have great devotion to her. Does it not seem to you a mark of predestination, to bear the name of Oblate of Mary, that is to say, consecrated to God under the patronage of Mary, whose name the Congregation bears like a family name it has in common with the most holy and immaculate Mother of God?”

He gave the first missionaries to Canada their obedience in 1841 with the words: “May the Blessed Virgin conceived without stain be your guide and patroness, devotion to whom, you must bear in mind, is a special duty of our vocation to propagate in every place.” And in his last will and testament he took consolation in the “filial devotion of my whole life and... the desire I have always had to make her known and loved, and to spread her devotion everywhere through the ministry of those whom the Church has given me as children, who have had the same desire as myself.”

*“Mary Immaculate is patroness of our Congregation... We shall always look on her as our mother... Wherever our ministry takes us, we will strive to instill genuine devotion to the Immaculate Virgin who prefigures God’s final victory over all evil.” (C. 10)*

The early Novitiate and Scholasticate directories asked that Mary’s feasts be prepared in recollection and penance and be celebrated joyfully. The major feasts, such as that of the Immaculate Conception, were preceded by a fast day. After the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, Oblates began preparing for this feast with a novena. The novena prayers were the special litany of the Immaculate Conception, the *Tota pulchra*

es (cf. page 48), the *Magnificat* and two short prayers.

The feast itself is celebrated with a community Mass. The General Chapter of 1920 asked that the Oblate act of consecration be recited on February 17 and December 8. It is usually said by all together after the communion of the Mass, but it may also be recited during another ceremony on these days (cf. page 78)

## **NOVENA PRAYERS FOR THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

1. Day: The Annunciation of the Angel to Mary (*Luke 1:26-38*)
2. Day: The visitation of Mary to Saint Elizabeth (*Luke 1:39-45*)
3. Day: The Nativity of the Saviour (*Luke 2:1-20*)
4. Day: Mother of Jesus (*Luke 2:21-52*)
5. Day: Witness of Christ (*Mt 12:46-50*)
6. Day: Mary, Under the cross (*John 19:25-27; C. 10*)
7. Day: Mary and the Apostles, the Descent of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4*)

8. Day: Mary, Star of Evangelization (Evangelii Gaudium 288; C. 46)

9. Day: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven (*Luke 1:46-55*; C. 36)

(Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary: p. 51)

(Consecration to Mary: p. 79)

## PRAYER TO HONOR MARY IMMACULATE

All honor to you, Mary! From you arose the Sun of Justice, Christ the Lord.

**V.** Let us do honor to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary;

**R.** Let us adore Christ, the Lord, who preserved her.

### **Let us pray:**

Father, the image of the Virgin is found in the Church. Mary had a faith that your Spirit prepared and a love that never knew sin, for you kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Trace in our actions the lines of her love, in our hearts the readiness of her faith. Prepare once again a world for your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.



## **25. BLESSED OBLATE MARTYRS OF LAOS: December 16**

During the Indochina War, between the years 1954-1970, seventeen followers of Christ in Laos suffered martyrdom for the sake of His name. Among these martyrs were the young priest, Joseph Tien (Ban Then, December 5, 1918 - Muang Xoi, June 2, 1954), the first martyr of Laos, and some catechists [Paul Thoj Xyooj (1941-1960), Joseph Outhany (1933-1961) Thomas Khampheuane Inthirath (1952-1968), Luc Sy (1938-1970), Maisam Pho Inpeng (1934-1970)]. Members of the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris [Fr. Jean-Baptist Malo MEP (1899-1954), Fr. René Dubroux MEP (1914-1959), Fr. Noel Tenaud MEP (1904-1961), Fr. Marcel Denis MEP (1919-1961), Fr. Lucien Galan MEP (1921-1968)] and of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate [Fr. Mario Borzaga OMI (1932-1960), Fr. Louis Leroy OMI (1923-1961), Fr. Michel Coquelet OMI (1931-1961), Fr. Vincent L'Hénoret OMI (1921-1961), Fr. Jean Wauthier OMI (1926-1967), Fr. Joseph Boissel OMI (1909-1969)] also offered their lives in sacrifice so that the Gospel could be heard. The Church in Laos recognizes these blessed as their founding fathers.

**PRAYER**

O Lord our God, You granted the 6 Oblate Martyrs of Laos, the audacity to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom in all circumstances. They acted with unfaltering loyalty according to the instructions received from the successor of Saint Peter. To love and serve the poor, the sick and the lowly, they put their lives at risk. They gave up their lives in union with the life of Jesus who died for us on the cross. In this way the people of God in Laos were able to grow strong and joyful amidst adversity. O Lord, give us the courage to follow in their footsteps and let the coming generations know the example they left. Through their intercession, O Lord, grant us now the favour that we ask for, trusting in your mercy, namely ... Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Our Father – Hail Mary – Glory be.*

*Oblate Martyrs of Laos, pray for us*

**2nd Reading: Account of the  
disappearance of Blessed Marcel Denis  
by a contemporary**

(F. Marcel Vignalet-Verges, M.E.P. In memory of Father Marcel Denis, missionary in Laos, who disappeared in 1961: *Positio super martyrio*, Roma 2014, pp. 1122-1125)

**We will meet again in heaven**

After fifteen years of work, on April 17, 1961 Marcel Denis disappeared forever. In those times and places disappearances were nothing rare: you had to expect everything, especially the worst... When you turned down the trail, no one – not even you – knew where and when you would arrive as the hazards were many... The distances are great, rutted tracks, and turbulent rivers must be crossed either by wading or swimming. There is no sign on the horizon, no mail or postman, no telephone, no doctor or policeman. Just beautiful exuberant and ruthless nature, cruel to the weak-kneed, indifferent to all. Here and there, a village, with its patch of rice fields, a small island lost in the immense forest, feared by men as the kingdom of evil spirits and ferocious beasts. Alone, one does not adventure in too far and never without a machete and protective amulets, because you can only rely on yourself and Heaven....

The famous Indochina War raged the entire time that Marcel was in Laos. The vast expanse of his area was alternately crossed by government or revolutionary troops without one or the other able to impose their law. Depending on the ebb and flow of each, you could come across an ambush, or be caught in a skirmish or a shootout. Depending on the direction in which you were traveling, you could be accused of treason or espionage, and all this amid the looting, burnings, and denunciations, which led to bloody repression and vengeance. It is in this climate that the missionaries moved about every day, with the quiet conviction of doing their duty in an ordinary world. They would have laughed at you if you had taken them for heroes, but each of them could tell you about many comic or tragic adventures they had been through....

The real picture is given by those who did not return! At the Thakhek mission alone, alongside Marcel, in those years, Father Malo died of exhaustion in his march as a captive in 1954, Father Dubroux was killed in 1959, Father Tenaud disappeared in 1961, and Father Galan was killed in 1968. They are on the long list of martyrs in the Hall of Martyrs at the Rue du Bac.

On the morning of April 17, 1961, Marcel, who was in Thakhek at the time, learned that the

village of Phon Sa-at, about 30 kilometers away, was threatened by the Viêts who had already taken the entire eastern part of his sector. He had left his catechist Unla and his family there. He decided that he needed to go cover for them and take responsibility for all the complaints that the revolutionaries were surely going to make against the head of the small Christian community. He was fully aware of the risks and knew that he would be treated as an enemy of the people, a servant of imperialism, a spy of colonialism and other similar crimes. He knew how little concern the Viêts had for human rights, for the dignity or the lives of those who were not on their side. Yet he went to parry the blows and divert to himself the charges he foresaw. A few days earlier, we had been with the group of Thakhek for a day of prayer and reflection. Once again, we had agreed on what to do faced with these advances and retreats of the opposing forces. The Gospel dictated the answer: the missionary is a pastor, not a mercenary.... The Good Shepherd does not flee before danger.... He gives his life for the sheep.... Marcel knew his Gospel and he left without looking back. We probably will never know the truth about his final days, the humiliations or the sufferings he had to endure. The last reliable testimony is that of Unla, his catechist, who saw

him leave Phon Sa-at at the wheel of his Jeep, surrounded by his jailers who could not drive.

“They did not seem all that bad, said Unla later. They let him come back to get his breviary and Father took the opportunity to tell us unequivocally: Adieu. We shall meet again in Heaven.”

## **26. FEASTS OF THE APOSTLES AND MISSIONARIES**

*“The community of the Apostles with Jesus is the model of our life”. (C. 3)*

Father de Mazenod called the apostles “our first fathers”. Their feast days and those of other saints for whom he and his early companions had particular devotion were marked by special community prayer. Many of their names are in the litany said during particular examen.

The following list of feast days is taken from the Roman calendar. Provinces and Regions should add to this list the feasts of saints important to their particular Churches. The local community can decide which of these are to be observed and how community prayer should solemnize them.

## FEASTS OF THE APOSTLES

Saints Peter and Paul	June 29
Saint John the Evangelist	December 27
Saint James	July 25
Saint Andrew	November 30
Saint Matthew	September 21
Saint Thomas	July 3
Saint Bartholomew	August 24
Saints Philip and James	May 3
Saints Simon and Jude	October 28
Saint Matthias	May 14

## PRAYER

God our Father, keep us faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, united in prayer and in the breaking of the Bread, and one in joy and simplicity of heart. This we ask through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

## FEASTS OF PRIESTS AND MISSION PREACHERS

Saint Charles Borromeo	November 4
Saint Alphonsus Liguori	August 1
Saint Vincent de Paul	September 27
Saint Leonard of Port Maurice	November 26
Saint Vincent Ferrer	April 5

Saint John Leonardi	October 9
Saint Philip Neri	May 26
Saint Joseph Calasanz	August 27
Saint John Francis Regis	December 31

## **FEASTS OF PATRONS OF MISSIONARIES**

Saint Francis Xavier	December 3
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus	October 1

## **27. ANNIVERSARY OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE POPE'S MINISTRY AND OF THE ELECTION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL**

*The Congregation celebrates with prayer the anniversary of the inauguration of the Pope's ministry and of the election of the Superior General.*

## **PRAYER FOR THE POPE**

Father of providence, look with love on N... our Pope, your appointed successor to St. Peter on whom you built your Church. May he be the visible center and foundation of our unity in faith and love.



Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*(Roman Missal)*

## **PRAYER FOR THE SUPERIOR GENERAL**

O God, our merciful Father, assist and protect our Father in Christ, the Superior General of our Congregation. Look on him with love and strengthen him with every blessing. Open to him the storehouse of your wisdom, that he may bring out from it treasures both old and new. Help him to fulfill his obligations as our father and guide. Grant that through his ministry we may remain faithful to our mission and ever grow in that unity of mind and heart which our Founder wished for us. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(adapted from the Roman Missal)*

## **PRAYER FOR SUPERIORS**

We praise and thank you, Lord, our God and Father, that you have chosen your servant N. ... to lead our religious community. Give him a spirit of wisdom and courage, a spirit of knowledge and love. By governing with fidelity those entrusted to his care may he help build your Church as a sign of salvation

for the world. This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*(based on the Roman Missal)*

## **28. THE END OF THE OLD YEAR AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW**

In their public churches and, later, in their community chapels, Oblates marked the end of one year and the beginning of another with prayer. On the last day of the year, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, the Miserere was sung, followed by the Te Deum and Benediction. On New Year's Day, the Blessed Sacrament was again exposed, the Veni Creator sung and Benediction given. The local community gathered formally to greet their Superior and wish him a Happy New Year.

The prayers selected indicate the devotional sentiments of these exercises: penance for our sins and thanksgiving for God's grace at the end of one year and petition for divine enlightenment as we begin another. This pattern of penance, thanksgiving and blessing might be incorporated into a community Holy Hour on December 31 or January 1. Even without the formal customs of the past, local communities can find means of renewing

fraternal bonds among Oblates at the beginning of the New Year.

Recent Popes have asked the Church to observe January 1, the feast of Mary, the Mother of God, as a day of prayer for peace in the world.

Our Constitutions speak to us of hope in *“the coming of a new world freed from selfishness and given to sharing”* (C. 20), a *“new world wherein persons recognize their close interdependence”* (C. 25), *“a world born of (Christ’s) resurrection.”* (C. 9)

The following prayers touch themes congenial to these articles.

## **GENERAL INTERCESSIONS FOR PEACE**

In peace, let us beseech the Lord:

for the peace that is from above and the salvation  
of our souls;

for the peace of the whole world and of the holy  
Church of God and of all people;

for our homes, that they may be holy, and for all  
our pastors, teachers and rulers;

for our city (town, village) and country and all who  
dwell therein;

for all that travel by land, by air, by water;

for the sick and all who need your pity and protection.

On all have mercy, and preserve all, O God, by your grace.

Bringing to mind our Lady Mary, blessed among all women, glorious and immaculate,

Mother of God and always a virgin, and remembering also the Saints, we gather together our lives and, entrusting them to one another, we offer them to Jesus Christ, our Lord.

For to you, O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor and worship, forever and ever. Amen.

*(from the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom)*

## **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

O Lord, God of Peace, you have created us and shown us your kindness so that we may share as sons and daughters in your glory. We praise you and we thank you because you have sent us Jesus, your well-beloved Son, and, through the mystery of his resurrection, you have made him the cause of all salvation, the source of all peace, and the bond of all brotherhood. We thank you for the desires, efforts, achievements stirred up by the

Spirit of Peace in our time, to replace hatred by love, mistrust by understanding, indifference by interdependence. Open our minds and hearts ever wider to the real demands of love for all our brothers and sisters, so that we may become more completely makers of peace. Remember, O Father of mercy, all those who struggle, suffer and die to bring forth a world of closer brotherhood. May your kingdom of justice, peace and love come to people of every race and tongue, and may the earth be filled with your glory. Amen.

*(Pope Paul VI)*

## **OBLATE PRAYER FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION**

God, Father of all, You have created the world as our common home. Through your Word and your Spirit you have brought forth life in which we delight. Help us to treasure this gift of life. Grant us your strength that we may love and protect all life on earth. Fill us with your peace and love that we may live in harmony with all of creation; may we recognize others as our sisters and brothers.

Following our Founder St. Eugene De Mazenod, help us to leave nothing undared in our ministry of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation so that the “liberating presence of Jesus Christ and the new world born in his resurrection” may be a reality today.

As Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, help us to be close to the poor with their many faces. We implore from Mary, our Mother, the strength to stand at the foot of the Cross where many of our brothers and sisters suffer today.

This we ask you, Father of all, through the intercession of our Mother Mary, Saint Eugene and all our Blessed Oblates. Amen.

### **PRAYER TO BECOME A PEACEMAKER**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,  
Where there is injury, pardon,  
Where there is doubt, faith,  
Where there is despair, hope,  
Where there is darkness, light,  
And where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying  
that we are born to eternal life

## **Part Three**

### **OBLATE CEREMONIES**





## 1. COMMUNITY MEETINGS

*“Local communities are the living cells of the Congregation. They are the primary units of our missionary presence where life and mission find their support and expression. They help all Oblates become more prayerful and reflective and live the Gospel fully, thereby freeing them for ever-greater fidelity to their calling within a common project and in the framework of the priorities of the Province.” (C. 91)*

*“Each community will adopt a program of life and prayer best suited to its purpose and apostolate. Once set up, such a program is entrusted to the vigilance of the Superior; regular meetings will be held to praise and thank the Lord, to assess the community’s life, to renew its spirit and strengthen its unity.” (C. 38)*

Throughout the Congregation’s history, communities have met officially in order to deepen our mutual love or in order to be informed and to help in decision making. The most formal instance of the first kind of meeting was the “coulpe” or chapter of faults; of the second, the local and provincial chapters which elected delegates to a General Chapter, before this was done by mail.

Today, fraternal charity is strengthened by various forms of communal revision of life; information is shared and decisions are prepared in community meetings whose agenda depends on their immediate goals. Communities meet for conferences from the Superior or a visitor, for pastoral planning, for study of Church or Congregation documents, for settling details of common life in a house or district, for communal discernment of God's Will. A healthy community meets regularly and its members find peace and joy in coming together.

Whatever the goal of a particular meeting, common prayer is part of it. Prayer to the Holy Spirit usually begins Oblate gatherings and meetings, and prayer to Mary usually closes them.

## **PRAYERS FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

**V.** Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created;

**R.** And you shall renew the face of the earth.

**Let us pray:**

O God, you teach the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inpouring of your Holy Spirit, that every thought and word of ours may begin from you, and in you may be perfectly completed, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(from the Roman Missal)*

## **2. MONTHLY RETREAT**

*“To put ourselves increasingly at the service of God in his people, we will set aside special times each month... for deeper personal and community prayer, for reflection and renewal.”*  
(C. 35)

From the Rule of St. Alphonsus, the Founder took the monthly retreat as an obligation of our way of life; from Saint Sulpice, he took self-reform as the goal of this exercise. To retain religious fervor and fight the dissipation which might attend poorly

focused activities, Oblates set apart an entire day each month for prayer and interior recollection. The day chosen varied. The Oblates at Montmartre argued for the first Friday of each month. In Scholasticates, the first Sunday was often chosen, because the Scholastics were free from classes and the Brothers from their daily tasks. Often, if the month saw the celebration of a major feast, the retreat day preceded this and prepared for it. It was always, however, a community retreat. "In God's name," Bishop de Mazenod wrote to Father Guigues in 1825, "let them return to their communities to renew themselves in the spirit of their vocation; otherwise it is the end of the missionaries. They will soon be nothing more than clanging cymbals."

The retreat usually began the evening before with the *Veni Creator*. The day itself passed in silence; it included the divine Office in common, a spiritual conference, usually given by the Superior, and part of the rosary in common. In private, the missionaries were to make the Stations of the Cross and complete the rosary. In the evening, there was Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Elements of these religious practices might be included in the monthly retreat of houses or districts. Quite often, this day provides an opportune moment for a community meeting, if its subject is not reduced to details of community administration.

### 3. ANNUAL RETREAT

*“One week each year will be spent in retreat.”*  
(C. 35)

The first Oblates made their retreat together each year from October 23 to November 1. This was the most important community exercise of the year. The goal of these days was a deepening of each Oblate's personal holiness. The time was to be spent examining his union with the Lord in relation to the duties of his state of life. The preacher was therefore to be an Oblate – in the beginning it was most often the Superior of each community – and the retreat master was to make frequent reference to the Constitutions and Rules. The last conference traditionally has been devoted to reflections on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Gradually, various houses united for these days, so that today Oblate retreats are usually organized by Province rather than by house. This probably accounts for the practice, different from that of other religious institutes, of permitting conversation during short recreation periods after the midday meal and in the evening, so that men who might not have seen each other for a year will have time to talk and the bonds of fraternal charity will be strengthened. In other respects, the Oblate retreat followed the short form of the Ignatian exercises,

reduced to a week by the Jesuit General Chapter of 1608 and modified further by the priests of Saint Sulpice.

The retreat began with prayer to the Holy Spirit in chapel. Two or three spiritual conferences were given each day. As during the monthly retreat day, the Divine Office and a part of the rosary were recited in common, and each Oblate was to make the Stations of the Cross and complete the rosary in private. The Superior served at table and, after him, the other Oblates in order of seniority. The younger Oblates read aloud during meals from the acts of visitation, from the circulars of the Superiors General and from the letters and biography of Bishop de Mazenod. Occasion was given for confession and spiritual direction, and the retreatants were expected to keep a spiritual journal and enter their retreat resolutions in it. Evening devotions took place before the Blessed Sacrament which was exposed, and during this time the Miserere was sung. On the last evening, the Magnificat and Te Deum were sung, vows were renewed together, the Oblates reconsecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart (1873 General Chapter) and Benediction concluded the retreat.

Elements of the above practices continue to be incorporated into Province retreats, depending on local customs.

Some of the subject matter for reflection should be distinctively Oblate.

The new custom of having a common penance service with individual confession of sins during the retreat is encouraged.

Fraternal gatherings and an exchange on apostolic experiences could well precede or follow the retreat (C. 35). The Founder also drew this relationship between retreat and mission. To Father Semeria he wrote in 1840: “You have therefore begun beforehand by making a good annual retreat prior to the activities of the sacred missions which were to take place immediately afterwards. I have no doubt that the good Lord will bless your work after you have thus renewed yourself in this holy flame which both enlightens and purifies.”

The relationships which define our life – union with God, through our brothers in community, for the sake of the mission among God’s people – should also shape the week of annual retreat. The accent, nevertheless, is always on our direct relationship with God through Christ, our Saviour.

Prayer to grow in love for Jesus Christ (p. 55)

Formula of vows (p. 78)

## 4. PROVINCIAL MEETINGS AND CONGRESSES

*“For greater participation in the life and mission of the Province, the Provincial in council will set up consultative committees, determining their composition, functions, and terms of reference; organize regular meetings with the local Superiors of the Province; according to needs and possibilities, organize a congress or a similar gathering of the Province, at least once during his term of office, in order to promote a common vision and determine common principles for mission.” (C. 108)*

*“Province meetings provide an opportunity for the Provincial to report on the implementation of policies and programs and to invite comments. Seeking the opinions and suggestions of all members, he will foster, as far as possible, an open discussion of the various questions raised. Such mutual and confident cooperation will promote unity in the Province and the progress of the mission.” (R. 108a)*

When the Congregation, because of its extension to North America, southern Africa and Asia, established Provinces in 1851, the Founder was concerned that the administrative divisions not



break the bonds of Oblate unity. He wrote in his circular letter of August 2, 1853: “The Provincials will remember that they derive all their power from a higher authority, of which theirs is only an emanation, which has been imparted to them to the extent inherent in their office to represent the Superior General wherever there are sons of the family of whom he is the only father. Their whole endeavor will be to be imbued with his spirit and act only in conformity with his views, since the least divergence in this matter will harm the unity which is absolutely necessary for any good government.”

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, religious institutes, even those which had been highly centralized for the sake of missionary effectiveness, searched for ways to increase members’ sharing in decision making and, at the same time, maintain unity and the traditions of religious obedience. In the rule of 1966, the Oblate General Chapter set up many consultative bodies which were para-governmental: advisory committees for mission, formation, finances; General Secretariates for mission and formation; extraordinary Provincial Councils, Provincial Congresses and an extraordinary General Council. Some of these disappeared in the Constitutions of 1982; most have been modified and transformed in the light of experience with them...

In Provinces and Delegations, Congresses often review mission priorities and insure that the Unit as such remains an apostolic corps. In smaller Units, the entire membership can help make particular decisions by directly advising the Major Superior and Council. In every case, common prayer establishes an openness to the movements of God's Spirit among us and makes of such meetings an exercise of our religious life.

Common prayer during Unit meetings and Congresses should include at least some of the Liturgy of the Hours, preferably as morning and evening prayer, and the concelebrated Eucharist. Particular examen and evening prayer before the Blessed Sacrament might also be done in common. The meeting should open with prayer to the Holy Spirit and close with prayer to Mary, perhaps including the singing of the Salve Regina.

## **PRAYER**

Lord, pour out on us the Spirit of understanding, truth and peace. Help us to strive with all our heart to know what is pleasing to you, and, when we know your Will, make us determined to do it. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*(from the Roman Missal)*

## **PRAYER WHEN MEETING**

*This prayer, used before each meeting of the commissions of the Second Vatican Council, is attributed to St. Isidore of Seville (ca. 560-636 A.D.) and is included in the Roman Pontifical (1596) among the prayers for the opening of a Synod.*

We stand before you, Holy Spirit, conscious of our sinfulness, but aware that we gather in your Name. Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts. Give us light and strength to know your will, to make it our own, and to live it in our lives. Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your power, for you are God, sharing the glory of the Father and the Son. You desire justice for all: enable us to uphold the rights of others; do not allow us to be misled by ignorance or corrupted by fear or favor. Unite us to yourself in the bond of love and keep us faithful to all that is true. As we gather in your Name may we temper justice with love, so that all decisions may be pleasing to you, and earn the reward promised to good and faithful servants. Amen.

## **5. OBLATE ASSOCIATES**

### **PRAYER OF OBLATES AND LAY ASSOCIATES**

God Our Father, we thank you for calling us, through your Spirit, to live our Christian life in the footsteps of Saint Eugene, Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary immaculate. Strengthen our desire to live our Baptismal commitment. Enlighten us to understand better the gift of the Oblate Charism which we have inherited from Saint Eugene. Grant us the spirit of the Mazenodian Family in sharing the same Oblate spirituality and the same missionary mandate to bring the Good News to the poor. Grant us also to be worthy sons and daughters of Mary, our Mother and Model. May we follow her in our Discipleship of Jesus, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

### **PRAYERS FOR LAY ASSOCIATES**

God our Father, you send the power of the Gospel into the, world as a life-giving leaven. Fill with the Spirit of Christ those whom you call to live in the midst of the world and its concerns; help them

by their work on earth to build up your eternal kingdom. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*(The Roman Missal)*

Creator God, all that we have and are comes from you and through you we are blessed. By the power of the Holy Spirit, open our eyes that, like St. Eugene, we may be aware of the needs of people around us and reach out to help those who feel abandoned. Inspire us to bring the Good News of Jesus to your people. Guide us as we live the Oblate mission together. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Prayer from OMI-Associate Congress 2014)*

## **6. COMMUNAL PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION**

*“Faith moves us to accept for love of the crucified Lord... the daily demands of community life. Moreover, we will heed the invitation of the Lord when he calls us to practice other forms of voluntary penance.” (C. 34)*

*“Charged with proclaiming the joy of God’s pardon to the world and acknowledging our own sinfulness, we will have frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.” (C. 33)*

The customs of Oblate life provide opportunities for public penance in community as well as private acts of mortification. This dimension of Oblate experience might be renewed in penance services at opportune moments in our common life. These penance ceremonies, sacramental or not, help us become aware of our failings against our brothers in community as well as our sins in fulfilling our common Oblate mission.

If sacramental, a penance and reconciliation ceremony includes the confession of sins. Saint Eugene de Mazenod said that he never refused to hear anyone’s confession, and he saw the reception of this sacrament as the fruit of mission preaching. The ceremony for a communal sacramental penance service follows the ritual approved by the local bishops’ conference. Reconciliation is also celebrated in the Eucharist, especially when the celebrants use one of the canons of reconciliation.

## FORMULA OF SACRAMENTAL ABSOLUTION

God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins, ✝ in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### 7. ANOINTING THE SICK

*“Our members in distress, those who are sick and the aged among us, contribute greatly to the coming of God’s kingdom. We will be particularly concerned for them and will surround them with all the affection that binds us together as members of the same family.” (C. 42)*

Local communities, especially those with elderly Oblates, might occasionally celebrate the anointing of the sick communally. This ceremony can be found in the Ritual. To give it a more Oblate character, readings from the Constitutions and Rules and Marian hymns may be included.

## PRAYER FOR THE SICK

I will make up in my own body what is lacking in the suffering of Christ, for the sake of his body, the Church.

**V.** The Lord has truly borne our sufferings:

**R.** He has carried all our sorrows.

### Let us pray:

Father, your Son accepted our sufferings to teach us the virtue of patience in human illness. Hear the prayers we offer for our sick brethren. May all who suffer pain, illness or disease realize that they are chosen to be saints, and know that they are joined to Christ in his suffering for the salvation of the world, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*(The Roman Missal)*

## FORMULA FOR THE BLESSING OF OIL

### Let us pray:

Lord God, loving Father, you bring healing to the sick through your Son, Jesus Christ. Hear us as we pray to you in faith, and send the Holy Spirit, our Helper and Friend, upon this oil, which nature has provided to serve our needs. May your blessing ✝ come upon all who are anointed with this oil, that



they may be freed from pain and illness and made well again in body, mind, and soul. Father, may this oil be blessed for our use in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.

### **FORMULA FOR THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK**

Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up. Amen.

## **8. CARING FOR THE DYING**

*“We strive to reproduce in ourselves the pattern of his life. Thus, we give ourselves to the Father in obedience even unto death...” (C. 2)*

The care of the dying is a normal community duty and a source of consolation for our sick members. Father de Mazenod’s wishes were clear in a letter to Father Courtes in 1826: “I do not like... us removing our sick from our communities when they are in danger of death. They have a right to a higher degree of care, and the consolation of dying in the arms of

one's brothers means something to a good religious who knows the value of supernatural assistance." And again, to Father Ciamin, dying at Jaffna in 1853: "All who have died in (the Congregation's) bosom have died like the predestined, and the good Lord seems to have wished to make them aware of this privilege by making them feel it in their souls. All of them without exception said they knew no terms to express the happiness they felt in dying as sons of Mary in the Congregation to which the mercy of God had called them."

The local community should gather at the bedside of an Oblate who is dying. Prayers for the dying can be found in the Ritual. A dying Oblate should be given the opportunity of confessing his sins, of renewing his vows and receiving the Holy Eucharist. His Oblate cross and rosary should be available to him.

## **PRAYER FOR THE DYING**

God of power and mercy, you have made death itself the gateway to eternal life. Look with love on our dying brother, and make him one with your Son in his suffering and death, that, sealed with the blood of Christ, he may come before you free from sin. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your

Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## **PRAYER FOR A DECEASED OBLATE**

*When an Oblate's body is prepared for burial, it is clothed in the liturgical vestments proper to the Order he received; if the Oblate was not ordained priest or deacon, his body is clothed in his religious habit. The black wooden cross from the community chapel should be placed in the hands of the deceased, along with his rosary. - When the casket (or the urn) is placed before the sanctuary, the priest places on (or at) it the departed Oblate's mission cross. He says the following prayer:*

Remember, Lord Jesus, your servant N. N., our brother. By calling him to the religious life (and priesthood) in the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, you invited him to take up his cross, renounce himself and follow you. Now he has reached the end of his journey. This cross reminds us that you loved us to the point of dying so that we may live; may we see it always as the sign of your love for N. N. and for each one of us. Amen.



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**“In the name of God,  
let us be saints.”**

*(Letter of Saint Eugene de Mazenod  
to the Oblates, after the approbation  
of the Rules, February 18, 1826)*



