EUGENE DE MAZENOD 101

Presentation 14

LEAVING NOTHING UNDARED AS BISHOP OF MARSEILLES

PRAYER USED BY ST. EUGENE BEFORE MEDITATION:
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.

1/ During Eugene's 38 years in Marseilles so much happened.

⇒ **What are some of the things that struck you during the video presentation? What can you learn from this to apply to you**

2/ Throughout his ministry as Bishop of the Diocese of Marseilles, St. Eugene always remained a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate. The Oblate values he lived allowed him to see the presence of Christ in his pastoral care and in the poor he served. His ministry was not mere philanthropy, but was how he lived the Gospel of Matthew 25:40: "I assure you that every time you did it to the least one of these, you did it to me."

OMI Constitution number 1 reminds us:

> *The call of Jesus Christ, heard within the Church through people's need for salvation, draws us together…* (C.1)

⇒ **How does the call of Jesus Christ, to live according to Mazenodian values in the various tasks of life, inspire us?**

3/ St. Eugene kept the door of his office open for four hours every day to welcome the needy, for part of the day he visited the sick and poor of Marseilles, and showed a deep closeness to the people. On our part, this closeness sometimes requires us to recognize the difficulty of serving even those closest to us: in our homes, workplaces, schools, and even the church. Sometimes they are the most difficult to show our closeness to them.

> *Wherever we work, our mission is especially to those people whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring. These are the poor with their many faces; we give them our preference.* (Constitution 5)

⇒ **How does St. Eugene's example help you to be close to difficult people, those poor with their many faces?**

4/ St. Eugene recognized that he needed the help of others to be missionaries to the poor. Already in 1815 he had written to Father Tempier: "You are necessary for this mission."

It was not just the Oblates he called. He involved various religious institutes and laity to share their money, time, and talent. One of countless examples that he noted in his diary:

> *January 14. Mass in the chapel of the home for Poor Girls. Many ladies attended. I received more than 50 of them. The association now numbers 475 women… It's a miracle.*
>
> (Eugene de Mazenod's Diary, 14 January 1839, EO, XX)

An Association of 475 women looked after 50 orphans, mostly through financial support, but also through the physical and spiritual care of the orphans in the House of Providence. Jesus became tangible and visible in this work. The Mazenodian Family continues this work as an Oblate General Chapter expresses:

> *Recognizing that what we dream alone will remain always just a dream, but what we dream with others can become reality, we acknowledge the limits of the individual and the fruitfulness of community. We can be effective evangelizers only to the extent that our compassion is collective, that we give ourselves to the world not as a coalition of freelance ministers, but as a united missionary corps.* (*Witnessing as Apostolic Community*, no. 7)

Concluding Prayer: From Pope Francis' *Fratelli Tutti*

O God, Trinity of love,
from the profound communion of your divine life,
pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love.
Grant us the love reflected in the actions of Jesus,
in his family of Nazareth,
and in the early Christian community.

Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognizing him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.

Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,

different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves. Amen.