Presentation 16

Leaving nothing undared through the legacy of Saint Eugene de Mazenod and his charism family

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/ In his last years as Bishop of Marseilles and Oblate Superior General, St. Eugene demonstrated his love for the Church. His love for Jesus Christ helped him to respond to the needs of the Church. In his pastoral letter of February 16, 1860, he wrote

> How would it be possible to separate our love for Jesus Christ from that which we owe to his Church? These two loves are intertwined: to love the Church is to love Jesus Christ, and vice versa. One loves Jesus Christ in his Church, because she is his bride without spot or wrinkle, who has come forth from his open side on the cross.

And just as Jesus Christ loved the Church by giving himself up to death for her (Ephesians 5:25), so St. Eugene dedicated his life to the Church and experienced joys, but also very heavy sufferings. His unconditional love for the Church never diminished.

⇒ **In what way is your love for Jesus Christ reflected in your love and service of the Church?**

2/ These words of St. Eugene, at the end of his life, show how he accepted to do the will of God in all things:

> "Be sure to tell them that I die happy... that I die happy that God has been so good as to choose me to found the Congregation of the Oblates in the Church.

⇒ **How do these words inspire you to respond more deeply to your vocation as a member of the Mazenodian Family?**

3/ The successor of St. Eugene as Superior General, Father Fabre, indicated at the 1861 General Chapter that the Founder remained among the Oblates of Mary Immaculate through the Holy Rule. The charism of St. Eugene continues to be expressed today in the fidelity of the Mazenodian Family to the Rule of Life he left us and in the various ministries its members exercise:

So let us hold this precious Rule in high esteem, have it always before our eyes, and even more in the heart, let us continually nourish our souls with the principles it contains, let us do nothing, say nothing, think nothing that is not in conformity with its spirit. It is only in this way that we shall be what God wants us to be and make ourselves worthy of our sublime vocation. […] As for myself, when I see brought together in a few pages everything that can constitute perfection on earth and consider that our Constitutions present us with "this everything" as the prototype of the true Oblate of Mary, I rejoice to be called to so high a perfection. (Retreat notes, 8 October 1831)

⇒ **Which elements of St. Eugene's charism inspire your way of living your vocation as a member of the Mazenodian Family in your particular state of life, your way of praying, and your way of evangelizing?**

4/ In the Preface of the Rule of Life of the Missionary Oblates, St. Eugene wrote a phrase in Latin that inspired a missionary creativity seen in the history of the Mazenodian Family: Nihil Liquendum Inausum. Today the Rule translates it in this way:

> ***We will spare no effort*** *to awaken or to reawaken the faith in the people to whom we are sent, and we will help them to discover "who Christ is"… (C.7)*

Living the charism today requires that we "**leave nothing undared**" and that we respond to the demands of the evangelization with missionary creativity:

> *To seek out new ways for the Word of God to reach their hearts often calls for daring; to present Gospel demands in all clarity should never intimidate us* (C. 8)

⇒ **In your local situation, how have you seen this missionary creativity exercised by Oblates and other members of the Mazenodian Family? What new means of communicating the message of God's love have you used with your local community to share the message of salvation?**

5/ We expressed the central elements of Mazenodian spirituality in this diagram. How do you resonate with these points:

1 Jesus Christ the Savior as the absolute foundation and center of everything.

2 Sharing our experience of Jesus with others through speaking, our actions and the witness of our lives (we call this "evangelization")

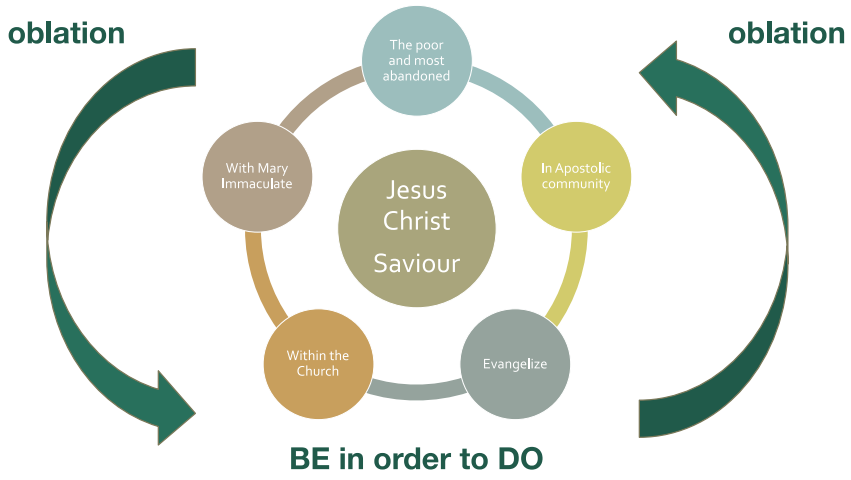
3 Being aware of those who do not know the fullness of the love of God or do not experience it because of the difficulties in their lives. They are the "poor and most abandoned for Eugene" and we are invited to evangelize by our concern and our helpful actions

4 We are members of the Church, the Body of Christ, and thus we live in communion with the whole People of God and with those who are our leaders in the faith

5 Like Jesus and the apostles, we are part of a faith community as family, as local church, and as members of various groups. The model is being with Jesus by living a relationship with him, and then sharing this relationship in word and action. (BE in order to DO)

6 We do this with Mary Immaculate as our mother and model of discipleship.

7 The cement that keeps this all together is oblation: the total self-giving of Jesus for us on the Cross - and our response of giving ourselves to Him in our everyday lives and activities and to those in need.



CONCLUDING PRAYER: THANKSGIVING

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 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 member of the Mazenodian Family.
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 of us may be faithful to our baptismal calling.
Mary Immaculate, our Mother and Patroness, accompany us on the paths of the mission of her Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.