EUGENE DE MAZENOD 101

REFLECTION 7: DARING TO SERVE THE POOR AND MOST ABANDONED

"Daring to Share an Experience of God with Others"

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/ When we speak of "vocation" we are referring to a relationship with God and how we respond.

This is how Eugene expressed it just before his ordination to the priesthood:

> *You, you alone will be the sole object to which will tend all my affections and my every action. To please you, act for your glory, will be my daily task, the task of every moment of my life. I wish to live only for you, I wish to love you alone and all else in you and through you. I despise riches, I trample honors under foot; you are my all, replacing all else. My God, my love and my all: "Deus meus et omnia."* (EO XIV n 95.)

When he was about to return to Aix to begin his priestly ministry he again communicated his vocation:

> *My chief occupation will be to love him, my chief concern to make him loved.*

⇒ How do I express my relationship with God?

2/ Eugene saw his vocation as being in love with God and making God loved.

> *My chief occupation will be to love him, my chief concern to make him loved.*
>
> *To this I will bend all my efforts, time, strength, and when after much toil I have succeeded in winning but a single act of love towards so good a Master, I will rightly consider myself very well paid.*

⇒ How do I do this in my daily occupations - in my home, commuting to and at work or school, shopping, in church etc.?

⇒ … and as part of the community to which I belong?

3/ Eugene's relationship with God was a product of his awareness of his own poverty.

His awareness of being without direction and the consciousness of his shortcomings opened him to receiving Jesus Christ's love and grace, which further helped him to see that same poverty in others.

⇒ How does the awareness of my own poverty and shortcomings help me to recognize and be more sensitive to those who are in need of the loving grace of the Savior?

4/ **In St. Eugene's Madeleine Lenten Sermon of 1813, his aim was to instruct and to accompany the most abandoned to know Jesus Christ – not just intellectually but in an ongoing relationship of conversion.**

⇒ "Let me show you who you are in God's eyes" was Eugene's message. How do we help others to see themselves through the eyes of God instead of through the eyes of the world?

5/ The Mazenodian (Oblate) Rule of Life identifies the poor as: "...*those people whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring*." (Constitution 5)

⇒ How does this Constitution from our Rule of Life help me to identify the most abandoned in my daily activities or personal ministry?

⇒ Do I need to change my perception on who the most abandoned are, so as to fully accept my vocation as a cooperator of the Saviour?

⇒ How conscious am I of feelings and prejudices regarding some categories into which I place the most -abandoned?

"These are the poor with their many faces; we give them our preference" (C. 5).

Concluding Prayer: ***From Dorothy Day***

> "What we would like to do is change the world--make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, of the destitute--the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words--we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing we can do but love, and, **dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as our friend.**"