

Letter from Father General for the Feast of Saint Eugene

17/05/2013 General Administration



Dear Brother Oblates,
Blessings on the feast of our Founder, Saint Eugene de Mazenod! As we celebrate the life of this charismatic man who dedicated himself to Jesus, to the Church and to the poor, I ask God to grace us with a profound personal and community conversion as called for by the 35th General Chapter of 2010. Our work at the recent Interchapter broke open new depth and significance around the Call to Conversion and we recognized it as a prophetic, transformational call, leading to greater missionary availability and renewed commitment to religious life.

It was during the Interchapter that the Central Government proposed a special "Oblate Triennium," a three year period, **"To fan the flame of Oblate life and mission in anticipation of the 36th General Chapter and the 200th Anniversary of the Congregation."** This was welcomed by the Provincials and Superiors present. We have committed ourselves: to foster the ongoing work of the Spirit in us for a profound personal and community conversion; to prepare for the 36th General Chapter of 2016; and to create a revitalized spirit among us as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Missionaries of Provence.

The Oblate Triennium is made of two pillars to help us respond to the Spirit's call to conversion. The first pillar is sharing our faith in community. This is not discussion or debate about ideas, but an invitation to conversations on the level of faith; opportunities to enrich each other by witnessing our experience of God; faith-story telling to deepen our communion with one another; and occasions to talk about what really matters. The second pillar of the Oblate Triennium is to express conversion through concrete gestures creatively discerned and owned by each Oblate, local community, Unit and Region. These practical actions may be small or large, significant and transforming, personal and communitarian signs of conversion: recycling refuse; doing Oraison together each day; leaving good ministries for a new ministry that is closer to the poor; simplifying our lifestyle; etc.

The themes for each year of the Oblate Triennium are the following:

Year I: 8 December 2013 to 7 December 2014

"A New Heart": Life in Apostolic Community

Year II: 8 December 2014 to 7 December 2015

"A New Spirit": Formation

Year III: 8 December 2015 to 25 January 2017

"A New Mission"

The Oblate Triennium will begin this year on December 8th. The themes for each year are taken from the Calls to Conversion. Each year a series of 24 reflection encounters will be available to help animate the sharing of our faith in communities once or twice a month, as decided by the local community. The Word of God will be the basis for these encounters along with Oblate texts. At the Interchapter we had some time for faith sharing and it was a deep and rich experience. Individual Oblates, communities and Units will decide on concrete gestures of conversion according to their situations. These signs are an invitation to move from sharing faith (hearers of the Word) to practicing faith (doers of the Word). It would be enriching to share these gestures of conversion with the entire Congregation.

A new edition of the Constitutions and Rules was given to each Oblate in a prayerful celebration during the Interchapter: "Do this and live." I have invited each Major Superior to animate similar celebrations throughout the Units to help us, under the grace of the Spirit, to come in touch with this privileged expression of our charism. I ask that in these months before December 8th, we do a prayerful reading of our CCRR, individually and in community, praying to the Spirit to renew our desire to live the Oblate charism more faithfully. (The celebration for giving the CCRR is available in three languages for use throughout the Congregation).

I would like to thank all the Major Superiors for their commitment to the Oblate Triennium. Let us dedicate this kairos event to Mary Immaculate and Saint Eugene in order **"To fan the flame of Oblate life and mission in anticipation of the 36th General Chapter and the 200th Anniversary of the Congregation."** I wish you a happy Feast of St. Eugene!

Your brother Oblate in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate,

May 21, 2013
Fr. Louis Lougen, O.M.I.