**8.**

## **Jesus is abandoned by his apostles**

**1. Setting**

**2. Introduction:** To be aware that to follow Jesus, let alone being a missionary, is not easy. Sometimes our weakness, brokenness, sin and personal faults can and do stand in the way. Sometimes other people can be stumbling stones. Sometimes even other Oblates, ‘those with whom we are sharing daily the bread’ and the Eucharist.

**3. Hymn**

**4. Prayer**

**5. The Word of God –** Mark 14:48-52

The Jesus spoke, ‘Am I a brigand’ he said ‘that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I was among you teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid hands on me. But this is to fulfil the scriptures’. And they all deserted him and ran away. A young man who followed him had nothing on but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the cloth in their hands and ran away naked.

**6. Time for silent reflection**

**7. Response to God’s Word: song, psalm or prayer**

**8. Oblate Texts**

– We are men “set apart for the Gospel” (Rom 1:1), men ready to leave everything to be disciples of Jesus. The desire to cooperate with him 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. Thus, we give ourselves to the Father in obedience even unto death and dedicate ourselves to God’s people in unselfish love. Our apostolic zeal is sustained by the unreserved gift we make of ourselves in our oblation, an offering constantly renewed by the challenges of our mission. (C. 2)

– I was enrolled from my birth at the time of my baptism in his army, but I had scarcely reached the age of reason when seduced by the enemy I would throw myself into his ranks. Before long I was recalled to my duty, but my sojourn amongst the rebels, by accustoming me to revolt, had given me the taste for independence and even though I lived in the very camp of the King, nourished at his table, even so I was guilty of entering into relations with the enemy. This infidelity soon led me to open defection, and once again I deserted the standard of my Prince to fight in the enemy ranks. Here I bore myself all too well; I was close to rivalling the most able of them; with one exception, all their manoeuvres were familiar to me, and that one too, for which, thanks be to God, I had conceived a kind of repugnance, I would doubtless have learnt in the end, if the Lord who even then had his sights on me had not preserved me from this final wretchedness. This generous Prince watched out to save me, he ambushed me at the moment my thoughts were far from him, and binding me once again more by the bonds of his love than those of his justice, he brought me back to his camp. Yet again I had escaped him, blind fool that I was. But this time it was for ever, yes for ever, for ever! May the memory of my revolt perish, or rather may I never forget it all my life, for nothing is more capable of attaching me to my King than the thought of my treason and his clemency. Ah! I would have counted myself happy if in pardoning my crime he had confined me amongst the slaves charged with the lowest tasks in his army, but no, prodigy of goodness, he has raised me to the highest rank of his army, he has commissioned me in a high command. Ah! now it is up to me, sustained by his grace, not to betray his expectation. Yes, my King, I seem to burn with desire to distinguish myself by some striking feat of arms, my every desire is to wash away in my blood the shame of my past defections and to prove to you, if need be, in fighting for you that your magnanimity has found the way to triumph over an ingrate and his treachery. All metaphor aside, I have been a sinner, a great sinner… (Eugene de Mazenod, *Retreat made in the Aix seminary, December 1814.* *Thirteenth meditation)*

**9. Going deeper into the theme**

Perseverance may at times appear to be an external thing: I am in and therefore I stay! In the context here it especially means an internal disposition to be faithful. I persevere because I love, even though the sensitive attitudes of my heart might change. I commit that in me which is most stable and profound, that in myself which in some-way transcends time and can remain unchangeable. Thus it is first of all the spiritual part of my being that I commit; at the same time, it is understood that I commit myself to strive in orienting my sensitivities into the same direction. (F. Jetté, *O.M.I. The Apostolic Man. A commentary on the 1982 edition of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules,* Rome 1992, p. 182)

**10. Sharing our faith**

– Are we steadfast or at times do we lose hope and like the apostles are we tempted to run away from the Mission entrusted to us by Christ?

– How do I see in my faults and weaknesses, a sharing in the Cross of Christ?

– Do I go regularly to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

– Do I have a brother with whom I can discuss my spiritual journey?

– Am I able to forgive the errors, and to understand the weaknesses and limits, of my brothers in community ?

**11. Personal and Communitarian Commitment**

**12. Final Prayer**

Jesus, good master, turn a look of compassion on your poor servant. It seems to me that I love you but I am afraid of deceiving myself; it seems to me that if you were to question me as you once questioned the Prince of the Apostles (it was the ardour of his love for you that motivated my choice of him as patron), it seems to me I would answer ****as did he: yes, Lord, I love you. But it would not need your putting the question for a third time to make me feel unsure of the sincerity of that love I had avowed for you, for, I repeat, I am afraid of deceiving myself and while I believe I love you, you would see, you who are the uncreated Light, that illuminates the darkest corners of my heart, and reads in its most secret places, and plumbs the depths of hearts and loins, you would see that in fact I do not love you at all. My Saviour, my Father, my love, bring me to love you; this only do I ask, for I know full well that that is everything. Give me your love. (Eugene de Mazenod, *Retreat in preparation for priesthood,* Amiens, December 1-21, 1811)

**13. Blessing and Song**