**19.**

## **Apostolic Community is Missionary**

**Intention**

****To deepen our missionary

consciousness for the world of today.

**Virtue to pray for**

Love for the Church

and the Congregation.

**Hymn**

**Prayer**

**The Word of God:** 1Cor 9:16-23

… Not that I do boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me; woe to me if I do not preach it! If I had chosen this work myself, I might have been paid for it, but as I have not, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands. Do you know what my reward is? It is this: in my preaching, to be able to offer the Good News free, and not insist on the rights which the gospel gives me. So though I am not a slave of any person I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. I made myself a Jew to the Jews, to win the Jews. ... To those who have no Law, I was free of the Law myself (though not free from God’s law; being under the law of Christ) to win those who have no Law. For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all in order to save some at any cost; and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, to have a share in its blessings.

**From our CCRR and the Oblate Tradition**

We are a missionary Congregation. Our principal service in the Church is to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned. We preach the Gospel among people who have not yet received it and help them see their own values in its light. Where the Church is already established, our commitment is to those groups it touches least.

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. (C 5)

A third and fourth trait of the Oblate vocation are expressed in this article: the Oblate is a *missionary* and his apostolic service is addressed *to the poor, to the most abandoned.* … “We are a missionary Congregation.” This clear, simple statement expresses very well what Eugene de Mazenod wanted. … “To be missionary” means to be sent on a mission of evangelization: it does not matter whether one is sent to the foreign missions or to the home or parish missions. The missionary is a frontier man, one who is always intent on forging ahead, on going farther afield. Zeal, daring, mobility, availability are his characteristic traits! And obedience too: he receives the mission of another, the mission of the Church: he is a man who “is sent”.

(F. Jetté, *OMI The Apostolic Man…,* p. 60)

Finally, the missionary – lest his preaching be in vain – will pray and get others to pray to the Divine Master of hearts, to deign to accompany the words of his minister with that powerful grace, which moves and converts souls, and without which all words are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal (*Holy Rules. Translation of the Definitive French Text (1824 or 1825),* First Part, Chapter 3, § 1, art. 24).

Following the example of the men of God who had dedicated themselves to the work of the Missions, the venerable Founder of the Oblates insisted that one must not limit oneself to emotional preaching, whose effect might not be lasting for the masses of people. Rather, he wanted that the truths of Faith be imprinted in their minds in such a way that they would never be erased from their memory. That was, he said, exactly the kind of preaching of the Apostles who announced the Good News to the nations, and made known to them Jesus Christ crucified… According to him, every missionary… should have no other desire than to say with St. Paul: the only knowledge I claimed to have among you was Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (*1Cor* 2:2).

(Jeancard, *Mélanges historiques,* p. 15).

Always keep in mind the words of St. Paul: “How will they call upon the Lord in whom they do not believe? And how will they believe in whom they have not heard? And how will they hear if there is no one to preach? So Faith comes from hearing. And one cannot hear if there are no preachers to speak the Word of God”, Rom. 10:14, 17. The reasoning of the Apostle is urgent, and his logic is vigorous … And it is to us that the words of St. Paul are addressed: Do the work of evangelizing. We must say, as did our divine Saviour: “I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God, because that is what I was sent to do”, *Lk* 4:43. I must preach the kingdom of God, because that is why I am a missionary … And we too, Oblates of Mary, we are sent by the Church to preach; that is our goal, our mission and our duty … The Oblate must repeat the words of St. Paul: I have a duty laid upon me: woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel, *1Cor* 9:16 … Now, the characteristic of our Congregation, clearly set out, and approved by the Church, and confirmed by the work of almost a century, is the apostolate. We are missionaries in name and in fact. Our first goal is to evangelize especially the poor. What is the means? “It is especially by preaching the Word of God – we are told in our Holy Rules – that the good of souls is brought about and established.” In the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, composed of a great number of members, some will be the eye that sees, the hand that works, the feet that carry; we are the lips of Jesus Christ, announcing the divine word to the people.

(L. Soullier, *Circular 59,* Feb. 17, 1893, p. 5-10).

**Questions for the sharing**

– As a community, are we like St Paul? Am I like St Paul?

– Do I pray, and do I get others to pray, that the preaching of the Word may be effective?

– How to understand these Oblate texts for our missionary activity today? What are implications for us as Oblates?

**Personal Commitment**

**Prayer Intentions**

**Final Prayer: Prayer for Mission**

God our Father, we thank you for having called St Eugene de Mazenod to follow Christ the Savior and Evangelizer. Passionately in love with your Son Jesus and sharing in his compassion for humanity, Eugene put himself unconditionally at the service of your Church for the evangelization of those most in need. Through his intercession, help us to reach out with the healing touch of Christ who calls us to holiness and to Mission. May we build communities, which are signs of your presence, and share the Good News of salvation with all peoples. For this, we dedicate ourselves, through Christ our Lord. Amen!

St Eugene, share with us your love for Christ!

St Eugene, help us to stand firm in goodness and faith trials!

St Eugene, be with us in all our risks and efforts for the sake of the Kingdom!

**Concluding rite**