



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate United States Province

December 8, 2015, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Dear Brother Oblates and Oblate Friends,

Congratulations and best wishes on this the feast of the Immaculate Conception! As we do every time we celebrate Mary, the mother of Jesus and our Mother, we are invited to proclaim God's greatness and abundant grace in our lives.

There are several invitations extended to us on this December 8th. I also invite all our Associates, Honorary Oblates, Partners, Employees and Benefactors—in short, all our Oblate Friends—to be aware of these events and to participate in your own families and communities.

First of all, Pope Francis invites us to begin an extraordinary year-long ***“Jubilee of Mercy”*** by personally accepting God's endless love in our lives and by participating in a missionary Church which holds open the door of mercy. To cross this threshold and to allow others to cross it can be a big challenge to our ingrained habits of thought and action. The parables of Jesus were likewise challenging. The invitation to be merciful calls us to see that “realities are more important than ideas,” as Pope Francis wrote in “The Joy of the Gospel” (see ## 231-233).

Also on this December 8th, ***we begin the third and last year of the Oblate Triennium*** which is a preparation to begin a new century as Oblates. The theme is “*Mission*” and we are invited to embrace more fully *the vow of “obedience.”* How obedient are we to the call of the One who sends us? Given our particular circumstances, how available and willing are we to be sent?

Also, within a few weeks, on January 25, 2016, we will celebrate ***the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Oblate Congregation.*** The province Triennium Committee is offering ways for all of us to celebrate this joyful event. Materials will be sent to you.

Finally, with this letter, I wish to announce to the members of the United States province that the next Province Convocation will take place at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville April 18 – 22, 2016. The Convocation Planning Committee is suggesting that we look to our future as a province as we consider the theme: “*Rooted in Christ Crucified: Growing in Witness to his Kingdom.*” *Please mark these dates on your calendar* and we hope that all Oblates who are physically able will attend. At the beginning of the Convocation, we will remember especially the elderly and infirm not able to attend and those who have died since our last Convocation.

Blessings of Peace, Strength and Joy for the Advent Season! Come, Lord Jesus!

Fraternally,

**Bill Antone, OMI
Provincial**