



HIGHLIGHTS

ONTARIO DISTRICT NEWS

January 2021

The dimensions of time

by Fabio Ciardi OMI December 31, 2020



A new year. Never so much uncertainty. Fears and expectations, frustrations and hopes. So let's sip these days that God gives us.

Since he came into our history, time has opened up to heaven and every moment draws on the eternal, it has acquired a vertical dimension, it connects us to God who makes himself present in every present.

And time stretches forward, horizontally, towards the full realization of our life, towards the encounter with Life.

Happy New Year, lived to the full.

Taken from Fabio Ciardi's blog at [The Dimensions of time](#)

God's Favoured Ones

Greetings favored one! The Lord is with you. Luke 1: 28

Wouldn't it be easy if we were all visited by an angel sent by God that would share with us the plan God had for our lives?

God may not have sent an angel to most of us; however, he does have a plan and he does share it with us. And, we are more like Mary than we think, in that we too must listen and then decide if we will answer God's call. One of the first things that the angel says to Mary is "Do not be afraid." This is interesting to me; as there are really two things to be afraid of. The first is the obvious fear of being visited by an Angel; and the second thing to be afraid of was God's request.

This is where we can find our similarities with Mary, we are probably all afraid of what God is asking of us. So much so, we will even go out of our way to not listen to what God is leading us to. In today's culture, we are very used to believing that we are in control of our lives. We make plans about everything we do, which in itself isn't a problem. However, are we taking time to discern what we are being called to? I think often we are not, but the bigger question may be, do we actually go out of our way to ignore what God is trying to tell us. Is it a passive not hearing, or an active act of ignoring?

I'm not sure I believe that if we really want to hear what God is saying to us it would be that difficult. I don't think God wants it to be that hard to discern his plans. I think what likely makes it difficult is that it doesn't always go along with our own plans. And remember that Mary made her decision for the whole world, for her community. Is this what makes us hesitate? It is definitely harder to decide something when it is for the greater good, rather than what is best for our selves. Yet, this is exactly what we are called to do as Christians, as followers of Jesus.

I believe we often don't understand that by doing what is best for our community, we will make the best decision for ourselves. This is how we will be most fulfilled; by using our gifts and talents to serve our brother and sisters. I truly believe we are all God's favoured ones, maybe not in the way that Mary was, in that she could carry the Son of God, but favored in how he loves us unconditionally. And so, my hope is that we can quit ignoring what we are called to, and that we take the time to hear what is being asking of us so that we can find our vocation and say yes to God.



*By Serena Shaw
Oblate Associate*

Mazenodian Family Monthly Oraison - January 24, 2021

"In prolonged silent prayer [...], we let ourselves be molded by the Lord, and find in him the inspiration of our conduct" (OMI Rule of Life, 33). The practice of Oraison was an important part of St. Eugene's daily prayer during which he entered into communion with the members of his missionary family. In this spirit let us become aware that we are praying in communion with members of the Mazenodian Family throughout the world.

Our Focus This Month

January 25th will mark the 205th anniversary of the founding of the Missionaries of Provence, later to become the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Aix-en-Provence is not only Holy Ground for the Oblates, but also Holy Ground for the Mazenodian Family where ALL of us were founded!

Word of God

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." (John 15:1, 4-5)

Oblate Text

St. Eugene wrote on the anniversary of that day in 1831 to the scholastics and novices at Billens, Switzerland:

"Tomorrow I celebrate the anniversary of the day, sixteen years ago, I left my mother's house to go and set up house at the Mission. Father Tempier had taken possession of it some days before. Our lodging had none of the splendor of the mansion at Billens, and whatever deprivations you may be subject to, ours were greater still. My campbed was placed in the small passageway which leads to the library: it was then a large room used as a bedroom for Father Tempier and for one other whose name we no longer mention amongst us. It was also our community room. One lamp was all our lighting and, when it was time for bed, it was placed in the doorway to give light to all three of us. The table that adorned our refectory was one plank laid alongside another, on top of two old barrels. We have never enjoyed the blessings of such poverty since the time we took the vow. Without question, it was a foreshadowing of the State of perfection that we now live so imperfectly."

Invitation to Pray

Meditatio (study): What does the text say to me, today, and to my life?

Contemplatio (reflect): What does the Lord inspire in my mind, heart and life? *Sit silently with this question for a few minutes.*

Oratio (state): What can I say to the Lord in response to this text?

Actio (act): How do I put this into action?

Link to US Province Mazenodian Family site: [January 2021 Mazenodian Family Oraison](#)



Maureen (White) Pinsonneault HOMI, OMI Associate

A woman whose Oblate charism was ‘bread in the bone’ affecting everyone she met and served –

Born into a large Catholic family with very little money, lots of love and kindness Maureen learned charity and compassion for others early on. Her mother’s deep quiet but active faith always welcomed, listened to and fed anyone who knocked on their door hungry or in need leaving an indelible mark on how Maureen lived her life.

While in Grade 7 she was working after school at their family’s parish of St. Joseph’s answering the phone and greeting folks at the office door. After completing secondary school she trained as a Registered Nurse working in V.O.N. until she eventually married and had three children. Maureen went on to take a Public Health Degree and returned to work for Health Canada. She lost her husband Bryant when her children were just 14, 13 and 11 yrs. old. Her faith sustained her through this painful loss, trying her best to comfort her children and grieve her husband and their father’s death which was beyond challenging. Maureen’s faith was undoubtedly tested during these years yet her strong faith and prayer life, together with the love & support of individual Oblates and involvement with her Oblate parish not only sustained her but intensified her response to serve others. Maureen has spoken in recent years about this season of her life upon reflection as a time when her sufferings were being transformed by God’s grace; giving her a fuller understanding of the Body of Christ.

Maureen grew into many of the parish activities & ministries like CYO, Choir, Cubs, Altar Servers and CWL with its many fundraising events which led to a devoted involvement with the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate (MAMI). Hers was a missionary heart feeling passionate about understanding, praying for and financially supporting the formation of OMI scholastics as well as the good works of committed Oblates both in Canada and abroad. There were many bazaars, dinners and social events organized together with many other volunteers at St. Joe’s working together to support the Oblate Missions, encourage vocations, share the Oblate Spirit and build community. There were at times differences of opinions and approaches that surfaced amidst these leadership teams but being the forthright, energetic and stubborn (she was not Irish for nothing!) woman she was there was little time to waste when tasks for those in need awaited attention. Maureen had a life-long devotion and love for Mary the Mother of God from whom she drew consolation in times of her own personal struggles and when ministering to the needs of others. This relationship with Mary anchored Maureen enabling her to respond with her ‘yes’ knowing God’s grace would be provided even when a situation seemed impossible.

On March 17, 1984 Maureen was named an Honorary Oblate of Mary Immaculate in recognition and gratitude for her missionary spirit, her tireless works in St. Joe's Parish but especially for her leadership in the Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate (MAMI) both in the parish and beyond.

After retiring from her nursing career in her early sixties Maureen had more time to discover, develop and enjoy painting which often reflected the beauty of God's creation. She met a kind, loving and faith-filled gentleman whom she married looking forward to sharing some more relaxed and meaningful years together. While visiting with one of his six daughters her husband suffered a massive heart attack and died just five months after their wedding. Maureen was asked to carry yet another heavy cross as she bid her husband Don, farewell trusting God was still with her. Maureen's sufferings and losses increased her compassion, acceptance and resilience for and with her family, friends and others accompanying them with love, hope & generosity.

In 2014 Maureen decided to take a further step when she committed to live her Oblate charism as an Associate of OMI Lacombe Canada. For the past few years she has been a resident of the Glebe Centre in Ottawa living courageously the effects of Alzheimer Disease. The essence of a big, hospitable Oblate heart is still very evident when in her presence.

Maureen, with love and gratitude we shower you with our love and our prayers.

*By: Colleen Kerr
Oblate Associate*

From St. Eugene de Mazenod

"We achieve unity in our life only in and through Jesus Christ. Our ministry involves us in a variety of tasks, yet each act in life is an occasion for personal encounter with the Lord, who through us gives himself to others and through others gives himself to us.

While maintaining within ourselves an atmosphere of silence and inner peace, we seek his presence in the hearts of the people and in the events of daily life as well as in the Word of God, in the sacraments and in prayer. We are pilgrims, walking with Jesus in faith, hope and love.

(Constitutions and Rules C31)





Fratelli Tutti

Discussion Series

Join us at St. Joseph's Parish for a Discussion Series on the Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of Pope Francis. This initiative will be offered entirely through Zoom and is open to the community at large. Beginning Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 7pm we will offer an open discussion of the encyclical, chapter-by-chapter, with the discussion occurring bi-weekly until April 28th, 2021. These sessions will be facilitated by Eleanor Rabnett and are open to all.

Each session will begin with a Prayer to the Creator, followed by a brief overview presentation of the given chapter. The focus of each session will be directed discussion and reflection on what Fratelli Tutti means to us, here in Canada, in this time of pandemic and isolation.

The encyclical can be downloaded to your tablet or computer using this link:

[Fratelli Tutti on Fraternity and Social Friendship](#)

Registration is required for this Discussion Series. Once registered you will receive an invitation to each of the gatherings every two weeks. To register for the sessions, [please use this link](#):



A New Blog in View of the Lay Congress

General Administration - Rome

Originally Published on OMIWORLD.ORG

Dear Friends especially for Lay Associations coordinators across the world, both Oblate and Lay:

We are 200 days away from the 2nd Lay Congress and we have great news about a new blog <https://omioikia.wordpress.com/> that we have launched to become a place of interaction and sharing amongst all Lay Associations around the world.

The main language is English but with Google Translate we can communicate via this Blog as well as share what is happening in your part of the world.

We encourage you to subscribe to this blog and send a message to

<https://omioikia.wordpress.com/contact>.

Peter Stoll omi (Coordinator for the Congress at omi.fam.oikia@gmail.com)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

January 24 – Monthly Oraison

Our Monthly Oraison for the Mazenodian Family which is taking place on the 4th Sunday of January. No matter where you are in the world or the time of day you are invited to join in coming together in the presence of the heart of Jesus for silent prayer. All are welcome.

January 28 – Ontario District Oblate Associate ZOOM Gathering ALL are welcome.

For more information email Eleanor Rabnett for an invitation reminder.

Want to remind all of us of other common dates? Send us an email and we'll include what we can.

In Love and Prayers

We pray this month for all who are suffering with COVID19, especially for Malcolm Mansfield, brother of Ken Mansfield, who has been hospitalized and is not doing well. We keep Malcolm, Ken and his family in our thoughts.

We continue to keep Frank Kavanagh OMI, Ron Kedrosky, Maureen Pinsonneault HOMI, Jane McDonald, and Yvon Oullet in our ongoing thoughts and prayers.

Upcoming Birthdays



Gilbert Mason – January 3

Maureen Pinsonneault – January 6

Joseph Lasowski – January 20

Henry Arruda – January 29

Wayne Jarvo – February 5

Christie Joachimpillai – January 6

John Renken – January 18

Marie Morgan – January 28

Frank Kavanagh – February 4

Karen Ann McKinna – February 9