



MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

The Superior General

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Letter from the Superior General on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2021

L.J.C. et M.I.

Dear Brother Oblates and my Sisters and Brothers who live the Oblate Charism,

Happy feast day! The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary brings us great joy. Through Mary's intercession we are renewed in our missionary oblation at the service of the poor and most abandoned.

This feast day is an occasion to give thanks to the entire Oblate family for your dedication and creative outreach in the midst of the pandemic. You have been serving courageously in very difficult situations, bringing the consolation of faith and the strength of the sacraments to those who have been afflicted by the covid virus and to their families. The efforts you made to find ways to connect people, to support and to grieve with them when dealing with the loss of a loved one, have been true expressions of St. Eugene's audacity and his tender heart!

Along with spiritual comfort, you have also been giving of yourselves to make available food, medicine, masks, gloves, soap, sanitizing gel, etc. for those who did not have access to such products. You have been available to organize and give rides for those who needed to get to the hospital, to church, to doctors' offices, etc. You have cooked food for others and have served good food with loving care. This has been a tremendous witness of courage, solidarity and charity. Congratulations and thank you!

As this situation continues with us, other important concerns for the Church and the Congregation call for our attention. The theme of the 2022 General Chapter has been announced: "*Pilgrims of Hope in Communion*." Animation materials that will help us reflect on the theme of the General Chapter and to prepare for it will be available in February. I ask everyone to pray to the Holy Spirit to fill the Chapter with a missionary vision and to guide the election of the new Superior General and his Council.

Since October, Pope Francis has moved the Church into the **synodal process** of listening and discerning. in dioceses all around the world. Many of you have already participated in this process in your local dioceses, making your contribution from the perspective of the Oblate charism as lived by vowed and lay people. The members of the General Administrations of religious institutes will be participating also. Our contribution to the Synod will be given to the Union of Superiors General by February 2022.

Another very important concern is the **Laudato Si' Action Platform** to which our Congregation is committed. Pope Francis has called us to an ecological conversion, and this Action Platform is meant to involve us in concrete ways of caring for our common home and for the poor. Provinces, Delegations and Missions are asked to initiate concrete steps to promote a healthy environment, thus caring for the gift of God's creation and for the poor. Parishes, small ecclesial communities, schools and universities, youth groups, retreat centers, etc. are called upon to respond. Many Oblates are already engaged in this effort and we are called to increase and widen our actions, uniting with others of good will.

Our Congregation, together with Lay Associations, is engaged in preparing for the **Second Oblate Lay Associations Congress** (2 OLAC 22) which will take place from May 27 to 29, 2022. Called by the 2016 General Chapter, this congress will celebrate the collaboration, charism and history of the various ways lay people are associated to the OMI Congregation. The central working team is organizing this international event as a hybrid congress, namely, partly by physical presence and partly by on-line participation. The Regions are already holding various meetings in preparation for this congress, which promises to be very lively.

We will soon see the establishment of the **new mission in Ghana**, our first presence in that country. The team, Father Hyacinth Nwaneri (Cameroun), Brother Rafal Dabkowski (Poland) and Father Daniel Aliou Mane (Senegal) have been here at the General House participating in a preparation for the new mission. Many topics have been discussed such as interculturality, mission, Mary, community life, the history and spirituality of the OMI charism, and finances. The new mission will be established in February 2022 in the Diocese of Ho. Please keep this missionary adventure in your prayers.

We are within the year leading to August 15, 2022, the **200th anniversary** of the special experience of St. Eugene as he blessed the image of the **Oblate Madonna** in the Chapel of the Mission in Aix en Provence. At a time of great discouragement and anxiety about the future of his small missionary band, he received the grace that this group would accomplish infinite good for the Church and be a source of great virtue. It was a visionary grace, and it forms part of the precious inheritance of the entire Oblate Family.

Let us be bold in claiming this grace for us today. Mary continues to journey with us in the joys and sorrows of our missionary life. We ask her intercession for our renewed missionary zeal, for a deeper quality of consecrated life, and for her assistance in our vocational efforts, so that new members will continue to join our Congregation and the Oblate Family. If the situation of the pandemic permits, I suggest that each Oblate Unit, together with the wider Oblate Family, organizes a **"Pilgrimage of Hope"** in 2022. Walking together in communion on a sacred journey, to a Marian shrine or other Oblate holy site, will be an expression of our faith in the presence and blessing of the Mother of God upon the whole Oblate Family. We will experience her smile upon us. As pilgrim brothers and sisters, let us journey together in prayer, song, joy and forgiveness, with great simplicity and a deep family spirit. Let us count on the creativity, animation and energy of our Lay Oblate Youth around the world in assisting in the organization of the Pilgrimage of Hope in the Units!

We now conclude the year dedicated to **St. Joseph**. We pray to him as our patron, to help us be the Oblates as envisioned by St. Eugene: apostles, entirely given to the preaching of the Gospel to the poor and most abandoned, leaving nothing undared for the Reign of God. Let us heed the call of St. Eugene: In the name of God, be saints!

A very happy celebration of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to all of you!

Louis Lougen, O.M.I.

Fr. Louis Lougen, O.M.I.
Superior General

Rome, First Sunday of Advent, November 28, 2021

