**REFLECTION NINE: A SONG OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING**

**CALL TO PRAYER**

R/ “Come, let us worship the Lord, who has given us the gift of the Oblates”

Come, let us sing to the Lord and shout with joy to the Rock who saves us.

Let us approach God with praise and thanksgiving and sing joyful songs to the Lord.”

R/ “Come, let us worship the Lord, who has given us the gift of the Oblates

**REFLECTION**

Looking back on the events of 25 January 1816, we have so much to be thankful for. Looking at 200 years of growth and missionary zeal since that first day, we can echo the song of Mary: “The Lord has done great things. Holy is his name!” Let us give thanks for our Mazenodian music, for those thousand who have come forward with the instruments of the their lives to play the Cross’s melody of salvation. Let us praise God for the hundreds of thousands in five continents and in over 65 countries who have received the music from the Oblates and amplified it through their lives and heroic service in difficult situations.

*God’s favor*

The initial group of priests who became missionaries in 1816 heard the Savior’s invitation to consecrate the instruments of their lives through religious life and the evangelical counsels in 1818 as brothers and priests.

In 1826 our “orchestra” received the title of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and our Rule and Society was approved by the Church. Approbation meant a recognition that what happened on 25 January1816 had come from God. Like Mary, the Reed of God, Eugene had allowed the Spirit of God to blow through his life – and the melody of the Paschal Mystery became our Oblate symphony. Always close to the people, our missionaries invited laity to participate in the music and to be associated with the grace and the adventure of “through the eyes of our Crucified Savior we see the world which he redeemed with his blood, desiring that those in whom he continues to suffer will know also the power of his resurrection.”

*Saint Eugene prays for us*

A few weeks after our foundation, Eugene and Tempier felt called to pronounce private vows on Holy Thursday. Eugene described the joy of the moment and their prayer during the night:

***… and we prayed the divine Master that, if it were his holy will to bless our undertaking, to lead our present companions and those who would be associated with us in the future, to appreciate the full value of this oblation of one's entire self to God, when one wanted to serve him unreservedly and to consecrate one's life to the spread of his holy Gospel and the conversion of souls. Our wishes were granted***. (Rambert I, p. 187)

I find it touching that "those who would be associated with us in the future" were prayed for on that night. That means that Eugene prayed for you and I and for every other person who has been associated with his music as part of the wider Mazenodian family! The prayer of Eugene reflects the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one." (John 17:20)

As a canonized saint, Eugene continues to pray for us from what he often referred to as the Oblate community in heaven.

**WE LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD**

2 Corinthians 1: 3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God.

Colossians 1: 3- 4

We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the holy ones

I Thessalonians 1: 2-3

We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

But we ought to give thanks to God for you always, brothers loved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in truth. To this end he has also called you through our gospel to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**WE LISTEN TO OUR RULE OF LIFE:**

“Each Oblate through his oblation assumes responsibility for the common heritage of the Congregation, expressed in the Constitutions and Rules and our family tradition. He is exhorted to let himself be guided by these norms in creative fidelity to the legacy bequeathed by St. Eugene de Mazenod. “ CC&RR Constitution 168

**WE RESPOND:**

* Gratitude for you missionary vocation
* Renewal of vows
* Other…

**CONCLUDING PRAYER**

God our Father, we thank you for the gift of the charism which

you have given us through St. Eugene de Mazenod

You have called us to a missionary life

in order to preach the Gospel to the most abandoned:

*Evangelizare pauperibus misit me.*

*Pauperes evangelizantur*

At this time of celebration of the 200th anniversary of our foundation,

we ask you for the grace of finding in your Son,

Jesus Christ, the center of our life and of our mission.

We hear the call to a profound

personal and communal conversion.

Help us to become the salt of the earth

and the light of the world,

so as to proclaim in today’s world

the values of your Kingdom in word and deed.

We beg you, Lord, to send upon us your Spirit.

Help us to be yours, inflamed with your love,

sparing no effort to extend your Kingdom

and totally committed to the good of today’s poor.

We ask this through the intercession

of Mary Immaculate, our Mother,

and of Saint Eugene de Mazenod.

Amen.

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| “Music does bring people together. It allows us to experience the same emotions. People everywhere are the same in heart and spirit. No matter what language we speak, what color we are, the form of our politics or the expression of our love and our faith, music proves: We are the same.” John Denver |