

APPENDIX – REFLECTIONS, POEMS, STORIES, PRAYERS & PRAYER SERVICES FOR RENEWAL OF COMMITMENTS, A CREATIVE PRAYER SERVICE IN ADVENT

TOWEL PEOPLE

You are towel people, soothers, cleansers, healers
of feet tired and sore and cut from the journey.

Veronica people,
wiping away the dirt and blood and spittle of the world's hatred,
spewed onto the faces of the weak.

You are the towel people.

This is your badge of service,
on your knees before others, like bootblacks,
Cinderellas, floor scrubbers.

On your knees in service of others and in homage to them.

for Christ is there.

Except that it won't be as romantic as it sounds,
because feet and dirt and blood and spittle have no romance.

And though you are a sent people, those with a mission,
you won't go striding out into the world, because only the arrogant stride,
as if the poor deserved you and you were the solver of everything.

What had Veronica solved as Christ continued up the hill?

No, servants and children do not stride,
nor will you, who have the sense to be afraid of what is all around you,
and even more of what is ahead.

So you will reach out and clutch God's hand;
God who has hunkered and stooped to you,
Loving you, and needing you and your towel.



Poem to the OMI Founder, Eugene de Mazenod

(This poem can be read out by 2 voices with background instrumental music)

Voice 1:

I've looked upon your various pictures, seen your statue:

I've stood beside your tomb in France,
prayed before your relic on the 21st of May.

I've read your preface to the Rules,
some of your letters, all of the Constitutions, I think.

Voice 2:

I've been variously moved,
Touched to the bone,
Bristled, smiled at times,
Even rebelled, I think, that you could be –
Had no choice but to be –so radical.
Radical to the point of Gospel folly,
and, what's even harder, I've felt that you ask the same of me.

Voice 1:

You, who as far as I know, entered heaven without fanfare,
and there – even there, you can't refrain from guiding,
yes, cajoling, scolding, wooing and caring.

Voice 2:

Caring's a word describes you well.
Caring enough to weep, to honest-to-God weep,
or "chastise (us) with the valor of your (pen)",

a goose quill.

For all I know You might have used a goose quill to write red rage
or deep red love for the Saviour and his poor.

Voice 1:

You've told us to form community with Jesus and with each other.
And then we're sent, driven and drawn to bring the Good News to the poor.
God only knows, and I hope He doesn't tell all of it to you.
God only knows how well or how miserably poor we've done it.

Voice 2:

But this I must say: Your charism works!
and we've caught it, some more, some less,
I guess, but we've caught it!
It comes upon us not exactly like a summer's cloud,
more like an anointing, an unseen wave of warmth,
to love, to touch, to empty out ourselves, to speak, to sigh,
to try and try to pray.
And thus to know your charism works.
By heaven it works!
Pray God, our Founder and our father,
Pray God, as long as there are poor, it always will.

Adapted from Fr. Jerome Hellman, OMI

(originally written for the 60th anniversary of St. Mary's Province, October 1986)

A PRAYER OF AWARENESS THROUGH OUR SENSES

Lord, our God, you give us the eyes to see your face
The ears to know your voice among ordinary people.
Let us not be fooled by the wrapping
By the dull brown paper or tawdry ribbon
But grant us the insight
The patience and gentleness
To unwrap and to uncover
The gifts that lie hidden in all your people.
Help us to share the pain of others
and to learn what it means to be fully human. **Amen.**

Author Unknown

THE KOREAN LEGEND story

Pope John Paul I used to teach about heaven and hell through the story of a Korean general. He died, was judged, and assigned to paradise. But when he came up before St. Peter he thought of something he would like to do. He wanted to peep into hell for a moment, just to have an idea of it. "Right you are," said St. Peter.

So the general peeped in at the door of hell and saw an enormous banquet hall. In it were a number of long tables with bowls of rice and delicacies on them, well-flavored, smelling delicious, inviting. The guests were sitting there hungrily, opposite one another, each with a plate of food.

What was happening? The guests all had chopsticks which they had to use but these were so long that, however hard they tried, not a grain of rice could they get into their mouths. And this was their torment, this was hell. "I've seen it, that's more than enough for me," said the general and went back to the gates of heaven, where he went in.

Inside, he saw the same banquet hall, the same tables, the same food, and the same long chopsticks. But the guests were cheerful, all of them smiling and laughing. Each one, having put the food onto his chopsticks, held it out to the mouth of his companion opposite, and so they managed to eat their fill.

"Thinking of others instead of oneself," the Pope said, "had solved the problem and transformed hell into heaven."

PRAYER FOR ANNUAL RENEWAL OF FRIENDS OF ST EUGENE COMMMITMENTS

Resources needed at the Focal point: Have Oblate Cross & book of Oblate Constitutions displayed on a cloth with an unlit big candle.)

All: In the name of the Father...

A volunteer: lights the big candle to invite the Light of the Christ in our gathering as we sing or say Chorus of Hymn: "Maranatha.."

Hymn:

Maranatha, Maranatha, Maranatha,

Come Lord Jesus, come.

(Repeat a few times)

Facilitator: O God come to our aid..

All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Facilitator: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit..

**All: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end Amen.**

Facilitator: Today, here in ... , we pledge our lives to renew our FoSE commitment as we respond attentively to "the *call* of Jesus Christ, heard within the Church through people's need for salvation which draws us together as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate" (CCRS 1)

We take a few quiet moments to ponder on the following questions intended for personal reflection:

(1) How have I been hearing and responding to the call of Jesus Christ in my life?

(2) Where and how do I see people needing to be saved in our world and in our Church?

(3) How is the Holy Spirit calling me to keep the flame of the Oblate charism alive both in my heart and also in my various communities?

TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

(background music could be played to support atmosphere of silence)

Facilitator: *We listen to some words from Scripture where St. Paul talks about living a Spirit-filled life that matters..*

Some words from Scripture

Volunteer: “I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all”. (*Eph 4:1-6*)

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Facilitator: *We take a few quiet moments to ponder on a word from Scripture that speaks to my heart right now... PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION..*

After Pause, we may call out a word or phrase that touches our hearts right now..

Facilitator: *We listen to as some writings from the Oblate Rule of 1826 of our Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod are read.*

St. Eugene De Mazenod’s writings in the Oblate Rule of 1826

Volunteer: “They will bear with one another in much patience and meekness, and strive to outdo one another in rendering service and joyfully practicing charity. Each will avoid whatever may wound his brothers and will gladly yield to the wishes of

others, so that the peace of God and the charity of Christ may abide in them. They will love each other and show mutual respect and deference for one another”.

(Rule of 1826)

We pause to reflect and listen with our hearts...

PAUSE

Facilitator: Saint Eugene had that special dedication to Mary Immaculate in his life as her name is given special mention in the name of the Congregation: *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate...*

So we ask Our Lady’s intercession as we pray *the ‘Memorare’ prayer together.*

The ‘Memorare’ prayer

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Mary Immaculate

pray with us and for us. Amen.

Saint Eugene De Mazenod

pray with us and for us. Amen.

A PERSONAL STORY ON REMEMBRANCE DAY – THE SPIRIT OF ENNISKILLEN

Some of the group may or may not remember the bomb that went off in Enniskillen Northern Ireland on Sunday 8th November during the Remembrance Day Parade

Gordon Wilson 1987, 8th November Remembrance Day bomb blast – story of how he forgave his daughter’s killers

In an interview with the BBC, Wilson described with anguish his last conversation with his daughter and his feelings toward her killers:

"She held my hand tightly, and gripped me as hard as she could. She said, 'Daddy, I love you very much.' Those were her exact words to me, and those were the last words I ever heard her say." To the astonishment of listeners, Wilson went on to add, "But I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge. Dirty sort of talk is not going to bring her back to life. She was a great wee lassie. She loved her profession. She was a pet. She's dead. She's in heaven and we shall meet again. I will pray for these men tonight and every night."

Whereas many Northern Ireland terrorist attacks were followed by acts of revenge by opposing terrorists, the Remembrance Day bombing was followed by acts of forgiveness and reconciliation that came to be called the Spirit of Enniskillen. Gordon's response to the bombing, "I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge", were reported worldwide and may be among the most-remembered from The Troubles' decades of conflict in Northern Ireland.

A CREATIVE PRAYER SERVICE DURING ADVENT

PREPARATION: Resources that you will need and communication with your team of volunteers

- (a) Check the various church doors are opened for access to switch lights on and off.
- (b) Go through the briefing and the running order with the readers and personnel who would be switching on turns lights off, keys in tabernacle and displaying the montstrance.
- (c) Ensure the sound system checked in Church and the microphone system turned on!
- (d) Get FoSE to distribute Participants' sheets as people enter.
- (e) 3 big Candles on tray & small table with purple cloth. All items are displayed in front of altar with lighting matches.
- (f) Have a little torch for the Readers to use – to and fro to Altar..
- (g) This Prayer for Advent can last between 40mins- 45 mins.

PRAYER DURING ADVENT – A suggested running order

A **VOLUNTEER** plays suggested Hymn on CD: **“Soon and very soon”** (or a similar themed Advent hymn) is played as people are streaming in.

FACILITATOR: A *Word of Welcome* and read out the quote of Saint Eugene: “we are all ministers of the **MERCY** of God”.

AN ADVENT REFLECTION

*The church is darkened – A **FOSE VOLUNTEER** switches lights off in church.*

READER: In the beginning, God allowed for chaos,
For troubled dreams, and uncertain sounds,
and fear in the darkness.

Then, when the chaos was most threatening
and hope was bleakest,
God said, ‘*Let there be light*’.

ALL: **And there was Light.**

VOLUNTEER: *The FIRST BIG candle* is lit.

(A VOLUNTEER switches on some of the lights.)

FACILITATOR: So, remember the chaos, the uncertainty,
the confusion in which you once stumbled into..
and give thanks for the Light.....

The Prophet Isaiah tells us now:

“The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light”.

A short period of **SILENCE** is observed

CANTOR: *Together, we sing:*

Christ be our light, shine in our hearts, shine through our darkness.

Christ be our light, shine in your Church gathered today.

READER: In the course of time, God allowed for a journey,
from ourselves to other people,
from restriction to freedom,
from a forgotten place to a promised land.

And when the journey was hardest,
and the way ahead unclear,
and the temptation to turn back most tempting,
God said, '*Let there be Light*'.

ALL: **And there was light.**

VOLUNTEER: *The **SECOND BIG candle** is lit*

FACILITATOR:

So, we remember our journey and how far we have
travelled and give thanks for the Light.

The Prophet Isaiah tells us that:

"on those who live in the land of deep darkness, a light has shone".

A short period of **SILENCE** is observed

CANTOR: *Together, we sing:*

Christ be our light, shine in our hearts, shine through our darkness.

Christ be our light, shine in your Church gathered today.

READER: Later yet, God allowed for something special to enter our lives:

for friendship to grow,
for truth to be discovered,
for faith to become real.

On the mountain top and in quiet places,
God blessed us saying: '*Let there be Light*'.

ALL: **And there was light.**

VOLUNTEER: ***The THIRD BIG candle is lit on the altar.***

FACILITATOR: So, remember not why, rather how, when and where we have
been blessed and give thanks for the Light.

Prophet Isaiah reminds us again now:

“The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light”.

A short period of SILENCE is observed

CANTOR: *Together, we sing:*

Christ be our light, shine in our hearts, shine through our darkness.

Christ be our light, shine in your Church gathered today.

(A VOLUNTEER switches on ALL the lights)

READER: And then, when the light was brightest, and life was good,
despite our better judgment, yet in solidarity with humanity,
we chased shadows, and chose darkness.

(A VOLUNTEER blows out the three BIG Candles.)

(A VOLUNTEER switches off ALL the Lights)

FACILITATOR: So, we remember how, when and where we may have perhaps
wandered from the light.

A short period of SILENCE is observed

FACILITATOR: Because our God is a merciful God,
there will always be light again.

Prophet Isaiah proclaims God’s Word to our hearts tonight:

“on those who live in the land of deep darkness, a light has shone”.

*(A VOLUNTEER ensures that the **three BIG Candles are re-lit.**)*

(A VOLUNTEER turns on some of the light switches)

CANTOR: *Together, we sing:*

Christ be our light, shine in our hearts, shine through our darkness.

Christ be our light, shine in your Church gathered today.

*A EUCHARISTIC MINISTER brings out the **BLESSED SACRAMENT** on to the Altar.*

FACILITATOR: *Let us spend some quality time with the Lord praying for the gift of Mercy..*

A LONGER PERIOD OF SILENCE is observed (approximately 15min-20mins)

At the end of the long period of **SILENCE....**

FACILITATOR:

Lord Jesus Christ, who chose at Bethlehem to meet us,
make us ready to lose and leave all that makes us proud and self-sufficient.
Let our knees bend to you, our hearts cradle you and
our lips sing you songs of love.....

CANTOR: *Together, we sing:*

Christ be our light, shine in our hearts, shine through our darkness.

Christ be our light, shine in your Church gathered today.

CLOSING PRAYER

FACILITATOR: Come, Lord Jesus!

ALL: **Bring peace and healing in our family and our world.**

FACILITATOR: Come, Lord Jesus!

ALL: **May we hear again your own prayer “that we may be one.”**

FACILITATOR: Come, Lord Jesus!

ALL: May we prepare the way for you by being merciful, loving, generous and forgiving. Come, Lord Jesus!

BLESSING *(if a Priest is available, then, he may recite this blessing)*

May the spirit of Christmas which is *Peace*
the gladness of Christmas which is *Hope*
the adoration of Christmas which is *Joy*
and the heart of Christmas which is *Love*
be yours now and tomorrow and always.

The EUCHARISTIC MINISTER returns the Blessed Sacrament into the Tabernacle.

CANTOR: *We sing together:*

O Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine.

All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine.

(Repeat 3 times)

A VOLUNTEER plays a Reflection Song on CD to send us on our ADVENT journey....
suggestion: "Love is the boat for the journey" *(Fr. Brendan & friends)*

ORASION PRAYER FOR LENT

(Focus: Oblate charism to be with the poor & renewal of FoSE commitment)

Focal point: Oblate Logo + Blessed Sacrament

Facilitator: O God come to our aid.

ALL: O Lord make haste to help us.

Facilitator: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...

ALL: as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

Facilitator: give brief explanation of Oblate Logo.

A reading from the writings of St. Eugene

“Come now and learn what you are in the eyes of faith.”

Poor of Jesus Christ, afflicted, wretched, suffering, sick, covered with sores, all you who misery oppresses, my sisters and brothers, dear sisters and brothers, respected sisters and brothers, listen to me. You are God’s children, sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ. You are in some way Gods!”

(Opening of Mission in Provence 1813- excerpt from his famous Lenten sermon addressed particularly to Chimney sweepers, Domestic workers, peasants, artisans, poor people.)

Facilitator: St. Eugene De Mazenod kept the following Scripture text close to his heart throughout his life:

“The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for He has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring the Good News to the poor,

To proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight,

To set the downtrodden free,

To proclaim the Lord’s year of favour”.

Short pause

Suggested Hymn to invite the Holy Spirit into our hearts

(choose a suitable hymn to invite the Holy Spirit as known in your local context)

Lord listen to your people praying

Lord send your Spirit in this place.

Lord listen to your people praying

Send your love, send your power, send your Grace.

(Repeat all 3 times)

Facilitator: Let us begin our time of quiet. During this time of silence let us keep this text close to our hearts. It is also a time to think about our God whom we serve when we serve the poor and our God whom we love when we love the poor.

Time of Silence

At the end of the Silence

Suggested Hymn

Lord listen to your people praying

Lord send your Spirit in this place.

Lord listen to your people praying

Send your love, send your power, send your Grace.

(Repeat all 3 times)

The Renewal of Commitment for the Friends of St. Eugene

The Friends of St. Eugene say:

“I renew my commitment as a Friend of St.Eugene.

*** I will live the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod in my daily life by praying, living simply and with a spirit of openness to others, especially the poor and marginalised.**

*** I will make every effort to make choices that bear witness to my belief in the dignity of each person and the compassion of God for all peoples.**

*** Through acts of Friendship, Prayer and Service, I will make a difference in my world and together we will further the reign of God in this area. Amen”.**

Oblate Priest/ Oblate Brother: Thank you for choosing to renew your commitment as Friends of St. Eugene and for your willingness to live the Oblate charism in your lives. I trust that with the help of God’s grace and impassioned for Christ, the Church and the Mission you will continue to witness to the Spirit of St. Eugene that has inspired so many men and women all over the world since the foundation of the Oblate Congregation.

Together we share in the words that our Lord taught us

ALL: Our Father...

Facilitator: Let us pray our concluding prayer together

Creator God, all that we have and are comes from you and through you we are blessed. By the power of the Holy Spirit, open our eyes that, like Saint Eugene, we may be aware of the needs of people around us and reach out to help those who feel abandoned. Inspire us to bring the Good News of Jesus to your people. Guide us as we live the Oblate mission together. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, your Son and in the power and love of your Spirit. Amen.

Oblate Congress prayer 2014

Mary Immaculate **pray for us.**

Saint Eugene De Mazenod **pray for us.**