

Impassioned for Christ



A call to Mission



"Eugene's influence is not limited to the age in which he lived, but continues its effect on our time. His apostolate consisted in the transformation of the world by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ".

St. John Paul II



Symbol of Commitment

As an outward symbol of their commitment, the Friends of St. Eugene are given a small lapel pin. This pin is round, symbolising the world, and is made up of the three letters, “OMI”, clearly making the Oblate identity central to the design.

The letters form an Oblate cross, with arms outstretched to embrace the world in oblation, a total self-giving. In one sign we are reminded of a loving Christ, the charism of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and our own role as Christians and as Friends of St. Eugene bringing the Good News to the world in word and action.

All materials produced by the Oblate Partners in Mission (Anglo-Irish Province) may be used by members of the Oblate family.

CONTENTS	Page no.
Introduction - Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI	4
Foreword - Fr. Frank Santucci OMI	5
Who are the Friends of St Eugene	8
Forming a group of Friends of St. Eugene	8
 PART A – INTRODUCTORY SESSION	
Session I. Living a life that matters	9
Session II. The Oblate story so far	10
Session III. L'Oraison	13
 PART B – IMPASSIONED FOR CHRIST PROGRAMME (IFC)	
1 st session Launching Impassioned for Christ	16
2 nd session How Christ enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family	19
3 rd session How Mary enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family	23
4 th session How St. Eugene enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family	29
5 th session How the Oblates live out their mission in the world today	31
6 th session How the Oblates live out their mission to the poor and marginalised in the (Anglo-Irish) local province	36
7 th session How Community enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family	42
8 th session St. Eugene, the Church and reading the signs of the times	47
9 th session Christ the source of our unity	49
10 th session Discernment	53
Resource materials	55
Contents on "IFC" CD	56
Supplement section for Handouts	57
Appendix for Opening Prayers	75
Appendix for Closing Prayers	89
Hints for Facilitator	94

Introduction

At Eugene de Mazenod's canonisation in December 1995, St. Pope John Paul II said of him: "His influence is not limited to the age in which he lived but continues its effect on our time. His apostolate consisted in the transformation of the world by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What Saint Eugene wanted to achieve was that, in Christ, each individual could become a fully complete person, an authentic Christian, a credible saint. The Church gives us this great Bishop and Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as an example of heroic faith, hope and charity."

In the years since the canonisation, people throughout the world have been discovering the reality of the gift of St. Eugene to all members of the Oblate Family and the Church at large. Growing numbers of people look to St. Eugene to discover a path to live as faith witnesses of the Gospel today. They draw inspiration from his life and his dedication to reach out to those on the margins of the Church and society. At so many levels St. Eugene is a saint for our times and our age.

St. Eugene wished that all people would experience the same relationship with Jesus the Saviour that he himself had and which gave meaning and direction to his life. To help people discover the richness of the story of St Eugene and of the Congregation that he founded we have prepared this resource material and it is appropriately named, "Impassioned for Christ".

Over the period of a year participants are invited to explore the many different dimensions of the spirit of St. Eugene and the charism of our Oblate Family. At the end of that period an option is offered to people to discern how this encounter with St. Eugene can help them live as faithful witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ in their own time and places.

I would like to thank Mary Tyrrell, Kirk Jacob and Fr. Michael Hughes OMI for their work in preparing this material. I also extend my thanks to the members of the different groups of the Friends of St Eugene who have helped us in this journey and given direction to our work.

I pray that all who will use this resource will be enriched by the experience and through the intercession of St Eugene will draw close to Christ for He is our Way, our Truth and our Life.

Yours in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate.

Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI

Oblate Partners in Mission (Anglo-Irish Province)

Foreword

Until recently, all material written about Saint Eugene de Mazenod came from Oblate religious and priests. This book is a marvellous invitation to share in the discovery of Eugene de Mazenod on the part of lay people, through the focus of their own particular life experience. They share with us how they have been inspired and how they have been inviting others into their personal journey of discovery. Who is this Saint Eugene de Mazenod that they wish to introduce to others?

Unfortunately when we think of saints we tend to have the idea of plaster statues with halos and otherworldly expressions on faces that do not say much to the 21st century. For me saints are about sunshine – they are **ordinary people** who allow themselves to live in the sunshine of God, and who reflect the sun in their environment in simple ways. Today, we are familiar with solar energy panels, which absorb the sunshine and transform it into energy for the use of others. Through our baptism, all Christians are called to be solar energy panels.

In the time of Eugene de Mazenod (1782 – 1861) there were none of these panels, but there were windows through which the light and warmth of the sun shone into a home. Thus, his life invites us to look at him as a window – a stained glass window, through whom the light of God shone and which continues to shine into our world today.

Windows are sometimes grey and dirty and do not allow much light to shine through. Eugene was a real flesh-and-blood person who had a colourful personality with many attractive aspects, but also with many faults and some difficult character traits that did not always let the light to shine through.

At around the age of 25 he understood that the direction his life had to change in order to fully catch the light and to bring a kaleidoscope of colour into his existence. Until this moment he had focussed in many directions that did not bring him to the fullness of life. Looking at the Cross-, the symbol of God's life-giving love, he understood: "I had looked for happiness outside of God, and outside him I found but affliction and disappointment." He was able to change direction and to become conscious of how to place himself in the full range of God's light.

Freed from the darkness within himself, he realized his beauty and dignity in God and he spent his life turning that window to catch that best light and to be filled with the full splendour of God shining through the colours of his own life. It was a process of on-going conversion. It was the discovery and pursuit of the inner light of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's much quoted expression: "People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine

when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within."

As Eugene's life changed, he became aware of other windows around him. They were grey because of poverty, the religious persecution and confusion of the French Revolution, and their attachment to values that were not lasting. Through the eyes of his own experience of God, Eugene was able to see the windows of the poor as they really were and to invite them to turn in the direction that would bring them into the awareness of their beauty in God's light. In his very first sermon as a priest in Aix, he told them: "Come now and learn from us what you are in the eyes of faith. Poor of Jesus Christ,... all you whom misery oppresses, my brothers, dear brothers, respected brothers, listen to me. You are God's children, the brothers of Jesus Christ, heirs to his eternal kingdom, chosen portion of his inheritance; you are, in the words of St. Peter, a holy nation, you are kings, you are priests, you are in some way gods, children of the Most High."

His whole life was dedicated to helping others to discover the beauty in themselves as stained glass windows and to be missionary in sharing their light with those who were not in the light. He ministered to the abandoned people in Aix en Provence, to the poor in the villages of Provence, and eventually in the city of Marseille. His message never changed – he preached the Good News of the transforming liberation brought by God the Saviour.

Others were attracted by what he was doing and came and joined him by adding the beauty of their windows to form a symphony of God's light as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Dedicated to preaching the Gospel to the most abandoned their main aim was to look for the grey windows and help them to become transformed into stained glass windows themselves. In the following two hundred years many others have joined this process as members of the Mazenodian Family – people in all walks of life who are inspired by the charism of Eugene de Mazenod.

This is what this book is all about. It is written by members of the Mazenodian family whose own lives have been transformed by their contact with Eugene. They share with others the excitement of their journey and invite them to participate.

In the process of turning our windows to best catch God's light and become reflections of God's colour, Eugene always insisted on three steps:

1. Personal experience. Come into personal contact with the light of God and be enthralled by its beauty so as to allow it to shine through the stained glass window of our lives.

2. Community. The Mazenodian family is a community where we share a common vision and help one other to focus our windows in a constant process of becoming more fully receptive to God's light.

3. Mission. To share all this with others and to become a force for transformation in our world. In other words, to "colour-in" the situations in which we find ourselves each day.

What I like about this booklet is that it is the fruit of the journey of those responsible for it. They have prepared it from the perspective of the experience of their own discovery; of how they strive to allow themselves to be transformed on an on-going basis, and of how they have been journeying with others in groups along these three steps.

May Saint Eugene accompany everyone who uses this book to discover the light from within in which their true beauty is revealed and proclaim with Saint Paul:

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. (2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

Fr. Frank Santucci OMI

Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas.



WHO ARE THE “FRIENDS OF ST EUGENE”?

Since the canonisation of St Eugene de Mazenod, founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, many people are seeking to know more about St Eugene and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and share in the Oblate charism. The Oblates have acknowledged this in their *Constitutions and Rules*:

“The charism of St Eugene de Mazenod is a gift of the Spirit to the Church, and it radiates throughout the world. Lay people recognise that they are called to share in the charism according to their state of life, and to live it in ways that vary according to milieu and cultures. They share in the charism in the spirit of communion and reciprocity amongst themselves and with the Oblates.” (Rule 37a)

In Britain and Ireland, the Oblates are responding by encouraging the formation of groups of *Friends of St. Eugene*. These groups are called to respond to the call to live the *missionary* charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod in their daily lives, in their own unique way. They support each other through FRIENDSHIP, PRAYER and SERVICE to make a difference in their local area and so further the Reign of God.

The Friends of St. Eugene have a living link with vowed Oblates. They share the charism of St. Eugene to bring Good News to the poor. They share this charism as they live out their baptismal call in the Church and the world.

As members of the Oblate family they carry on the mission of Jesus Christ “*to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free*”. (Isaiah 61:1)

FORMING A GROUP OF “FRIENDS OF ST. EUGENE”

The formation of a new group of *Friends of St. Eugene* begins with an invitation to join the group. This consists of three sessions, which are designed to introduce the participants to St. Eugene and the Oblate charism. Details are set out below in PART A.

At the end of these three sessions, participants decide whether they wish to continue by enrolling in the *Impassioned for Christ* programme.

This is a formation programme of 10 sessions, at the end of which participants may decide to become enrolled as *Friends of St. Eugene*. Details are set out below in PART B.

PART A - INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS

Session I. Living a life that matters

Resources

- DVD player and PowerPoint projector and screen
- DVD "Living a life that matters"
- Reflection questions for each participant /group
- Flipchart & flipchart pens
- Name labels

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome and Opening prayer

Icebreaker - Names

A. Do you have a nickname? Why do you think your name is important?

Is there any reason you have been given your name?

B. Ask the group to get themselves in a straight line by lining up in an order of who has been the shortest time in the parish to who has been the longest time in the parish. You can discuss with person next to you to check out each other's information.

Input 1 - Watch DVD: "Living a life that matters" (20 mins)

After watching the DVD, allow some time for silent personal reflection and then invite participants to share their first impressions within large group.

Reflection questions in small groups (15 mins)

What strikes you from the DVD? How are you already sharing your faith?

What is distinctive about the Oblate Charism for you?

Sharing responses from the whole group (10 mins)

Note responses from the group.



Hints for Facilitator:

Have definitions of the word "Charism" available.

Leader facilitates the sharing while another notes the feedback.

CLOSING SECTION

Announcements & Thank You

Date of next meeting & Closing Prayer

Impassioned for Christ

Session II. The Oblate story so far

Resources

- PowerPoint screen showing the Regional & Province Units.
- Handouts containing the key points of the session. (see supplement section)
- Flipchart paper and flipchart pens

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Review last session

Brainstorm

Where do you think Lay Oblate Associations or Friends of St Eugene are located in the world? Participants have to guess the answers, which can be displayed on the PowerPoint.

Region	Province/Unit
AFRICA / MADAGASCAR	Central Province, Natal (RSA), Senegal.
LATIN AMERICA	Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Brazil and Uruguay.
ASIA – OCEANIA	Australia, Philippines.
CANADA	Assumption, Lacombe, Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire.
EUROPE	Germany, Anglo-Irish Province , Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Scandinavia.
USA	

Input 1 – Why Lay People have begun to show an interest in the Oblate Charism (15 mins)

Three main reasons

1. Lay people are called to holiness (*Vatican Council II*) and they have a greater desire for a more personal involvement in the life of the Church.
2. The canonisation of St. Eugene in 1995.

3. OMI priests and brothers have been withdrawing from parishes and people wish to stay connected to the Oblate congregation and the Oblate charism.

The Oblates have welcomed this development and are encouraging it. There are already 28 Oblate Provinces that have formed Oblate Associations.



Hints for Facilitator: It may be helpful to have the key points of each of the following paragraphs displayed on a PowerPoint screen.

The 1998 Chapter introduced the new Constitutions and Rules and two rules in particular concern lay people.

Rule 37a officially recognises that lay people share in the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod *"in a spirit of communion and reciprocity amongst themselves and with the Oblates"*.

Rule 37a specifies that lay people by sharing in the Oblate charism, *"gather in associations"* and the Provinces and Delegations *"foster the development of such associations"*.

There were two meetings of Lay Associates where Lay people were invited, with ordained Oblates to develop the Associate programme. The first was in Aix-en-Provence in 1996 and the other in Rome in 2007. At the 1996 meeting, the *"Identity of Lay Associates"* was discussed and it reflected how the Oblate Charism could be lived by lay people. Two points developed from that meeting:

1. Lay Associates would move from dependence on the Oblates to collaboration and partnership with them.
2. Lay Associates would eventually progress from being co-operators, to being disciples who are involved in a deeper spiritual relationship.

Fr. William Steckling OMI (Superior General at that time) identified four aspects, which he saw as important for Lay Associates inspired by St. Eugene.

1. **A clear identity** inspired by St. Eugene that includes a formation curriculum.
2. **A spiritual life** rooted in Jesus Christ and the Church, nourished on scripture and the sacraments.
3. **A community built on love**, endowed with the spirit of the Oblate family but also formally structured for a common good.
4. **A mission that is good news for the poor** which occurs in the context of an Oblate partnership.

Brainstorm: what does Friendship mean to me? (5 mins)

Note for Facilitator: Note responses on flipchart

Summary

"Friends of St. Eugene" is the name chosen by the Anglo-Irish Province Leadership team for people who are connected or wish to stay connected to the wider Oblate family. As Friends of St. Eugene get to know St. Eugene and his charism more deeply, it is hoped that through this knowledge, each person will have a deeper relationship with Christ.

Impassioned for Christ, the Church and the Mission (15 mins)

These statements were originally identified during the Congress at Aix-en-Provence in 1996 and have been adapted by the Anglo-Irish Province.

A suggested way of working with the document

Read each statement and discuss aspects of it, as it is read aloud by a member of the group, noting areas, which are important for the Friends of St. Eugene.

After the document has been read in the group

What do you think of these statements?

How do they match with the aspects of friendship that were noted at the beginning of the meeting?

The way forward (5 mins)

The next step for those interested in finding out more about the Friends of St. Eugene would be to join the Impassioned for Christ programme. This involves attending regular meetings over approximately 11 months. The monthly meetings will last no longer than an hour and a quarter.

Next month, there will be a time of prayer, called l'oraison, which was how St. Eugene prayed and he always encouraged his Oblate priests and brothers to pray in this way too. It is hoped that this will be a time of discernment for people to consider their commitment to the *"Impassioned for Christ"* programme.

CLOSING SECTION

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting & Closing prayer

Session III. L'Oraison and social time

Resources

- copy of l'oraison prayer sheet for each person.
- excerpts from the Constitutions explaining its significance to the Oblate family displayed in some way.

INTRODUCTION

Oblate Constitution and Rules, #31

"We achieve unity in our life only in and through Jesus Christ... While maintaining within ourselves an atmosphere of silence and inner peace, we seek God's 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.



Oblate Constitution and Rules, #33

"In the prolonged silent prayer we make each day, we let ourselves be moulded by the Lord and find in him the inspiration of our conduct. Following our tradition, we devote an hour each day to mental prayer, part of which is spent together in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament".

L'oraison is a mode of prayer in which we listen to God in silence. Prayer is not just about talking to God; it's also about listening to God. Here the idea is to lean forward, to turn our ears to God, and to really listen to what God might be saying to us.

The first time you do this, five minutes will seem like an eternity. When you've done it for a while, and have learned how to use the time, 20 minutes will seem too short.

How do you use the time well? You simply observe what goes on in your mind and emotions as you sit there. After this heart-to-heart encounter with the Lord, you may notice that you are more keenly aware of something (that I'm forgiven, or that there is hope for a situation I face) or something I'm convinced that I'm supposed to do (phone a friend, give money to charity, or be kind to a certain person at work). Some days nothing specific comes to mind, and that's okay. Do not force these things. Learning to hear God – really hear – is an ongoing process. This is no fool-proof way to discern the voice of God, but it is often surprising to see how talking things through, the group has a much clearer idea of what God wants.

(From the *Complete Idiot's Guide to Prayer* by Mark Galli & James S. Bell, Jr.)



Hints for Facilitator: Each participant will have a copy of the prayer and the respond with the statements in bold. (supplement – **handout 2**)

OPENING SECTION

L'oraison prayer sheet - (see handout 2)

After the prayer, people are encouraged to enrol on the "*Impassioned for Christ*" programme.

Social time together.

CLOSING SECTION

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting

A note for the Facilitator: There are other Oblate media resources available for the Introductory sessions: '**Harvest of Souls**' DVD which contains the canonisation of St. Eugene de Mazenod and the two parts of '**Heart as Big as the World**', keeping in mind that this DVD is also used during the "*Impassioned for Christ*" programme.



PART B – THE “IMPASSIONED FOR CHRIST” PROGRAMME

Session Titles for “IMPASSIONED FOR CHRIST” Programme

1 st session	Launching Impassioned for Christ.
2 nd session	How Christ enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family.
3 rd session	How Mary enriches the lives of Oblates and The Oblate family.
4 th session	How St.Eugene enriches the lives of the Oblates and the Oblate
5 th session	How the Oblates live out their mission in the world today.
6 th session	How the Oblates live out their mission to the poor and ed in the (Anglo-Irish) local province.
7 th session	How community enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate
8 th session	St.Eugene, the Church and reading the signs of the times.
9 th session	Christ the source of our unity.
10 th session	Discernment.
11 th session	Enrolment mass and celebration.

SOME PRACTICAL POINTS FOR THE FACILITATOR

All timings are approximate, but no session should last longer than 75 mins.

In the 6th session, the facilitator will need to ensure that the local Provincial history and culture will be reflected in the session. Resources are available from the local Oblate Archivist and also the Oblate website www.omiworld.org

Access to the Internet is required for many of the sessions.

This schedule can be started at any time of the year, but account must be taken of the retreat experience and local holiday breaks. Sessions can be moved according to local or liturgical customs.

Session 1: Launching “*Impassioned for Christ*”

Resources

- Flip chart paper and flip chart pens.
- Have “IFC” printed on flip chart paper.
- “Contents of Introduction” handout for each participant.
- Outline of Oblate charism sharing’s and summary on PowerPoint screen.
- A set of photographs, which will evoke aspects of human life, which are linked to ministry.

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome

Icebreaker: *The Counting game*. This is a fun activity to warm up the group. It is a good way for people to ‘gel’ together.

Instructions to the group:

The leader says the number “1”, and the other group members randomly say 2, 3, 4... however, if there is a clash where two people say the same number, then, the turn returns back to the Leader saying “1”. The rules are the group are not allowed to have a set pattern as to who says what number and when. So, let’s have a go... Leader says 1..

Opening prayer



Hints for Facilitator: write the letters IFC on a flipchart.
Distribute **handout 3** (“Contents of Introduction”)

Input 1a - Introduce theme “IFC” - Impassioned for Christ Title. (15 mins)

Brainstorm: Guess what “IFC” stands for?

Introduce IFC as being **Impassioned for Christ**.

The title for this journey has been taken from the Congress report when the Oblates and Lay Associates met at Aix-en-Provence in France, May 1996.

Input 1b - Contents of Introduction (15 min) (*supplement - handout 3*)

Input 2 - Who are the professed Oblates?

Using Brainstorm techniques (in pairs): “who are the Oblates?”

After 5 mins, their ideas are shared with the whole group.



Hint for Facilitator: *a volunteer to scribe group feedback on the flipchart.*

The Feedback list will hopefully encompass the following Oblate ideals.

1. The Oblates follow a Christ-centred spiritual life.
2. They are a Missionary group.
3. Oblates identify themselves as the spiritual sons of St. Eugene.
4. They identify themselves as spiritual sons of Mary.
5. Fundamentally Oblates identify themselves with the poor and the marginalised.
6. They are deeply attached to the Roman Catholic Church.
7. Oblates come together as living in religious communities as priests and brothers.
8. There are also other Congregations in the Church inspired by the spirit of St. Eugene. (*Las Oblatas – Spanish group of Sisters*)

Input 3 - What do the professed Oblates do? (20 mins)

Using Brainstorm techniques (discuss in pairs): “what do the professed Oblates do?” After 5 mins, their ideas are shared with the whole group.



Hints for Facilitator: Display the photographs across the floor. Invite each participant to pick up 2 pictures. People share with the partner sitting next to them, linking the pictures to what the Oblates do. Each person chooses one of the two pictures to share with the large group.

The Feedback list of ideas generated will hopefully include:

1. Professed Oblates are co-workers with Christ in his mission in the world especially with the poor.
2. Professed Oblates reach out in friendship beyond Christian boundaries to other groups of people.

Input 4 – What is the living link between “Friends” and professed Oblates? (10 mins)

In Britain and Ireland, the Friends of St. Eugene have a living link with the professed Oblates in accordance with *CCRR 37a* and are motivated by a genuine desire to live out the charism of St. Eugene. Consequently, the Anglo-Irish Province have offered resources such as on-going Adult Faith Formation, retreat facilities and opportunities to work together on local and overseas projects. The Friends of St. Eugene (FoSE) belong to the wider Oblate family and their meetings are an essential Oblate activity.

CLOSING SECTION

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you.

Date of next meeting & Closing prayer.



SESSION 2: How Christ enriches the lives of the Oblates and the Oblate Family

Resources

- PowerPoint screen highlighting key points:
 - Input 1 the quotes from Fr. Michael Barry (SJ)
 - the Oblate Constitutions
 - the reflection questions and Luke 4:16-19.
- 5 slips of paper with each verse from Luke 4: 16-19 printed for each participant.
- DVD: "Other side of struggle – section Part 2".

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome & introduce theme

Opening prayer

Review of last session

Input 1 - Conversion (15 mins)

Using Brainstorm techniques (in pairs): the word Conversion?

After 5 mins, their ideas are shared with the whole group.

Summary

St. Eugene's conversion was a much more gradual unfolding conversion experience, unlike that of St. Paul's conversion, which was more dramatic.

Conversion is always *a movement from something and a movement to something*.

God was always working in Eugene's life through people and events. He didn't always know it but God had brought Eugene into contact with people who helped him on his faith journey.

The whole of a person's life is a journey of faith. All experiences can mediate the presence of God. Each of us has moments, which we can recall.

Fr. Michael Barry S.J. states:

"At every moment of our existence, we encounter this creative presence of God, but we are only intermittently aware of the encounter".

Eugene's conversion came through his Good Friday experience in 1807 when he realised how much Christ crucified had done for him.

Conversion always invites us to action, to reflect on how we are living and willing to change. The changes that come about because of that reflection, in turn become our mission. St. Eugene's conversion and subsequent mission led to the formation of the Oblate congregation.

As a gifted speaker, Eugene tried throughout his life to share his expertise with his Oblates as he knew the better the preaching of the Oblates was, the more effective would be the results of their ministry.

"Make it evident that we are penetrated with what we teach, and that we have begun in practice, before attempting to instruct others".

1818 Rule Part 1, chapter 3.

However, the instruction of the early missionaries did not stop at giving people academic knowledge about the catechism. Eugene insisted that they were to teach people that Jesus was their Saviour, with the intention of inviting them to conversion. Of course, Eugene's secret of success was that he was preaching from his own intimate experience and knowledge of Christ the Saviour and he expected the same from his followers.

Instruction for the group: Spend a few minutes thinking about one of the following questions. Share as little or as much as you wish with the person beside you.

Personal reflection questions:

1. Who are the people in my life that reveal God's love to me?
2. Are there particular places that reveal something of God's love for me?
3. Have there been particular events in my life when I have experienced God's love deeply?



Hints for Facilitator:

Examples of People – Mother Teresa, someone you know.

Example of Places – looking at creation i.e. sunset, sunrise, stars at night, or a beautiful location like the Lake Districts.

Examples of Events - wedding, funeral, birthday, christening.

Input 2 - St Eugene's conversion and mission (15mins)

We are going to watch a short DVD clip which reflects upon Eugene's conversion and as a result of his conversion, how he responded to Jesus Christ, namely through his life's Mission.

Play DVD 14:47 – 18:00 – The other side of struggle (Part 2)

Silence to consider

1. What were your first impressions from DVD?
2. Was there anything new for you?

Share in pairs (as little or as much as you wish)

Share in the large group

Summary

After the 1807 Good Friday experience, Eugene was a changed man, and his Mission for Christ and that of the Oblates' was born as a result of that foundational Good Friday experience.

Input 3 - The Oblates' mission (25 mins.)

The fundamental Oblate commitment is to preach Christ especially to the poor. St. Eugene's mandate came from the Scriptures and he was drawn by the scripture text that Jesus made his own. I invite to read from **St. Luke 4:16 – 19**.

He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Then, He began to speak to them,

"This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen".

"Top" 5 exercise

Instruction for small groups: invite people to break up into small groups of 3-4. Tell them that their group will be given 5 slips of paper with a verse each from Luke 4: 16-19. Their task is to reflect on each verse of Luke 4:16-19 and relate them to the core values of **"what the Oblate family do today"**. The groups are asked to discuss and agree as to grading the verses of Luke 4:16-19 from the most important to the least important. So, each group will have a "Top 5" order of the scripture verses.

Small groups feedback to the large group

Note responses from the group.

Summary

St Eugene instructed his missionaries to be co-operators, co-workers, and companions of Christ. St. Eugene, because of his passion for this way of living, consequently, attracted others to this way of life, so Eugene became a revealer of God's love for others.

CLOSING SECTION

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting

Closing prayer



SESSION 3: How does Mary enrich the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family

Resources

- Handouts of “Motherhood” story for volunteer readers (**handout 4**).
- Copies of picture of old woman / young woman. (**see appendix**)
- Scripture references to Mary for each participant. (**handout 5**)
- Copies of the Oblate Constitutions texts for the small groups.
- Display quotes of St. Eugene and the texts from the Oblate Constitutions.
- Pictures of the Marian shrines associated and not associated with the Oblates.

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome & introduce theme

Opening Prayer

Review last session

Input 1 - The “Motherhood” story (see supplement section – **handout 4**)(15 mins)



Hints for Facilitator: You may need to get 4-5 volunteers who will speak the voices of the Narrator (**N**), the mother (**Mo.**), the guide (**G**) and some children (**Ch.**)

Short period of silence

What struck you from that “motherhood” story?

Distribute **Old woman / young woman** picture to the group. (see attached CD)



Hints for Facilitator: The aim of the exercise is for the participants to identify both the older woman and a younger woman present in the same picture.

Summary: this simple activity brings out how easy it is to spot visible things but we need time to recognise the more hidden things. Mary, our Mother learnt to spot both the visible and the more hidden things right from the moment of her *Annunciation*.

Input 2 – Various Titles linked to the Oblate Congregation (20 mins.)

Brainstorm: what comes to mind when you hear the word: "Oblate"/ "Oblation"?

Summary: Oblation = self-offering. The Thesaurus states words like *gift, offering, presentation, sacrifice, and generosity*. A modern word could be *self-giving; commitment*.

Oblate is the name linked with our Oblate family and Congregation: Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Originally, they were called "*Missionaries of Provence*", and then "*Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo*". Later, in 1826, when the Constitutions and Rules were formally approved by Rome. The name **Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate** was given to his group. As Eugene exclaimed upon receiving that name from Pope Leo:

"Why, indeed, it is a passport to heaven!!"

The Mission of the Oblate family draws its source from the Oblate Constitutions.

CCRR 1 (Oblate Constitutions & Rules)

The call of Jesus Christ, heard within the Church through people's Need for salvation, draws us together as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Christ thus invites us to follow him and to share in on through word and work.

Brainstorm: Where do you remember hearing about Mary in the Gospels?



Hints for Facilitator: Display on PowerPoint screen the scripture reference texts on Mary (supplement – **handout 5**). Briefly go through the texts not mentioned by the group.

Summary

From all the stories we know of Mary: be it in her Annunciation, her Magnificat, the Wedding feast of Cana or her being at the foot of the cross: they all echo Mary's *oblation* and her total self-giving and life commitment to Christ and His Kingdom. Mary offers each one of us right here and now, a model of **courage, strength**, and she mirrors that special **living presence of God** for each of us. Mary is the "first disciple" in Luke's Gospel: St. Eugene recognised this aspect. St. Eugene says:

"With Mary at the foot of the Cross, let us repeat unceasingly those words which so fittingly calm all our sorrows: 'May your will be done!'"

(a link can be made to the Angelus Prayer and Mary's Annunciation)

Diary, Jan. 3, 1859

Mary had no idea as to where her "Yes" was going to lead to. The invitation is for each one of us to respond like Mary: "May Your will (not my will) be done!" in all things and in all circumstances.

Input 3 - Reflection in small groups on Mary and the Oblates (15 mins.)



Hints for Facilitator: Before the session, make copies of the Oblate Constitution texts on separate sheets of paper. Divide the large group into smaller groups. Give each small group a different text from the Oblate Constitutions relating to Mary Immaculate that have related corresponding questions.

Instruction for the group: Your group are asked to discuss what does this Oblate text says to us as members of the Oblate family. A spokesperson from each group gives feedback key points from their discussion to the larger group.

CCRR 46 (Group 1)

"Inspired by the example of Mary, we live in creative and ongoing fidelity our personal commitment to Jesus Christ, while serving the Church and God's Kingdom".

Some questions to help you in your small group discussion:

- a. How has this Oblate text helped you to clarify your baptismal calling?
- b. How does living out your baptismal calling influence your life as an Oblate family member?

CCRR 10 (Group 2)

"Mary Immaculate is patroness of our Congregation. Open to the Spirit, she consecrated herself totally as lowly handmaid to the person and work of the Saviour. She received Christ in order to share him with the world, whose hope he is. In her we recognise the model of the Church's faith and of our own".

Some questions to help you in your small group discussion:

- a. Reading this Oblate text, how does Mary's model inspire you?
- b. How does being under Mary's protection influence your life as an Oblate family member?

CCRR 36 (Group 3)

"With Mary Immaculate, the faithful handmaid of the Lord, and under the guidance of the Spirit, we enter into closer union with Jesus Christ. We will contemplate with her the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, especially in praying the rosary".

Some questions to help you in your small group discussion:

- a. How does Mary bring you into closer union with Christ?
- b. How does Mary's model of "Faithfulness" influence your life as a member of the Oblate family?

Small groups feedback to the larger group

Conclusion to Input 3

One out of every two circular letters that have been coming out from the OMI Generalate has had something to say on Mary. Two aspects in these circular letters deal with **mission**.

Fr. Fernand Jetté, a former Superior General says that "the primary goal of the OMI is not to spread devotion to Mary; it is first and foremost **to evangelise the poor**. We are to preach the Gospel to the poor under the patronage of Mary and with Mary's sentiments in our hearts." Fr. Marcello Zago OMI in a circular letter to the Oblates on 17th Feb 1988 urged on his Oblates that they live the reality of these simple, profound words of St. Eugene:

"The members will always look upon Mary as their Mother!"

Input 4 – Marian Shrines served by the Oblates (15mins)

Each small group looks at pictures of 4 Marian Shrines. The four shrines are Lourdes (France), Notre Dame du Cap (Canada) and Notre Dame de la Garde (France). Look at these Marian Shrines. Can you guess where they are located in the world? What are they called? What is the Oblate connection?

Summary

Lourdes - France. Oblates were the first people to bring English-speaking pilgrims to Lourdes *Fr. William Ring OMI brought a group in 1883.* The Oblates are the largest resident Chaplaincy community still present. Other information: Our Lady appeared 18 times to Bernadette.

Notre Dame du Cap – Canada. It is located at Cap de Madeleine, Quebec, Canada. Oblates actually run this shrine till date.

Our Lady of the Snows – USA. An Oblate Fr. Paul Schulte, “The flying priest over the Arctic” in the 1930s flew missions of mercy throughout the remote arctic. Inspired by the “Northern lights”, he imagined “Our Lady of the Snows” coming to the Inuit people.

Notre Dame de La Garde - Marseille, France. St. Eugene restored this ancient shrine even though he did not see it completed. Since 1901, when all religious were expelled from France, no Oblate has been involved at Notre Dame de la Garde.

Other Marian Shrines connected with the Oblates in France

Notre Dame du Laus (Our Lady of the Lakes) – the second house opened by Eugene. Our Lady appeared here to a young shepherdess in 1660.

Notre Dame de Lumières - a very ancient shrine of Our Lady, which was purchased by the Oblates in 1837 and is still an Oblate house.

Notre Dame de Sion in Lorraine is a very ancient shrine where the Oblates served from 1850 until very recently.

Notre Dame de L’Osier (meaning “willow bush”) – it is a very ancient Marian shrine served by the Oblates from 1834 to 1993.

What the Marian Shrines mean to the OMI

“Because the temples dedicated to her are for us here below an image of her heavenly residence... shrines are privileged places where her motherly mercy towards people is experienced.”

Circular letter of De Mazenod to Rectors of Marseille, 21st Sept. 1843

Marian Shrines have always been close to St. Eugene's heart because they provide the congregation with an exceptional opportunity to fulfil its Mission within the church. Indirectly, **these shrines are centres of apostolic influence.** The aim of the shrine was the same as that of the parish missions: to bring the most abandoned to conversion and to a life of fullness in God.

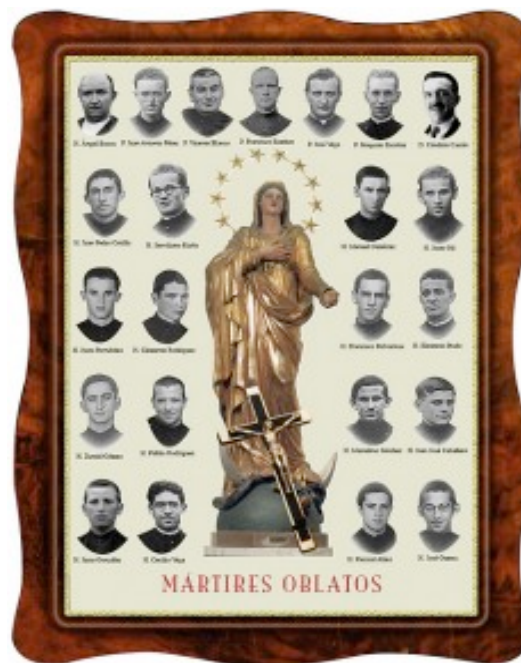
CLOSING SECTION

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting

Closing Prayer - suggested hymn – Salve Regina



SESSION 4: How St. Eugene enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family.

Resources

- DVD "Heart as big as the world" & DVD player.
- Pens & Paper, flip chart paper and flip chart pens for each group.
- Copies available of Group 1 & Group 2 sets of questions (**Handout 6**).

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome & introduce theme

Opening Prayer

Review last session

Input 1

Introduction to Part 2 of "Heart as big as the world" DVD (30 mins)

This week we journey with St. Eugene as he establishes his various missions, and the difficulties he encounters with both the Church and the State authorities. He is made Vicar General and then Bishop and we learn how it takes him to new frontiers and new challenges.

Watch Part 2 on the DVD "Heart as big as the world".

16:08 – 32:11 - 16mins.

Start DVD: "Once the community assembled in the Carmelite..."

Stop DVD: St. Eugene help us to be co-workers of Christ..."

Silence to consider (10 mins)

(a). What are your first impressions upon watching the DVD?

(b). How do you relate to what happened to St. Eugene?

Share in pairs (as little or as much as you wish)

Share in the large group

Questions for small group sharing (15mins) (supplement – **handout 6**)

GROUP 1

St. Eugene came to understand that he could not respond to the call of Christ alone.

- What was St. Eugene's response?
- Who in your life has affected your call to Christ?
- Where do you presently find support for your response to Christ's call?

GROUP 2

St. Eugene was a man impassioned for Christ.

- How did Christ reveal himself to St. Eugene in the course of his life?
- How has St. Eugene's passion for Christ shown itself in his life?
- How has Christ revealed himself in your life?
- How have you responded?

Small groups feedback to large group (10 mins)

CLOSING SECTION

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting

Closing Prayer



Session 5: How the Oblates live out their mission in the world today

Resources

- A leaflet for all the participants which contains the text for each section:
 - The Beginning
 - Continuing the story
 - the present day
 - where we are now
- Have quotes of St. Eugene on PowerPoint screen.
- synopsis of Blessed Joseph Gérard's life. (supplement section - **Handout 7**)

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Review of last session

Brainstorm: (10 mins)

It's all in the name. The adjective 'missionary' was always in the name of the congregation from the earliest days.

What does the term 'missionary' mean to you?

Has your understanding of the word changed over the years?

Input 1 – The Beginning



Hints for Facilitator: It is suggested that this session be produced as a leaflet. Each person is then invited to read aloud a section. (Only those who are willing to read). Comments and further information is added as the leaflet is read. At the end of each section there is a question for reflection and sharing.

1. In his correspondence with Charles de Forbin-Janson from 1814 to 1816, Eugene mentions the Missionaries of France and says that he himself wants to join up with a few priests in order to preach missions in Provençal.
2. At Saint-Laurent-du-Verdon in November of 1818, Eugene gives this title to the rules he is drawing up: "*Constitutions and Rules of the Society of the Missionaries of Provence*".

3. This title corresponded exactly with the purpose of the society: that of establishing a community of diocesan priests to evangelise Provence. It is something that must have come spontaneously to Eugene's mind who knew the Missionaries of France.

4. In drawing up the Rules of the Missionaries of Provence in 1818, Eugene set a very specific goal for his institute: to preach the Word of God to the poor of Provence, especially through the means of parish missions, retreats, catechetical instruction and other spiritual exercises.

5. Even though he chose to preach the Word of God in Provence, Eugene's interest and even his calling to the foreign missions persisted. In Venice, he had read: The edifying letters on the missions of China and Japan. Did he not confide this to Fr. Tamburini in an October 25, 1855 letter?

"I had not yet attained twelve years of age when God caused to be born in my heart the first and very effective desires of dedicating myself to the missions."

Oblate Writings 11 (1991): 285

6. At the seminary in Saint-Sulpice, Eugene was a member of Forbin-Janson's mission circle for those who wanted to go to China.

7. This interest existed among a few of Eugene's first co-workers. They had set as their goal:

"to go beyond the confines of the Kingdom before the realm dictated that they had to stay in their own country".

Letter to the Minister of Public Worship, July 31, 1817

8. When, in Rome, they suggested that the Congregation was to be approved for France alone, Eugene wrote to Cardinal Pedicini on January 2, 1826 stating:

"that one of the main reasons that brought us to ask for the approbation of the Holy See was precisely the desire that we have to bear to every corner of the world the benefits of the ministry to which the members of our institute are dedicating themselves."

Oblate Writings 1, Vol. 13, no.51

9. He added that he was in touch with the Bishop of Nice with regard to a foundation in his diocese, and that he was planning to go into the diocese of Savoy. Also, stated that several members of the institute

"would readily preach the Gospel to the infidels. From all of this, His Eminence can draw the conclusion that the approval requested should extend to the whole Church."

Oblate Writings 1, Vol.13, no. 51

10. On February 17th, 1826 a new religious family - called the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate came into being.

Question for sharing in pairs

"From little acorns big oak trees grow"- talk to the person beside you about your experiences of small beginnings or the importance of a name or an idea you had when younger that has come to be an adult passion.

Input 2 – Continuing the story (10 mins.)

1. In 1841, at the request of Bishop Bourget of Montreal, four Oblate priests and two brothers went to Canada and began the congregation's missionary outreach. Soon, Bishop Eugene began receiving more requests for help. While seeking priests for his mission in Sri Lanka, one bishop was told to visit Marseilles where he would find

"A Bishop with a heart as big as St. Pauls', as big as the world."

2. Bishop Eugene was determined to answer every request for missionaries that he received, even though he had to turn down some requests due to his limited personnel. Before his death in 1861, his congregation of 416 men had spread to ten countries, including Canada, the U.S., England, Ireland, Scotland, Sri Lanka, and South Africa.

3. His message of service to others has inspired many men to answer the call to serve in Oblate missions throughout the world.

Question for sharing in pairs

St.Eugene gave an example of generosity to others and thus inspired others to join in his adventure. **Who has inspired you? Whom do you inspire?**

Input 3 – The Present Day (10mins)

Watch YouTube clip: Fr. Chavas Gonzales OMI on Oblates understanding of Mission.
(10 mins)

The link is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY9pNy5GSrQ>

Share impressions in the large group

Input 4 – Where are we now?

- 1.** Oblates are still missionaries. From the time when Fr. Eugene and four companions came together to preach missions in Provençal, in the rural countryside of southern France till now. Currently, there are 4,440 Oblates in all, of which 580 Oblates are in formation: Priests, Brothers! And that's not counting "*Friends*"...
- 2.** Oblates are in the five continents. The branch planted in Aix-en-Provence thrives: there are more than 700 Oblates in Africa, 1450 in Europe, 630 in Asia, 360 in Latin America, 750 in Canada, 480 in the United States. Africa has 165 young men in training - the highest number in formation.
- 3.** What do they do? Oblates still reach out to the poorest of the poor in varied forms ranging from preaching the Gospel in unsafe places in the world and offering prison chaplaincies or listening spaces for people dealing with mental health issues, to running schools, universities, parishes & centres of mission, retreat & spirituality centres, promoting justice, peace and integrity of creation issues, production centres for creating DVDs, radio, television and internet resources.
- 4.** It was enough for bishops to come to our Founder and say to him: "I do not have anybody..." for him to act, re-examine his manpower, cut personnel here and there, and release 2 or 3 men for these new needs. And that continues today still. It is a question of passion, of missionary concern....
- 5.** Recently, an Oblate foundation was in Guinea Bissau: close to one of our missions in Senegal. Others are in Cuba, Turkmenistan, Belorussia and Ukraine.
- 6.** Older Missions are now taking on responsibilities for new missions: Haiti founded a mission in Colombia, among the Afro-American; and Sri Lanka has for many years sent missionaries into India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Input 5 – What can we do? (10 mins.)

We must read the signs of the times and the needs of our local area. Opportunities to be a missionary exist in our Province... Give examples showing what is going on in your Province. Mission boxes; Oblate Missionary Development Office; Christmas card appeal, Lourdes pilgrimage are examples of missionary activity in the Anglo-Irish Province.

CLOSING SECTION

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting

Closing prayer



Session 6: How the Oblates live out their mission to the poor and marginalised in the local (Anglo-Irish) Province.

This session is localised to the development of the History of the Anglo-Irish Province.

Resources

- A leaflet for all the participants which contains the text for each section:
 - The origin of the Oblates
 - Eugene's 2 journeys within the Anglo-Irish Province
- Have the quotes of St. Eugene on PowerPoint screen.
- Key influences of Oblates in Anglo-Irish Province (**handout 8**)
- DVDs
 - Fr. Charlie Burrows OMI
 - History of Anglo-Irish Province

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome & introduce theme

Opening Prayer

Review of last session

Input 1 - Why the Oblates Mission was begun in Britain and Ireland (30 mins)

1. For the conversion of England
2. Eugene foresaw that England could be a springboard for the English-speaking world.



Hints for Facilitator: Show the map of where Oblates had put down roots in the Anglo-Irish Province during Fr. Eugene's time. You may then request each participant if they so wish to read out a paragraph from the leaflet and then open it up to further for whole group discussion.

The local Oblate Missions that were opened up during Fr. Eugene's time were:

1843-1852	Penzance (cradle of OMI Mission), Cambourne
1845 – 1848	Grace Dieu Manor & Mission
1848 – 1853	Aldenham Hall, Shropshire
1848 – 1850	Ashbourne

1847 – 1855	Everingham, Yorkshire
1849 – 1852	Manchester – St. Mary's
1849 – 1852	Maryvale ('Old Oscott')
1850 – 2001	Holy Cross Parish, Liverpool
1851-1989	Mount St. Mary's, Leeds
1852-1859	Galashiels (Scotland)
1852 – 2010	Lys Marie, Sicklinghall (Church & House)
1856 ----	Inchicore House of Retreat
1859----	Leith, Start of the Sea Parish, Scotland
1859 – 1942	Glenree, Co. Wicklow, Ireland – Reformatory School, Late vocations College and Chaplaincy
1860 – 1863	Glenmary, Delgany, Co.Wicklow, Novitiate

Notes for Facilitator: use the old map of UK & Ireland to demonstrate the various places Eugene visited.

Input 2 - The Origins of the Oblates in the Anglo-Irish Province

In 1841, Eugene asked Fr. William Daly to travel to UK & Ireland on a fact-finding Mission. In July 1842, Fr. Casimir Aubert was appointed in Dublin as superior of the Oblate Mission. In 1844, Fr. Daly became superior of the Mission Centre in Penzance, Cornwall.

In 1848, Fr. Bellon succeeded Fr. Daly as superior. In 1849, Fr. Bellon moved from Ashbourne to Maryvale, which became the headquarters for the Oblates in England. Fr. Casimir Aubert was appointed by Eugene as *extraordinary visitor*.

The British Province was canonically established in 1851, with Fr. Casimir Aubert as the First Provincial. Fr. Robert Cooke soon succeeded him. The Province became known as the Anglo-Irish Province after Irish independence was achieved in 1921.

Input 3 - Eugene's two journeys in the Anglo-Irish Province.

Eugene made his first journey in 1850 to the Anglo-Irish Province in order to plan for the future. Eugene had nothing but praise for the establishments in Maryvale, Aldenham, Everingham, Penzance, Manchester and Liverpool. He travelled from France, via Germany, Switzerland and into Ostende (Belgium) and then took the boat to Dover. During his stay in Britain, it was unusually good weather though Eugene had been expecting nothing but rain and fog.

Encounter with the Oratorians

Casimir accompanied Eugene as he had a good knowledge of English. They lodged at a modest French Hotel in Leicester Square, London. Eugene as usual wanted to celebrate daily Mass and was able to do so in nearby King William Street, London, where the Oratorians had their chapel at that time. There, Eugene was met by Fr. Dalgairns, who introduced him to Blessed John Henry Newman. Fr. Dalgairns introduced Eugene to the Earl of Arundel who later became the Duke of Norfolk and also to Lord Acton and other members of the Nobility.

Eugene – one of the “Eastenders”!

Eugene and Casimir took a horse & carriage to the East End of London. They walked through the streets and saw the “poorest of the poor” which stirred up the old missionary spirit in the depths of Eugene’s soul. He resolved that he would send missionaries to London.

Eugene’s Maryvale fairytale!

Eugene travelled by train from London to his headquarters at Maryvale. (*Trains were a recent invention, and they went at speeds of 60mph!*)

While being there, he met Bishop Ullathorne. He was asked to be the chief guest at the prize distribution ceremony at Oscott seminary. He visited his friend Lord Shrewsbury, and he saw the magnificent Oratorian Retreat house of St. Wilfrid’s, which was offered to the Oblates. Eugene made his way to Birmingham but declined an invitation to stay at Lord Herries home and chose instead to stay at the Little Priory at Everingham, which he declared to be:

“truly a gem where I am very comfortable”.

Laying the foundation stone in Manchester.

Eugene travelled to **Manchester** to see the work being done by Fr. Daly & his confreres. It was at the busy parish of St. Mary’s that Eugene laid the foundation stone of the Church, but the Oblates did not remain to see the Church built.

Eugene being “gripped” by the Liverpool experience.

Later, Eugene went to **Liverpool** where he visited **Holy Cross Parish**, which was the highlight of his visit. Eugene called it:

“a kind of marvel”.

The Oblates set up schools and social services and a centre of Mission within Liverpool and Eugene was delighted by the way people, mainly victims from the famine in Ireland, accepted his missionaries. Eugene was overwhelmed by the work of the Oblates, who brought the consolation of religion to the miserable slums of Liverpool dockyards. Eugene said:

“the crowd which filled the chapel, waited for me to pass by and they drew themselves on me to kiss my hands, my vestments and even my feet.”

Eugene’s encounter with the faith of the predominantly Irish people, made a deep impact on him. It was in Liverpool’s slums that Eugene saw the fulfilment of the Oblate role, namely to:

“preach the Gospel to the poor”.

It reinforced Eugene’s desire to set up a London mission. However, the London Mission did not take off until after Eugene’s death in 1861.

Eugene’s return to France via Maryvale and Penzance

Eugene visited Aldenham via Birmingham to confirm 20 people, and then returned to Maryvale to perform 7 ordinations. He travelled to Penzance where he baptised and confirmed many converts and finally returned to France.

July 10th – August 10th 1857 - Eugene’s second visit to the Anglo-Irish Province

Much had happened since Eugene last visited England in 1850. The British Province was established in 1851. An Irishman Fr. Cooke had become Provincial and the activities of the missionaries were now concentrated more in urban settings than in rural areas.

The main purpose of Eugene’s visit was to preside over the opening of the new Oblate Church at Mount St. Mary’s, Leeds. Eugene also wanted to encourage the Oblates and to see for himself the development of their work, especially the Dublin novitiate and the scholasticate at Sicklinghall.

On his visit to Dublin, Eugene celebrated Sunday mass in the small wooden church at Inchicore, Dublin. Vast crowds, who were most respectful, greeted him. Eugene received a cordial welcome from the Archbishop of Dublin and was surprised by the great display of private individual charity.

He also visited Galashiels and Edinburgh, Scotland.

Current and Former Oblate Missions set up after Eugene's death

This list is for illustration purposes and it is not a fully exhaustive list.

England: Tower Hill, Kilburn & West Kilburn; Crewe Retreat Centre & Crewe Parish; Rock Ferry – The Wirral; Norris Green – Liverpool; Kingshurst, Chelmsleywood, City centre in Birmingham; Corpus Christi Parish and Mount St. Mary's in Leeds and Wetherby in Yorkshire; Southampton; Christchurch; Cinderford & Coleford in Gloucester; Leigh-on-sea - Southend; parish at Eastwood - Bristol; IWIC in Birmingham; London Irish Centre; Irish Centre Housing, London & Birmingham; Broadwater Farm in Tottenham; Holy Cross - Liverpool.

Wales: Holyhead; Amlwch; Beaumaris; Parish and Nursing Home chaplaincy in Colwyn Bay; LLanrwst in Conwy County; Llangefni, Rhosnaigar, Blaenau Ffestiniog; St. Mary's College & Parish in Rhos-on-sea; Menai Bridge and other places.

Channel Islands: Parishes in Jersey & Alderney islands.

Scotland: Wester Hailes Parish & Leith Parish in Edinburgh.

Ireland: Dublin Parishes of Darndale; Bluebell (Naas road – Inchicore) & St. Michael's (city side – Inchicore); Parish on Inishbofin, Galway. Belcamp College, Raheny; Emmaus Retreat Centre Chaplains in Swords.

Reformatory schools – St. Kevin's at Glencree, Co. Wicklow; St. Conleths at Daingean (Philipstown), Co. Offaly; Oberstown (Co. Dublin).

Formation houses in Belmont (Co. Dublin), Piltown (Co. Kilkenny) and Cahermoyle (Co. Limerick).

Brazil: Goiânia; Cassilândia; Ceres; Aragoiânia; Rio de Janeiro; Paranaiguara; São Simão.

France – Lourdes Marian Shrine – English-speaking chaplaincy.

Popular Parish Missions were preached in small country towns and villages across Ireland and Britain.



Input 4 – Show Fr. Charlie Burrows OMI DVD (30 mins)

How one Oblate from the Anglo-Irish Province is living out his mission to the poor and marginalised in Indonesia.

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements (For the Anglo-Irish Province only, distribute **handout 8** – additional information on Oblates and their work)

Thank you, Date of next meeting & Closing prayer



Session 7: How Community life enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family

Resources

- Thick tape or ribbon and scissors for the Icebreaker.
- Display the quote of Fr. Zago on PowerPoint screen.
- A leaflet for each participant containing the 7 points in the sections "Beginnings of Oblate community" and "reflection questions for Friends of St. Eugene becoming a small Christian community". (supplement **handout 9**)
- Writing pens.

OPENING SECTION (15mins)

Welcome & introduce theme

Opening Prayer

Review of last session

Community Icebreaker - Building up and breaking down Community

Instruction for Facilitator: Name aloud words associated with the building up of Community. When a word is called out, take the ball of string and hand it to them...hopefully, a web representing community is formed. Physically, pluck the strings at various points and at the same time recalling the various words that build up community in order to show they are linked.

Then, name aloud, things that break down Community.. snip the string in various places... visually the web of community is broken down..

Write the words spoken aloud on a flip chart.

Look at and compare the words and discuss what the priorities are for community.

INPUT 1 - Ideas about Community today

We may think that what we do involves only us, but everything we do or say has an effect on someone else. Today we live in an individualistic society where the self reigns supreme.

Fewer people are engaged in larger community activities like political parties, trade unions etc. The companionship and compassion of the church are all regarded as no longer relevant. It is apparent that the idea of community and, in particular Christian community is counter cultural. Yet, the value of community is immeasurable. In this case, it is true community that is being referred to and not just the touchy feely, feel good connotations that can be associated with the word.

Abbot Christopher Jamison says in his book, *'Finding Sanctuary'*:

"a concept is in trouble when it is used freely by politicians and community is just such a concept."

Abbot Christopher goes on to add:

"The ease with which some things are declared to be a community is now quite extraordinary".

Here are some communities mentioned recently by the media. People who ride bikes are 'the cycling community', spies and their spymasters are 'the intelligence community', and people whose names appear on the same database become 'a database community'. By sharing a postcode you immediately become 'a neighbourhood community'. And so it goes on and on.

Nobody denies that these groups have something distinctive in common, but it is a misuse of the concept of community. To assume that by simply joining a group one can claim to be a community without having to do the more demanding work with other people.

Questions for sharing in a small group (15 mins)

- 1. What is your experience of being part of a community?**
- 2. What is our shared language shared rituals and shared memories as a Church community?**

As Friends of St Eugene, Community begins for us when we show awareness to those around us and we may not be aware how much power our actions over the community.

We are connected in so many ways as family by blood, by nationality, by beliefs or by interests. In fact, any shared interest offers a strong forum for members of the community to build relationships out of which they can learn from one another and make an impact on the society or culture around them.



Hints for Facilitator: Display these next 5 key points of Fr. Zago OMI.

Fr. Marcello Zago OMI (a former Superior General) spoke about the elements of a religious Oblate Community as being more than just people living under the same roof! There are five key dimensions:

- (i). A **human** dimension of mutual understanding and friendship.
- (ii). A **Christian** dimension of sharing the faith.
- (iii). A **religious** dimension of support from their vows (for Religious Oblates)
- (iv). A **missionary** dimension in the planning and carrying out of our ministry.
- (v). An **economic** dimension in openness in the administration and sharing of goods.

INPUT 2 - Beginnings of Oblate community (25 mins)



Hints for Facilitator: The following section is compiled with extra information for the Facilitator, which should be used in conjunction with **handout 9**. This handout contains quotes of St. Eugene.

INTRODUCTION

From the time of his ordination in 1811, Eugene de Mazenod wanted to give himself to the service of the poor and of the youth in Aix-en-Provence. For three years he worked by himself with those who spoke Provençal, the servants, the youth and the prisoners. He was also a spiritual director at the seminary in Aix. This work all ended when he contracted typhus in 1814 and was so dangerously ill. On his recovery, he became aware that the needs of the poor were so great that he could not cope with it alone.

So from the beginning the plan to preach to the poor of Provence involved a community of priests who would live together in the same house, and would be held together by a rule and a regular lifestyle.

1. Apostolic model

Icard, one of Eugene's first companions was expelled after the first mission. Deblieu left to become a Diocesan Priest. So, out of Eugene's first 4 companions, only 2 remained with him – Mie & Tempier. Then, in Blessed Joseph Gérard's time, there was an Irish man, another French man, and this particular French man took the first ship back. So, these were very human men and they did not necessarily choose each other as friends.

2. We form a family.

We have a deep sense of family life expressed by Eugene to his companions.

3. Centred around the presence of Jesus.

Jesus our Saviour is our centre point in our lives.

4. Aim is to sanctify its members.

Eugene's model of religious community came from his experience with the setting up of youth congregations who looked after each other's welfare, in sickness and death. The question at the back of Eugene's mind was always:

**Is your group a meaningful community for you?
Can you say that it is like "a mother" for you?**

5. Charity is its pivot

In other words, it meant seeing others through the eyes of the Saviour, even those who mock Christians. Charity is translated into action by being compassionate to the weakest sections of society.

6. The whole community is always missionary.

Be it those who are actively involved in ministry as well as those who need to stay at home and partake in the administration duties. One needs the other and both aspects need to keep prayer as the centre point for building up the community.

7. Community life is not to be sacrificed to the mission.

Eugene urged his companions to look closely at the quality of their being. The motto was always "**Be** in order **to do**". There are 120 rules in CCRS out of 798 that relate to Community.

Fr. Marcello Zago omi (former Superior General) said:

"The associate strives to live the objective: 'charity among you' in the diverse places and situations of his / her particular state, for instance in the home, in groupings of associates, and in Oblate communities where the associates are active".

Friends of St Eugene as a small Christian Communities (15 mins)

Blessed John Paul II had called the small Christian Community as "*communio*".

He said:

"This is our highest vocation: to enter into communion with God and with our brothers and sisters".

Fraternal Life in Community, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life, 9

(a). How could we become "a real community" in this Friends grouping?

(b). What does it say for other relationships with other Oblate Friends groupings?

Instruction for the Facilitator: invite the group to think about 2-3 points for the two questions on their own. Then, discuss it within their small group and then feedback to large group.

"To do God's will is not a solitary task. Companions will join me on this journey. Some will be of my choosing and others will not; both deserve my respect".

CLOSING SECTION

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting

Closing prayer



Session 8: St. Eugene, the Church and reading the signs of the times

Resources

- Display an Oblate cross or another representation of a Cross
- Display a picture of St. Eugene de Mazenod
- DVD player and DVD: "Heart as big as the world"
- Copies of questions for small group sharing (**handout 10**)

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome and introduce theme

Opening Prayer

Review of last session

Input 1

St. Eugene's charism is mentioned in this section of the DVD. A charism is a special grace given by the Holy Spirit to meet the needs of the Church at a particular time. This session is focused on St. Eugene's life, his early years and ministry.

Watch Part 1 on the DVD

0:29 – 16:05 (16 mins)

Silence to consider

1. What are your first impressions upon watching the DVD?
2. How do you relate to what happened to St. Eugene?

Share in pairs (as little or as much as you wish) (10 mins)

Questions for small group sharing (15 mins.)

(see supplement section – **handout 10** for participants)

1. St. Eugene worried that the Church would vanish.

- What did St. Eugene do to prevent the Church from vanishing?
- Do you share these worries in today's climate of faith? (lack of faith).
- Would it make a difference to me if the Church vanished?
- How has the Church helped me in my life?

2. St. Eugene did not believe that anyone was beyond redemption.

- How did he witness to this belief in his life?
- Who do I or society consider beyond redemption today?
- How have I reached out to them or thought about reaching out to them?

Share in the large group (10 mins)

CLOSING SECTION (10 mins)

Closing Thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting

Closing prayer



Session 9: Christ the source of our unity

Resources

- Display an Oblate cross.
- Have some paper and pencils.
- Display on PowerPoint screen:
 - texts of the Oblate Constitutions
 - St. Teresa of Avila prayer.

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome & Introduce the theme

Opening Prayer

Review of last session

Introduction to “Christ, the source of our unity” (15 mins)

We began in February by looking at “How Christ enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family”. We talked of conversion to Christ and how conversion leads us to action and we finished by naming St. Eugene as a revealer of God’s love to us.

Input 1

During a retreat in 1814, Eugene discerned that his life had lost its focus and its unity with Christ because his ministry was overwhelming his inner life. There was too much activity and not enough prayer. However, Eugene would come to learn that it was not just more prayer that was needed but he needed to find Jesus *in his activity*.

“I looked for happiness outside of God and for too long with resulting unhappiness. How many times in my past life had my torn, tormented heart taken wings for God from whom it had turned away. Thus, I had looked for happiness outside of God, and outside of Him I found only affliction and vexation”.

Good Friday experience (1807)

Silence to consider

How does this sentence resonate with you?

Sharing in pairs

Input 2 (20 mins)

What we have been doing in this “IFC” (Impassioned for Christ) programme is recognising how our lives have been enriched by our connection to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the charism of St. Eugene. As Friends of St. Eugene, we have united ourselves with St. Eugene and have recognised how St. Eugene has been showing us the way to Christ.

CCRR 31 (first sentence)

“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”.

We call ourselves the Body of Christ and we are called to be members of an Incarnational Church. In the prayer attributed to **St. Teresa of Avila** we hear:

**Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.**

Facilitator's instructions for the group: There are people in our lives who show us the face of Christ. By yourself, think about the following questions:

Who comes to mind as you hear that prayer?

Have you any stories of people who have been Christ to you?

Feedback to the large group

CCRR 31 (second sentence)

"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".

Summary on CCRR 31

St. Eugene had three suggestions for maintaining an inner life.

(i). within ourselves we maintain *"an atmosphere of silence and inner peace"*.

(ii). Everywhere we are to seek the Lord's 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"*.

(iii). We maintain an attitude of *"pilgrims, walking with Jesus in faith, hope and love"*.

Input 3 (15 mins)

Looking at the Constitutions and rules, St. Eugene wrote about unity with Christ, which relates to us in our Christian lives.

CCRR 2 (second sentence)

"We are disciples of Jesus. The desire to co-operate with Him draws us to know him more deeply, to identify with Him, to let him live in us. We strive to reproduce in ourselves the pattern of his life".

Summary on CCRR 2

- We are disciples of Jesus; therefore we become his co-workers for the Kingdom here on earth.
- We strive to know Christ personally and we allow Christ to grow in us and be the central part of our individual and collective lives as a community.
- Friends of St. Eugene seek to do God's will in all things and they also have a desire to be on fire with that missionary zeal of St. Eugene.

CLOSING SECTION

Closing thoughts: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements & Thank you

Date of next meeting & Closing Prayer



Session 10: Discernment

Resources

- Have copies of "Friends" Handbook for each participant.
- Display on PowerPoint screen the 2 discernment questions, outline of themes of IFC programme.
- Writing pens and plain writing paper.

OPENING SECTION (15 mins)

Welcome and introduce the theme

Opening prayer & reminder of the purpose of IFC

Personal reflection, paired and large group sharing

Write down 3 things you remember from the "IFC" programme.

- What struck you the most about our Friends of St. Eugene meetings?
- What were the highlights for you in our time spent together?

Share with the person next to you.

Invite for large group sharing.

Themes of the IFC programme are displayed on a sheet of paper for each person. We've been through this IFC programme.. give a rough outline of each of the themes of IFC programme....Jan., Feb... until Dec.

Meaning of commitment (15 mins)

Brainstorm techniques

What words spring to mind when you hear the word "commitment"?

Spend a few moments to consider the following questions on your own:

- Have I been committed to the Friends of St. Eugene in the past year?
- Is meeting together with the other Friends of St Eugene at the monthly meeting important to me?

The commitment a Friend of St Eugene makes?

What we have been doing over the last 10 months has been to help you decide if you wish to formalise your commitment to the Oblate family through the Friends of St Eugene. It is a yearly commitment, and this is what it entails....

Facilitator shares aspects of "Friends handbook" with group: Look at understanding the commitment page of "Friends of St. Eugene booklet" (FoSE).
A question for the group to think about:
Do I feel ready to make a commitment for a year to the Friends of St. Eugene?

Discernment exercise (15 mins.)

Ways of working:

(see supplement section – **handout 11** – questions to be given to each participant.)

Instruction for the group: We ask you to think about the 2 questions on your own. Then, taking it in turns, speak to the person beside you and share your thoughts on your answers. After a short while, you will be asked to circulate around the people in the group and speak to at least 3-4 other people about their reflections and share your own.

1. How does the commitment to Friends of St. Eugene fit with your life?

2. Is being a part of the Friends of St Eugene something that you wish to continue with?

Summary and feedback in large group (10 mins.)

Any comments / questions

CLOSING SECTION

Closing thought: Invite people to take a few minutes to think about their experience of the meeting and share a word, which describes their experience.

Announcements

Everyone is invited to a celebration on with Mass and enrolment as Friends of St. Eugene by You may invite friends and family to this celebration. You are also invited to contribute to a "bring and share" as part of Friends celebration.

Thank you & date for enrolment mass and celebration & Closing Prayer

Resource materials:

DVD: "The story of the Anglo-Irish Province: Living a life that matters" and "Heart as big as the world".

Contact: Fr. Lorcán O'Reilly OMI / Fr. Brian Maher OMI

Address: Director of Oblate Partners in Mission
Denis Hurley House
14 Quex Road
London NW6 4PL, U.K.

Telephone no: +00-44-207-624-7296

Email: denishurleyhouse@oblates.co.uk

DVD: "St. Eugene de Mazenod: The other side of struggle" and "Harvest of souls: The canonization of Bishop Eugene de Mazenod, O.M.I."

Booklet: Guide for Oblate Associates of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Contact: Gerri Furmanek

Address: National Director of Mission Enrichment & Oblate Associates
Oblate Media Centre
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
224 S. De Mazenod Dr.
Belleville, IL 62223, USA.

Telephone no: +001-877-361-4617.

Email: gfurm224@aol.com

DVD: "The Nazarene" which is related to the missionary work of Fr. Charlie Burrows OMI in Indonesia.

Contact: Fr. Tom McCabe OMI

Address: Oblate Mission Development Office
Tyrconnell Road,
Inchicore
Dublin 8, Ireland

Telephone No: +00-353-1-402-0815.

Email: info@oblatemissions.ie

Constitutions and Rules of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Rome 2000.

Historical Dictionary of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Vol. I & Vol. II
- The Oblates in France at the Time of the Founder.
Association for Oblate Studies and Research, Rome 2008 & Rome 2010.

Dictionary of Oblate Values under the direction of Fabio Ciardi O.M.I.
Association of Oblate Studies and Research, Rome 2000.

CONTENTS on IFC CD

- 1. CCRR quotes for Discernment session.pdf**
- 2. eugenecharism.pptx**
- 3. Everyday God - Bernadette Farrell.doc**
- 4. FOSE Handbook.doc**
- 5. How Christ enriches life of Oblate family.pptx**
- 6. How Community life enriches the Oblate family.pptx**
- 7. Marian Shrines quiz.doc**
- 8. Marian shrines.pptx**
- 9. old and young woman.pdf**
- 10. olde england map.pdf**
- 11. Session II - The Oblate story so far.pptx**
- 12 Supplement section for handouts - IFC.doc**
- 13. William Steckling link.doc**
- 14. Youtube link for Fr Chavas Gonzales.doc**
- 15. Resources material**
- 16. FoSE Immaculate Conception mass - Enrolment ceremony**

SUPPLEMENT SECTION FOR HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 1 - Impassioned for Christ, the Church and the Mission (Identity of Lay Associates text – 1996 Congress, Aix-en-Provence)

- Friends of St Eugene are people who try to live out their baptismal call, and as a result of working with the Missionary Oblate Brothers and Priests share the same missionary outlook as St.Eugene.
- Friends of St Eugene are disciples of Jesus who seek to follow in the footsteps of the Apostles and St.Eugene. They give witness to their faith in the places where they live and work. They deepen their relationship with Jesus through reading the Word of God and praying. The Eucharist and the Gospel are central to their lives. Mary is their model.
- Friends of St Eugene recognise the dignity of every person before God. They make their family and family life as one of the priorities of their mission. They reach out to others. They fight injustice wherever they see it. This is their mission – their option for the poor.
- Friends of St Eugene, like St. Eugene, love the Church, and the people of God – who are the signs and instrument of Jesus in the world today.
- Friends of St Eugene are always linked with the Oblate Congregation. This link may vary according to the situation.
- Friends of St Eugene and vowed Oblates complement each other. They help each other to grow in a spirit of openness and trust. They respect each other's vocation.
- Friends of St Eugene and Oblates meet together *, when possible, as a support for each other in their mission – to the world, to the church and to the Oblate Congregation.
- Friends of St Eugene live simply; they are recognisable by their togetherness, by their charity, and by their openness to others. They are persons of prayer who live in solidarity with the people of their area.

<p>Note for Facilitator: * mention groups where Oblates and Lay people currently meet and work together.</p>

Question for group: “Can you see your life through these texts?”

HANDOUT 2 – L'Oraison prayer sheet

Oh come, let us worship and bow down, and let us kneel before the Lord for He is our God. (*Psalms 95*)

Enfold us, Lord.

Keep your protection near and any danger far from us.

Enfold us, Lord

Keep our hopes alive and discard doubt.

Enfold us, Lord.

Keep us ever in your light and out of the darkness.

Enfold us, Lord.

Keep peace, love and joy deep within us.

You are worthy indeed Lord to receive not just the worship and praise of our lips, but also of our hearts and souls. You created all things for a purpose, and we are part of your purpose in this place and at this moment in time.

Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks, honour and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen

Suggested Hymn - Tantum Ergo

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

Silent prayer time lasts for about 20 -30 minutes

In the wonder of this moment

We worship you

In the company of your people

We worship you

In the beauty of all creation

We worship you

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Glorious Trinity

We worship you

Let us begin our time of quiet.

A time to think about our God whom we serve, our God whom we worship and our God whom we love

At the end of the silence

Through our words of prayer and adoration

We lift your name on high

Through our songs of praise and thanksgiving

We lift your name on high

Through our lives, our attitudes and acts of service

We lift your name on high

Together we share in the words of the Lord's prayer

Our Father

Creator God, you are one with the Holy Spirit and with your Son may we also be one, united in your Church. As members of the Oblate family we offer you our lives in service to those most abandoned. Together with one another, we proclaim:

To God be all praise and honour and glory and power, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing (if no Priest is available)

Bless us and bless those for whom we pray tonight. (pause)

Holy God, we praise you through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the love of your Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen

Suggested hymn – O Sacrament most holy.



HANDOUT 3 - Contents of Introduction - "IMPASSIONED FOR CHRIST"

In Impassioned for Christ we explore over the period of a year what friendship with St Eugene and the Oblates could mean.

We hope that Impassioned for Christ will, in itself, be enriching for you and that you will grow in your relationship with Christ as a result of taking part.

The ultimate goal is to see at the end of the year if you wish to carry the "Friends of Eugene" forward and if so how.

In Impassioned for Christ, the Oblates offer to share their charism with you and it evokes a response from you.

At the end of the year, as a Friend of St. Eugene, you may decide whether you wish to continue the friendship with the Oblates and in what manner.

The **content** of the Oblate sharing includes the following

Impassioned for Christ journey

An outline of the Oblate missionary charism sharing's

1 st session	Launching Impassioned for Christ.
2 nd session	How Christ enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family.
3 rd session	How Mary enriches the lives of Oblates and The Oblate family.
4 th session	How St.Eugene enriches the lives of the Oblates and the Oblate family
5 th session	How the Oblates live out their mission in the world today.
6 th session	How the Oblates live out their mission to the poor and marginalised in the (Anglo-Irish) local province.
7 th session	How community enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family.
8 th session	St.Eugene, the Church and reading the signs of the times.
9 th session	Christ the source of our unity.
10 th session	Discernment.
11 th session	Enrolment mass and celebration.

The retreat experience and holiday break have not been included in this schedule.

HANDOUT 4 - The Motherhood story

Hints for Facilitator: You may need to get 4-5 volunteers who will speak the voices of the Narrator (**N**), the mother (**Mo.**), the guide (**G**) and some children (**Ch.**)

The Young mother set foot on the path of life. *(Temple Bailey)*

Mo. *'Is the way long?'*

N. she asked. And the guide said:

Gd. *'Yes, and the way is hard. And you will be old before you reach the end of it. But the end will be better than the beginning'.*

N. But the young mother was happy, and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, and gathered flowers for them along the way, and bathed with them in clear streams; and the young mother cried,

Mo. *'Nothing will ever be lovelier than this'.*

N. Then the night came, and storm, and the path was dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle, and the children said,

Ch. *'Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and no harm can come'.*

N. And the mother said,

Mo. *'This is better than the brightness of day, for I have taught my children – **Courage**'.*

N. And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the mother was weary, but at all times she said to the children,

Mo. *'a little patience and we are there'.*

N. So the children climbed and when they reached the top, they said,

Ch. *'Mother, we would not have done it without you'.*

N. And the mother, when she lay down that night, looked up at the stars and said:

Mo. *'This is a better day than the last one, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness. Yesterday, I gave them courage, today, I have given them **Strength**'.*

N. And on the next day, came strange clouds, which darkened the earth – clouds of war and hate and evil, and the children groped and stumbled, and the mother said:

Mo. *'Look up, lift your eyes to the light'.*

N. And the children looked and saw above the clouds an Everlasting Glory, and it guided them and brought them beyond the darkness. And that night the mother said,

Mo. *'this is the best day of all, for I have shown my children **God**'.*

N. And the days went on, and the weeks and months and the years, and the mother grew old, and she was little and her back bent. But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage.

N. And when the way was hard, they helped their mother: and when the way was rough, they lifted her; for she was light as a feather, and at last they came to a hill, and beyond they could see a shining road and the golden gates flung wide.

And the mother said:

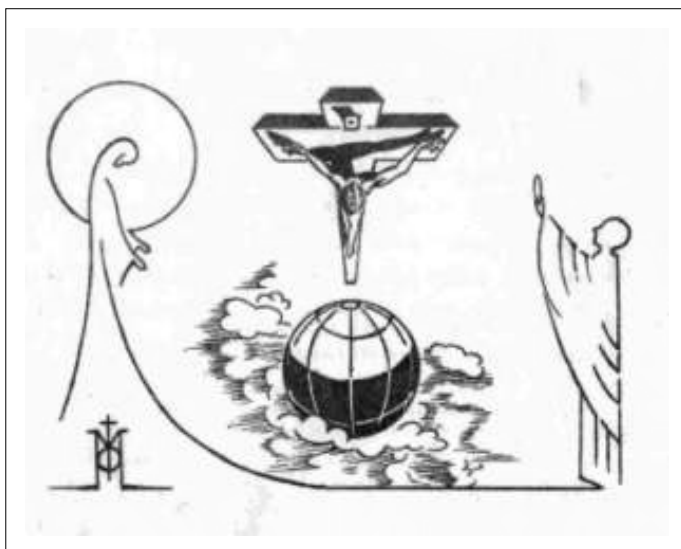
Mo. *' I have reached the end of my journey. And now I know that the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone, and their children after them'.*

N. And the children said,

Ch. *'You will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates'.*

N. And they stood and watched her as went on alone, and the gates closed after her. And they said:

Ch. *'We cannot see her, but she is with us still. A mother like ours is more than a memory, **she is a living presence**'.*



HANDOUT 5 – Scripture reference to Mary

Luke 1:38

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it to me according to your word.

Matthew 1: 18-25 His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, ..

Luke 1: 46-55 And Mary said, my soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord...

Matthew 2: 11

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him:

Luke 2:19

As for Mary she treasured all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Matthew 2:13

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said:

'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt...

Luke 2: 34-35

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'you see this child:

he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare'.

Luke 2: 48-51

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said to him,

'my child, why have you done this to us? See, how worried your father and I have been looking for you'.

John 2:5 His mother said to the servants: 'Do whatever he tells you'.

Mark 3:31 There came then his brothers and his mother, and standing outside, sent in a message, calling him.

Mark 6:3 This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joset, and Jude and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

John 19:27 Then said he to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

HANDOUT 6 - Questions for small group sharing

GROUP 1

St. Eugene came to understand that he could not respond to the call of Christ alone.

- What was St. Eugene's response?
 - Who in your life has affected your call to Christ?
 - Where do you presently find support for your response to Christ's call?
-

GROUP 2

St. Eugene was a man impassioned for Christ.

- How did Christ reveal himself to St. Eugene in the course of his life?
 - How has St. Eugene's passion for Christ shown itself in his life?
 - How has Christ revealed himself in your life?
 - How have you responded?
-



HANDOUT 7 – Blessed Joseph Gérard -Missionary in Lesotho (1831-1914)

Born near Nancy in France, in the village of Bouxières-aux-Chénes on March 12th 1831, Joseph Gérard spent his childhood on the family farm but, with the help of the parish priest, was able to commence his studies for the priesthood. Whilst in the local seminary, he was impressed by accounts of the missionary work of some priests of the newly founded Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and, desiring to join them in their endeavours, he entered the Oblate Congregation. He was ordained a deacon by the Founder of the Oblates, Blessed Eugene de Mazenod, who with great confidence in Joseph, assigned him at the age of 22 to the mission of Natal in South Africa.

In May 1853, Joseph Gérard set off for his mission field, never to see France again. On Feb. 19th 1854, he was ordained priest by Bishop Allard OMI in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and started his ministry to the local white population, but especially to the Zulu people. His years of journeying through difficult countryside, of sleeping in the open, of learning new languages, of cold and of heat began to have a deep impact on him. Despite all his good efforts, his ministry among the Zulus did not seem to bear immediate fruit, and with a sense of great disappointment in this apparent failure, he moved in 1862 to Lesotho to bring the Gospel to the Basotho people. Fr. Gérard, however, lived to see the movement of faith later among the Zulus, and he rejoiced in the grace of God so wonderfully given and received. He had been part of sowing the first seed.

But, Lesotho was to become his new mission field, and he laboured there for the next 52 years. Together with this nation he was to travel a wonderful journey to God. Faced initially with indifference, even scorn at times, Fr. Gérard worked and prayed for more than two years before he won his first Basotho catechumen. Even after that, progress was slow, but his determination, his dedication, his forgetfulness of self took effect quietly but surely. The Catholic missionaries were well received by

King Moshoeshoe I, and Fr. Gérard showed his gratitude for this by his loyalty especially when the nation was under attack by the Boers. King Moshoeshoe I, much to Gérard's disappointment, never embraced Christianity, but later his grandson Griffith Leretholi who rose to be Paramount Chief became a Catholic, to the very great joy of Fr. Gérard.

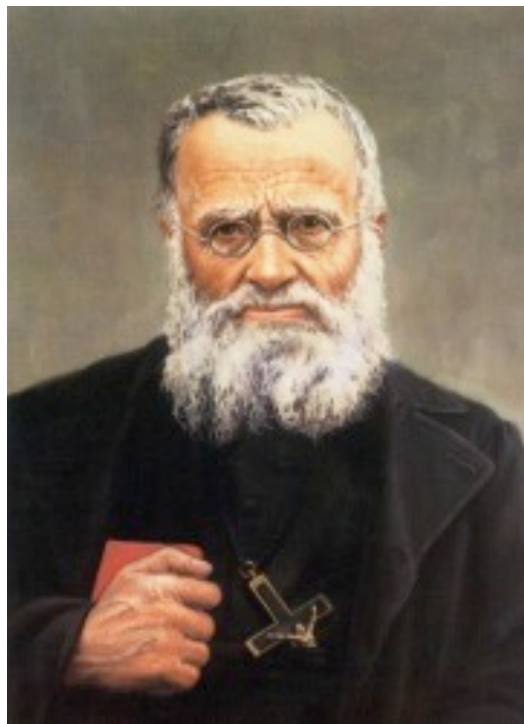
However, more and more people in these early years heard the message of Christ, and came into the Church. There were many baptisms, there were some defections, but in God's good time the work of Fr. Gérard grew apace. Grace was taking hold of the Basotho people. Within five years of his coming, there was the beginnings of a Congregation of local sisters and his first mission station at Roma was to blossom. Today, it is the site of many novitiates and of seminaries, a University founded by the Oblates, high schools, numerous religious houses, a hospital – all the legacy of this remarkable man of God.

Throughout his years in Lesotho, Fr. Gérard's concern and care for the sick and the old was remarkable – even heroic at times. Despite the distance, despite the weather, despite the inconvenience, he would set out on foot or on horseback, carrying the Blessed Sacrament, to minister to those afflicted. His first converts absorbed his deep devotion to Mary, and since his day, the nation has been dedicated to Mary Immaculate. There is no count of the miles he travelled up and down the steep mountains of Lesotho, and his all-embracing care of the weak, the sick, of those in need, is part of the history and love of the people of Lesotho. His deep commitment to prayer was always an example to the people, and at his funeral, one of them expressed it well: **"Fr. Gérard was a man who, you might say, did not eat food but fed himself on prayer, and if prayer is something with which one can feed the people, then, he has fed us Basotho too, for a very long time"**.

Fr. Gérard laboured for many years preaching, consoling, leading to God, and he also kept contact with people in South Africa. The last years of his life were spent back at his first mission in Roma. He still continued his rounds of visiting even when arthritis bent

him over almost double, his sight was mostly gone, and he had to be lifted up on to his faithful host "Artaban". Up to a month before his death, he was out on the mountain tracks caring for those in need. He was 83 at the time. On May 29th, 1914 after a life of patient and enduring devotion, Joseph Gérard in the fullness of years, came face to face with the Master he had served so long and so well.

Fr. Gérard, in one of his retreat notes, gave the key to his constancy when he wrote about the people he served: **"....we must love them, love them in spite of everything, love them always"**. He lived out his belief in the joy of spreading God's Word, despite the hardships and opposition he encountered. In his loving, he drew the Basothos with him to the contemplation of God. The Church recognised this when Pope John Paul II, on his 1988 pastoral visit to Lesotho, knelt at the grave of this great missionary, and on September 15th before a vast multitude of the Basotho people declared their spiritual father, Blessed Joseph Gérard OMI that **"Love had reached its fullness. The world belongs to the person who loves it most and proves it"**.



Handout 8 – Some key influences from Oblates in the local (Anglo-Irish) Province

Take home to ponder on...



Hints for Facilitator: *you may show pictures of Archbishop Denis Hurley, Fr. Joe Taafe, Irish Welfare Centre.* Have these notes printed out in the leaflet for the participants.

If you are from another Province, you may show Oblates who do have or have had key influence in your local region. Speak to your local Oblate.

Denis Hurley:

He was a native-born South African, Irish Parents. Denis joined the Oblates and joined the Novitiate in Ireland. After which, he went to Rome to study Theology. Soon after that, he returned to South Africa as a Priest. At 32 years old, Fr. Denis became Archbishop of Durban and held that office for a very long time. Archbishop Hurley was a Father of the Second Vatican Council, a distinguished liturgist, a courageous and unflappable foe of the apartheid regime as He was renowned for his resolute battles fought openly against apartheid. Being a dedicated prophet of justice and reconciliation, he talked openly about social justice questions and the Formation of Priests.

Joe Taafe:

Fr. Joe, after his Ordination became an Industrial Chaplain and he lived along with the workers in such places as *Trawsfynydd*, which is near *Blaenau Ffestiniog*. There was a lot of Irish people living and working there at a Nuclear Power station. Fr. Joe then worked in the Housing Association in Birmingham, dealing with poor people's problems. It was there that he became involved in the case of "*the Birmingham six*". Fr. Joe did a lot to get

the case re-opened and he was a constant visitor to the 6 of them when they were in prison.

Additional notes for Facilitator: If you see a picture of “*the Birmingham six*” at the moment they were released from the Old Bailey, after the verdict was overturned; you will notice that the first person to greet them is Fr. Joe who is a smallish in stature man, with a bag under his arm.

Irish Welfare Centre – (IWIC) Birmingham:

The Irish Welfare Centre was set up in the 1960s due to thousands of Irish emigrating to the UK. There were issues of homelessness, crime (a high percentage in prison), and unemployment. Lots of Contractors and building firms contacted to employ people who just arrived from Ireland. Lots of retired Irish people were using fictional names, and it was a problem at the moment of death as it was difficult to identify their next of kin. Programme was set up for identifying bodies. IWIC put in *Rights* representing people for whom their homes were unlawfully taken over. IWIC developed techniques of collecting and analysing social data – getting funding to answer those needs: competitive tendency for Services. *De Mazenod* House was provided for Elderly Irish. Research undertaken at Birmingham University: after 100 deaths, it was noticed that Irish people were dying younger than anybody else. Causes identified were mainly natural & neglect. Local Health Authorities couldn't do much as they thought they had to be impartial. IWIC – came across individuals (both Irish & Muslims) were being neglected by local Health Service that was run by a Muslim group. They resented anyone who drank alcohol. Because they did not stop drinking, they were neglected, some even died due to neglect. Other needs responded to have included tickets being provided for people repatriating back to Ireland.

London Irish Centre:

A Diocesan Priest Fr. McNamara set it up and it existed temporarily on an informal basis for people migrating from Ireland to London. Due to the growing numbers, and the need for permanence, the Oblates were called in to run it. They ran it from 1967 to 2004. It mainly provides Housing for Irish immigrants. Also, supporting them with Welfare: welfare rights, benefits, and jobs. In the 1960's, London was not so multi-cultural and cosmopolitan, and it was very daunting for Irish people coming over especially from rural Ireland. There were complex issues to cope with, even a residue of anti-Irish sentiment to contend with, and also stereotypes that go with it. Hence, a Ghetto mentality – for example, all Irish kept together in Camden town, Kilburn. It is only with the second generation that Cultural and Social integration has started to take effect on the Irish community.



HANDOUT 9 - How Community enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family.

1. Apostolic model

The model for the life of the Missionaries was that of the apostles around Jesus. In his invitation to Tempier to join him, Eugene used the expression that he was looking for men who had "the will and the courage to walk in the footsteps of the apostles."

2. We form a family.

In one of his early letters to Father Tempier, he exclaims, "Between us missionaries ... we are what we ought to be, that is to say, we have but one heart, one soul, one thought. It is admirable! Our consolations, like our hardships are unequalled. In an atmosphere of mutual support, all difficulties are surmountable, even if the members are dispersed.

3. Centred around the presence of Jesus.

"This is the only way of reducing distances, to be at the same moment in our Lord's presence, it is so to speak like being side by side. We do not see each other, but we sense each other's presence, hear each other, lose ourselves in one and the same central point".

4. Aim is to sanctify its members.

"We are put on earth, particularly those of our house, to sanctify ourselves while helping each other by our example, our words and our prayers".

5. Charity is its pivot

"...Charity is the pivot on which our whole existence turns. ... Charity for our neighbour is again an essential part of our spirit. We practice it first amongst us by loving each other as brothers, by considering our Society only as the most united family which exists on the earth, by rejoicing over the virtues, the talents and other qualities that our brothers possess just as much as if we possessed them ourselves, in bearing with mildness the

little faults that some have not yet overcome, covering them over with the mantle of the most sincere charity".

6. The whole community is always missionary.

".....all are missionaries, because those who stay at home are praying for the workers, and studying to prepare themselves in turn for their own preaching when their turn comes: "If you do not pray for us, we are in a bad fix".

7. Community life is not to be sacrificed to the mission.

"But beware of driving yourself as if it were a challenge. In God's name, go back to the bosom of the community to renew yourselves in the spirit of your vocation. Otherwise it is all up with our missionaries. They will soon be no more than sounding cymbals".

How could we become real in this Friends grouping?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What does it say for our relationships with other Oblate Friends groupings?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

"To do God's will is not a solitary task. Companions will join me on this journey. Some will be of my choosing and others will not; both deserve my respect".

HANDOUT 10 – “St. Eugene, the Church and the Sign of the times”

Questions for small group sharing

1. St. Eugene worried that the Church would vanish.

- What did St. Eugene do to prevent the Church from vanishing?
 - Do you share these worries in today’s climate of faith? (lack of faith).
 - Would it make a difference to me if the Church vanished?
 - How has the Church helped me in my life?
-

2. St. Eugene did not believe that anyone was beyond redemption.

- How did he witness to this belief in his life?
 - Who do I / society consider beyond redemption today?
 - How have I reached out to them or thought about reaching out to them?
-



HANDOUT 11 – Discernment

Ways of working – questions for participants

1. How does the commitment to Friends of St. Eugene fit with your life?
 2. Is being a part of the Friends of St Eugene something that you that you wish to continue with?
-



APPENDIX 1- suggestions of OPENING PRAYERS

OPENING PRAYER - Introduction session

The focus for this prayer is on the importance of **our baptismal name**.

Focal point: Big candle and bowl of water on table.

- a. Lighting **big candle**.... Short thought: on what occasions do we light candles..... centre ourselves. We may either close our eyes or focus on the candle.
- b. Make **sign of the Cross**... reminder of our baptism when our Parents & God Parents made that first sign of the Cross on our foreheads!
- c. Hymn: **Taize chant** to reflect on our baptismal name:

Take a few moments for each of the participants to light their candles and place it around the bowl of water.

- d. **Scripture reading: Matt. 3: 16 - 17.** Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan.

Pause for silent prayer

Jesus being called personally and commissioned by His Heavenly Father at the very start of bringing about His Father's Kingdom.

Each of us at our baptism was called by our NAME i.e. with all our imperfections. God in his unconditional love does the calling and we only have to respond. Today each of you responded in a little way by agreeing to let me write you out a NAME badge. It may or may not seem a petty thing, but each one of you have made a stand to be here to respond to that loving call and invitation from God in Jesus Christ's name.

St. Eugene, the founder of the Oblates.. his name echoes in our hearts tonight as he echoes Christ call and invitation to "live a life that matters" to you.

Finally, Mary, Our Heavenly Mother responded clearly with a "yes" to God's call for her. So, we pray with her as we say...

Hail Mary....

OPENING PRAYER – Introduction Session 2

Litany for St. Eugene de Mazenod

St. Eugene, the Church has recognised your holiness and proclaimed you as a model for others in their search for Christ. Pray with us as we intercede for others and ourselves in their need.

St. Eugene, you experienced the love of God *pray for us*

St. Eugene, preacher of the Good News *pray for us*

St. Eugene, lover of the Blessed Sacrament *pray for us*

St. Eugene, intercessor for all who live in poverty *pray for us*

St. Eugene, you brought others to God's love *pray for us*

St. Eugene, encourager of youth *pray for us*

St. Eugene, founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate *pray for us*

St. Eugene, faithful to the example of Mary our Mother *pray for us*

With St. Eugene, we pray for those who suffer the pain
of broken relationships *Lord hear our prayer*

With St. Eugene, we pray for those who live in exile *Lord hear our prayer*

With St. Eugene, we pray for those in prison *Lord hear our prayer*

With St. Eugene, we pray for those who live in fear *Lord hear our prayer*

With St. Eugene, we pray for those who are persecuted *Lord hear our prayer*

With St. Eugene, we pray for those who work for justice *Lord hear our prayer*

Let us pray: God of joyful hope and faithful love: you call us to share more fully in the mission of your Son. Inspired by the charism of St. Eugene, may we be witnesses to the power and presence of Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit, may we always be disciples of the Good News, especially among the poor and most abandoned. **Amen.**

OPENING PRAYER – 1st session

(The Focal symbols: Circle of Friends/ candleholder with candle in the centre and matches for lighting the candle.)

Friends feel safe and trust one another and are at ease with each other in sharing words and in sharing silence.

As you hear these words of a “People Place” being read out... imagine these words are from your closest friend Jesus, so allow yourself to respond with your heart...

“A People Place” poem - William J. Crockett

If this is not a place where tears are understood.

Where do I go to cry?

If this is not a place where my spirits can take wing.

Where do I go to fly?

If this is not a place where my questions can be asked.

Where do I go to seek?

If this is not a place where my feelings can be heard.

Where do I go to speak?

If this is not a place where you will accept me as I am

Where can I go to be?

If this is not a place where I can try to learn and grow.

Where can I just be me?

Moments for silence

"St. Eugene on his search for friendship speaks about it when he first entered the seminary". (*Self-Portrait for his Spiritual Director on entering seminary*)

We hear that Eugene drew his ideal of friendship from literature rather than from life – and from the deep longings of his heart.

"I have longed for a friend, but I have never found one, at least one such as I am seeking; it is true that I am hard to please for as it is my nature to give generously I expect the same in return". (*self-portrait to his Spiritual Director on entering the seminary*)

Moments for silence

I invite you to join in singing the Chorus of "**A new commandment..**". I invite you to place your right hand gently on the shoulder of the person beside you and ask Jesus' special blessing of friendship for that person's life.

Let us bring our prayer to a close as we pray the words that our eternal friend Jesus taught us. **Our Father....**

Mary Immaculate**pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod... **pray for us.**

OPENING PRAYER – 2nd session

(*Focal point:* suggestion to use Oblate cross and Picture of St.Eugene.)

In the 'Good news' / the Gospels, I see how Jesus lived and acted, how he entered into relationship with each person. When I look closely at John's Gospel (**Jn.1: 36-39**), I see Jesus encountering John the Baptist's disciples and asking them about their needs, namely: **"What do you want?"** And they put a question back to Jesus, namely: **"Where do you live?"** Jesus puts the ball back into their court and gives them a personal, direct invitation to them: **"Come and see"**.

Jesus calls each one of us into a personal, intimate relationship with himself.

As Jesus invites us to follow him, he is also telling us that we must make a choice. If we choose one thing, it means we refuse another. If we choose to follow Jesus, we receive a gift of love and communion, but at the same time we must say, 'no' to the ways of the world and accept loss. **Jesus allows each of us to make our own choice freely.**

St. Eugene made his choice and as a result of that choice he called others into community with him. Through St. Eugene, many people were attracted to the person of Jesus Christ.

Insist on making Jesus Christ known and loved. Speak often of this Divine Saviour and of all He has done to save mankind. Make them resolve never to spend a day without praying.

Letter to Jean Viola, 17 January 1849, O.W.IV n.4

Our God is a here and now God. Every day we make a choice to live in the way that Jesus lived. Every night, we realise how difficult that choice can be. But by paying more attention to how we live we begin to notice evidence of God's presence in our day-to-day events and encounters. Jesus came to reveal an everyday God who loves us and calls each of us daily into a **personal, intimate relationship** with Him.

Invitation to listen or sing responses to hymn "Everyday God" - Bernadette Farrell" (there are words on YouTube to sing the responses)

OPENING PRAYER – 3rd session

The Angelus Prayer.

Leader: Thee Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:

All: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Leader: Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

All: Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary . . .

Leader: And the Word was made Flesh:

All: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary . . .

Leader: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,

All: that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader: Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen.

OPENING PRAYER– 4th session (prayed together)

Focal point suggestion: to include a statue of Mary.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER – 5th session (prayed together)

Focal point suggestion: Picture / statue of St. Eugene

Gracious God, come and assist us with your loving care. Be with us in our humanity; bless our brokenness with mercy and kindness, and let it strengthen us for our daily struggles. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Mary Immaculate pray for us.

St. Eugene de Mazenod pray for us.



OPENING PRAYER – 6th session

The Good News must first be proclaimed to all the nations. (*Mk 13:10*)

What is the good news? We all carry a piece of the Good News of the Gospel within us.

Anne Frank said, "Everyone has inside of him/her a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"

I think St.Eugene would have agreed with this statement.

Have a few moments in silence to thank God for some of the Good News in your life this week.

short period of silence

We always want to share good news with others. We recognise and thank God for the Good News we share with each other that God loves us and we are called to bring that love to others.

Let us pray for the courage to share God's good news with others.

When St.Eugene began his work of sharing the Good News, his idea of being a Missionary was to preach God's love to the people of Provence – his home place. It was only later that in generosity he responded to requests to send his priests throughout France and then the world.

Let us pray for the courage to be generous with our God given gifts.

Since then we have had some heroic examples of priests and brothers who have followed the Oblate way through sharing in the adventure of Eugene's dream. One of them whose feast we celebrate on May 29th is Blessed Joseph Gerard, the apostle of the Basuthos. In one of his retreat notes, Fr. Gérard, gave the key to his constancy when he wrote about the people he served: "... we must love them, love them in spite of everything, love them

always". He lived out his belief in the joy of spreading God's Word, despite the hardships and opposition he encountered. In his loving he drew the Basothos with him to the contemplation of God.

Let us pray for the courage to love all God's people

Other heroes include Blessed Jozef Cebula, who was killed in the concentration camp at Mauthausen in 1943, and so many others whose anonymous holiness is registered in the heart of God. December 17th 2011 was the beatification day of the 23 Spanish martyrs of Pozuelo. They were killed in Madrid during the Spanish Civil war in the 1930's.

Let us pray for the Church and for people who are persecuted for their faith in so many parts of the world.

We pray together: **Our Father**

Blessing:

Lord Jesus, You have promised to be present among us whenever we come together in Your Name. Remain with us as we meet for the benefit and love of your people and ourselves. Guide us in our discussions, and help us to do everything for your honour and glory and for the salvation of Your Church. Jesus, we praise you, for you are our Lord forever and ever. **Amen.**



OPENING PRAYER – 7th session

Leader: People have always wanted to be in relationship with each other since the earliest times. It is a basic human need to be together. Jesus gathered around him friends and companions on the journey to the cross and beyond. The friends of Jesus continued to gather after Jesus ascended into heaven and took his place at the Father's right hand. We are told,

Reader 1: (read scripture quote from Acts 2: 44-47)

In other words, the community of believers was of one heart and one mind. St Eugene also gathered around him like-minded men and formed the community we call the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. And we continue today in the same way. We gather together, we praise and thank God, we support each other and we share our goods with people in need. This is the very basis of our Christian community. We pray that God will continue to bless us and those with whom we journey.

We listen to a prayer, which is a Celtic prayer from the Iona Community – Scotland. (*we pause at the end of each stanza for reflection*)

Reader 2: God guide our community from brokenness and indifference, to love and caring for each other, and for God's creation.

Reader 3: God build our community from self-centredness and independence, to friendship and compassion for the marginalized, the abandoned and the despised.

Reader 4: God build our community from mistrust and misunderstanding, to unity and togetherness for other peoples, religions and nations.

Reader 5: God bless our community and may we build together a living community bound together by love and joy for all God's people and all God's creation. **Amen.**

We pray together the family prayer that Jesus taught us**Our Father**

OPENING PRAYER – 8th session

A Volunteer lights candle to welcome the Light of Christ.

Suggested hymn: Be still and know that I am God

In the name of the Father...

Gracious God, come and assist us with your loving care. Be with us in our humanity; bless our brokenness with mercy and kindness, and let it strengthen us for our daily struggles. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. **Amen.**

Scripture reading: Luke 6:20-23.

Moments for Silence

Litany to Jesus with St. Eugene

Response: *St. Eugene de Mazenod lead us to Jesus through the trials of life.*

1. You who were rich and content at birth but afflicted by poverty and suffering very early in life. (R)
2. You lost everything in exile but were miraculously sustained by God's providence. (R)
3. When your parents were separated, you lost the warmth and love of your mother at a tender age but you were blessed with the loving presence of our Heavenly Mother. (R)
4. You instructed the members of your Congregation before your death to show each other charity and to work with zeal for the salvation of people (R)

Short period of Silence

Glory be to the Father.....

Mary Immaculate ...**pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod ...**pray for us.**

OPENING PRAYER – 9th session

Leader: We begin this evening in the name of the Father, Son and
the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Suggested hymn: Christ be our Light.

Scripture reading: Philippians 2: 1 – 11.

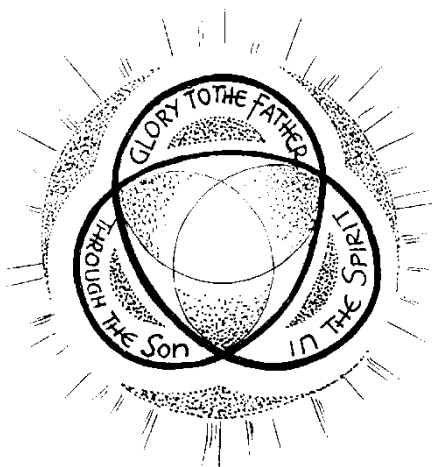
Pause for silence

Intercessory prayer – *invite each person to write the name of another that they wish to pray for and then, shape the prayers into a cross and place the Oblate Cross on top of that cross.*

Hail Mary...

Mary Immaculate....**pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod**pray for us.**



OPENING PRAYER - 10th session

Sign of the Cross

Silence

Prayer: We pray, Spirit of God, be present within us, so that all darkness will be penetrated by your light; all troubles calmed by your peace; all evil redeemed by your love; all pain transformed by your suffering and all dying glorified by your risen life.

Hymn Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful
And light up in them the fire of your love.
Send out your Spirit and we shall be created
and you will renew the face of the earth.

Spirit of light: **Let the fire of your wisdom burn within us.**

Spirit of silence: **May we be open to God's presence.**

Spirit of love: **Open our hearts to the needs of others.**

Spirit of joy: **Fill us with the passion of Christ's love.**

Spirit of courage: **Dispel the fear that lingers in our hearts.**

Spirit of peace: **Help us be attentive to God's word in the world.**

Spirit of power: **Bestow the gift of your strength upon us.**

Spirit of truth: **Guide us to walk in the way of Christ.**

Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful
And light up in them the fire of your love.
Send out your Spirit and we shall be created
and you will renew the face of the earth.

We listen to a scripture reading - 1 Thes 1:1-5b

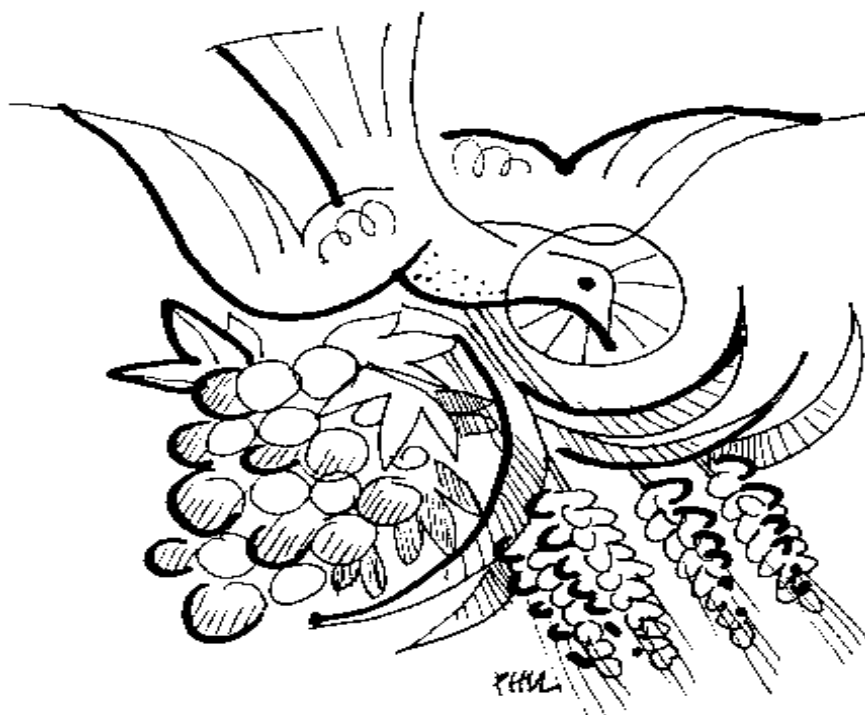
I invite you now to take a moment of silence to reflect on that reading and to pray for all of us this evening that the Spirit of God will be the light that guides this meeting and our lives each day.

Silent Prayer

In thanksgiving let us pray together: **Glory be to the Father.....**

Mary Immaculate....**pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod**pray for us.**



APPENDIX 2 – Selection of CLOSING PRAYERS

CLOSING PRAYER - Introduction session

We are called through our Baptism to see with the eyes of Christ and to love with the heart of Christ. Through living the charism of St. Eugene, we are summoned to set out daily on a pilgrimage of "other-centeredness", to bring the good news of God's love to everyone we meet by recognising and respecting their preciousness in the sight of God.

- Tonight we remember and pray for the Oblate fathers who have lived and worked and shared the Good News with us over the years. **(pause)**
- We pray for this parish of and all its parishioners, particularly for the mission being carried out here in this Oblate parish. **(pause)**
- We pray for the work of the partners in Mission who share in the work of Oblate Congregations all over the world. **(pause)**
- We pray for ourselves as we continue to live and work through Spirit of St Eugene that all we do will give glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **(pause)**

Together we say **Glory be to the Father**.....

May we walk in to the future guided by the Risen Christ and with Mary Immaculate by our side.

Mary Immaculate..... **pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod ... **pray for us.**

CLOSING PRAYER - Prayer of Intercession for families in difficulties

Almighty and loving God, you led St. Eugene de Mazenod through the sufferings and challenges of family life to a life of holiness. Through his constant intercession bless us all. Grant us the gifts of understanding, patience, love and courage to overcome the problems of life. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

Mary Immaculate **pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod **pray for us.**

CLOSING PRAYER (prayed together)

St. Eugene, your charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the whole world. Through your intercession, help me to reach out with the healing touch of Christ, who calls each one of us to holiness and to mission.

Guide me to accept God's call in my life with strength and love.

Let me act and make choices that bear witness to my belief in the dignity of each person and the compassion of God for all peoples, especially the poor and marginalised.

By your example, help me to see Jesus in others, to help all those in need, and to have the courage to do God's will, *'leaving nothing undared for the Gospel'*. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary Immaculate **pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod **pray for us.**

CLOSING PRAYER

God our Father, we thank you for having called St. Eugene de Mazenod to follow you.

Sharing in the compassion Jesus had for humanity, Eugene put himself unconditionally at the service of the Church for the evangelisation of those most in need.

Through the intercession of Saint Eugene help us to reach out with the healing touch of Christ who calls us to holiness and to mission.

May we build communities, which are signs of your presence, and share the Good News of salvation with all people, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Eugene de Mazenod, **Share with us your love for Christ.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod, **Help us to stand firm in goodness.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod, **Be with us in all our efforts.**

CLOSING PRAYER

God, grant me the courage to change the things I can change, the serenity to accept those I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference. But God, grant me the courage not to give up on what I think is right, even though I think it is hopeless. Amen.

Mary Immaculate **pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod **pray for us.**

CLOSING PRAYER

God of joyful hope and faithful love: you call us to share more fully in the mission of your son. Inspired by the charism of St. Eugene, may we be witnesses to the power and presence of Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit. May we always be disciples of the Good News, especially among the poor and the most abandoned. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary Immaculate **pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod **pray for us.**



CLOSING PRAYER

We recall and give thanks for how God communicates with us in our daily lives:

For your presence in our lives, especially in our gifts and loving ways.

All: we give thanks to you Lord.

For your presence in our relationships with people at home, in the streets, the workplace and in the community.

All: We give thanks to you Lord.

For your presence in the struggle to build a new quality of human solidarity on our island.

All: We give thanks to you Lord.

Let us say the blessing prayer for each other:

May God bless us in love.

May God inspire us with wisdom and insight.

May God fill us with joy and bring us to the fullness of life, which is promised to us. Amen.

Mary Immaculate **pray for us.**

St. Eugene de Mazenod **pray for us.**

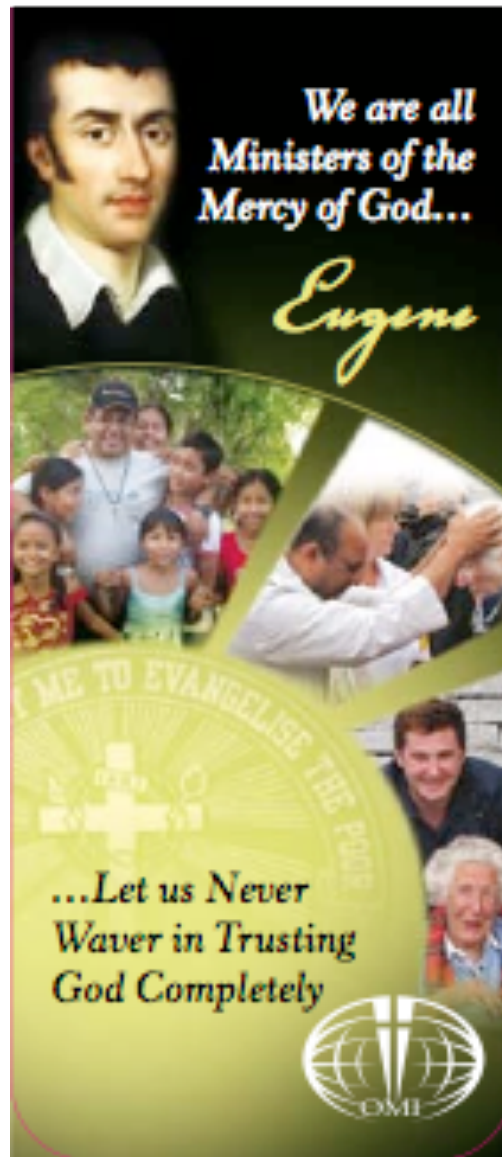


HINTS FOR FACILITATORS

- * Check that the meeting place is booked and appropriate for numbers expected.
- * Ensure the room is prepared - arrange the chairs preferably in horseshoe shape.
- * Organise heating, if required.
- * Make sure people are informed of the place, day and time of the event in advance.
- * Have stationery available for people (flipchart paper & pens, writing paper and pens).
- * Create a focal point.
- * Have handouts available and where possible key points displayed on PowerPoint.
- * Icebreakers are suggested but can be replaced by others used locally.
- * Refreshments to be served either before or after the meeting.

HINTS FOR GIVING PEOPLE CONFIDENCE

- * Start and finish at the designated times.
- * Make people welcome. Give people space to get to know each other.
- * Check pronunciation of names and use the name they wish to use (nick names)
- * No one is required to share unless they wish.
- * Be sincerely appreciative of each person's contribution.
- * Stress the importance of trust among the members of your group.
- * Remind the participants that nothing shared in the meeting is to be discussed outside the room.



An OMI Anglo-Irish Province Resource

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