

## **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.

**Note for Facilitator:** \* *mention groups where Oblates and Lay people currently meet and work together.*

## **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. (*Psalm 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 <sup>st</sup> session	Launching Impassioned for Christ.
2 <sup>nd</sup> session	How Christ enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family.
3 <sup>rd</sup> session	How Mary enriches the lives of Oblates and The Oblate family.
4 <sup>th</sup> session	How St.Eugene enriches the lives of the Oblates and the Oblate family
5 <sup>th</sup> session	How the Oblates live out their mission in the world today.
6 <sup>th</sup> session	How the Oblates live out their mission to the poor and marginalised in the (Anglo-Irish) local province.
7 <sup>th</sup> session	How community enriches the lives of Oblates and the Oblate family.
8 <sup>th</sup> session	St.Eugene, the Church and reading the signs of the times.
9 <sup>th</sup> session	Christ the source of our unity.
10 <sup>th</sup> session	Discernment.
11 <sup>th</sup> 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?
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### **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?
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## **HANDOUT 7 – Blessed Joseph Gérard -Missionary in Lesotho (1831-1914)**

Born near Nancy in France, in the village of Bouxières-aux-Chênes on March 12<sup>th</sup> 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. 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Lerotholi 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 29<sup>th</sup>, 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 note, 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 32years 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?
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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?
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## HANDOUT 11 – Discernment

### Ways of working – questions for participants

1. How does the commitment to Friends of St. Eugene fit with your life?
  1. Is being a part of the Friends of St Eugene something that you that you wish to continue with?
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## APPENDIX FOR OPENING PRAYERS

### Introduction session – Opening Prayer

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	<i>pray for us</i>
St. Eugene, preacher of the Good News	<i>pray for us</i>
St. Eugene, lover of the Blessed Sacrament	<i>pray for us</i>
St. Eugene, intercessor for all who live in poverty	<i>pray for us</i>
St. Eugene, you brought others to God's love	<i>pray for us</i>
St. Eugene, encourager of youth	<i>pray for us</i>
St. Eugene, founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate	<i>pray for us</i>
St. Eugene, faithful to the example of Mary our Mother	<i>pray for us</i>

With St. Eugene, we pray for those who suffer the pain of broken relationships	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>
With St. Eugene, we pray for those who live in exile	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>
With St. Eugene, we pray for those in prison	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>
With St. Eugene, we pray for those who live in fear	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>
With St. Eugene, we pray for those who are persecuted	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>
With St. Eugene, we pray for those who work for justice	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>

**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 (10 - 15 minutes)**

*(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

*(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**

### **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– prayed together (5 mins.)**

*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**

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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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**

**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**

### **Prayer for St. Eugene, the Church and reading the sign of the times**

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**

**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 - Discernment**

### **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 FOR 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.**

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### **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.**

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## **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.**

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## **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.

