

Bringing Peace and Blessing in the Ravaged World

Pope Leo XIV delivered his *Urbi et Orbi* message on Sunday, April 5, 2026: “In the light of Easter, let us allow ourselves to be amazed by Christ! Let us allow our hearts to be transformed by his immense love for us! Let those who have weapons lay them down! Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace! Not a peace imposed by force, but through dialogue! Not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them! (...) let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination, and power, and implore the Lord to grant his peace to a world ravaged by wars and marked by a hatred and indifference that make us feel powerless in the face of evil (...) Let us entrust ourselves to him and open our hearts to him! He is the only one who makes all things new (cf. Rev 21:5)”.

Pope Leo invoked God’s peace and blessings upon each one of us and the whole world. He bore witness to the Resurrected One who is the Truth, the Way, and the Life for a world in the midst of war, hatred, and enmity that has cost millions of lives. For the victims trapped in despair and powerlessness, the Pope poured out God’s blessing like raindrops on a dry, weary land. God’s blessing becomes an inner strength for those who are weak and hopeless to stand up and an inspiration for peace lovers to keep shouting, “stop the war and let’s sit to dialogue!”

Pope Leo’s description of the world today echoes St. Eugene de Mazenod’s famous “Preface” regarding the state of the Church after the French Revolution. “The Church, that glorious inheritance purchased by Christ the Saviour at the cost of his own blood, has in our days been cruelly ravaged. The beloved spouse of God’s only begotten Son is torn with anguish as she mourns the shameful defection of the children she herself bore. Christians, but apostates, and utterly mindless of God’s blessings, they provoke divine justice by their

crimes. And did we not know that the sacred deposit of faith is to be preserved intact to the end of time, we would hardly be able to recognize the religion of Christ from the few remaining traces of its past glory that lie scattered about. Such is the state of things brought about by the malice and corruption of present-day Christians that it can be truly said that the greater number of them are worse off now than was the gentile world before its idols were destroyed by the Cross (...).”

We are Christians! We are called to stand for justice and peace. We are not called to be indifferent, as Pope Leo said, but to pray fervently for peace and to invoke blessings upon the world. It is time for each disciple of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, to bear witness as true Christians and not as “apostate Christians” as St. Eugene de Mazenod described in the Preface. It is time to build bridges and connect all of humanity. It is time not to divide but to strengthen fraternity and unity among the people of God in this ravaged world. It is time not to shout or insult but to sit, listen, and engage in dialogue. Remember that we share the same Earth!

The call to build peace is not merely a human desire for harmony. It is not a dream for a comfortable worldly life, but first and foremost, it is a call to participate in God’s mission. “...For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him...” (John 3:16-17). God sends us to love the world as He loves the world.

There is no reason not to love the world, not to bring peace, or not to invoke the *Urbi et Orbi* blessing. Christians are called to—like God—love and save the world. Our beloved Founder,

St. Eugene de Mazenod, wrote in the 1818 Rule of Life, “What more sublime purpose than that of their Institute? Their founder is Jesus Christ, the very Son of God; their first fathers are the Apostles. They are called to be the Saviour’s co-workers, the co-redeemers of mankind; and even though, because of their present small number and the more urgent needs of the people around them, they have to limit the scope of their zeal, for the time being, to the poor of our countryside and others; their ambition should, in its holy aspirations, embrace the vast expanse of the whole earth”.

Urbi et Orbi, a blessing for the city and the world! That’s the call for each Christian now! Let’s continue bringing peace and blessings to those around us, those we encounter every day, as well as to those who are far from us, those we never meet and don’t know at all... but who inhabit the same Earth as we do. Tirelessly, let’s invoke God’s peace and blessings for the world that He loves so much!

Henricus Asodo ISTOYO, OMI Assistant General for Formation

Cor Unum

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

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Henricus Asodo ISTOYO, OMI Assistant General for Formation

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FROM THE REGIONS

AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

Cameroon: New Provincial Appointed

Cameroon/Provincial/April 2026

Clement Solomon OBOITE, OMI

On 27 April 2026, the Superior General, with the consent of the Council, appointed

Fr. Clement Solomon OBOITE

Superior of the Province of Cameroon for a first term.

OMIWORLD

Congo (DR): Appointment of the Provincial

Congo (DRC) / Provincial / April 2026

Constant KIENGE KIENGE, OMI

On 27 April 2026, the Superior General, with the consent of the Council, appointed

Fr. Constant KIENGE KIENGE

Superior of the Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for a second term.

OMIWORLD

EUROPE

The Constitutions and Rules: A Living Expression of Our Charism

Two hundred years later, the Oblate Constitutions and Rules continue to guide those who seek to follow Christ in the spirit of St. Eugene de Mazenod. Born from the vision of a small missionary community in Aix-en-Provence, they remain a living expression of the Gospel and the heart of our missionary life.

A Book of Life: From 1818 to Today

Our Constitutions and Rules, approved 200 years ago, is not a collection of legal prescriptions. It offers our understanding of how to live the Gospel through the charism received from Saint Eugene. It is meant to be lived, prayed, and shared. In every generation, it remains a book of life. In 1818, when Eugene de Mazenod and his first missionary companions composed the initial Rule, they were putting into words what they had already been living for three years. Eugene sought to preserve his God-given inspiration in such a way that future generations could remain faithful to it. Over the past two centuries, the Constitutions and Rules have continued to express the lived experience of the Missionary Oblates. It is precisely this lived experience that the new Commentary seeks to explore.

Reading the CCRR Today

Many have written about the CCRR before 1982, but the definitive commentary on the 1982 edition remains that of Father Fernand Jette, *The Apostolic Man: A Commentary on the 1982 Edition of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules* (available on OMIWORLD). Its depth and clarity remain as valuable today as when it first appeared. In light of the bicentenary of our papal approbation, the Superior General and his council have commissioned a new Commentary to illuminate the Oblate charism as it is lived today, with hope for the future.

A Companion for the Charismatic Family

The result is *A Companion to the OMI Constitutions and Rules: Reflections by the Oblate Charismatic Family*. This new volume gathers the voices of 135 contributors who reflect the historical, spiritual, and missionary richness of our charism as it is lived in different contexts today. It does not replace earlier works but stands alongside them, inviting Oblates and members of the wider family to rediscover the CCRR as a living source of unity, inspiration, and hope. The Companion is now available in English, French and Spanish.

Frank SANTUCCI, OMI

LATIN AMERICA

CIAL Formation Congress: Young Oblates Online for Bicentennial

Young Oblates in formation from across Latin America and the Caribbean come together online to celebrate the bicentennial of our Constitutions and Rules.

CIAL Formation Congress

On Saturday, 7 February 2026, Oblates from every stage of initial formation across Latin America and the Caribbean met online in a real

spirit of fraternity. With the bicentennial of our Constitutions and Rules in view, the CIAL (Interprovincial Conference of Latin America) Executive Formation Commission, working with the major superiors of each unit and the formation teams, convened a congress for those in formation. The Interprovincial Novitiate House in Guatemala welcomed the group and guided the sessions from start to finish.

Constitutions and Rules as a Road to Holiness

Young men from every stage of initial formation took part, listening attentively and openly. Formators joined them, along with the Councillor for Latin America, the Assistant General for Formation, and the President of CIAL, a presence that helped these young men in formation feel accompanied. Fr. Cléber LOPES, Procurator for the Causes of Saints, led the main reflection and reminded everyone that the Constitutions and Rules are a road to holiness. In small groups, participants shared how each one, in his own formation journey, tries to take on the vision of the apostolic man in daily life.

A Message from the Superior General

“Do this, and you will live.” The Superior General addressed the young men in formation through a video message and encouraged them to persevere. We thank the formation houses of the Latin America and Caribbean region and the formandis and formators from the International Scholasticate in Rome, Italy, and the Post-Novitiate in San Antonio for joining with such generosity.

May this bicentennial celebration of our Constitutions and Rules renew in each of us the desire to serve with availability, obedience, and joy.

Gabriel NIROU, OMI

CANADA AND UNITED STATES

Choosing the Story of Grace: 200 Years of Oblate Mission

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate celebrate the 200th anniversary of the approval of our Constitutions and Rules.

The bicentenary of “our Book of Life” is a great feast observed in several countries around the world. For us here in Canada, particularly in the Notre-Dame-du-Cap Province, it is a beautiful celebration, one that rekindles memory, reminds us of where we come from, and invites us to reread our history.

But before speaking about the meaning of this feast for us, I would like to share a story

It is the story of a farmer who lost everything in a storm. Everyone felt sorry for him and expected him to be angry, broken, and bitter. Yet he remained happy. Always happy. One day, someone asked him, “Why are you always happy when you should be sad?” He replied, “I chose which wolf to feed.” The person, surprised, asked, “What do you mean?”

He explained that every morning, when he woke up, he found two wolves at his door. Every morning, he had to choose which one to feed and which to leave unfed. There is the

wolf of anger, sadness, and anxiety that regularly knocks at the door. But there is also the wolf of gratitude. And every morning, he chooses to feed the wolf of gratitude. Because the wolf you feed is the one that grows. The wolf of anger does not disappear, but it is not fed.

As we celebrate this feast today, I think of that story and apply it to our situation. The history of the Missionary Oblates in this part of the country and this part of the world is both a story of success and a story of failure. We can choose to feed the narrative of failure, or we can choose to feed the narrative of success.

Today, I have chosen to feed the narrative of success

The success of missionaries who, despite their difficulties, weaknesses, sins, and lack of knowledge or judgment, decided to walk this land. Certainly, if we chose to tell the story of failure, there would be much to say. Much. But since today we choose to tell the story of success, let us look at what is happening now. While the community is shrinking and aging, many of our members remain committed. There are still men and women who, despite

their age, continue to follow in the footsteps of Saint Eugene de Mazenod.

What is particularly significant is that we are realizing, or rather rediscovering, that this mission is not reserved for priests or brothers. The charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod is a gift for the whole Church, and that is precisely what is being manifested today through our missions.

I think of Sacred Heart Parish in Ottawa. During the celebrations of this jubilee year, we gathered, Oblates, associates, Oblate youth, and many friends who came to share our joy. During that celebration, I took time to observe. I looked at the Oblates, priests and brothers, though aging, yet faithful to their commitment, present and persevering. I looked at the associates, also aging, yet engaged with conviction. I also saw young people, in the bloom of youth, living this charism with us in our missions and parishes, particularly at Sacred Heart Parish.

Seeing these young people, I told myself that the Oblate charism is truly for the entire Church. Coming from different parts of the world, we gathered to give thanks on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the approval of our Constitutions by the Church.

Today, we commemorate the story of achievement, a triumph exemplified by these young people. Success is evident in fidelity to the Oblate charism, confidence in the ministry entrusted to us by the Church, and the ongoing growth, vitality, and progress of the Church. Today, we celebrate the Spirit who animated Saint Eugene de Mazenod and continues to animate the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Happy feast to all our confreres, associates, Oblate youth, and to all of you who continue to walk in the light of our foundation.

Happy bicentenary to all!

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

OMI INFORMATION is an unofficial publication
of the General Administration of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
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