

Brazil: Superior General a Pilgrim in the Amazons

Following the Jubilee celebrations in Aix-en-Provence and Marseille, the Superior General is beginning a pilgrimage through the Oblate Province of Brazil. From the vast metropolitan region of São Paulo to the communities of the Amazon, his journey will be a time of encounter, listening, prayer, and fraternal communion.

Among the Communities of São Paulo

After celebrating the Jubilee in France, Fr. Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso, OMI, Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, has arrived in Brazil as a pilgrim. During the coming days, he will visit Oblates, formandi, lay associates, and the communities they serve across the Province, beginning in São Paulo before continuing to the Amazon District. This journey is centered on pastoral encounter, offering a unique opportunity to listen to and pray with the people who share in the life and mission of the province.

Beginning on July 13, Fr. Chicho will visit Escola Maria Imaculada and Escola Santo Eugênio, followed by a visit to St. Eugene de Mazenod Parish in the Diocese of Campo Limpo. This particular parish serves several communities across the southern reaches of the megacity and its neighboring municipalities. He will then continue through the wider metropolitan area to visit Our Lady of Graces Parish in São Paulo and St. Louis Gonzaga Parish in the Diocese of Santo André.

On July 16, the Superior General will meet with the Province's formandi before joining the closing celebration of Missionary Week at Our Lady Aparecida Parish in Campinas, a city

northwest of São Paulo. The gathering will bring together young Oblates in formation, as well as the faithful who have participated in the missionary outreach throughout the week. It promises to be a beautiful moment of fellowship, allowing Fr. Chicho to share his heart directly with the next generation of Oblate vocations.

From São Paulo to the Amazon

The pilgrimage will then continue north to the Amazon District, where Fr. Chicho will meet with the lay associates of LAOMI and visit the St. Paul the Apostle Mission Area among the riverside communities of Araçá. He will also celebrate Mass at the Tenderness of God Mission Area on the outskirts of Manaus, the capital of the state of Amazonas. This leg of the journey will bring him into close pastoral contact with communities whose daily lives, faith, and missionary identity are intimately connected to the waterways of the Amazon.

Gathering as an Oblate Province

Returning to São Paulo, the Superior General will participate in the opening of the Assembly of the Oblate Province of Brazil on July 21. His pilgrimage will conclude on July 27 with the beginning of the Province's annual retreat, which he will preach. Traveling across schools, parishes, formation houses, urban peripheries, and remote riversides gives the Superior General a firsthand look at how the Oblate charism continues to take flesh in Brazil. We accompany the Superior General, the Oblates of Brazil, and all those they serve with our prayers.

OMIWORLD

FROM THE REGIONS

AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

Looking back, we move forward

On April 13, as we begin the 11th plenary session of our mandate, Pope Leo XIV begins his apostolic visit to Africa. Two seemingly unconnected realities connected by one virtue, hope. We do so at a time when the world is experiencing profound uncertainty about the future and is tempted to despair. Since our last session, the war between the US-Israel and Iran has broken out into full-scale violent clashes, the relationship between the US and its allies in NATO is severely damaged, and the UN has been rendered ineffective. Apart from being fearful about the future of humanity, I am concerned about the impact of all these events on the lives of the poor.

The Pope's visit to Africa is a pilgrimage of hope in a darkened world. Since his election a year ago, he has proclaimed peace, not the peace won by arms but the peace of the risen One. In his gentle voice, he continues to proclaim peace. May the world hear his message!

As we meet in plenary session, we will look back on the period since our last session. Certainly, the war will be on our minds; many

of us have been directly affected, caught up in the chaos caused by the many flight cancellations. We will also be looking to the future and wondering what it holds in the coming months.

On the agenda for this session, apart from the usual appointments of provincials and councils, is the joint session with the European region this summer. The Oblate reality in Europe has changed dramatically in the past 50 years and continues to do so. What decisions do we need to make in light of these changes? The decisions we make now will bear fruit in the years to come. The resurrection assures us that new life will come for those who remain faithful.

Courage, it is I; do not be afraid; peace be with you! This is the constant message of the season. Looking back, we go forward like the Sankofa, that African concept that teaches us: we must return to our roots to move forward! Let us hold each other up in prayer. The Lord is truly risen!

Raymond MWANGALA, OMI

Cor Unum

EUROPE

Europe: Looking Back on the Joint Session

From 15 to 21 June, participants came together for a week dedicated to reflection and shared discernment on the mission in Europe. Throughout those days, they engaged in moments of input, dialogue, and Conversation in the Spirit, seeking to listen attentively to one another and to discern the paths the Spirit was opening for the future. The General Councillor for Europe reflects on the rich experience shared during these days, highlighting the depth of communion and the hope that emerges for the mission ahead.

At the beginning of the European Joint Session in Romania, we set ourselves a clear goal: to

reflect together, in a spirit of synodality, on how we can continue to live our Oblate missionary vocation in Europe. We sought to discern how today's challenges might become opportunities for the growth of God's Kingdom in a society that is increasingly losing its sense of the infinite and finding it difficult to view reality through the lens of faith. Looking back, I believe we achieved that goal.

The session was filled with a genuine spirit of fraternity. An atmosphere of openness, spontaneity, and mutual trust accompanied our work from beginning to end, while the careful preparation of the meeting reflected a shared commitment to prayerful discernment. Although some discussions would have benefited

from more time, I was encouraged by the attentive listening during the plenary sessions and language groups, the quality of the reports presented by both the Central Government and the Units, and the frank, constructive dialogue between the Major Superiors and the Superior General, together with members of the General Administration.

One especially hopeful sign was the courage shown by the Belgium-Netherlands and France-Benelux Delegations as they began a discernment process toward the possible unification of their Units. Their example may encourage similar conversations as the Region continues reflecting on the future of its structures. Our common prayer, especially the Eucharist and Evening Prayer, remained the heart of the gathering, while the visits to the Catholic Cathedral in Bucharest, where we met Auxiliary Bishop Damian Cornel, and to the Oblate community in Mărăcineni strengthened our fraternity and mutual understanding.

The evaluation at the end of the session was overwhelmingly positive. There were no negative comments, only a few observations expressing concern that decisions regarding administrative restructuring and formation are progressing more slowly than some had hoped. Perhaps we could have accomplished more, but it is equally true that we achieved what the Holy Spirit enabled us to accomplish, while recognizing that we must not become passive in continuing the work of renewal entrusted to us.

The Superior General offered heartfelt encouragement during his closing address, inviting the region to continue their discernment with passion and to make the decisions that will lead them toward a truly shared mission in Europe. Reflecting on Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, he reminded us that renewal begins with small but courageous steps taken in openness to the Holy Spirit. Europe, the cradle of our Congregation, is called to be reborn by welcoming the surprises of the Spirit, who

continues to guide the Church in unexpected ways.

He also reminded us that the vision of the 2022 General Chapter remains our common path forward. By embracing solidarity, subsidiarity, synodality, and intercultural living, our communities can offer a credible witness to the Gospel in an increasingly diverse society. He further encouraged us to strengthen the animation of our local communities by placing the Constitutions and Rules at the center of our common life, preserving our charismatic identity, fostering a deeper sense of belonging, and embracing 2027 as the Year of the Vow of Poverty during this Bicentenary of our "Book of Life." The Joint Session also marked the conclusion of Fr. Renaud Saliba's two-year term as President of the CIE, and the Major Superiors of the Region's eight Units elected Fr. Wojciech Popielewski, Provincial of Poland, as the new President.

The Church is missionary, and so are the Oblates. May we continue to be humble and passionate witnesses of the Gospel that saves, remembering that we ourselves have first been saved by love. With grateful hearts, may we always be ready to give an account of the hope that fills us to all those whom God places along the path of our missionary journey.

Alberto GNEMMI, OMI General Councillor for Europe

OMIWORLD

Bicentennial Celebrations in Marseille: "Be both witnesses and channels of a new outpouring of grace"

On July 11, 2026, the Oblate family gathered at "Les Accoules" in Marseille to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the pontifical approval of the CCRR of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Returning to the exact site of the historic General Chapter of 1826, members of this international Charismatic family experienced a profound moment of thanksgiving and renewal.

In his homily, the Superior General reminded those present that this anniversary is about rediscovering who we are today. He challenges us to live out our shared mission with fresh energy: “May we understand well what we are! As children of Mary Immaculate, may we launch ourselves with audacity, leaving nothing undared in carrying the Gospel and announcing the Kingdom to the most abandoned.” Join in the global celebration—read the full homily below.

Marseille, France July 11, 2026

Dear Oblates and dear friends of our charismatic family. Dear Vicar General of Marseille, and all the members of the parish of Les Accoules who join us for this Eucharist of thanksgiving on the bicentenary of the pontifical approval of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate:

I wish to express my joy at celebrating the Eucharist in these holy places, realizing a desire that I have long harbored in my heart. We cannot celebrate the bicentennial of our pontifical approval without remembering what the companions of St. Eugene were living through while he was in Rome, and even more so when he returned to celebrate the 1826 General Chapter from July 10 to 13. The significance of this Chapter for our religious family marks a definitive before-and-after, a genuine change of era. Our Fourth General Chapter was the one in which we officially received the Constitutions and Rules approved by Pope Leo XII, which defined us as a pontifical religious congregation and included the change of our Institute’s name. In this sense, we can say that it was the first General Chapter celebrated as the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

The Acts of this Chapter offer us palpable traces of the deep emotion with which those first Oblates, with St. Eugene at their head, lived this moment. They were of “one heart, one soul” as they welcomed with joy the rules approved by the Pope. A profound “Amen” echoed from all when the Rules were promul-

gated, as they committed themselves to live them and to renew their oblation. In truth, who were these men who gave voice to such things? A small company of missionaries—no more than twenty, counting the novices—who had just received the Pope’s approval, elevating them to the same rank as the other religious congregations.

The first reading and the Gospel speak to us of the power of the Word of God, using the image of the sower, the sowing, and the cultivation of the soil. Indeed, God had sown His Word in this small company of missionaries, men burning with zeal to announce the Gospel to the most abandoned. Perhaps they were a very fragile company, beset by problems, threatened in their very survival. Yes. But the power of the Spirit would transform them into a vibrant company of zealous missionaries who, throughout their history, announced the Kingdom of God in more than 70 countries. What we call the charism, sown by God in the hearts of our first fathers, found the good soil of generosity and fidelity to bear the fruits of missionary evangelization. They received those first fruits of the Spirit that cause us to walk in hope, following in their footsteps. Some of them have been recognized as saints and martyrs by the universal Church. Of others, we guard their memory, recognizing in each of them a page of the Gospel written with their very lives. They, too, are the ground of our hope that our own labor, collaborating with Jesus to sow His Word, will bear fruit if we are capable of cultivating our soil with a creative fidelity to our Constitutions and Rules.

The General Chapter of 1826 was a Pentecost for our charismatic family. In the upper room of “Les Accoules,” the Oblates received from the Holy Spirit a torrent of joy and missionary enthusiasm upon recognizing themselves in the Constitutions and Rules that Pope Leo XII had approved in Rome. To say it in the words they themselves expressed, religious reverence and the most vibrant emotion took possession of all those present. Already Fr. Tempier had ex-

pressed the sentiment that had seized all the Oblates when they received the news of the miracle of the pontifical approval. St. Eugene, in a letter from Rome to Father Tempier on March 20, 1826, said, “You are completely right to say that it seemed to all of you that you had become new men; so it is, indeed. May we understand well what we are!” (EO VII n. 231). May we understand well what we are! This, too, is the longing that dwells within our own hearts during these days.

At the conclusion of the General Chapter of 1826, Eugene de Mazenod addressed his brothers with a moving discourse, the purpose of which was to make us feel “the beauty of our vocation.” The celebrations we now begin are a grace to enable us to recognize the beauty of our vocation, which makes us co-workers with Christ in His saving work and in the mission of announcing the Gospel and His Kingdom to the poorest and most abandoned. The participants in the celebrations of “Les Accoules” in 1826 did so as new men, professing their vows with a profound recollection. As the Acts of the General Chapter narrate to us, emotion seized everyone at that moment: “Many shed tears in streams, the others were deeply moved, and God, undoubtedly, must have been moved as well.” At the conclusion of the ceremony of the profession of vows, St. Eugene invited his brothers to keep always present in their hearts the remembrance and the joy of this beautiful day. Upon their return to the sacristy, they all embraced one another, saying to each other, now we are truly brothers.

Those of us who participate in these celebrations today do so in the name of all generations of Oblates and members of our charismatic family, renewing our commitment to the Church to be holy missionaries of the poor, living in community in fidelity to the Gospel. We do so with the same emotion and joy as our first fathers. We do so also as pilgrims who walk in communion, seeking to sow hope in our world. May we understand well what we are! As children of Mary Immaculate, may we

launch ourselves with audacity, leaving nothing undared in carrying the Gospel and announcing the Kingdom to the most abandoned. I like to think that the Holy Spirit has convoked us today to be witnesses and, at the same time, channels of a new outpouring of grace upon our family. It is the reason for my joy and also the deepest intention of my prayer.

May the Lord grant that we be renewed in our vocation so that together we may live our call to embody and proclaim the Gospel as holy missionaries who, living in community, strive to be missionaries of the Good News to the poor. And may our Mother, the Virgin Immaculate, St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Blessed Oblates, and all the members of the charismatic family who have already reached the heavenly mansions continue to inspire us and help us to live the beauty of our vocation with joy.

Luis Ignacio ROIS ALONSO, OMI Superior General

OMIWORLD

CCRR200: France Celebrates the Bicentenary

The Oblate Family will gather in Aix-en-Provence and Marseille on July 10 and 11 to celebrate the bicentenary of the approval of the Constitutions and Rules. This two-day pilgrimage will return participants to the places where this defining moment in the Congregation’s history first unfolded, inviting them to give thanks for a spiritual inheritance that continues to shape Oblate life and mission.

Returning to the Source

The celebration will begin in Aix-en-Provence, the birthplace of the Congregation, where participants will gather for prayer at the Foundation House. The program includes reflections by Fr. Bernard DULLIER, OMI, on the year 1826 and on how St. Eugene de Mazenod and the first Oblates received the newly approved Constitutions and Rules. The day will also

include a memorial moment, followed by an evening of prayer and Eucharistic adoration.

Walking in the Footsteps of St. Eugene

The following day, the celebration will continue in Marseille with prayer at Notre-Dame de la Garde, the Marian shrine overlooking the city where St. Eugene carried out much of his ministry. Participants will then make a pilgrimage in the footsteps of the Founder, visiting places closely associated with his life and mission. The journey will also include prayer at his tomb, offering a moment of thanksgiving and renewal. The commemoration will conclude with a solemn Eucharistic celebration at Les Accoules, the historic church where St. Eugene presented the newly approved Constitutions and Rules to the first Oblates. The Mass will be presided over by the Superior General, during which the Oblates will renew

their religious vows. This celebration will bring the pilgrimage to its spiritual culmination, linking today's Oblates with the grace of the Congregation's earliest days.

A Living Gift for the Mission

Two hundred years after their approval, the Constitutions and Rules remain at the heart of the Congregation's missionary life. This bicentenary invites Oblates and members of the wider Oblate Family to return to this shared source with gratitude and renewed commitment. As the Congregation continues its mission in today's world, the Constitutions and Rules remain a living guide for proclaiming the Gospel and serving the Church in the spirit of St. Eugene.

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LATIN AMERICA

Guatemala: Delegation Grateful for 38 Years of Missionary Life

Gathered in Chicamán, Quiché, the Oblates of Guatemala came together to give thanks for 38 years of missionary life in the country. Their annual assembly became a time to remember the people who have shaped their journey and to renew their commitment to the mission entrusted to them.

Giving Thanks for the Journey

The Oblates of Guatemala recently gathered as a Delegation in Chicamán, Quiché, to celebrate 38 years of missionary presence in the country. Their gathering was a time to pray together, strengthen their fraternal bonds, and look back with gratitude on the path they have traveled. In a spirit of fraternity, they shared both the joys and the challenges of missionary life. They spoke openly about the hopes that continue to encourage them and reflected on new ways of accompanying the People of God in the communities entrusted to their care.

The gathering culminated with the Eucharist on July 2, the anniversary of the arrival of the first five Oblates in Guatemala. During the celebration, they gave thanks for a history sustained not only by their own efforts, but also by the witness of the martyrs of Guatemala, the faithful response of lay communities, and the support of religious congregations, bishops, the Oblate Laity, and the diocesan clergy with whom they share the mission.

A Mission Shaped by Many Nations

The anniversary also became an occasion to recognize the fruits of nearly four decades of missionary life. During these 38 years, nine Guatemalan Oblates have embraced the charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod as priests, while two have professed their vocation as Oblate Brothers. The Delegation also remembered those now in initial formation as they continue to discern their missionary calling.

Although Guatemala is a young Delegation within the Province of Mexico, it has been in-

tercultural from the very beginning. Oblates from the United States, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Canada, Poland, Italy, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium, and Pakistan have all served alongside the local Church, each leaving something of his own missionary experience in this land.

As the celebration came to a close, the Delegation entrusted its future to the Lord of the harvest, praying that he will continue to call new Oblates to serve his Kingdom and that the entire Oblate Family in Guatemala may continue to grow in faithfulness to the charism of St. Eugene.

Félix GARCÍA, OMI

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