



OMI
The Missionary Oblates
of Mary Immaculate

OMIWORLD NEWS

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

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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 promulgated, 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 expressed 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.

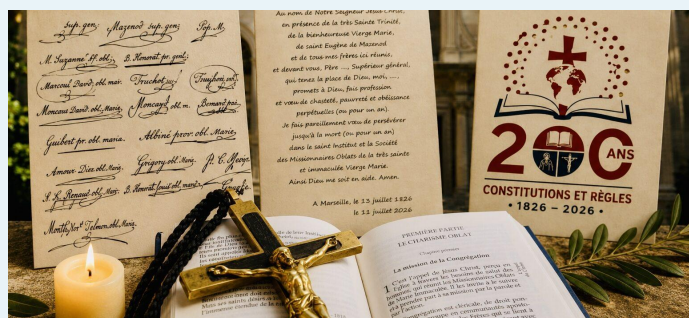
May the Lord grant that we be renewed in our vocation so that together we may live our call to embody and proclaim the Gospel as holy missionaries who, living in community, strive to be missionaries of the Good News to the poor. And may our Mother, the Virgin Immaculate, St. Eugene de Mazenod, the Blessed 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

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**With heavy hearts, we honor and celebrate
the lives of the following departed Oblates:
May their souls find eternal peace,
and may their lives and devotion to service continue to inspire us all.**

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