

EXCERPT
35th General Chapter OMI -2010, Report of Lay Associates,
"The Oblate Family: Religious and Lay together, the New Subject of
Evangelization?"

PART ONE

. . . During the 3 years of work carried out by the Commission, [2007-2009] we examined the existing forms of collaboration among the laity and Oblates and have discovered a common spirit, which reaches across the various cultures and environments.

Two (2) important congresses, the Congress of the Oblate laity in the USA (and Mexico) and the Congress of the Oblate laity of Europe (held in Pozuelo) have confirmed the following:

The spirit that unites all of the proposals is the request on the part of the laity for a closer communion with you, a communion that is characterized by a co-responsible sharing in the mission of evangelization of the most abandoned, which shows our complementary vocations.

. . . An effective tool, it appears to us, would be to work on local projects of evangelization written together by laity and the local Oblate community. To plan together really means to be partners; to give life to a new model of evangelization, permitting the laity to develop their own specific vocation.

. . . The choice of a model of co-responsible sharing, based on the unity of the Oblate Family, doesn't mean to establish a single model of association (or partnership). The concept itself of family depends on each culture and, as a consequence, the way of living the missionary association (fraternity) will be different from one province to the other and from one local area to another.

. . . The ecclesial model that we are proposing, found in the missionary association (fraternity), is characterized by co-responsible and complementary relationship between religious and laity.

. . . This request to be in closer union in order to share co-responsibly in mission is in line with the charism for the following reasons:

1. it has as its primary objective, a more effective mission;
2. it places at the center, the community dimension;
3. its ultimate goal is the building up of a mature community in the Church.

PART TWO

. . . We are shifting from a model where the Oblate Charism was considered property of the Congregation, to one that recognizes the Charism as a much broader gift, one given to the Church and thus includes in its fullest sense the Laity.

. . . The involvement of the laity is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and we feel a definite call to incarnate the Charism of St. Eugene into all the daily realities of our lives.

. . . Proposal: Simply speaking we would hope that in each place where there are Oblates, they would include Lay Associates, forming a community spirit, and continually deepen their spirituality and promote a genuine complementarity in the mission.

. . . The charism has inspired the Oblates and the laity with a spirit of mission to serve the poorest among us. In today's world the situations of poverty are diverse. It is important to discover and understand these realities especially in order to know who are the new poor: The immigrants, those who do not know Christ, those influenced by an ever more secularized world, is integrated families, street children, families of the incarcerated, disorientated youth and victims of natural disasters. These are some of today's poor and there are many more.

. . . Proposal: That the Oblates and the Laity share a common priority and work together to implement it. That we seriously ask ourselves: "Who are the poor and abandoned and what is our call to serve them?"

. . . Eugene, together with the youth of his time, tried to respond to the question of poverty. He appreciated them to be an excellent vehicle in order to respond concretely to some of the situations that he wanted to reach and transform.

. . . Proposal: that we begin to study and define the relationship and the complementarity between the Oblates and the Lay Associates with regards to pastoral accompaniment of youth and vocation promotion. That we find mutual areas of understanding and service that can attend to these realities and others.

. . . We understand and are convinced that the Holy Spirit is giving life to this reality and helps us to live our Baptismal vocation inspired by the Charism of St. Eugene.