

Selected Quotes for Oblate Associates

“We actively promote participation of women and men who share the charism and mission of St. Eugene de Mazenod.”

Preamble, Statutes, OMI Lacombe Canada Province

Selected Texts Related to Association from the Rules and General Chapters

From the Rules:

R. 37. In various places, lay people feel called to participate in the Oblate mission, ministry and community. The terms of their association can be drawn at the provincial level, in agreement with General Administration.

Amendment to Rule 37: (1998)

R. 37a. The charism of Saint Eugene de Mazenod is a gift of the Spirit to the Church, and it radiates throughout the world. Lay people recognize that they are called to share in the charism according to their state of life, and to live it in ways that vary according to milieu and cultures. They share in the charism in a spirit of communion and reciprocity amongst themselves and with the Oblates.

In order to live more intensely the mission of evangelization according to the Oblate charism, some lay people gather in associations. In concert with the General Administration, Provinces and Delegations will foster the development of such associations, will assure that they faithfully reflect the Oblate charism, will contribute to the formation of the laity by giving them access to the sources of the charism and will specify the relations between the Congregation and the associations. In this regard the General Administration takes the initiatives it regards as opportune to promote communication between Province and Delegations and a common perspective (outlook) in the Congregation.

General Chapters

Missionaries in Today's World (1986) Chapter IV, (see 68-85)

73. In the light of what has been said, Oblates are called to involve themselves more fully in promoting the mission of the laity, especially in the issues of the meaning of baptism and the royal priesthood of the faithful (*LG*, 34-36).
74. It likewise involves for us Oblates a conversion of thought, heart, and action, as well as greater trust, openness and willingness to share power and responsibility with the laity,
75. Furthermore, mission with the laity demands that we fully respect the primary, irreplaceable role of the baptized in all the circumstances of their daily lives: their interpersonal relationships, their social and political commitments, their places of work and relaxation and especially in their families. It also demands that we respect their specific role in the ecclesial community, since evangelization is a duty of every baptized person. For our part, we shall continue to make our own specific contribution to the world: word and sacrament.
77. In our works, our parishes, our missionary activity, we shall be evermore disposed to work collaboratively with the laity. With them, we shall look for new forms of evangelization adapted to the need of today's world.
79. We shall be attentive to the aspirations of women and the demands they are making in respect to their place in the world and in the Church. We shall support their participation in decision-making in the areas of pastoral ministry and mission.
83. We shall not hesitate to place our resources at the service of the laity whose missionary activity is exercised at the heart of the world. We shall open our seminaries, our retreat centres and our parish facilities to those members of the laity who want to meet there, either to come to a better understanding of society or to deepen their own spirituality.
84. Our religious community life will be enriched by working, sharing, and celebrating with the laity. These common activities are a privileged occasion for mutual formation and evangelization. They also promote the development of an incarnate spirituality, one which makes the gospel, our life, our faith and commitment come alive.

Witnessing as Apostolic Community 1992 (see 39-44)

39. As witnesses in apostolic community, we stand at the heart of today's world. Thus our relationship with lay persons is a priority for the future our Congregation and our religious life ... We reaffirm the value and importance of Chapter IV of MTW: "Mission with the Laity." We invite each Oblate to reread this chapter in view of better appropriating it and drawing inspiration therefrom for his activity.
40. A new reality is becoming evident: families, married couples, single people and young people wish to be more closely united with us and manifest a special commitment to our charism. Various forms of association already exist in all regions of the Congregation. This relatively new phenomenon is **a sign of the times**. We are not the owners of our charism: it belongs to the Church. And so we are happy to see that lay persons who are called by God want to share it.
41. Where these forms of association already exist, they are a positive influence on the faithfulness of persons and communities to the gospel. They therefore affect the quality of our witness and reveal a new facet of the Church. Together we are in a more credible way prophets of Christ's Passover, from this Passover a world based on the equality and dignity of each human person is born.
42. We are aware that it is premature to give a formal and definitive structure to these forms of association. There are different modes of sharing the Oblates charisma. The term "association" allows sufficient flexibility to integrate the various forms that already exist as well as others that may yet arise.
43. The Chapter encourages these initiatives and offers the following guidelines:
- i That each Province/Delegation name one person or, better still, a group of Oblates and lay persons, whose task will be to promote association between Oblate communities and laity.
 - ii Encourage Oblates to meet laity, not only to work with them but also to share what animates us both: rootedness in the same baptism, the experience of living the same charism of the Church in a common missionary vision.
 - iii That we be attentive to the aspirations of lay persons; these aspirations are often more than comprehensive than our response. Let us call, invite and challenge laity to share the Oblates charism and welcome those who express the desire to do so.

- iv. That we foster and develop the various forms of association that already exist and that we encourage new forms which are adapted to different local settings, always safeguarding the essential elements of the Oblates charism and respecting the specific vocation of the laity.
- v. That at the provincial, regional and Congregational levels we establish means to exchange information and to share experiences.
- vi. That we ensure an appropriate formation for Oblates and lay person, and for local communities (e.g. the practice of personal and communal discernment, knowledge of the Oblate charism, the life of the Founder, the Oblate tradition, etc.)
- vii. The fact that this is basically a communication endeavor should not prevent us from giving full value to personal initiative. Without the conversion and commitment of each individual Oblate, we risk missing an opportunity given to us by the Spirit. In this exploratory moment that we are living in the Church, we are called to openness and mutual trust, aware that the time is more than ripe for communion and sharing.

Evangelizing the Poor at the Dawn of the Third Millennium (1998) # 35, 36

- #35 Aware of what a gift it is to have lay persons help show us the depth and fecundity of our own charism, we re-commit ourselves to continue the journey with them.
- #36 It will take time to overcome the resistance and the fears that can easily arise in us in the face of this new reality; it will take time to support and sustain those Oblates more directly engaged in the common journey and learn from their experience; to cultivate the dialogue and reciprocity needed between the laity and ourselves in order to share with each other how the charism of Eugene de Mazenod gives us life. It will take time to work out ways of being in step together in mission, associates and Oblates, meeting the great challenge of evangelization at the dawn of the new millennium.