



MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
The Superior General

Casa Generalizia – Via Aurelia, 290 – 00165 Roma, Italia
Phone: (39.06) 39.87.71 – Email: OMISupGen@omigen.org

**LETTER OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE SOLEMNITY OF
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY
DECEMBER 8, 2022**

LJC et MI

WITH MARY, MISSIONARY PILGRIMS OF HOPE IN COMMUNION

Dear brother Oblates and all brothers and sisters of our charismatic family.

Today we greet Mary, “blessed among women”, as we contemplate the miracle of God's mercy in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. We celebrate ourselves for having her as our mother and patron and we ask her to intercede for us as our mother.

In his talk during his audience to the capitulants of the 37th General Chapter¹, Pope Francis invited us to *“take Mary as a traveling companion, so that she may always accompany you on your pilgrimage”*. After recalling the episode of her “pilgrimage” to the home of Elizabeth, the pope told us: *“May Mary also be for you an example in this, for your life and for your mission”*. On this feast day, I want to get back on the road with Mary and with all our family, to gradually become such missionary pilgrims, sowers of hope in communion, as was the dream of our General Chapter.

The gospel text proposed by the pope tells of Mary's encounter with Elizabeth (Lk 1, 39-56). For many, this Gospel passage is an inspiring paradigm of the Church's missionary action. As for me, while participating in the life of the Churches of North Africa, I have been able to attest to its fruitfulness. Called to bear, to announce and to share the mystery of salvation that dwells within us, we go out with haste to meet the “other”, placing ourselves at their service, as Mary did. It is a way that reveals Jesus' presence to us and invites us to leave in our wake the mark of hope and communion among us and with all of creation. Walking, going out to meet the other and putting ourselves at their service, we discover our own identity. This is also how that portion of truth is revealed to us which the Spirit of God has sown in the other and that is offered to us as a gift. Walking with Jesus and with the other, always living communion as a gift and a task, we become pilgrim prophets, singing the praises of the Lord and announcing with our lives the new world and the new humanity that has already been born and that hopes to manifest itself in its fullness.

I would like to begin and continue a conversation with all the members of our shared family what contemplation of this Gospel passage brings us for our life and our mission. In the

¹ <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2022/october/documents/20221003-oblati.html>

closing Eucharist of the General Chapter² I was able to begin this dialogue. How nice it would be if, in our meetings during these holidays, we could dedicate some time to sharing the fruits of this contemplation. How nice if we could hear the echoes coming from all corners of our common home, from all our communities and institutions, from all the expressions of our charismatic family. Let's be creative in putting on the common table what each one is discovering.

In these days, we will have in hand the *Acts of the XXXVII General Chapter*. We know that the acceptance of the chapter documents does not happen spontaneously; it is a grace that we have to learn to welcome. How do we do it? The chapter members strongly stated that all of them should be the first animators of this phase. It is evident that they are the privileged witnesses of everything that happened. Let's not be afraid of bothering them by asking them to share their experience! Let us listen to their stories; let us try to walk with them and ask for the grace to connect with their experience.

I believe that a good acceptance of the chapter document will occur when each and every member of our charismatic family becomes an animator of the post-chapter phase: animators because they have allowed themselves to be challenged by the Spirit; animators because they seek ways to put into practice creatively the proposed suggestions. All of us, then, are called to set out on the journey. Let us undertake this pilgrimage together and let us do it together with the poor, to renew ourselves in our vocation; to make our common home a livable home; to live as family the richness of our diversity, both cultural and within the various distinctive vocations which our charism embodies. Let us all walk as missionary pilgrims of hope in communion.

Will you allow me, in this phase of acceptance and post-chapter animation, to propose once again as a model what Mary experienced in the mystery of the "visitation"? She heard from the messenger some Good News that exceeded all expectations. Even without understanding everything, she confidently abandoned herself into the hands of God. While the Word was becoming flesh and her womanly body was changing to welcome him and nurture him in her womb, she set out in haste, overcoming the temptation of self-referentiality. Walking with confidence, she let faith and hope grow in her heart, repeatedly remembering that "for God nothing is impossible". And in that pilgrim journey, Mary was a sacrament and an announcement of the presence of the Savior in our history. Putting herself at the service of Elizabeth, she received the gift of the confirmation of her own identity and later, the explosion of prophetic joy which became a hymn to a God who is both Holy and Merciful and who is bringing his creation to fullness and does so through the poor and the hungry, the simple and the humble.

Let us ask Mary to teach us to wholeheartedly welcome the grace of the last General Chapter. Let us walk with her, hand in hand, as Pope Francis proposes, putting ourselves at the service of the other and living the joy of being prophets of communion and hope. Let us grow in faith, hope and love as a charismatic family that wants to respond today to its vocation as missionaries to the poor by caring for our common home. I would like to invite you to accompany me with your prayer in the pilgrimage that I will undertake to embrace and show communion with our brothers in Ukraine. With them, I would also like to embrace all the members of our charismatic family who are on pilgrimage in difficult situations, in suffering, hit by all kinds of violent situations caused by injustices and human ambitions.

² <https://www.omeworld.org/2022/10/30/homily-of-the-superior-general-at-the-closing-eucharist-of-the-xxxvii-general-chapter/>

With Mary and with all our family saints and with those who have preceded us on this pilgrimage, let us walk the paths of service to the most abandoned, being sowers of hope and communion.

Happy Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Your pilgrim brother, in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "L" and "R".

Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso, omi.
Superior General