

Acts of the 35th General Chapter

(2010)

Conversion



MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

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1.

Letter from the 35th General Chapter

Dear Oblate Brothers and Fathers, Honorary Oblates, Oblate Associates, friends of the Oblates, and all persons of good will:

Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate!
Praised too be our beloved Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod!

The 35th General Chapter of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate has just ended and, like the first disciples of Jesus bursting forth from the Pentecost room, we too want to proclaim in many tongues what we have experienced here.

We began our meeting with a Mass of the Holy Spirit on September 8th, a Marian feast on which many of us made our vows as Oblates, and ended one month later with a mass of Thanksgiving. Eighty-nine Oblates took part in the Chapter and more than twenty other Oblates participated as either resource or auxiliary personnel. As well, five Oblate Lay Associates, representing various Oblate Regions joined us for the first week of the Chapter. Our venue was again the Casa La Salle of the Christian Brothers where all of our recent Chapters have taken place. Three talented young Oblates, Filadelfo Estrella, Andriano Titone, and Hipolito Olea, served as our moderators. At their InterChapter meeting in 2007, the Oblate provincials had already designated as theme for the Chapter: Conversion: A new heart, a new spirit, a new mission. Brother Paul Michalenko, ST, was our overall facilitator and, in line with our theme, challenged us throughout the entire Chapter to empty our heads of judgments, our hearts of cynicism, and our wills of fear.

After the Mass of the Holy Spirit, we then spent several days getting to know each other through a number of small group interactions. Cardinal Francis George, OMI, joined us for part of that time and gave us an inspirational talk. We then entered the first major phase of the Chapter, receiving and processing information. This took place through a series of reports.

First, each Oblate Region gave a report on life in their region, naming both the strengths and the weaknesses of Oblate life there. This was followed by a report from the Standing Committee for Oblate Brothers. The Lay Associates reported next and challenged us to work more closely with them. The next two days were taken up in receiving and processing the report from our Treasurer General, Rufus Whitley. Among other things, he challenged us to be awake to a massive shift in demographics that is happening within the congregation and to what this will mean in terms of financial resources. This initial phase of our Chapter ended with a report from our outgoing Superior General, Guillermo Steckling, on the state of the Congregation. He ended his report by suggesting that four things now constitute the most urgent imperatives for the congregation: i) that we build Christ-centered communities; ii) that we truly love the poor and move towards them; iii) that we face up to the massive demographic changes that are

reshaping the face of the congregation; and iv) that we recommit ourselves in our love for the Church. After some dialogue with him on his report, we entered the initial discussions on our Chapter theme, conversion.

Nearly an entire week was then spent on the next phase of our Chapter, examining and debating a series of proposals that had been submitted to us by a Pre-Chapter Commission that had been set up by the General Council to re-examine our Governmental structures. After much passionate debate, the Chapter voted, for the most part, to retain our present structures. The majority feeling was that, at this time, it is more important that we change our attitudes than that we change our structures. But there was also palpable disappointment among many of the Chapter delegates about this decision.

We then entered a third, and very important, phase of our Chapter: elections. Again, we began this process with a Mass of the Holy Spirit and spent a half day in silent reflection and one-to-one *murmuratio*. And the Holy Spirit sent us a very clear message: Fr. Louis Lougen was elected, nearly unanimously, on the first ballot. As Fr. Louis rose and humbly accepted the call to serve, the Chapter delegates rose to their feet, as one, and a thundering applause went on for several minutes. There were tears in eyes of many of the delegates and the feeling in the room at that moment -- the oneness of heart, the sense of the rightness of this choice, the warmth of energy -- will forever remain the highlight of this Chapter. The energy flowing from that moment carried us forward as we then elected a Vicar General, Paulo Archiati; two Assistants General, Cornelius Ngoka and Gilberto Pinon; and five General Councillors for the Regions, Miguel Fritz, Clement Waidyasekara; Warren Brown, Luis Ignatio Rois Alonso, and Evans Chinyemba.

We then entered the fourth and final phase of our Chapter: the approval of various proposals that had been submitted to the Chapter and the shaping of a message to send out to the Oblate world. Once again, debate was spirited but the Chapter eventually refined and passed a number of proposals on issues of ministry, finance, higher education, and justice. The final days of the Chapter were taken up with discussions concerning what particular challenges this General Chapter wishes to send out to the Oblate world.

This discussion was not an easy one. A general feeling among the delegates was that the messages sent out by the last four General Chapters still contain the major challenges we need to face as congregation and that adding another document at this time would not serve us positively. What was needed, it was felt, was something brief, more specifically directive, focused on our theme of conversion, and highlighting very specific areas of conversion to which we feel we are called at this time. Our document The Chapter Call to Conversion is predicated on these premises. We state, almost apologetically, that we are not necessarily offering new challenges or challenges beyond those to which our Constitutions and Rules and past General Chapters have called us, but rather that we are offering some important challenges that need to be highlighted in our Oblate world at this time in our history. We leave these challenges with you, inviting you, as we were invited time and again at this Chapter, to empty our heads of judgments,

our hearts of cynicism, and our wills of fear.

In conclusion, a word about the atmosphere of this Chapter: Despite our very spirited exchanges on the Chapter floor, the atmosphere of this Chapter has been wonderfully warm, deeply fraternal, free of virtually all politics, and deeply prayerful. Among other things, the delegates spent half an hour each day in common oraison before the Blessed Sacrament. One delegate, attending his third General Chapter, commented: “This Chapter was the most fraternal of all. I have never experienced anything like this at an international gathering before.” Another delegate, attending his first General Chapter, remarked: “This is my first Chapter and it has been a great experience. One of the things that impacted on me was to see so many Oblates from so many places. It is an experience of the great richness of our religious family. I see a good atmosphere and mutual caring.” This truly was an experience of Oblate community and warm fraternity.

Throughout the Chapter, the delegates kept listening, waiting for a particular biblical image to be given us as a key to help us more deeply understand both our experience at this Chapter and the Oblate and ecclesial reality within which we are now living. Again and again, spontaneously in our conversations, the image that came to us was the one given in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24, where the disciples, dispirited and without heart because their religious world had been crucified, meet the resurrected Christ on the road to Emmaus, feel their hearts burning within them as he speaks to them, eventually recognize him and the new reality they are living, and go back into their religious lives with renewed vision, hope, and energy.

This General Chapter has been an Emmaus walk. We have examined our crucified worlds, met the resurrected Christ on the road, and leave here with our hearts burning with new vision, new hope, and new energy. Our wish is to share that with you!

Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate.

The Oblate General Chapter of 2010

Rome, Italy
October 7, 2010

2. Election of the Superior General and Council

Through elections held according to the prescriptions of our Constitutions and Rules, the General Chapter called the following Oblates to the service of authority:

Superior General	Louis LOUGEN (United States – United States) (Elected: September 28, 2010)
Vicar General	Paolo ARCHIATI (Italy - General Administration) (Elected: September 29, 2010)
1 st Assistant General	Cornelius NGOKA (Nigeria - Cameroon) (Elected: September 29, 2010)
2 nd Assistant General	Gilberto PIÑÓN Gaytán (Mexico - General Administration) (Elected: September 29, 2010)
General Councillor for Latin America	Miguel FRITZ (Germany – Paraguay) (Elected: September 29, 2010)
General Councillor for Asia - Oceania	Clement WAIDYASEKARA (Sri Lanka - Colombo) (Elected: September 29, 2010)
General Councillor for Canada-United States	Warren BROWN (United States – United States) (Elected: September 29, 2010)
General Councillor for Europe	Luis Ignacio ROIS Alonso (Spain – General Administration) (Elected: September 29, 2010)
General Councillor for Africa - Madagascar	Evans CHINYEMBA (Zambia – United States/Zambia) (Elected: September 30, 2010)

3. A Call to Conversion

WE ARE IN NEED OF A PROFOUND PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL
CONVERSION

OUR COMMUNITY

Jesus Christ is the centre of our life and mission, and our religious Life shared in an Oblate community requires planned and regular animation to enable us to live the way of Jesus and the gift of our Oblate Charism. In the light of that witness we will strengthen our Vocation ministry.

As a consequence of this Chapter, our conversion must bring about a new quality of our common life. Report of the Superior General to the 35th General Chapter, p. 34

What is the heart of the Oblate community? The Call of Jesus Christ has gathered us together in the Church to share our faith, life, mission and culture. This relationship is deepened through our personal and community prayer and through the reflection on and evaluation of our way of living. This opens us to the invitation and gift of the Holy Spirit.

Personal and communal conversion centred on the person of Jesus Christ requires:

1. That each Oblate reflect on the witness of his religious life, living the vows in a prophetic way so as to share these values with the world, as an invitation for others to join our Oblate family.
2. That each Oblate Superior and each community accept personal and shared co-responsibility for the life of the community (House, District, Unit).
3. That Oblate Superiors and the community periodically review their lifestyles in the areas of acquiring and use of finances, sharing of goods, and living in a transparent and accountable way.
4. That Oblate Superiors and the community seek out ways and means of reconciling what is in need of healing within the community.
5. That Oblate Superiors and community be attentive to their personal and community prayer and fidelity to the practice of oraison.
6. That Oblate Superiors and the community be attentive to on-going formation, Scripture reflection and Oblate studies, for their own spiritual good and for the authenticity of their missionary work.

7. That we recognize that our retired and elder Oblates are our mentors and wisdom figures and that their place in the life and mission of the community provides an authentic witness of religious life.
8. That Oblates who live outside the community for the purpose the mission do so as an exception and only with the support of the community.
9. That our communities, where possible, be intercultural, reflecting the changing face of the Congregation

OUR OBLATE MISSION

Jesus Christ is the centre of our life and mission to bring the Good News to the poor. In facing the challenges of today from our diverse contexts, including globalization, secularization, inculturation and information technology, we are called to participate in 'crossing borders' and being 'inter-cultural' within an Oblate apostolic community.

Today, do we discern God's will as to our congregational mission to evangelize the poor or just keep doing by inertia what we are used to? Our own saints will show us the right way! When it comes to solidarity with the poor, we have many martyrs of love and even of blood among our confreres, and they all have in common that they loved the poor with God's heart. There will be a personal and communitarian benefit from this for our conversion. Report of the Superior General to the 35th General Chapter, p. 35.

Conversion in our mission requires:

1. That in the framework of a renewed Immense Hope Project, Oblates cooperate with the new Central Government, who will develop a fresh animation for mission and for discerning new missionary strategies and major missionary challenges, in relationship with the local church, in dialogue with other religious, Oblate Associates, and all people of good will.
2. Our Oblate specialists in missiology and our institutions of higher learning are called to define a way to understand the challenges of modernity, secularity, inculturation and religious fundamentalism as well as our own way of witnessing to the Kingdom of God in the midst of these challenges.
3. That Oblates periodically submit their ministry to the discernment of their local community for evaluation and review. Evaluation of ministry and the service of mission should also happen at Province and Unit level.

4. That we identify the face of Christ in the faces of the poor in the social context of our Units today such as migrants, HIV/AIDS victims, undocumented persons, war victims, and indigenous peoples and that we defend their rights and dignity.
5. That Oblates be open to and involved in inter-denominational and inter-religious dialogue, particularly in terms of positively working with other religions to build God's Kingdom.
6. That Oblate Units and Regions continue to develop in the sharing of resources, personnel and finances across the Congregation.
7. That Oblates in Units and Regions discern with their Superiors, their motivation to leave "home" to "cross borders".
8. That we recognize that Mary is an integral part of our missionary experience. She is our mother and our model. We see her in her daily life in Nazareth, in the house of Elizabeth, at Cana, at the foot of the cross and in the cenacle

SERVICE OF LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY

Jesus Christ is the centre of our life and mission expressed in leadership and authority. We are called to exercise this service and to animate in a dynamic way, with prudent foresight, courage, and joy, in the context in which we live and in response to the changing face of the Congregation today.

In our Congregation there is a huge demographic change just around the corner, the many new faces show it. We must respond to this change with courage and with joy... Where the average age is high we must simply make whatever structural changes are needed to serve our mission best. .. We can count on excellent Oblates and in good numbers in many parts of the world. Some are still young but many could already be entrusted with leadership responsibility. Report of the Superior General to the 35th General Chapter, p. 36

Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave." Matt 20:25-27

Conversion in leadership and authority requires:

1. That we, as missionary Oblates, live a prophetic and inspiring leadership that is at the service of others in the community, and like Jesus who did not come to be served but to serve, we do the same in obedience to the will of God and for the love

of the mission; and that superiors at all levels, use appropriately the authority given to them, especially in timely intervention to address difficulties.

2. That Oblate superiors, and those who exercise authority in the community, live according to the encompassing values expressed in C82.
3. That we continue to evaluate and review our mission, particularly at the level of the whole Congregation, so as to establish priorities to guide us in the effective use of personnel and material resources.
4. That we identify future leaders, and adequately form and continually animate present and future leaders in the various aspects of leadership and governance in our Congregation.
5. The virtue and vow of Obedience expressed in Constitutions 24 to 28 and in Rules 26a and 26b provide the ethics for the service of leadership and authority.
6. That all Oblates take great care in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and review Church and Congregation policies regularly.

FORMATION

Jesus Christ is the centre of our life and mission regarding first and ongoing formation. We are called to improve the quality of our formation. It must be deeply rooted in Christ, and with our Oblate charism, open to the needs of the community and the mission.

Formation is the process which aims at the integral growth of a person and lasts a lifetime. It enables us to accept ourselves as we are and develop into the persons we are called to be. Formation involves us in an ever renewed conversion to the Gospel and a readiness to learn and to change in response to new demands. Constitution 47

Conversion in Formation requires:

1. An openness to the development of intercultural and joint houses of formation that indicates our common mission today.
2. That we provide a deeper Oblate missionary spirituality for our candidates and formators. Scholastics should spend at least one year of pastoral experience outside of their culture during their formation journey.
3. A holistic human development formation for our candidates and formators

4. That formation for leadership include skills in finance, administration, animation, communication, and JPIC.
5. A good quality formation and training program for full-time formators
6. Sharing of resources among the Units through exchange and collaboration.
7. That houses of formation function with a team of formators, and not just one, and that smaller scholasticates be rationalised to ensure an adequate formation.
8. A clear program for ongoing formation in every Unit. That each Oblate be constantly renewed in the knowledge of the Scriptures for the good of the mission. For this purpose, Oblates are invited to avail of the “Centre De Mazenod” Aix programs for renewal in the Oblate Charism and family.
9. That each local Superior review his responsibility for ongoing formation within his community.
10. That each Unit appoint an Oblate with responsibility for promoting and programming ongoing formation, in close collaboration with the central government of the Congregation.
11. The development of a post-Novitiate program for Oblate Brothers in each Unit in line with the proposal adopted by the 35th General Chapter. [Cf. infra p. 19.]
12. That we recognize that our Constitutions and Rules and General Norms for Oblate Formation contain models for our Oblate Formation and that we take bold steps in creatively and sincerely using the opportunities they provide.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Jesus Christ is the centre of our life and mission, and in affirming our historical solidarity in financial stewardship within the Congregation, we emphasize the need to increase local income and to review the on-going stewardship of our resources. This requires a change of mentality, moving from dependency and indifference to responsible interdependence.

“The changes in the Congregation have today reached a point where a financial paradigm shift is necessary.” Report of the Superior General to the 35th General Chapter, p. 35

“Every Unit of the Congregation is called to share from its abundance (whether it be personnel, expertise or finances) and receive (whether it be personnel, expertise or finances) in service of our mission. The challenge is to transform, explicitly, this model of

temporal resource dependency with an emerging model that includes financially sustainable Oblate Units and communities, solidarity in the sharing of expertise, material resources and personnel resources throughout the Congregation, and a new recognition of our dependence on investments as one of the four pillars of our material resources.” Report of the Treasurer General to the 35th General Chapter

Please refer also to *CCRR 154 - 162* and to the *Directory for the Administration of Temporal Goods*

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.
Acts 4: 32

Conversion in our stewardship of finances requires:

1. A renewed emphasis on our living and expression of the vow of poverty as a call to follow Jesus in solidarity with the poor with their many faces in our different contexts.
2. Effective implementation of strategies at all levels towards financial sustainability through an increasing reliance on local sources of revenue, especially in the growing Units.
3. Recognition that the Gospel values of discipleship and stewardship call for a renewed commitment on the part of each Oblate to address the issue of financial responsibility.
4. Renewed commitment to the prudent, transparent, and professional management of our material resources at all levels in a way that expresses our vow of poverty and our identification with the poor.
5. Renewed adherence to the principles of effective financial management (budgeting, financial reporting, external review, etc.) to guide long term planning of our material resources.
6. Recognition that the vow of poverty calls for the responsible use of our property and possessions as the patrimony of the poor. There should therefore be a timely and well prepared intervention at the appropriate level of authority to anticipate and address financial crises.
7. Renewed commitment to coordinate with the Office of the Grant Director, in the search for financial resources to support our formation and mission.

4.
**Changes to the Constitutions and Rules approved
by the 35th General Chapter**
(Text added or changed is indicated by *italics*.)

Changes to the Constitutions:

C 38. The text is changed to read: “Obedience and charity bind us together, priests and Brothers, keeping us interdependent in our lives, and missionary activity, even when, dispersed for the sake of the Gospel, we can benefit only occasionally from life in common.

Each community will adopt a program of life and prayer best suited to its purpose and apostolate. Once set up, such a program is entrusted to the vigilance of the Superior; regular meetings will be held to praise and thank the Lord, to assess the community's life, to renew its spirit and strengthen its unity.”

(Approved by the Chapter on October 1, 2010, thereby eliminating the phrase, “, *whether a house or a district,*” from the second sentence of the previous text.) [This article was approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on October 26, 2010 (Prot.M 29-1/99).]

C 98. The text is changed to read: “It pertains to the Superior General in Council to establish Provinces, to change their boundaries, and to suppress or unite existing Provinces. Before *any restructuring actions*, the Superior General will consult those concerned. *It also pertains to the Superior General in Council to evaluate periodically their Oblate life, missionary activity and stability.*”

(Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.) [This article was approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Religious Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on October 26, 2010 (Prot.M 29-1/99).]

C141. The text was changed to read: “The members of the General Council are elected from among those perpetually professed, according to what is prescribed elsewhere in the Constitutions and Rules.

A new General Council is elected by the General Chapter after it has elected a Superior General. The members of the General Council remain in office until the *installation* of their successors.

(Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010)

[N. B. The modification of this article was denied approval by the Congregation for Institutes of Religious Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on October 26, 2010 (Prot.M 29-1/99). The change approved by the Chapter therefore never took effect and the previous C141 remains unchanged, in accordance with C164.]

New or Revised Rules:

R 65i. *To establish a post-novitiate formation community, the approval of the Superior General in Council is required.* (Approved By the Chapter on October 6, 2010)

R 92a. [This article was **suppressed** by the Chapter on October 1, 2010 and partially replaced by *R65i*, above.]

R 97a. The text is changed to read: “*A Province must demonstrate a history of being able to assume responsibility for effective functioning of government and administration. This implies a sense of identity, a stated missionary vision, adequate leadership potential, a respect for cultural and ethnic diversity, and normally, the ability to communicate in a common language. The Province is also to demonstrate that these characteristics are going to continue into the foreseeable future.*” (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 98b. The text is changed to read: “Normally, a Province should have some *sixty* members in order to assure a proper functioning and stability. If the number falls significantly below *sixty*, the Superior General will initiate a dialogue with the Province leadership in order to address the situation and provide for the future. *Exceptions to this norm will be decided by the Superior General in Council.*” (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 98d. *In the restructuring process, efforts will be made to ensure sensitivity to diversity and a certain level of autonomy among the areas of the new province.* (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 123e. The former text is replaced by: “*For membership on various General Committees, the Regional Conferences will propose the names of competent Oblates to the Superior General who, from this list, will appoint members to appropriate committees as needed.*” (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R123f. *An Oblate Brother representing his region will participate regularly in certain meetings of the Regional Conference.* (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 127b. The text is changed to read: “*At least two years before a Chapter, the Superior General in plenary session of the Council will appoint a Commissioner and the other members of the Precapitular Commission to make the necessary preparations for the Chapter.*” (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 128a. The text of the follow sections is changed to read:

“3) The Conference of the Region will determine the electoral units, the number of delegates and alternates to be elected in each electoral unit, *and the necessary procedures for their election. The procedures will assure proportionate representation and the right to cast a direct and secret vote to each Oblate with active voice.*

4) *The Conference of the Region will submit for the approval of the Superior General in Council the eventual composition of electoral units, as well as the procedures for election, no more than six months after the convocation of the Chapter (Cf. 128b).*

5) *Members of the General House community and other Oblates attached to it will be counted in and vote in electoral units of their previous assignment.*

6) *The Superior General, after consultation, will invite one Oblate Brother from each region in the congregation.*” (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 128e. The text is changed to read: “*Between Chapters, the Superior General in Council in plenary session will call at least one meeting of the Provincials with the Central Government. After consulting the Provincials, he will determine details of convocation and the agenda of the meeting.*”

The principal purpose of such a meeting is to evaluate the extent to which decisions taken in Chapter have been carried out, to encourage further implementation of such decisions, and to provide for the remote preparation of the next Chapter.” (Approved by the Chapter on October 1, 2010.)

R 136b. *The newly-elected Superior General and Council, in consultation with the current Superior General and Council, will decide the appropriate date for the installation, which will take place no later than three months after the end of the chapter.* (Approved by the Chapter on September 20, 2010.)

[N.B. Since this article conflicts with C141, the revision of which was not approved by the Holy See, it is without juridical effect.]

R 136c. *In the interim period between the election and installation of the newly elected Superior General and Council, the outgoing Superior General and Council remain in office for the discharge of the ordinary affairs of the Congregation.* (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

[N.B. Since this article conflicts with C141, the revision of which was not approved by the Holy See, it is without juridical effect.]

R 137b. The text is changed to read: “The Superior General will consult the Provincials and the Oblate concerned before giving a first obedience or making a transfer from one Province to another. *Unit superiors will ask the Superior General for approval before allowing an Oblate to live outside the Province’s geographic territory if the stay exceeds one year. If the stay is for the purpose of higher studies, only notification is required.*” (Approved by the Chapter on October 1, 2010)

R 145c. *For a better government of the Region and of the Units of which it is composed, the Superior General in Council may delegate a General Councillor with governmental power for determined actions, to be specified in his Council, within one or several Regions and Units, with the exception of whatever may be reserved by law or by a specific act of the same Superior General.* (Approved by the Chapter on October 1, 2010.)

R 149a. The text is changed to read: “Among the General Services are the Procurator to the Holy See, the Postulation, the *Oblate Communications Service; the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Service;* the General Archives and the Service of Hospitality at the General House.

Each General Service is under the direction or supervision of an Oblate appointed for a specific term of office by the Superior General in Council in Plenary Session.” Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 149d. The text is changed to read: “Through different means of communication, the *Oblate Communications Service* provides for an exchange and sharing of information throughout the Congregation and beyond *and fosters the use of media in ministry.*” (Approved by the Chapter on September 24, 2010.)

R 162a. The text is changed to read: “In addition to an animation role in regard to the responsible stewardship of temporal goods, the Treasurer General conducts the ordinary business of the General Administration and prepares its annual budget. He receives an annual consolidated report from each Province and Delegation and gives his analysis to the Superior General and Council. *He also receives a copy of the budget approved by the Major Superior in Council of each Province and Delegation in order to provide a more accurate analysis of the financial report.*”

With the appropriate adaptations, he assumes at the general level the same responsibilities as the Provincial Treasurer exercises at the provincial level. .” (Approved by the Chapter on October 1, 2010.)

R 162b. The text is changed to read: “A General Finance Committee helps the Superior General and Council determine the financial policy of the Congregation and presents whatever recommendations it judges opportune. The committee is composed of the Treasurer General, his assistant and *four qualified Oblates appointed by the Superior General in Council from a list of candidates proposed* by each Regional Conference. Persons other than Oblates may be invited by the Treasurer General as advisers *on specific issues considered by the General Finance Committee.*” (Approved by the Chapter on October 1, 2010.)

R 165a. The text is changed to read: “Any change in existing Rules which is approved by the Chapter is immediately effective.” (Approved by the Chapter on October 1, 2010, thereby suppressing the second sentence of the former text.)

5.

Additional Delegations, Authorizations, Resolutions, Mandates, Observations, Declarations, Invitations, Requests, Directives, Affirmations and Wishes of the General Chapter

A. Editing the Chapter Documents

The 35th General Chapter delegates and authorizes such persons as shall be appointed for this purpose by the Superior General in Council to edit and prepare for publication the documents approved by the Chapter in proper grammatical and stylistic form in the original language in which they were approved by the Chapter and to provide for appropriate translations of the above-mentioned documents into the other languages of the Chapter. (Approved by the Chapter on 6 October 2010.)

B. Finances

1. That the President of each Region of the Congregation (or at the direction of the Region, the president or designated major superior in sub-regional configurations) together with the Treasurer General coordinate a meeting, at least every 24 months, among the Unit (i.e. Provincial, Delegation, Mission) treasurers of the Region (sub region) and the Treasurer General:

- a. for more specialized ongoing formation and training;
- b. for the review of procedures and coordination of financial transactions
- c. for the coordination of long range planning proposals for a more effective and collaborative use of the material resources of the Congregation - to be submitted to the appropriate government levels of authority.

The Region (sub region) should appoint a person to coordinate this meeting with the Treasurer General. It would be appropriate for the Region (sub region) to designate a liaison person between the Regional (sub regional) Conference and the treasurers, who would participate fully at this meeting.

2. That each Region (Sub Region) develop a plan to provide basic training opportunities for the management of material resources. The Region (Sub Region) will consider extending this opportunity to:

- a. future treasurers
- b. local treasurers
- c. members of finance committees
- d. assistant treasurers
- e. formators.

3. The Chapter authorizes the Superior General and Council, in order to respond to the suggestions, directions, mandates and orientations of this Chapter that require the expense of funds, to increase the per capita contribution requested of Oblate Units. (In this case the Treasurer General, each year, should communicate to the Major Superiors and Treasurers the percentage of the per capita contribution that is required for this).

4. Participation in the congregational sponsored catastrophic health insurance program is mandatory for Units that do not utilize equivalent or superior programs available within their own context or do not have such programs available to them. Such units will raise the required premiums and/or seek the assistance of the Central Government to assist in the payment of the premium. Units that determine their circumstances warrant non-participation must present their reasons in writing to the Superior General and Council for approval.

5. The Superior General in Council will establish clear guidelines for the support of Units facing a severe financial crisis. These guidelines will include clear accountability procedures as well as a requirement for a detailed plan to reach financial independence as a requisite for the support facilitated by the Superior General in Council.

6. The Superior General in Council is authorized to assess a tax of up to 10% on the sale of land and/or buildings by Units of the Congregation. The primary purpose of the funds so raised would be to increase the reserves of the Congregation so that the first formation grant would increase and the current solidarity grants would be ensured. The General Finance Committee will recommend to the Superior General in Council a sliding percentage based upon the contribution categories. A Unit subject to the assessment is invited to petition the Superior General in Council if there exists reasons that would require a mitigation of all or part of the tax.

7. That the Superior General in Council invite Units of the Congregation to consider contributions to the Jette (Formation) and Zago (Solidarity) Trusts in order to increase the reserves of the Congregation that are in service of first formation, ongoing formation, and the solidarity process.

8. That the Superior General in Council invite the Trustees of the OIP to collaborate in identifying potential Oblate Board Members and Administrators for the OIP.

That the Superior General in Council request that the OIP, as an expense of the OIP, provide training and educational opportunities to properly prepare the identified Oblates for the role of Board Members and Administrator.

That prior to 2016 at least two Oblates be trained to be administrators of the OIP.

It is noted that, even if not utilized by the OIP, these Oblates (trained either as Board Members or Administrators) will have developed skills that may be available to their Unit in the management of material resources. (Accepted by the Chapter on October 1, 2010.)

C. A Declaration of the 35th General Chapter to Oblates and Associates

In response to certain expectations expressed and declarations made on 11 September 2010 by the group of Lay Associates that participated in the 35th General Chapter we wish to state the following:

1. We appreciate the voluntary, complementary and co-responsible role that lay groups and Associates assume in the Congregation's missionary endeavors. We acknowledge their desire to participate more fully in the Oblate charism and mission.

2. We invite them to dialogue with the local and regional units and explore ways as to how this can be achieved, respecting the special character of each group.

3. In view of achieving the above, it will be necessary for us, Oblates and laity, to create instruments of planning and evaluation so that we can better gauge and express whether our efforts are moving towards the desired results.

4. We request the Oblate Units and their respective communities to assist the Associates in their spiritual formation and their missionary involvement.

5. We encourage all Oblate Units and Regions to work closely with lay groups to identify priorities that consider especially the poor of today and engage in a process of mutual personal and communal conversion to the values of God's Kingdom.

6. We call on all Oblate Units to work together with the Associates in promoting the ministry of Oblate missionary vocations.

7. We wish to persuade all Associate groups to live the specific characteristics of St. Eugene's charism as enunciated in the 1996 Aix Congress through Regional Congresses, regular meetings with Oblates and encounters in daily life. We draw inspiration from our common charism, which strengthens the spirit of the Oblate family.

8. We support the laity in their efforts to invite others to live and share the Oblate charism. (Approved by the Chapter on 1 October 2010)

D. Resolution on Oblate Higher Education

That the 35th Oblate General Chapter name Higher Education as a valued and essential ministry within the Oblate mission of evangelization and that the Chapter direct the Superior General in Council to establish policies regarding the support of higher studies in the Congregation and the place of Oblate Institutes of Higher Education within the Congregation. (Approved by the Chapter on 1 October 2010.)

E. Resolution on Ministry with Migrants

That the Oblate General Chapter affirm that ministry to migrants is a valued Oblate ministry flowing from the charism of our Founder. As such, ideally, we would like to see this ministry highlighted during the period of first formation; that opportunity for specialized studies in this area be provided for some of those who are assigned to this ministry; and that, wherever possible, we support the various groups who are working to alleviate the plight of migrants around the world. (Approved by the Chapter on 1 October 2010.)

F. Resolution on the Formation of Oblate Brothers

That the Assistant General who will be in charge of the formation portfolio work on the issue of common standards in the first formation for Oblate Brothers in the Congregation. This project will be carried out in dialogue with the Presidents of the Regional Conferences, the General Formation Committee and the Standing Committee of Oblate Brothers. Following which, recommendations will be made to the Superior General and to his Council. (Approved by the Chapter on 1 October 2010.)

G. On the Protection and Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Chapter emphatically affirms the *Policy Statement Regarding Serious Physical, Professional, and/or Sexual Misconduct with Minors and/or Vulnerable Adults* (approved by the General Council in ordinary session on April 7, 2004). The Chapter also notes that

§ 24 requires that each Unit of the Congregation, respecting the above mentioned policy, develop its own policy which will be binding on the members of the Unit.

The Chapter, in the spirit of our Gospel responsibility to those who have suffered abuse, their families, and the Oblates, affirms the importance of the provision that each Unit provide for an external evaluation and, if necessary, revision of its policy in a way that ensures that the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is given first priority. The Chapter further directs that each Unit forward its policy and the evaluation of the policy by October 1, 2011 to the General Administration in order to document compliance with the policy. (Approved by the Chapter on 1 October 2010.)

H. Resolution on the Ministry of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

That the leadership of Units and Regions of the Congregation develop suitable directives and provide the necessary support to promote JPIC ministry in the mission. (Approved by the Chapter on 6 October 2010.)