



Beyond Mission

By 1815, Eugene realised his overwhelming ambition to serve would not be accomplished unless he drew others to his cause, to share a common life and be united by religious vows. On January 26, 1816, Fr De Mazenod and four friends dedicated their lives to bringing the Good News to the poor in this way. Eugene De Mazenod was destined to minister to the broader Church when in 1837, he was named Bishop of Marseilles.

Eugene's commitment to society's most abandoned is clear in his first public pastoral action that we know of; his famous instruction in the Church of the Madeleine, Lent 1813. Importantly, he was speaking Provencal, the language of the poor:

“Servants! Farmhands! Peasants! Poor!

Come now, and learn from us what you are in the eyes of faith. You, the poor of Jesus Christ, the afflicted and the wretched, the sick and suffering, those covered with sores– all of you whom misery overwhelms, my friends, my dear friends, my respectable friends, listen to me.

You are the children of God, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, the co-heirs of his eternal Kingdom, the cherished portion of his inheritance; you are, in the words of St Peter, the holy nation, you are kings, you are priests, you are, yes, in a certain way, gods...

So, lift up your heads! Let your dejected spirit rise! Stop grovelling on the ground and raise yourselves toward heaven where you were meant to attain what should be your most normal relationship... For once, let your eyes look inward and see through the rags you wear. There, within you, is an immortal soul, created to the image of God whom it is destined one day to possess – a soul redeemed at the cost of the blood of Jesus Christ, more precious before God than all the riches of the world, than all the kingdoms of the earth, a soul about which he is more concerned than about all the governments of the entire world... Therefore, O Christians, recognise your dignity....”





Foundation House and Community,
Aix en Provence