



CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

Prot No.: 0000 288/2023
Rome, November 9, 2023

Missionaries of Hope, in the footsteps of the Redeemer
YEAR DEDICATED TO COMMUNITY LIFE
Const. 21-75; EG 026-049; Lk 6,12-16

DEAR CONFRERES,
REDEMPTORIST BISHOPS,
FORMANDI,
LAY ASSOCIATES OF OUR MISSION AND REDEMPTORIST OBLATES,
REDEMPTORIST MISSIONARY YOUTH (RYVM),
FORMER SEMINARIANS AND
OTHERS OF OUR REDEMPTORIST FAMILY

1. On November 9, 1732, Alfonso and his companions Pedro Romano, Juan Bautista Di Donato, Vicente Mannarini, and Silvestre Tósquez, together with Monsignor Falcoia, celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit and sang the *Te Deum* invoking the light of the Paraclete on the *New Project*. Alfonso and Brother Vito Curzio persevered in the small Institute and, thanks to them, today the Congregation is present on five continents and is celebrating 291 years of proclaiming Abundant Redemption. After all these years, what would Alphonsus tell us on seeing the Congregation today, at almost three hundred years old? Would he recognize the Congregation he founded? And what would he ask of us?
2. Today, Alphonsus would ask us the following straightforward questions: Confrere, where do you find those who represent today's goat herders? Are they in your heart and your mission, or are they only an abstract concept? And how have you announced to them the Abundant Redemption? And how does your religious community experience missionary zeal? Certainly, Alphonsus would tell us, with

great emphasis, never to forget our foundational roots, the Gospel and the poorest, so as not to run the risk of betraying his charism and making an extensive and profound reading of the present times to give concrete answers to the men and women of today in their geographic and existential peripheries. To each one of us, he would tell us not to lose heart, even in the moments when we have no answers, and that the Redeemer and his Spirit walk with us. Finally, he would urge us to deepen more and more our charismatic identity and mission.

3. Our holy Founder would not be surprised by the present expression of the Congregation in its process of restructuring for mission! On the contrary, he would be very perplexed if his Institute were to find itself in the same form as he left it. In this sense, Alphonsus did all he could in his context to help the missionary work he founded to grow. And it was this spirit of openness, of realizing that it was the work of the Spirit, that made it possible for those who continued it to bring the Congregation to where it is today. *From the foundation until today, we have not lost the common thread, the charismatic breath of the Spirit. Today, each confrere is the custodian of this treasure. Therefore, each one has an immense responsibility before history and the People of God because the Congregation is a work of the Spirit that will continue its days if its members are faithful in the following of the Redeemer and are hermeneutics and applicators of redemption in the context of a wounded world.*
4. Therefore, it is vital to be attentive to today's world. It challenges us, but it also offers us important reading principles to interpret the charism and to analyze, with sincerity, if we are being faithful to the Gospel. In this sense, it is necessary to look at our own history in this world and what the last General Chapters have motivated and indicated to us. What resonance do they have in our (vice) provinces and communities? With their limits, they are synodal bodies and give us indications on how to reread our charism. Therefore, I ask that each (vice) Province deepen the decisions of the General Chapter in its chapters and (vice) Provincial assemblies, as well as the Strategic Plans elaborated in the third phases of the XXVI General Chapter. They must reach our communities, our formandi, and our laity. We are a missionary body, and we must walk in harmony, inspired by the Spirit, under the guidance of our foundational texts.
5. The Congregation, with its 291 years, will not survive if we do not have vocations. Therefore, each (vice) Province should do everything possible to promote, accompany, and discern them using human and financial resources, as well as the means of communication. We are a missionary Congregation made up of priests and brothers, and this should be reflected in vocation promotion. However, it is not

enough for the promoters to fulfill their mission. Each confrere is a vocation promoter through the witness of his life and the joy he communicates by being a Redemptorist. "The Congregation's strength to continue its apostolic mission depends on the number and quality of candidates who want to join the Redemptorist community. Therefore, all the confreres, out of esteem and love for their own vocation, should apply themselves to the pastoral work of fostering vocations to the Congregation" (Const. 79). We could seriously ask ourselves: why are there places where the Congregation is present, and no vocation has ever arisen? What is missing? Do we communicate our charism where we are? Have we reached the young? The future is in the hands of each one of us. We must always cast our nets into deeper waters (cf. Lk 5:4), even if we do not get results, but we are doing our part.

6. Dear Confreres, Formandi, and all those who are involved in the mission of the Congregation. We celebrate with joy this date of the birth of our Institute, an anniversary that encourages us to strengthen our faith, hope, and missionary zeal. The Congregation is a dynamic reality, but we can do much more because we are missionaries of hope following in the footsteps of the Redeemer. We cannot let comfort and lack of apostolic zeal take away from us our personal and community missionary zeal and weaken us to the point of not being recognized by our own Founder.
7. May St. Alphonsus continue to inspire us and make us see new horizons for our Institute. What Congregation will we leave to future generations of Redemptorists? That depends on how we understand our consecration and devote our days in favor of the *copiosa apud eum redemptio* both personally and in community.
8. May Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, our Saints, Martyrs, Blessed, and Venerable, grant us the grace, perseverance, joy, and creative fidelity to be faithful to the mission of the Redeemer.

Fraternally, in Christ the Redeemer,



Rogério Gomes, CSSR
Fr. Rogério Gomes, C.Ss.R.
Superior General

Original: *Spanish*