

8. Redemptorists for Life



Theme: Perseverance

Aspects: First Vow, all through life, the love of God.

Keywords: Faithfulness, steadfast.

“The members, set apart for the work to which they are called (Acts 1:32), are prepared to remain steadfast for life in their vocation. They renounce themselves with all they possess to become followers of Christ, and to be all things to all (cf. 1 Cor 9:22).” (C.49)

The following quotation from a circular letter of Alphonsus (July 29, 1774) sums up the spirituality of the Congregation in its origins. It can be said to be the Summa of Alphonsian spirituality and a last will and testament for Redemptorists of all times.

“My dear Confreres, the main thing I urge for you is the love of Jesus Christ. We are so strongly obliged to love him. This is the reason we have been chosen from all eternity and called to this Congregation to love him and to make others love him as well. What greater honor or tenderness could Jesus Christ give us than to take us from the world by drawing us to his love so we pay attention to nothing during this life-long pilgrimage through which we must pass on the way to eternity except to give him joy and to make him loved by so many people who, year after year due to our missions, keep giving up sin and place themselves in the grace of God?...

Now if God honors us in this way, choosing us to be the means of his glory and to make him loved by others ..., how much we ought to thank him and love him more than others do! ... Let us always try to advance day after day in the love of Jesus Christ ... And if we wish to

continually feel more of the affection of Jesus Christ, let us constantly place ourselves in the last place... The more that one hides oneself from others, the more one becomes united to Jesus Christ ... One who does not pay attention to the Rule, does not pay attention to the love of Jesus Christ; one can see from experience that whoever fails against the Rule with eyes wide open, and especially if the defect is repeated, quickly feels cold and dry in divine love.

You already know that the most efficacious means for overcoming contrary things is to love Jesus Christ a great deal. To love Jesus Christ a great deal, one need not ask him a great deal. To love Jesus Christ is the greatest work we can perform in this world; and it is indeed a masterpiece, a gift which we cannot achieve by ourselves. It must come to us from him and he is quick to give this to those who ask it. Therefore, if it is lacking, it is lacking because of us and our faults ... I bless each and every one individually in the name of the Blessed Trinity. I pray Jesus Christ that through his merits all of us who now live or will ever live in the Congregation may grow, truly grow, always more in his divine love... I end now, but I will never end my desire to see all of you totally in love with Jesus Christ and at work for his glory."



Introduction

Place the coat of arms/ the emblem of the congregation together with an icon of Our Blessed Mother in the center of the room.

Lived Experience

Why do I want to continue as a Redemptorist?

What qualities attracted me to the Redemptorists?

How does the leaving of so many confreres affect me?

Word of God

One of the members of the group reads Ruth 1:16-18 while the group reflects in silence.

What values or value do you identify as significant in this text?

Meditation and Reflection

Modern culture shies away from long term commitments.

How does this challenge us who not only make perpetual vows but seal them with a vow and oath of perseverance?

What is God saying to me regarding my commitment as a Redeemptorist?

Prayer and Supplication

The leader introduces Intercessory Prayers, in which the members pray for one another and for members of the wider Congregation. As the concluding prayer at the end of the intercessions, all join together in praying the prayer of Alphonsus for perseverance.

“Perfect your work, O Lord, and for your glory, make us all your own so that all the members of this Congregation, even to the day of judgment, may continue to please you perfectly, and to gain for you a countless number of souls. Amen, Amen.”

Vision and Resolution

The group discerns some concrete means whereby each confrere can contribute in some way to the perseverance of the other.

Preparation

Arrange the time and date for the next meeting and invite a member of the group to coordinate it and prepare its final celebration.

Celebration

The members of the community renew their vows together:

“Following Christ, the Saviour of the world, with fidelity and perseverance, I . . . renew my vows of chastity, of poverty, and of obedience, together with my vow and oath of perseverance, according to the spirit and way of life proper to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, so that apostolic zeal may increase in me and in the whole Congregation, for the good of the whole church. Amen. (Formula IV. Cf. GS. 080)

They end by singing together the *Salve Regina* as a prayer for perseverance (or any suitable substitute).

