



Rome, October 16, 2020  
Feast of St. Gerard Majella, C.Ss.R.  
Prot. No. 0000 161/2020

**WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER:**  
*In Solidarity for Mission in a Wounded World*

Dear Confreres, Sisters, Lay Missionaries, and Redemptorist Associates,

Greetings from Rome as we prepare for the annual World Day of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation to be celebrated on November 8, 2020 in all our Communities and Churches. It will be a very different celebration in this time of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, we must mark this day with prayer, with hope, and with faith in Jesus, our Redeemer and our brother, who accompanies us.

As Pope Francis reminds us in his most recent Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, this pandemic has revealed to us just how wounded our world truly is. The pandemic touches all of us. "We are all in the same boat." Many people have been abandoned, discarded, left on the margins. We are more aware than ever how our exploitation of the world's resources has threatened the future of our "common home". Pope Francis frequently reminds us that how our world emerges from this pandemic will depend in some measure on all of us and how we respond to its challenges.

While still in the "dark shadows" of the global pandemic of Covid-19, this Vocation Day is a call to renew our missionary commitment to the wounded world to which we belong and in which we are called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ our Redeemer! May it also be a day of new life and hope in our Redeemer who "makes all things new" (Rev. 21,5).

St. Clement Hofbauer, whose 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary we celebrate this year, lived our Redemptorist Missionary Vocation in very challenging and difficult times. For more than 30 years, he struggled to establish the Congregation in northern Europe. Only after his death in 1820, was the first permanent foundation opened in Vienna. He faced prison and exile, poverty and rejection, yet he never gave up. He persevered in faith: "*Have courage! God is the Lord who directs everything for divine glory and for our good. No one can resist God.*" Through St. Clement and his creative perseverance, God brought to birth the worldwide Redemptorist mission in a wounded world.



The 25<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (2016) challenged us to revitalize our mission in the wounded world of today. As each continent discerned its Missionary Priorities and Apostolic Plan, we realized that our Charism as prophetic witnesses of the Redeemer in this wounded world is more

important today than ever. Not only must we persevere in joy and hope, but we must have the courage to invite others, men and women, to join us in this mission today. Together, we can make these words of Pope Francis our own:

“I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart ... Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile. Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.” (*Fratelli tutti*, #55)

As we celebrate our World Day of the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation on November 8, 2020, let us walk along these paths of hope together. More than this, invite others to join us and walk with us on this journey in solidarity and joy.

May God bless and heal our wounded world. May Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help, accompany us in our mission. May St. Alphonsus and all our Saints, Martyrs and Blessed inspire us and give us courage to bring the Good News today to the most abandoned, especially the poor!

Your brother in Jesus our Redeemer,

*Michael Brehl, C.S.R.*

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.  
Superior General

