



CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

Prot: 0000 122/2023

Rome, May 28, 2023
Solemnity of Pentecost

MISSIONARIES OF HOPE IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE REDEEMER

Year dedicated to community life

Const. 21-75; EG 026-049; Lk 6,12-16

"Just as the Holy Spirit, uncreated love, is the indissoluble bond that unites the Father and the eternal Word, so it is this same Spirit that unites our souls to God" (St. Alphonsus, Novena to the Holy Spirit, 8th day).

Dear Confreres,
Formandi,
Laity associated to our mission and Redemptorist Oblates,
Redemptorist Missionary Youth (JRYVM),
Redemptorist Family,
Former Redemptorist Seminarians:

1. The book of the Acts of the Apostles, in its first chapters (Acts 2), reminds us of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. This event allows the community to speak in new tongues, let go of their securities and fears, and proclaim the *kerygma*. Such an experience is deeply in tune with our charism, which allows us to read the signs of the times and interpret them in new languages and to be ready to announce

the Redemption we experience first-hand to those in need, especially the most abandoned (cf. Const. 1). *It is the Spirit who frees us from the narrow visions forged by the confinement within our walls, opens our eyes to other horizons and puts us on the path and in the mission of the Redeemer as missionaries of Hope.*

2. Our Constitutions make various references to the Spirit (cf. Const. 6, 10, 23, 25, 47, 56, 73, 74, 80, 92 and in the formulas of temporary and perpetual profession). He is the Lord of events, the life-giving, missionary-raising Spirit in the Church, who puts the correct word on our lips, and opens our hearts to the explicit proclamation of the Word and to fundamental conversion. He is present in the heart of the community to form and sustain it and is manifested in each confrere in the various services to the Congregation for the common good. He works unceasingly to conform the confreres to Christ, so they may have the same sentiments and way of thinking as Jesus. He fosters charisms and promotes apostolic action through various ministries. It enlivens the communities and makes its members more diligent in serving God in the Church and the world. It guides Redemptorists from profession, as a response to their baptismal consecration and as ministers of the Gospel, and associates them with the mission of Christ. With his strength, Redemptorists strive to reach the total gift of self to respond in love through the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. It helps the superiors and the other members of the Congregation to live in communion the supreme rule, the following of Jesus and his Gospel, our Constitutions, Statutes, and decrees legitimately promulgated; to follow the will of God and to fulfill the mission of Christ. In this sense, *the Spirit encourages each of us, together with the Redeemer, to be missionaries of the Father in this wounded but hope-filled world.*
3. In the Cenacle scene of Acts, those whom Jesus had chosen to follow him were gathered in community. They did not choose each other. They were gathered because of the call and because of what the whole drama of Jesus' death and its aftermath meant. They were all gathered there for one reason: Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. In the same way, we do not choose the people with whom we live in community. *The community is constituted with the mandate to be missionary, in the name of the Redeemer.* For this reason, differences and diversity of thought are important: they become a gift, a mutual enrichment, and strengthen missionary action. The Spirit is the shaper of this harmony because He is Divine Harmony. "The Holy Spirit is harmony. [He is [...]] that 'divine and musical harmony' that unites everything [...]. He brings forth the diversity of charisms and recomposes it in unity. He creates a concord that is not based on homologation but on the creativity of charity. In this way, he creates harmony in multiplicity" (Francis, Holy Chrism Mass. St. Peter's Basilica. Holy Thursday, April 6, 2023). *It is the Spirit who makes us one missionary body in diversity!*

4. "To fulfill their mission in the Church, Redemptorists perform their missionary work as a community..." (Const. 21). Community life is not living together to fulfill schedules and activities. It is to build a missionary community in the dialectic of tensions and harmony! We can be together, and yet each one lives in his own world apart without any affective, spiritual, or missionary bond with the other, experiencing apathy and indifference. Therefore, *community life is always a process of empathy to strengthen trust, to accept each other in our differences without standardizing the individuality of each one, to care for each other and to care for the house where we live to create a **quality of life** that gives us affective and spiritual support. What is the quality of our Redemptorist consecrated life in our time? Do we want to improve it? How can we improve it to sustain and witness our mission?*
5. We should not be nostalgic for the past, for the large communities governed by the old discipline. Today, communities are smaller, personal agendas are full, relationships have changed, new technologies have conquered our lives, and community life often becomes liquid.... *It is no exaggeration to say that in many religious communities, the community is liquid, with virtual relationships.* Faced with this reality, we must ask ourselves: What values can we not renounce? How can we guarantee a quality community, spiritual and formative life? Here is the challenge of not falling into *communitarianism*, where the person is suffocated by the community or in the *anomalous autonomy* that incurs the overvaluation of the individual, absolute individualism, and the emptying of the community. The Spirit, the Divine Harmony, the Communion of God helps us to reflect on this reality and to seek balanced ways to avoid dispersion and individualism that destroy our fraternity and our mission.
6. The light of the Holy Spirit has given impetus to the vocation and missionary zeal of the community of the followers of Jesus. How are our missionary zeal and availability for the most difficult things? (cf. Const. 20) How is my missionary vocation? What is its meaning for the world? Am I encouraged or discouraged? The world's proposals cannot frighten us, nor can we remain with our doors closed or shut within our walls. The Spirit challenges us to go out on mission. "My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an "extra" or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. *I am a mission* on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing." (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 273).
7. May the Spirit enlighten us to live our community life with intensity so that we may proclaim Christ the Redeemer with missionary zeal, following in his footsteps and being missionaries of Hope! With St. Alphonsus, we can pray: "O my God, my love, my all, I sigh for you, I desire you. Come, O divine Spirit, and with the holy fire of

your love, consume in me every affection that does not have you as the object. Make me all yours, and may I conquer everything to please you. O Mary, my advocate, and Mother, help me with your prayers" (*Novena to the Holy Spirit*, 9th day). Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, help us in this mission. Amen.

Fraternally in Christ the Redeemer,



Rogério Gomes, CSSR
P. Rogério Gomes, C.Ss.R.

Superior General

Original text: *Spanish*