

PRESS RELEASE:

The Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help

Celebrating the Jubilee Year 27 June 2015 to 27 June 2016

On the Feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, June 27, 2015, the Redemptorist Missionaries will inaugurate a year-long celebration to commemorate the restoration of the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help to public devotion. On December 11, 1865, the Holy Father, Blessed Pius IX, entrusted the Icon to the Superior General of the Redemptorists, Fr. Nicholas Mauron, with the instruction: "Make her known to the whole world!" Since April 26, 1866, the original Icon, after restoration, has been housed in St Alphonsus Church, Via Merulana 31, 00185 Rome.

Redemptorist Missionaries

The Redemptorists (CSsR) were founded by St Alphonsus Liguori in 1732 in Scala near Naples, Italy. Their motto is "Copiosa Apud Eum Redemptio " meaning "With Him there is Plentiful Redemption". Like St. Alphonsus, they follow Jesus the Redeemer in preaching the Good News to the poor whether in small remote places or in huge popular shrines in Aparecida, Brazil or Manila, Philippines. The Redemptorists are about 5000 priests and brothers serving across all continents. Many lay men and women associate with them in their spirituality and mission and together form the Redemptorist Family.

Devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help

"Our Mother of Perpetual Help" is the missionary icon of the Redemptorists. She has accompanied them in the 80 countries that they serve. However, the appeal of her 'perpetual help' crosses all cultures, nations and across the world. Today, this Icon of Perpetual Help is considered one of the best known images of Mary. Devotion to her – especially through the Novenas – in Cathedrals and Basilicas, rural Churches and Chapels, and now even on TV, radio and internet, ensures that it is diffused across the globe. This devotion is found in the Eastern Churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, as well as the Roman Catholic Church. In Asia, particularly, it draws people from other faiths as well. A significant number have found their way to Jesus and Baptism - through Mary, who has been for them, a perpetual help.

The Icon of Love

The theme chosen for this Jubilee, "Icon of Love", testifies to the attraction and power of Our Mother of Perpetual Help for people today. The Icon is not simply a representation of Mary and Jesus, with the archangels Michael and Gabriel. It is living image with a message for us. In the Icon, Mary invites us into the mystery of God's love for all.

An icon is often described as a window to heaven. It calls us out of our limited and narrow world and draws us into the world of God. In meditating on this icon, we allow Mary our Mother and her Son to touch us. Every detail speaks to us. Millions of devotees - it does not matter what language, tradition, culture or even religion – see in her, an icon of love. They see her as a Mother who loves, no matter what!

The 3 Year Jubilee Program.

To celebrate this jubilee, the Redemptorist Missionaries have planned a three year program which has already begun.

The first year – from June, 2014 to June 2015 – is devoted to the preparation of the Congregation for the JUBILEE YEAR from June 27, 2015 to June 27, 2016. This preparation year is a time to engage in a study and renewal of our personal relationship with Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help. Special projects have been held or planned like Congresses, a video documentary, publications, and music.

The second year – from June 27, 2015 to June 27, 2016 – is devoted to the celebration of the Icon and Devotion to our Mother of Perpetual Help. This is the JUBILEE YEAR which begins and concludes on the feast of our Mother of Perpetual Help. Some groups and several parishes from different countries have begun to plan Jubilee Year pilgrimages to the Shrine of the Original Icon at St. Alphonsus Church in Rome. Local celebrations in Redemptorist Churches around the world have been planned as well.

The third year – from June 27, 2016 to June 27, 2017 – is devoted to spreading the Icon and Devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help in the service of the new Evangelization called for by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Icons created for the jubilee celebration will make a pilgrimage to every Redemptorist Church and community. In fact, this ‘year’ may take much longer than one calendar year.

The Immediate Jubilee Program: 24-28 June 2015.

1. TRIDUUM PREPARATION: 24, 25, 26 June at 1830 hours.

Preparation with Novena Devotions and the Eucharist!

Principal Celebrant for the Triduum: Rev Fr.

2. INAUGURATION OF THE JUBILEE YEAR: 27 June 2015 at 1830 hours

Eucharistic Celebration, Solemn Announcing of the Jubilee and a Marian Homage in Song

Principal Celebrant: Superior General **Rev. Fr. Michael Brehl**

3. SOLEMN FEAST DAY EUCHARIST AND PROCESSION at 1800 hours.

Eucharistic Celebration, Procession with the Image and Novena Prayers and Blessing

Principal Celebrant: **His Eminence Cardinal Agostino Vallini**

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Missionari Redentoristi, Via Merualana 31, 00185, Roma, Italy. Tel: (39) 06494901

Email: news@cssr.com