

**REDEMPTORIST NORTH AMERICAN SECRETARIAT FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION**

**INITIAL FORMATION SESSION #2**

**THE FOUR PILLARS OF ALPHONSIAN/REDEMPTORIST SPIRITUALITY**

**90 MINUTES**

**CENTRE OF BEAUTY:**

- ☐ Symbols of Redemptorist Spirituality: the infant from a Christmas crib, a Mission Cross, Bread and Grapes, icon of OLPH
- ☐ Icon or picture of St. Alphonsus
- ☐ Cloth
- ☐ Candle
- ☐ Bible

**HANDOUTS:**

- ☐ Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit
- ☐ Prayer Service: "We Remember: Celebrating Alphonsian/Redemptorist Spirituality (attached)
- ☐ A copy of *Living Redemptorist Spirituality* (tonight's session will revolve around the material presented on pages 16-20)

**MATERIALS:**

- ☐ Flip Chart
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Masking Tape
- ☐ Name Tags
- ☐ Pens/pencils
- ☐ Paper

**NOTES:**



## SATURDAY MORNING OR WEEKDAY EVENING SESSION

### GATHERING

### WELCOME

### OPENING PRAYER: Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit

**Experience:** Ask the participants: “What is at the heart of your own spirituality?” Ask them to turn to a neighbour and talk about this for a few minutes.

**Reflection:** Large-group sharing on the aspects that we would name as the “heart” of our spirituality. When there is a lull in the conversation, offer the following reflection on the “heart” of Alphonsian/Redemptorist spirituality (these words are merely guidelines; use your own if at all possible).

At the very heart of the spirituality of Saint Alphonsus is love: God’s love for us and our love for God in response. Saint Alphonsus was overwhelmed by God’s love for him and for all of us. For Alphonsus, this was especially manifest in Jesus. Jesus is the unshakeable sign and proof that God loves us. The spirituality of St Alphonsus focuses on the love of God shown in Jesus, our Redeemer—Jesus, who shared our human condition; who suffered, died, and rose; who continues to be present among us; who gave his own mother to intercede for us.

**Generalization:** The spirituality of Saint Alphonsus is about God’s self-giving love and presence shown in Jesus. Redemptorists have traditionally summarized that in the four symbols of:

- the *crib*,
- the *cross*,
- the *altar*,
- and *Mary*.

Jesus, the Redeemer, is God become human in the Incarnation (crib).

He redeemed us by emptying himself, becoming a servant, and accepting all the consequences of human life—including a dishonorable death (cross).

He continues to make his loving and saving grace available to us in the Eucharist (altar).

And he consoles us through the intercession of his mother, Mary, to whom Jesus entrusted us from the cross.

**Crib, cross, altar, Mary:** Incarnation, redemption, Eucharist, Mary. It is all one great event by which God assures us that we are loved in Jesus.

**Action:** Ask the group to discuss their own response to this articulation of the core elements of Alphonsian/Redemptorist spirituality. You might ask:

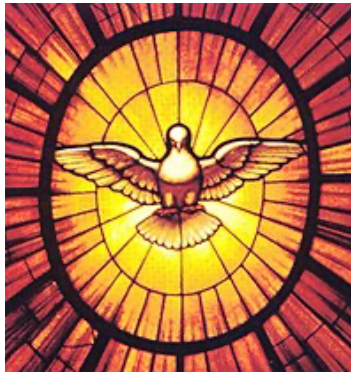
- Does this resonate with you?
- Would any of the elements that we named here tonight as characteristics of Redemptorist Spirituality be elements of your own spirituality?
- What inspires you?
- What encourages you?
- What challenges you?
- Name one thing that you will take home with you from tonight's session.

## PRAYER

Use the attached prayer service from Terry Moran's *In the Spirit of St. Alphonsus*—We Remember: Celebrating Alphonsian/Redemptorist Spirituality.

## SOCIAL TIME

PRAYER OF ST. ALPHONSUS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT



**L.** You are **fire**;

**R.** enkindle in me your love.

**L.** You are **light**;

**R.** enlighten my mind with the knowledge of eternal things.

**L.** You are the **Dove**;

**R.** give me innocence of life.

**L.** You are the gentle **Breeze**;

**R.** disperse the storms of my passions.

**L.** You are the **Tongue**;

**R.** Teach me how to bless you always.

**L.** You are the **Cloud**;

**R.** shelter me under the shadow of your protection.

**L.** You are the **Giver** of all heavenly gifts;

**R.** animate me,

**L.** I beseech you, with your **grace**;

**R.** sanctify me

**L.** with your **charity**;

**R.** enlighten me

**L.** with your **wisdom**;

**R.** adopt me by your goodness as your child, and save me in your infinite mercy;

so that I may ever **bless** you, **praise** you, and **love** you;

first during this life on earth, and then in heaven for all eternity.

Amen.

*St. Alphonsus Liguori*

**WE REMEMBER:**  
**A PRAYER SERVICE CELEBRATING ALPHONSIAN SPIRITUALITY**  
(adapted from *In the Spirit of St. Alphonsus*, by Terry Moran)



**Environment:** In a central place in the room, gather some symbols of the spirituality of St. Alphonsus, such as:

- an image of the infant Jesus from a Nativity scene (Crib-Incarnation),
- a crucifix (Cross-Redemption),
- wheat and grapes (Altar-Eucharist),
- an icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help or one of the Alphonsian Madonnas.

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**INVITATION TO PRAYER**

**Presider:** God is ever present, around us and within us--  
God, who took human flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary;  
God, who accompanies us through death to new life;  
God, who is present among us when we break the bread;  
God, who gave us the gift of St. Alphonsus Liguori.  
May this God be with you, now and forever.

**All:** Amen.

## READINGS AND RESPONSES

**Reader 1:** This reading is from the Final Document of the Twenty-first General Chapter:

The center of Redemptorist spirituality is Christ the Redeemer, as He reveals Himself above all in the mysteries of the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection which we celebrate in the Eucharist. These lead the Redemptorist to be His living memorial and to continue His mission in the world. This profoundly Christocentric spirituality impels us to recover the heritage of St. Alphonsus in his “exodus” towards the poor. The Redemptorist follows Christ the Redeemer and pursues His liberating action. Mary is the first disciple of the Redeemer, whom she accepted as the Word of God; she guides us on our journey of identification with Him. In her is found the most perfect image of liberation and of liberating activity.

**All** sing this or another suitable response:

We remember how you loved us to your death,  
and still we celebrate, for you are with us here.  
And we believe that we will see you when you come in your glory, Lord.  
We remember, we celebrate, we believe!

## CRIB

**Reader 2:** This reading is from the works of St. Alphonsus:

“O Word made flesh, you are at a loss to know what more you can do to make yourself loved by us. You first appeared among us as a poor child. Even from your birth, you lost no time in drawing our hearts to yourself. Make us fall in love with your goodness.”

**Presider:** In the Incarnation, St. Alphonsus saw a God who shared our life completely.

**All:** May the example of the Word made flesh inspire us to open ourselves to one another and to make all the struggles of the human family our own.

**All** sing this or another suitable response:

We remember how you loved us to your death,  
and still we celebrate, for you are with us here.

And we believe that we will see you when you come in your glory, Lord.  
We remember, we celebrate, we believe!

### CROSS

**Reader 3:** This reading is from a letter of St. Alphonsus dated November, 1751:

“My brothers, by the grace of God we perform wonders wherever we go on mission. People say they have never before experienced a mission like ours. Why? Because we go by obedience, we go in poverty, and we preach Christ crucified.”

**Presider:** In the paschal mystery, St. Alphonsus saw Jesus in total commitment to the mission of healing, liberating, and redeeming God’s people.

**All:** May the power of the cross, which we preach by word and witness, renew in each one of us our desire to give ourselves to the mission of Jesus Christ as we see it lived out in the Redemptorist Family.

**All** sing this or another suitable response:

We remember how you loved us to your death,  
and still we celebrate, for you are with us here.  
And we believe that we will see you when you come in your glory, Lord.  
We remember, we celebrate, we believe!

### EUCCHARIST

**Reader 4:** This is a reading from the works of St. Alphonsus:

“My God, my true and only love. What more could you have done to be loved by us? To die was not enough for you, my Lord. You instituted the Eucharist to give yourself totally to us and to bind yourself, heart-to-heart, with us. My God, I love you above all things. I wish to see you loved as you deserve.”

**Presider:** St. Alphonsus devoted his life to building up communities centered around the Eucharist.

**All:** May our devotion to the Sacrament of Unity empower us to lives of sharing of faith and service with one another and among the people of God.

**All** sing this or another suitable response:

We remember how you loved us to your death,



and still we celebrate, for you are with us here.  
And we believe that we will see you when you come in your glory, Lord.  
We remember, we celebrate, we believe!

## MARY

**Reader 5:** This reading is from the works of St. Alphonsus:

“Mary co-operated by love in the spiritual birth of all the members of the Church. It was on Mount Calvary that Jesus formed the Church and the Virgin Mary co-operated in a special manner in the accomplishment of this work. It was on Calvary that Mary began, in a special way, to be Mother of the whole Church.”

**Presider:** St. Alphonsus saw Mary as the midwife in the spiritual birth of the Church from the wounded side of the Redeemer.

**All:** May the prayers of Mary accompany us as we proclaim the Gospel anew by word and witness, and so continue to build the Church.

**All** sing this or another suitable response:

We remember how you loved us to your death,  
and still we celebrate, for you are with us here.  
And we believe that we will see you when you come in your glory, Lord.  
We remember, we celebrate, we believe!

## FAITH SHARING

**Presider:** After a few moments of silent reflection, please share with some of the people around you your answer to the following question:

- Which element of the Redemptorist spiritual tradition is particularly nourishing to you?

**Presider:** Gathered as one in the spirit of St. Alphonsus, we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:

**All:** Our Father...

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Presider:** Loving God, we gather today to celebrate the call of Alphonsus Liguori, whose faith inspires us in our own commitment to the mission of Jesus, the mission of sharing his redeeming love with all. United in a common heritage, we look to your Spirit, alive in every age, to renew us, sustain us, and fortify us with zeal for mission. May that same Spirit draw us more closely to one another as one missionary Redemptorist family, so that the future we build will have no other foundation than Jesus the Redeemer, who is Lord forever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

**All** sing this or another suitable response:

We remember how you loved us to your death,  
and still we celebrate, for you are with us here.  
And we believe that we will see you when you come in your glory, Lord.  
We remember, we celebrate, we believe!