



CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

Dear Confreres, Brothers and Sisters,

Once again, I greet you from St. Alphonsus in Rome, and the Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help.

In a few short hours, the joyful shout will ring out once again across our wounded world: Christ is Risen! Alleluia! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

On behalf of all of us here in Rome, let me wish you a very blessed and joyful Easter! May the Lord bless you with peace, and hope, and new life!

This year has been quite extraordinary. For the first time, the whole General Government has been together for the entire season of Lent. I arrived back in Rome on Ash Wednesday, just in time for the 'lockdown' which has paralysed so much of Europe, and now the rest of the world as well.

In a very real way, the whole world is now united:

- United in fear and anxiety of how the coronavirus pandemic will affect our families, our nations, and ourselves.
- United in a common effort to find the vaccine and to overcome this devastating illness.
- United in our common uncertainty about what our life and our world will be like after Covid-19 has passed.

We Christians have also experienced an extraordinary Holy Week – with locked Churches and empty pews! But this has not stopped us from celebrating this Holy Week with Jesus our Redeemer.

Together with Jesus, we have remembered his passion united with the suffering of so many in our world today: the sick and the vulnerable suffering from the Coronavirus – including many members of our Redemptorist Family, confreres, Sisters, Lay Redemptorists.

Praying with Jesus on Holy Thursday, we thanked him for the gift of himself in the Eucharist, and we thank God for the doctors, nurses, volunteers and so many people who give themselves daily for others, even giving their own lives in many cases.

On Good Friday, we walked the way of the Cross with Jesus, united with the elderly, the anxious and the lonely, as well as so many migrants and the poor.

On Holy Saturday, we grieved with Mary his Mother, and with the families of so many who have died – and who never really had a chance to say good-bye.

As we come to the end of this extraordinary Lent and Holy Week, as we celebrate Easter, perhaps we hoped this crisis would be over and that life could go back to normal. And this hasn't happened.

Perhaps, like the first disciples, we now wonder where to look for the Risen Jesus today. He is not in the tomb. He is no longer where his broken body was once laid.

So where do we look? The Gospels give us the answer – he goes before us to Galilee! What is so special about Galilee? Why there?

Galilee is the place of his mission, the place where Jesus healed the sick, touched lepers, and preached the Good News. Galilee today is wherever the poor and the vulnerable still suffer; those places where there is still so much to be done. You see, the Resurrection is not the end of the story. It is really only the beginning of a new story. Our story. With Jesus in his Mission. Today.

Where will we find the Risen Jesus today? Wherever there is suffering and pain, loneliness and fear, anxiety and brokenness. This year we can't celebrate Easter as we have always celebrated in the past – going to Church, with family dinners and gatherings with friends and relatives, in our parishes and communities. This year, we cannot do these kinds of celebrations.

But we can meet the Risen Jesus by calling someone who is isolated at home and spending time with them for a while. We can send a message to family and friends and let them know we're with them. We can thank the health care workers and volunteers, and all the other essential workers who keep us going.

The Risen Jesus is with us wherever we need him most, and where our world needs to be changed. We'll meet him today as we face together the challenge which now confronts the whole of humanity and our wounded world.

Together, may we celebrate this Easter with Jesus, and with faith and hope in the power of the Resurrection! May we live the Easter message through a renewed commitment to serve our brothers and sisters, and to heal and change our broken world.

Alleluia! Christ lives! He is Risen!

May the Blessing +

Fr. Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

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Superior General

