

REDEMPTORIST NORTH AMERICAN SECRETARIAT FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
INITIAL FORMATION GATHERING #3
THEME: PRAYER
Time Frame: 90 minutes

CENTRE OF BEAUTY:

- Mission Cross
- Cloth (red, for the Holy Spirit)
- Incense, charcoal and open bowl
- Candle
- Bible

HANDOUTS:

- Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit
- Prayer in Honour of Bl. Gennaro Sarnelli (attached)
- A Way of Conversing Continually With God as a Friend* (with reflection questions)
(Distributed at end of last session, or prior to this one)

MATERIALS:

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

NOTES:

SATURDAY MORNING OR WEEKDAY EVENING SESSION

GATHERING

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYERB Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit

Experience: In the large group, have people name the ways in which they pray, or practices, disciplines, methods, particular prayers, etc. that they find helpful.

As these are named, list them on chart paper.

Reflection: Have the group look over the list that has been generated. Then, ask: Is there anything from this list that really strikes you?
NOTE TO THE FACILITATORS: Look for and note signs that there are different pathways of prayer, but all are headed in the same direction. All are means of deepening our relationship with God.

Generalization: Discuss the article which participants have read since the initial gathering: *A Way of Conversing Continually with God as a Friend*. The following are the reflection questions that were appended to the article. You might wish to use the following reflection questions as a discussion guide:

1. What did you learn from St. Alphonsus= writing?
2. Choose one section that you will comment on to the group.
3. Was anything affirmed for you? If so, what?
4. Did anything you read challenge you? If so, what was it?

Action: Name one thing that you will take home with you from tonight=s session.

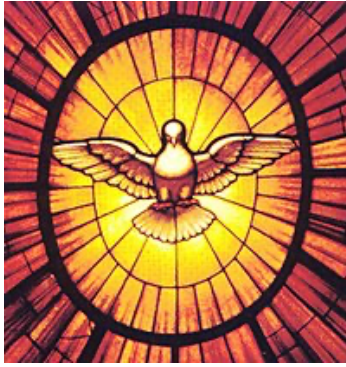
PRAYER

Use the attached prayer service from Terry Moran=s *In the Spirit of St. Alphonsus*, centering on Gennaro Sarnelli. You might consider giving an introduction based on the following:

Gennaro Sarnelli was one of the early Redemptorists. He lived at the time of St. Alphonsus. His overwhelming concern was for the poor, particularly for the prostitutes of the city of Naples. For his witness to the Gospel, he has been declared ABlessed@, or beatified, by the Church.

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

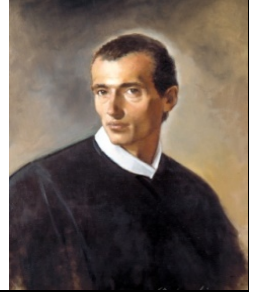
L. with your **charity**;
R. enlighten me

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

**PRAYER
IN HONOUR OF
OF BLESSED GENNARO SARNELLI**



HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

Presider: May the God of Gennaro Sarnelli, the God who welcomes the outcast, be with you.

All: May the God of Compassion live in our hearts forever.

Presider: Let us pray, together

All: Jesus, beloved companion, you share our table and our lives. We know that we need you. We know as well, that, at a deeper level, we have been chosen, redeemed, and gathered together in your name. Make our church a place of welcome and our hearts as wide as your mercy. Amen.

Please be seated.

MEDITATION

Presider: We gather here to remember and honour our brother and confrere, Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli. He was a teacher of prayer. The life of Gennaro, one of our brothers, has been acknowledged as truly being heroic in virtue and love. We pause to give thanks to God.

One of the books written by Gennaro is entitled *The World Sanctified by the Practice of Mental Prayer Made in Common*. He shared the Redeemer's own confidence that where two or three are gathered in God's name the earth becomes holy ground. Let us listen to the word of God and to the words of our brother Gennaro and become present to the Redeemer dwelling among us gathered here.

READING 1

Matthew 9: 10-12

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?" But when he

heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

The Word of the Lord.

Pause for silent reflection

READING 2

An extract from a letter of Sarnelli to Saint Alphonsus

I have a special favour to ask you. Every time you say Mass, as you break the host and place the small fragment in the chalice, place there my heart too and ask Jesus that he will give me the zeal and strength necessary for my vocation.

Pause for silent reflection

READING 3

Our brother Gennaro was a prophet of justice. Listen to these words from one of his conferences:

How many wealthy live today in Christendom! They spend their time at banquets, at feastings and diversions while the poor of Jesus Christ die of hunger. So many servants and hired hands are defrauded of their just recompense. How the poor struggle to collect what they have earned and would to God that they got it intact! How many rich there are who have a superabundance of everything – except of God. The rich do not wish to give the Lord in the person of the poor even a fraction of the good of this world – not even to gain eternal life. The strictest judgement is reserved for those who have acted without mercy toward their neighbour.

Pause for silent reflection

READING 4

From the writings of Sarnelli

Cast your selves in to the immense womb of God. Widen your heart and trust without limit. Say with St. Paul, *I can do all things in God who gives me strength*. Prayer can find gold amidst mud and draw water from the rocks

Pause for silent reflection.

Each person in the group is invited to share his prayer by speaking aloud one word that summarizes how God has spoken to him today.

INTERCESSIONS

Presider: Let us bring to prayer the needs of those so dear to Sarnelli, the poor, the abused and the victimised. For prostitutes...

All: Bring them healing, Spirit of Life.

Presider: For runaway children...

All: Bring them healing, Spirit of Life.

Presider: For those who cannot pray...

All: Bring them healing, Spirit of Life.

You are invited to add your own intentions while the community responds...

Bring them healing, Spirit of Life.

Presider: United with Gennaro Sarnelli, we pray as Jesus taught us....

All: Our Father....

The one who presides takes the candle from the centre of beauty, and it is passed from one person to the next as each says to the person next to him these words frequently used by Sarnelli as a blessing: May Jesus Christ be our Light.