

REDEMPTORIST NORTH AMERICAN SECRETARIAT FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
INITIAL FORMATION GATHERING #4
THEME: COMMUNITY
Time Frame: 90 minutes

CENTRE OF BEAUTY:

- Mission Cross
- Cloth (red, for the Holy Spirit)
- Bowl of Water
- Candle
- Bible

HANDOUTS:

- Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit (attached)
- Gospel passages pertaining to Christian living (attached)
- Constitutions* 11 & 12 (attached, to be used in preparation for the next session)

MATERIALS:

- Flip Chart
- Markers
- Masking Tape
- Name Tags
- Pens/pencils
- Paper
- CD Player
- CD of reflective music

NOTES:

SATURDAY MORNING OR WEEKDAY EVENING SESSION

GATHERING

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYERB Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit

Experience: In the large group, pose the following questions for discussion:

- ≡ *Could you live a Christian life alone, or in isolation?*
- ≡ *What are your reasons for answering the way you do?*

Reflection: Ask the group:

- ≡ *What have you seen in the way Redemptorists live community that can serve as an inspiration for you?*

List these elements on chart paper.

Generalization: Break the larger group into smaller groups of 3 or 4, if that is possible. Give each a copy of the attached Biblical passages pertaining to living Christian community. Ask each small group to look through the list of passages, which all have descriptors attached, and select one upon which to reflect together.

In each small group, the passage should be read aloud, and then a little time given for personal reflection, and ample time given for sharing. Reflect upon the following question in reference to the passage:

1. *What light does this passage shed on our understanding of community?*

The passages are:

- ≡ Luke 10:29-37 (The parable of the Good Samaritan)
- ≡ John 10:14-16 (Jesus, the Good Shepherd)
- ≡ John 17:20-24 (Jesus prays, A... may they all be one...@)
- ≡ Acts 2:43-47 (Description of the early Christian community)
- ≡ Romans 12:9-13 (ALet love be sincere...@-- description of mutual love in the Christian community)
- ≡ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (There are many gifts, but the same Spirit)
- ≡ 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 (A body is one, though it has many parts)
- ≡ Colossians 3:12-17 (Guidelines for living Christian community)
- ≡ 1 Peter 2:9-10 (Now, you are the People of God)

When each group has had time for reflection, come back to the large group for sharing of insights from the smaller groups on the various passages on which they reflected.

Action: Ask the group:
From this reflection and discussion, what do I want to take home and explore further?

PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

Word of God: proclaim John 13:1-11 (Jesus washes the feet of the disciples)

Ritual Action: ≡ Mutual Handwashing
 ≡ Play reflective music in the background.
 ≡ Beginning with one of the leaders, approach the bowl of water, and wash the hands of the person next in the circle; that person washes the hands of the next person, and so on, until each person in the group has had their hands washed by another.

≡ The Lord=s Prayer

≡ Closing Hymn

Suggestions: - AOne Bread, One Body@

- AServant Song@

- AThey=Il Know we are Christians@

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

Give participants the parts of Constitutions 11 & 12, attached.

SOCIAL TIME

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FOR REFLECTION

**In your group, choose *one* of the passages listed below,
and reflect upon it using the following question:**

What light does this passage shed on our understanding of community?

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TO DISTRIBUTE IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

From the Redemptorist *Constitutions and Statutes*:

Art. 3: The Purpose of the Missionary Work

11. Blessed by God with the ministry of reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18), the members announce the good news of salvation and the "favourable time" (2 Cor. 6:2), so that people be converted, believe in the Gospel (cf. Mark 1:15), really live their baptism and put on the new self (cf. Eph. 4:24).

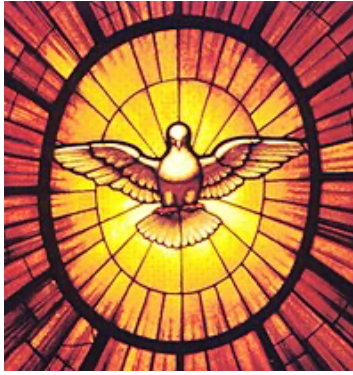
Redemptorists are thus "apostles of conversion", in so far as the chief object of their preaching is to lead people to a radical choice regarding their life - a decision for Christ - and draw them firmly and gently to a continuing and total conversion. 9

12. The conversion of the individual, however, is brought about in the ecclesial community. And therefore the object of their whole missionary activity is to raise up and develop communities that will walk worthily in the vocation to which they are called, and exercise the priestly, prophetic and royal offices with which God has endowed them.

The missionaries lead those who have been converted to share fully in redemption which is at work in the liturgy, especially in the sacrament of reconciliation, where the Good News of God's mercy in Christ is so wonderfully proclaimed and celebrated, but most of all in the Eucharist through which the Church is built up. 10

In this way the Christian community becomes the sign of God's presence in the world. For, nourished by the word of God, it bears witness to Christ and continually passes with him to the Father in the mystery of the Eucharist. As a result, it walks in love, aflame with the apostolic spirit.

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