

REDEMPTORIST NORTH AMERICAN SECRETARIAT FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
INITIAL FORMATION GATHERING #5
THEME: MISSION
Time Frame: 90 minutes

CENTRE OF BEAUTY:

- Mission Cross
- Cloth (red)
- Taper Candles (one for each participant)
- Candle
- Bible

HANDOUTS:

- Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit (attached)
- Quote from Circular Letter of St. Alphonsus (attached)
- Constitutions* 11 & 12 (attached)
- Prayer from St. Alphonsus (attached, for closing ritual)

MATERIALS:

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

NOTES:

This session is based on the session from *Charism 2000*, entitled AAflame with the Spirit@. The theme is that we are called to be apostles of conversion. Conversion demands a radical choice for Christ, and is ongoing and total. Conversion has an individual dimension, but also a communal one.

SATURDAY MORNING OR WEEKDAY EVENING SESSION

GATHERING

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYERB Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit

Experience: In the large group, read aloud

- ≡ The sections of Constitutions 11 & 12 which the group was given at the end of the last gathering
- ≡ The quote from the Circular Letter of St. Alphonsus (July 29, 1774B attached). Give a copy of this to each person.

Reflection: In the light of this selection from the writings of St. Alphonsus, and from the Redemptorist Constitutions and Statutes, upon which the group has reflected since our last gathering:

- ≡ Share with the group a personal experience of conversion and A plentiful redemption.@
- ≡ Share an experience of conversion/redemption in which you have participated as Aan apostle of conversion.@

Generalization: Proclaim 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

In the large group, discuss:

1. *What in this text resonates with your own sense of mission?*
2. *What does being Aan ambassador for Christ@ mean for you?*
3. *As Aministers of reconciliation@, how do we bring reconciliation to divided families and communities in our region?*

Action: Give people time to reflect individually on the following question, then discuss as a group:

- *How can we, as individuals and as a group, stay Aaflame with the apostolic spirit@ to draw people Afirmly and gently to a continuing and total conversion@?*

PRAYER

Ritual Action: Give each person a taper candle. Have each one come forward and light their taper from the group candle in the centre of beauty. Stand in a circle, holding the lit candles, until all the candles are lit. You may wish to have some reflective music playing in the background as this is happening.

When all the candles are lit, the leader says:

L. *Will you be faithful to prayer?*

All answer: *I will.*

L. *Will you serve one another in the believing community?*
All: *I will.*
L. *Will you be an ambassador for Christ, proclaiming and living reconciliation?*
All: *I will.*
L. *Thanks be to God! Let us pray together.*

The prayer below is on an attached sheet, to be photocopied for each participant.

O, my Lord Jesus Christ!
How can I thank you enough, since you have called me
to the same ministry that you did yourself on earth;
namely, to go in mission
to invite people to accept God=s salvation?
I will serve you with all my strength.
See, I offer you all of my labour,
and even my blood, in order to serve you.
Nor do I attempt by this service
to do what I feel like or to win appreciation from others.
I desire nothing but to see you loved by all as you deserve.
I treasure my happy call, and consider myself fortunate
that you have offered me this great ministry
in which I seek your glory.
I wish to love you and see you loved by others.
Give me the strength I need to follow your mission.
Mary, my supporter, you who love people so much, help me.

A prayer of St. Alphonsus Liguori (adapted)

L. May almighty God bless us, ⊥ Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
All: Amen!

CLOSURE: Leaders explain that, with this session, we conclude the initial formation program envisioned by the Lay Collaboration Commission, and have come to the point where we seek feedback and suggestions about whether to continue the process. We ask that individuals complete the attached feedback form, and discuss the feedback in the group, if they so desire. All feedback will be brought to the next meeting of the Lay Collaboration Commission on January 19, 2002, and will be considered in determining future efforts.

SOCIAL TIME

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.

AFLAME WITH THE APOSTOLIC SPIRIT

A quote from a Circular Letter of St. Alphonsus, dated July 29, 1774

The main thing I urge for you is the love of Jesus Christ... This is the reason we have been chosen from all eternity and called to this Congregation: to love him and make others love him as well... What joy to make him loved by so many people who, year after year due to our missions, keep giving up sin and place themselves in the grace of God?

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IN CHRIST=S OWN LOVE

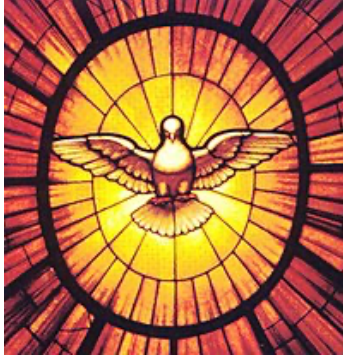
O, my Lord Jesus Christ!
How can I thank you enough,

since you have called me
to the same ministry that you did yourself on earth;
namely, to go in mission
to invite people to accept God=s salvation?
I will serve you with all my strength.
See, I offer you all of my labour,
and even my blood, in order to serve you.
Nor do I attempt by this service
to do what I feel like or to win appreciation from others.
I desire nothing but to see you loved by all as you deserve.
I treasure my happy call, and consider myself fortunate
that you have offered me this great ministry
in which I seek your glory.
I wish to love you and see you loved by others.
Give me the strength I need to follow your mission.
Mary, my supporter, you who love people so much, help me.
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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