

**REDEMPTORIST NORTH AMERICAN SECRETARIAT FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
ONGOING FORMATION AND FAITH-SHARING
THE CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES OF THE REDEMPTORISTS**

Based on the prayer service,
“Eat the Book” in *In the Spirit of St. Alphonsus* by Terry Moran
Time Frame: 90 minutes

CENTRE OF BEAUTY:

- Mission Cross
- Cloth
- Icon of St. Alphonsus
- A copy of the *Constitutions and Statutes*
- Candle
- Bible

HANDOUTS:

- Constitutions 1, 23 and 55 (attached)
- Copies of the Prayer, within which the session is framed (attached)

MATERIALS:

- Name Tags (if needed)
- Pens/pencils
- Paper

NOTES:

SATURDAY MORNING OR WEEKDAY EVENING SESSION

GATHERING and WELCOME

Experience—

Gathering Hymn (to the tune of “Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones”)

1. Now, gathered here, we strive to be,
One, great, Alphonsian family,
O praise God! Alleluia!
A living heritage we share,
of mission, common life and prayer.
O praise God! O praise God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
2. To East and West, to South and North;
Prophets of mercy now go forth.
Tell the Good News! Alleluia!
Throughout the universe release
God’s reign of justice, love and peace!
O praise God! O praise God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
3. How beautiful upon the Earth,
The feet of those who bring God’s Word,
Preach the Good News, Alleluia!
All through the world our voice resounds,
Plentiful redemption abounds!
O praise God! O praise God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sign of the Cross

Word of God

Reader 1: Ezekiel 3:1-3

He said to me, O mortal, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. He said to me, Mortal, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it. Then I ate it; and in my mouth it was as sweet as honey.

Presider: Dominic Blasucci, one of the holy men of the first generation of the Congregation, had written on his copy of the Rule the text from the prophet Ezekiel *Commede Librium! Eat the Book!*

He knew that the Redemptorist Rule had to take flesh in him. It had to become bone and sinew for him. It had to be transformed from a cold text

into fiery energy for mission. It had to energize him to go to people in the exile of alienation and proclaim the Gospel of welcome and return. We gather together to chew over the Redemptorist *Constitutions* in prayer, to be nourished on this book, and to find the energy to preach the Good News to the peripheries of our world.

From the *Constitutions and Statutes*

Reader 2:

Constitution 1—The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, founded by Saint Alphonsus, is a clerical missionary religious Institute of pontifical right, enjoying the privilege of exemption, and having members belonging to various rites. Its purpose is to "follow the example of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, by preaching the word of God to the poor, as he declared of himself: 'He sent me to preach the Good News to the poor'."

In this way the Congregation shares the mandate given to the Church, which, since it is the universal sacrament of salvation, is missionary of its very nature.

It does so by responding with missionary thrust to the pressing pastoral needs of the most abandoned, especially the poor, and by devoting itself entirely to evangelization.

The Redemptorist Congregation truly follows the example of Christ in the apostolic life, which comprises at one and the same time a life specially dedicated to God and a life of missionary work.

Reader 3:

Constitution 55-- All are Missionaries. This profession makes all Redemptorists truly missionaries, whether they are engaged in different activities of the apostolic ministry or hindered from working at all, whether they are occupied with various services on behalf of the Congregation or the confreres, or are advanced in age, sick, or incapable of external work or whether, above all, they are suffering and dying for the salvation of the world.

Reader 4:

Constitution 23-- Since the members are called **to continue the presence of Christ and his mission** of redemption in the world, they choose the person of Christ as the **centre of their life**, and strive day by

day to enter ever more intimately into personal union with him. Thus, at the heart of the community, to form it and sustain it, is the Redeemer himself and his Spirit of love. And the closer their union with Christ, the stronger will become their union with each other.

Reflection: Ask the participants: What did you hear, as we listened to Constitutions 1, 23 and 55? What stood out for you?

Generalization:

President: The *Constitutions and Statutes* of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer guide and order the life of the community of professed Redemptorists. They also inspire the lives of partners in mission. The *Constitutions and Statutes* are also sometimes referred to as “the Rule,” or “the Rule of Life.” The Constitutions and Statutes are entitled *The Apostolic Life of Redemptorists*.

If we want to know the heart of what it means to live lives inspired by St. Alphonsus and the Redemptorist charism of proclaiming plentiful redemption to the most abandoned, particularly the poor, we look first to the witness of the professed community and then to the *Constitutions and Statutes*.

You may wish to use part or all of the video on the *Constitutions and Statutes* from www.cssr.net.

Or you may wish to use words similar to these:

The *Constitutions and Statutes* are organized into five chapters. These are:

- I. The Missionary work of the Congregation
- II. The Apostolic Community
- III. The Apostolic Community: Dedicated to Christ the Redeemer
- IV. Formation of the Apostolic Community
- V. Government of the Apostolic

Does anything stand out for you? The most important thing to note is that, for Redemptorists, it’s all about mission. Community exists. Not for its own sake, but for mission. Formation is formation for mission. Governance is at the service of mission. Likewise, Partnership in Mission exists, not for its own sake, but to further the mission of proclaiming the Good News of plentiful redemption to the most abandoned, particularly the materially poor.

Now let us share with one another our responses to the following questions:

- What do I find inspiring in the words that I have heard today/tonight?

- What am I called to be, and to do, having heard these words of the Constitutions?
- What are we called to be, and to do, having heard the words of the Constitutions?

Intercessions

Presider: Let us pray for the grace to en flesh the spirit and values of the Redemptorist Constitutions in our lives, in the places where we live and work, play and serve, and in our communities.

All: Holy Redeemer, make us missionaries of your mercy.

1. That we, like St Alphonsus, may never be shaken in the belief that our Redemptorist family, under the protection of our Mother Mary, would labour vigorously together in the heart of the Church and at the edges of society in the mission of proclaiming plentiful redemption for all, we pray...
All: Holy Redeemer, make us missionaries of your mercy.
2. That we might give witness to “the charity of Christ, and do all in our power to make ourselves neighbours to everybody,” we pray...
All: Holy Redeemer, make us missionaries of your mercy.
3. That we might “join our prayers and deliberations, our labours and sufferings, our successes and failures, and our material goods as well, for the service of the Gospel, we pray...
All: Holy Redeemer, make us missionaries of your mercy.
4. That we may become “signs and witnesses before people of the power of Jesus’ resurrection, proclaiming new and eternal life,” we pray...
All: Holy Redeemer, make us missionaries of your mercy.
5. That we might “learn progressively what the following of Christ demands... and thus become true missionaries” we pray...
All: Holy Redeemer, make us missionaries of your mercy.
6. That we may grow in the knowledge that to each one of us is “given the manifestation of the Spirit for the sake of the common good,” we pray...
All: Holy Redeemer, make us missionaries of your mercy.

Presider: We gather our prayers, those spoken and those that remain in the silence of our hearts, as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:

Our Father...

Closing Prayer

Presider: As a Redemptorist family, we follow Christ, the Redeemer of the world, with fidelity and perseverance. May apostolic zeal increase in us, and in our entire family, for the good of the whole Church. Amen. We pray together the Prayer for Vocations to the Redemptorist Family:

All: Provident God,
You spoke your dream of plentiful redemption in Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit ignited the heart of St. Alphonsus,
inspiring him to found a family in the Church,
dedicated to proclaiming the good news
of plentiful redemption to the most abandoned.
Raise up among us strong women and men of faith,
afire with love for you and zeal for the mission of proclaiming your word
among those who do not know you,
or who need to hear your Word proclaimed anew.
Guide men to respond with generosity as vowed Redemptorist priests and
brothers,
and women and men to serve in joy and hope as partners in the
Redemptorist mission.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Word, who is our Life. Amen.

Blessing

Closing Hymn: Any hymn on the theme of mission

Action: What is one thing that you will take away from this session?

SOCIAL TIME

**PRAYER SERVICE
INCLUDING TEXTS OF CONSTITUONS 1, 23 AND 55**

Gathering Hymn (to the tune of “Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones”)

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