

THE WORKS OF THE REDEMPTORIST FAMILY

PROCLAIMING GOOD NEWS TO THE MOST ABANDONED, PARTICULARLY THE POOR



St Alphonso Liguori founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, popularly known as “Redemptorists”, in southern Italy in 1732. Redemptorists follow the example of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer by preaching the Gospel to the poor (cf. Luke 4,14-21). The Congregation began as a response to the spiritual needs of the abandoned, poor people living in the rural, mountainous areas outside the city of Naples. Now present in seventy-seven countries, professed Redemptorists number about 5,500 priests, brothers and students who profess the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and also take a vow and oath of perseverance. The wider Redemptorist family includes the Redemptoristines (OSsR), active religious sisters in congregations that share the same spirit, and lay partners in mission who extend the spirit and the works of the Congregation wherever they live, work and interact.

The mission of proclaiming Good News to the most abandoned, particularly the materially poor, takes flesh through many and varied ministries, and in many sites and venues. What follows is a description of some of the principal ministries through which the Redemptorist family evangelizes the poor and is evangelized by the poor.

PREACHING



St. Alphonso wanted his companions to be itinerant preachers of the Word of God. In many countries today this original inspiration is carried out by missionaries who visit a parish for a week or longer and offer a special series of sermons that invite people to a deeper love for God and a fuller practice of the Christian life. Beyond preaching, the parish mission may include special devotions; visits to people’s homes, especially the sick; counseling and spiritual direction, all with an emphasis on the sacrament of reconciliation.

Redemptorist preachers also conduct triduums (three days) and novenas (nine days), which are periods of prayer and preparation prior to special feasts, as well as retreats to lay people, priests, religious sisters and brothers. St. Alphonso insisted that Redemptorist preaching be simple and down-to-earth in order to make the profound mysteries of faith accessible to all people, regardless of social, cultural or educational background.

MORAL THEOLOGY



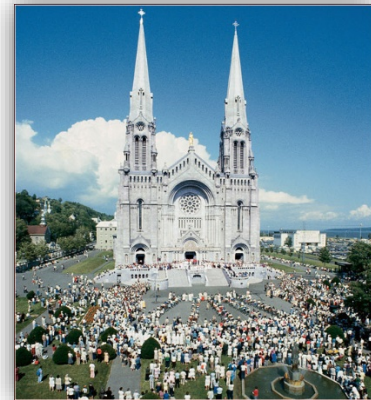
Because of his extraordinary contribution to helping ordinary people follow Jesus, Saint Alphonsus was named the patron of moral theologians and confessors. The Congregation maintains a long-standing interest in and commitment to moral theology by giving this theological discipline a strong emphasis in the initial formation of its seminarians and in the life-long study of its members.

Redemptorists serve as advisors to associations of Catholic hospitals and use modern media to help people form their conscience. They place a high value on being good confessors and accessible spiritual directors. The Congregation maintains Institutes for graduate studies that offer specialized education in moral theology to priests, religious and lay people: the Alphonsian Academy in Rome, and the Institute for Moral Sciences (Instituto Superior de Ciencias Morales) in Madrid, Spain.

Redemptorists are blessed with an extraordinary opportunity to minister in shrines, sanctuaries and traditional sites of pilgrimage. Some of these sites attract more than a million pilgrims each year, like centers in the Philippines, Singapore, Colombia, Brazil, Canada, Materdomini and Rome, Italy. Even in countries where religious practice has decreased dramatically, shrines where Redemptorists serve still retain a strong connection with people.

This form of missionary work allows Redemptorists to specially touch the lives of thousands of people, particularly through preaching and the celebration of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Often other services are offered, such as catechetical instruction, counseling and social assistance. Redemptorists work in effective teamwork with many lay partners in welcoming pilgrims.

SHRINES AND SANCTUARIES



RETREAT HOUSES



Since the founding of the Congregation, Redemptorists have opened their houses to people who seek time to “retreat” a bit from the worries and cares of their ordinary lives and look for a deeper relationship with God in an environment of silence and prayer. Various kinds of retreats are offered for all types of Christians: priests, religious women or men, married couples, engaged couples, single people and the young, who might spend a week or a weekend in a special time of communion with God. Redemptorist missionaries who work in this ministry always seek new ways to help people experience God’s loving presence in their lives.

PARISHES



Redemptorist missionaries also serve in parishes or other parochial structures. Parishes staffed by Redemptorists can be found in big cities, small towns and across vast expanses of rural areas. Redemptorists generally accept parishes in areas where the local diocese is unable to provide adequate pastoral care. Parish ministry includes preaching, teaching, counseling, liturgical and sacramental celebrations, visits to the sick and social assistance. Beyond doing ordinary parish ministry, Redemptorist priests and brothers always have an anxious zeal for the unchurched and alienated.

In 1866, Pope Pius IX entrusted to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer the original icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, commissioning Redemptorists to “make her known.” As a result, this image of Mary is the most recognizable image of the Mother of God in the world. Across the globe, hundreds of thousands of people gather for the weekly novena in honour of our Mother Perpetual Help in Redemptorist churches and shrines. May celebrate the nine-day Novena in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help around the feast, which is June 27. The Redemptorists value this devotion as a great opportunity to fulfill their mission of evangelization.

THE PERPETUAL NOVENA IN HONOUR OF OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP



OVERSEAS MISSIONS



At the request of the Holy Father or in response to requests from local bishops, Redemptorist missionaries are sent to countries and cultures distant and different from their own, in difficult places and situations. In a real way Redemptorists continue to fulfill a dream of Saint Alphonsus: that Redemptorist missionaries would preach the Gospel throughout the whole world.

Saint Alphonsus was a great communicator. Besides his preaching, he also wrote more than 100 books that have now been reproduced in 20,000 editions and translated into over 70 languages. Some of his writings, such as the Glories of Mary, his Way of the Cross or Visits to the Blessed Sacrament are universally appreciated in the patrimony of Christian spirituality. Today Redemptorists use all means of social communication to preach the Word of God: publication centers, radio and television stations and programs, audio-visual materials, and the Internet.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA



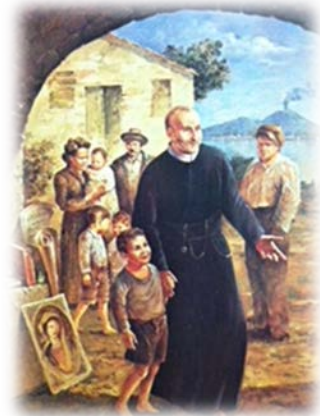
WORK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE



Redemptorists believe that the saving love of God touches the whole person and calls for the transformation of social injustice into respect for the dignity of all men and women. Hence Redemptorists around the world are involved in a wide variety of social problems and justice issues such as: immigration, refugees, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, workers' rights, women's issues, exploitation of child labor, racism, genocide, indigenous peoples, the environment, war and violence, weapons of war and trafficking in people.

While Redemptorists have always enjoyed working with young people, in 1985 the world-wide government of the Congregation made youth ministry a pastoral priority. Young people must be numbered among the most abandoned, since they frequently find themselves on the margin of Church and society. So it is only natural that Redemptorists feel the call to be with them. In parishes and shrines, youth ministry is often an identifying feature of Redemptorist presence. In many areas, young people are offered opportunities to be partners in local outreach, or in international service. A part of this ministry is aimed at helping young people discern their own vocation in life. For more information, go to the pages of the General Secretariat for Evangelization.

YOUTH AND VOCATION MINISTRY



PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE REDEMPTORIST FAMILY

Provident God, you spoke your dream of plentiful redemption in Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit ignited the heart of Saint 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.