



## CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

Rome, Italy

December 16, 2012

Dear Confreres, Sisters and friends,

As you receive this December edition of *Scala*, we are more than halfway through Advent and about to begin the Novena for Christmas. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect with you on the meaning of this season. For St. Alphonsus, the Incarnation that we celebrate at Christmas is the first 'Mystery of Redemption'. During the Season of Advent, and especially during the Novena, we wait in joyful hope, praying that God will increase our appetite for the great feast to come.

For Alphonsus, the Incarnation is a celebration and affirmation of life. He writes, "Justly does the Apostle call Jesus Christ our life. Behold our Redeemer, clothed with flesh becomes an Infant, and he says to us: 'I have come that you may have life.'" We celebrate this life in our families and in our parishes. The bright lights and decorations, the hymns we sing, the joy of our liturgies, and the welcome we share with others – all these are signs of the life God shares with us. Alphonsus continues: "From the first moment of the Incarnation, Jesus embraced our redemption with enthusiasm. He rejoices like a stag to run his course, and he comes leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills."

And why such joy? Alphonsus writes that God became human so that he might converse with us as a friend. He longs that we converse with him, and that we find him in the manger - that we recognize him in the world among the poor and the abandoned – and that we welcome him and all those he brings with him. It is a mystery of friendship.

May you experience all the joy and blessings of Christmas! May the mystery of the Incarnation draw you more deeply into the mystery of friendship with Jesus the Redeemer as well as communion with the least of his brothers and sisters. I wish you a Merry and Blessed Christmas.

In Jesus our Redeemer,

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

Superior General