



CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

Prot. N. 0000 070/2013

Rome, March 31, 2013

Dear Confreres, Sisters and Lay Associates,

On this Easter 2013, I greet you with the words of the Risen Jesus to his disciples: "Peace be with you!"

As we celebrate the power of the Resurrection this Easter, we listen again to the words of the angels to Mary Magdalene and the other women at the empty tomb: "Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here, he has risen" (Luke 24:5b).

This message from the Easter Vigil finds an echo in our Constitutions and Statutes: Redemptorist Missionaries "must, therefore, become signs and witnesses before people of the power of his Resurrection, proclaiming the new and eternal life" (C. 51). As St. Paul makes clear, the power of the resurrection is experienced and witnessed in the new life which we live and proclaim. As Jesus himself proclaimed: "I have come that they may have Life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b).

As followers of Jesus the Redeemer, we are called to experience first of all the power of his Resurrection in our own lives. This experience transforms us so that we too may live more fully in the power of the Spirit. As we experience the power of the Resurrection and are transformed by it, we invite others to share this experience in "simplicity of life and language" (C. 20).

I believe that this is the great attraction of Pope Francis I to the people of today. The mystery of the Resurrection is primarily the mystery of Life. During the first weeks of his Petrine ministry, Pope Francis has returned to this theme more than once, affirming the value and meaning of daily life with all the joys and sufferings, hopes and crosses we experience. He speaks to us of a Church of the poor and for the poor. He preaches about friendship and tenderness, hope and mercy, simplicity and care for one another. His way of being, the signs that he gives, the human gestures – these seem to speak even more powerfully than his words alone to proclaim the Gospel anew 'in simplicity of life and language'.

"Why look among the dead for someone who is alive?" The message of those two angels seems logical enough. But often we can forget its importance for us today. It can become too easy to look back on the past with nostalgia. It is often more comfortable to rely on methods which we have used for generations. We resist change.

As Redemptorist Missionaries and those who share this Charism, we are called and sent to preach the Gospel ever anew (St. Clement). It is not enough to rely on methods which have been successful in the past, no matter how venerable they might be, but which might not reach the people of today (Cc 14-16). It is insufficient to hold on to buildings and places, or “to settle down in surroundings and structures in which our work would no longer be missionary” (C. 15). The power of the Resurrection impels us to read the signs of the times, to take risks, and to pioneer bold initiatives.

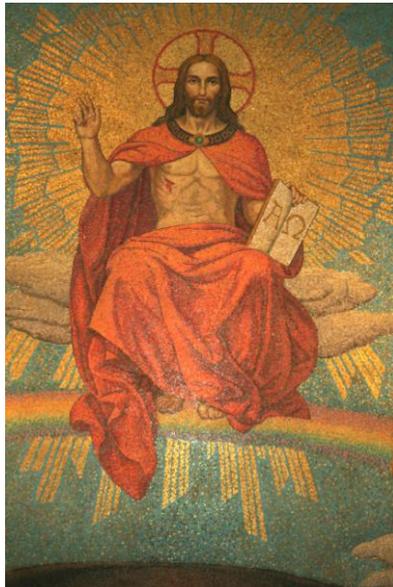
My brothers and sisters, our annual celebration of Easter is a constant call to renewal – a call to renew our hope and to renew our hearts. Jesus calls us to go with him to Galilee, wherever that ‘Galilee’ might actually be found today. The Synod on New Evangelization suggested that ‘Galilee’ might be a symbol, like the court of the Gentiles, for those places where different cultures and nations gather and have an impact one upon the other.

During these fifty days of Easter, guided by the Holy Spirit, may the Redeemer continue to breathe new Life into us and into our Congregation! Gathered in prayer with Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help, may we experience ever more deeply the power and challenge of the Resurrection today! In the power of the Resurrection, may we preach the Gospel ever anew with courage and with hope!

Your brother in the Redeemer,

Michael Brehl, C.S.R.

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Superior General



EASTER: Copiosa Apud Eum VITA!