



October 25, 2014
PROT.NO. 0000 218/2014

Dear Confreres, Sisters, Lay Missionaries and friends,

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus, our Redeemer. I am writing you today as we celebrate the close of the Extraordinary Synod on the Family and the Beatification of Blessed Paul VI. Both these events are very important for the Church, and for our Congregation.

The very title of **the Extraordinary Synod** expresses its importance for Redemptorist Missionaries as we preach the Gospel ever anew: **The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization**. In our mission of evangelization in the modern world, we confront those pastoral challenges daily. We are grateful to the participants in the Synod for the open and courageous dialogue which took place, and which is clear in the "Relatio Synodi" which was voted and published this weekend. It is clear that there was a very large consensus on many matters, but there was also serious disagreement and reservation about a number of very sensitive and delicate subjects.

In the Relatio, the participants in the Synod have asked all the local Churches to carefully study, pray and dialogue about these themes in preparation for the Ordinary Synod to take place in October, 2015. In particular, they called for biblical, theological and moral research and study to address these pastoral challenges. In his homily on Sunday, October 19, the Holy Father underlined the importance of this ongoing dialogue as we engage in this journey together towards the Ordinary Synod next year. I urge all Redemptorist theologians to take up this challenge and animate us in a careful and thoughtful reflection and study, in union with the local Churches in which we live and proclaim the gospel.

I urge all of you to read and study the Relatio. It is readily available on the Vatican website, www.vatican.va, and I am sure that it will also be made widely available in every Diocese.

As you know, Fr. Sabatino Majorano, C.Ss.R., Professor at the Accademia Alfonsiana was appointed to participate in the Extraordinary Synod as a Collaborator of the Special Secretary, Archbishop Bruno Forte. We are very glad that our Congregation was able to make a contribution to this important gathering through the person of Fr. Majorano. Your brothers are grateful, Fr. Majorano.

Secondly, I would also like to emphasize the importance of **the Beatification of Blessed Paul VI** for our Redemptorist family. As Pope Francis affirmed in his homily, it was Pope Paul VI who was 'the great helmsman of the Council' which gave us so many wonderful documents, which influenced so strongly the renewal of our Constitutions. As the Holy Father emphasized in his Angelus address, Blessed Paul VI was the great force behind the mission of evangelization, and his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, continues to be just as significant today as it was



forty years ago. Perhaps we could take this Exhortation up once again, as we continue to ponder the message of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*. They are good 'companion documents'.

With this letter, I am also sending each of you the text which Blessed Paul VI addressed to the members of the Redemptorist General Chapter in October, 1973. After delivering his official address in Latin, he put aside his text, and spoke spontaneously in Italian, and, as he said, from his heart. We are fortunate that one Chapter delegate had a tape recorder, and recorded these words spoken from the heart of a Pope to the Sons of St. Alphonsus. Recently, I became aware that many younger members of our Congregation are not familiar with this message. And many of my generation have not read these words in many years. I encourage you to read this brief text prayerfully and to hear again the invitation to deepen and renew our missionary vocation.

Our Congregation also played a very significant role in the Beatification of Blessed Paul VI through the person of Fr. Antonio Marrazzo, C.Ss.R., the Postulator General of the Congregation. Since his appointment as the Postulator for the cause of Paul VI by Pope Benedict XVI, Fr. Marrazzo has worked countless hours to prepare the Beatification. He has represented our Congregation with grace, generosity, intelligence and fidelity. Thank you, Fr. Marrazzo!

My brothers and sisters in the Redeemer, thank you for your patience in reading this letter. I know that I am giving you all some 'homework' to do. Perhaps you could take up some of these themes in your community – for reflection and discussion, for ongoing formation and for renewal.

May God bless you and the entire Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and indeed, the whole Redemptorist Family. May Mary, our Perpetual Help, accompany us in our mission of evangelization. Through the example and prayers of St. Alphonsus, St. Clement, St. Gerard and Blessed Pope Paul VI may we continue to be witnesses and missionaries of copiosa redemptio to all God's people.

Your brother in the Redeemer,

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Superior General

