



CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

August 1, 2018

Solemnity of St. Alphonsus Maria Liguori

Prot. No 0000 115/2018

**WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER:**

**In Solidarity for Mission to a Wounded World**

*"When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"*

*(Matthew 9:36)*

Dear Confreres, Sisters, Lay Missionaries and Associates,

Once again, we celebrate the Solemnity of St. Alphonsus Maria Liguori, C.Ss.R. in a spirit of joy and gratitude for the great gift of our Missionary Charism which we received through his faithful following of Jesus the Redeemer.

One year ago on this feast, I wrote you to announce the Extraordinary Visit of the General Government to the whole Congregation. In the spirit of the 25<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (Decision 44), this Extraordinary Visit has gathered Confreres, Sisters, and lay Redemptorist Associates from different (V) Provinces, Regions, and Missions for Assemblies in every Conference and on every Continent. As we celebrate the feast of St. Alphonsus this year, I would like to share with you some reflections on this extraordinary event in the life of our Congregation.

As I write to you, the General Government with the Conference Coordinators has already conducted over 80% of the Assemblies of this Extraordinary Visit. The Assemblies of the Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean and of the Conference of Africa and Madagascar have been completed. The remaining Assemblies will be completed before November this year. It is already clear that the large majority of confreres, of all ages, have participated in these Assemblies, along with many Sisters from affiliated Congregations and lay Redemptorist Associates. In addition to the Assemblies, we have also met with most of the Major Superiors and Councils in the Congregation. As well, the Conference Commissions for the Apostolic and Restructuring Plan have been meeting regularly and carefully considering the reflections, recommendations and suggestions which you have contributed at each Assembly.

Once the whole Extraordinary Visit has been completed, the General Government will evaluate the experience, taking into account the evaluations we have received from you during



each Assembly. At this time, I would like to offer you some reflections on the experience so far as we begin the Conference Assemblies at which the first draft of the Conference Apostolic and Restructuring Plan will be presented.

First of all, the General Government would like to express our gratitude to all of you who have participated in this Visit. Confreres of all ages, from novices to seniors, engaged fully in the Assemblies. Others who were unable to attend an Assembly sent their contributions through the community preparation. Many who could not attend supported the Visit in their prayer, especially our infirm confreres, as well as many Sisters and lay associates. Thank you for your generous and enthusiastic response to the invitation contained in my letter of August 1, 2017!

Every Assembly affirmed the value and importance of this Visit. Many confreres and lay associates thanked the Consultors and Coordinators for their closeness and availability, and they also expressed the conviction that they went home from the Assemblies with a much better understanding of the process of restructuring. More importantly, the majority of participants made concrete personal commitments to continue to engage fully in this process of renewal and revitalization of our Congregation.

The Assemblies strongly affirmed the importance of the day of retreat on the Theme of the Sexennium. I urge you to continue your reflection on this theme in each local community, and in your personal prayer. As we move forward with the work of the Commissions and the Conference Assemblies, we recognize that we are in a process of discernment, attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit and the call of the 'signs of the times'. May St. Alphonsus, an expert in discernment, continue to accompany and guide us in this process!

Recognizing the reality of the Congregation at this time, many Confreres expressed a greater openness to the reconfiguration of their (V) Provinces and Regions in order to create stronger Provinces more capable of carrying out the mission to which we are called. At the same time, you expressed your concerns and fears, as well as criteria and concrete proposals for this reconfiguration. Each Conference Commission has found this information very helpful, and these Commissions will continue to pay close attention to your reflections and further contributions after you have received the first Draft of the Plan for your Conference. This Draft will be sent to each Unit once it has been approved as a working document by your Conference Assembly. This should be received in time for consideration in local communities, as well as in Assemblies and Chapters as we prepare for the next quadriennium.

As we continue this process of preparing the Plan in each Conference, we are also beginning the discernment of the kind of leadership we need for the next quadriennium. As you know, this discernment relates not only to the choice of Superiors, but also their Councils. This leadership will be very important as we continue the process of restructuring and renewal of the Congregation. We



need leaders with the courage to face the risks involved, and to animate the (V) Provinces and Regions for the sake of our mission.

The ongoing participation of every confrere will continue to shape this process. As we celebrate the feast of St. Alphonsus this year, it is our hope and our prayer that we remain faithful to his vision and attentive to the 'signs of the times' today, so that we will continue our mission to "follow the example of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, by preaching the word of God to the poor..." (Const. 1).

We are living in an extraordinary era, a time of great challenges and great opportunities. In communion with the whole Church, guided by the leadership of Pope Francis, we commit ourselves once again to the theme of this sexennium: *WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER: In Solidarity for Mission to a Wounded World.*

As genuine disciples of St. Alphonsus may God bless us with the grace to follow Christ the Redeemer with hearts full of joy. Denying ourselves and always ready to undertake what is demanding, may we share fully in the mystery of Christ and proclaim it in Gospel simplicity of life and language, that we may bring to people the gift of plentiful redemption (cf. Cons. 20)

May our Mother of Perpetual Help accompany us always.

Your brother in our Redeemer,

*Michael Brehl, CSSR*

Michael Brehl CSSR  
Superior General

