



CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

October 21, 2018

World Mission Sunday

Prot. No. 0000 185/2018

WITNESSES OF THE REDEEMER:

In Solidarity for Mission to a Wounded World

Dear Confreres, Sisters, Youth, Lay Associates, and Young People,

On Sunday, November 11th, we will celebrate the annual World Day of Prayer for the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation. In this celebration we will remember our Foundation Day (November 9th), and give thanks for the 286 years of witness to the Redeemer lived by generations of Redemptorist missionaries across the world.

As I write to you today from the Synod of Bishops on Youth, I am reminded that our missionary vocation is at the heart of the Church's mission. And this Synod reminds us that at the heart of the Church's mission are young people, and most especially those who are wounded or marginalized, migrants or lost. Today we are called in a very special way to be prophetic and authentic witnesses to the Redeemer as we accompany many young women and men in the discernment of their vocation as missionary-disciples.

The Synod has reminded us of the wounds experienced by so many young people and families in the world today. Across the world, the large majority of migrants are young people. Many are driven from their homes by war, by poverty, by religious persecution. Others migrate from rural areas to urban centers seeking education, employment, a chance to improve their life. A great number of young women and children are the victims of human trafficking. Still other young people are searching for meaning, for acceptance, for purpose.

Speaking recently of this reality, Pope Francis encourages us "not to be afraid of descending into the hell of the people... Suffering, be it human, social, that of conscience... we need to be there. Touch the wounds. And touching people's wounds, you touch the wounds of Christ. [We] should never be afraid of this. It is a grace we receive from the hand of the Lord."

As we prepare for this World Day of Prayer for the Redemptorist Missionary Vocation, we remember the Synod process initiated by the Holy Father and in which so many of us have taken

part. The Synod Assembly which concludes on October 28 is not the end of the process. Pope Francis has invited us to continue to walk with young people as we prepare for the World Youth Day in Panama, and then to continue the Post-Synodal implementation phase in every continent, country and diocese. We walk together with our younger sisters and brothers in a process of discernment and commitment.

At the same time, we cherish and celebrate the growing number of lay men and women that God is calling to share our missionary vocation as Lay Missionaries and Associates. And we are grateful for the generous response of so many younger confreres and candidates in the process of Initial Formation.

Remembering the widow in the Gospel passage for Sunday, November 11, we gratefully celebrate those who from their poverty, "have given everything they had to live on". The lives of our senior confreres who have persevered in their vocation with joy and hope are an authentic and prophetic Witness to the Redeemer who calls us in solidarity to touch his wounds today.

In this Spirit, I ask every Redemptorist community to celebrate this World Day of Prayer in every one of our churches. In past years, some have dedicated a particular petition in the prayers of the faithful, others have planned an hour of Eucharistic Adoration. Some have used the occasion to promote our missionary vocation with displays of information about the Redemptorists. And others have taken up the collection for the Redemptorist Solidarity Fund, most of which is used for the initial formation of Redemptorist missionaries, especially in developing nations. I urge you to be creative and thoughtful, and perhaps this year it would be a good idea to ask for ideas and involve groups of young people in the planning.

May we follow "Christ the Redeemer with hearts full of joy" (Cons. 20), confident that we are "sent as helpers, companions and ministers of Jesus Christ in the great work of redemption" (Cons. 2). May Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help, accompany us always. May St. Alphonsus, and all our saints, blessed and martyrs inspire us and help us by their prayers.

Your brother in Christ our Redeemer,

Michael Brehl, C.S.R.

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.,
Superior General

