



TOGETHER FOR MISSION

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARTNERS IN MISSION

REDEMPTORIST CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

Volume 3, Number 2

February 2020

On March 15, 2020, we will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Redemptorist St. Clement Hofbauer. The General Government of the Redemptorists has proclaimed the coming year as a year of jubilee in honour of our brother St. Clement. This jubilee year calls us to connect our lives and situations to his. It calls us to a renewed awareness of how we, like Clement, are called to the mission of proclaiming the Good News of plentiful redemption in challenging times and contexts, always with hope and missionary vigour. In this issue of *Together for Mission*, we will bring together some of the thoughts of our Superior General, Fr. Michael Brehl, CSSR, with some reflections from others in our great Redemptorist Family, as we seek to draw new insights and impetus from our brother Clement.

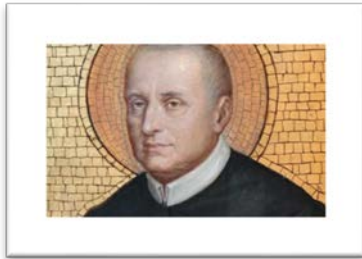


*It is enough to have courage.
O, God you are the master.
You guide all for the sake of your glory
and for what is best for us,
and no one can resist you.
All our plans, however well they may be thought out,
serve only to fulfill your will.*

From Clement we can learn how to live in communion with God and, at the same time, to be zealous apostles, dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel to the poorest and most abandoned. Like St. Alphonsus, his genius lies in the harmonious fusion of the interior life and apostolic activity. These two dimensions of holiness often run the risk of being separated. For Redemptorists, the interior life without an active mission in the world will not build up the Reign of God. The active missionary apostolate and care of people, without passion and the inner warmth of heart, would be reduced to purely external action. – Fr. Michael Brehl, CSSR

“A big lesson for us today from St Clement is to maintain a sense of humour as exemplified when a man whom Clement was asking for a donation to his orphans spit on him. Clement calmly replied, “That was for me, now something for my orphans.” Remembering Clement’s desire to be a hermit also reminds us of the importance of quiet and contemplation to balance our apostolic work.”

- Fr. David Louch, CSsR, Province of Canada



For me, St. Clement Hofbauer is an extraordinary incarnation of our Constitution no. 15. "(...) Since they are always obliged to seek new apostolic initiatives under the guidance of legitimate authority, they cannot allow themselves to settle down in surroundings and structures in which their work would no longer be missionary. On the contrary, they will diligently pioneer new ways of preaching the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15)." - Teresa Ascensao, Lay Missionary of the Most Holy Redeemer, Province of Lisbon

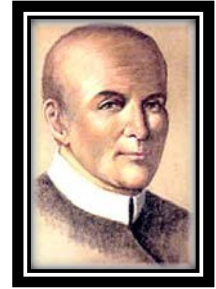
A constant concern of Clement was to form committed lay men and women as apostles. Shortly after his arrival in Warsaw, he began to gather groups of lay people, whom he formed and prepared for the apostolate in various fields in the life of the Church. In 1788 he gave birth to a community of lay faithful, called Oblates, that is, those consecrated to God. Clement directed them that the main purposes of the Oblates included sanctifying one’s own life, following Jesus with all one’s strength, listening to the word of God, participating in prayer circles and the sacramental life of the Church, cultivating trust in the Holy Father and the teaching of the Church, and spreading the Catholic press, particularly good books. Arriving in Vienna, his presence became a “mission centre”, a meeting place especially for young people, particularly for university students who had chosen him as a teacher, as a counselor and as a friend.

– Fr. Michael Brehl, CSsR



"Role models and heroes have a great impact on children and young adult, helping them to establishing their personalities. The life of Saint Clement is the equivalent of a hero for us, professed and lay Redemptorists, as a point of reference which help us to give flesh to our redemptorist personality today." – Fr. Cristian Bueno, CSsR, Executive Secretary, General Secretariat for Evangelization

"St. Clement Hofbauer is an example of what means to be faithful to a Tradition: drink from the source to always find fresh apostolic ways to proclaim the love of God. His freedom, zeal and missionary spirit always helped him to not confuse the Mission with a particular missionary method."
 - Jose Silva Oliviera, Lay Missionary of the Most Holy Redeemer, Province of Lisbon



"St. Clement was an adapter! He responded to the needs he discovered in Warsaw and Vienna and other parts of northern Europe. But he did so with the solid treasures of our Catholic faith: dramatic, music-filled liturgies; simple, excellent preaching; care for the poor; and Clement-circles where people could ask questions and grow in the understanding and therefore the exercise of their faith." – Fr. Mark Miller, Regional Coordinator, Edmonton-Toronto Region, Province of Canada

Clement also nurtured great esteem and filial love for our Founder, St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, and he tried with all his might to remain faithful to the charism of the Congregation. He instilled in his confreres a love for the Founder and for the Congregation, as one of them testified during the process of beatification: "It is he, Clement, who instilled in me the love for St. Alphonsus and his Congregation. I had listened to him personally, and he always spoke with the greatest love of his Italian confreres in Rome, and so he was inflaming me with a great love for St. Alphonsus and the Congregation." In the spirit of Alphonsus, Clement constantly strove to live and work together with his confreres in the apostolic community, even when the civil authorities placed many obstacles in his way. – Fr. Michael Brehl, CSSR



"St. Clement Hofbauer reminds me that mission is perpetual. Many religious orders profess perpetual adoration. The 2nd Founder of the Redemptorists puts the priority on perpetual mission. So having "dirty shoes" is as important and "sore knees" and the two should provide energy for the other." - Van Bensett, Life Directions Project Director and Redemptorist Associate, Chicago

"'Here I am Lord, I come to do your will'. St. Clement taught us that we are all called to serve and that by our gift of faith, we will be given the grace and the blessings needed to do what He asks of us." - Micki O'Connor, Redemptorist Associate, North Carolina

“St. Clement was an authentic disciple of Jesus and a faithful follower of the inspirational missionary charism and spirituality of St. Alphonsus.

St. Clement was a great missionary because of his ability to respond to the different pastoral necessities with *creative and flexible initiatives*.

Most of our Redemptorist apostolic works are among the marginalized, poor and abandoned. St. Clement inspires us all, professed and lay, to renew our missionary vigour as we are challenged by many complex realities. As did St. Clement, we proclaim the love of God, our Father, who will never abandon us and is the source of our hope.” - *Fr. Manuel Rodríguez Delgado, C.Ss.R., General Secretariat of Formation*



“When I think of St Clement the first words are a paraphrase, "Let us preach the Gospel ever anew." I admire Clement's willingness to venture into new forms of evangelization - education of the young, orphanages, discussion groups, academic groups, ongoing parish mission in Warsaw to name a few. We have had that spirit in the Centre for Bioethics, the Centre for Growth, Adult Faith Formation, Catholic Information Centres, outreach to First Nations Peoples, music, television, and publications. The challenge is to remain open attentive to new possibilities and new ventures that will continue the spirit of Clement and breathe life into the Gospel and to those who hear it.” – *Fr. Ray Douziech, CSsR*

Clement’s love for his neighbour, especially for the poorest and most abandoned, sprang from his great love for God. He was called “father of the poor”, because the poor, the abandoned and the marginalized found in him a companion and sincere friend. He lived close to the poor, being himself poor and, whatever he had, he generously shared with them. He often spent time with the sick and dying, preparing them, through the sacrament of reconciliation, for their encounter with Christ the Redeemer. – *Fr. Michael Brehl, CSsR*



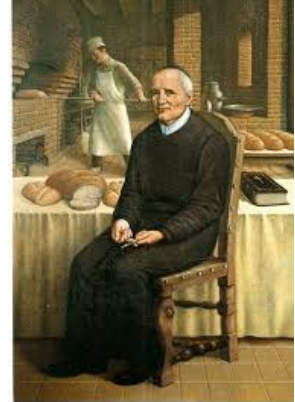
“When I think about St. Clement and his efforts to establish the Congregation north of the Alps in a somewhat hostile environment, I’ve always been struck by his creative adaptability. Clement was willing to try almost anything to get the message of the Gospel across, whether it was the perpetual mission at St. Benno’s in Warsaw or the various circles in Vienna. I’m also impressed by his dogged perseverance and his healthy stoicism in the face of disappointment. Both of these traits are invaluable in today’s challenging mission field. We have to be willing to try new things, knowing that some of them may fail or at least not produce significant results. Clement is certainly a saint for today!”

– *Fr. Ed Eherer, CSsR, Director of Novices, Lima, Ohio*



"The life of St. Clement tells us all to never give up and to always find ways to collaborate for the vitality of Mission." – Fr. Michael Smolinski, CSsR. Regional Coordinator, Region of Yorkton, Province of Canada

"Even in the service of our Redeemer, our imaginations may well long for the spectacular, usually with ourselves at the center either as "the achiever of" or as "vicarious witness". St. Clement Hofbauer would remind us, gently but firmly, that it is in the ordinary everyday interactions we experience with others that the Word gets best witnessed and proclaimed. I imagine him saying - thinking of his days as a baker - 'Yeast is hardly spectacular - but it works - oh, how it works!'" - Bon Fagan, Redemptorist Associate, St. John's, NL



Clement also distinguished himself by his great love for the Church and for the Holy Father. In his sermons, he often repeated: "Whoever refuses to have the Church as a mother will not have God as Father". He urged all to pray for the Holy Father and to encourage others to do the same. Such prayer would strengthen their Catholic identity, and also assist the Pope in his responsibilities. – Fr. Michael Brehl, CSsR

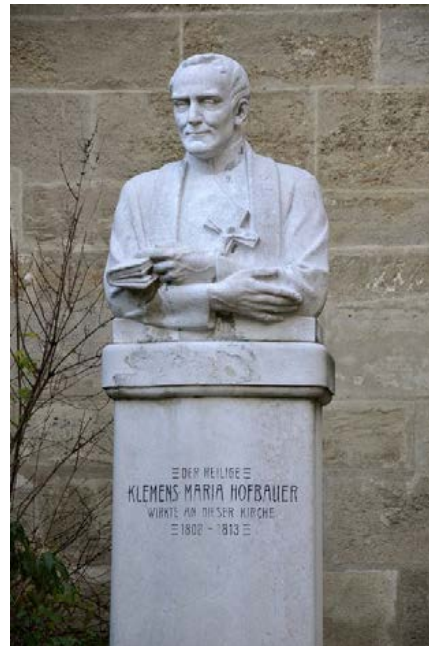
"What's amazing to me: How St. Clement in the most difficult circumstances found ways to give testimony as Redemptorist and how he invited people with totally different background to do the same. A life with an enormous capacity to overcome limits." – Fr. Joannes Romelt, CSsR, Coordinator, Redemptorist Conference of Europe



"Clemens Hofbauer was the modern missionary par excellence. He completely 'stripped' himself and his institutional context of all the burdens and forms of the past. He concentrated/focussed on the 'core task' of evangelization in word and deed, fully open to new forms and ideas, freely speaking and unbiasedly listening." - Eric Corsius, Partners in Mission, St Clement Province

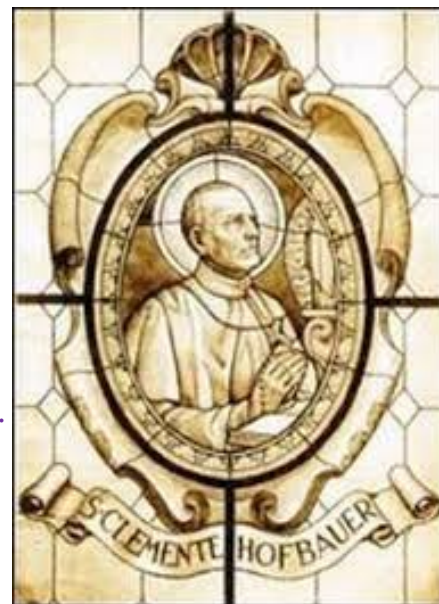
"St Clement worked tirelessly for others, and he tried to draw others to serve as well. Inspired by his example, our aim is that our deeds not turn the eyes of others to ourselves, but to the Lord, and eventually inward to discover how they can also be of service the Kingdom of God." - Jane Donohue-Logan, Redemptorist Associate, Saint John, NB

“Clement Hofbauer lived at a time of change and challenge, in both Society and in the Church, and responded with incredible passion both in his personal life of mystical communion with God in the Person of Jesus and in his missionary life embracing peoples of all social positions and none. Extraordinarily tenacious, Clement refused to be undone by the seemingly insuperable odds thrown in his path, even to the nightmare of having his supremely successful center of beautiful worship and powerful preaching, successful formation and acclaimed catechesis, St. Benno's, be suppressed, by the machinations of civil authorities of his day. With charm and irresistible warmth, he brought the great intellectuals of his day together and instigated Vienna as the epicenter of the best of emerging liberal philosophy and creative imagination, to such a degree, that he was acclaimed upon his death as the "co-patron" of that European Capital.” - Fr. Francis Gargani, C.Ss.R., Baltimore Province



“I am inspired by what a visionary Saint Clement was. He Never allowed his spirit to be trapped within confined places. Even when he was not allowed to preach outside his Church, he still spread out maps on the dining tables and he and others would talk about how in the future they would send missionaries to Canada, and then from Canada, go to China to begin a Redemptorist mission in The Far East. It is this visionary spirit that has kept the church alive and flourishing in a time of Jesus Through Saint Alphonsus, through Saint Clement, to our present day. Whatever we do, let us be visionaries, like Clement, and look beyond the present and see what could be the church of the future.” – Fr. Paul Coury CSsR, Denver Province

“In a world that where reactionary movements ask us to return to a glorious past, it is always comforting to know our tradition has men and women who have had the audacity to preach the gospel anew. There is a danger in letting go of an anchor, of moving into new spaces, be they physical or mental. St Clement Hofbauer had the courage to bring the Redemptorists to both new mission areas as well as help revitalize the Catholic faith. He is a model for those of persevering in faith in secular society. His life reminds us we can hold firm to our faith while responding to the needs of the societies we find ourselves living in.” - Matthew Howard, Communications Officer, Province of Oceania





“It’s important for Redemptorists to “Cross the Alps” in every generation. St Clement brought the message of Plentiful Redemption “across the Alps” which demanded that he adapt to a new culture and world situation. What are our Alps today that we must cross and adapt to? Our Missionary Priorities invite us to cross the Alps into the world of Young Adults! Those who don’t hear the Gospel as Good News! Immigrants, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons! Together, with the inspiration of St Clement, we journey forth.” – Fr. Jack Kingsbury, CSsR, Coordinator, Redemptorist Conference of North America

“Using the fact that Saint Clement was a prolific pilgrim (having made several walking journeys from Vienna to Rome and back!), what I find inspiring is that he lived his spiritual life in much the same manner—one step at a time—to make great progress while facing much political and cultural adversity.” - Wendy Barnes, Lay Missionary of the Most Holy Redeemer, Denver Province



“Clement Hofbauer strongly reminds me of the Redemptorists’ unquenchable fire of zeal for the salvation of souls. It is for this mission that all our lives, actions and structures are shaped”. – Fr. Dominic Long Nguyen, CSsR, Vice Province of Extra Patriam

“When I hear the question, “What does the life of St. Clement say to me as a Redemptorist Associate? How does his life inspire me to a renewed missionary vigour?”, I keep hearing the word “persevere” and the phrases “Never give up! Keep going! God is with you and will never abandon you! “ St. Clement creatively shows me that the link between holiness and mission is nourished by the constant prayer of listening and persistent following of that to which God calls me no matter what the world around me may say in criticism or persuasion to do otherwise. My help comes from the Lord. I surrender my life to his guidance and mercy.” - Lynda Browning, Redemptorist Associate

“Saint Clement’s life really inspires us to believe that God will come through whatever the situation and how impossible it might seem in our eyes. If it does not work the first time, try again in another way.” – Fr. Charles Duval, CSsR, Provincial Superior, Province of Canada



“St. Clement encountered many obstacles in his life to proclaim the Redeemer’s love. He never allowed those difficulties to prevent him from finding new ways to continue our mission and spread the good news.” – Fr. Greg May, CSsR, Denver Province



Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to conclude with these words of Clement, addressed to his confreres over two hundred years ago. These words have such a universal character that they can also encourage us to entrust our lives and our mission to God and to seek the will of God in all that we do.

“Courage! God is the Lord! He guides everything for His glory and for our good and nothing is able to oppose Him. All human plans, even if designed in the greatest detail, serve only for the fulfilment of His will ... I notice that everything that seems to be made to hurt us, leads us there, where the Lord wants ... Let us be guided by God and all will be well ... My dear brothers! Let us be wary of sin and strive for perfection; this is the only thing we have to keep in mind, let us be strong in heart and encourage each other to do good. Let us treat one another with love. I greet you all in the heart of Jesus.” – *Fr. Michael Brehl, CSsR*

Clement Mary Hofbauer was born in Tasswitz, Moravia (now the Czech Republic) on December 26, 1751. In his early youth, after the death of his father, he worked as an apprentice baker. Having become a servant in the Norbertine Abbey at Klosterbruck, he was able to follow the call to the priesthood by completing first his secondary schooling and then his catechetical, philosophical, and theological studies in Vienna, Austria. During this time, he made yearly pilgrimages to Rome, where he encountered the Redemptorists. On October 24, 1784, with his friend Thaddeus Hubl, Clement entered the Redemptorist Congregation. Both professed religious vows on March 19, 1785, and were ordained priests on March 29. As vicar general of the Congregation north of the Alps, Clement founded the first house of the Redemptorists in Warsaw, Poland. Other houses were established in Poland, Prussia, Germany, Switzerland, and Romania. He lived in Warsaw from 1787 to 1808, and with the collaboration of laypeople of various nationalities, he developed a very fruitful apostolate, promoting good works and strengthening the piety of the faithful. With the takeover of Poland by Napoleon, the Redemptorists were suppressed. Clement was forced to leave Warsaw, and made his way to Vienna. In 1813 he was appointed rector of the Church of the Ursulines. Through the charisms of spiritual direction, preaching, confession, and works of charity, he converted and helped people of every social class. Hofbauer's activity influenced the Congress of Vienna and the culture of the time, especially the romantic movement.

Clement died at Vienna on March 15, 1820. He was canonized by St. Pius X on May 20, 1909. He is co-patron of both Vienna and Warsaw.

The shrine of St. Clement Hofbauer is in the church Maria am Gestade in Vienna, Austria.