



HOMILY FOR THE OPENING OF THE SPIRITUALITY COURSE 2023

DEAR PARTICIPANTS OF THE SPIRITUALITY COURSE,
DEAR CONFRERES AND LUCY,
our Lay Redemptorist associated with our mission.

1. It is a joy for us, the General Government, and the Spirituality Center, to have you here in Rome this month for this spirituality course. We are beginning this meeting here in St. Alphonsus Church and Perpetual Help Shrine. This is a very important sign.
2. During these days, you will receive a lot of information, but beyond being a theoretical course, it is an experience of God that you will have through the lens of Alphonsus. *He will be the mystagogue of this course!* With Saint Alphonsus you will experience during these days the Redeeming God who loves the human being. And Alphonsus understood this love of God very well. That is why he founded the Congregation that today has 4585 confreres, is in more than 80 countries and counts on so many lay people in our mission. This Congregation is alive! And we are a missionary body!
3. This Spirituality course is a way to renew the missionary ardour in each of you. You have been sent by your (vice)provinces to have an experience of God, to remember the memories of redemption present in these places. And not only there, but those present in your heart that make you persevere as a Redemptorist and as a consecrated layperson in our mission. If you have been sent to make your heart burn like the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24,32), after this course your Redemptorist life must undergo a change. *We need to revitalize our own spiritual life and our many communities, and you have this task to help them with this. You must communicate this experience to the confreres and renew the missionary ardour in the communities where you are assigned. You must encourage the confreres to deepen their spiritual life and never forget the importance of Ongoing Formation. This course of spirituality is part of Redemptorist Ongoing Formation.*
4. During this month you will have an experience of restructuring. You are confreres from different parts of the world, with different cultures. *Restructuring is a call from the Spirit not to be afraid of the other who is different from me. It is an invitation to know the richness that my companion on the road, my confrere, possesses. If we know the Gospel in depth and let it touch our lives, restructuring and reconfiguring should not be difficult for us.* It is a call to think of other missionary possibilities for the Congregation, a call to missionary availability. *Take the opportunity of this time, this kairós in your life, to be together, to know the history of the other confreres from different (vice) provinces, to pray together and to eat a delicious pasta or an Italian pizza together!*

5. The Gospel we have just heard (John 19,25-27) presents us with Mary's fidelity to difficult things: standing at the foot of the cross next to her son. This reminds us of our Constitution number 20 that Redemptorists "denying themselves and (are) always ready to undertake what is demanding..." In today's world, we are called, like Mary, to be with the oppressed of our society, with those who suffer. To be present until the last moment. *We will only have the strength to do this if we have a personal spirituality, a community that gives us strength, and never lose faith in God's action.* Mary trusted from the incarnation to the resurrection of her Son in the God of life who saves and liberates people. In this sense, *she inspires us not to forget that our faith is proven upon the cross, but that it does not end there. The redemptive mission continues.*
6. May Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help, give us the courage to persevere, especially in times of despair and help each one of you to follow her Son, the Redeemer, as consecrated men and lay people to proclaim His Gospel. May all the Redemptorist saints, blessed and martyrs enlighten each one of you to be *Missionaries of Hope in the Footsteps of the Redeemer.* Amen!

Fraternally in Christ the Redeemer!



Fr. Rogério Gomes, C.S.S.R.
Superior General

Rome, June 5th 2023