

Homily

Solemnity of the Most Holy Redeemer - Title of the Congregation

Dear Confreres, Students, and Lady Judith,

1. The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer celebrates its titular Most Holy Redeemer on the third Sunday of July, recalling God's wonders in the history of salvation, giving us His Son as the fulfilment of universal redemption and the eternal covenant with humanity. The entrance antiphon says: "By your blood, O Lord, you redeemed us for God from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made us to be a kingdom and priests serving our God" (Rev 5:9-10).
2. In the opening prayer, we pray: "O God, you appointed your only-begotten Son as Redeemer of the world, and through him, you overcame death and mercifully restored us to life. Grant that we, who recall these blessings, may deserve to be united to you by an enduring bond of love and to enjoy the fruit of that redemption forever".
3. In the reading from Romans (5:12-21), the apostle Paul uses three antitheses to reveal the saving elements of redemption: Adam Christ, sin-grace, death-life and two realities: with Adam, people experience sin and death; in Christ, grace and life. Despite the blessing of Jesus Christ upon all humankind, people still seem to prefer the kingdom of Adam to the domain of the world's Redeemer. We must remind ourselves that, from the Christian point of view, life overcomes death, grace overcomes sin, and love overcomes hate.
4. This Gospel (cf. Jn 3:13-18, 21) is a beautiful passage that details Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus, a prominent Jew mentioned

three times in John's Gospel: "who came to Jesus by night". This man appears only in John and in different contexts: seeking to understand birth to a new life, defending Jesus before the Law (Jn 7:50), and when they descend Jesus from the cross, he brings perfume to prepare the Master's body (cf. Jn 19:39).

5. In the dialogue that we have heard, Jesus reveals to Nicodemus that new life lies in abandonment through the cross. God demonstrate your love for the world through the cross by giving his only Son, and those who believe will be able to live forever. In other words, Jesus shows Nicodemus that redemption is available to everyone and that it is no longer necessary to hide at night to find him, but he must approach the light that is Jesus Christ himself. The Redeemer's light is a constant reminder for those who encounter him!
6. Jesus' redemption always makes us look for him no longer at sunset but during the day. The morning of the resurrection always brings us out with joy to declare that a new time of grace has come in Jesus Christ. In Him, the grace is abundant, and the righteousness of one is the justification that gives life to all men (Rom 5:18).
7. The Italian song "Croce Fedele" by Monsignor Frisina gives us a beautiful picture of redemption. The text says: "Sing, O tongue, the glorious battle, sing the noble triumph of the Cross: the Redeemer of the world, slain, stands victorious [...] You were worthy to bring redemption and lead the shipwrecked world to its rightful harbour. Sprinkled with the pure bloodshed from the holy body of the Lamb".
8. Redemption is visceral in the biblical sense because it is born from God the Father's immeasurable love for people. He enters

human history and Jesus' life to demonstrate his unconditional love. Jesus gives humanity the gift of himself, incarnating, doing good, setting human beings free from sin and death, and signing a decree which purges evil with one's blood shed on the cross. This immense and fascinating mystery reveals in our eyes, and we are still incapable of understanding it.

9. St Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, in *The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ*, wrote: "And how can I possibly love anything else, after seeing You die of sufferings on a Cross to save me! How could I behold You dead and exhausted with torments and not love You wholeheartedly? Yes, I love You with all my soul; I have no other desire but to love You in this life and for all eternity. My love, my hope, my courage, and my consolation, give me strength to be faithful to You; grant me light, and make known to me from what I ought to detach myself; supply me too with a strong will to obey You in all things" (Chapter VII, *Charity seeketh not her own*).
10. For us Redemptorists, the feast of the Most Holy Redeemer is a grateful memory of plentiful redemption; God emptied himself, became one of us and gave us a clear project for our life and mission: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Lk 4:18-19). Because of this program, the Greats did not understand Him then. He was faithful to his end, so the Father sent him to the little ones of the Kingdom, and he gave him new life overcoming the death on the cross.
11. With the Redeemer, we learn to speak explicitly of the Kingdom of God and mercy and to follow him with our weaknesses because he is good and compassionate. It is from the

Redeemer that the Redemptorist identity flows, enshrined in Constitution 20: “Strong in faith, rejoicing in hope, burning with charity, on fire with zeal, in humility of heart and persevering in prayer, Redemptorists as apostolic men and genuine disciples of Saint Alphonsus follow Christ the Redeemer with hearts full of joy; denying themselves and always ready to undertake what is demanding, they share in the mystery of Christ and proclaim it in Gospel simplicity of life and language, that they may bring people plentiful redemption”. Without the strength that comes from him, we cannot proclaim the Gospel explicitly, we proclaim ourselves, and this does not resonate in the hearts of the People of God!

12. Today, these young men – Bro. Benedictus Artur (Mozambique), Fredrick Omondi and Pius Juma (Kenya) renew their religious profession in this special celebration. We pray that you will be good Redemptorists, deeply human, available for the mission, and persevere to the end in the Congregation.
13. May Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, and our saints help us to understand the meaning of the plentiful redemption in our lives. Amen.

Fr. Rogério Gomes, C.Ss.R

Superior General

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