

Missionaries of Hope in the Footsteps of the Redeemer

Brothers and Sisters:

1. In a spirit of joy and hope, we send this message from the Capitulars of the Canonical Phase of the 26th General Chapter to all the members of the Redemptorist Family: Priests and Brothers, Sisters, Lay Associates and Lay Missionaries. United as one missionary body (C. 2) in Jesus Christ our Redeemer, we are grateful for your participation in the Chapter process, and especially for the prayers with which you have accompanied us in these days.
2. We are keenly aware of our wounded world and the change of epoch which deeply shape the context in which we are called as witnesses to the Redeemer today: the groaning of creation; the pandemic and its consequences felt in every country and in the whole Congregation; the ongoing war in Ukraine, along with the outbreaks of violence touching every continent; the political and economic crises and uncertainty in which so many of the abandoned poor, especially migrants, indigenous peoples and youth struggle to create a life for themselves and their families; the deep pain experienced by all victims of abuse; the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly secular and digital world deeply wounded by 'fake news'; and many other circumstances.
3. We are part of this wounded world, but we are also aware of many signs of hope emerging in the world, in the Church and in our Congregation. During our opening retreat, we experienced once again our vocation to be missionaries of hope in a time of liminality – leaving the 'no more' but without a clear vision of the 'not yet'. Recognizing ourselves in the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-43), we shared the understanding that hope is courage, bold but humble: the courage to carry the burden of our reality; the courage to believe that we are accompanied by God through the Holy Spirit in this moment of uncertainty; and the courage to serve with compassion and love, in a synodal process of mission and dialogue. We recognize that Jesus walks with us, in our communities and in this Chapter.
4. Animated by the reports from the Conferences and the concerns of the confreres and our lay partners, we engaged with the questions of Redemptorist Identity, our Mission today, our Consecrated Apostolic Life in Community, Formation for Mission, Leadership and Governance for today. We became deeply convinced that all of us are indeed called to a continual 'missionary conversion', guided by the cries of the poor and creation, marked by our closeness to people, and strengthened by a renewed engagement with our Constitutions and Statutes in every community and every Unit. To assist the confreres, sisters and lay partners to undertake this renewed engagement, we send you the document prepared by the capitulars with the fruit of our work together. We ask you to read and reflect together on this document.
5. In the spirit of the Emmaus story, we have journeyed together in hope in the process of restructuring. This is a journey of encounter and conversation, dialogue and

conversion, reimagining and mission. We have walked this road together, accompanied by Jesus in the power of his Spirit. We want to affirm in a special way the wisdom and contribution of our senior confreres who continue in their missionary vocation (C.55). We are grateful for all the confreres, sisters and lay partners who live our missionary charism with creative fidelity. We encourage those who may be discouraged and feel alone. Courage! Remember, it is the Redeemer who walks beside us, and who sends us forth as prophetic missionaries of hope!

6. We also send a special word to all those in initial formation in the Congregation. We urge you to continue to share your dreams and hopes for a future we will create together! With you, we believe in the beauty and importance of our Redemptorist charism. Thank you for answering the call to journey with us in this challenging time!
7. Fr. General Rogerio Gomes encouraged us with his message on the day of his election: *“Do not be afraid of the creative fidelity that makes us faithful to the Spirit, allows us to re-imagine new things, to intuit new ways of evangelisation; to make mistakes and learn from our own mistakes and not to remain petrified.* The Spirit who anointed Jesus, Alphonsus, our saints, martyrs, blessed and venerable, is the same Spirit who is here and accompanies us, the same Spirit who provokes and helps us in this time of restructuring and who loves us without fear! Let us not be afraid of restructuring; it will be our new wine at the wedding feast of Cana!”
8. In our encounter with Pope Francis, we were moved by his spontaneous remarks and the call of God to leave our comfort zones – which is the mark of every missionary – so that we can draw closer to the abandoned poor to whom we are sent. Recognizing the importance of the Alphonsian Academy, the Holy Father encouraged us and challenged us to become experts in the formation of conscience, according to our Alphonsian moral tradition, and thus, to offer hope to others in these uncertain times.
9. Brothers and Sisters, today, perhaps more than ever before, we are called to take risks, as prophetic missionaries of hope, available to go where the Spirit calls, with a vision of creation and humanity renewed in the image of Jesus our Redeemer (C. 19)! Accompanied by our Mother of Perpetual Help, and all our ancestors in the Redemptorist family, “Let us not lose sight of Jesus.” (Hebrews 12.2) Together, we go forward in courageous hope!

Message of the Capitulars of the Canonical Phase of the 26th General Chapter
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