

Topic 2: Our Redemptorist Mission (1)

Part One: Vision of Our Mission

Scripture: Luke 10:25-32 – The Good Samaritan

Constitutions 2-5; 15-19

For Redemptorists, and our partners, mission is our life-blood, it is our very reason for being. Like the apostles in Mark 3:14, Jesus has called us “to be with him,” to be his companions. The person of Jesus, the Redeemer, is at the centre of our lives and it is our passion for Jesus that sustains us. But he has called us to be with him in order that he may send us out, sent forth to continue his mission, “to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19). Our passion for Jesus is reflected in our passion for the poor. Like our founder, Alphonsus, we are sent to a world deeply loved by the Father, but a world that is broken, fragile, fearful, insecure. Deserving of our attention in this world are “the poor, the deprived, the oppressed. The evangelization of these is a sign of messianic activity, and Christ, in a certain sense, wished to identify himself with them” (C.4). Like the victim in the parable of the Good Samaritan, these are the abandoned ones, the ones left by the roadside, the ones to whom we are sent. These are the wounded body of Christ and they await our healing touch. It is for this reason that we “cannot allow ourselves to settle down in surroundings and structures in which our work is no longer missionary. On the contrary, we will diligently pioneer new ways of preaching the Gospel to every creature” (C15). We are impelled to go out into the world to bring the good news of Redemption to all. But if we are to be truly faithful to our call to be missionaries, to be men and women who are sent, we must “engage in missionary dialogue with the world. In a spirit of brotherly concern we should try to understand people’s anxious questionings and try to discover in these how God is truly revealing him and making his plan known” in our world today. (C.19)

Part Two: What We Heard from Phase I and Other Sources

This is our vision for Redemptorist Mission. What we believe we are called to be and sent to do. During the process of consultation for the General Chapter and during the Phase I meetings, this is what we heard:

It is recognized, and appreciated, that Redemptorists and lay partners are engaged in a variety of ministries throughout the world that are important and bring joy and comfort to the People of God. And yet, as we celebrate our Chapter, there is an unease among us. We have our own “anxious questionings”.

- Constantly, we face new challenges, challenges many of us do not feel capable of responding to adequately. We are confused. We question our relevance in the world today. At times, we experience a sense of helplessness in the face of the overwhelming challenges that we encounter.

-We ponder the question whether “the means of evangelization we employ answer what is expected of us by the Church and the world (C.17). We question the effectiveness of our “missionary methods” and if they need to be renewed and how this should be done. It has been suggested that we be afraid to take the risk to modify our methods of evangelization or abandoned those that are no longer useful for fear of the unknown.

-We are concerned about being truly missionary, about our availability and readiness to be sent to where the need is greatest. Some of us fear that we have allowed ourselves to settle down in surroundings and structures that are no longer missionary but provide us with comfort and security, that our courageous advocacy for justice has been tamed and we are no longer prophetic. Many of us doubt the message we preach, especially in a Church rocked by scandal, as we face the growing

reality of radical secularization, as we live in a world where for many people God and religious faith is no longer necessary.

-We question our passion for the poor and the abandoned. The poor and the abandoned feature heavily in the missionary priorities we have chosen but we doubt if these priorities **are** reflected in many of our current ministries. There is a tension between our missionary and apostolic priorities, between what we say and what we actually do.

-If the first form of evangelization is witness, we wonder if our apostolic communities are truly prophetic, being signs and witnesses to the joy of the Gospel, and if in our explicit preaching of the Gospel we show genuine solidarity with the poor by promoting their fundamental rights to justice and freedom.

-We talk about sharing fully our charism with others, especially with our lay partners. But it seems we often fail to recognize and encourage the passion for the poor and abandoned that our partners have. And so we wonder if they are truly “partners” or do we merely see them as those who can be useful to us when necessary.

Questions for reflection and conversation:

- 1. Do these reflections resonate with you as you listen to your own experience of mission in your own life and in the Congregation?*
- 2. How do we discern better our mission and the voice of God in the signs of the times?*
- 3. What do you want the Chapter to say to confreres and lay partners that will deepen and strengthen their commitment to our Redemptorist Mission?*