

Living Redemptorist Spirituality

PRAYERS, DEVOTIONS,
REFLECTIONS

PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
REDEMPTORIST CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

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Introduction

Copiosa apud eum redemptio
(*With the Lord, there is plentiful redemption*)

Those words from Psalm 130 are the motto of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists), and they are incorporated into the seal of the Congregation. Saint Alphonsus Liguori chose those words to guide the Congregation he founded because they expressed his own most profound experience of God: God loves us lavishly and extravagantly. God's love is manifested most amazingly in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, who gave himself completely for God and for humanity—a self-gift that reached its highest point in his death on the cross.

Reflecting on the Incarnation as well as the passion and death of Jesus, St. Alphonsus came to appreciate more deeply the meaning of our redemption in Jesus. He founded the Redemptorists to spread that good news and proclaim our redemption in Jesus to the

In recent years, Redemptorists have come to a renewed and deeper understanding of the Church as the communion of believers, entrusted with carrying on the redeeming mission of Jesus. The Church is the people of God, embracing all the baptized and inviting all to share in its evangelizing mission. So Redemptorists have been seeking ways to involve others—lay-people especially—in their part of that mission of Jesus and the Church.

In North America, desire has grown among lay-people to share in both the spirituality and the mission of Redemptorists. This prayer book, produced by the Redemptorist North American Commission for Partnership in Mission, is meant to foster and nourish that desire. We hope that our Redemptorist Partners in Mission, both individually and in groups, will use the prayers, reflections, and suggestions gathered here to deepen their communion with Redemptorists and, more important, to deepen their Christian spirituality and communion with God.

For Redemptorist spirituality, grounded as it is in the paschal mystery of Christ, nurtured by the regular practice of both communal and personal prayer, study and reflection, is best expressed when it forms us to be women and men on mission. Our mission is to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God, where

ble of life. Authentic Redemptorist spirituality should lead to engagement in the ministry of justice, compassion, and peace for creation.

Foundational Scripture Texts

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
To my voice in supplication:*

*If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,
O LORD, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness
That you may be revered.*

*I trust in the Lord;
My soul trusts in his word.
My soul waits for the Lord
More than sentinels wait for the dawn.*

*More than sentinels wait for the dawn,
Let Israel wait for the Lord,
For with the Lord is kindness
And with him is plenteous redemption;
And he will redeem Israel
From all their iniquities.*

[In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus] unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor...liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free...."

Isaiah 61

Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.

Luke 4:17-21



The seal of the Congregation consists of a cross with a lance and sponge mounted on three hills; on either side of the cross are the abbreviated names of Jesus and Mary; above the cross is an eye sending forth rays; over all a crown. Around the seal is the motto: "With him is Plentiful Redemption" (cf. Ps. 129,7).

Statute 06, which reproduces substantially

Constitution 717 of 1764

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Redemptorist spirituality is an apostolic, missionary spirituality. This passage from Luke's Gospel is key for Redemptorist apostolic life, and it is reflected in our prayer and spirituality. The most abandoned attract our pastoral compassion as we strive to evangelize the poor and be evangelized by them.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the nearest blood relative (redeemer) is charged with the loving responsibility to make things right. Jesus the Redeemer is at the heart of all our prayer. The Eucharist, which we celebrate daily, is especially precious, since it renews and makes present the saving death and resurrection of Jesus. As a communal celebration, it also highlights the importance of community for Redemptorist apostolic life. Following the example of St. Alphonsus, Redemptorists also hold Mary, the Mother of God, in highest esteem, especially under the title of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. All of this fills us with the desire to give our lives for plentiful redemption.

SECTION ONE

St. Alphonsus Liguori and Prayer

Let us pray, then, and let us always be asking for grace, if we wish to be saved. Let prayer be our most delightful occupation; let prayer be the exercise of our whole life. And when we are asking for particular graces, let us always pray for the grace to continue to pray in the future; because if we leave off praying, we shall be lost. There is nothing easier than prayer. What does it cost us to say, Lord, stand by me! Lord, help me! Give me Thy love...What can be easier than this?

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Prayer, the Great Means of Salvation

Meditative Prayer

Saint Alphonsus is known as the Doctor of Prayer because he was convinced that prayer was the necessary means to salvation. As St. Alphonsus writes in *Prayer, the Great Means of Salvation*, “Not just good thoughts, but much more, it is the holy affections of the will that are important, such as acts of humility, trust, detachment, abandonment to the divine will, and above all

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This prayer form, which is often a half-hour in length, begins with an introductory act of putting ourselves in God's presence and a brief prayer asking for assistance. After the introductory prayer, there is a short reading from the Bible or from a spiritual book. This is the first "point" of the meditation and is followed by a silence of ten minutes or so. When this is finished, another "point" is read, which is also followed by a period of silence. At the end of this second silence, some short concluding prayers are recited and the time of meditation (or mental prayer) is over.

What does one do during the moments of silence? The first step is to reflect on what has been read and to meditate on it. This is followed by affections of the heart—love, adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and reparation. Many have organized these affections of the heart into four different categories and use the acronym ACTS to remember what they are:

A = Adoration. We adore, praise, and worship God.

C = Contrition. We confess our sins against God and neighbor and ask forgiveness.

T = Thanksgiving. We give thanks to God for the blessings we have received.

S = Supplication (petition). We ask God for help in all our needs.

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To conclude the meditation, one identifies practical actions that will ground the prayer in everyday life.

Alphonsian Meditation

Beginning: Make an act of faith and humility and a petition for light and strength; say a brief prayer to Mary, Joseph, your guardian angel, and your patron saint.

Meditation: Read a few verses from Scripture or a spiritual book, then think and reflect about what you read. What does it mean? What has it taught you? What have you done about this in the past, and what shall you do about it now?

Act of Love: Pray for the grace to love God. Tell God you love him!

Prayers of Petition: Pray for the graces you need both for your daily living and for your spiritual journey.

Resolution: Make one practical resolution that you can carry out today.

Conclusion: Thank God for whatever grace you have received, renew your resolution, and ask for Jesus and Mary, in their love, to help you keep your resolution.

Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament

Saint Alphonsus prepared a series of thirty-one prayers, one for each day of the month, to use when visiting the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary. We include here a sample of the visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the words of St. Alphonsus.

Introductory Prayer

TO BE SAID BEFORE EACH VISIT

My Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that you are really here in this sacrament. Night and day you remain here, compassionate and loving. You call, you wait for, you welcome everyone who comes to visit you.

Unimportant though I am, I adore you. I thank you for all the wonderful graces you have given me. But I thank you especially for having given me yourself in this sacrament, for having asked your own Mother to mother me, for having called me here to talk to you.

I am here before you today to do three things: to thank you for these precious gifts, to make up for all the disrespect that you receive in this sacrament from those who offend you, to adore you everywhere in the world where you are present in this living bread but are left abandoned and unloved.

My Jesus, I love you with all my heart. I know I have

your help, I promise never to do it again. I am only a miserable sinner, but I consecrate myself to you completely. I give you my will, my love, my desires, everything I own. From now on, do what you please with me. All I ask is that you love me, that you keep me faithful to the end of my life. I ask for the grace to do your will exactly as you want it done.

I pray for the souls in purgatory—especially for those who were close to you in this sacrament and close to your Mother, Mary. I pray for every soul hardened in sin. My Savior, I unite my love to the love of your divine heart, and I offer them both together to your Father. I beg him to accept this offering in your name. Amen.

First Visit

You are kneeling before a fountain. From its calm depths a voice whispers: *If you are thirsty, come to me.* It is Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. From this fountain of love, he pours out upon the world all the merits of his sufferings. From it the saints drink deeply. The prophet predicted it: You shall drink with joy from the Savior's fountain.

A Spanish Poor Clare loved to make long visits to the Blessed Sacrament. The other nuns asked what she did during those long silent hours. "I could kneel there

You wonder what I do in the presence of my God? I marvel, I love, I thank, I beg. What does a tramp do when he meets a millionaire? A sick man when he sees a doctor? A starving man when he sees food? What does a dry-throated hiker do at a drinking fountain?"

My Jesus: You are my life, my hope, my treasure, my soul's only love. A cruel death was the price you paid to be here in this sacrament today. Even now you suffer insults from those who ignore you, yet you remain because you want our love.

Come, my Lord, implant yourself in my heart. Lock its door forever. I want nothing cheap to enter it and take away the love that belongs to you. You alone must run my life. If I swerve from you, steer me straight once more. Make me search for one pleasure: the pleasure of pleasing you. Make me yearn for one joy: the joy of visiting you. Make me crave one delight: the delight of receiving your body. So many people chase after such hollow things! But all I care about is your love, and I am here to beg it from you today. Let me forget myself and keep you ever before my mind. Amen.

Spiritual Communion

TO BE SAID AFTER EACH VISIT

My Jesus, I believe you are really here in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you more than anything in the

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world, and I hunger to feed on your flesh. But since I cannot receive Communion at this moment, feed my soul at least spiritually. I unite myself to you now, as I do when I actually receive you. Never let me drift away from you. Amen.

First Visit With Mary

We have another fountain to drink from, too: our Mother Mary. Saint Bernard said that Mary is so rich in graces that everybody shares in them: “Of her fullness we have all received.” Mary was literally filled with grace, as the angel said when he greeted her. God filled her with such tremendous riches so that she could share them with her children. Cause of our joy, pray for us!

Concluding Prayer

TO BE SAID EACH DAY

Most Holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to you who are the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the world, the Advocate, the Hope, the Refuge of sinners, I have recourse today—I, who am the most miserable of all. I render you my most humble homage, O great Queen, and I thank you for all the graces you have conferred on me until now, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often de-

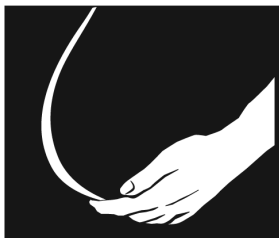
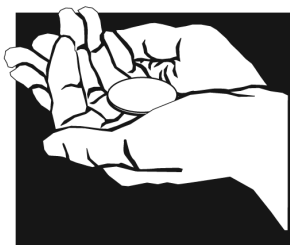
served. I love you, O most amiable Lady; and for the love that I bear you, I promise to serve you always and to do all in my power to make others also love you. I place in you all my hopes; I confide my salvation to your care. Accept me as your servant and receive me under your mantle, O Mother of Mercy. And since you are so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather, obtain for me the strength to triumph over them until death. Of you I ask a perfect love for Jesus Christ. From you I hope to die a good death. O my Mother, by the love that you bear to God, I beseech you to help me at all times, but especially at the last moment of my life. Leave me not, I beseech you, until you see me safe in heaven, blessing you and singing your mercies for all eternity.

So I hope. So may it be. Amen.

Order the complete series of *Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament* at Liguori.org.

Four Elements of Alphonsian Spirituality

At the very heart of the spirituality of St. Alphonsus is love: God's love for us and our love for God in response. Saint Alphonsus was overwhelmed by God's love for him and for all of us, and for Alphonsus, this was especially manifest in Jesus. Jesus is the unshakable sign and proof that God loves us. The spirituality of St. Alphonsus focuses on the love of God shown in



Jesus, our Redeemer—Jesus, who shared our human condition; who suffered, died, and rose; who continues to be present among us; who gave his own mother to intercede for us.

The spirituality of St. Alphonsus is about God's self-giving love and presence shown in Jesus. Redemptorists have traditionally summarized that in the four symbols of the *crib*, the *cross*, the *altar*, and *Mary*. Jesus, the Redeemer, is God become human in the Incarnation (crib). He redeemed us by emptying himself, be-

es of human life—including a dishonorable death (cross). He continues to make his loving and saving grace available to us in the Eucharist (altar). And he consoles us through the intercession of his mother, Mary, to whom Jesus entrusted us from the cross. **Crib, Cross, Altar, Mary:** Incarnation, Redemption, Eucharist, Mary. It is all one great event by which God assures us that we are loved in Jesus.

From the writings of St. Alphonsus:

Crib: My dearest Jesus, if it is true that ownership is acquired by gift, then you are truly mine since the Father has given you to me. You were indeed born for me; you were given to me. As Scripture says: “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us” (Isaiah 9:6). Therefore I can justly say to you: “My God and my all!” And since you are mine, everything that belongs to you is also mine (see Romans 8:32). Therefore your precious blood is all mine, your grace is mine, your paradise is mine; and since you are mine, who can ever take you away from me? Amen.

“Meditation for the Novena of Christmas,”

The Incarnation, Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ

Cross: Was it possible that God, the creator of all things, would have been pleased to die for love of his