

C.Ss.R.

PIRITUALITY

ONE BODY (Eph 4,4)

UN SOLO CORPO (Ef 4,4)

UN SEUL CORPS (Eph 4,4)

UN SOLO CUERPO (Eph 4,4)

JEDNA WSPÓLNOTA (Ef 4,4)

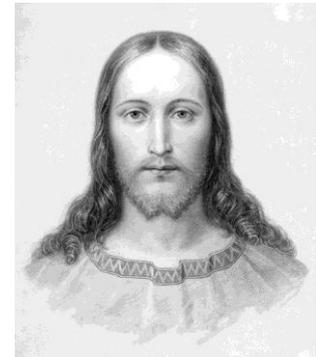
UM SÓ CORPO (Ef 4,4)

EIN LEIB (Eph 4,4)

ΕΙΝ ΛΕΙΒ (Εβμ 4,4)

04 – IN A NEW WAY.

Begin the meeting with a hymn, greetings and a prayer. There should be some symbols to signify 'newness' such as seeds, flowers or a sprouting branch etc. It would be a good thing to have a picture of St. Clement Hofbauer in a prominent position.



What is really new

'New' is the word that permeates the theme of the sexennium.

It would seem that the General Chapter was obsessed with the idea of novelty though this is not the case. Certainly the Capitulars were searching for new forms of language, methods, structures and strategies for preaching the Gospel. They spoke of heart and hope renewed. But the real 'novelty' they were looking for is something else.

The world regards novelty in terms of **production**. Technology produces each day the most modern mobile phone. Science is discovering 'the God particle'. The media receives and spreads news. The world lives on this as news signifies the rhythm of its life.

However, in the Gospel there is one great novelty and it is **Christ**. He is the fullness of creation. It is he who out of sheer confusion creates newness. In him God became flesh and made all things new according to the original design. The world becomes the sacrament of the love of the Father. We find ourselves again as sons and therefore we are all brothers. The news that Christ announces renews existence.

The world can plan new commercial centres, better hospitals, streets and urban services. It can produce better and more progressive living conditions. However, nothing and nobody can take the place of the novelty of Christ who is the perfect expression of how the Father wishes **life** to be. This is the Christ whom this same world has chosen to kill and then ignore.

I am called to live and experience this newness **in my flesh**. It happens when the Gospel becomes good news for me. I am living this new way when an ideal of goodness and love becomes a lived experience for me. I live this new way when bit by bit get away from my ego and make God the only centre that counts. I am living it when today I renew the vows I made many years ago. I live it when I listen to the cry for salvation reaching me and when I look around and read the signs of the times. I have to question myself and seek to respond.

Your Word is a light for my steps

*The singing of the Alleluia introduces the proclamation of **Mk.2, 18-22**. This may be followed by sharing or indeed silence. At this point it might be useful to have in mind:*

- Christ, the Bridegroom of God incarnates the **love** for which humanity is in search. To see this thirst quenched, to find in Christ our destiny, to see in his choices, his words and his miracles the love that God has for us is a reason for real **joy**. To become disciples of Christ is to believe in the love that the Father has shown in him (1Jn.4, 16). **Fasting** does not lose its *raison d'être*: when the Bridegroom has departed it will enhance his memory and the longing for his face.
- Christ, the incarnation of the love of the Father is the news that the world stands most in need of. At his banquet one may not wear the **old** garment of the law. It is mercy

alone that permits us to sit at his table where the wine is not only a memorial but also a call to face things in a **new way**: it is the logic of a life spent in service and of blood poured out that every day we experience in the Eucharist.

From our Redemptorist tradition

The stages that our Congregation went through at its beginning are marked by 'the **new**'. This is the **key** word in the difficult relations that Alphonsus, Crostarosa and Sarnelli had with Mgr. Falcoia. Of course the role of Falcoia was providential in establishing it and in the life of the Redemptorist community during the first eleven years of its existence when faced with so many difficulties. Nonetheless Falcoia did not grasp the 'newness' in the project planned by Alphonsus and Maria Crostarosa nor in the 'different' way in which Sarnelli incarnated it.

When Alphonsus tried to get Papal approbation his 'own project' emerged that up to then lay hidden in his mind. It was a **different project** from traditional religious life in which category Falcoia had placed it. Many times he had said 'we are not the same as the other Institutes', 'our missions are different'. The way he had planned the Redemptorist community, its location, its welcoming spirit and availability to people and its search for the abandoned display a 'new' profile, the continuing of Christ as Redeemer and evangeliser. This is the purpose of the community not the imitation of the virtues for the sake of personal sanctification.

This makes the Redemptorist charism open to what is new in the sense of its **flexibility** and being adaptive to urgent needs. Alphonsus rejoiced at hearing that Clement M. Hofbauer and Thaddeus Hübl were doing so much good in a very different context such as Warsaw as they tried new strategies.

For this reason the General Chapter when it invited us to preach the Gospel ever anew cited **St. Clement**. In fact this phrase is a teaching for the whole of life and remained in the memory of Emmanuel Veith, a student of the saint and a famous preacher in the cathedral of Vienna. He stated that he had heard these words 'almost every day pronounced solemnly and forcefully' by the lips of Hofbauer.

The biography of St. Clement is the best explanation of the **concrete** events signified by 'ever anew'. We have the permanent mission in St. Bennos, the schools and other services provided for the abandoned in Warsaw, spiritual direction and his preaching in Vienna are perhaps the best commentary on the first part of the theme for the sexennium.

For Redemptorists of all time 'newness' is understood as zeal, even in our imagination. He who continues the work of the Redeemer has no other **ambition** save the proclaiming in word and deed of plentiful redemption to the poor and abandoned. Creativity follows as a consequence.



Our Constitutions today

The 'new way' called for by the General Chapter is best described in the **variety of ways** in which we find Redemptorists at work. There is scarcely any form of the apostolate in which they are not engaged, parish missions, sanctuaries, parishes, schools, the media, the struggle for justice and the promotion of social justice.

The 'new' is part of that *bold initiative* with which '*the Congregation strives to carry out its mission*' (Const. 13). In fact one cannot confine or limit a Redemptorist nor the form of his apostolate since it has that characteristic of missionary **dynamism** (Const.14). The ever fresh challenges of our time are for him a powerful stimulus to '*diligently pioneer new ways of preaching the Gospel to every creature*' (Const.15).

There is a risk, however, of our responses being unconnected, personal and erratic. Therefore we should pay attention to two things especially.

The first is that we should seek ourselves the newness of the **Word** we preach. Every time we listen to it to make it part of ourselves and proclaim it we can hear the words of Isaiah 'See I am doing a new deed; even now it comes to light; Can you not see it?' (Is. 43, 19). We should give the time it deserves to the study of the Word in view of proclaiming it and for our own personal journey in the Spirit. Look at our own history. Let us recall how scrupulous former generations were about preaching. Remember the frequency of 'Mission Academies' and the fact that a young father had to have a senior confrere more expert to train him in the art of oratory. Today we have discovered again a wonderful method in *Lectio Divina*. We should avail of it in preparing the Sunday homily by means of community sharing. There are many communities in the Congregation where it is in operation and it would be a good thing to promote it more widely.

Another matter that deserves our attention is **discernment**, 'a most grave moment of consecrated fraternity when with particular clarity the centrality of God as the ultimate end of all research shines forth as well as the responsibility and contribution of each member of the community in the journey of all to discover the truth' (*The Service Of Authority And Obedience*, 20e). It is only by coming together and discerning in common in the light of the Word and by the power of prayer that we can understand what preaching the Gospel 'ever anew' really signifies here and now, in the service of the poor and abandoned among whom the Lord has placed our community.

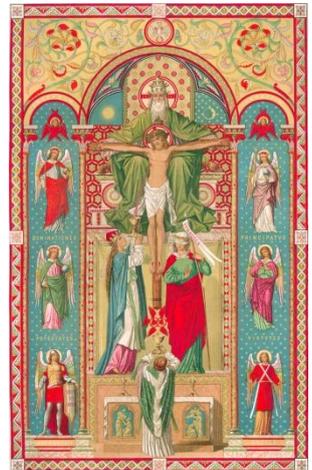
It would be a good thing to share and perhaps contribute to the points already mentioned as well as make suggestions for the community life or personal commitments.

Before concluding it is well to have a period of silence, followed by a hymn.

Conclusion

The following prayer was certainly recited by St. Clement even though his authorship of it is uncertain.

O Jesus Redeemer,
Author and perfection of our faith,
Do not allow the bright life of our faith to be extinguished.
Remember your mercy of old;
Look with compassion on the vine your right hand has planted,
Watered by the blood of thousands of martyrs,
By the tears of serious penitents
And the fatigue of zealous apostles,
And made fruitful by the prayers of many Christians.
If sickness and problems afflict us
May we not lack faith,
Because rich with this precious gift,
We will voluntarily support sorrow
And nothing will be able to deprive us of your joy.
Grant us peace and unity.
Strengthen and confirm us in your holy service,
So that we may ever live in you and for you. Amen.
The meeting concludes with a blessing and a hymn to Our Lady.



ONE BODY is a monthly text of prayer proposed by the Center for Redemptorist Spirituality
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The letter head of this project is the work of Biju Madathikunnel cssr

----- Translated by Anthony Mulvey cssr -----