

Redemptorists

International

THE MIND AND HEART OF THE GENERAL

GET TO KNOW MORE ABOUT
THE CANADIAN WHO LEADS
THE REDEMPTORIST MISSION
AROUND THE WORLD

2014
FACTS
IDEIAS
LIFE

Fr. Michael Brehl

40 **ISLAM**
Testimony of an
African confrere



22 **THE OUTSKIRTS**
Redemptorists in
Street Ministry



Redemptorist Church

Tacloban, Philippines

- Families occupied the Church after typhoon Yolanda passed in November, 2013.
- The typhoon affected more than four million people in thirty-six Filipino provinces.
- The winds of this powerful storm reached 300 kms. an hour, with even stronger gusts.



Gospel solidarity, which makes the Congregation commit itself to the poor, the needy and the oppressed, finds concrete expression in our community.



Publication of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Superior General
Fr. Michael Brehl, CSsR

General Council
Fr. Enrique López, CSsR
Fr. Jacek Dembek, CSsR
Fr. João Pedro Fernandes, CSsR
Fr. Juventius Andrade, CSsR
Fr. Alberto Esseverri, CSsR
Br. Jeffrey Rolle, CSsR

Missionary Communication Service
Fr. Rafael Vieira, CSsR
Fr. Biju Madatakunna, CSsR

Photos
Files, CSsR

Collaborators
Simone Borges
Fr. Rafael Vieira Silva, CSsR
Br. Diego Joaquim, CSsR
Br. Michael Goulart, CSsR

Translators
Fr. Joseph P. Dorsey, CSsR
Fr. Porfirio Tejera, CSsR
Ms. Annalisa Pinca

Website
www.cssr.com

Editing
+39 (06) 49-490-608
news@cssr.com

Printing
Scala Publications
Rua Itororó, 144
Bairro São Francisco
74455-370 Goiânia-GO
(55) 62 4008-2350

Via Merulana, 31
00185 – Rome, Italy
redacao@cssr.com

Ricardo Studiert / Presidência da República



COVER

6 MICHAEL BREHL

Documents and letters reveal what the superior general of the Redemptorist missionaries thinks, how he feels and foresees the future of the Congregation.

MISSION ACTUAL

20 JOHN NEUMANN

Report of the treasurer general about the missionary work being done in Philadelphia, USA today

ALEC REID

14 TRIBUTE

Ireland says good-bye to a great missionary of reconciliation and peace





ISLAM 40 DIALOGUE

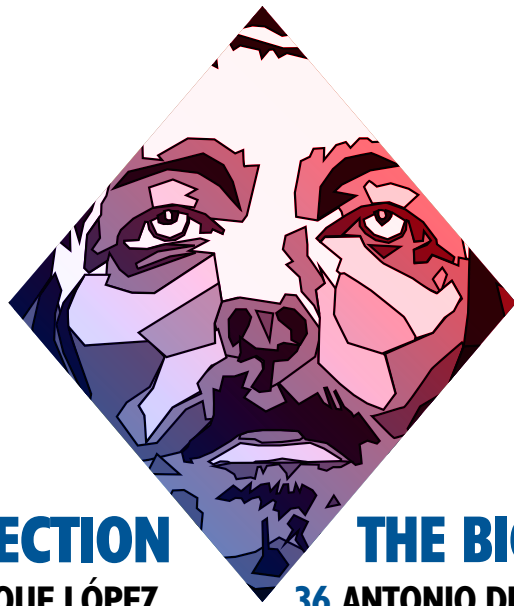
A Redemptorist from Niger highlights difficulties and challenges faced when living together with Muslims

ABANDONMENT 22 STREET-DWELLERS

Brazilian Redemptorists are committed to serving those who find themselves at the extreme limits of poverty

ALBANIA 46 THE BEGINNING

Confreres from three European Units begin missionary work in the eastern part of the continent and the community being assisted grows in a significant way



REFLECTION 28 ENRIQUE LÓPEZ

The vicar general of the Congregation asks questions about the current situation of the Institute and calls for a deeper understanding of its mission

THE BIG PICTURE 36 ANTONIO DE LUCA

An Italian Redemptorist bishop speaks of the urgente need for a new evangelization of the European continent
Icon



ICON 16 CAMPO GRANDE

International Congress in Brazil discusses devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help

APP 13 BREAD4TODAY

The Australian Redemptorists offer a free digital app for daily meditation

THE MIND AND HEART OF THE GENERAL

Letters and special messages to the confreres and Units reveal dreams, ideas and convictions of the leader of the Redemptorists on all continents

■ Scala News

Friendly, generous, lively, playful, serious, deep, an excellent memory and, above all, one hundred percent Redemptorist. These adjectives could be the colors of one of the photographs that one might take of the superior general of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Father Michael Brehl. He was born in Toronto, the most populous city in Canada and the capital of the province of Ontario.

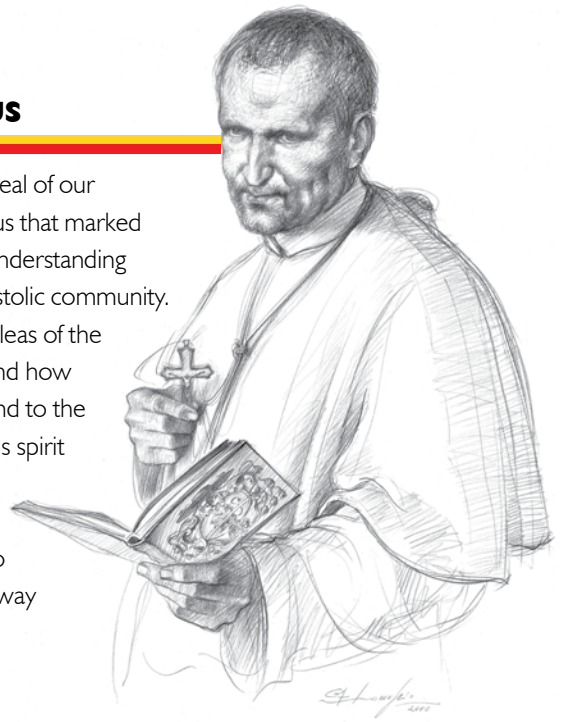




And before coming to know the members of the Congregation, he had already become a devotee of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Last January 7th, he completed 59 years and has already lived 38 years of religious profession and 34 of priesthood. Son and brother of journalists, he speaks with simplicity, in a direct way and always with clear summaries and fantastic images in order to speak of the way of being and the mission of the sons of St. Alphonsus Liguori in the Church. Elected four years ago, he has traveled to the four corners of the earth to encounter Redemptorists in their places of missionary work. And he has written to the confreres quite frequently.

SAINT ALPHONSUS

“Let us recall the apostolic zeal of our founder, the passion for Jesus that marked his prayer, the charity and understanding with which he built the apostolic community. How he always heard the pleas of the abandoned and the poor, and how we too would like to respond to the neediest in our days. May his spirit inspire us to give our lives for Plentiful Redemption, so that we too can preach the Gospel in a way that is always new.”



SUPERIOR GENERAL

“It is a great privilege to be the superior general of the Congregation, because it is an act of confidence by my Redemptorist confreres who asked me to take this position. Indeed, the support, love and all the help I have received have made it possible to carry out this work. I feel very good because my brothers are with me on this journey.”



THE WORLD

“God dreams of a world where no one prepares for war, but all are disarmed. God longs for a world where people sit together at the same table and every tear is wiped away. God promises a world in which justice reigns and love unites people of all races, languages, beliefs and lifestyles. The lion and the lamb will lie down together, and a child shall lead them. God speaks to the world with images and a language of hope that move the human heart.”

“It is a great privilege to be the superior general of the Congregation, because it is an act of confidence on the part of my Redemptorist confreres who asked me to take this position.”

Michael Brehl



P. Michael with the members of the General Council at the closing of the visit of the General Government

The Redemptorists

His letters and messages reveal what he thinks and feels in the work of affirming and encouraging Redemptorists "We are Missionaries. This is our fundamental identity as followers of Jesus Christ in the spirit and tradition of St. Alphonsus and our Congregation. Like St. Clement Hofbauer, we are deeply aware that we must learn to preach the Gospel ever anew in every age, in a way that

people can understand, so that it can touch their hearts and introduce them more fully to the plan of God, which is that Kingdom of justice, love and peace proclaimed by his Son. (...) It is a challenge for the whole Church. As Redemptorists we are reminded of a reflection by Father Francis Durrwell: our charism, which places us at the heart of the Church is missionary by its very nature (Const. 1.)"

THE ABANDONED

"A life of missionary dedication does not necessarily put us in the spotlight. It calls us to explore new ways and means to proclaim the Gospel, often on the margins and fringes of society. The Redemptorist missionary is not just an effective and dynamic preacher in the pulpit! Redemptorist missionaries also work in alleys and slums, in areas and cities in the hinterlands, wherever the abandoned and the poor are found."

NECESSITIES

“The Congregation faces many difficulties in some areas, such as: missionary initiatives, urgent pastoral needs, formation, administration of temporal goods, the service of leadership, the development of projects, the mediation and resolution of conflicts, technical skills and competency, etc. Many of these cannot be undertaken due to the lack of personnel in the Unit or in the Conference. Experience has shown us that some initiatives have failed for this reason. On the other hand, there are other positive experiences of confreres working in different Units, helping to respond to these needs.”

Vocational

“We are Redemptorist missionaries: priests, brothers, sisters and lay men and women, sent to preach the Gospel ever anew. Above all we are sent to the abandoned and the poor. Secondly, each Unit must discover concrete steps it can take to

develop its vocational ministry. This includes the promotion of our missionary vocation, as well as the accompaniment of candidates. Thirdly, each community must find specific ways to celebrate the Redemptorist missionary vocation.”

Restructuring

“Restructuring is a slow process. But, as we are a congregation with members all around the world, this is no surprise. After all, it takes a long time to reap the fruits of this work. We need to restructure and we are working on it. Nevertheless, greater collaboration between Redemptorists from different countries, from different parts of the world, is needed.”

Commitment

“Redemptorist social works are an expression of the missionary charism of the Congregation,

which aims to evangelize the poor. They ‘aim at the liberation and salvation of the whole human person’ (Const. 5). Therefore, all these works are very important for the vitality of our charism, but above all we believe they are necessary for the livelihood of so many brothers and sisters who need them so desperately. Thus, the social works developed by a Redemptorist Unit seek to care for the dignity of the human person who has been redeemed by Jesus Christ.”

Shrines

“Shrines have several special features. The first is to be a meeting place for people from different parishes and different parts of a country to gather for prayer and devotion. They are meeting points that go beyond the parish or the diocese and remind us that we belong to a larger Church.”

“Marian shrines have a special role, because a mother is always happy to gather together her children from everywhere.”

Communicate in a renewed way

When the last general chapter asked Redemptorists to accept the sexennial challenge of a new evangelization, this did not mean to say that current ways of evangelizing by the sons of St. Alphonsus are weak, or even that it is necessary to change everything. Renewal is an original characteristic of the Congregation. The Congregation developed as the result of an effort to do the mission in a new way, not as it was done in the Kingdom of Naples, where the clergy were concentrated in the cities, leaving abandoned the goatherds on the mountains of Scala.

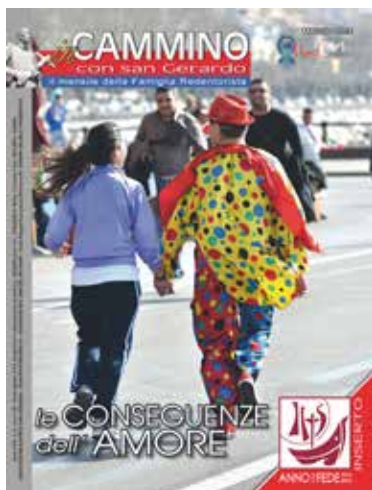
The work of internal communication of the Congregation has been done with special competence in the course of the last decades, but it was necessary that it be done in a new way, in order to resonate and be consistent with the chapter mandate. Apart from the names of so many confreres who could have taken on this task, the service of communication has sought to renew itself mainly along two lines: the management of information that is leaner, briefer and more objective, as today's reader demands it, and the adoption of technologies more attuned to the digital revolution in progress.

The magazine "Redemptorists" appears as the fruit of this effort. You have in your hands a quick overview, bringing together the main facts and lived discussions of 2014, the challenges that were faced and, of course, the material that shows what over 5,000 missionaries are doing around the world in order to evangelize in a renewed way. The main attraction of this first issue could not but be the exposition of the thoughts, dreams and convictions of the greatest promoter of this process. Father General exercises, with dedication and enthusiasm, the role of energizing the Redemptorist world for an ever new way of evangelizing.



Fr. Biju Madatikunel, CSSR
Director

MESSAGES



A Gerardian Magazine

The magazine “In Camino con San Gerardo” [On the Way with Saint Gerard] publishes monthly articles about Christian formation with special reference to Redemptorist spirituality, above all, the spirituality of Gerard. “To begin anew with Christ” – the joy of the presence of the Risen One, “continuing” in the footsteps of Christ the Redeemer. For more information, in Italian, go to:

<http://www.sangerardo.eu>.

Liguorian

The “Liguorian” magazine always communicates a joyful message about plentiful Redemption. With its own style and with a selection of special materials, it communicates a significant pastoral message to Catholics about faith, about the practical life of a Christian and

about social justice in such a way that the reader might progress in conversion to Christ. The “Liguorian” represents the best of the Catholic tradition. For more information, in English, go to:

<http://www.liguorian.org>.

South Africa

Redemptorist Pastoral Publications is a small initiative of the South African Redemptorists imbued with the spirit of Saint Alphonsus Liguori. The main purpose of this publication is to ensure a pastoral approach that considers the context in such a way as to give clarity, brevity, simplicity and theological accuracy to the big picture. For more information, in English, go to:

<http://www.rpp.org.za>.

Brazil

Founded in 1900, Santuário (Shrine) Publications of the Redemptorists of São Paulo, is completing 114 years of existence. The Publishing House was born with a very clear objective: to facilitate evangelization through printed materials, especially the evangelization of the poor, because these people are the reason for and identity of our mission. Working with the poor is something very dear to the Redemptorists, heirs of the missionary charism of St. Alphonsus. The founda-

tion of Santuário Publications is connected to the Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida and unites the faith of the pilgrim with a vehicle of communication. Through the Publishing House, the Newspaper of the Shrine of Aparecida was also born, which, in all this time, has been printed without interruption. For more information, go to: [http://](http://editorasantuario.com.br)

editorasantuario.com.br.



APP

The Redemptorists of Australia and New Zealand have the pleasure of announcing the release of the new “Bread 4 Today” application, a prayer app for life. Go to: [http://](http://www.cssr.org.au)

www.cssr.org.au.

Send your e-mail

news@cssr.com

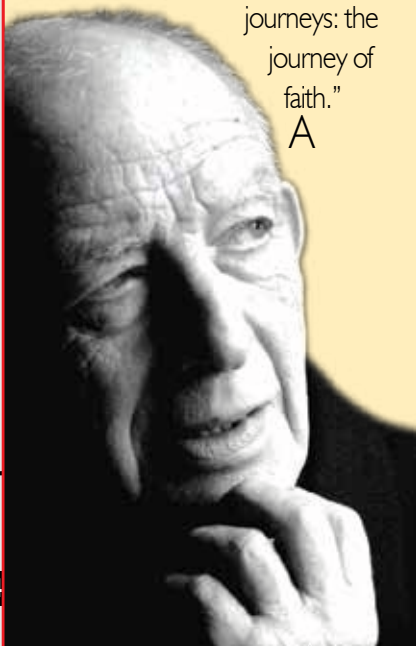
For reasons of space, messages may be published in a shortened form.

Brothers

- A Congress of and about Redemptorist Brothers, which was attended by 24 brothers and 4 priests from several different Redemptorist Units of Latin America and the Caribbean was held from November 25-29 at Marianela house, in the town of Atyrá (Paraguay).

Fr. Alec Reid

- With great sadness, the Redemptorists announce that their confrere, Father Alex Reid, died peacefully in a hospital in Dublin on Friday morning, November 29th, (...) He was remembered affectionately during the funeral Mass. The Methodist minister, Rev. Harold Good declared: "Father Alex and I were companions on a very important journey, the most important of all journeys: the journey of faith." A



Arquivo

New Venerable

- On April 15th, Pope Francis authorized the promulgation of the Decree on the heroic virtues of the Redemptorist, Fr. Wilhelm Janauschek. By virtue of this Decree, Fr. Wilhelm Janauschek has been declared venerable.



Scala News

Mavambo

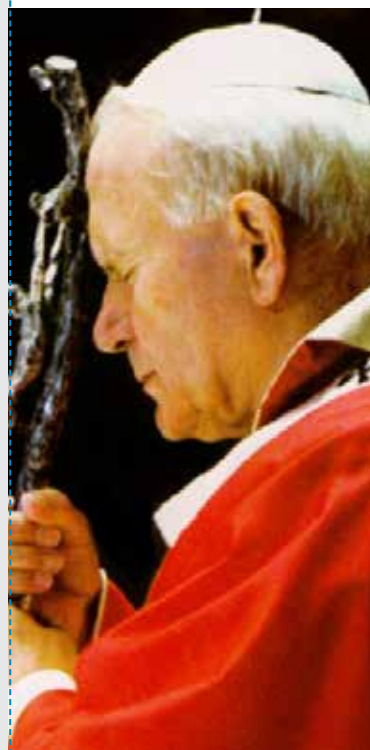
- The name Mavambo means Genesis, or rather, a new start. Brother Benjamin, CSsR, is the Director of the Mavambo Foundation, Zimbabwe, originally founded to educate children from ages 8-11 who have lost the possibility of going to school, usually because they do not have a birth certificate and cannot, therefore, enroll in public schools, or because they are too poor to pay the school fees. They are often orphans of one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS and have been reared by their grandparents.

Cyril Axelrod

- Deaf from birth, he was born into an orthodox Jewish family in South Africa in 1942, the Redemptorist missionary, Fr. Cyril Axelrod, was received by Pope Francis in March of 2014.

St. John Paul II

- Fr. Danilo Bizacco shares: "The Pope was recollected in deep meditation before the Icon and did not move or speak to me. I was completely flustered. Finally, after several minutes, he blessed the Icon of the Mother of Perpetual Help."



Arquivo

PERPETUAL HELP



■ *Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R., superior general*

Greetings from Rome, where we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Like the beloved disciple we have welcomed Mary into our homes and hearts. We turn our attention to her as to a mother, with all the love and reverence we should have as sons and daughters. (cf. Const. 32).

(...) Pope Francis calls Mary, Our Lady of care, in other words, Our Lady of Help (EG, 288). Mary is not just a beautiful woman to contemplate. She is not only

a model of discipleship to imitate. She is our mother, the one to whom we go when we are in trouble. When we need help, she is always there, ready to come to our aid. She is “perpetual help” – always ready to take us into the same embrace we contemplate in her icon. From the Cross, Jesus gave her this mission.

Like St. Alphonsus before him, Pope Francis recognizes that Mary is a missionary. She is a missionary of the tenderness and revolutionary love of God. She is the missionary who draws near to us and accompanies us throughout life.

With a few strips of cloth and a mountain of tenderness, she transformed the cave in Bethlehem into a home to welcome the Word made flesh. With loving concern, she made sure that the wine would not stop flowing at Cana – when others didn’t even notice. With her heart pierced by the sword of suffering and sadness, she is at the side of all the suffering people of the world, in their desire for justice. As a mother, she welcomes all to the table of her Son.

Pope Francis says there is a “Marian style” to our mission of evangelization. St. Alphonsus believed the same truth. In Mary, our Perpetual Help, we see and believe in the power of tenderness to transform our world and change our hearts. With her, we too become missionaries of tender concern for others.

Oh, Mother of Perpetual Help, come join us in this mission. Bring joy, hope and tenderness to our sisters and brothers. Teach us to have no fear, even when we recognize the signs of the passion and cross. With you, we can share the joy of the Gospel with each and every one!

May our celebration of the feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help deepen our commitment to “preach the Gospel ever anew,” giving our lives for plentiful redemption.

Your brother in the Redeemer.

SAINTS AND BLESSED

JANUARY 5TH – Saint John Neumann

JANUARY 14TH – Blessed Peter Donders

MARCH 15TH – Saint Clement Hofbauer

JUNE 28TH – Blessed Mykolay Charnetskyi, Blessed Vasyl Velychkovskiy, Blessed Zynoviy Kovalyk and Blessed Ivan Ziatyk

JUNE 30TH – Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli

AUGUST 1ST – Saint Alphonsus Liguori

AUGUST 25TH - Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka

SEPTEMBER 26TH – Blessed Gaspar Stanggassinger

OCTOBER 5TH – Blessed F. Xavier Seelos

OCTOBER 16TH – Saint Gerard Majella

NOVEMBER 4TH – Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka, Blessed Vasyl

Velychkovskiy, Blessed Zynoviy Kovalyk, Blessed Mykolay Charnetskyi and Blessed Ivan Ziatyk

NOVEMBER 6TH – The Spanish Martyrs



CAMPO GRANDE AND THE



The participants in the first International Congress of Perpetual Help had the opportunity to learn about experiences in the other Conferences

ICON



Fr. Dirson Gonçalves, Rector of the Shrine in Campo Grande, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, in Brazil, coordinated the work of a large team that welcomed the participants of the Congress

Before the beginning of the short talks, Father Michael Brehl, superior general of the Redemptorists, welcomed all the participants, declaring: "This is a historic moment for us Redemptorists. Almost 150 years ago, Pius IX asked us to make Our Lady of Perpetual Help known to the whole world. Today, there is no place in the world where this devotion is not present."

Then, the Archbishop of Campo Grande, Dimas Lara Barbosa, also addressed a word to those present: "It is a privilege for us to host this event, because the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Campo Grande is not only a point of reference for the city but for our entire state, and this Shrine constitutes more than a special sign of the presence of the Redemptorists. May everyone take care of the Mother of Perpetual Help."

Fr. Manny Rodriguez, Coordinator of the Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean of the Redemptorist Congregation, was the moderator of the activities during the morning session. He emphasized the significance of the meeting: "We are here to venerate, to express our love for

Mary. We would like to encourage a 'passionate' devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. We want to fulfill what Pope Pius IX asked of us, and the sharing of our experiences will revitalize, spread and multiply this devotion."

The Coordinator of the Conference also explained the methodology to be used during the Congress: "The strategy that we intend to use is well known here in Latin Ameri-

ca. The first day, today, will be the moment 'to see'. It will not be so much an analysis as a sharing. Tomorrow, we would like to develop further the experience we are living, with reflection on the various aspects of the devotion, it will be the moment 'to reflect'. And Thursday will be the day 'to act'. We will have a time to stand up and take action to strengthen this devotion around the world."

Message

We have begun the journey to the solemn 150th anniversary celebration of Pope Pius IX entrusting the Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to the Redemptorists. The Redemptorist Province of Campo Grande, together with the URB (Union of Redemptorists of Brazil) sub-conference and the Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, has taken the initiative to organize an International Congress about this Icon, so loved and popular throughout the world. The coordination was assumed by the provincial superior of the Province of Campo Grande, Fr. Joaquim Parron, by the confreres of his Province, in the person of Fr. Dirson Gonçalves, rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Campo Grande, and by the lay people. Campo Grande, a mornal city located in the central-east of Brazil, at the beginning of the Pantanal in Mato Grosso do Sul, received us very well.

The presence of confreres from all the Conferences, as well as many Redemptorist lay mis-

sionaries, was formidable, a sign that demonstrates Redemptorist love for our Mother of Perpetual Help and the common interest of all to promote a special time of grace for the duration of this anniversary. There were 102 participants, from 28 countries, with representatives from all five Conferences. This initiative, fully supported by the general government, enjoyed the presence of our superior general, Father Michael Brehl, at the beginning of the work.

The meeting was organized in order to share experiences, mainly regarding the Novena of the Lady of Perpetual Help, reflections on the Icon and its message, and proposals for evangelization, which will help improve and renew the mandate received 150 years ago, to make her known throughout the world.

It was wonderful to hear about all that is happening in the various parts of the world represented at the Congress, as well as the opportunity to participate in the Perpetual Novena celebrated with the whole People of God.



**In the opening congress
Fr. Enrique López, vicar, Fr. Dirson
and Fr. Parron, provincial superior of
Campo Grande, at the opening of the
Congress**

We tried to contemplate the Lady of Perpetual Help in her original meaning as Icon. We then reflected on its Mariology. We meditated on the spiritual, pastoral and missionary message that flows from this Icon, and we dialogued about the dimension of popular piety and the liturgy of the Icon, all aimed at renewing our evangelization efforts.

This first international event leads us directly to the proposed theme for the celebration of the 150th anniversary: "Mother of Perpetual Help, Icon of Love". The whole history of God's People, through these 150 years, marked by the personal, commu-



nal and pastoral dedication of generations of Redemptorist confreres who spread this devotion, has been a profound and abiding experience of Mary's maternal love, which accompanies us, with her attentive and serene look, ready to offer herself and the Help she carries in her arms, Jesus, our Most Holy Redeemer.

This Congress has rekindled in our hearts the love we have for our dear Mother of Perpetual Help. We leave here with a commitment to get involved and joyfully celebrate this 150th anniversary. And we want to invite all Redemptorists, every Unit and Conference, together with us, to assume with creativity a new mandate to make her known and loved worldwide as the Icon of Love, a living expression of plentiful redemption.

“Thank you for hosting this week here in Campo Grande. We have come here from all parts of the world, and we are happy to celebrate this day with you.”

P. Michael Brehl, Father General



Contemporary missionary work in the land of St. John Neumann



The Redemptorist missionary, Fr. Carlos Viol, was in the city of Philadelphia, in the United States (USA), where the Shrine of St. John Neumann, the first man canonized in the United States, is found. Fr. Carlos Viol is the general treasurer of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer and was in Philadelphia for the meeting of the Secretariat of Finance of the Congregation, which took place from November 10-12.

In Philadelphia, the Redemptorists of the Province of Baltimore are responsible for St. Peter the Apostle Parish and the Shrine of St. John Neumann, where the body of the Redemptorist saint is found. "The Redemptorist Community (Province of Baltimore) is welcoming and organized. I



think the fact that the saint's body is found at the Shrine and the constant presence of people make this shrine a special place of prayer and contact with the mystery of God," reports Fr. Viol.

The region where the Shrine is found has always been marked by the presence of migrants. There are even celebrations in Spanish. According to

Fr. Viol, despite not having large crowds of pilgrims, as in other shrines, there are always groups visiting the place. "Speaking about pilgrimages with a confrere who works at the shrine, he said that some groups coming from neighboring dioceses are more common. But what caught my attention was that there exists this constant movement," Fr. Viol said.

JOHN NEUMANN

The Saint

St. John Neumann went to the United States in 1836, when he was 25 years old, a young seminarian from Bohemia. He was ordained a priest by the Bishop of New York in the same year, and carried out intense missionary activity, serving in distant places of difficult access. In 1840, he joined the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeem-

er, becoming the first Redemptorist professed in America.

For Fr. Viol, all these characteristics of St. John Neumann, canonized in 1977 by Pope Paul VI, make the saint a true Redemptorist missionary: "His zeal and missionary spirit are evident, whether by the fact of leaving his country of origin or in not simply remaining in the sacristy. The option for the poor, in particular, his commitment to

helping migrants and to educating children were and are trademarks of the Redemptorist charism and were part of his ministry."

Neumann, in his lifetime, still found time for considerable literary activity, beyond his pastoral duties. He wrote numerous articles, published two catechisms and, in 1849, a history of the Bible for the schools. ■

EXISTENTIAL OUTSKIRTS

Brazilian Redemptorists participate in groups who accompany those living on the streets of large cities





■ *Simone Borges*
Scala News

To make Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament known and loved, revealing to the world the hidden presence of Jesus in poor and marginalized sisters and brothers. This is the mission of the group “Children of Mercy,” a volunteer expression of Redemptorist Social Action, which is taking place in the Midwest of Brazil, in the city of Goiânia, in the state of Goiás.

The group consists of about 50 pastoral workers, young and old, people of humble origins, liberal professionals, students, freelancers and housewives. They strive to be a sign of Jesus’ redemptive presence among the people living on the streets of Goiânia, providing the minimum necessary for survival amidst the adverse conditions on the streets.

In October, 2006, the group “Children of Mercy” emerged within a group of friends who were inspired by the members of another group imbued with Franciscan spirituality, which cared for the poor and abandoned. They soon found encouragement, and material and spiritual support from the Con-



A moment of reflection and prayer for the pastoral group “Children of Mercy”

gregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in Goiás. Currently, two Redemptorist Missionaries accompany closely the work of this group: Fr. Geraldo Magela Ribeiro and Fr. Welinton Pereira Silva.

The charism of the group is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and love for the abandoned and homeless poor. Their base is the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual

Help (the Mother Church of Campinas, in Goiânia), staffed by Redemptorist missionaries. “The Eucharistic spirituality of the group ‘Children of Mercy’ is a force that draws families, young people, in short, all people of good will, to the Eucharistic presence of Jesus, being the proclamation of the Paschal Mystery of Christ and strengthening us for the mission,” explains Fr. Welinton.



The pastoral work is done voluntarily and generously by the members of the group, or through the contributions of people who are sympathetic to the project. They plan the activities and the collection of material resources necessary for the

execution of what was planned. On Mondays, during the wee hours of the night and early morning, they distribute snacks, soft drinks, clothing, shoes, coats and blankets; and at lunchtime, on alternate days throughout the week, they also

distribute a very nutritious meal.

According to the Fr. Welinton, beyond meeting these needs, the project aims to give fraternal witness in defense of the life of the poor and abandoned, listening to them and encouraging them

Several Units of the Congregation in Brazil do pastoral work with the homeless in precarious situations.

to have hope for better days; to make screening referrals for those who truly desire to recover from addiction to narcotics and/or similar things; to train and develop agents in order to deepen the inspiration and methodology of pastoral action; to give visibility to the issues of homeless people and denounce violent and discriminatory actions; to support the articulation of

the homeless population in its organization into movements.

“In the Street Ministry apostolate we go out to meet those who suffer. We engage them through listening and assist them in their most basic needs. And, most importantly, being the presence of God’s love for and with them, through our companionship, revealing that the Holy Church has its eyes turned toward them,” he says.

Charism

“Each of us who seeks to live Redemptorist spirituality with the homeless population on the streets is called to be profoundly sensitive to the situation of the people and the society in which they live, and discover situations of poverty and oppression that call for a response from us Christians.”

In this way Fr. Welinton explains the strong link between the pastoral work done by the group “Children of Mercy” and the charism of the Redemptorist Congregation. For him, in particular, the opportunity to live this experience is a real challenge.



“For me, every time we go out to meet our homeless brothers and sisters living in the streets is always a new and challenging moment. In the face of every suffering human being who roams the streets we see the face of Christ who suffers destitution, a lack of resources, the failure of the state when it



Fr. Geraldo Magela has been involved in street ministry for many years in different areas of Goiânia, Goiás



insists on violent repression, which claims the lives of so many more than the streets do. We find the sharing of faith experiences among these people who have no one on their side. We try to carry out works of mercy, aware that we are instruments of grace in God's hands," he says. ■

“In the Street Ministry apostolate we go out to meet those who suffer. We engage them through listening and assist them in their most basic needs.”

Fr. Welinton Silva, CSSR



Criteria that strengthen our missionary task

■ Fr. Enrique López, CSsR, vicar general of the Congregation

Do not confuse the past with the future

“The ‘abandoned’ are the poor, neglected and those tossed aside by society; those excluded from social and material goods.”

Even though the water is always new, it is the same river that flows. We cannot simply repeat the past. Everything changes and demands new answers. This is the main challenge. The XXIV General Chapter (2009) asked us for a new availability, a new solidarity, a new prophecy and a new missionary mystique. As a Congregation we have to discern and make concrete choices. As a community we have to open ourselves to God’s will: listening attentively to the voice of the Holy Spirit, recognizing the signs of the times, looking for and accompanying the most abandoned, especially the poor. The “abandoned” are the poor, the neglected and those cast aside by society, those excluded from social and material goods, the oppressed and suffering. These are also the people, communities and social groups “cast aside” by the Church, the spiritually abandoned and those who feel excluded from the Church.

Before this mission, we must recover the mystery of the missionary inspiration, with generous availability, creativity, apostolic charity and missionary dynamism. We are active agents of a new vision of the Kingdom of God, sent to show the unconditional love of Jesus Christ, to promote an inculturated evangelization, an incarnated spirituality, the value of people’s life and dignity, a culture of freedom, justice and solidarity, with a profound sense of responsibility.

None of this will be possible without personal and communal conversion. We know that this is an internal, congregational matter. A real review of life is needed, taking responsibility for our current situation, without deceiving ourselves, but seeking a change for the better. We must renew our hearts, our spiritual motivations, and strengthen the mystery of the missionary inspiration. Ongoing conversion is a

fundamental dimension of our spirituality. It invites us to open ourselves more to God, to mercy, to compassion and apostolic charity, to solidarity, to fraternal life in community, to the suffering, to the poor and abandoned.

With the grace of God, we must seriously fight against our selfishness, against material, intellectual and spiritual “self-indulgence,” against personal and pastoral laziness, against that “clericalism” which separates us from people, against attitudes typical of “bureaucratic officialdom,” against the paralysis of arrogant discussions, against “gossiping” that destroys and empty talk, against rivalries, jealousies and competitions that divide us, against petty interests and “politicking” that plague our communities and profoundly affect our pastoral action, against the inability to open ourselves to others and a new mentality.



The criteria that strengthen our missionary task

- We must respond with greater pastoral agility to the actual urgencies and demands of evangelization: in very diverse places, cultures and social contexts. We are lacking a reform, a “restructuring” understood as a change of mentality, a spiritual conversion, a change in our structures and forms of organization, always seeking greater closeness to the people. We lack more pastoral flexibility in the decisions of leaders and superiors as well as in the missionary attitudes of confreres in the trenches.
- We must have greater openness to solidarity, a spirit of association with other Redemptorist Units and related organizations in order to optimize human (professed Redemptorists and lay women and men), spiritual and material resources. Redemptorist provinces should not be competing against each other.
- We must open ourselves more and more to active and reciprocal collaboration with lay people (men and women) who share the mission, spirituality and charism of our Congregation, and also, with so many religious women and men who have similar charisms. Professed confreres (priests and brothers) are not the “sole owners” of the Redemptorist charism. We must promote collaboration, association for pastoral action, to awaken the missionary spirit in everyone, giving greater vitality to the Redemptorist charism.
- We must allow ourselves to be led by the principle of “mercy.” We must embrace this undeniable reality: many people and human groups continue to suffer all kinds of shortages and violence (affective, gender, sexual, economic, cultural, social, political, etc.). Many are discriminated against and oppressed, victims of the most diverse types of abuses of power. There are many poor people who are unemployed, hopeless, abandoned, excluded from society and the Church. Mercy is the correct response to the suffering world.
- We Redemptorists are sent to bring hope and announce the plentiful redemption of Jesus Christ. Let us recall the parable of the “Good Samaritan.” The principle of “mercy” is what moves us to respond to the suffering of others. Mercy is God’s principle. It is God who moves us to react and respond to human suffering. It is the movement of God through Incarnation and Redemption. The response of “mercy” must always be personal,

communal, pastoral and social. It is not sentimental, paternalistic or individualistic compassion. It must be accompanied by concrete actions.

- We must be moved by active hope. Real hope is always action. You have “to do something.” Theoretical reflection and discourse are not enough. The poor teach us to live hope. When we have everything, and solutions are at hand, there seems to be no need for hope. But when we lack everything, when we see no results and everything is going wrong, that’s when it takes a lot of faith, hope and trust.
- Hope is certainly the daughter of outrage at injustice, but also of creative imagination. It is indignant; it criticizes and complains. But it also proposes “something new, an alternative or something different.” It does something new. Hope requires some very important attitudes such as patience, dialogue, perseverance, the ability to recover (resilience), flexibility and a very good sense of humor.
- Our hope is well founded in the love of God, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the mystery of redemption. Hope lives in the incarnation and is realized in the spirit of struggle. It is not a matter of regret, but rather of positive

and proactive action. It is not a question of repeating the past nostalgically. Neither is it useless or destructive criticism. It is availability, openness, collaboration, solidarity, association with others and concrete action.

- We must have a realistic vision of the future. One may strive and struggle, but there are no guarantees about the future. No fantasy or imagination guarantees the future. It makes no sense to dream of recovering an alleged

“glorious past” that no longer exists. Those who say “we have no future” confuse the future with the past. But, the future does not forgive. It continues there firmly before us. It will be distinct, but there it is “looking to pass the time.” If we demand that the future come before its time, it will surely resist. It knows how to wait. It has more patience than us. We have to change our attitude toward the future.

- Many things will change. Life teaches us that the whole future is based on cycles of birth, death and new life, each with its moment in a process of change. To choose means “to leave something” in order to take on a “new project”: to die and to be born again. The authentic future is everything that is based on creative fidelity and drives us beyond the present.
- In our prayer let us ask for the gift of creative fidelity. May we be faithful to the Redemptorist charism and mission. This is our present and our best hope for the future. We always remember St. Clement Mary Hofbauer. May the Lord God help us to follow His will, preaching the Gospel “again and in a way that is always fresh,” with renewed hope, renewed hearts and renewed structures.

Move us with
active hope.
Authentic hope is
always action. You
have “to do
something.”

“Make her
known
throughout the
entire world.”

Pius IX



Entrusted to the Redemptorists 150 years ago

Participate in the initiatives of your community in preparation for the Jubilee of the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help being entrusted to the Redemptorists in 1866.



At the National Shrine
of Aparecida, São Paulo, Brazil
the Redemptorists studied new
theological challenges



THEO

■ www.a12.com

The Saint Alphonsus Seminary Guest House, together with the Center for Redemptorist Spirituality (Ceresp), received renowned experts for the International Redemptorist Congress of Moral Theology, which began on July 27th and continued until the 1st of August. ➔



MORAL OLOGY

The Congress assembled Redemptorist moralists and professors of moral theology

The purpose of the event was to discuss the greatest challenges for moral theology at the present time. According to Father Rogério Gomes, C.Ss.R., professor of the Alphonsian Academy and member of the Organizing Committee of the Congress, the participants reflected on topics such as classical moral theology, contemporary French phenomenology, theological ethics in the digital world, and surveillance and security in a technological society, among other subjects.

The Congress gathered Redemptorist moralists and professors of moral theology, other Redemptorists interested in the subject, non-Redemptorist moralists and lay people coming from various countries like Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, the Philippines, India, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, the United States and Vietnam.

Father Enrique López, C.Ss.R., vicar general of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, evaluated the Congress positively. "This is an academic Congress, where studies, research work and other contributions are presented, where we have interaction between the speakers and the sharing of work done in small groups. In this way we hope to motivate people and awaken even more interest in theology."

Fr. López explained that this is the eighth congress, which is held every four years. The encounter



Fr. Rogério Gomes, professor at the Alphonsian Academy, coordinator of the Congress

has already been held in Canada, the Dominican Republic, Thailand, Poland, Colombia and twice in Italy.

The closing Mass of the Congress was held at the National

Shrine of Aparecida on August 1st, the feast of St. Alphonsus Liguori, Patron of Moralists and Confessors and founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

The encounter has already been held in Canada, the Dominican Republic, Thailand, Poland, Colombia and twice in Italy



Participants of the the Congress, representing the five Conferences of the Congregation in front of St. Alphonsus Seminary

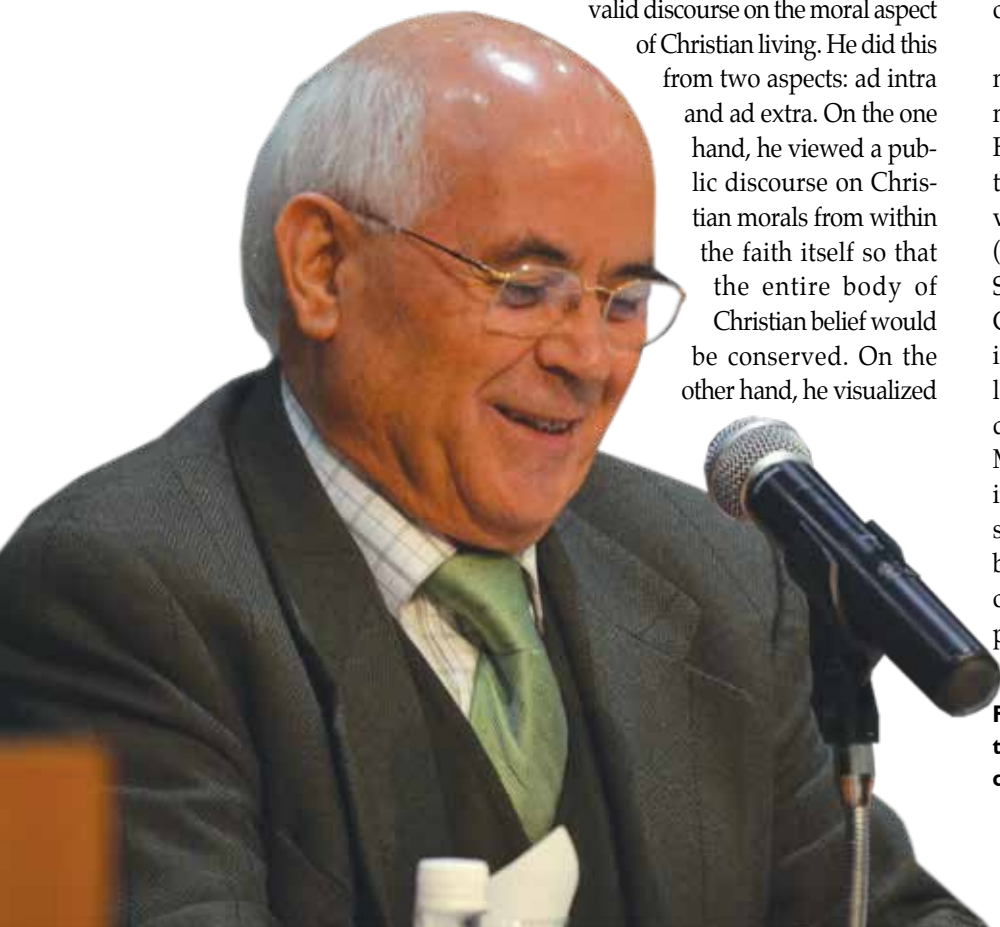
Challenges

On the third day of the Moral Theology Congress, the main aim of the well-known Spanish Redemptorist moral theologian, Marciano Vidal, was to configure a sufficiently valid discourse on the moral aspect of Christian living. He did this from two aspects: ad intra and ad extra. On the one hand, he viewed a public discourse on Christian morals from within the faith itself so that the entire body of Christian belief would be conserved. On the other hand, he visualized

moving outward from the same faith in a manner that could be understood by all in a given polity; this would obviously permit space to enter into a dialogue with other discourses.

Vidal divided his talk into two main parts (what he called “moments”) to achieve his main aim: 1) Historical Moment: in going through the Christian moral tradition as it developed in the course of history (Primitive and Patristic; Medieval Scholastic theology; Post-Tridentine Casuistry and the Renovation at Vatican II), he showed the main peculiarities that the theological-moral discourse has taken. 2) Systematic Moment: taking off from the teachings of Vatican II, he sought to respond to the demands of a would-be-Public Discourse, that would be critical and really ‘public’ at this present moment.

Fr. Marciano Vidal, one of the great theologians of our time, gave conferences during the Congress





■ Mons Antonio de Luca, bishop redeemptorist

Dangerous fundamentalisms feed on that cultural narcissism that isolates, separates and ignores

Europe, a continent to be re-evangelized

“The old continent, cradle of civilization and culture has nurtured its identity, drawing on the great values of Christianity”



The art, the architecture, the great cathedrals, the majestic monasteries, the music, the values of solidarity, the legislative heritage, everything has received a particular adhesive bond in Christian roots. Today the face of Europe appears changed. It is without anchors and points of reference. Different and conflicting values, without a hierarchical standard, are opposed and combined in a strange mixture that does not help identities, nor strengthen a sense of belonging.

Profound contradictions and considerable fragility emerge. A climate of growing secularization has produced a Europe lost and confused about its roots and its identity. On the one hand there are the just demands for the dignity of the person and his/her rights. On the other, there is an exasperated exaltation of the individual who, in the name of an alleged privacy, remains but lonely and isolated. In part, subjectivism inspires this harmful ethical relativism that confuses freedom with arbitrary authority, and that self-determination that has inspired the renunciation of education, and has forgotten the healthy personalism that Europe has generated and nurtured since forever.

Even the effort of a leveling rationalism that seemed to have the pretext of eliminating God definitively, has instead produced only an anthropological drift and still there is a growing awareness that “without the Creator the creature vanishes” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 36). Indeed, the theological crisis has generated an anthropological crisis, about who is man, what are his rights, his potentials, the sense of limits, and respect for a criterion that not everything that is scientifically possible is also ethically permissible.

It calls for the elimination of the sacred and wants to reduce religious experience to a product of the imagination or a personal, private phenomenon. And in the meantime, in the face of a growing and renewed demand for spirituality, many alternative forms of esoteric and superstitious beliefs and practices (horoscope, astrology, nature worship, etc.), which cannot satisfy the thirst for the Divine and the Transcendent, which is located in the heart of every man and every woman, abound and grow.

Economic systems, based on consumption, which for a time constituted certainty, have ended up producing new and more painful forms of poverty and destitution, with an incalculable increase of wealth in the hands of a few. Europe is experiencing a

dramatic loss of confidence and hope. The demographic collapse and exaggerated aging make of the European union a continent in a precarious situation with respect to the future. Certainly the history of the European continent evokes the great achievements in terms of rights, science and the promotion of the person. It has also favored the birth of the great religious orders and academic centers that have contributed to that widespread anthropological sensitivity for the respect of the dignity of the human person, and especially the expansion of the Gospel in countries and territories that have severely tested the boldness and courage of the daughters and sons of this European continent.

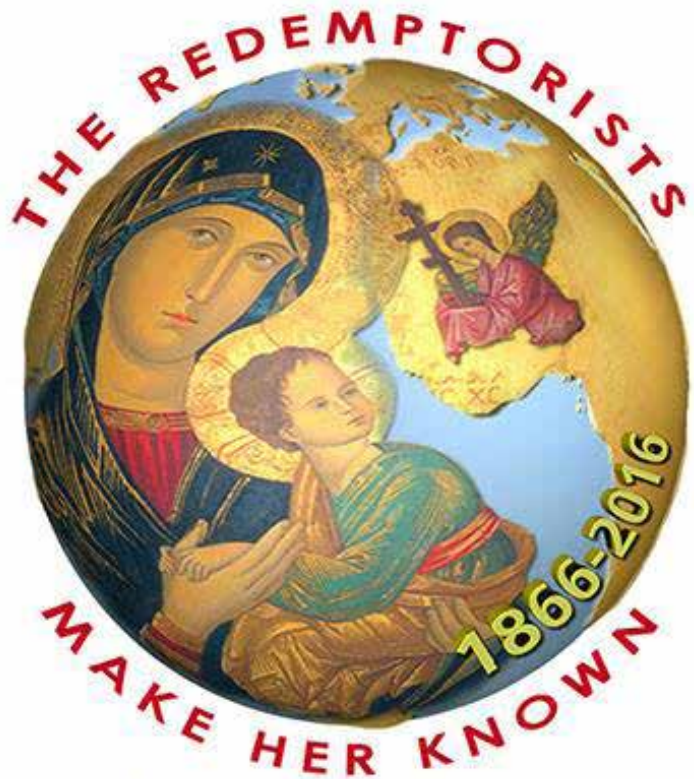
Therefore "Europe today must not simply appeal to its former Christian heritage: it must in fact be capable of deciding again its future in the encounter with the person and message of Jesus Christ." (Synod of Bishops – First Special Assembly for Europe, Final Declaration (December 13, 1991), 2). And the familiarity and the encounter with contemporary culture in which the Gospel must be proclaimed as well cannot and should not result in a dangerous weakening of the radical demands of the Gospel that are made concrete in respect for the dignity of each person, and for the whole person, in the protection of creation, in hospitality and in the challenge of multiculturalism. A renewed humanism is the mission that belongs to Europe. Faced with this great task, linked to its history, escape is impossible. Nor is it enough to deny its own Christian roots, but only by understanding again the passion for unity, the beauty of responsibility, and the duty of hospitality will it be possible to build a new Europe for a new generation of young people hungry for authenticity and the future.

The younger generations find it difficult to dialogue with the Church. Often they do not even understand the reasons. But certainly the question of God remains one of the most immediate appeals that we must be able to meet head on in light of a new evangelization. Every renewed commitment to evangelization must rediscover its connection with culture and with knowledge: "The split between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the drama of our time, as it was in other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures." (Evangelii nuntiandi, 20). Dangerous fundamentalisms feed on that cultural narcissism that isolates, separates, and ignores. The recomposition of differences passes through the humble listening to the reasons of others, and the mutual exchange that enriches and consolidates human coexistence. And in this Europe can certainly take advantage of the historical heritage and the links with Christianity that have given this continent a unique and original face. The new evangelization that it is up to Europe to do, must take into account that the Christian soul of this continent has not disappeared but is only dormant. It must be awakened and brought back to its reasonable considerations. The Church, institutions, culture, must discover that educational alliance which will restore vigor to the great values of family, life and education, which in the context of a comforted freedom and democracy can also be ways to restore hope and life to a historic phase in Europe, which today seems to be decidedly in decline. Human mobility and the cultural resources of which Europe is the guardian do not extinguish hope.

*On November 26,
2011, Pope
Benedict XVI
nominated
Antonio de Luca
as bishop of
Teggiano-
Policastro,
succeeding Mons.
Angelo Spinillo,
who was
nominaged bishop
of Aversa*



JUBLILEE OF ENTRUSTING



MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP
ICON OF LOVE



Representatives from Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America and members of the general government of the Congregation

THE ICON

Phase I: January, 2015 – December, 2015

“To strengthen and attend to our love for the Mother of God.” The first phase is a preparatory year, which will help us renew our devotion to the Mother of God. The Center for Redemptorist Spirituality will prepare for the whole Congregation the modules that will help us reflect on our religious consecration and at the same time provide material for deepening our reflection on the role of the Blessed Mother in consecrated life.

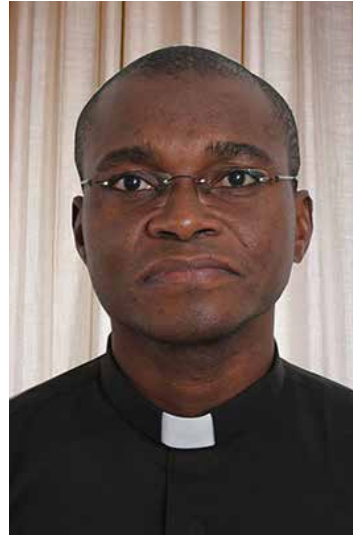
Phase II: 2016

“Mother of Perpetual Help: Icon of Love” – Celebration. The second phase will be a season of celebration, through which the Congregation around the world, together with all who venerate Mary under the title of Perpetual Help, will organize events to help us reflect on the love and devotion to Mary as the Mother of Perpetual Help. The high point of these events will be the celebration in the Shrine of Rome, where the participation of Pope Francis is also expected. The various Units and Conferences are asked to organize some important activities, especially on the feast day, June 27th.

Phase III: 2016-2017

The renewal of the mandate of Pope Pius IX “Make her known to the world” – the missionary dimension. The purpose of the celebration of the Jubilee is the renewal of our commitment, expressed in the mandate of Pope Pius IX: “Make her known to the world.” The greatest challenge is to revive and refresh our service of evangelization, especially through the spreading of the Icon as a means of evangelization. Responsibility for this commitment will fall especially to the Units and Conferences of the Congregation.





Fr. Ibrahim Seydou lives in Rome and studies Arabic and Islam

DIALOGUE WITH ISLAM

A Redemptorist from Niger highlights difficulties and challenges faced in living together with Muslims within one's own family and community

■ Scala News

Father Ibrahim Seydou is a very special African Redemptorist missionary. The son of a country that suffers from enormous economic and social difficulties, he speaks about dialogue, peace, reconciliation and perseverance. Niger not only suffers the consequences of having 65% of its territory covered by the Sahara desert, but it also faces the difficulties of coexistence between religions that have had a history of peaceful relations but are now threatened by increasing unrest in neighboring Nigeria. The fruit of a marriage between the only Christian in a Muslim family with a Catholic, Father Ibrahim always attended family celebrations, hearing about both the Bible and the Quran. He confesses that among uncles and cousins, the talk was always difficult, but respectful. Engaged in learning languages that will enable him to deepen his study and practice of inter-religious coexistence, he says he is crazy about singing, playing guitar and the drums and the martial arts are his favorite sport.

He has a simple idea for facing the complex challenge of coexistence



Members of a Christian church pose with Muslims in front of a religious center in Niger

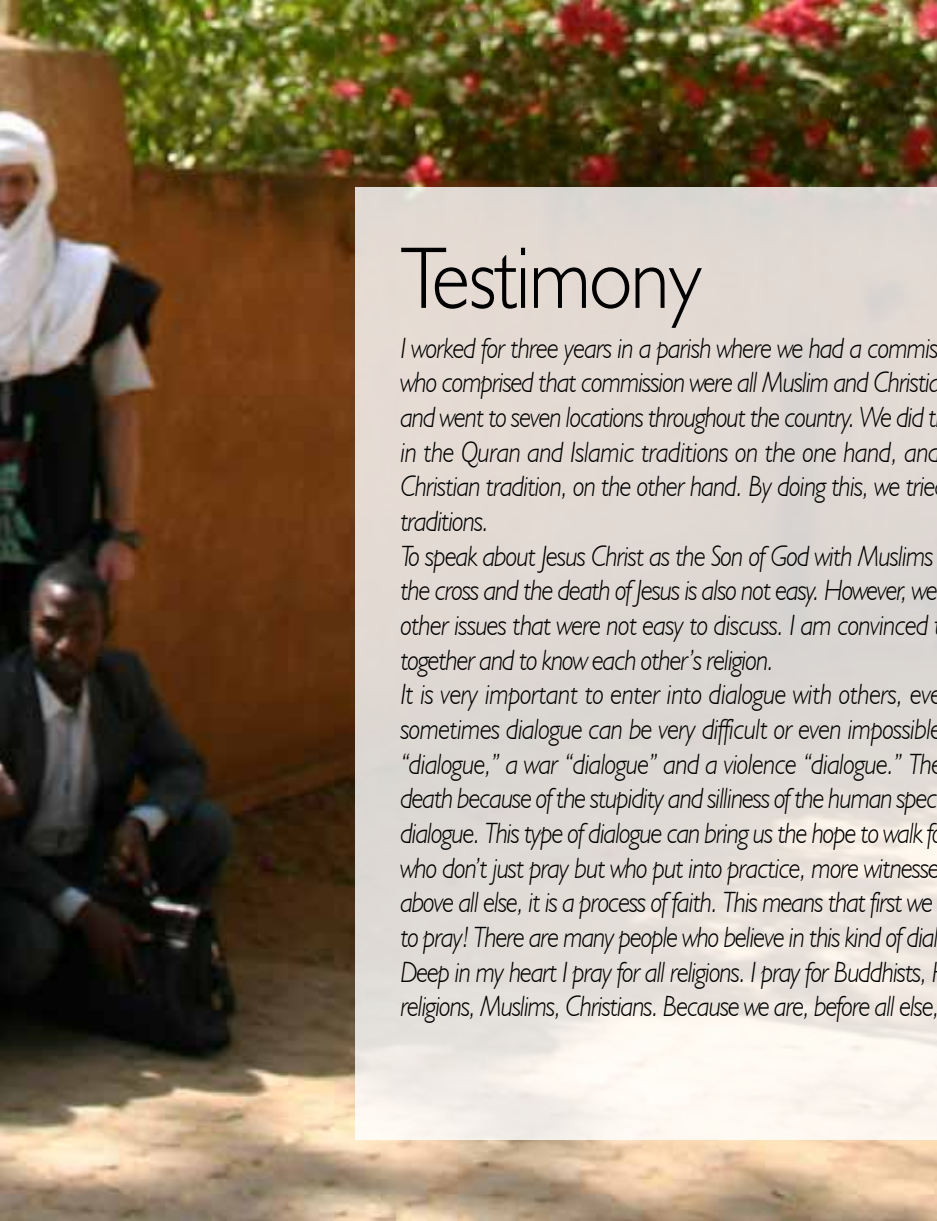
between Christians and the people of Islam: “it is necessary to accept people as they really are and not because we want them to be a certain way.” The practical difficulties in the application of this principle are manifested mainly by the ignorance that members of one religion have about the other. “According to many Muslims I know, we do not pray as much as they do. They

pray five times a day, while we only pray once a week, on Sunday, and this is not normal for them. They think we do not fast and that we do not respect the laws of forbidden foods, like not eating pork, which is a sin for them,” he explains.

Islam arrived in Niger over ten centuries ago and today it is the religion of 98% of the population, but even so, constitutionally

speaking, the state is secular and respects religious freedom. In theory, religion is considered a private affair. According to the Christian organization “Open Doors,” however, there is one main factor that generates the persecution of Christians in the country, which is Islamic extremism. It is estimated that currently there are between 50 and 150,000 Christians in Niger. “I think the

“To gain an understanding of God is very difficult. But we always strive to define the meaning of the path of religion.”



Testimony

I worked for three years in a parish where we had a commission for inter-religious dialogue. The people who comprised that commission were all Muslim and Christian leaders. We worked with this commission and went to seven locations throughout the country. We did three days of talks on the sources of dialogue in the Quran and Islamic traditions on the one hand, and the sources of dialogue in the Bible and Christian tradition, on the other hand. By doing this, we tried to increase awareness about each of the traditions.

To speak about Jesus Christ as the Son of God with Muslims is not easy. To speak about the meaning of the cross and the death of Jesus is also not easy. However, we did it and we were able to talk about many other issues that were not easy to discuss. I am convinced that it is possible to be together, to discuss together and to know each other's religion.

It is very important to enter into dialogue with others, even when it is complicated. Unfortunately, sometimes dialogue can be very difficult or even impossible. In this case, dialogue becomes an arms "dialogue," a war "dialogue" and a violence "dialogue." The consequence of this type of "dialogue" is death because of the stupidity and silliness of the human species. Amidst this situation, there is a prayerful dialogue. This type of dialogue can bring us the hope to walk forward. Today, the world wants more people who don't just pray but who put into practice, more witnesses than "loudspeakers." But the fact is that, above all else, it is a process of faith. This means that first we have to believe and work and finally, to stop to pray! There are many people who believe in this kind of dialogue.

Deep in my heart I pray for all religions. I pray for Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, people who profess traditional religions, Muslims, Christians. Because we are, before all else, human beings.

Fr. Ibrahim Seydou, CSsR

problem is that too little knowledge of other religions can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings," adds Father Ibrahim. "To gain an understanding of God is very difficult. But we always try, through language, to define the meaning of Revelation, the path of religion. Speaking about God is not easy, but it is not impossible among believers," he notes.

The organization "Open Doors" informs us that there is a radical Islamic group called Izala in Niger. Just like the Izalas in Nigeria and Benin, the Izalas in Niger reject the Sufi origin of Islam

and other practices considered non-Islamic by them. They are known for their proselytizing campaigns. "The creation of a National Islamic Council in 2003 received wide support from Sufi leaders who saw it as an instrument to control Izalas who have been involved in a series of violent incidents over the past few years. The primary danger of movements like Izala, are its effort to crush everything that they consider 'perdition for Muslims,' which includes minority religions like Christianity. As recent history has shown, violence is still part of

the group's performance standard," states the organization.

"The future of the Church in Niger is worrisome. The overall dynamic of the country indicates a potential increase in pressure and violence. A considerable segment of the southern part of the country seems prone to Islamic hostilities. The increase of radical Islam in northern Nigeria and in Mali also contributes to the deterioration of the religious situation in Niger. In addition, churches are not prepared for greater pressure from Islamic extremism," according to the organization "Open Doors".

Fr. FRANCESCO Antonio de Paola

- Celebrations for the second centenary of the death of Fr. F. A. de Paola, the second superior general of the C.Ss.R., were held on November 15-16, in the Redemptorist community of Frosinone. The centenary, strongly desired by Fr. Giuseppe Orlandi, was promoted by the Roman Province with different initiatives. On Saturday, November 15th, on the premises of the Oratory of Saint Gerard, the historical work of Fr. Vincenzo La Mendola, entitled Fr. Francesco Antonio de Paola, Redemptorist (1736-1814), a biographical profile from the letters, was presented.

Scala News



Scala News



The Opus Award

- Fr. Joe Maier, C.Ss.R. was designated one of three finalists for the annual Opus Award, a prestigious award, which “recognizes the unsung heroes who, guided by faith and by an entrepreneurial spirit, are those who overcome the most persistent social problems of the world.” The Opus Award is given every year to recognize the unsung heroes of any faith tradition, who, around the world, are solving the most persistent social problems today.

Haiti

- September 17, 2014, will be a date difficult to forget. Finally, to the delight of all, the new School of St. Gerard in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, was inaugurated. It was the most anticipated day of the last four years. More than six hundred Haitian boys and girls gladden the classrooms, the courtyard and the corridors with the sound of life that bursts out. A small group meets in the hall in which the inauguration is celebrated. There were some words of thanks from the regional superior of the Redemptorists, Fr. Kenol, and the blessing of water which then served, for sprinkling and blessing the entire building.

Venerable Pelágio Sauter

- On November 7, Pope Francis declared the Servant of God FR. PELAGIO SAUTER, (1878-1961) CSsR to be Venerable, authorizing the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the Decree on his heroic virtues.



Scala News

Lebanon

- At the request of the general government, two confreres from the Province of Liguori in India, Fathers Binoy Mandapathil and Antony Binoy Uppumackal, reached Lebanon to continue the mission begun by the Belgian Redemptorists of the Province of San Clemente. They arrived in Lebanon on December 1, 2014, to officially join the Mission.



Scala News

Radio Maria

- This past November 29, 2014, Radio Maryja (Maria), which belongs to the Redemptorist Province of Warsaw, celebrated the 23rd anniversary of its foundation, in the presence of more than 10 thousand listeners and friends (the so-called Family of Radio Maryja). They came to Torun, Poland, to thank God and pray for the work of Radio Maryja, for the Redemptorists who work there and for their co-workers.



Christmas in Bangkok

- The children of Father Joseph Maier's Redemptorist Center of Mercy, located in the heart of the Bangkok slums tell, in their own way, the story of the birth of Christ through their paintings. "Some of these children are Catholic, but most are Buddhists," affirmed Father Joe, who has worked in the slums since 1973 and has created the Foundation for Human Development – the Center of Mercy. This center has created schools for children, a home for orphans, for the victims of abuse and for the abandoned and has, furthermore, founded a hospice for children infected with HIV/AIDS.



THE BEGINNING IN ALBANIA

The Redemptorist mission in Albania has just begun. The material and spiritual situation in this part of Europe makes the presence of the Congregation meaningful.



■ *Fr. Laureano Del Otero, CSsR*

It was 5:20 a.m. when Fathers Laureano Sevillano Del Otero, Dominic O'Toole and Andrzej Michon, the first three Redemptorists to go to Albania, landed at Tirana, the capital of Albania. The sky was filled with clouds and the preparations for the imminent visit of the Pope in the "land of the eagles" could be seen along the road.

The community was welcomed by Bishop George Frenedo, OP, aux-

iliary bishop of Tirana-Durazzo, in the rectory of the Cathedral, where the confreres remained for two weeks, devoting themselves to the study of language, participating in various church meetings, and making their first contacts with the Albanian Catholic Church. The day after their arrival the missionaries were received by the Archbishop of the capital, Archbishop Rrok Mirdita, who said that the arrival of the Redemptorists in the diocese was a precious gift for his

75th birthday. They also had a meeting with the Apostolic Nuncio in Albania, who urged them to love the people and to have "the smell of the sheep" on them, citing Pope Francis.

During the stay in Tirana the community visited the future missionary site of Kamëz and also held meetings to discuss the details of the mission, which had been moved forward to Monday, September 22nd, for several reasons.

The first three Redemptorists in Albania, Fathers Laureano Sevillano Del Otero, Dominic O'Toole and Andrzej Michon, landed at Tirana, the capital of Albania.



On Sunday, September 21st, Pope Francis visited Albania, the first European country to be visited by the Holy Father. The confreres had the privilege of getting very close to Francis, since the Albanian bishops and priests present were not so numerous. Many people of other religions, with their religious leaders, and government officials were also present at the celebration. An amazing flood of people had inun-

dated Mother Teresa square. In his homily, the Pope defined the Church as a missionary community. Several times he repeated the greeting of peace: "peace is not just a greeting, but also a gift. Dear brothers and sisters of Albania, I come among you today, in this place dedicated to a humble, grand-daughter of this land, the blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Repeat for me this greeting: peace in your homes, peace in

your hearts, peace in your nation. Peace!" The Pope recalled the past suffering of the Albanian Church and, referring to the image of the eagle on the national flag, invited the Albanians to fly high. In the afternoon, the confreres attended the meeting of the Pope with priests and religious in the Cathedral, where two witnesses told of their religious experience during the time of the atheistic, communist dictatorship.

The first community: Kamëz

Monday, September 22nd, will be written with golden letters in the history of the Congregation. After receiving the papal blessing, in a car provided by the diocese (with only two seats, so one of the confreres had to sit in the back), the community traveled the 10 kilometers to Kamëz. At 5 p.m. the three Redemptorists entered, for the first time, what henceforth will be the first Redemptorist community in Albania.

Thanks be to God!

The Redemptorist community received the mission to serve the Catholic community of Kamëz, including the parish of St. John Vianney, the parish of the nearby village of Luz and the area of Kasalle. In all three places the Eucharist is celebrated, even though Kasalle and Luz have only a small chapel without electricity and running water. Kamëz is a large urban center where

Catholic families who migrated from the northern mountains have established themselves. Luz and Kasalle are rural populations where the humble lifestyle reveals a survival economy. The roads are in very poor condition, and the wounds of abandonment and poverty are visible. This is our Albanian "Scala".

The Catholic population numbers about twenty thousand people. The community has settled into the



parish of Kamëz, which consists of the church and the parish house, both in need of some repairs. The community is learning Albanian, but English is the language for morning prayer and interpersonal communication. Every day the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist are celebrated before the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, which was given to Father Andrzej in Poland. All members of the community participate together in the prayers and the Eucharistic celebrations. From day one the Eucharist has been celebrated in the Albanian language and this is a source of great joy for the faithful.

The beginning of this missionary adventure has not been easy, especially when the faithful ask the confreres to celebrate in their homes. Given the difficulty of the language, the help and assistance of other priests and religious have been an enriching experience of communion. The church in Albania is small but very friendly. Given the shortage of priests in the country, the majority of the clergy and religious are for-

eign missionaries who feel solidarity with the first steps of our community.

One of the things that greatly surprised the confreres is the age of the Catholic community. Most of the people who participate in the Eucharist are teenagers and young people. But there are some older people too. We were told that middle-age Catholics do not go to church because their faith was not cultivated during the reign of communism, because all churches in the country were closed or destroyed. The young people of Kamëz are a very great help to the Redemptorist community, in order to understand the reality of and speak with the faithful.

On Sunday, October 5th, the feast of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Archbishop Mirdita celebrated Mass in order to present the Redemptorist missionaries to Kamëz. In his homily he said he was happy that we will take care of this parish that has one of the largest Catholic communities in the country. He also

said that he wants the parish community to help its new parish priests, since it is a privilege to have three priests at their service. He also expressed the hope that our presence here will be long and fruitful, resulting in the growth of the parish community of Kamëz. At the same time he recalled that there can be no church without priests. For without priests there are no sacraments. Therefore he asked all to pray for vocations.

The Redemptorist mission in Albania has just begun. The material and spiritual situation in this part of Europe makes the presence of our Congregation significant. The presence of young Catholics in a church that has suffered much, but has remained faithful to the Gospel, is reason for hope. The prayers and the support of the whole Redemptorist family are necessary so that this little seed of the Gospel might bear abundant fruit. And it is hoped that other Redemptorist missionaries might have the desire to participate in this adventure.



I have finished my activities at the service of the general government with a heart full of gratitude

■ Fr. Rafael Vieira, ex Director of Communication

The joy of being a Redemptorist

From administrative services to the work among the most remote and poor populations of abandoned countries there is always a Redemptorist working with confident trust.

2014 began with great expectations in the communication office of the general curia and ended with a generous decision of the general government to replace the director of communications in order to allow for some necessary health care treatment. Indeed, during that time, I lived great experiences that marked my journey forever. The problematical work of implementing a strategic communication plan was mixed with a sudden surgery and a serious psychiatric diagnosis. In all these moments I could feel the comfort, support and joy that being a Redemptorist has brought to my life.

When we started the communication work in the Roman office, in September of last year, even with the presence of Fr. Gary Ziuraitis, I went through moments of profound reflection on the human dimension of the Congregation. It is a world of fraternity, with vivid expression on every continent. For everywhere we look, we find a Redemptorist full of life and enthusiasm, carrying out its mission. From the characteristic services of

the central administration to the most remote social works with the very poor populations of the most abandoned countries on earth, there is always a Redemptorist facing difficulties, but working with confidence.

One particular group moved me in the first months of our work: the members of the general government and Father General. We – all Redemptorists of the world – are privileged to have a coordinating group with excellent human and spiritual qualities. The superior general and the general consultors form a team with whom it is a pleasure to live and work. The others who work in the general curia are also welcoming and kind. The confreres who form St. Alphonsus community also give valuable witness to solidarity and support for those who have a special mission in Rome.

We designed a strategic plan for communication, which the general government approved in its September meeting and, from that moment, we spent months trying to put into practice the ideas of

organizing global news coverage of the Congregation, using more dynamic and current technological tools. In July, when I had the opportunity to see my family again in Brazil, I went for a cancer prevention test, and was surprised by an accident: the doctor perforated my intestines. I passed many difficult weeks in the hospital. In early September, another terrible surprise: the post-traumatic stress awakened in me the anxiety disorder known as panic attacks. Since that time I have remained in treatment in Brazil. In its December meeting, the general council accepted my resignation and appointed Fr. Biju Madatikunel as the new director of communication for the Congregation. I finish my activities at the service of the general government with a heart full of gratitude. Everyone was very kind to me and I thank everyone, with all my soul, directing myself especially to a Redemptorist who inspires me to be a Redemptorist with always greater passion: Father Michael Brehl, one of the most simple, intelligent, generous and dedicated men I have ever met. Thank you very much, Fr. Michael!



@general_CSSR

general twitter



“Why not gather together a group of priests, who will dedicate themselves solely to those so sadly abandoned?”

ALPHONSUS LIGUORI
1696 – 1788

CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

VIA MERULANA, 31
ROMA – ITALY

WWW.CSSR.COM