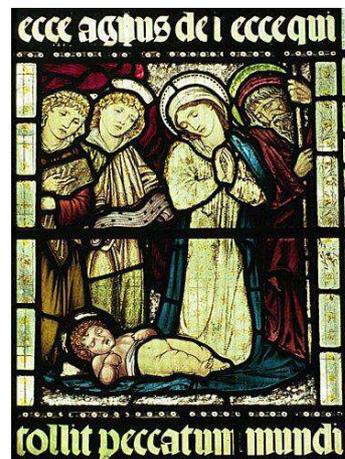


Christmas 2015

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life”. (John 3:16)

On this holy night may your heart be illuminated with love, joy and peace. May the blessing of the Lord shine on you this Christmas and forever.

with prayer
Fr. Jacek Zdrzałek



Letter from the Coordinator, No 22 (20.12.2015)

*Dear Confreres, Dear Lay Missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer,
Dear Partners in Mission.*

The Year 2015 is almost over. We all have different experiences of this past year. For some, the situation we will be reflecting on is the huge migration in our continent which changed many aspects of our society. Others will be thinking about the fear caused by the terrorist attacks and the extraordinary security procedures which we experience in public places every day.

However, we should be grateful for all the blessings which we have received during this time. There were many extraordinary events connected to the Year of Consecrated Life. The year 2015 was a special year of preparation for the Jubilee in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help; and we have just started the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

We have also experienced many joys in our Units and on the level of our Conference. The first Interprovincial Community in Albania is more than one year old, and the pastoral engagement in Albania with the help of the confreres from the Madrid, Warsaw, London and Rome Provinces, is growing almost every day. As you may know, Fr. Dominic O'Toole (London Province) after one year in Albania, due to his illness, had to leave our mission. I thank him for his dedication to this mission and for his work as the parish priest in Kamez (Albania). Br Leszek Pys from the Rome Province joined the community in Albania in November and he will work there during his pastoral year. May God bless him and bless our mission.

With great success we continued some other common projects of the CRE in 2015. They became the points of reference for our work. I mention some of them: the month of preparation for Perpetual Vows for our clerical and brother confreres, and the Transition to Ministry programme for young confreres (Tuchów/Poland, July 14 to August 5); the school of evangelization, called “REDCAMP 2015”, (Venice/Italy, July 27 to August 1); the pastoral care of pilgrims on the “Camino de Santiago”, (Astorga/Spain; July 1 to August 16), the meeting of Formators from the

CRE (Dublin/Ireland; September 2-4); Assembly of the CRE (Vila Nova de Gaia/Portugal; September 22 to 24).

There were also new initiatives in the Conference such as: The Interprovincial Meeting of Partners in Mission (Laity) and Redemptorists of the CRE (Madrid/Spain; December 11-13); The International Symposium for Redemptorist Publishing Houses (Hawkstone Hall/England; April 8-12) and so on.

If we add all the meetings of the various secretariats, commissions and working groups, we recognize the huge amount of work done in 2015. I sincerely thank so many confreres and lay collaborators engaged not only in the final meetings but also in the long and busy preparation processes which need so much time and dedication.

The New Year of 2016 also looks very busy for us.

All three special celebrations initiated in 2015 will have their conclusions in 2016. The Year of Consecration Life will finish on 2nd February with a special celebration in Rome. The closing of the Jubilee Year of OMPH on June 27, 2016 will become the beginning of the “reverse pilgrimage - visitation”; that is of authentic copies of the icon traveling throughout the Redemptorist Conferences. The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy will end on November 20, 2016 – and of course we, as Redemptorists, have a special task linked with our role as Missionaries of Mercy.

This new year will be marked also by the XXV General Chapter. For the first time this Chapter will be celebrated in three phases and two of them will be held in 2016. The first phase (on the Conference level) will be in Toruń (Poland) from 5th to 13th April, and the second one (so-called “canonical phase”) in Pattaya (Thailand) from 31st October to 26th November. It will be an important Chapter because the Congregation will evaluate these first years of the new restructuring process. We have received the first part of the Working Document for the General Chapter and the second part is almost ready and will be sent to the Units in a few days.

There will also be World Youth Day in Poland from 26 to 31 July 2016 with the Alphonsian Day on 27th July and a special preparation for Redemptorist Groups from all over the world in Wroclaw (Poland) (20-24 July). The host Province (Warsaw) expects great number of Redemptorist youth - and from the bookings already received, it seems there will be a really big crowd.

This new year will also be a time of implementation of some of the decisions of Fr. General concerning common formation. This process is ongoing, but much preparation must still be done since some new projects will start.

These are just a few reflections as we think about the New Year. As usual I invite you to read more on the web-page of our Conference: www.cssr-europe.com

The General Government has declared 2016 as a Year of Jubilee in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help – so let us pray that Our Lady helps us not only to experience many blessings through her intercession, but let us also try to be transformed by the Icon of Love to become more effective Missionaries of Mercy during this Extraordinary Jubilee Year.

Fr. Jacek Zdrzałek CSsR