



The Redemptorists



Vocations Promotion Magazine

Redemptorists of the
English Speaking
Caribbean Region

WHO WE ARE: We're Redemptorist priests and brothers. We actively try to live the example of Christ the Redeemer, and to meet the needs of the most abandoned.

The best way to introduce the Redemptorists is to identify the person who gave them their start: St. Alphonsus Liguori, a man of warmth and compassion as well as great determination. Even though he belonged to another time and place (18th-century Southern Italy), the main lines of his life-story have been duplicated many times in the lives of his Redemptorist sons.



Looking for something more: Alphonsus was a former lawyer who became a missionary priest. His change of life style startled a lot of people. His family had their hearts set on his becoming the most prominent lawyer in Naples, and after practicing law for eight years he was well on his way to reaching that goal. In spite of his success, however, Alphonsus was not truly happy; he felt there was something more that he was meant to do with his life.

A dramatic discovery: As he struggled with the question of what he should do, Alphonsus began to pray intently. He developed a deep love for the Person of Jesus and his Mother, Mary. Along with this came a new appreciation of the meaning of

"redemption." Journeying outside the familiar environment of his home city, he came in contact with the "hill people" in the interior of the country, who lived in dismal poverty. What shocked Alphonsus more than anything else was that they were abandoned even spiritually. Even though nominally Christian, they were for all practical purposes ignored by the Church. As a result, many of them lived without faith and without hope.

Sharing the dream: Alphonsus became convinced of the need for a new missionary thrust which would concentrate on bringing

the "good news of redemption" to the poor and abandoned. He shared his dream with a few close friends. In 1732, in the hill town of Scala, near Amalfi, Italy, he gathered some companions who were

willing to dedicate themselves to this mission. This was the beginning of what became a worldwide community of priests and brothers, the "Missionary Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer."



THE WORK WE DO: Our mission is to bring the Good News of Christ to those who are unaware of his message and his saving mercy.

The coat of arms St. Alphonsus designed for his congregation contains the words COPIOSA APUD EUM REDEMPTIO - "With Him is Plenti-

ful Redemption." Redemptorists have always kept that as their motto. It speaks of the generous availability of God's mercy and forgiveness. It is a powerful reminder of what God's love can do in the life of every person, no matter what the circumstances. As Redemptorists, we believe that our own lives and work must be pathways for Christ's redeeming love, especially for the most abandoned. We are known as "apostles of conversion" because our goal is to help people make a decision for Christ and to draw them to a continuing and total conversion. We aim, however, not only to convert individuals but also to renew whole communities. True conversion involves bearing witness to Christ and sharing the Good News with one's neighbors. By fostering "Small Christian Communities" and other support groups, we help people strengthen their faith and keep conversion going.

Practical idealists: Our work takes on many forms: mission preaching, novenas and retreats of many kinds; parish work in Dominica, St. Croix, St. Lucia and Trinidad,

ministries to people with special needs such as engaged couples, youth including delinquent youth, persons suffering from drug or alcohol addiction etc.

We work with old and young alike. We are preachers, confessors and spiritual directors. We are constantly challenged to take on new apostolic activities on behalf of persons and groups who are most neglected by society. We are "practical idealists," striving to put our ideals to work in what is often an unkind world.



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HOW WE LIVE:

We live in Community and carry out our apostolic work through community.

We believe that as we dedicate our lives to the service of others in need, we are doing something supremely valuable and wonderfully satisfying. We're following Christ



the Redeemer and continuing his mission. The joy and vitality that is ours in knowing Jesus - this is a gift to be shared with others, including people of cultures different from our own. We have received a marvelous vocation, but it demands much from us. We need to be completely approachable to people of every background. We need to understand their way of thinking, their strengths and frailties. We need to make their hopes and dreams our own.

Living in Community: The constant challenges of our vocation could easily overwhelm us if we did not have the spiritual, emotional and physical support of our fellow Redemptorists, with whom we live in a spirit of brotherhood. Living together in community, we find that we are able to foster the personal growth of each member.

In "Gospel friendship" we pray together, work together, eat and relax together, struggle with challenges together. In the Caribbean we live in international communities, with priests and brothers from Antigua, Belgium, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, India, Nigeria, Poland, St Kitts, St Thomas, Trinidad, and the United States.

Missionary Fraternity: Community life is an invaluable help for missionaries. This insight is as true today as it was in the time of St. Alphonsus and his early companions. The Redemptorist Constitutions express it in these words: "To fulfill their mission in the Church, Redemptorists perform their



missionary work as a community...An essential law of life for the members is this: that they live in community and carry out their apostolic work through community. For this reason the community aspect must always be kept in mind when any missionary work is being accepted... The whole purpose of community life is to have members, like the apostles, in a spirit of genuinely brotherly union, combine their prayers and deliberations, their labors and sufferings, their successes and failures, and their material goods as well, for the service of the Gospel."

*THE VOWS WE MAKE:
Striving for holiness through a fully human life.*



Chastity, Poverty, Obedience, Perseverance: these are the vows which, as Redemptorists, we made to God on the day of our profession. We chose them freely, after weighing all the implications. Our fidelity to these vows makes living in community truly life-giving for us. We renew them often, because they are our way of dedicating ourselves as individuals and as a community to the mission of the Redeemer.



Vows for the sake of mission

The Redemptorist Constitutions refer to religious profession as "the definitive act of

the whole missionary life of Redemptorists." That is a profound insight and it continually challenges us. Each of our vows is for the sake of mission. The vow of celibate chastity is freely chosen "for the sake of the Gospel." Celibacy becomes a spiritual journey and adventure which facilitates generous service to God's people.



The vow of poverty reminds us that if we are to be credible preachers of the Gospel of Jesus, we need to identify with the poor through a simple life-style. The vow of obedience witnesses to our willingness to move on, wherever and whenever we are sent. We make ourselves fully available to new apostolic initiatives. We refuse to settle down in comfortable surroundings in which our work would no longer be missionary. The vow and oath of perseverance is unique to the Redemptorist community. Inspired by the life example of our founder, St. Alphonsus, we persevere for the sake of our mission.

What It Takes: Typical Redemptorist Formation



Those who are attracted by the ideals described in these pages are encouraged to learn more about the Redemptorist way of life, our apostolic activities and the program of initial formation. The aim of initial formation is to provide a realistic experience of living in a small Redemptorist community.

While sharing the life of such a community, candidates embark on an educational program to help prepare them for their future ministry either as missionary priests or brothers.

Postulancy: The first step for new candidates is a period of "postulancy." During



this time of spiritual formation, there is emphasis on self-knowledge, self-esteem, emotional growth, and everything pertaining to human and Christian development. In the United States, the house of postulancy is Immaculate Conception in Bronx, New York. The postulants pursue college studies or pre-theology courses at **St. John's University, Queens.**

Novitiate: The length of postulancy varies, depending on individual needs, but typically after two years a postulant may

apply for the next step in Redemptorist formation, which is the novitiate. This is located in the scenic city of Toronto, Ontario. It is a one-year program. The novitiate is designed to enable the novice to grow in a deeper knowledge of prayer and to assimilate the charism and spirituality of St. Alphonsus and the Redemptorist tradition. It aims to provide a sufficient introduction to the life and work of the Congregation so that the novice will be able to discern whether he is really called to live and work as a Redemptorist.

Further formation: At the end of the year of novitiate, those who are approved for profession dedicate themselves to Christ the Redeemer through temporary vows, with a view to perpetual profession

after a period of three years. The newly professed Redemptorists typically continue their education either at St. John's University or in Boston where they join the community of Our Lady of Perpetual Help – Mission Church. Those preparing for priestly ordination undertake the four-year theology program at the Boston College – School of Theology and Ministry. Those preparing for the brotherhood undertake an associates program or further studies to prepare them for their ministry.



Adapted from "The Redemptorists" written by Rev. Joseph T. Hurley, C.Ss.R. former Novice Master, Baltimore Province.

OUR BEGINNINGS:

We have supported the needs of the people in the Caribbean for more than 150 years.

The Redemptorists were founded in Italy over 270 years ago by St. Aloysius Liguori. Today there are more than 5,500 men to be found all over the world bound together in the special Redemptorist brotherhood of work and prayer.

For the past 150 years we have served in the Caribbean as preachers, pastors, and in many specialized tasks. In answer to our special call to make known the Plentiful Redemption in Christ we have reached out to the peoples of the Virgin Islands, the Leeward Islands, Dominica, St. Lucia, Cuba, Haiti, Puerto-Rico, Dominican Republic and now Trinidad.

The English Speaking Caribbean Region of the Redemptorists comprises of St. Croix, Dominica, St. Lucia and Trinidad.

Dominica: From the time of their arrival in Dominica more than 100 years ago, the Redemptorists made themselves one with the people of this small country of 754-square-kilometers. They provided for the community's everyday needs and helped the Dominican people meet their personal goals.

Today, they serve parishes in Dominica and go out to preach missions on other Caribbean islands. With the Redemptorists' leadership, many in the local Church are engaged in ministries such as pro-life activities and advocacy for social justice. In addition, the Redemptorists run a retreat house to encourage the spiritual growth of young and old alike.

St. Lucia: The Redemptorist mission to St. Lucia offers the people both spiritual and practical support for the many challenges they face. The parishes of 40,000 include seven communities, each with its own chapel, where Redemptorist priests offer Mass and the sacraments. Though many island schools sit on Church land, they belong to the government. The parish priest manages the schools and has input into staffing decisions. In addition, Redemptorists volunteer their time and talents at the

schools.

St. Croix: The Redemptorist ministry in St. Croix began in 1861 when Father Joseph Prost, former superior of the American Province, went to the then Danish-ruled West Indies and took up residence at Holy Cross Parish on the eastern end of St. Croix. The Belgian Redemptorists took-up service to the parish in 1897, succeeded by the Americans during World War I, when St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John were sold by Denmark to the U.S.

Today, Redemptorist parishes are vibrant with various ministries and traditions that continue to serve the faithful in St. Croix. St. Mary's Parish School is more than 100 years old and has educated many of the island's leaders. Long-established organizations such as the Legion of Mary, Sacred Heart Society, Knights of Columbus, and St. Vincent de Paul Society continue to provide vitality to the parish, while new ministries are being established and developed including youth ministry programs and pro-life groups. The Redemptorists also collaborate to minister in the prisons and to the Hispanic community.

Trinidad & Tobago: In February 2006, the Redemptorists added Trinidad and Tobago to the list of countries in which they minister. Though the island's archbishop, Archbishop Edward Gilbert, is a Redemptorist, Father Rodney Olive and Brother Gerard St. Hilaire officially began the order's ministry there. With a population of 1.3 million, Catholics make up 29.4 percent with Hindu being the second largest religion at 23.8 percent. The Redemptorists have charge of two parishes — St. Theresa's in Barataria where Father Glanville Joseph is pastor, and Holy Cross in Santa Cruz where Father Peter Hill is pastor. Brother Gerard is heavily involved with youth ministry in the parishes and also training boys and young men to be scouts.

The Redemptorists: In Him There Is Plentiful Redemption

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