

Living Redemptorist Spirituality

PRAYERS, DEVOTIONS,
REFLECTIONS

PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
REDEMPTORIST CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

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Introduction

Copiosa apud eum redemptio

(With the Lord, there is plentiful redemption)

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

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

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

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

For Redemptorist spirituality, grounded as it is in the paschal mystery of Christ, nurtured by the regular practice of both communal and personal prayer, study and reflection, is best expressed when it forms us to be women and men on mission. Our mission is to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God, where all God’s kinfolk can take their rightful place at the ta-

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

Foundational Scripture Texts

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

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

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

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

Psalm 130

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

Isaiah 61

Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.

Luke 4:17–21



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

**Statute 06, which reproduces substantially
Constitution 717 of 1764**



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

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

SECTION ONE

St. Alphonsus Liguori and Prayer

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

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Prayer, the Great Means of Salvation

Meditative Prayer

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

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

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

- A = Adoration.** We adore, praise, and worship God.
- C = Contrition.** We confess our sins against God and neighbor and ask forgiveness.
- T = Thanksgiving.** We give thanks to God for the blessings we have received.
- S = Supplication (petition).** We ask God for help in all our needs.

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

Alphonsian Meditation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament

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

Introductory Prayer

TO BE SAID BEFORE EACH VISIT

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

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

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

My Jesus, I love you with all my heart. I know I have displeased you often in the past—I am sorry. With

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

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

First Visit

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

A Spanish Poor Clare loved to make long visits to the Blessed Sacrament. The other nuns asked what she did during those long silent hours. "I could kneel there forever," she answered. "And why not? God is there.

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

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

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

Spiritual Communion

TO BE SAID AFTER EACH VISIT

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

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

First Visit With Mary

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

Concluding Prayer

TO BE SAID EACH DAY

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

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

So I hope. So may it be. Amen.

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

Four Elements of Alphonsian Spirituality

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



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

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

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

From the writings of St. Alphonsus:

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

“Meditation for the Novena of Christmas,”
The Incarnation, Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ

Cross: Was it possible that God, the creator of all things, would have been pleased to die for love of his creatures? Yes it is through faith that he has done so,

“as Christ loved us and gave himself for us” (Ephesians 5:2). The earth, the heavens, and all nature with astonishment witnessed Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the Lord of the universe, die in intense pain and anguish, like a criminal on a disgraceful cross. Why? For the love of humanity! Lord, I have known your Passion and not only have I not loved you, but I have frequently offended you. Pardon me, I beg you, and remind me continually of the death you have suffered for love of me, so that I may never again offend you, but may always love you.... My crucified Jesus, I want to be yours alone now and forever, and I will love no one else but you. Amen.

The Way of Salvation

Altar: My loving Jesus, you can give us no greater proofs of your love than those which you have already given us. You have given your life for us—and you have bequeathed yourself to us in holy Communion, that we may be nourished with your own flesh and blood. How can we see all these testimonies of your love and fail to love you in return? I thank you for giving me the time and opportunity not only to regret the offenses I have committed against you but also to love you for the rest of my life. Help me, my Jesus, to reject and expel from my heart each and every affection which is not directed toward you, so that from this day

forward I may not desire, nor seek, nor love anyone but you alone. My God, whom shall I love if not you, who are my supreme good? Amen.

“Meditation for the Octave of Corpus Christi,”
The Holy Eucharist

Mary: O most beautiful Lady, I rejoice in seeing you so dear to God because of your purity and beauty. I thank God for having preserved you from every stain of sin; and since you are so loved by the Holy Trinity, do not refuse to look with love upon me, a sinner. Obtain for me from God pardon for my sins and eternal salvation. Look down upon me and change me. Draw my heart to you so that from now on I may truly love your Son and you. You know that I have placed my hopes in you, my dear mother, so do not abandon me! Help me in life through your powerful intercession, and come to my aid, especially at the hour of my death. Amen.

“Meditation for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception,”
The Glories of Mary

SECTION TWO

Redemptorist Devotion to Mary

Mary is a creature who has received all she has gratuitously from God. But who can deny that it is reasonable and fitting to assert that God would wish to exalt this great creature?

St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*



The Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help

The Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help is written in the Byzantine style of the Eastern Church. The purpose of this style is to convey a spiritual message.

A Byzantine painting is like a door; we want to open the door and go beyond it. The artist has portrayed the beauty and mystery of Mary and Jesus and their message in symbols.

The icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help dates back to at least the fifteenth century, but no one knows exactly when it was painted or who the artist was. We do know that, in 1866, Pope Pius IX entrusted the image to the Redemptorists, not as a gift but as a mission. He told them, “Make her known throughout the world.” The Redemptorists embraced this directive by distributing reproductions of her image and sharing stories of her powerful intercession in missions and homilies. Thousands of shrines and altars have been dedicated to her, and devotions and novenas in her honor are observed in churches everywhere.



Mary's Gaze

We come before this icon in order to be seen by Mary.

But she and her Son call us to more. We must gaze at the world through their eyes.

- ✠ When we look out on the world around us with tenderness, compassion, mercy, and love who do we see? ... what do we see?
- ✠ Because we see with eyes of tenderness, compassion and mercy, how does our mission come into clearer focus?
- ✠ To share the gaze of Mary is to be called to transform the world—to be a minister of redemption.



Cross, Spear, Nails, and Sponge

The angels hold these symbols with veils, which symbolize resurrection, victory over death.

- ✠ In the world around you, where do you see signs of hope and resurrection where once death reigned?
- ✠ Through what action are you a minister of hope and resurrection?



Perpetual Help Today

The mission of the Redemptorist Family with Our Mother of Perpetual Help is not only to make her known. Today we are called to do much more. Our mission today must be to accompany Mary in HER mission as a missionary disciple of Jesus the Redeemer!

With Mary, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, our mission is to:

- ✠ **ACCOMPANY** the abandoned and the poor with compassion, tenderness, and maternal love
- ✠ **GATHER** God's people as pilgrims, especially the poor and the suffering
- ✠ **STRUGGLE** for justice with the revolutionary power of love and tenderness
- ✠ **PRAY** in the midst of God's people.



Prayer to Our Lady of Perpetual Help

*O Virgin of Perpetual Help, great sign of our hope,
Holy Mother of the Redeemer, we invoke your name.
Help your people who desire to be renewed.*

*Give us joy as we walk towards the future
in conscious and active solidarity
with the poorest of our brothers and sisters,
announcing to them in a new and courageous way,
the Gospel of Your Son,
the beginning and the end of all human relationships
that aspire to live a true, just, and lasting peace.*

*Like the Child Jesus, Whom we admire in this
venerable icon,
so we also want to hold your right hand.
You have both the power and the goodness to help us
in every need and circumstance of life.
This moment is yours.*

*Come then, help us; be for us our refuge and our hope.
Amen.*

Pope St. John Paul II
June, 1991

Byzantine Marian Antiphons

It is truly right to bless you, O God-bearing One, as the ever-blessed and immaculate Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and by far more glorious than the seraphim, ever a virgin, you gave birth to God the Word. O true Mother of God, we magnify you.



The angel cried out to the One full of grace: “O chaste Virgin, rejoice! And again I say, rejoice! Your Son has risen from the tomb on the third day and raised the dead.” Let all people rejoice! Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you! Exult now and be glad, O Sion! And you, O chaste Mother of God, take delight in the resurrection of your Son.



Rejoice, Virgin Mary, full of grace! O Theotokos, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have given birth to the Savior of our souls. Amen.

SECTION THREE

Redemptorist Saints

*All sanctity consists in the love of God,
and the love of God consists in doing God's will.*

St. Alphonsus Liguori,
Conformity to the Will of God



St. Alphonsus Liguori

*Bishop, doctor of the Church,
Founder of the Congregation of
the Most Holy Redeemer*



August 1

Alphonsus Liguori was born in Naples, Italy, on September 27, 1696, and spent his entire life in the kingdom of Naples. The firstborn of an aristocratic family, he completed his literary and scientific studies at home and achieved his doctorate in civil and Church law at the age of sixteen.

After losing an important court case in 1723, he left the practice of law. Alphonsus was ordained a priest on December 21, 1726. He embarked upon an intense apostolate in the poor sectors of Naples, giving himself especially to the catechesis and moral formation of the most simple people. As a member of the Apostolic Missions, he also dedicated himself to the preaching of missions in the surrounding areas of the Kingdom of Naples.

When his health was seriously endangered by his apostolic labors, he went for a rest to Santa Maria Dei Monti, in the hills above Amalfi. There he came in contact with poor peasants and shepherds who were

deprived of spiritual care. This experience awakened the desire in the heart of Alphonsus to found an institute for the evangelization of the poor. The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer was born at Scala on November 9, 1732. Preaching and prayer formed the heart of the missionary activity of Alphonsus. Where he could not reach people with the spoken word, he sought to do so with his writings. His 111 works have gone through many editions.

In 1762, Alphonsus was named bishop of Santa Agata dei Goti, where he worked especially for the formation of the clergy. Thirteen years later, he retired as bishop and returned to Pagani, where he died on August 1, 1787, at the age of ninety-one. Alphonsus was canonized by Gregory XVI on May 26, 1839. On March 23, 1871, Pius IX declared him a doctor of the Church, and on April 26, 1950, Pius XII declared him patron of confessors and moral theologians. Alphonsus is also known as the patron of arthritics, because he suffered from this condition.

The tomb of St. Alphonsus is at the basilica in Pagani, Italy.

Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit

Leader: You made Mary full of grace and inflamed the hearts of the apostles with a holy zeal.

All: Inflame our hearts with your love.

Leader: You are the spirit of goodness.

All: Give us the courage to confront evil.

Leader: You are fire.

All: Set us ablaze with your love.

Leader: You are light.

All: Enlighten our minds, that we may see what is truly important.

Leader: You are the dove.

All: Give us gentleness.

Leader: You are a soothing breeze.

All: Bring calm to the storms that rage within us.

Leader: You are the tongue.

All: May our lips ever sing God's praises.

Leader: You are the cloud.

All: Shelter us under the shadow of your protection.

Leader: O Holy Spirit, melt the frozen, warm the chilled, and enkindle in us an earnest desire to please you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Clement Hofbauer

*Priest, patron of Poland,
co-patron of Vienna*

March 15

Clement Mary Hofbauer was born in Tasswitz, Moravia (now the Czech Republic) on December 26, 1751. In his early youth, after the death of his father, he worked as an apprentice baker. Having become a servant in the Norbertine Abbey at Klosterbruck, he was able to follow the call to the priesthood by completing first his secondary schooling and then his catechetical, philosophical, and theological studies in Vienna, Austria. During this time he made yearly pilgrimages to Rome, where he encountered the Redemptorists.

On October 24, 1784, with his friend Thaddeus Hübl, Clement entered the Redemptorist Congregation. Both professed religious vows on March 19, 1785, and were ordained priests on March 29. As vicar general of the Congregation north of the Alps, Clement founded the first house of the Redemptorists in Warsaw, Poland. Other houses were established in Poland, Prussia, Germany, Switzerland, and Romania. He lived in Warsaw from 1787 to 1808, and with the



collaboration of laypeople of various nationalities, he developed a very fruitful apostolate, promoting good works and strengthening the piety of the faithful.

With the takeover of Poland by Napoleon, the Redemptorists were suppressed and Hofbauer—forced to leave Warsaw—made his way to Vienna. In 1813 he was appointed rector of the Church of the Ursulines. Through the charisms of spiritual direction, preaching, confession, and works of charity, he converted and helped people of every social class. Hofbauer's activity influenced the Congress of Vienna and the culture of the time, especially the romantic movement.

Clement died at Vienna on March 15, 1820. He was canonized by St. Pius X on May 20, 1909. He is co-patron of both Vienna and Warsaw.

*The shrine of St. Clement Hofbauer is in the church
Maria am Gestade in Vienna, Austria.*

Prayer of St. Clement Hofbauer

It is enough to have courage. O, God you are the master.

You guide all for the sake of your glory and for what is best for us,

and no one can resist you.

All our plans, however well they may be thought out, serve only to fulfill your will.

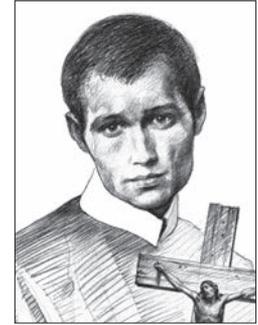


Courage, courage, God takes care of everything.

We must hope against all hope, for what appears impossible to human beings, is possible for God.

St. Gerard Majella

Religious, patron of mothers, especially during pregnancy



October 16

Gerard Majella was born in Muro Lucano, Italy, on April 6, 1726, into a family of humble circumstances. From his parents Gerard learned the love of prayer and sacrifice. When his father died, Gerard, being the only son, had to provide for his family by working as a tailor. At the age of fourteen he sought to enter the Capuchin friary but was rejected because of his poor health. After a short time as the domestic servant of the bishop of Lacedonia, he returned to tailoring but earned a minimal income.

In April 1749, after attending a Redemptorist mission in Muro, Gerard succeeded in getting himself accepted by the Congregation. Following a trial period and a year of novitiate in the house at Deliceto, he professed religious vows on July 16, 1752. Gerard was noted for his observance of the Redemptorist rule, and collecting money for the material needs of the community. His presence to people who were weighed down by poverty and illiteracy was a sign of hope to

them. Gerard had great empathy and testified to trust in the love and the compassion of God.

During his five years as a lay brother in the Congregation, Gerard was remarkable for his apostolic zeal, patience in sickness, love for the poor, deep humility in the face of false accusation, heroic obedience, spirit of penance, and constancy in prayer. He wrote numerous letters of spiritual direction. The Lord favored him with many spiritual gifts, including prophecy, the reading of people's hearts, and the gift of miracles. He died at Materdomini on October 16, 1755.

Gerard was beatified by Leo XIII on January 29, 1893, and canonized by St. Pius X on December 11, 1904. He is invoked as patron of mothers, especially in time of pregnancy. Couples hoping to conceive a child also seek St. Gerard's intercession.

The shrine of St. Gerard Majella is at the basilica in Materdomini, Italy.

Prayer of St. Gerard

It is true that sometimes we find ourselves confused and weak. But there is no confusion with God, there is no weakness with God's power, because it is certain that in our battles the divine majesty helps us with his powerful arm. And so we can be joyful and grow in strength [by accepting] God's will. And we bless his most holy works for all eternity.

From a letter of St. Gerard, January 22, 1752

For Parenthood

Good St. Gerard, powerful intercessor and wonder-worker, we call on you and seek your aid. You know that we have not been blessed with a child and how much we desire this gift. Please present our pleas to God, from whom all parenthood proceeds, and beseech the Creator of Life to bless us with a child whom we may raise as an heir of heaven. Amen.

St. John Neumann

Bishop

January 5

John Neumann was born in Prachatitz in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) on March 28, 1811. He studied theology in the seminary of Budweis. Zealous for the missionary life and wanting to lead souls to Christ, he decided to leave his homeland to dedicate himself to the European immigrants in America.

Neumann was ordained a priest by the bishop of New York in June 1836 and gave himself to the pastoral care of people in the vast area around Niagara Falls. Wanting to live in a religious community that corresponded more to his missionary vocation, in January 1842 he entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. A tireless missionary, Neumann busied himself in particular with the German immigrants, first in Baltimore, then in Pittsburgh. Having filled the role of Vice Provincial Superior of the Redemptorists from 1846 to 1849, he became the parish priest of St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore. In 1852, at the age of forty-one, he was named bishop of Philadelphia.

John Neumann had a strong effect on the religious



life of the United States by founding Catholic schools and promoting devotion to the Eucharist. He founded a new religious institute: the Third Order of St. Francis, of Glen Riddle. The School Sisters of Notre Dame likewise regard Bishop Neumann as their secondary founder, their “Father in America.” In just seven years he built eighty-nine churches, as well as several hospitals and orphanages. Neumann was untiring in visiting his vast diocese.

On January 5, 1860, at the age of forty-nine, he died suddenly of a heart attack on a street in Philadelphia. John Neumann was beatified during the Second Vatican Council on October 13, 1963, and was canonized on June 19, 1977. In the homily on the occasion of Neumann’s canonization, Paul VI summarized the activity of the new saint in these words: “He was close to the sick, he loved to be with the poor, he was friend of sinners, and now he is the glory of all emigrants.”

Saint John Neumann is invoked as a patron of sick children and of immigrants.

*The National Shrine of St. John Neumann
is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (stjohnneumann.org).*

Prayer of St. John Neumann

Deprive me of everything, my God,

but not of the desire to unite my will to your will in perfect resignation!

How much I love You, O my Jesus! I wish to love You with my whole heart; yet I do not love You enough. My lack of devotion and my negligence still haunt me. I have one desire, that of being near You in the Blessed Sacrament. You are the sweet bridegroom of my soul. My Jesus, my love, my all, gladly would I endure hunger, thirst, heat and cold to remain always with You in the Blessed Sacrament.

My Jesus, banish the demon of despair! My devotion has vanished, my tears are dried up, thoughts of my angel and of my patron no longer soothe my troubled soul! Even Thy remembrance, my Savior, and that of Thy Blessed Mother, grow dim before my mental gaze. O Jesus, do not forsake me! Help me! Help me! I am resolved not to omit a single one of my devotions!

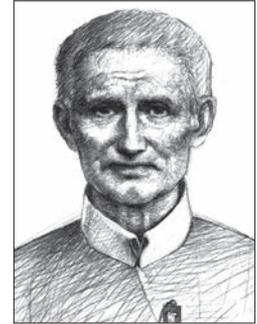
Blessed Peter Donders

Priest

January 14

Peter Donders was born in Tilburg, Holland, on October 27, 1809. As a boy he felt called to the priesthood. His family was poor, and his schooling was cut short so that he could learn weaving, which was his father's trade. At the age of twenty-two, he entered St. Michael-Gestel Seminary. Ordained a priest on June 5, 1841, Donders set out for Paramaribo, Surinam, a Dutch colony.

For fourteen years, he ministered to the city's 2,000 Catholics, and he regularly visited the plantation slaves, the military garrisons, and the indigent people along the rivers. In 1856, he volunteered to minister to people with leprosy at Batavia, where he remained, with the exception of a few short intervals, for the rest of his life. In 1866, he joined the Redemptorists, professing his vows on June 24, 1867. These vows gave him a more vivid sense of the apostolic missionary community, and he left Batavia more often to minister to other pastoral needs. Donders died among his lepers on January 14, 1887, mourned



as their benefactor and invoked as a saint. Saint John Paul II beatified Peter Donders on May 23, 1982.

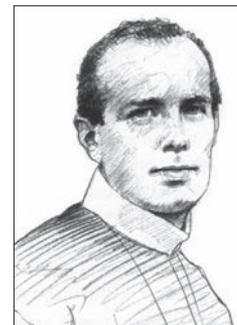
Blessed Peter Donders is buried in Batavia, Surinam.

Prayer in Honor of Blessed Peter Donders

Dear and compassionate God we give You thanks for Peter Donders who dedicated his life to You and was of service to all those who were sick or otherwise discriminated or abandoned. You gave this humble missionary priest an open heart for all people regardless of race, color or descent. Thus he followed in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, who performed miracles of goodness amongst us. He, Your Son, said that whosoever believes in Him, will perform even greater miracles. Give that today also, people may experience miracles of goodness and salvation through the intercession of Blessed Peter Donders.

Blessed Kaspar Stanggassinger

Priest



September 26

Kaspar Stanggassinger was born in Berchtesgaden, Germany, on January 12, 1871. In 1890 he entered the diocesan seminary, where he realized the Lord was calling him to live as a religious. After a visit by some Redemptorists, he was inspired to follow their missionary vocation. He was ordained a Redemptorist priest in 1895 and appointed to the work of forming future Redemptorists. Conscious of his own struggles with academics, as a student and later as a seminary professor he gathered groups of young people around himself and engaged them in mission. Deeply devoted to Jesus present in the Eucharist, Kaspar invited all to turn to the Blessed Sacrament in times of need and anxiety. Shortly after being named director of a new Redemptorist seminary in Gars, Bavaria, he died suddenly of peritonitis on September 26, 1899, at the age of twenty-eight. Kaspar was beatified by St. John Paul II on April 24, 1988.

*The shrine of Blessed Kaspar Stanggassinger is in the
Redemptorist church in Gars, Germany.*

Prayer of Blessed Kaspar Stanggassinger

Spirit of holiness, come into my heart.

*Give me true holiness,
always to want and to recognize the good
and the true,
and to hate and despise what is evil and false.*

I am poor without you.

*But if you come into my heart with your grace,
then I am not poor, I am infinitely wealthy.*

Only through grace do we arrive in heaven.

*Only through grace can we grow better,
Only through grace do we remain good.*

*If God's Spirit is with you,
all is easy, all turns out well.*

*Holy Spirit, you are the light of bliss and brilliance
which reaches to us from eternity.*

Without your grace I am nothing.

*Give me your grace, and I will collaborate with you
When I am in your grace
I renounce everything else.*

*But when I proceed on my own, directing myself and
my affairs, then I shall fall,
because without your grace
I can do nothing.*

Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli

Priest

June 30

Gennaro Sarnelli was born in Naples, Italy, on September 12, 1702. Son of the baron of Ciorani, he had a solid cultural and spiritual formation. He earned a doctorate in civil and canon law at the age of twenty. Caring for the sick in the Hospital for the Incurables, Sarnelli felt the call to the priesthood. During this time he also came to know Alphonsus Liguori, who was his first biographer. Ordained a priest in 1732, Gennaro dedicated himself especially to the catechesis of young people, with a particular concern for young women at risk of becoming prostitutes. In June of the following year, Sarnelli went to Scala and entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer on November 9, 1736. He dedicated himself to the preaching of the word of God to those who were most destitute of spiritual help. For reasons of health, he returned to Naples in 1736, where he resumed his pastoral and charitable activities.

In 1741, he organized and took part in the great mission among the spiritually abandoned areas in



the outskirts of Naples. Sarnelli published more than thirty books on a wide range of subjects. He died in Naples on June 30, 1744, at the age of forty-two. Saint John Paul II beatified him on May 12, 1996.

*Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli lies at rest in Ciorani,
Italy, in the first Redemptorist church.*

Prayer in Honor of Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli

Holy Redeemer, we place ourselves in your presence confident that you are a loving and merciful God. You walk with us by day and by night as we strive to proclaim your gospel with compassion to people who are poor and abandoned. As we reach out to those most in need, we look to Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli as a model and help. His ardent desire was to bring people on the fringes of society and Church to a deeper knowledge and love of you. We pray that his zeal will inspire and motivate us to share your redemption with those who are marginalized. Amen.

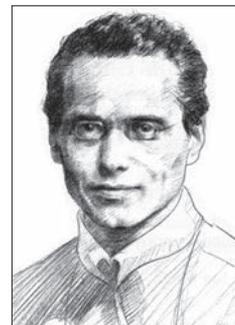
Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

Priest

October 5

Francis Xavier Seelos was born in Füssen, Bavaria, on January 11, 1819. He studied philosophy at the University of Munich and began theology as a seminarian for the diocese. Visiting the Redemptorists in Altötting, he heard of their missionary work in North America and decided to join them. With their approval, in 1843 he set sail for the United States, where he made his novitiate. In 1844, Seelos professed vows as a Redemptorist and was ordained a priest in Baltimore. His first assignment was to St. Philomena Parish in Pittsburgh. He served there for six years as assistant pastor with John Neumann, followed by three years as superior of the community. During this time he was also the novice master. In 1854, he was transferred to Maryland—first to Baltimore, then to Cumberland in 1857, and to Annapolis in 1862, all the while engaged in parish ministry and serving in the formation of future Redemptorists as prefect of students.

Replaced as prefect in 1863, he preached missions in German and English throughout the northeast



and midwest United States. Seelos was always an active and highly successful missionary, particularly devoted to the ministries of reconciliation and spiritual direction. In 1866, after a year in Detroit, he was made pastor of St. Mary's Assumption Parish in New Orleans, where he devoted himself to the poor, sick, and neglected. While caring for victims of yellow fever, he contracted the disease and died on October 4, 1867. Francis Seelos was beatified by St. John Paul II in 2000.

The national shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos is in the Church of St. Mary's Assumption, New Orleans (Seelos.org).

Wisdom of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

No one was ever lost because his sin was too great, but because his trust was too small.

Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky and Companions

Martyrs

June 27/28

Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky

Nicholas Charnetsky was born in Semakivci in Halychyna, Western Ukraine, in 1884. He did his theological studies in Rome and was ordained as a



diocesan priest in 1909. After obtaining his doctorate in theology, he was spiritual director and professor of theology at the seminary in Stanislaviv. He entered the Redemptorist novitiate in Zboisk in 1919 and professed his vows in 1920. During his early years he was assigned to teach in the minor seminary and then to preach popular missions. Charnetsky was ordained a bishop in 1931 and appointed the Apostolic Visitor to the Ukrainian Catholics in Volyn. From 1931 to 1939 he ministered to the people of Volyn, Polisia, Pidlissia, and Belorussia. During World War II he was engaged in pastoral ministry and taught at the theological academy. From 1945 to 1956, he was held captive in about thirty Soviet labor camps and prisons. Following his release he returned to Lviv, where he acted as bishop of the suppressed Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. His prolonged imprisonment shattered his health, and he died in 1959.

The shrine of Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky is in St. Josaphat's Church in Lviv, Ukraine.

Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky

Vasyl Velychkovsky was born in Stanislaviv, Western Ukraine, in 1903. He studied at the seminary in Lviv and was ordained a deacon in 1923. He entered the Redemptorists as a deacon, professed vows in 1925,

and was soon ordained a priest. After teaching at the preparatory seminary in Zboisk, Vasyl worked as a missionary for the next twenty years in rural Ukraine. He was arrested in 1945 and was condemned to death, but the death sentence was commuted to ten years' imprisonment. In 1963 in a hotel room in Moscow, USSR, Velychkovsky was consecrated a bishop by Metropolitan Joseph Slipyj and became the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Arrested once more in 1969, he spent three years in prison. In the spring of 1972, near death, he was exiled from Ukraine. He died in Winnipeg, Canada, in 1973 as a result of a slow-acting poison that had been administered prior to his release.

The shrine of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky is in St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba (bvmartyrshrine.com).

Blessed Zenon Kovalyk

Zenon Kovalyk was born in 1903 in Ivachiv Horishniy, near Ternopil, Ukraine. Having joined the Redemptorists and professed vows in 1926, he studied philosophy and theology in Belgium and was ordained in 1932. He went with Bishop Charnetsky to Volyn as a parish missionary and subsequently to Stanislaviv, where he also conducted missions. Zenon was a fear-

less preacher of God's Word and of love for the Mother of God. He was arrested by the Soviets in 1940 and continued his pastoral ministry while imprisoned. When the Soviet prisons were opened on the arrival of the invading German army in 1941, Blessed Zenon's body was found crucified to a wall of the Zamarzynivska prison.

Blessed Zenon Kovalyk's final resting place is unknown.

Blessed Ivan Ziatyk

Ivan Ziatyk was born on December 26, 1899, in Odrekhova, now part of Poland. He entered the Ukrainian Catholic seminary in 1919 and was ordained in 1923. He professed Redemptorist vows in 1936.

During the German occupation, all the Ukrainian Catholic bishops were arrested, and by 1948, Father Ziatyk was entrusted with the administration of the Church in Ukraine. He was arrested on January 5, 1950, because of his public support of papal instructions to proclaim the Catholic faith to all people.

Eyewitnesses testify to the brutal treatment Ivan endured in the Siberian prison at Oserlag. On Good Friday, 1952, he was beaten so cruelly that he died a few days later on May 17.

Blessed Ivan Ziatyk is buried at Oserlag, Siberia.

Prayer in Honor of the Redemptorist Ukrainian Martyrs

O Lord, our God, you call all to believe in you and to follow your way. We thank you for the grace you gave to Nicholas Charnetsky, Vasyl Velychkovsky, Zenon Kovalyk, and Ivan Ziatyk and to all their spiritual companions, such that they were able to pay the ultimate price of faithfulness to you in giving their lives.

We thank you for glorifying them in your heavenly kingdom, that they may be for all of us a shining example of your powerful presence in our lives. We pray that you give us the grace of faithfulness and generosity as we seek to respond to your love. Through their intercession, help us always to stand firm in the Truth and be faithful to you and your commandments.

O Holy Mother of God and our Mother of Perpetual Help, lead us to your Son, Jesus. Give us the courage to follow him always. We place ourselves under your protection.

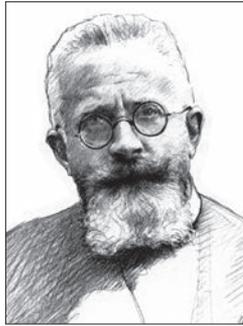
For all the glory and honor belong to you, Almighty Father, Eternal Son, and Life-giving Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka

Martyr

August 25

Blessed Methodius was born in Frydlant, Moravia (now the Czech Republic), on July 6, 1886. He joined the Redemptorists in 1902 and professed vows on August 25, 1904. He was ordained in Prague on July 17, 1910. He spent the early years of his ministry preaching parish missions. His superiors approved his desire to work among the Greek Catholics and was sent to Lviv, where he learned Ukrainian and Old Slavonic, along with the Byzantine Rite. After a brief time of enculturation he worked among the Greek Catholics in Halic, in Galizia, and then in East Slovakia, where he carried on intense missionary activity. He was nominated first Vice Provincial Superior of Michalovce in 1946. He worked zealously to found new houses and to form young Redemptorists. On the night of April 13, 1950, all religious communities were suppressed by the Czech government. Father Methodius was arrested, tortured, and condemned to twelve years' imprisonment. In 1958 he was transferred to the prison



of Leopoldov, where under harsh conditions, he contracted tuberculosis and died on March 23, 1959. Saint John Paul II proclaimed him to be Blessed Methodius Dominic on November 4, 2001.

The remains of Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka are buried in the Redemptorist plot in the cemetery of Michalovce, Slovakia.

Prayer in Honor of Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka

Lord our God, you gave to Blessed Methodius your priest and martyr outstanding bravery in the face of trials and torture.

Through his intercession, may we remain faithful to the Gospel of truth.

We make this prayer through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever.

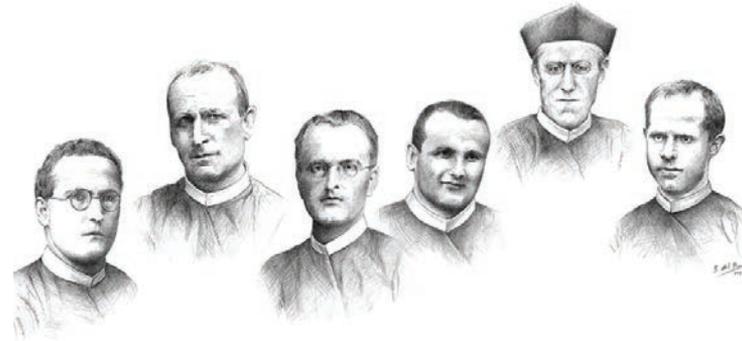
Amen.

Blessed José Javier Gorosterratzu and Companions

Martyrs

November 6

The violent religious persecution unleashed in Spain against anything Catholic and initiated with the destruction and profanation of churches and convents a little before the civil war, grew notably during the years of that conflict, which lasted from 1936 until 1939. In those years, the religious persecution became increasingly cruel until it reached its maximum expression with the killing of bishops, priests, religious and faithful laity, who were shamefully massacred. During that dramatic period, six Redemptorists, among others from the community of San Felipe in Cuenca, suffered martyrdom: Father Jose Javier Gorosterratzu Jaunarena (1877-1936), who was arrested on August 10, 1936, and shot in the city cemetery even as he pardoned his killers; Father Ciriaco Olarte Pérez (1893-1936), a missionary in Mexico who had escaped persecution there, was arrested in Spain on July 31, 1936, and shot near the chapel of “the Virgin of Sorrows,” where they left him to bleed to death; Father Julián Pozo Ruiz de Samaniego (1903-1936), devoted to the ministry of reconciliation and the care of the sick, was arrested on



August 9, 1936, and shot on the road as he recited the rosary; Father Miguel Goñi Ariz (1902-1936), tireless preacher of parish missions, was arrested and shot along with Father Olarte Pérez, and both were left to die in long hours of agony; Brother Victor (Victoria-no) Caalvo Lozano (1896-1936), a coadjutor brother with an heroic spirit of service, was arrested and shot together with Father Gorosterratzu; Father Pedro Romero Espejo (1871-1938), who, in order to not put in danger the family who welcomed him during the persecution, abandoned that home to live on the streets, dedicating himself to others and exercising his priestly ministry until June 1938, when they put him in jail, where he died on July 4, 1938, as a consequence of dysentery. All were beatified in Tarragona on October 13, 2013, at a joint celebration of beatification of 522 martyrs of the twentieth century in Spain.

The shrine of Blessed José Javier Gorosterratzu and Companions is at the church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Madrid, Spain.

Prayer in Honor of the Redemptorist Martyrs of Cuenca

God our Father, you brought Blessed José Javier and his fellow martyrs, with the help of the Mother of God, to the imitation of Christ—even to the point of shedding their blood. Grant us, through their intercession, to profess the same faith with courage, in both word and deed. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed Maria Celeste Crostarosa

Religious and foundress of Redemptoristines



September 14

Blessed Maria Celeste Crostarosa was born in Naples, Italy, on October 31, 1696. At the age of twenty she entered a Carmelite monastery. When this monastery was suppressed, she went to Scala in the hills above Naples, where she entered a monastery living the Visitation Rule.

Under the direction of Bishop Thomas Falcoia, and with the cooperation of St. Alphonsus, Maria Celeste reformed the monastery according to a revelation she had received from the Lord. She founded the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptoristines) on May 13, 1731. Their vocation is to be a “living memory” of Jesus Christ, witnessing to the paschal mystery.

In 1733, Maria Celeste was forced to leave Scala, and eventually she was called to Foggia, where she founded the Monastery of the Most Holy Savior.

The spiritual journey of Maria Celeste, favored by many mystical experiences, was characterized by obe-

dience to conscience, by constant searching for the meaning of the gospel, and by living simply.

Maria Celeste died at Foggia on September 14, 1755. At the moment of her death, St. Gerard Majella, her spiritual friend, saw her soul flying to heaven as a white dove. On June 18, 2016, she was declared Blessed by Pope Francis.

The Shrine of Blessed

Maria Celeste Crostarosa is in Foggia, Italy.

A Prayer in Honor of Blessed Maria Celeste Crostarosa

Loving God, by the gifts of your Holy Spirit, Maria Celeste responded to inspirations received in the depths of her contemplative prayer. Help me, through her intercession, to open myself to deep contemplative prayer and communion with your will. Give me a portion of her listening, her love, and her courage, that through union with you in prayer, I may become that “living memory of Jesus, our Redeemer” in my family, in my workplace, and in my ministry, for the sake of all your created world. Amen.

Venerable Joseph Passerat

Priest

October 30

Joseph Passerat was born in Joinville, France, in 1772. He served as a drum major and quartermaster in Napoleon’s army until he eventually fled into Germany. Experiencing a call to religious life, Passerat journeyed to Warsaw, Poland, where, under the direction of Clement Hofbauer, he entered the Redemptorist Congregation. With Passerat’s skill and Hofbauer’s zeal, the two proved a formidable team. For twenty years they collaborated in the expansion of the Congregation, and Clement chose Passerat to succeed him as vicar general of the Redemptorists in northern Europe.

As Vicar General, Passerat sent the first six Redemptorists to the United States in 1832 and for twenty-eight years fostered the American mission. Saint Clement called him “the Great Pray-er.” He died in 1858.



*The remains of Venerable Joseph Passerat are buried
in the town of Bischenberg/Bischoffsheim, France.*

“Love of neighbor” by Joseph Passerat

If there is anyone I do not love, I do not have “love of neighbor.” If I do not love my neighbor, I do not love God... What consoles me is that I must not love the faults of the neighbor, but the person, created in the image of God, redeemed at the price of the blood of Jesus Christ... If I love my neighbor, I love God... My course of action in the practice of charity towards my neighbor is to have neither in my actions, nor in my manners, nor in my thoughts, nor in my words, anything which, if he knew it, could displease him... O God, give me the treasure of “the love of my neighbor.”

Venerable Alfred Pampalon

Priest



September 30

Alfred Pampalon was born November 24, 1867, in Levis, near Quebec City, Canada. He was one of eight children, and when he was five his mother died. Although somewhat frail, Alfred was an excellent athlete. As a student he was devout, prayerful, and helpful.

Alfred felt a desire to devote his life to God’s service. It seems his decision to join the Redemptorists came after a serious illness in 1885. During his years of formation and study in Belgium, his classmates dubbed him “the Lamb of God,” a testimony to his piety and gentleness. He was ordained in 1892.

Alfred contracted tuberculosis and in 1895 returned to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré in Canada. He was renowned as a confessor and spiritual director, especially among the poor. He died on September 30, 1895, at the age of twenty-eight. His heroic virtues were officially acknowledged by St. John Paul II on May 14, 1991. Devotion to him as a patron of alcoholics and drug addicts is growing.

Venerable Alfred Pampalon is buried in the lower chapel of the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec, in Canada.

***Prayer to Venerable Alfred Pampalon,
Patron of Alcoholics and Drug Addicts***

Dear Father Alfred, listen to my cry and come to my aid. Obtain for me the favors I desire. You are well known as the protector of people who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit.

You show special compassion for alcoholics and drug addicts. You have freed so many people from their dependencies. Free me also, I beg you, dear Father Alfred, and free those people I recommend to you, especially members of my family.

I come to you with confidence. I pray for myself and for all those who are dear to me. Come also to the assistance of the Church and of the whole world. Amen.

Redemptorists Named as “Venerable”

- ✠ Fr. Vitus-Michael Di Netta (1788-1849)
- ✠ Fr. Paolo Cafaro (1707-1753)
- ✠ Bro. Dominic Blasucci (1732-1752)
- ✠ Fr. Joseph-Armand Passerat (1772-1858)
- ✠ Fr. Antonio Maria Losito (1838-1918)
- ✠ Fr. Wilhelm Janauschek (1859-1926)
- ✠ Fr. Pelágio Sauter (1878-1961)
- ✠ Fr. Bernard Łubieński (1846-1933)



SECTION FOUR

Other Ways to Pray

*Gaze at the passion...you will find there
all the reasons to love God.*

St. Alphonsus



What is prayer? “The fruit of silence is prayer,” wrote St. Teresa of Calcutta. The Lord’s Prayer is often called the perfect prayer because it includes the primary prayer forms: adoration and praise, thanksgiving, petition, intercession, and forgiveness. Many of us were taught that prayer is lifting our minds and hearts to God. One teacher called it a conversation between us and God—speaking and listening. A missionary preacher took this further and said that prayer is a relationship with God, revealing ourselves—including the ugly parts and the thorny issues—and allowing God, with infinite patience, to reveal God’s self to us. Truly, we cannot capture the intimate mystery between God and each one of us.

Saint Alphonsus is often called the Doctor of Prayer, in his spirit, we offer here a description of some prayer forms and styles.

Prepare Yourself to Pray:

- ✠ Find a quiet place.
- ✠ Choose a posture that is comfortable but attentive.
- ✠ Remember that you are in the presence of God and open yourself to God’s Spirit.
- ✠ With all prayer forms, it may be helpful to record your experience in a prayer journal and return to it from time to time.

Praying With Scripture

When we pray with Scripture, we don't approach the text in an intellectual way; rather, we allow God to speak to us directly through the text.

Once you have prepared yourself to pray:

- ✝ Open your Bible to the text you have chosen.
- ✝ Read the passage through slowly.
- ✝ Read it through again, slower this time. Mull over a word or phrase that touches you or catches your attention.
- ✝ Stay with whatever feelings, inspirations, or thoughts come to you.
- ✝ Allow God to speak to you in silence.
- ✝ Respond to God—share your feelings and thoughts with God. You may want to offer a prayer or hymn of thanksgiving.

Foundational Passages That Inspire and Support Redemptorist Spirituality

Matthew 5:1–12

The Christian covenant

Psalm 130

Motto of the Redemptorists from verse 7

Luke 4:16–21

Missionary spirituality

1 Timothy 2:4

God wants all to be saved; often quoted by Alphonsus

Matthew 9:35–38

Compassion, sheep without a shepherd

Matthew 25:31–46

Our final judgment; living the kingdom

Luke 12:49–51

Holy Spirit and missionary zeal;
Alphonsus' first homily was on this text

1 Corinthians 13

Love; *The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ* is based on this passage

Matthew 11:28–30

Gentleness: an important theme with Alphonsus;
Redemptorist missionaries in footsteps of Jesus

Isaiah 63:19—64:1

First text on which Alphonsus preached as a
deacon.

2 Philippians 5–11

The humility of God; the self-emptying of Christ;
the vulnerability of God.



Praying With the Imagination

Some people find another method of praying with Scripture helpful. In it, we bring the power of our imagination to bear on a Bible scene and enter the incident we are considering. This method of prayer is more suitable for use with action scenes rather than with teaching passages.

Once you have prepared yourself to pray:

- ✦ Read the passage through slowly.
- ✦ Read the passage again, trying to place yourself in the action that is happening.
- ✦ Allow yourself to enter the scene. You may feel the heat of the day; you may feel hurt or angry. Note your own feelings and responses and share them with the Lord.

Centering Prayer

In centering prayer we repeat a prayer word over and over again to help us stay centered on the Lord. We quiet ourselves in order to discover God at the center of our lives.

Once you have prepared yourself to pray:

- ✝ Simply sit, relaxed and quiet, enjoying your own inner calm and silence. Listen to God's presence in you and allow yourself to be touched by it.
- ✝ After a few moments, gently start repeating a single word such as, *Jesus, Lord, Love*, or any word that you choose. Place into this word all your faith and love as it leads you deeper into God.
- ✝ Continue to repeat the word, using it to block out thoughts and images. If you get distracted, do not worry; simply return to the word.
- ✝ As you come out of prayer, move slowly to a silent awareness of your surroundings and then pray the Our Father or Glory Be.

Consciousness Examen

This form of prayer helps us appreciate the importance of our own experience and see how God has been present with us in our daily lives. It's helpful to use it at the end of each day as we look at how we have reacted during the course of the day, where God has been leading us, and how we have responded.

Once you have prepared yourself to pray:

- ✝ Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you back over your day and to guide you in your prayer.
- ✝ "Play back" the significant events of the day.
- ✝ Stay with what seemed to be the most significant events of the day. What was God calling you to do or to be? How did you respond?
- ✝ Depending on your response to God, give thanks or ask for pardon—or both.
- ✝ Resolve to do or to be whatever God asks of you in the future. Make the resolution practical and something concrete, for example, to say "sorry" to someone you've hurt.

Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a gift through which our sins are forgiven and we are reconciled to God and to one another. We are encouraged to grow in awareness of how we treat our brothers and sisters, for through that awareness, we will be strengthened to grow in holiness and in grace.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori wrote that three things are needed for a good confession:

- 1) A thorough examination of conscience,
- 2) sorrow for sin, and
- 3) firm resolve to quit sin.

The steps followed in the sacrament of reconciliation are:

- ✠ Examination of conscience
- ✠ Expression of sorrow for the sins you have committed
- ✠ Confession of your sins to God through the priest
- ✠ Assignment of penance
- ✠ Praying an act of contrition
- ✠ Granting of absolution
- ✠ Carrying out the penance

Prayer Before Examination of Conscience:

Holy Spirit, source of truth, grant me light to see myself as God sees me. Give me the grace to be truly sorry for my sins and the strength and courage to accept the Father's love and turn more and more to walk in the ways of Jesus Christ. Amen.

After Confession:

Saint Alphonsus wrote, "After confession, thank Almighty God for the pardon which you hope to have received, and renew your good resolution never more to offend Him, and to avoid all occasions of sin; and pray to Jesus and Mary for perseverance."



Conclusion

This prayer book was born out of the desire, expressed by vowed Redemptorists, Redemptorist Associates, Lay Missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer, and others, to create a resource that all could share as we walk together as followers of St. Alphonsus.

Together we realize the emerging face of the “Redemptorist family,” which is made up of vowed and ordained, married and single, men and women. With varied degrees of belonging and commitment, we unite our gifts in service of our shared mission of “evangelizing the poor and being evangelized by the poor.” In his day, St. Alphonsus taught ordinary people to pray and engaged them in the catechetical mission of the Church. Saint Clement Hofbauer formed circles of laypeople, equipping them with the skills to go out into society as leaven, proclaiming “plentiful redemption” by their witness and by explicit proclamation of the gospel.

We are the heirs of Sts. Alphonsus and Clement, and we follow in the footsteps trod by countless members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

and Partners in Mission. We dedicate our lives to following “the example of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, by preaching the word of God to the poor” (Constitution 1). In the heart of the Church, this continues to be our charism. We believe our partnership is a “sign of our times, that opens us up more and more to experience the Church as People of God and a mystery of communion.”

We pray for an increase of willing laborers for the harvest, and in the words of the prayer that follows this reflection, we ask God to open hearts to receive the message of redeeming love and share in diverse ways in the life and ministry of plentiful redemption.



Prayer for Vocations to the Redemptorist Family

Provident God,

*you spoke your dream of plentiful redemption
in Jesus Christ.*

*Your Spirit ignited the heart of St. Alphonsus,
inspiring him to found a family in the Church
dedicated to proclaiming the good news
of plentiful redemption to the most abandoned.*

Raise up among us

*strong women and men of faith,
afire with love for you
and zeal for the mission of proclaiming your word
among those who do not know you,
or who need to hear your word proclaimed anew.*

*Guide men to respond with generosity
as vowed Redemptorist, priests and brothers,
and women and men to serve in joy and hope
as partners in the Redemptorist mission.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus,
your Word, who is our Life.*

Amen.

Calendar

St. John Neumann	January 5
Blessed Peter Donders	January 14
St. Clement Hofbauer	March 15
Eucharistic Heart of Jesus	Thursday after third Sunday after Pentecost
Our Mother of Perpetual Help	June 27
Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky and Companions	June 28 (June 27 in Ukrainian Church)
Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli	June 30
Solemnity of the Most Holy Redeemer (<i>Titular feast of the Congregation</i>)	3rd Sunday in July
St. Alphonsus Liguori	August 1
Blessed Methodius Trčka	August 25
Blessed Maria Celeste Crostarosa	September 11
Blessed Kaspar Stanggassinger	September 26
Venerable Alfred Pampalon	September 30
Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos	October 5
St. Gerard Majella	October 16
Venerable Joseph Passerat	October 30
Blessed José Javier Gorosterratzu and Companions	November 6
Founding of the Congregation	November 9
Immaculate Conception of Mary (<i>Patroness of the Congregation</i>)	December 8



Many other resources related to
Redemptorist spirituality and partnership
in mission can be found at cssr.net.