



DOCUMENT *of the*
general commission
for **REDEMPTORIST BROTHERS**



"Witnesses of the Redeemer in solidarity for mission to a wounded world"

CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

The General Commission for the Brothers

This document was produced by the *General Commission for Redemptorist Brothers* and was approved by the General Superior, Fr. Michael Brehl in May of 2020. A letter by Fr. General introduces the document. After a listing of the contents, the reflections are presented in four main sections:

- 1. The Situation of Redemptorist Brothers Today**
- 2. The identity of the Redemptorist Brother**
- 3. Specific suggestions and program**
- 4. Conclusions**

The Document is available in the three official languages of the Congregation.



CONGREGATIO SS. REDEMPTORIS

Superior Generalis

Rome, May 1, 2020
0000 055/2020

Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

Dear Confreres,

From the very beginning of the Congregation, the Brothers' vocation has been recognized as an integral part of our Redemptorist Identity. Remember the importance of Bro. Vito Curzio! Brothers have made an important contribution to the development of the Congregation over the years both in our community life and in our mission. Recent General Chapters have noted with concern the dramatic decline in the number of Redemptorist Brothers, and especially, the decline in candidates to this vocation.

Recognizing the seriousness of the current situation, the 25th General Chapter mandated the General Council to establish a Commission for Brothers (Dec #23) to analyse the current situation in order to offer the General Council by the Mid-Sexennial Meetings proposals for concrete programs and their implementation throughout the Congregation.

The Commission has completed the task entrusted to it and a report of this work was presented at the Mid-Sexennial Meetings in 2019. Taking into account the response from those Meetings, the Commission now offers the Congregation the attached Document for our reflection and consideration.

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This document has a particular structure. The first section addresses the current situation of the Brothers, outlining the “lights and shadows” that surfaced as a result of the analysis undertaken. The Commission acknowledges that the “shadows” may seem negative and pessimistic. This is not by choice of the Commission but as a result of the investigation into the reality. Unfortunately, this is our current situation. The number of Brothers and their perseverance in the Congregation has been rapidly declining in recent years, so much so that throughout the Congregation, confreres are asking questions about the identity and role of the Redemptorist Brother, and whether they are still integral to our missionary identity today. Faced with this uncertainty it is not difficult to see why there is so little enthusiasm for the promotion of the vocation of the Redemptorist Brother.

Undoubtedly, the most challenging issue raised by the inquiry into the situation of the Brothers is the Identity question. For this reason, the Commission has dedicated an entire section to it (Section 2), recognizing that reflecting on the issues and how to respond is absolutely necessary for planning a way forward. The question about the identity of the Brother is not new, it has always been with us. But we have just failed to address it in a systematic way and respond with concrete solutions.

However, Identifying and naming the causes of a problem is only part of the task. While it is an important step, it is more important is to propose possible solutions. To this end the Commission, in section three of the document, offers some steps that can be taken to address the issue of the decline of Brothers in the Congregation.

It is the hope of the Commission and General Council that each Unit uses the document as a tool for reflection, espe-

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cially sections 1 and 2. These sections can be used as material for reflection and discussion at a community retreat/recollection day, or at a (V)Province or Region assembly or convocation. The fruits of such reflections should be gathered and studied with a view to future concrete action.

Section 3 - “Specific Suggestions and Programs” provides concrete programs for implementation. It offers suggestions to help Units and Conferences assure more effective vocation promotion, integral formation of candidates and students, and the rightful participation of Brothers in the mission of the Congregation.

The General Council believes that this work of the Commission is an important contribution to us as a Congregation, especially as we continue the process of restructuring. It can help us deepen our understanding of who we are as Redemptorists and our mission in the Church and world today. We ask each Unit to use this document as a “Working Document” on the vocation of Redemptorist Brothers today. Doing so will challenge us to think more deeply about the vocation of all Redemptorists. We ask that you share the results of your deliberations on the document with the Secretariat or Commission for Brothers of your Conference, especially any concrete plans or recommendations you have in relation to the vocation of the Redemptorist Brother today. In doing so, you will be contributing to the ongoing discussion in relation to this important challenge.

Once again, on behalf of the Congregation, I express our very sincere gratitude to the Commission for Brothers. I also express my gratitude to the Conference Commissions for Brothers and to the many confreres who offered their contributions. May your collaboration bear fruit in prophetic and authentic witness to the Redeemer through greater solidarity for mission in our

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wounded world.

May Our Mother of Perpetual Help, St. Alphonsus, St. Gerard, St. Clement and all our pioneers in the charism and mission of the Redemptorists continue to inspire us and bless our efforts to follow the Redeemer as he preaches the Gospel to the poor today!

Your Brother in Christ our Redeemer,

Michael Brehl, C.S.R.

Fr. Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R,
Superior General



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BROTHERS COMMISSION DOCUMENT

*Witnesses of the Redeemer, in solidarity for
mission to a wounded world*

1. THE SITUATION OF REDEMPTORIST BROTHERS TODAY

1.1. Introduction

Through the past decades there has been a growing interest on the part of the Redemptorist Congregation to reflect on the situation of the Brothers, taking into consideration factors such as declining numbers and non-clarity of identity to discuss possible approaches toward responding to these realities. Both at the level of Conferences and Units, there have been attempts to seriously discuss the current crisis and what can be done to reverse the trends.

The XXV General Chapter made three decisions regarding the vocation of the Brothers in the Congregation (Decisions 23, 27, 29). Consequently, a Brothers Commission was established and tasked with analyzing the current situation of the Brothers and to offer to the General Council by the mid sexennium, concrete programs and suggestions for implementation

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throughout the Congregation. The Commission carried out a survey that involved all units of the congregation in an attempt: a) to complete a thorough analysis of the current situation of the Brothers, b) to clearly articulate an identity of the Brothers that defines their role and tasks in the congregation, c) to respond positively to the challenges and needs that arise in the course of this process. The results of this survey echo previous discussions about the state of the Brothers in the Congregation.

1.2. The Situation of the Brothers Today: Shadows

A number of elements constitute the shadows: the declining number of Brothers in the congregation, the aging of the Brothers without younger members entering, the weaknesses both in the vocation promotion and in the formation of the Brother, the lack of clarity of identity as Brothers within the context of clericalism in a mixed congregation, the need to continue developing the meaning of consecrated life and, finally, the mentality of the ordained members (priests) and their attitude towards the vocation of the Brothers.

1.2.1. Declining Numbers

As of the spring of 2020, the following statistics show the numbers of Brothers in the different Conferences:

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Conference	Brothers in perpetual vows	Brothers in temporary vows	TOTAL
Europe	100	03	103
North America	42	02	44
Latin America	99	19	118
Asia-Oceania	43	09	52
Africa and Madagascar	15	04	19
Total	299	37	336

Over the years, the total number of Brothers has been decreasing rapidly. In 1992, there were 759 brothers. In 2020, only 28 years later, that number has reduced to only 336.

1.2.2. The unclear identity of the Brothers that impact their role in the congregation

There is no question regarding the identity of the Redemptorist missionary. The Constitution and Statutes define this identity clearly. (Cons.55). However, this identity has been more clearly associated with a sacramental expression, thus generally excluding the Brothers.

An important factor is how the consecrated life has been

transformed by clericalism. Despite the presence of religious Brothers in the Church for centuries, there is still a misconception that one can only be a male religious if one becomes a priest. Historically, clericalism has so influenced the minds of the faithful that only priests are recognized as having an important role in the Church's ministry. All other ministries only seem to support or point towards the priest. There has been a lack of understanding of the consecrated and missionary life as a vocation flowing from baptism. Consecrated life has been seen rather as a vocation to the sacrament of orders, thus reinforcing the authority of the clerical state.

1.2.3. Limitations in the promotion of the Brother's vocation

Due to the lack of a clear identity and understanding of the Brother's vocation as a consecrated religious, there are immediate difficulties to promote the vocation of the Brothers. There is a tendency to define the Brother from the perspective of the "negative way": what is not, rather than who he is. In doing so, the beauty and value of the Brothers' vocation is not emphasized. It is not perceived as a possibility, but as a denial of a desired value.

As a result, vocation promoters find it difficult to promote Brother's vocation. If you do not understand what something is, then how do you explain it? This is especially true for the lay members of vocation promotion teams who do not have adequate guidance and understanding of the specific vocation of the Brothers. In addition, there have been problems in the pro-

duction of promotional materials used to attract vocations; they lack a clear portrayal of the identity of the vocation itself.

Other factors that contribute to poor promotion of a Brother's vocation include no full-time staff, lack of support from confreres who are too busy with their commitments, limited opportunity for the Brothers to be "visible" during important liturgical celebrations and in other aspects of the Redemptorist mission.

1.2.4. Weaknesses in the Initial and Continuing Formation program for the Brothers

Before Vatican II, there was a clearer program for the formation of the Brothers, despite the limitations of such a program. But as changes occurred after the Second Vatican Council, several congregations, including the Redemptorist Congregation, found it difficult to adjust their formation programs to reflect contemporary pastoral realities, as well as the emphasis of lay ministry within the Church.

There are few Units in the congregation that do have a well-designed formation program for the Brothers, which identify the objectives at each stage of formation and how these objectives should be achieved. Unfortunately, this is the exception, not the norm. Formation programs often face difficulties in terms of limited availability of staff and lack of understanding of the Brother's vocation as distinct from the clerical vocation. Often, the confreres who are available for formation ministry lack the necessary skills to be effective formators.

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In most of the units, *formandi* for both clerical and Brothers vocations are placed together in the same formation program. In the process, non-clerical candidates do not receive adequate attention to the Brother's unique vocation and spirituality. Clerical candidates are generally given more attention and the emphasis on preparation for sacramental ministry becomes blurred with apostolic life. In addition, formative programs that emphasize that all “members are equal” unfortunately can minimize the unique differences between clerics and Brothers in the congregation. Additionally, very few units have a Brother who is a member of the formation team.

After temporary vows, many Brothers do not receive sufficient accompaniment by someone who can guide and mentor, as well as help in the transition to a true community experience. In general, an adequate program for the formation of Brothers taking into account the mission of the congregation as a whole and of the unit has not been developed. Asking the Brother (candidate) to define where he feels called to contribute to the Congregation with his gifts, while necessary is not sufficient. A clear and well-defined accompaniment program capable of helping the Brother candidate and the Congregation at the same time is what is missing.

1.2.5. Specific “tasks” in the Redemptorist mission

Before Vatican II there was a strong focus on work as mission. Most of the Brothers “work” was generally defined by the domestic needs of churches, shrines and communities (convents, monasteries, rectories). Very few Brothers had tasks be-

yond the manual labor assigned to them. In the missions, the Brothers were the technical support to the priests who preached and administered sacraments. Consequently, there was not a need to take a college course or to study Theology. Eventually, this led to some of the Brothers feeling inferior to the priest, especially if ordained confreres treated them as second-class members.

With Vatican II changes began to occur in some units of the congregation. Due to the new pastoral needs, as well as the expansion of mission ministries, the Brothers began to pursue specialized studies or training so that they could assume administrative and other functions within the mission. Not all units moved in this direction. Some found it difficult to introduce such changes. In units that failed to develop strategies for Brothers to offer and develop their gifts and talents, the vocation of the Brothers suffered.

1.2.6. Perspective and attitude of ordained confreres toward the Brothers

There is still a presence of an old mentality of a negative perception of the Brothers. Within the congregation there have been ordained confreres whose treatment of the Brothers not only caused tensions among them but also have directly blocked the promotion of the Brothers vocation. Some seem resigned to a pessimistic perspective and are convinced that there is no place for the Brothers in the congregation. Among many confreres, clericalism is also prevalent resulting in the diminishment of the value of the Brothers' vocation. This also results in the demorali-

zation of the Brothers themselves.

Others say that it is so difficult these days to define the vocation of the Brothers, so why recruit? There are those who do not realize that it is the vocation to religious life and not simply the vocation of Brother that is in crisis. There are also some confreres who see the lack of priests as a crisis situation and, therefore, believe that we should concentrate more on recruiting and training priests. There are still others who believe that since the congregation has opened its doors to the active participation of lay collaborators, there is no need for Brothers. These attitudes are some of the reasons why candidates are not attracted to the Brothers vocation or leave after a few years.

1.3. The Situation of the Brothers Today: Lights

We have focused above on the crisis of the Brothers vocation in the congregation. It must be noted that there is light amidst the shadows. The following are the significant positive trends of the Brothers' vocation in the congregation:

- a) As a result of the new reflections on the vocation and the role of the Brothers after the Second Vatican Council, there has been a change both in the formation of the Brothers and in the different types of ministries in which they are involved. Today, the Brothers are not only involved in domestic tasks in the church / sanctuary, but are also engaged in other ministries: e.g., professor, financial manager, health worker, experts in disaster risk management, etc. A man desirous of being a Brother en-

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tering the congregation, who already has professional training or is interested in practicing a profession is as welcome as someone who would voluntarily attend to the needs of our homes and churches / sanctuaries.

- b) The initial formation of the Brothers is no longer limited to religious formation for sacramental ministry but can also include training for a profession. Many are encouraged to complete a university program. The study of theology is also highly encouraged.
- c) In order to avoid getting lost in the mix with clerical students, there has been a strong impetus for a separate but adequate, initial formation program for Brothers. Currently, Brazil's experience in this field is providing a model for other units. As a result, more Brothers have received specialized training and are being prepared to be part of formation Teams and other ministries.
- d) In some units, the Brothers are elected to the Ordinary or Extraordinary Council. In the present General Council, one member is a Brother. At the XXV General Chapter, a Brother represented the Provincial of his Unit who could not attend due to illness.
- e) The XXV General Chapter made a decision to revitalize the promotion and formation of the Brothers with the expectation that the individual units will comply.

Reflecting on the reality of the Brother's vocation in the Congregation today, it is clear that defining the identity of the Brother, distinct from that of the ordained Redemptorist is crucial. Although we can generally refer to a Redemptorist identity,

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as was stated earlier, this identity has been more clearly associated with a sacramental expression. The Brothers are generally excluded from this identity. This is the case not only for the Redemptorists, but also for most mixed religious congregations in the church. Therefore, it is very important that we elaborate the identity of a Redemptorist brother.

2. THE IDENTITY OF THE REDEMPTORIST BROTHER

Consecrated life, in the Redemptorist tradition, wisely comprises from its foundations, two ways of being: Brothers and priests who merge into one, a Redemptorist being. The Congregation follows the example of Christ in the apostolic life, which comprises at one and the same time a life specially dedicated to God and a life of missionary work (Cons. 1). The presence of the Brothers reveals that the most important thing in the Congregation is the life of special consecration to God and missionary activity. Therefore, a contemporary theology of the consecrated life is that of being and not of doing and that doing is only the consequence of a being who consecrates himself, as a Redemptorist missionary, to God to serve where He is called with his gifts.

“The evangelical basis of consecrated life is to be sought in the special relationship which Jesus, in his earthly life, established with some of his disciples. He called them not only to welcome the Kingdom of God into their own lives, but also to put their lives at its service, leaving everything behind and closely imitating his own *way of life*.” (Vita Consecrata 14).

2.1. Witnesses of the Redeemer

The Redemptorist Brothers are laymen who choose to belong to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer by religious profession, committing themselves to the Redemptorist

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missionary charism in the Church.

The decree *Perfectae caritatis* n.10 defines the state of the Brother as one who lives the religious life undertaken by the laity, “a state for the profession of the evangelical counsels which is complete in itself.” Religious life has value in and of itself; it does not identify with the ordained ministry and does not depend on it. In the context of consecrated life, especially today, the reality of the Brothers recalls what *Vita Consecrata* n. 60 affirms, “the presence of Brothers constitutes a different form of participation in an Institute's mission, through services rendered both within the community and in the apostolate, in collaboration with those who exercise the priestly ministry.”

The nature of the Brothers vocation is such that they live their identity as consecrated persons, thus manifesting a spirit of total surrender to Christ and the Church according to the Redemptorist charism. “The term Brother suggests a rich spirituality” (VC 60). In a context of consecrated life where community life seems out of date, the presence of the Brothers is very important, because their presence can bring great wealth to the community. In addition, each Brother, by living an authentic religious life, is contributing to the mission of the Congregation.

The reflection “Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church” of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life, reminds us that fraternity is understood as a gift that the Brother receives from the Triune God, a communion of persons, a gift that he shares with his brothers in the fraternal life in

community and a gift that he offers to the world for the building of the Kingdom of God.

2.2. In Solidarity for mission

The identity of the Brother is understood through his total consecration to God. That is the first condition of his being and doing. The Brother must clearly realize that his being is to serve in the various missionary works of the Congregation. Like some confreres who over emphasize the ordained ministry, he is capable of falling into the extreme position of being a “professional” brother that the community cannot count on with his presence.

Brothers are called to be prophets who testify how Jesus lived on this earth and to announce how the Kingdom of God will be in its perfection. They are called to live and witness in a more visible way a sign of fraternity that unites with one another, overcoming the temptation of radical individualism and not to live “in a small circle of close friends, renouncing the realism of the social aspect of the Gospel” (EG 88).

Another prophetic witness of the Brothers is that of the service of charity, because “the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction” (EG 88).

The prophetic witness of being a Redemptorist Brother is

to point out to others the only way to happiness, of greatness, a path that fills us with joy, which is the way of Jesus. To be like Jesus, then, is to be close to the people sharing their joys and sorrows, showing with our love, the fatherly face of God and the motherly caress of the Church. It is witnessing to the Father and his merciful love, with the grace of Christ, being able to instill hope in this humanity of ours marked by anxiety and fear and sometimes, tempted by discouragement. It is making felt the renewing force of the beatitudes, of honesty, of compassion; the value of goodness, of simple, essential life, full of meaning, nourishing hope in the Church.

2.3. In a wounded world

Following the teaching of Pope Francis, we are reminded of the mystical nature of encounter with others and with the least among us. It is “touching the Word made flesh”, it is “seeing and serving Christ in humanity”. In addition, it highlights the apostolic nature of charity towards neighbor that is itself evangelization. Pope Francis summons us to the “revolution of tenderness” (EG 88), to “aggressive tenderness” (EG 85). “Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others ... and instead enter into the reality of other people’s lives and know the power of tenderness” (EG 270). The consecrated person “has to contemplate the word, but he also has to contemplate his people”, “for reading God’s message in events ... what the Lord has to say in this or that particular circumstance” (EG 154).

The Brother is one who can see the power of the Resurrection in his own wounds and in those of the world; one

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who like Jesus, will not approach others with reproach and condemnation. The people of God are not waiting for us, nor do they need us as superheroes. Rather, they expect Brothers full of compassion, who can lend a hand, who can stop and lift up those who have fallen and like Jesus help them to heal their wounds.

Brothers are involved in many apostolic works of the Church. Their mission includes various types of labor, material and technical, the explicit proclamation of Jesus, in spiritual conversation, in spiritual exercises, in catechesis and in teaching. They are available to be sent to those experiencing discrimination, to those who are deprived of their dignity, to those who have no voice or power, to those in search of meaning in their lives, to those who are weak in faith and to those in search of the Good News of Jesus. They are also available to serve in the communities and works that need their help to fulfill the mission of the Church.

The Redemptorist Brother: a man consecrated to God from Baptism, having chosen to follow Jesus in a radical way for the mission, and having the evangelical counsels as an instrument, with a rich spirituality, committed to the Redemptorist charism, with spiritual gifts that help him live completely the first condition of his being and serving as a member of a missionary body. A Man ready to serve in the diverse missionary works of the Congregation in a prophetic way, announcing the full Redemption that he has experienced in Jesus the Redeemer; a man open to live a simple life, essential, full of meaning and joy, nourishing hope in the church through his being. A contempla-

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tive of the Word of God and also a contemplative of the people, an apostolic man who wants to touch human misery, touching the painful flesh of others and knowing the strength of tenderness; a man able to see the power of the resurrection in the wounds of the world. The Redemptorist Brother embodies religious life in its essence, and for this reason, is able to manifest this life with particular clarity (cf. Cons. 20).

3. SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS AND PROGRAMS

3.1. Vocation Promotion

3.1.1. Formation for Vocation Promotion

“Those directing formation, in mutual harmony of mind and purpose, will follow a well thought-out program which is of genuine service to those who look to them for assistance.” (Cons. 83).

To fulfill this mandate we need to provide training for all vocation promoters. This training must include the importance, spirituality and identity of the Brother’s vocation. We suggest the following:

- a) Orientation to understand the role of the Brothers and their participation in the mission of the Congregation;
- b) Participation of all confreres and lay missionaries in vocation promotion;
- c) Highlight the missionary identity of the Redemptorists in vocation promotion;
- d) Involve Brothers in the activities of the vocation promotion team, including in the preparation of vocation promotion material;
- e) Have vocation promoters who are committed to promoting the Brothers vocation;
- f) Where possible, have a Brother on the vocation promotion team.

3.1.2. Vocation Material

“The aim of formation for . . . candidates . . . is to lead them to such a degree of human and Christian maturity that . . . they will be able to dedicate themselves intelligently, willingly and wholeheartedly to the service of the missionary Church in Redemptorists community life, in order to preach the Gospel to the poor.” (Cons. 78)

This requires, therefore, materials that fully represent the Redemptorist Missionary – Brothers and Priests (often, the Brother’s vocation is left out of vocation promotion). Therefore, we suggest the following:

- a) Production of vocation promotion material about the Brothers (electronic and print media);
- b) Produce a documentary about the Brothers in the Congregation;
- c) Prepare a triptych illustrating who the Brother is in the Congregation. It will be put in all our places of ministry
- d) Share material and ideas for vocation promotion of Brothers throughout the Congregation;
- e) Our response to vocation inquiries must indicate that we are a missionary Congregation of Brothers and Priests;
- f) Use social media for the vocation promotion of the Brothers, and when possible have a full-time person dedicated to this ministry (this could be a conference initiative).

3.1.3. At the level of the Conference

Decisions 1 and 2 of the XXV General Chapter affirmed the Conference as part of the renewed structure of the Congregation (cf. XXIV General Chapter Decisions 2.2).

On the level of the Conference we suggest:

- a) That the priorities of the Unit and Conference be clearly stated in the formation program. Vocation promotion must always consider these priorities.
- b) Collaboration for vocation promotion of Brothers;
- c) That a Brother be a member of the Conference council.

3.1.4. Units without Brothers

Through the years there has been a diminishment of the presence of Brothers in the Congregation. However, since the beginning, with the faithfulness of brother Vito, we are made up of Brothers and Priests. The lack of the Brother's presence is contrary to our history. Therefore we should:

- a) Help Units that do not have Brothers to promote the Brothers vocation;
- b) Collaborate between Units with many Brothers and those who do not have Brothers for vocation promotion.

3.2. Initial and permanent formation

From listening to the confreres, we caught a glimpse of the reality of the Brothers in the Congregation. There are advances in some Units and the need to move forward in others. Given

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that we are undergoing a process of reconfiguration and restructuring in our Congregation, we know that as a Redemptorist missionary the Brother must receive adequate formation to prepare him for the apostolic life of the congregation. Knowing that all confreres have responsibility for formation and that we are continually in formation and development (cf Cons. 82), we propose:

- a) The implementation of the decree of the General Government of 2015 regarding the formation of Brothers in temporary vows;
- b) A reorganization of our formation program to be formation for the consecrated life and mission instead of being “a factory for priests”;
- c) While in initial formation, the conscience of the formand in his choice to be a Brother must be respected; the formator does not have the right to push the man to change course toward becoming a Priest;
- d) Adapting our formation program to accommodate Brother candidates who are over 30 years old;
- e) Specific initial formation for the Brothers in collaboration between the Units and Conferences (e.g., one Brother’s formation residence in a conference or using existing Brother’s formation residences in the Congregation);
- f) That the Brothers have an adequate theological-pastoral formation;
- g) Specialized studies for the Brothers in different areas, for example, theology, spirituality, social sciences, information technology, philosophy, business, etc., according to the Brother’s capacity and the needs of the Congregation;

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- h) Establish and maintain structures that will allow for a simple lifestyle in our houses of formation and in our apostolic communities;
- i) Need for ongoing formation on religious consecrated life (Cons. 90; XXV General Chapter Decision 34).

To help us implement these suggestions, we present some concrete actions:

- a) That every unit will review its criteria for admissions for Brother candidates. For example, when considering a candidate for admission, do not over emphasize the academic dimension but rather take into account the human, pastoral, spiritual and community dimensions;
- b) The Formation Secretariat produce a volume on the Brothers as part of its “Tools for Formators” series;
- c) That each Unit and Conference have a formation program for Brothers;
- d) Ongoing formation meetings and/or gatherings for Brothers and on the Brothers vocation.

3.3. Mission

“**All Redemptorists**, urged on by the apostolic spirit, and imbued with the zeal of their founder continue the tradition developed by their confreres in the past, and are ever attentive to the signs of the times. ‘Sent as helpers, companions and minister of Jesus Christ in the great work of Redemption’” (Cons. 2)

Therefore we recommend:

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- a) In our plans (Apostolic Plan, Pastoral Plan and Plan for Community Life) of the conferences, of the Units and of the communities, emphasize ministry beyond the ordinary pastoral care and administering of the sacraments (see Message XXV General Chapter n. 8).

To implement this recommendation, we present the following specific programs:

- a) The ministries that do not require a cleric in the strict sense (sacraments), can be assumed by the Brothers, for example, financial management, project development, counseling, visits to homes and sick people, novenas, extraordinary preaching such as retreats, popular missions, publications, teaching Moral Theology, library, preparation and care of archives, administration, formation, ordinary/extraordinary council, director of employees, spiritual direction, youth ministry, ministry to migrants etc.;
- b) That communities at least two times a year, reflect on and evaluate the Plan for Community Life (PCL) to ensure the Brother's active participation in the mission.

3.4. The Redemptorists are "Apostles of Conversion" (Cons. 11)

"The members must give all their attention to putting on the new self, created in the image of Christ crucified and risen from the dead, so as to purify their motives in judging and acting. For conversion of heart and the continual renewal of mind should characterize their whole daily life." (Cons. 41)

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In response to the call of the XXIV General Chapter “renewed hope, renewed hearts...” and aware of the current reality of our Congregation, we propose:

- a) Making our confreres aware of the importance of vocation promotion for Brothers;
- b) In each plan of community life (PCL), there is space to reflect on the vocation of Brothers;
- c) The identity of the consecrated life (religious profession) is primary for all Redemptorist Missionaries and must be reflected in our programs of initial formation, documents, discourse, etc., (see Cons. 54, 55);
- d) Give more visibility to the presence of the Brothers in the mission and especially during liturgical and special occasions of the Congregation.
- e) To emphasize our consecrated life, at celebrations of profession of vows and jubilees of vows avoid concelebrations where the Sanctuary is filled with Priests in vestments. Instead have all the confreres present (other than the presider) dress in habits and sitting among the people
- f) When a retreat preacher is invited to our communities, always indicate to him or her that we are a Congregation of Priests and Brothers; Do not prepare a retreat focusing only on the priestly life;
- g) In the spirit of restructuring and reconfiguration, where civil law will allow and it is not too costly, change the name by which we are represented publicly from ‘Redemptorist Fathers’ to ‘Redemptorist Missionaries’ or at

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- least ‘Redemptorists’; (thus taking advantage of the new Units that will need naming)
- h) When referring to candidates for the priesthood in the seminaries, do not call them 'Brothers', reserving this denomination only to the Religious Brothers;
 - i) A new *Communicanda* on the Brothers Vocation be published (eg. *Communicanda* 64 of 01/03/1982, Fr. Josef Pfab);
 - j) Confront all forms of clericalism present in our Congregation and in the Church, when possible, by changing our speech and behavior, in our communities and within our ministerial sites;
 - k) In Units that have representative Chapters, ensure the presence of the Brothers at the Chapter;
 - l) Create spaces for dialogue between generations to overcome conflicts and tensions, helping to grow in communion (Brehl *Communicanda* 2, No.100);
 - m) Present and pray for the vocation of the Brothers in our celebrations and especially in our mission preaching;
 - n) Promote meetings/gatherings of Brothers at the conference level to strengthen their vocation.
 - o) Major superiors of Units do more to encourage the Brothers to attend meetings and gatherings regarding Brothers at the unit, conference and international levels;
 - p) Change the expression of Brother Coadjutor (Statute 01, 05 in the Spanish and Statute 05 in the Italian versions) to Religious Brother, which is the form currently used in the church.

4. CONCLUSION

In the Gospel of Matthew 20: 25-26 we read: “But Jesus summoned them and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant’...”

Constitution 74 reminds us “Since the fundamental norm of the religious life is the following of Christ as presented in the Gospel, this must be considered as the supreme rule” (PC, 2a) in our Congregation.

Being an apostle of change and conversion, (cf. Cons. 11) the Redemptorist can only offer what he himself has experienced. The Gospel and our Constitutions and Statutes always challenge us to make present the Kingdom that we so easily preach. We have lived the experience of the past, with its division between clergy and lay Brother we are now experiencing the present, with its movement towards recognizing the dignity of each Redemptorist. We know that we still have a long way to go toward eradicating the mentality of clericalism in the Congregation and in the Church.

The XXV General Chapter recognized the impact of clericalism and Pope Francis continues to call us to conversion in this area. The only way to really experience change is to change our way of thinking and acting. The way forward for us is to revisit our founding narrative. **We are all missionaries.** The Spirit,

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who does all things for the common good, has given each one of us a unique calling to express the charism that we so cherish in our hearts. Some of us express that charism as Priests others as Brothers. Only by recognizing and appreciating our differences in living the charism, can we truly be witnesses of the Redeemer in solidarity for mission. The wounded world awaits the good news that in God there is plentiful redemption.

A final exhortation from Saint Paul (1 Cor. 12: 13-20):

“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,' it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body,' it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

General Commission for Brothers

Gerardo Giordano – *Conference of Europe*

Laurence Luján – *Conference of North America*

Pedro Magalhães – *Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean*

Marcos Vinícius Ramos – *Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean*

Carlito Gaspar – *Conference of Asia-Oceania*

Léon Masiala – *Conference of Africa and Madagascar*

Jeffrey Rolle – *Consultor General*

Rogério Gomes – *Consultor General*