

## **Message of Fr. Rogerio Gomes, the Superior General on the occasion of the Online Meeting with Redemptorist Oblates from across the congregation**

Dear Redemptorist Oblates:

1. It is a great joy as the General Government to meet you on this special day. Welcome! It is good to see so many faces from different cultures, which reflects the cultural diversity of our Congregation, present in 85 countries. And you are part of that group! The purpose of this gathering is to express our deep gratitude for being part of this mission together with us, as valuable fellow travelers and dedicated collaborators in the Redemptorist mission. We thank you immensely for the work you do, for your commitment, dedication and love with which you contribute to our mission. With your vocations and gifts, you enrich and strengthen our journey.
2. With this meeting, we wish to bring you a message of encouragement and hope: “We are missionaries of hope, walking in the footsteps of the Redeemer.” We remind you that the congregation does not walk alone, but shares its missionary charism with you. We are a missionary body in which each member has a fundamental role to play. As the apostle Paul reminds us, “The body is one and has many members, and all the members, though they are many, are one body...” (1 Cor. 12:12), we, Redemptorists and lay people associated with our mission, also form a family that embraces the Redeemer's mission of proclaiming his plentiful redemption.
3. This bond that unites us is charismatic, spiritual and missionary. In a world as complex as the one we live in, where selfishness seems to prevail, being an oblate reminds us of the profound dimension of gratuitousness and willingness to serve. In this way, together with you, the Congregation can broaden the proclamation of plentiful redemption and build a world that is more just, fraternal and full of hope, especially for the poorest and most abandoned. I hope that this meeting will be a living sign of our communion and the congregation's support for your Christian life and your commitment to proclaiming the Gospel. Woe to us if we do not proclaim the Gospel! (cf. 1 Cor 9:16).
4. Our General Statutes state that “the Congregation may associate oblates, both clerics and laity. It must consider and form them as permanent or temporary cooperators in our apostolate” (Ext. 02). They “share the spirit

and missionary activity of the Congregation and must receive adequate preparation and live in constant communion with us, according to the norms established by each (Vice)Province” (cf. Est. 085). I would like to insist on this point: you share the missionary spirit and activity of the Congregation and must be properly trained to live in communion with us. In other words, the Congregation has the task of forming you in its charism and spirituality.

5. Surely one day, a provincial superior or a Redemptorist community told you that you had been chosen to be Redemptorist Oblates, and this must have brought you deep joy. What does it mean to be an oblate? Being an Oblate has a very deep meaning.
6. From Latin *oblatio*, means offering, giving, donation or sacrifice. In ancient religions, the oblate was one who offered gifts or sacrifices to the deity. In Christian terms, it refers to a person who offers himself to God, dedicating his life or work to the service of the Lord. In other words, the oblate is one who makes an oblation, which can be an offering made to God, either of material or spiritual goods, or an act of giving something to someone with deep devotion and dedication. In the past, people donated their goods to a religious order or consecrated their service to that order without taking vows. In this way, the person was acknowledged to have a deep connection with the charism and spirituality, valuing total dedication without being bound by religious vows. While not taking vows, oblates associate themselves with the mission, charism and spirituality of the order or institute, committing themselves to living these principles in their daily lives, work and service to the Church.
7. This is an overview of what it means to be an oblate. Now the question arises: what does it mean to be a Redemptorist oblate? Being a Redemptorist oblate means being deeply associated with the charism, mission and spirituality of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, a missionary congregation. Redemptorist oblates are lay people, priests or bishops who share the Redemptorist charism and are dedicated to collaborating with the congregation's mission of proclaiming the Gospel, especially to the poor and most abandoned. Oblates do not take the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience and perseverance like religious, but freely and voluntarily commit themselves to be part of the Redemptorist family,

dedicating part of their lives to the evangelizing work of the Congregation. Many of you contribute by helping us financially, with work in our institutions and in missionary and pastoral activities in our parishes. Thank you very much for this!

8. The Redemptorist oblate is passionate about the Gospel and, because of this, becomes a collaborator in the congregation's mission. Although he or she does not live within a religious community, he or she shares the same passion to bring the Gospel to the needy and to promote justice and solidarity. This is in line with the congregation's founding text, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because, he has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set the oppressed free; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19). The oblate's manner of action and spiritual life are important in encouraging the faithful to live out their consecration.
9. I would like to emphasize some important aspects of being a Redemptorist oblate. As mentioned above, the oblate is one who offers his or her life to God and neighbor, seeking to live the Gospel according to the Redemptorist charism. Inspired by the example of St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, other Redemptorist saints, blesseds and martyrs, the oblate seeks to reflect in his daily life the values of mercy, redemption and care for the poorest and most abandoned. He actively participates in the Redemptorist mission, becoming an evangelizing and supportive presence in his own community and family.
10. The oblate lives a spirituality deeply rooted in Redemptorist values and is guided by principles that shape his life and mission. Redemptorist spirituality has four pillars: the Incarnation (crib), the Cross (redemption), the Eucharist and Mary, the model of availability to God's redemptive plan. In this sense, our spirituality is Christocentric, that is, it is based on the person of the Redeemer, the guide and reason for our mission in the Church, alongside the most abandoned.
11. Another important aspect to highlight is that the oblate deeply identifies with the Redemptorist charism, making this link a source of inspiration and guidance for his own spiritual and missionary life. He embraces the mission of proclaiming God's abundant mercy and love for all humanity, especially

- the poorest and most abandoned. This commitment is reflected in the willingness to serve the needy and the desire to bring hope and dignity to the marginalized. The oblate understands that his vocation is deeply rooted in solidarity and compassion, living the Gospel of Christ in concrete ways and devoting himself to the social and spiritual transformation of the most abandoned. He participates in missionary, pastoral or social activities in collaboration with Redemptorists, helping to spread the message of redemption.
12. You support the mission of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in many ways, offering your time, talents and, in many cases, your financial resources to contribute to our evangelizing work. This work takes place in sanctuaries, parishes, non-parish churches, the media, popular missions, spiritual retreats and teaching. In this way, you live in communion with the congregation, participating in celebrations of our saints, blessed and martyrs, in prayers and community activities, living the Redemptorist life. This communion is also reflected in unity with the laity associated with our mission and with the religious who are part of the large Redemptorist family, sharing the same missionary ideal. Therefore, your participation is active in our life.
  13. Redemptorist Oblates are called to be living witnesses of the Gospel in all the environments in which they live and work: in the family, at work and in the community. For the most part, they are lay people living out their vocation in the secular world, where their mission becomes even more challenging and important. Their goal is to be a visible sign of Christ's redeeming love. In this way, Oblates embody the Redemptorist charism in their daily actions, integrating their faith with professional, social and family life, making the Gospel accessible and real to all those around them. They become channels of hope, promoting justice, reconciliation and dignity, and collaborating in building a more just and fraternal society, always in keeping with the Redemptorist mission of bringing redemption to those most in need.
  14. Dear Oblates, on behalf of the General Government of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I wish to express our deep gratitude to all of you who, with generosity and a spirit of dedication, offer your best talents and energies to collaborate in the Redemptorist mission. You help us to be

living witnesses to the richness of St. Alphonsus' charism, demonstrating by your actions and prayers a deep commitment to the cause of the Kingdom, especially among the poorest and most abandoned. The humble service and love you put into every gesture reflect the redeeming love of Christ and strengthen the mission of the Congregation throughout the world. We thank you for your dedication and faith, which continues to inspire and sustain redemptive work in many places. May God bless you abundantly and may Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, continue to guide and protect you.

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Superior General  
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