

DRAFT GUIDELINES
FOR THE INVITATION, FORMATION, ACCEPTANCE AND ENROLMENT
OF REDEMPTORIST ASSOCIATES
REDEMPTORIST CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

Partnership in Mission in the Redemptorist Context

Redemptorist life has never been possible without the support and encouragement of lay people, associates, secular clergy, and religious. As Redemptorists have touched and changed the life of the Church, so they have been touched and changed by the people with whom and among whom they have been called to minister. In every place and at every stage of their history, Redemptorists have looked for ways of joining with lay women and men in mission to more effectively proclaim the good news of plentiful redemption to those who most need to hear it.

We are becoming more aware that there are a variety of forms of partnership in mission, and that there is such an entity as a Redemptorist family. Gathered around and in the spirit of St. Alphonsus and the Redemptorists, all are partners in the mission of proclaiming Good News to the most abandoned, particularly the materially poor.

“Partnership in Mission” is something of an “umbrella term,” under which we find many forms of collaboration between and among professed Redemptorists and lay people, secular clergy and members of religious communities that share a similar charism. Partnership in mission, in and of itself, is not the goal. The goal is the ever more effective proclamation of the Good News to the most abandoned, particularly the materially poor.

... Collaboration is to be so planned that the Redemptorists and laity are effectively co-workers in the evangelization of the poor. Its realization should always be marked by real co-responsibility and sincere mutual respect. The objective to be attained is "the Redemptorist family" demonstrated at different concentric levels of belonging. (*Communicanda 4*, No. 11)

Complementarity and reciprocity between the charisms in that communion proper to the Church, should constitute the basis of all collaboration... (*Communicanda 4*, No. 12)

The basis of collaboration is the sharing of the laity in the mission which is proper to the Redemptorist community. The secular dimension, the specific charisms and the skills of the laity will contribute to make incarnate and more significant the evangelization of the Redemptorist community. The Redemptorist community in its turn will make available to the laity the richness and fruit of its spiritual and material patrimony. In this way a greater thrust and incisiveness will be given to apostolic dynamism. (*Communicanda 4*, No. 13)

With these guiding principles in mind, the following are offered as guidelines for the circles of Redemptorist Associates in the Redemptorist Conference of North America.

I. Redemptorist Associates

Redemptorist Associates are those lay people, secular clergy or members of other religious communities who have been invited into a circle of Redemptorist Associates connected with some Redemptorist missionary centre, group or project. Redemptorist Associates live out their commitments in independent lifestyles, answering the call to proclaim the Good News of plentiful redemption within the context of their daily lives. Having participated in a process of initial formation, they are enrolled as Redemptorist Associates. Circles of Redemptorist Associates meet regularly for the purposes of fostering a stronger spiritual growth and a more explicit commitment to the evangelization of the poor, exploring Redemptorist charism and spirituality. They may share in some aspect of the Redemptorist Mission.

Redemptorist Associates feel called to and drawn toward Redemptorists, Redemptorist charism and spirituality. They do not seek more involvement in ministry; rather, they seek a “spiritual home,” and environment in which they can be strengthened and empowered to do better what they are already doing. Already drawn to and offering service to the poor and abandoned, they seek coherence and support as they live out this call within the Redemptorist family.

II. Invitation

1. *How prospective Redemptorist Associates are invited*
Prospective Redemptorist Associates are invited by a Redemptorist community. If there is an existing circle of Redemptorist Associates, they should be consulted. Prospective Redemptorist Associates may, on their own initiative, express interest in becoming Redemptorist Associates. Alternatively, the idea might be presented to them by a professed Redemptorist or a lay partner in mission.
2. *Consultation between the CSsR community and the V/Provincial Commission or Working Group for Partnership in Mission*
There should be ongoing and regular consultation between the CSsR community and its circle of Redemptorist Associates, and the body responsible for the coordination of Partnership in Mission of the V/Province to explore Redemptorist association, to establish direction and to provide consistency among the circles of Redemptorist Associates that exist within the unit.
3. *Characteristics of prospective Redemptorist Associates*
Some of the characteristics of those who might be invited to become Redemptorist Associates would be:
 - faith-filled adults, already active in the life of the Church/parish;
 - people drawn to outreach and ministry among the most abandoned, particularly the materially poor;
 - people with a connection to a Redemptorist community;
 - people drawn to the Redemptorist spirit and charism;
 - people who seek a spiritual home, an environment in which they can grow in faith and find coherence between their faith, their longings, their gifts, and the expression of those gifts in service to others.

III. Process of Initial Formation for Redemptorist Associates

Formation process developed and coordinated by the v/provincial body responsible for the coordination of Partnership in Mission

Formation for Redemptorist Associates involves participation in the formation series coordinated by the v/provincial body responsible for the coordination of Partnership in Mission.

This series consists of, at minimum, an initial day-long retreat/workshop and at least four follow-up sessions, focussing on key aspects of Redemptorist spirituality and mission.

IV. Enrolment of Redemptorist Associates

Process, ritual and consistency across the unit

1. Each individual makes a written request to the superior of the local CSsR community.
2. The local Redemptorist community responds to the request.
3. The local superior or his designate presides over a Ritual of Enrolment.
4. The local CSsR community notifies the chair/s of the v/provincial body responsible for the coordination of Partnership in Mission, who inform the Extraordinary V/Provincial Council and the Conference Office for Partnership in Mission of the enrolment.
5. The opportunity to renew enrollment is offered at the beginning of each quadriennium.
6. Names and contact information of enrolled Redemptorist Associates are recorded at the v/provincial offices. Lists are updated regularly.

V. Ongoing Formation and Faith-Sharing for Redemptorist Associates

1. The process and resources for ongoing formation and faith-sharing will be developed and maintained by the v/provincial body responsible for the coordination of Partnership in Mission, with the support and assistance of the Redemptorist North American Secretariat for Partnership in Mission.
2. Circles of Redemptorist Associates gather regularly with members of the CSsR community for faith-sharing, prayer, ongoing formation and sharing of communal activities.
3. Gatherings take place monthly, or as often as agreed upon by the professed Redemptorists and the members of the circle of Redemptorist Associates.
4. Topics for gatherings include, but are not restricted to:
 - a. Aspects of Redemptorist charism and spirituality;
 - b. The lives and relevance of Redemptorist Saints and Blessed
 - c. Redemptorist history;
 - d. Current issues in the Church, e.g. encyclicals, other important documents, and events;
 - e. Current events in the Redemptorist family (eg: general chapters, local issues, communicanda, provincial letters, etc.)
5. Circles of Redemptorist Associates are encouraged to invite visiting Redemptorists and partners in mission to take part in and facilitate gatherings of the circle.

VI. Leadership of the Circle of Redemptorist Associates

As much as possible, leadership of the circle of Redemptorist Associates is shared. All are encouraged, according to their gifts and abilities, to share in the facilitation of input sessions, recommending topics for study or faith-sharing, and contributing to the social aspects of the gatherings.

The leadership of the v/province and the Redemptorist North American Secretariat for Partnership in Mission work together to provide appropriate guidance, formation and support for leaders of circles of Redemptorist Associates.

VII. Formation of the Redemptorist Community for Collaboration

The formation of the Redemptorist community for collaboration with the laity is equally necessary. It is a dimension which must be given particular emphasis both in initial and ongoing formation. (Communicanda 4, No. 33)

As professed Redemptorists seek to deepen their own formation for increased and deepened collaboration with lay people, secular clergy and members of religious communities who share a similar charism, for the sake of mission, a renewed exploration of the *Constitutions and Statutes* is encouraged.

...it (will be) especially helpful to consider Articles 4 – 8 in Chapter 2 of the Redemptorist *Constitutions and Statutes*... It should be noted that previous articles in the Constitutions have already spoken of the centrality of Christ and the importance of prayer for both *communio* in general and Redemptorist *communio* in particular. (*Called into Communion for Mission*, p.17)

Possible occasions or venues for this formation of professed Redemptorists include presentations at convocations, workshops with local CSsRs communities, webinars, etc.

Conclusion

Redemptorist history shows that partnership in mission (collaboration with others) has consistently marked Redemptorist Apostolic Life (e.g. evening chapels, sharing prayer with the people, Vienna Circle). Also in recent history there are many examples to be found of fruitful collaboration between Redemptorists and lay people and many experiments in lay partnership. Collaboration with lay people has been on the agenda of all recent Redemptorist General Chapters. A common feature of many recent Redemptorist experiences of lay collaboration is that they are based not on convenience or utility, but on shared faith and spirituality. (*Called into Communion for Mission*, 2009, p.27)