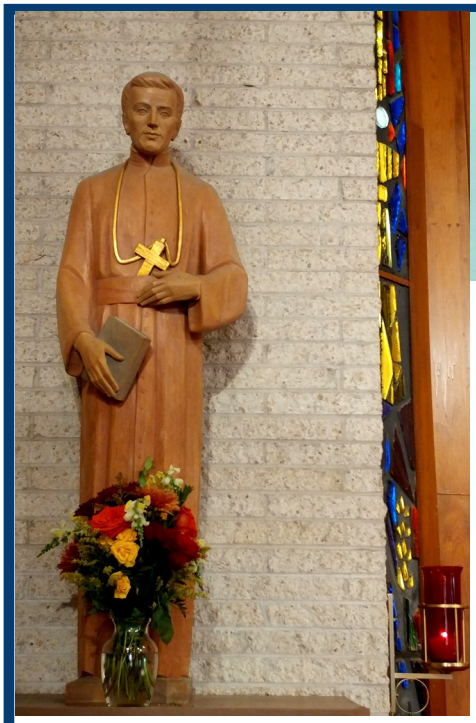


The Redemptorist Cross



The Cross is one of the pillars of the Redemptorist spirituality, together with the Nativity, the Eucharist, and Mary. These representations of the mission and the vocation of the Redemptorist Congregation are highlighted in some symbols, such as the Redemptorist shield or crest, the Redemptorist cross and the Redemptorist habit.

St. Alphonsus Liguori founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in 1732. The order serves the poor and most spiritually abandoned. Brothers and priests bring a message of hope and Good News to everyone they encounter: "In Him there is plentiful redemption" **(Psalm 130:7).**

The first symbol of the Redemptorists was the shield (coat of arms), which was created by brother Vito Curzio in 1738, six years after the foundation of the order. 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.



The symbolic elements of the seal represent the work of Redemption carried out by Jesus Christ and which the Congregation was to proclaim under the protection of Mary. This explains the cross on the hill with the lance and sponge, the names of Jesus and Mary and the motto *Copiosa apud eum redemptio*. The Redemptorist Cross follows the symbolism of this shield.

Christian crosses refer to Jesus Christ and his death and often indicate a historical relationship, such as the cross of Saint Peter, which is reversed because the apostle asked to be crucified upside down, so as not to feel worthy to die like his Master. For the Redemptorists, the cross represents Redemption. For St. Alphonsus Liguori, it was his devotion to the mystery of the Incarnation (Crib), to the Mystery of the Passion and Death (Cross) and to the mystery of the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist (Tabernacle) and in Mary, the Mother of Jesus.



Father Lucas Emanuel, the vocation explains what the Redemptorist cross contains:

"In it, we do not have Christ on the cross, because it is the Cross of Redemption. In addition to the cross, we have the instruments of the Passion, the spear, the sponge, and also the representation of Mount Calvary, present in the Redemptorist coat of arms. The dove above the cross symbolizes the Holy Spirit. In the verse, we have the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a devotion that accompanies the congregation since Pope Pius IX handed it to the Redemptorists and asked to make her known to the whole world."

The Redemptorist Cross is used by the priests, brothers, seminarians and the faithful associated with the mission, including the Oblates, the Redemptorist Laity, the Redemptorist youth and even those who identify with the charism.

In addition to St. Alphonsus, 17 others have been canonized or beatified, including our patron, St. John Neumann. Approximately 5,300 Redemptorists serve in 78 countries throughout the world.

Sources: https://www.cssr.news/2019/03/the-meaning-of-the-redemptorist-cross/ https://stjohnneumann.org/redemptorists/who-are-the-redemptorists/ https://www.redemptorists.ie/about/who-we-are-2/