



INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING
SOVEREIGN PRIEST
SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART



September 4, 2020
First Friday

Dear Members and Friends of the Society of the Sacred Heart,

Please join me in giving thanks to Almighty God as we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest! It was on September 1, 1990 that Bishop Cyriaque Obamba of Mouila, Gabon canonically established the Institute in his diocese. It was the feast day of our founder, Msgr. Gilles Wach, who undertook this great enterprise with the help of his dear friend Fr. Philippe Mora. Both men were convinced of the need to found a new community in the Church where young men aspiring to the holy priesthood could receive a solid formation. Yet all the dioceses of Europe seemed closed to this idea. Thus the Institute would make its humble beginnings as a mission in equatorial Africa. In times past, an area would be designated as mission territory if the Catholic Faith had not yet been preached there and no territorial hierarchy put in place. It was thereby distinguished from all the dioceses of Christendom where the Faith was firmly established. It is evident that no such clear distinction any longer exists. We can speak only of the pagan world and the post-Christian world. And both these worlds are ripe for missionary activity. In the face of this pressing and universal need, our founder reminds us that we are content to remain small, humble and in our place, ever mindful of the words he and Canon Mora received from the great Cardinal Siri during their own time of priestly formation in Genoa: “We don’t save the Church; the Church saves us.”

It is nevertheless plain that the Institute has found its place within the Church’s universal mission, and though we may not seek greatness in stature, Divine Providence has certainly not willed for us to become smaller from year to year! How far away now seem the days when I entered Gricigliano and took my place among a handful of Americans in that small band of 35 seminarians, with three soon-to-be Sister Adorers living up the hill! In the past ten years Gricigliano has tripled in size, and the number of Canons, Sisters and Oblates worldwide now places our community at the forefront of the Church’s growth in the post-Christian world.

Some of you have already had the chance to listen to my recent conference on the Book of Joshua. In the conquest of the Promised Land, we note the importance of liturgy, that the most crucial victory, the capture of Jericho, was accomplished not by a military siege on the city walls, but by a procession. As Msgr. Wach reminded us in his most recent conference, God cannot reign in our world here and now without the liturgy, that form of prayer whose words and actions are divinely inspired, and inherently public. The Institute’s mission, which is of course the whole Church’s divinely given mission, of furthering the reign of Christ the King in all aspects of human life, cannot be accomplished without the adornment of churches and sacred ministers and the solemn celebration of Holy Mass, processions, and the Divine Office.

I know that not a few of you are still deprived of access to the Sacraments and the ability to participate in the Church's public worship. Never forget that by your baptism you are members of Christ's Mystical Body. The Church in her sacred liturgy remembers you especially among "our absent brethren . . . the afflicted, the captives." The lifting of the Sunday obligation which is still in effect in most dioceses is not an abolition of the Third Commandment. It is merely a reminder of what we have always known: those who are gravely ill or have frail immune systems may stay at home, and those who pose a serious danger to others because of the contagious nature of their illness not only may but should do so. If you are unable to go to God's house, keep the Lord's Day at home, reading the Prayer, Epistle and Gospel of Sunday Mass, making a fervent spiritual communion, and reciting the Rosary and the Litany of the Sacred Heart of the Blessed Virgin, and at least the office of Compline every evening.

On September 14, Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the American Province of the Institute begins forty days of prayer for our nation leading up the Feast of Christ the King. Every day you are asked to recite the Rosary, make the act of contrition, and say the prayer to St. Michael and the invocation, *Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy Kingdom Come!*

Finally, I must tell you how blessed we all are by the presence of the Sister Adorers of the Royal Heart in the United States. The project for their arrival came together quickly and unexpectedly in 2019, yet the hand of Divine Providence was apparent at every turn. The dire events of 2020 have made it clear that, had the plan for the American convent not come together when it did, it would not have happened at all. And now here they are, our dear Sister Adorers, praying every day before the Most Blessed Sacrament, chanting Holy Mass and the Divine Office, receiving vocational visits from those who are barred from traveling to Italy, teaching children's catechism, and visiting the sick and dying. Over the past months, we canons have exchanged many stories of our adventures in bringing the Sacraments to the faithful, the return of many souls to the Faith, and the miraculous growth of our congregations. Only at the end of time shall we know how many of these fruits were due to the prayers of those who led a hidden life, praying without ceasing for priests and faithful, fulfilling in a sovereign manner the chief obligation of every human creature: to adore God in spirit and in truth.

I hope to visit all of you this coming year in your various apostolates. Until then I remain

Sincerely Yours in His Most Sacred Heart,
Canon Aaron B. Huberfeld
National Chaplain