June 7, 2020

Dear friends,

Wishing you a blessed Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, I offer you my heartfelt greetings on behalf of our Institute’s Prior General, Monsignor Gilles Wach. Much to his regret, international travel restrictions made it too difficult for Monsignor Wach to make his annual springtime pastoral visit to our American apostolates. However, please be assured that you are in Monsignor’s thoughts and prayers as he looks forward to his next visit to the United States.

As the Pentecost Octave has now concluded, thus officially ending the liturgical season of Easter, I thank you for having daily prayed the Regina Caeli for the intention of having access once again to Holy Mass and Communion, as requested in my Easter Sunday letter. Of the eighteen dioceses in which the Institute has apostolates in the United States, twelve are now open once again for the public celebration of the Liturgy, while it appears that the others will reopen soon. Deo gratias! The live-streaming of the Mass and Divine Office will continue from our U.S. Provincial Headquarters via our website and social media platforms. Be sure to check the schedule listed on our website for any modifications.

During this month of June, the priesthood of Jesus Christ is a spiritual theme in the Liturgy. As we will soon be celebrating the Feast of Corpus Christi and afterwards the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the seminarians will be in the midst of the final exams at our international seminary in Gricigliano near Florence, Italy. A spiritual retreat will close the academic year. May their young hearts conform ever more to the priestly Heart of Our Lord.

Given the protocols for the gradual reopening of activities in Italy, the Major Orders of Deacon and Subdeacon, as well as the Minor Orders of Porter, Lector, Exorcist, and Acolyte will not be conferred in July as usual but rather later this year at a time when these events can be appropriately organized. However, the Tonsure will be administered on July 1 in the Seminary Chapel of the Immaculate Conception for those seminarians completing their first year. On July 2, Feast of the Visitation, ten men will receive priestly ordination at the hands of His Eminence, Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke at the Church of Ss. Michael and Cajetan in Florence. These men are Reverend Deacons Arnaud Jaminet (France), Justin Ong (Malaysia), David Sampayo (USA), Edward Strodiik (France), Stephan Sharpe (Canada), Samuel Garcia Vega (Spain), Jean Maidenat (France), Jean Despaigne (France), Jonasz Zurek (France), and Sean Kenney (USA). This Pontifical Mass of Ordination will not be open to the public due to the restrictions put in place by the authorities, but the close family members of the ordinands will be able to attend.
It is most regrettable that the priestly Ordination ceremony which was to occur in St. Louis on August 6 will not be taking place as planned. Those men who were going to be ordained in St. Louis will instead be ordained with their confreres in Florence on July 2. This decision was necessary due to the same factors affecting international travels and other logistical considerations we have mentioned above. As we continue to be blessed with many priestly vocations from North America, we trust that Providence will make it possible for future priestly Ordinations to be celebrated again in the United States. The record number of vocational inquiries and discernment visits by young men ensures that our pre-seminary program in the United States will be quite full in September. As bishops continue to contact us with new invitations to serve in their dioceses, all of these vocations will certainly not be unemployed!

While I encourage you to maintain and even increase your prayers during this time for these future priests, I also thank you wholeheartedly for your generous participation in the semi-annual Seminary collection during Paschaltide in honor of Christ the Good Shepherd. Despite the fact that our churches had to be closed as per the mandates of the ecclesiastical authorities, a grand total of $45,612 was raised in this semi-annual collection to help St. Phillip Neri Seminary, thanks to your remarkable charity. May God reward and bless you!

Please know that we canons of the Institute will be praying for you all in a special way as we gather at St. Francis de Sales Oratory in St. Louis this coming week for our annual retreat. May the Most Sacred Heart of Christ our King fill you and your families with an abundance of His graces and blessings. May Mary Immaculate, patroness of the United States of America and of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, guide and assist our mission of promoting the divine truth and charity of Christ which can alone bring peace and happiness to our needy world.

With profound gratitude for your generous and prayerful support, I remain,

Faithfully yours in Christ the King,

Rev. Canon Matthew Talarico

Provincial Superior in the United States

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