

Thy Kingdom Come!



REGNUM CHRISTI

June 8, 2018

Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

To the Legionaries and Regnum Christi members of the North American Territory

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On this special celebration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus I want to share with you some thoughts and feelings that I have had since the recent General Chapter of the Legion and the Regnum Christi General Assembly.

Over these last years of our renewal, I have been moved often in prayer by the fact that the Risen Jesus kept his wounds. You would think that a glorified body would be perfect and unmarred. But Jesus kept his wounds. There is a lesson in this for all of us. In the Legion's 2014 General Chapter we had conversations about whether or not to change our congregation's name: to definitively put our past history behind us and get a fresh start with a new name. Many were shocked the Legion did not change its name and formally separate itself from her scarred and wounded history. At the time I kept thinking, *I am proud to be a Legionary; we cannot forget our history*. The wounds we suffered in the past – as well as those we inflicted – are part of us. They are part of our story.

Our Lord did not give up his wounds in the Resurrection. Rather, he rose with them and used them as signs pointing to the truth of his love and mercy. Think of Caravaggio's brilliant painting of Thomas fingering the wounded side of Christ. Think of how Our Lord presented his love to Saint Margaret Mary: a wounded, bleeding heart on fire with love. Think of the image of Divine Mercy: the white and red light streaming from his heart represents the water and blood that flowed from his wounded side. Jesus' wounds are a point of encounter with his love and mercy.

A wound is an enduring point of pain from a prior hurt. Some wounds are debilitating, which we call trauma. Trauma usually requires professional help to return to normal human functioning. With other wounds, we often can and should continue functioning without dwelling on them. However, pausing to dress them and foster their healing is also important to prevent infection and bring ourselves to full and abundant life, which is the capacity to give of ourselves without fear or reservation. Our wounds also can be a point of encounter with love. In them we can encounter a deeper communion with the healing presence of the Risen Jesus, and they also can be a place of communion with each other through forgiveness and mercy.

I have witnessed this encounter with love through wounds at our Joint Territorial Assembly in Chicago and at the General Assembly in Rome. At our territorial assembly, in the last session, an expression of hurt received a beautiful apology, and then another beautiful apology combined with an expression of a deeper hurt. Appropriate vulnerability, humility, and honesty resulted in healing for many present.

At the General Assembly, the central commission saw the need to facilitate healing in our spiritual family. They anticipated that the difficult conversations required might chafe the wounds that were undoubtedly present. From early in the week of the assembly, they commissioned a subcommittee to propose some acknowledgement of that reality, and the result was the document that you have received on communion and reconciliation (see [\*Message to Regnum Christi Members Concerning Communion and Reconciliation\*](#)). When the document was read at the end of the assembly with time afterward for discussion, there was another beautiful exchange of asking for forgiveness and of offering mercy, pardon, and healing.

As your territorial director, I have a tremendous desire for this gift of merciful healing for our entire spiritual family, extending also to those who no longer participate in it. I desire this healing because I know that wounds exist. Most hurts were not intended, but resulted from human weakness combined with imbalances in our past ways of thinking and operating from which our Lord continues to purify us.

I want to express my own sorrow for hurts I may have caused. I know that in the past I have been convinced of my own opinions and the direction I wanted to go and have often not stopped to listen to others, take their opinions to heart, or communicate the reasons why I make certain decisions.

Along with the two experiences I described earlier, I am aware that meetings have already occurred in various localities and communities that have brought similar fruits of healing and communion. It seems that in many cases a simple reading of the [\*Message to Regnum Christi Members Concerning Communion and Reconciliation from the General Assembly\*](#), followed by open dialogue, has provided an occasion for this type of discussion to occur. I encourage leadership teams at every level to consider creating opportunities for these conversations, both within communities and teams and also across branches. We are all at different places with different needs, so I leave it to each leader and group to decide together when and if such an encounter will be helpful for them.

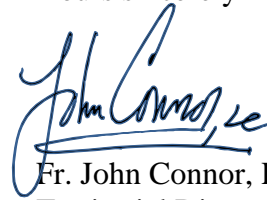
The thing about wounds is that they often don't go away. They may scar over. They may lose their sensitivity to touch over time, yet they tend to persist. That is a good thing. They remind us of our frailty and our need for a Healer. Jesus' wounds are a reminder of our indifference, insensitivity, and sin. But they are also a reminder of his love, mercy, and forgiveness. We must see them as a gift and an opportunity. They are an opportunity to share with others the

great mercy Our Lord has showered on us, to seek healing for ourselves and others, and to live the words of Pope Francis: “We need to think of ourselves as an army of the forgiven” (see *Gaudete et Exultate*, 82).

Today let us contemplate the Heart of Christ wounded out of love for us. Let us accept the full love of his heart and allow it to light our hearts on fire with love for humanity, so we may boldly proclaim that love.

May God bless you and all your loved ones.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Connor, LC". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Fr. John Connor, LC  
Territorial Director

Cc. Fr. Eduardo Robles Gil, LC, General Director