

Conforti: Circular Letter #1

Naples, Italy January 19, 1906

In Omnibus Christus! Christ in All!



To all my dear brothers of the Xaverian Institute, Missionaries in Honan:

Health, Peace, Blessing!

Thank the Lord. He has answered our fervent wish. Through the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, He has given us a mission of our very own. I am reminded of the serious responsibility with which the Institute, and you in particular are entrusted.

You are given an area of some 90,000 sq. km. (34,749 sq. mi.), where some 8,000,000 infidels live. With the help of the Lord you should enlighten them by preaching the good news! What a tremendous field lies open to your work and priestly zeal! Certainly if you consider your limitations and numbers, you can be discouraged, doubtful, despairing of success. Take courage, it is the Lord, who sent the Apostles to preach the gospel to the whole world, who sends you to continue the same mission. You have every reason to take heart, divine assistance will never be lacking unless we prove unworthy.

God sends you, workers of the last hour, to work in His vineyard so that you may bear fruit. He will grant you the necessary means, for He wants the end product. That you may better merit divine favor, I say, seek first His glory and the salvation of those, your brothers, who look to you for salvation and redemption. When the human and earthly invade apostolic ministry, the results are sterile since the Lord then withholds the benefit of His grace.

Work always with the same spirit of Christ. Keep Jesus before your eyes. He is the model of all called to glory. He is the particular model for the heralds of the gospel. They announce a heavenly teaching, they should witness by their lives to the sublime examples of holiness which are part of our priceless heritage. That Christ might ever be foremost in your thoughts and affection, I suggest: foster that interior spirit which provides strength, vitality, nourishment for your exterior life of continuous activity and sacrifice. You cannot preserve in such activity for long unless an interior spirit rooted in God, the source of every true joy, sustains you.

Thus, amidst anxieties and difficulties in ministry, don't lose heart for the Lord knows and takes account of your trials and struggles. If you wish to preserve this spirit of union with God, so essential to the missionary, be faithful to your daily meditation and spiritual reading. Celebrate Mass well like those saints who there learned to climb the heights of sanctity, to be objects of wonderment for men and angels alike.

A missionary, who daily offers the immaculate Victim to God with fervor, cannot but faithfully live his own life in continual immolation of the salvation of souls. Indeed, he shares in Christ's will to suffer for all.

Be ever men of one mind and one heart, remain united by the bond of perfect charity which "does not rejoice in what is wrong, is not self-seeking, nor prone to anger. There is no limit to love... to its trust, its hope, its power to endure. The joy and mutual assistance, which flow from this great virtue, will lighten the weight of your apostolate. If you are motivated such love, unlike Christ's apostles, you will not argue over "who is to be the greatest". Rather your rivalry will be that which the apostle Paul had for the members of the young Christian community, where there were as many saints as there were believers in the divinity of the gospel. Remember the wise words "sit first in the last place" and "better to be subject rather than to reign."

I mention these things for no particular reason. At times self-centered love advances under the guise of virtue; it tries to undermine the hearts of even the best.

You are my crown and my joy. I bid you farewell. If you could read my heart, if I were able to express what I feel, then you might be able to appreciate how much is my love for you and how much I wish for you. May the Lord, aware of my unworthiness supply for this, and accompany you with his grace and grant you every blessing.

+ Guido M., Archbishop
Superior of the Institute
St. Francis Xavier Foreign Mission Society

©2017 St. Francis Xavier Foreign Mission Society
All Rights Reserved