

WORLD MISSION ROSARY

Feast of the Founder of the Xaverian Missionaries,

St. Guido Maria Conforti

November 5, 2021

In honor of the mission of the Church we serve commemorated on World Mission Sunday, October 24, 2021, followed by the Feast of our Founder, November 5, 2021.

First Luminous Mystery – Baptism of Jesus



And when Jesus was baptized, ... the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him, and lo, a voice from heaven, saying "this is My beloved Son," with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17)

Guido Conforti was the eighth of ten children of Rinaldo Conforti and Antonia Adorni. He was born on March 30, 1865, at Casalora di Ravadese, amid a fertile land of Parma, Italy. All the educational efforts were undertaken by his parents geared toward a specific goal, dreamed by his father: to have his son be the future administrator of the farm and its properties. Guido attended the Christian Brothers' school in Parma, and he could have very well been a successful manager. On the way to school, Guido developed the habit of stopping in prayer in front of a huge Crucifix in the Church of Peace. There was an intense conversation among the two of them: *'I looked at Him, and He looked at me, and it seemed he was telling me many things'* Guido Conforti used to retell later when he became Bishop. In that meeting with the Crucifix, Guido felt called to the priesthood.

We pray for the Xaverian Missionaries and all missionaries in the continent of Africa.

Second Luminous Mystery – The Wedding at Cana



His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. (John 2:5-7)

In May of 1902, Conforti was named Bishop of Ravenna by Pope Leo XIII. It could have been a deadly blow to Conforti and his newly born congregation. In his conversation with the Pope, Conforti shared his dream of going to China, and the Pope told him that his field of work was Ravenna, "the China of Italy." The Pope continued: "I summoned you to Rome in person so that you could hear from the mouth of the Pontiff himself what he asks of you. So be ready to do the will of God, and He will give you the grace necessary for the fulfillment of His plan."

On June 11, 1902, at St. Paul Church outside the Walls in Rome, Guido was consecrated Bishop. He also made his religious profession together with the vow to dedicate himself without reserve to the proclamation of the Gospel "ad gentes." This assignment proved to be a *Way of the Cross*.

We pray for the Xaverian Missionaries and all missionaries in the continent of Asia.

Third Luminous Mystery – Proclaiming the Kingdom of God



"And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without pay, give without pay." (Matthew 10:7-8)

The Love of God's People, the hand of fate, or the inspiration of the Spirit was to enter the life of Guido again: in December of 1907, Guido became Bishop of Parma, following the death of Bishop Magani. Bishop Conforti adopted *In Omnibus Christi* (Christ in all things) as his motto, and the Xaverian Missionaries would later adopt it as well. It was to be put to practical application in his pastoral visits throughout the diocese. For almost 25 years, he was the good shepherd of his flock, a living sign of the maternal concern that the Church shows towards all, whether they belong to the Church or otherwise, paying particular attention to the poor and the weakest among them.

As with Ravenna, religious instruction was the priority of his pastoral plan: he founded schools of Christian doctrine in all parishes and prepared catechists with appropriate courses in pedagogical and spiritual culture. He was the first in Italy to celebrate a catechetical week.

We pray for the Xaverian Missionaries and all missionaries in Central and Latin America.

Fourth Luminous Mystery – Transfiguration



And as He was praying, the appearance of His countenance was altered, and His raiment becomes dazzling white. And a voice came out of the cloud saying, "This is My Son, My chosen; listen to Him!" (Luke 9:29, 35)

Bishop Conforti's concern for the Church entrusted to him never distracted him from the "*concern for those parts of the world where the Word of God had not yet been proclaimed.*" He was convinced that the proclamation of the Gospel "*ad gentes*" (to the

nations) was the most effective re-evangelizing his people. Therefore, he was untiring in his commitment to mission evangelization and promotion, both through the work of his own missionary family and by supporting every missionary animation initiative in Italy and throughout the world.

We pray for the Xaverian Missionaries and all missionaries in the United States and Europe.

Fifth Luminous Mystery – The Institution of the Eucharist



And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you." And likewise, the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." (Luke 22:19-20)

One last significant event in Conforti's life was his journey to China, which he undertook "as a duty and a need of my heart." Notwithstanding his ability to deal with missionary problems as a founder of a missionary congregation and president of the Missionary Union of the Clergy, he recognized that this trip would help him appreciate more the mission service and dimension of the Church.

China gave him a new sense of the vastness of its territory: "We don't need 3,000 missionaries in China, but 50,000." Before leaving China, Bishop Conforti addressed his missionaries by saying, "I hope that my visit will bring great good, deepen our love, and give all of us greater encouragement to work willingly and constantly for the missions... I'm amazed at what you have accomplished for the good of these Chinese people. How I would like to be young again and dedicate all my energies to them!"

We pray for the mission of the Church of the 21st century in every corner of the earth as it evolves with the many changes and needs of the world we live in.