

**MESSAGE OF HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHE PIERRE,
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FOR THE ONLINE MEETING OF THE CMSM
AUGUST 4, 2020**

Dear Members of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men:

Having been informed by your President, the Very reverend Adam Gregory Gonzales, O.C.D., that your 2020 National Assembly will be offered in a digital format on August 4-5, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, I thought it opportune to offer you a few words of encouragement, knowing that next August in Kansas City, Missouri, you will address the theme, "Wake Up the World: Living Our Prophetic Witness."

First, allow me, as the Apostolic Nuncio, to express the spiritual closeness of the Holy Father at this difficult time during the life of your communities. I assure you of his prayers and his best wishes as you "connect" for your online program. Second, allow me to state that in the midst of the crisis, your charisms are more necessary than ever for the life of the Church.

The stop imposed by the coronavirus to our way of life through required social distancing, the shutdown of the economy, and the public suspension of Masses has forced many in society, including those of us in religious and consecrated life, to acknowledge that God is in control and that we are not. "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps 45:10)

Modern men and women have forgotten what it is to be still, and yet we are offered an opportunity to live this stillness and give meaning to it through our commitment to our respective vocations, especially the commitment to prayer and to communal life. To be still means to rediscover the present moment and to seek God's presence there, so as to live that moment in a grace-filled will. God asks for our stillness, so that we may abide with Him; love Him; and be loved by Him. He is the One who will satisfy the longings of our heart.

Without denying the suffering the pandemic has imposed, we must also use these moments to rediscover our freedom: to rediscover the capacity to be free to choose that which gives freedom to our hearts, even when we are deprived of everything else. The religious vow of poverty highlights the freedom that comes from not being constrained by worldly desires but which instead allows us in our poverty to recognize Christ as our ever-present Friend.

Even in the dark moments of this pandemic, when we could not be with our people or when members of our community suffered or succumbed to illness, God was with us. How did God enter into your life and into your trials? What consolations did you receive? Hopefully, God revealed to you that beyond the present danger, your lives and your vocations have a deeper meaning than the resolution of the pandemic.

As consecrated persons, you stand as living and prophetic witnesses to those who suffer as you point them toward the Kingdom of God and Heaven itself. The pandemic presents an opportunity as religious to stand before the Lord to recognize that He comes to meet us amid the anxieties and circumstances of life. It is this conviction that must be shared with the People of God.

As consecrated persons, you have also been afforded the opportunity to live and to pray in community, sensitive to the drama of life and the fragility of our structures and routines. Has it made us more sensitive to the need compassion for our brothers in the community? Hopefully, rather than grow indifferent to the plight of others, we are now more aware of the need for compassion and mercy throughout our society, something the Holy Father has emphasized since the beginning of his Pontificate. Finally, the pandemic has allowed us to dedicate ourselves more deeply to prayer, united with the whole Body of Christ, in solidarity with suffering humanity.

Although I am sure many of you are disappointed that you could not gather in Buffalo this year, I am confident that living your prophetic charisms, you will “Wake Up the World” to the reality that God is with us.

With these sentiments, the Holy Father commends the Conference of Major Superiors of Men to the Holy Mother of God and paternally imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.