

## The Welcome Home - A Mission of St. Alphonsus

### SYLLABUS FOR CANDIDATES



*“The Welcome Home - A Mission of St. Alphonsus is a Redemptorist apostolic community to which lay adults are invited to share, in equal partnership, the life and mission of the Redemptorists. The members of the Welcome Home community freely choose a life of mutuality with one another and seek to live the gospel of Jesus Christ today through a preferential option for the poor.”*

-Mission Statement

Redemptorists around the world are aspiring to re-enact for our times St. Alphonsus Liguori’s (their founder) response to the Gospel. St. Alphonsus preached the good news of Christ to the poor and most abandoned. God has placed in the hearts of others an invitation to share in the life and mission of the Redemptorists. The Welcome Home provides a unique opportunity for Ukrainian/Byzantine Catholic men and women to experience Christian community, spirituality and ministry with the Redemptorists.

Members of the Welcome Home make the choice Jesus made - the choice in favor of the poor. The goal of the Welcome Home is to build a faith community of the poor, which, in turn, calls the members to a deeper Christian faith.

#### **I. Calendar**

The year begins in late August with an orientation period of several days that ends with a Rite of Initiation and Commitment. During orientation new members are introduced to community life and ministry. A “regular” schedule is set up and commences immediately after orientation.

There are two breaks in the Welcome Home year. The first is Christmas break which is approximately 15 days long during which members are free to visit "home". Support for transportation home is given. The second break is the week of Easter (Bright Week) during which all are free to do as they wish but transportation is not provided.

The Welcome Home year ends usually by mid-July. During the last month, time is allotted for evaluation and closure.

#### **II. Community Philosophy**

##### **Simplicity**

The lifestyle of this community is intended to be simple, non-consumer oriented and non-materialistic. The community strives not to be pre-occupied with the day-to-day material needs, challenging itself to trust in Divine Providence and to identify with those who have little choice but to live with limited resources. It is an attempt to emulate Christ’s own solidarity with the poor in our context. Feeling some of the “pinch and the pain” of the poor is always a valuable reality check.

##### **Equality**

This community is based on the equality of persons inherent in our dignity as children of God made in

God's image and likeness. Our vocation to service in the Church as Redemptorists and lay people is recognized in our common life and ministry. A "team approach" to our community life and ministry is preferred.

### **Community Building**

When a group of people gathers together to share their lives with each other for a period of time, there is a need to work on building relationships with each other. Daily life at The Welcome Home is based on developing community with those living in the home, with those living in the neighborhood and with the volunteers who share both our spirit and our work.



## **III. Community Life**

### **Prayer Life**

Prayer is the building block of community life at The Welcome Home. Growing in one's personal relationship with Christ is an essential part of one's spiritual journey. Since The Welcome Home is a Ukrainian Catholic Redemptorist community, the Liturgical life is according to the Byzantine Rite. A Redemptorist spirit also adds a particular dimension to the prayer life of the community. There are normally two periods of prayer most days that members attend. These usually consist of a Divine Liturgy and a Vespers celebration. As well, the opportunity to attend retreats on an individual or communal basis is available during the year.

### **Practical**

Community life has many practical sides to it. Some of these are household cleaning, cooking, shopping and home repairs. These are shared and/or divided up as each community sees fit and according to the gifts and abilities of the individual members of the community.

### **Community Meetings**

Once a week, there is a community meeting. Community Meetings are the barometer of a community's health. Members gather to pray, discern and share what God is doing in their personal lives and in the life of the community. New business arising for the upcoming week and month is discussed, the needs of the ministry are examined, as well as scheduling, household needs, etc

### **Meals**

The community members determine the menu plan for the week. The responsibility for the preparation of meals is shared, often on a rotation, among all the members of the community. Depending on the schedule, at least one meal is shared in common each day.

### **Recreation**

Common recreation is an important aspect that balances community life at the Welcome Home. It depends upon weekly scheduling and obligations.

### **"One-on-One"**

About once a month the director will get together one-on-one with each member to "check in". These meetings focus on honest and open dialogue and sharing mutual concerns regarding the personal experience of each member.

### **Formation and Education**

Each year various educational opportunities are made possible year to help members grow in their Christian

life. A few examples are:

Scripture Studies

Reflection on Redemptorist History and Charism

Study of Catholic Social Teaching

Study of Eastern Christian Spirituality and Practices

Sessions with local resource persons.



#### **IV. Ministry**

The central focus of The Welcome Home is the ministry. The apostolic dimension of the community is designed to challenge each member to a life of service, calling forth their gifts and identifying and using new gifts.

##### **Neighborhood Ministry**

The Welcome Home is a “spiritual home” for people of all ages. Many in the neighborhood refer to it as their “church.” We are family centered and endeavor to build community with those who may not feel they belong anywhere else. We also do religious education and prepare people to celebrate the Sacraments.

Ministry work in the immediate neighborhood calls each community member to a ministry of presence. For the adults and teens, this means “being there”, whether a person needs to talk, wants to play a card game, or just have a cup of coffee. For the children, it may mean playing games, doing crafts, or reading stories. The purpose is to make everyone feel welcome and know that he or she **belongs**. It is our humble attempt to create an atmosphere in which people can experience the great hospitality of God.

##### **The Volunteers**

The Ukrainian Catholic laity in general and young adults in particular are invited into the encounter with the poor and marginalized. People are invited to participate on a variety of levels. There are opportunities to include people as a “hands on” volunteer who helps with the ministry or as someone who helps behind the scenes in a supportive role.

##### **Volunteer Work**

In as much as time permits, all members seek to volunteer outside the home in local inner-city agencies, community centers or schools. This valuable experience allows each community member to get to know not only his or her neighbors, but opens up connections with others serving in the area as well.

##### **Missions**

During the second half of the year, when possible, the community will prepare and conduct retreats and missions. Most occur during Great Lent.

#### **V. Finances**

Basic needs of community members are met through the house fund. However, maintaining the monthly budget is the responsibility of the entire community. Each member receives a monthly honorarium (living allowance) and a departure bonus (based on one’s length of commitment).