

«GO AND TELL THEM – I AM RISEN!»

APOSTLES OF THE RESURRECTION

**Handbook for the Associates
of the Congregation of the Resurrection
Ontario – Kentucky Province**

Welcome!

What you have in your hands is a booklet describing the *Apostles of the Resurrection*, a group of Lay Associates of the Ontario-Kentucky Province of the Congregation of the Resurrection. In this short publication we will try to answer some questions you might have about the *Apostles*, whether you already are one of them or only inquiring at this time. To give you a general idea of what we are about, we invite you to read and meditate upon this passage taken from the Gospel of John /20:11-18/ that is foundational to who we are and what we do as *Apostles*:

*«Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”’ **Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her».***

As Apostles of the Resurrection, like Mary Magdalene, we are sent out into the world to proclaim the Good News of Jesus’ Resurrection and to share our experience of the Living God with others. As faithful lay people, we do it in places where God has

placed us in life, and using the talents God gave us, in order to give witness to Him: in our families, among friends, in our workplaces, schools... wherever our society is in need of spiritual resurrection. By doing so, we share in the mission of the Congregation of the Resurrection, a Catholic religious order of Priests, Brothers and Deacons dedicated to the Paschal Mystery of Christ, to sharing with the world the hope of Jesus' Resurrection.

What is a lay associate?

By definition a lay associate is “a baptized lay person, married or single, who makes an official commitment in a chosen Congregation in order to grow in faith, while participating in the spirituality and charism of the Congregation, without being bound by vows or obliged to leave a profession or trade” (Canadian Religious Conference).

What is the Church's definition of the laity?

According to the Vatican Council II and its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (#31), the laity are first of all baptized Roman Catholics. Their vocation in the Church is the universal call to holiness. Their mission is described this way: “They are called by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity”.

What is the Resurrectionist vision for the laity?

Our founder Bogdan Janski spoke about personal sanctification and resurrection (or 're-Christianization') of society.

In his vision he saw the mission of the laity which was described by Vatican II.

A lay person himself, Janski envisioned the laity working alongside the religious for the resurrection of society. He believed it could only be done through Truth and Charity (*veritate et caritate*), by proclaiming the Truth with Love.

As Resurrectionists we invite lay people to live out their vocation to holiness by sharing in our Resurrectionist spirituality, and to work with us for the resurrection of society by embracing our Charism and Mission in their everyday lives. In order to commit himself or herself more fully, a lay person may wish to become our Lay Associate – an Apostle of the Resurrection.

What is the Resurrectionist vision for the “Apostles of the Resurrection”?

Since its very beginning, the Congregation of the Resurrection has been putting great emphasis on forming the laity in such a way as to empower them to transform – resurrect – the society from within. In the words of our Mission Statement, “We assist the laity in their own efforts to become prophets to the world and to transform it by providing them with a deeper experience of the Paschal dynamic in their lives”. At another point, our Resurrectionist Constitutions say, “It is part of our tradition that there are associations of laity living the Resurrectionist charism and mission according to their state in life. The presence of the laity in our ministry ought to mean a real collaboration – the laity working with us in genuine communion with the Church”.

It was Bogdan Janski’s dream that both the laity and the consecrated religious would work together for the resurrection of society – each in their own way, proper to their vocation. The link between the *Apostles* and vowed *Resurrectionists* is spiritual in nature; it is the desire to live the same vision and the same dream. The challenge for both *Resurrectionists* and *Apostles* is to live out

the Mission and Charism of the Congregation of the Resurrection in our lives in a deeper way, in the hope of bringing about the resurrection of society and entering into our own personal Resurrection. Both the *Apostles* and the *Resurrectionists* need to support and nourish each other by sharing and living our faith, as we all attempt to bring about the resurrection of society, starting with ourselves. It is also our hope and desire as professed religious that we can learn from and be enriched by the many gifts of our Lay Associates, by the sharing of their lives and faith journeys.

Who may be an Apostle of the Resurrection?

Here are some criteria for acceptance as a Lay Associate with the Congregation of the Resurrection:

The candidate must be a baptized Catholic 18 years of age or older, and needs to show evidence of:

- a wholesome character with emotional, psychological and spiritual stability;
- a desire to deepen his or her own spirituality by conforming his or her life to the Paschal Mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection;
- a desire to live out the Resurrectionist Charism and Mission in his or her daily life at home, at work and in ministry;
- a willingness and commitment to support the Resurrectionists in their ministry through prayer and through personal initiatives;
- a spirit of cooperation with the Resurrectionists and with fellow Apostles of the Resurrection, in order to promote the resurrection of society.



What is the process of becoming an Apostle of the Resurrection?

Any person wishing to become an Apostle of the Resurrection is asked to submit the Application Form* along with a Pastoral Reference Letter* from the pastor of the parish he or she attends. Once the form and letter are reviewed, the person will be invited to participate in at least two formation sessions before his or her “Commitment Ceremony”. This ceremony will take place on December 8 of each year at Resurrection College in Waterloo, ON.

*You can download both forms from: www.resurrectionists.ca/lay-associates, or request them by contacting us directly (see: our contact info on the last page of this booklet).

What is involved in the formation process?

The Apostles will meet five times a year. Three of these meetings will be formation sessions, when we will meet for a common prayer service, a seminar, and a social – each time at a different Resurrectionist parish in the Diocese of Hamilton. The other one will be the “Commitment Ceremony” (Dec. 8 of each year) when during Mass, new Apostles will be formally received and make their promises for a year, and the existing Apostles will renew their commitment for another year (if they wish to do so). We will also gather each year on July 22, the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene (our patron saint) to celebrate together with a BBQ.

What kind of commitment is one expected to make?

Each year on December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, those who have been accepted and have participated in at least two formation sessions, as well as those who after a year wish to renew their commitment, may be invited to make promises for a period of one calendar year (December 8 – December 7 of next year). The promises are made publicly during Mass and

received by a representative of the Resurrectionists. Each new Apostle receives a pin which he or she is encouraged to wear regularly as a witness to Christ's Resurrection and its power working in their life.

The person does not make the commitment for life, but for one year at a time. If he or she wants to withdraw from the programme there will be no obligation or pressure to renew the promises.

NOTE: There is NO financial obligation on the part of either the associate or the Congregation of the Resurrection. Likewise, no commitment on the part of either extends beyond one year unless it is renewed.

What are the promises?

Here is the full act of commitment that an Apostle of the Resurrection is asked to make and live out for one year at a time:

Act of Commitment of an Apostle of the Resurrection:

In light of what I have learned about the Congregation of the Resurrection and its founder, Bogdan Janski, and after discerning the Lord's call in my heart, I commit myself for one year to the Apostles of the Resurrection.

I promise to grow in holiness by living according to the spirit of Bogdan Janski and the Congregation of the Resurrection, that is:

- striving to be inwardly renewed, dying to self in order that Christ may live in me,
- working for the resurrection of society by making of my life a visible sign of the transforming power of God's love,
- bringing the hope of Christ's resurrection to all those who despair.

To help me live out this commitment I promise also:

- to deepen my faith and knowledge of the Resurrectionist spirituality, Charism and Mission by attending the formation sessions throughout the year,

- to support the ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection in whatever ways I am able,
- to pray daily for vocations to the Congregation and for my fellow Apostles.

When receiving the Apostles of the Resurrection Pin:

I promise to proudly wear this pin and to make Bogdan Janski and the Resurrectionists known. St. Mary Magdalene, patron saint of the Apostles, pray for us.

What is the Apostles' motto, patron saint and feast days?

«***Go and tell them I am Risen***» is the motto of the Apostles of the Resurrection. With these words the Risen Jesus sends Mary Magdalene to announce His resurrection to the Apostles – this is why Mary Magdalene is called ‘the Apostle to the Apostles’. Our mission as the Apostles of the Resurrection is to announce Christ’s Resurrection to the world by what we say and do, in all areas of our everyday life. This is also why ***St. Mary Magdalene is our patron saint***, and why one of our feast days is ***July 22*** – the memorial of St. Mary Magdalene. Our other feast day is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, ***December 8***. Mary is not only the Mother of God and the one who intercedes for us, but she is also a model of perfect discipleship for all those who want to follow Christ. This is why we celebrate her major feasts.

In what ways do Apostles participate in the life of the Resurrectionists? (“What will I be asked to do as an Apostle of the Resurrection”?)

The Apostles of the Resurrection share in the spirituality, Charism and Mission of the Congregation of the Resurrection by living them out wherever God has placed them in life – in families,

among friends, at school, at work, or in their own parish. They do it primarily by bringing the power of Christ's resurrection into these areas of their life by their words and actions. The Apostles are invited to support with their many talents, time and prayers the particular ministries led by the Resurrectionists, that is parishes, education and faith formation ministries, vocation ministry, and others. The Apostles also commit to pray daily for the Resurrectionists and their ministries, for vocations to the Congregation, and for fellow Apostles and their intentions.

***What is the Resurrectionist spirituality?
Here are Eight Principles:***

1. God loves us unconditionally

We have all experienced love. We yearn to love and be loved. Yet we recognize that often our human love is imperfect and limited. God's love is unconditional. This is difficult for us to understand and accept, especially when we have experienced failed human love. Even though God knows our every thought and desire he loves us - because he created us -and has called us into being to know, love and serve him. Whereas we may feel unworthy of his love, he forgives us and blesses us. Whereas we may find it difficult to accept others, he accepts us and gives us grace to live fully in him. Whereas we may find it difficult to forgive others, his mercy is everlasting. This is the love of the covenant, forever and one hundred per cent. God has taken the initiative with us, and loves us beyond our understanding and imagining. Our love is to reflect that unconditional love of God. Our failure to understand, accept and share this love leads to our sadness, selfishness, fear and doubt, broken relationships, and a world in need of new life (resurrection).

2. God created us from nothingness

We are creatures, created by God. All that we have and are comes from God. This should fill us with gratitude to God, and humility

before God and one another. We are called to be at one with all creation (ecology) and creatures. When we realize our nothingness (without God) we open ourselves to receive his grace and to depend on his love and mercy. Our dignity and purpose comes from God, not the criteria or standards of our modern society.

3. Evil attracts us

In our human condition we are attracted to evil. Fr. Peter Semenenko wrote that this is like an illness -marked with a loss of taste for things that are healthy, a lowering of our spirit, and a lack of movement. Only when we realize our own weakness and susceptibility to evil will we recognize that Jesus has saved us, and has the power to heal us from the illness of sin. We then choose grace over sin, life over death.

4. We succumb to sin

The temptations that surround us tempt us into sin. This leads us to separate ourselves from God, from one another, and to lose true peace in our hearts. We can be tempted to think that we are incapable of being forgiven and loved by God. This lie does not come from God, but from the evil one. Or, we can presume that we are free from all sin, and thus do not need God. The author of this lie is the same as the other.

5. God calls us to conversion - Paschal Mystery

God calls us out of our sin to a new life in him. We are to die to our sin and embrace the grace of the Spirit, the truth of Christ, and the love and mercy of God. This change of heart is not an easy process, but through the grace of God it is within our reach. This dying to sin and rising to a new life in Christ mirrors the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our conversion has been won through that saving act of Jesus, and we relive it each time that we turn away from sin and live more fully the way of Christ.

6. God calls us to community

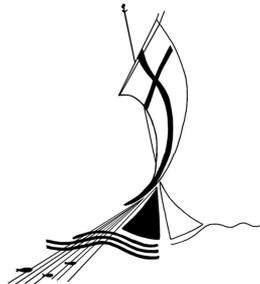
We are social creatures and God calls us out of isolation and individualism to form a Christian community. Each of us brings our unique gifts and talents, as well as our unique experience of God, his grace, and his mercy. Jesus Christ unites us to one another. We need one another. In the 'Community' our family and our parish -we share faith, express love, pray and worship, and serve one another.

7. God calls us to work for the resurrection of society

In this community - inspired, nourished and blessed by God -we work together not only for our mutual sanctification, but for the transformation of society. The Holy Spirit enables us to share our own personal experience of new life (resurrection) with one another, encouraging and leading each other to a deeper sharing in the life of the Risen Christ. United by that Spirit, we work together to transform (resurrect) our society, based on gospel values so that our homes, schools, work places, neighborhoods and parishes may truly reflect the kingdom of God.

8. Mary: Our Model and Mother

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the first and perfect disciple of Jesus. From the visit of the angel Gabriel until the foot of the cross, we see Mary as a woman of faith, hope and love. Her faith is in God's love, her hope in the faithfulness of God to his promises, and her love for her son and for each of us as her spiritual children. Despite the mysteries of her life she maintained these virtues, and invites us, by following her son, to face the difficulties, challenges and disappointments of our day in union with her. Indeed, she is our Model and our Mother.



What is the Charism of the Congregation of the Resurrection?

Each religious community in the Catholic Church lives and ministers according to their specific and unique charism, a “gift” they have and share with the larger Church. Such charisms usually come from the vision of the founders of a particular community. Our Resurrectionist Charism is expressed in the following Charism Statement:

«We desire to be faithful to the grace received by our founders, a grace we now share by our call to the Congregation of the Resurrection. We recognize certain truths to be especially important for our life and work as Resurrectionists because they give expression to this grace and call.

We believe that God's love for us is merciful and unfailing. We have not earned his love. We are nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing without God. We are attracted to evil. We are sinners. Yet, God continues to draw us to himself.

We believe that in his love the Father calls us to conversion: to personal resurrection in union with Jesus, to a new life filled with the power of his Spirit. With Jesus, we die to ourselves when we surrender our lives to the Father, renouncing anything that separates us from him. The power of the Spirit forms Christ in us, and moves us to respond with love to the Father's great love for us.

We believe that God calls us to live together as brothers - sharing the gifts that we have received, supporting one another, praying and working together for his glory. He has called us to be a community, which is a living sign of the gospel values of justice, truth and love.

We believe that God calls us to work together for the resurrection of society, bringing his life and love to all: through our personal witness, through the witness of our life in community, and through our community apostolates, primarily through parish work and teaching. This also requires that we build, and teach others to build, a Christian community in which all can experience the hope, joy and peace of Christ's Resurrection.

We believe that Mary is our model for all that we are called to be and do as Resurrectionists».

What is the Mission of the Congregation of the Resurrection?

In addition to a particular spirituality and charism, each religious community in the Catholic Church receives from God its very own and unique mission. Here is the Mission Statement of the Congregation of the Resurrection:

«The Congregation of the Resurrection announces and gives witness to the *Paschal Mystery*. Convinced of God's unconditional love for us, we herald the liberation and salvation of each person and society as a passage from death to life, in which every situation of evil and injustice will be overcome.

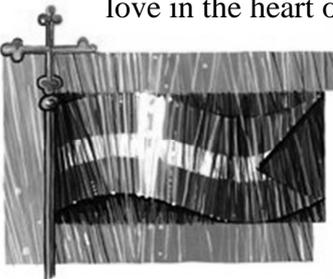
We call others, especially youth and families, to communities of the Risen Christ in which faith, hope and love radiate as a sign of our union with Christ and his mother, Mary, in the Church. We are convinced that to do this, our Congregation must be a model of Christian community in which people are one in heart and mind.

We reach out to all people through our pastoral-educational ministry, but especially join in solidarity with people diminished by unjust structures.

We assist the laity in their own efforts to become prophets to the world and to transform it by providing them with a deeper experience of the Paschal dynamic in their lives.

As an international community, we assist each other in various parts of the world by sharing our ministries, experiences and resources.

We share Christ's own desire to enkindle the fire of divine love in the heart of every person on this earth».



How do the Charism and Mission Statements of the Resurrectionists relate to being an Apostle?

As an Apostle of the Resurrection you will be invited to share our Charism and participate in our Mission. Our formation sessions throughout the year will touch upon the many various aspects of these two documents (as well as on our spirituality, history, our founders, etc.). However, you are invited to meditate on them individually, so that you can understand them more fully and live out these special “gifts” of the Holy Spirit to the Church in your own life and ministry, and so work for the resurrection of society.

What is our history?

«The Congregation of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ began in Paris, France, on Ash Wednesday, February 17, 1836, under the leadership of Bogdan Janski. After the death of the Founder on July 2, 1840, his disciples continued to develop his ideas and to live in community under the direction of Peter Semenenko and Jerome Kajsiewicz, the co-founders of the Congregation. On Easter Sunday, March 27, 1842, along with five other clerics, they professed their first religious vows in the Catacombs of St. Sebastian in Rome. The first Rule was written during the Lenten season of 1842 and became the basis for community life and personal sanctification. They were inspired to dedicate themselves to the Risen Saviour and to call themselves “Brothers of the Resurrection”. They were now dead to sin and alive with the Risen Christ in a new life dedicated to truth and charity».



This short summary of our beginnings is taken from the “Historical Preface” to our Constitutions. During our formation sessions we will talk more about our history, both internationally and in North America. Below is a short summary of our beginnings in Canada: The Ontario Kentucky Province, the founding province of the Congregation of the Resurrection in North America, began August 14, 1857. Father Eugene Funcken C.R. came to St. Agatha Parish in St. Agatha, Ontario from Europe at the invitation of the local bishop. He was followed to North America by his brother, Father Louis Funcken C.R. In 1865, Fr. Louis founded St. Jerome’s College also in St. Agatha.

Over the years the Resurrectionists grew in number and ministered in various capacities as priests, brothers, and deacons opening up schools (including seminaries) and parishes in Louisville, Kentucky, Bermuda, and in various cities in Southwestern Ontario. Today, nearly 50 men constitute the Ontario-Kentucky Province. They come from both Canada and other countries, mostly Poland. Most of our active members work in parish ministry. Some of our religious work in education at the secondary, university and adult education levels. Special talents call some religious to special ministries. Among these are social work, chaplaincies, diocesan personnel work, international and provincial community administration and vocation promotion.

Many of our senior members specialize in the apostolate of prayer, spiritual direction and part-time ministry in parishes and adult faith formation.

As an international community, currently present in 15 countries of the world, we collaborate with other Provinces of the Congregation in many areas of our ministry and religious formation.

Who was Bogdan Janski?

Born on March 26, 1807 in Lisowo, Poland; he died on July 2, 1840 in Rome, Italy. He was a professor of economics, a fervent patriot, a voluntary exile, a friend of French statesman

Charles Montalembert, a man of deep interior conversion and spiritual resurrection, a public penitent, a lay apostle of the Polish emigration in France, a spiritual guide for the lost ones, a protector of the morally and materially careless ones, an educator of priests... a founder of the Congregation of the Resurrection.



“Then there arose among us a man of great intellect, a person in every way exceptional, his name – Bogdan Janski. He, too, passed through darkness, but he was the first to greet the rising light. Then he himself gave forth the light like the morning star, which announces

the newly arrived dawn, a prophet of that light which is to reign always. Actually he did not carry the torch very long, but long enough to show the way. How many quickly gathered around him! How many found God’s peace through him and greeted him as one sent from God, a guiding angel. Even though their number may not have been great, how great the reality and the results! What a beautiful person... a great soul, unshakable, steadfast, clear, pure and serene. He was the first to be openly illuminated by the light, by grace and peace”.

*Fr. Peter Semenenko CR
co-founder of the Resurrectionists*

How will the links with the Congregation of the Resurrection be maintained?

The personal links with the brothers, deacons and priests of the local community will be the strongest bond the Apostles will have, but hopefully they will also become aware of other ministries of Resurrectionists both in Canada and throughout the world. Other

than the five formation/social meetings each year, each Apostle, as a special friend of the Congregation, is always welcome to any of our formal events (both in parishes and on the provincial level, for example our First or Perpetual Vows ceremonies, ordinations, liturgical jubilee celebrations, etc.). Good friendships with our youngest members in formation, as well as those in retirement, are always a great support for us.

At the same time, we want to be part of your life as well, and want to offer you our friendship and support. Many of our elderly priests offer spiritual direction and opportunities for reconciliation in the sacrament of confession. Your relationship with us, and our relationship with you, is always a two way street, and so it is not only us enriching your lives, but also you enriching our lives! We welcome your feedback, suggestions and new inspirations in all areas of our ministry. You give and you receive; we give and we receive, too. Our mutual relationship will hopefully lead us all to a greater understanding and living out of our own vocations, and to growth in holiness, and so to God, as Vatican II reminded us.

An explanation of the Pin of the Apostles of the Resurrection

/for a colour image of the pin see the back cover of this booklet/

The pin of the Apostles of the Resurrection is round and maintained mostly in the white-red colours, with the exception of its centre. White and red are the colours of the resurrection – the banner of the Risen Christ (in the very centre of the pin) is red with a white cross at its centre. The letters ‘C’ and ‘R’ stand for *Congregatio a Resurrectione* which in English means Congregation of the Resurrection, and are our religious community’s official “initials” (hence the letters “C.R.” by our names). The banner has a rising sun in the background – which symbolizes the Risen Christ, the light of the world, as described by Zechariah in the gospel of Luke: “By the tender mercy of our God

the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Lk 1:78-79). At the very bottom, beneath the banner, is a small figure of the Risen Christ – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And finally, the inscription “Apostles of the Resurrection” seems to be radiating from the sun, which reminds us that we are sent by God to arrive into every corner of the world with the Good News of Christ’s resurrection – “go and tell them I am risen”.



The Apostles are invited to wear their pin proudly whenever possible – making the most of every opportunity to explain what it means to others, and what Apostles of the Resurrection and the Resurrectionists are about, which in itself is “working for the resurrection of society”, as our personal witness to the Risen Christ reaches more and more people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT...

THE APOSTLES OF THE RESURRECTION:

www.resurrectionists.ca/lay-associates

THE ONTARIO - KENTUCKY PROVINCE
OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE RESURRECTION:

www.resurrectionists.ca

THE CONGREGATION OF THE RESURRECTION (INTERNATIONAL):

www.resurrectionist.eu



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Ⓞ Risen Lord,

**the Way, the Truth and the Life,
make us faithful followers of the Spirit of Your Resurrection.**

**Grant that we may be inwardly renewed,
dying to ourselves in order that you may live in us.**

**May our lives serve as signs
of the transforming power of your love.**

**Use us as your instruments for the renewal of society,
bringing your life and love to all,
and leading them to your Church.**

**This we ask of you, Lord Jesus,
living and reigning with the Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever. Amen.**

