

Dear Friend of the Congar Institute:

Yves Congar, OP* described himself during the nine years he was silenced and exiled as being under constant duress. Nine years is a long time, especially compared to how long just these few months of living under the duress of the coronavirus seem. Yet, Congar used those nine years to continue his work as a professor, not publicly, but in quiet research and writing, trusting that this work would be useful for the Church's future renewal. Of course, his journey mirrors that of Christ's early followers who were covered and silenced under the duress of the religious authorities until they were freed by the irrepressible power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when an immense energy of renewal and hope was released into the world.

This Pentecost, the Congar Institute celebrates 15 years of our mission to partner with dioceses in the formation of lay pastoral leaders. We have always taken a hopeful stance, looking with different eyes at what has been called a "vocation shortage", seeing instead an abundance of vocations among lay persons called to pastoral leadership. This hopeful attitude continues at the Congar Institute, even in this difficult time. While we are prevented from working as before, we can still prepare with hope for a renewed future for our next 15 years. The current coronavirus experience reminds us that we cannot depend on things remaining the same. It is time to assess where we have been and where we are going. What is the future we hope to shape? Here is a sketch of some things we've learned during this crisis for our future mission:

Adaptability. Schools went online almost overnight. We will build on our use of technology and assist lay leaders to integrate technology into their ministry to better steward resources.

Care for the Environment. We will build into our formation programs an awareness of our moral responsibility to our shared home and the role of church leaders to promote it.



Care for the Vulnerable Ones. We've seen how unevenly the vast wealth of this country is shared. We will form ministers who are attentive advocates for the vulnerable.

Community & Reconciliation. Community connectedness has never been more important. We will strengthen community-building skills, especially to help communities welcome newcomers.

Congar entitled his final work, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, beautifully summing up the faith-centered genesis of Congar's constantly-hopeful stance. In this time of Pentecost we at the Congar Institute accept this challenge to be hopeful in the face of an uncertain future. You give us hope for the future. Thank you for all the different ways you have supported us in this first 15 years of our mission. We look forward to having you as our partner in mission for the next 15 years!

Sincerely yours in the Risen Christ and his Holy Spirit,

Fr. Wayne A. Cavalier, OP, Director

Anna Chavez, Assoc. Director

Gabriela Farias, Admin. Assist.

* The late French Dominican Cardinal and pre-eminent theologian of Vatican II and the inspiration for the Congar Institute.