

**LINEAMENTA for Thought and Proposals in Preparation
for the LIX General Chapter of the Order of Camillians
May 2020**

*What is Camillian Prophecy Today?
Looking into the Past, Living in the Present,
Trying to Serve as Samaritans and Journeying with Hope towards the Future'*

'In our world, where it often seems that the signs of God's presence have been lost from sight, a convincing prophetic witness on the part of consecrated persons is increasingly necessary. In the first place this should entail *the affirmation of the primacy of God and of eternal life*, as evidenced in the following and imitation of the chaste, poor and obedient Christ, who was completely consecrated to the glory of God and to the love of his brethren. The fraternal life is *itself prophetic* in a society which, sometimes without realizing it, has a profound yearning for a brotherhood which knows no borders. Consecrated persons are being asked to bear witness everywhere with the boldness of a prophet who is unafraid of risking even his life. Prophecy derives a particularly persuasive power from *consistency between proclamation and life*. Consecrated persons will be faithful to their mission in the Church and the world, if they can renew themselves constantly in the light of the word of God. Thus will they be able to enrich the other faithful with the charismatic gifts they have received and, in turn, let themselves be challenged by the prophetic stimulus which comes from other sectors of the Church' **John Paul II**, apostolic post-synodal exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, 1996, n. 85.

'Let us not fall into humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine that prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism! Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism!'

Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy *Misericordiae Vultus*, 11 April 2015, n.15.

'Being radical in prophecy is the rule *sine glossa*, the Gospel *sine glossa*. That is to say: without tranquilizers! We must find the radical character of prophecy in our founders. They remind us that we are called to move out of our comfort and safety zones, from all that is worldliness: in our way of living but also in thinking of new roads for our Institutes. New roads should be looked for in the founding charism and the initial prophecy. We must recognise as individuals and as communities what our worldliness is'.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Superior Generals*, 25 November 2016.

'The evangelical originality (Mk 10:43) of which the consecrated life is meant to be the living prophecy, comes from practical attitudes and choices: the primacy of service (Mk 10:43-45) and the steady journey towards the poor and solidarity with the least amongst us (Lk 9:48); the promotion of the dignity of the person in whatever situation they find themselves living and suffering (Mt 2:40); subsidiarity as an exercise of reciprocal trust and generous collaboration of all and with all... This prophetic line is the sign and result of its charismatic nature that makes it capable of inventiveness and originality. This requires continuous openness to the signs of the Spirit to the point of *listening to the breeze* (cf. 1K 19:12). This is the only attitude that allows us to recognise the mysterious paths (cf. Jn 3:8) of grace until new hope in the fruitfulness of the Word is reborn (cf. Jn 4:35)'.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, January 2017, nn. 31, 32.

'It is a matter of looking to the future, open to new forms of apostolate which the Spirit inspires in you and which the signs of the times and the needs of the world and of the Church require. The great gift you have received is still current and necessary also for this age of ours, because it is founded on love that will never end... Be ever aware that "it is in communion, even when this proves painful, that a charism is seen to be authentic and mysteriously fruitful". In fidelity to the initial inspiration of the Founder and the Foundresses, and in listening to the many forms of suffering and poverty of humanity today, you will know how to make the gift you received shine with an ever new light; and many young men and women throughout the world will be able to feel attracted by it and to join you, so as to continue bearing witness to God's tenderness'.

Pope Francis, *Address to the Camillian Charismatic Family*, 18 March 2019.

Esteemed Confrere,

The guidelines for thought brought together in this text emerged principally during the meeting of the major Superiors of our Order of Camillians (Rome, 14-18 March 2018) with the Superior General and the members of the General Consulta. This meeting was immediately followed by the meeting of the same figures with the representatives of the Camillian Charismatic Family (Rome, 10-14 March 2019).

These ideas sprung from the dialogue of those taking part about some simple but neuralgic questions that you can read at the end of each individual passage of the text: I hope they can contribute to discernment at the level of ascertainment and planning by individuals and by (local, Provincial, Vice-Provincial and Delegation) communities.

We are preparing ourselves for our participation in the LIX General Chapter of the Order of Camillians which we will celebrate starting on 2 May 2020 and whose subject will be: 'What is Camillian Prophecy Today? Looking into the Past, Living in the Present Trying to Serve as Samaritans, and Journeying with Hope towards the Future'.

The subject of prophecy has never ceased, with its pungent contemporary relevance, to provoke, and it appears in a way that is always new as a challenge for the contemporary realities of consecrated life. A prophet receives from God a capacity to scrutinise history, to live and interpret events: he is like a sentry who, strong because of the experience he has acquired, stands guard during the night, but his dynamic is to proclaim the next dawn (cf. Is 21:11-12). He knows God and he knows men and women, his brothers and sisters. He is able to discern and denounce the evil of sin and injustice because he is free; he answers to no other teacher than God; he does not have interests other than those of God. Usually, a prophet is on the side of the poor and the defenceless because he knows that God Himself is on their side.¹

Let us accept the invitation of Pope Francis who has repeatedly called attention, at Church appointments of absolute relevance, to prophecy as a specific and absolutely defining characteristic of consecrated life: the Year dedicated to Consecrated Life (30 November 2014 to 2 February 2016) and the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (8 December 2015 to 20 November 2016): 'I hope that you will wake up the world', because the characteristic feature of consecrated life is prophecy. As Pope Francis urged the Superior Generals: 'evangelical radicalism does not belong in an exclusive way to religious, it is required of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way'. This is the priority that is now pointed out to us: 'to be prophets who bear witness to the style of life that Jesus chose for himself in his incarnation... A religious should never forgo prophecy'.²

1. LOOKING AT THE PAST WITH GRATITUDE

Where do we come from? The past that is in us!

- *We should discern in the context of our history three fundamental elements (values, realities, challenges...) that were prophetic signs in a particular historic epoch and continue to have a strong resonance in our contemporary world.*
- *Which prophetic activities of our charismatic history provoke in us a profound sense of gratitude?*
- *Always and precisely give the reasons for, and argue in favour of the motivations behind, such a choice.*

¹ Papa Francesco, *Apostolic Letter to all Consecrated People on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life*. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_lettera-ap_20141121_lettera-consacrati.html

² Fr. Leo Pessini, Superior Generale, *Opening Address to the Meeting of Major Superiors of the Order*, Rome, 14 March 2019.

In the centuries-old history of Camillian consecration of which we are the custodians and guardians, being responsibly committed to knowing it and implementing it, we can identify some fundamental elements (values, realities, challenges....) that were prophetic signs in a particular historical epoch and continue to have a strong resonance in our contemporary world.

Our confreres of the past, imitating our founder St. Camillus, above all at difficult moments for the Order, were men in whom dwelt a *profound faith* that led them to abandon themselves to God and to make exciting choices or engage in actions bordering on the incomprehensible. This solid approach of faith continued to nourish the ‘first’ and ‘original’ Camillian prophecy; the insight of St. Camillus de Lellis of bringing together a ‘company of pious and good men who for love of God would love the sick’. It is around this incandescent charismatic and spiritual core that the Order down the centuries has responded to the centrifugal fibrillations of history, reaffirming the value of unity.

In a social context that is increasingly widely self-referential, which is something that runs the risk of undermining the quality of our consecration (identity and charism), we reaffirm the need for initial and ongoing formation that leads to interpreting our religious vows in the light of the *category of fraternity*, which has been providentially handed down and borne witness to since the beginnings of the foundation of the Order: obedience as a participatory capacity to put the common project at the centre of things, not one’s own ego; poverty as joint responsibility and the communion of spiritual and material goods; chastity as a source of friendship, a generator of tenderness, a capacity for relations which, while it allows us to be called upon by challenges that come from outside, at the same time asks questions of our environment.

A grateful memory. You can look to the past with gratitude if you know the past. We can observe, above all in the new generations, a low level of knowledge of, often accompanied by a widespread lack of interest in, the history of our Order, except for the elements that are occasionally provided during the novitiate. It would be advisable to reconfigure this important debt towards our history in a more systematic way, starting with initial formation.

The exercise of the fourth vow. The historical pathway followed by the Order provides us with a plurality of expressions of the fourth vow: from care for the plague-stricken to care for the sick in hospitals and homes, from our works to missions and social works, and on to thought about the meaning of illness, of suffering and of death, etc. The lives and the witness of our confreres who were ‘martyrs to charity’ and died caring for the sick, above all during the epoch of plagues and epidemics, outlines a luminous trail of compassion, tenderness, boldness and holiness. The fourth vow polarised the lives of these confreres of ours and the lives of their communities.

In a more recent epoch – the middle of the twentieth century – the propulsive thrust of radical service, united to a wish to be in a permanent tension of responding to the contemporary reality of the challenge of the new needs of sick people, led the outlook of the Order to open up to ‘*missio ad gentes*’ (in the Americas this had begun as early as the eighteenth century) with a focus that was always well centred on: illness, accompanying the dying (*hospices*); frailty; the need for health (high-quality Camillian health-care works); the defence of rights and health-care justice (the social stigma of HIV); the development of communities that would be resilient in the face of natural and manmade disasters (*CTF* → *CADIS*); integrating in a synergic way the spirituality of lay people (*the Lay Camillian Family*) and the Camillian Charismatic Family); and exploring the mystery of pain in the light of the salvation achieved by Jesus and the potentialities of the *humanum* through the intelligence of faith and thought (*the Camillianum*, centres of formation and humanisation, ‘*Gymnasium caritatis*’, ethical and bioethical analysis).

2. LIVING THE PRESENT WITH PASSION

At what point do we find ourselves? Knowing the present in order to live it better

- *Starting with our perception of social and ecclesial life that today calls on our charism and our life choices, we should identify in the present of the life of the Order (works and activities of ministry, spiritual life, formation activity, exercise of the fourth vow...) practical elements of life (practical life), immediate situations of 'light and shadow', uncertainties, perplexities and hope.*
- *We should identify three realities (justifying their choice!) that project 'shadows' which impede or weigh down, like a raft; 'passion' to be prophetic signs today; the growth of our vocation to prophecy.*
- *We should identify (justifying the reason for this!) three institutional initiatives that bring 'prophetic light' to the Church and to society, and contribute to transforming 'passion for Christ into passion for humanity' (cf. Pope Francis to the Fatebenefratelli, 1 February 2019).*

a. Shadows

A sense of belonging and a passion to take part in the daily facets (prayer, free time, joint responsibility on economic administration...) of *community life* has been declining. That life is increasingly experienced in a functional way with the propensity to adopt a middle-class style in living it.

The emphasis on the self-referential, the priority attributed to personal objectives compared to the fraternal good, clashes with a community project ('what can the Order do for me' against 'what can I do for the Order?'). Often not good or non-healing relationships in the long term generate resignation, a lack of trust and hope, and lead religious to seek and live such needs outside their own communities.

When looking at the present, the *contraction in numbers* of our Provinces – above all the 'historic' Provinces that were founded in Europe – throws a shadow of a certain impact: the majority of religious experience a sense of resignation and lack of confidence about the future and this demotivates the 'few' who are still ready to take on, full time, the task of animation and the promotion of vocations.

The modest results in terms of vocations (and at a specific level also the figure of the religious who is a brother, with its very strong identity) are generating pessimism and impede thinking anew about our survival and our presence at the level of ministry, with confidence in the immediate future. It is said that 'when the celebrations of anniversaries and not of inaugurations increase, that is a sign of growing old'.

In this sense, *inter-Provincial collaboration* is a providential challenge that can contribute to increasing in individual religious a sense of identity and belonging to the Order, understood in an overall way. Such collaboration teaches a renewed sense of joint responsibility for every member of every Province of the Order who is called to build up the kingdom of the Lord, overcoming the logic of the subordination of the youngest parts of the Order or parts endowed with less resources to those that are more structured.

However, we need respect for the rules of inter-Provincial collaboration which should be experienced and managed with wisdom and prudence in order to avoid economic motivations alone, or the search for ministerial labour alone, compromising this healthy form of reciprocity.

The *fourth vow* runs the risk of being lived in a 'delegated' form: one observes the loss of the added value of the physical presence of a Camillian 'at the side of' the sick...the touch of the 'flesh' of the sick.

The progressive clericalisation of the Order also has consequences for the practical exercise of our charism: an approach centred almost exclusively on the sacraments not supported by ‘agile hands and empathetic practices and hearts’.

Formation. In order to dispel the impression that specialised formation has the sole purpose of the award of a ‘diploma’ (the expression of an academic and social up-grading), greater discernment in the choice of the fields of specialised study is to be welcomed, with greater accord being achieved between the propensities and interests at the level of personal formation of individual religious, on the one hand, and the overall projects of the Provinces, on the other.

We should also hope for a return of ‘intensive’ courses of ongoing formation: they can contribute to re-motivating and re-qualifying the ‘fundamentals’ of personal vocational choices and a person’s own style of serving the sick.

Our works. These were born in certain historical and geographical health-care contexts as a response to emergencies of poverty, to a request for the integral health of the body, and to a request for environmental wellbeing, above all for those most in need. They now bring with them the need for important corrections. They run the serious risk of offering very good health-care services (the risk of an exaggerated emphasis on efficiency) but ones that are no longer available to a wider public (the challenge of the allocation of resources; a balance between respect for state and civic rules and a transparent and sustainable budget, with the ‘prophetic’ supply of dignified health-care services to the poorest). We need a renewed understanding of the ‘Camillian’ identity of the religious involved in our works (they are often present at the top of these works). Also to be hoped for is a redefinition of the consistency, the interaction and the origins of these works in relation to the life of a religious community (prayer life and fraternity versus the professional, health-care and academic activity of the religious himself).

b. Lights

When we peer into the present, we can identify elements that throw a good ray of light on our journey.

A greater sense of the Church. An awareness is developing that the charism given to St. Camillus for the good of the sick is a gift to the Church and for the Church to be lived in the Church and the world: throughout the Camillian world practical forms of collaboration with the pastors and institutions of dioceses, with local Christian communities, are underway, always with the approach of valuing and giving visibility to our charism, for the promotion of the integral health of the sick.

These ‘high expectations’ that the Church nurtures towards our charism (they see us as ‘pioneers and experts’ in the world of health and health care), although, on the one hand, they give us gratification, on the other, they must be a constant stimulus to formulate with intelligence and creativity new proposals of an *ad-intra* (our formation) and *ex-intra* (the beneficiaries in the world of illness and health) character.

Although, on the one hand, the ageing of our religious, above all in the Provinces of greatest antiquity in terms of their foundation, provokes significant concern, on the other, receiving and *providing care to our elderly confreres* can be an opportunity for witness, above all in a society where the elderly run the risk of being ‘discarded’ in line with the logic of an exaggerated emphasis on efficiency.

The steady increase in the average age of religious in the Provinces of the northern hemisphere of the planet, with a consequent contraction in projects and ministry, does not attenuate the ‘light’ of the flourishing of vocations in other areas of Camillian geography (the Camillian Provinces of Africa and Asia, *in primis*).

New expressions of our charism. As in the past, so also today, we can observe how our charism continues to re-modulate itself and reshape itself into expressions of increasing practical contemporary relevance (social action for integral health and for ‘new and old’ forms of poverty, palliative care, hospices, home care, the construction of community resilience (CADIS), integral development – ‘Health and Development’). This is also true at the level of thought (centres of formation and humanisation). Perhaps greater attention should be paid to new forms of addiction.

Multiculturality. This should be supported and developed in the direction of an authentic *interculturality*. Cooperation between Provinces offers an opportunity to undertake pathways so that our communities are increasingly international communities where diversity enriches and does not harden the common life.

Collaboration with lay people. Last in chronological terms, the recent meeting of the Lay Camillian Family (October 2018) highlighted how lay people are attracted by the Camillian charism and are committed with determination to living it with joy. This innovation involves for us religious a commitment to offer these people fraternity, spirituality and formation.

Spiritual life. The shadows that darken the future generate not only malaise but also a profound need – healthy dismay! – to convert and strengthen spiritual life. The programmes for ongoing formation can continue to accompany our religious on their human itinerary and their itinerary of consecration.

The *Camillian Project* for the revitalisation of our Camillian lives also continues as a substantial opportunity for thought and growth on the overall horizon of our Camillian identity and ministry. We are dealing here with placing it with greater determination and concreteness at the centre of our community projects.

3. EMBRACING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE

Where are we going? Realism and hope

- *We should identify some priorities/strategic choices (justifying the reasons for them!) for our Order for the next six-year period in order to be credible in the world of health and suffering (formation, spirituality, pastoral care ministry...)*

A better structuring of *inter-Provincial collaboration* appears urgent and necessary. A greater set of rules in this field is not sufficient if it is not accompanied by an authentic and bilateral readiness to engage in dialogue and the sharing of intentions and cooperation projects.

Taking note of the demographic development of our Order, which is already marked by a ‘post-European profile’, means, on the one hand, a strengthening in everyone of knowledge of our origins and our historical and charismatic sources, which, indeed, provide substance to our very identity as an Order, but also, on the other hand, it requires, when attending to the pathways of *formation*, the cultivation of a greater sensitivity to interculturality. One cannot improvise a common life of people in whom dwell different cultural sensibilities.

This solid commitment to interculturality (which cannot be delayed) is also, and above all else, constructed through a *renewed fraternal dimension within a community*, lived as a family experience (avoiding approaches such as absenteeism, personal projects that prevail over the life of the community, indifference...).

A self-referential approach can be converted only into the deep belief that ‘it is preferable at the level of values, and more fruitful at the level of witness, to reach a destination together rather than ‘first’ but alone’ (this was a thought that emerged with repeated emphasis at the meeting of the Camillian Charismatic Family of March 2019).

This prophetic unity and fraternity will help above all young men in formation to grow in their feelings of identity and membership of the ‘family of the Order’.

Good formal and informal *communication* inside the various component parts of the Order (between religious, between communities, between Provinces, at a hierarchical level...) is the yeast that will lead sharing and mutual esteem to rise, as well as being an opportunity for a subsequent practical exchange of ideas, projects and resources.

It is as impelling as it has ever been to refer in a precise and continuous way to our programme of formation in order to support the good discernment and suitable growth of our religious. We should refer in an explicit and structured way to the questions and issues of the field of health that relate to our charism

– such as spirituality, pastoral care in health, bioethics, etc. – and are mediated by the various sensibilities of our Order, of the Church and of the secular health-care world.

Spiritual life requires greater commitment and depth in order to be increasingly less devotional and increasingly embodied in our religious. In ministry we need to rediscover ‘physical and continuous’ presence at the side of the sick. On this point, a renewed appeal is made: candidates for Camillian life should also be involved in an ongoing way in the ‘*practical exercise*’ of our charism as a constituent part of their initial formation.

These renewed spiritual and ministerial needs should also be the subject of a more cogent supply of *ongoing formation*, organised under the auspices of the General Consulta.

At the level of ministerial witness, it is advised that a serious discernment should be set in motion, Province by Province, to ascertain the realistic impact of our works at the level of witness (and where this is appropriate freeing ourselves of them should be assessed); to strengthen the quality of the service that is offered to the sick in hospital chaplaincies and through home care; and to implement the animation of pastoral care in health and care for sick people in parishes.

We should set in motion a broader debate and dialogue, at an inter-Congregational level as well, to study a change of paradigm in the *field of ministry* (thought about, and the carrying out, of projects and initiatives) and the *animation and promotion of vocations*, based upon personal context with young men.

The *Camillian Charismatic Family* in its commitment to the growth of our identity can also draw up an important form, and a new style, of Camillian presence in the Church and the world.

Economic sustainability. The most recently founded Delegations must organise their own plans for their communities, for ministry and for formation, calibrating them according to the prospect of achieving a sufficient sustainability and economic autonomy in relation to their ‘mother Provinces’.

4. PROPOSALS FOR GOVERNANCE

In consecrated life authority is first of all a spiritual authority. Persons in authority recognize that they are called to serve an ideal that is much greater than themselves, an ideal which can be approached only in an atmosphere of prayer and humble seeking, which allows them to grasp the action of the same Spirit in the heart of every brother or sister. Persons in authority are “spiritual” when they place themselves at the service of what the Spirit wants to realize through the gifts which he distributes to every member of the community, in the charismatic project of the institute...

Persons in authority are called to keep the charism of their own religious family alive. The exercise of authority also includes putting oneself at the service of the proper charism of the institute to which one belongs, keeping it carefully and making it real in the local community and in the province or the entire institute, according to the plans and orientations offered, in particular by General Chapters (or analogous meetings).³¹ What is required of persons in authority is an adequate knowledge of the charism of the institute, making it part of themselves, in order then better to see it in relation to community life and in relation to its place in ecclesial and social contexts’.

Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, The Service of Authority and Obedience. Faciem tuam, Domine, requiram, 2008, nn.13a.13e.

- *We should offer an assessment of the governance of our Order: is it up-to-date and adapted to our time and to the challenges posed to our charism? Does the structure of current management actually correspond to the current needs of our Order?*
- *What profiles of leadership do the priorities-aspirations identified at point 3 (‘Embracing the future with hope’) themselves identify? Which elements and strategies should be incorporated for a dynamic and effective governance of the Order?*

Should greater weight be entrusted to our central governance, avoiding an interference with the constitutional autonomy of the Provinces? This could foster greater dialogue between the Provinces and between the major Superiors, as well as fruitful cooperation.

The ‘world’ in which we live is undergoing very rapid rhythms of advance and appears to require decisions of a consequent character. In order to facilitate the decision-making process in the Order and to be able to respond in a suitable way, some methodological adjustments would be useful:

- The introduction of new more efficient technologies to gather, manage and share information between the central government of the Order and the Provinces.
- The establishment of a clear and effective protocol for the sending out and management of information. One of the obstacles to communication is 'language'. It is necessary to emphasise the need for everyone to have a command of at least one of the two official languages of the Order.
- The members of the central government should have more freedom to dedicate themselves to the animation of religious, delegating other more practical activities to specialists, including lay people, who can perform more technical tasks.
- Continuing to promote and complete a synodal approach in the government of the Order through meetings of the central government of the Order with the major Superiors and Delegates.
- The implementation of inter-Provincial and inter-Congregational collaboration within the Camillian Charismatic Family and with lay people.
- Specifying clearer criteria in profiles for the election of the Superiors of local, Provincial and central governments.
- The attribution to the Superior General of the possibility of proposing the members of the General Consulta, like his work group, and subjecting them to the examination of the General Chapter.

In *leadership* an approach of 'fatherhood' is held to be of great importance. The Superior General is not only the steward of the patrimony of the Order, a promoter of its growth in line with the values specific to the mission of the Order, an animator and a guide: he is also and above all else a 'father' who is capable of accompanying, above all at moments and in strategic decisions where there is most tension; a man capable of dialogue and able to foster dialogue.

A certain balance is held to be needed as regards the presence of the Superior General and the members of the General Consulta in Rome in order to facilitate the project of the Order and implement its journey.

Some aspects of the current management of governance have been appreciated: the solving of the 'Camillianum' question; steady and effective communication; the management of the transition after the events that involved the last Superior General; the reorganisation of the economic and financial system of the general curia; a well organised secretariat; the good organisation of meetings at the level of the Order; and the publication of official documents.

Profiles of Leadership

The members of the General Consulta should be representative of the different geographical areas to which the Order has spread and have the formation and the skills needed to animate the various sectors in which the Order operates (formation, financial administration, ministry, mission, etc.).

The Superior General should be emotionally balanced, spiritual, with a charismatic formation, endowed with good health, of a suitable age, with the gift of leadership, impassioned about our charism and with a certain facility as regards the ability to communicate.

Final Hope

From this rapid summary that we are now putting in your hands, one certainty emerges: there is much more life in our ‘consecrated life’, *there is much more fire under the ash*, than appear to our eyes. To ignore everything that is evangelical in Camillian consecrated life would be to ignore the action of the Spirit who continues to blow and to work through many of our confreres. All of this speaks to us about life and not about death or, if one so prefers, about a ‘pruning’, so that our Camillian life may continue to bear fruit and fruit in abundance (cf. Jn 15:1-2). Under the ashes, as we can ascertain and observe, there are still many embers, there is a great deal of evangelical and charismatic life.

The document *Vita Consecrata* offers us an important pathway: ‘New situations of difficulty are therefore to be faced with the serenity of those who know that what is required of each individual is *not success, but commitment to faithfulness*. What must be avoided at all costs is the actual breakdown of the consecrated life, a collapse which is not measured by a decrease in numbers but by a failure to cling steadfastly to the Lord and to personal vocation and mission’ (VC, n. 63).

The difficulties and omissions, which we have observed above, far from being a defeat must be adopted as a *kairòs* that calls us, summons us and challenges us to move from the good to the better.

Rome, 29 June 2019
Solemnity of St. Peter and St. Paul
Witnesses to Faith and the Charity of Christ

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam!

Il vicario generale

I consultori