

## Message from the 59th General Chapter to the religious of the Order

*Dear Confreres,*

*Peace and Health!*

As you well know, two years later than planned due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to celebrate our General Chapter in Nemi - Rome from May 2 to 20, 2022. In it, 56 capitular religious participated (Consulta, Provincial Superiors and Delegates) joined by Fr. Médard Abouè after his election as General Consultor, fathers (54) and brothers (3), from all over the world, visibly young, at the *Ad Gentes* Center of the Verbiti Missionaries, as well as some religious who helped us in secretarial and translation work.

The theme of the Chapter was *What is Camillian prophecy today? Scrutinizing the Past, Living the Present, Walking with Hope into the Future*, on which the local and provincial Chapters were also based in anticipation of the holding of the General Chapter in 2020. On this topic, taken from different angles, took place the two-day retreat at the beginning of the Chapter, preached by Fr. William Eronimoose, a Camillian from India, and other papers presented by Card. João Braz de Aviz (Prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) and other Camillian confreres: Fr. Raoul Tekou (Benin-Togo) with the theme of Prophecy, Fr. J. Dieudonné Bei (Burkina Faso) with the theme of Authority (*Governance*), Fr. Mateus Locatelli (Brazil) with the theme of Formation, Fr. Mathew Perumpil (India-USA) with the theme of Strategic Direction, and Fr. José Carlos Bermejo (Spain) with the theme on Camillians and Pandemic. Also speaking were President of the Lay Camillian Family Marie-Christine Brocherieux, Dr. Klemens Ochel of *MedMissio*, and Fr. Christopher Mahar of the Pontifical Dicastery for Integral Human Development. These contributions will be made available to all by the general secretariat. It seemed to us that prophecy is particularly present in the boldness of our ministries with the sick, always rooted in Gospel values.

These reports helped the chapter members to reflect on the prophetic dimension of our charism, putting special emphasis on the community dimension of it. In light of Pope Francis' invitation to the whole Church, we are also there, called to be synodal Camillian religious in today's world. This was the first exhortation addressed by the newly elected Superior General to the capitulars: *"If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together"*. This is my invitation to you. Let us go together, the journey will be much better, by going together we will surely go farther."

During the course of the chapter, some chapter religious became positive for Covid-19, which prevented the pilgrimage to Bucchianico that was scheduled. Fortunately, the religious overcame the infection without complications and were cared for by medical confreres (Fr. Paul Ouedraogo - Burkina Faso, Fr. Pietro Magliozzi - Romana) and a nurse (Br. Luca Perletti - North Italian) who were asked to act as a medical committee to deal with the evolution of the infection within the Chapter.

We experienced an atmosphere of respectful dialogue and fraternity during the work, at meals and in prayer. We prayed especially for peace and recited the novena for

the Camillian martyrs of charity. We appreciated the beauty of the charism that unites us, remembered and prayed in communion with Fr. Leocir Pessini, who died three years ago. We shared moments of intense debates as well as relaxed conversations about ourselves, our provincial realities and the Order; we sought to open ourselves to the Spirit for the elections of the new general government.

The program was carried out with normality to arrive at the priority objectives that both the Consultation and the Definitory, had proposed and that is to elect a new government, formed by religious such as Superior General Fr. Pedro Tramontin of the Delegation of the United States (Brazil), Vicar General Fr. Gianfranco Lunardon of the Northern Italian Province and the other consultors: Fr. Koffi Médard Aboué of the Benin-Togo Province, Fr. Baby Ellickal Scaria of the India Province and Fr. Paul Kaboré of the Burkina Faso Province. In this regard, we thank you for your cooperation through the online consultation.

We are especially grateful to the outgoing general council (Fr. Laurent Zoungrana - Burkina Faso, Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla - Spain, Fr. Aris Miranda - Philippines, Fr. Gianfranco Lunardon - North Italian and Fr. Felice De Miranda - North Italian) for their service to the Order in moments marked by difficulties during these eight years: the beginning of the sexennium after an extraordinary Chapter, the suffered closure of the *Camillianum*, the death of Fr. Leocir Pessini (Superior General), the pandemic... We express to them our sincere thanks. In addition, we worked on the motions and wishes received from the provincial chapters, Consulta and *E-gremio Capituli*.

We are pleased to have been received by the Holy Father Francis in a private audience on May 16, who addressed us, among other things, with these words, "Animated by the grace proper to a Chapter - if lived well in listening to the Spirit, the brothers and history -, you propose to find new ways of evangelization and proximity, in order to realize with dynamic fidelity your charism, which places you at the service of the sick"; "for the church to be a *field hospital*, it cannot do without your charism."

Dear confreres, aware of the various limitations of this Chapter, we have firm hope that we can begin a new moment for the Order, which will allow us to resume the momentum of animation so long awaited after this last period. Even the decisions made about the services proper to the central government at the Magdalene Generalate, and those pertaining to the post-Camillianum, we believe are signs of hope and a new breath of vitality.

We are particularly concerned to be faithful to the responsibility of cultivating fraternal life in community, to the centrality of our charism, which is more relevant than ever, to the specific formation needed to be good prophetic Camillians today, and to the need to promote the figure of the brother in the Order as a sign of our Institute's identity. The various motions and auspices approved will be published by the General Secretariat.

May the Lord make us bold prophets in the small world of health and suffering that each of us is able to serve.

Assuring prayers of suffrage for Fr. Hermann Somda, a young Camillian from the province of Burkina Faso, who died on May 19, with special remembrance of the sick and elderly religious, thanking you for the support of your prayers and invoking the

intercession of St. Camillus and Our Lady of Health, we send you warm and fraternal greetings.

Nemi (RM), May 20, 2022