



CONGREGAZIONE DELLA PASSIONE DI GESÙ CRISTO

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Al Superiore Generale

Prot.n.2010.097

**LETTER OF CONVOCATION OF
THE XIV GENERAL SYNOD OF
THE CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION**

Dear brothers, women religious and laity of the Passionist Family,

I send greetings to all of you on my part, and also on behalf of the members of the General Council who at this time are making canonical visitations in preparation for the celebration of various provincial chapters. My means of this letter and according to the norms of our Constitutions at numbers 144, 145 and 146, I am hereby convoking the XIV General Synod of the Congregation.

As was stated in Cuernavaca, Mexico, during the last Synod of 2008, the next Synod of 2010 will be celebrated in Rome at our Generalate of Sts. John and Paul during 21 -31 October 2010.

The participants can begin arriving in Rome on Monday, 18 October in order to be able to celebrate together the solemnity of our Holy Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, the following day, Tuesday, 19 October. However, everyone must be present by Wednesday, 20 October because the Synod will begin on Thursday morning, the 21st, and will conclude on the morning of Sunday, 31 October. That same evening and during the following days everyone will be at liberty to depart.

The members of the Synod are those who participate “ex officio” at the General Chapter or their substitutes according to the Constitutions, No. 147. Therefore, these “ex officio” members are the General Curia, the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors, as well as the Regional Vicars of those Vicariates that are comprised of at least twenty-five religious as of the date of the convocation of the Synod. Those Vicariates with at least twenty-five religious are as follows: CARLW-CORM (Kenya); RES-CORI (Peru); THOM-CRUC (India); VICT-DOL (Brazil); and DOMIN-PRAES (Brazil). Furthermore, since the main topic of the Synod will be that of Restructuring, the General Council decided that it would be opportune to invite the Coordinator of the CPA Configuration (Africa), Fr. Michael Owengo (MATAF) who is not an “ex-officio” participant. Additionally, for the same reason, the following Regional Vicars are also invited: GEMM-CORM (Tanzania); MATAF-PATR (Botswana/South Africa); and PAC-CORI (Puerto Rico/The Dominican Republic).

Fr. Kevin Dance (SPIR) will present a report on his work and the steps that have been taken to make our presence at the UN more fruitful. He will also report on future endeavors. All of the invited guests will have active voice.

As is customary, I herein state what is prescribed by our Constitutions in this regard. No. 144 states that: “The General Synod will examine the programmes proposed by the General Chapter and evaluate their implementation. Furthermore, it will suggest initiatives to keep the Congregation continually up to date; it will propose means of

settling problems in a spirit of brotherly harmony, and will call the attention of the various Provinces to their duties towards one another.”

I also wish to remind you of what is stated in #146 of the Constitutions: “The members of the Synod are free to put forward other topics for discussion.” Therefore anyone who wishes to present other proposals or matters for discussion must send these to the General Secretariat as soon as possible, but no later than August 30th in order to allow for their inclusion in the definitive Agenda for the Synod.

As is customary, we shall be studying the implementation of the Programme set out by the last General Chapter and the Synod of 2008, the presentation of the General Economy’s Budget and financial plan, the report of the General Secretary for Solidarity and the Missions, and other such reports as shall be specified in the Synod Agenda, which will be sent out to everyone concerned by September 19th. It will also include useful information for your travel and arrival at our Generalate of Sts. John and Paul.

Regarding the matter of travel, last April the Secretary General published a letter in which he invited the members of the Synod as well as the translators, secretaries, members of the liturgical and communications commissions, the redaction committee and others who will be lending their services to the Synod, to ascertain as soon as possible whether or not they will require VISAS to enter Italy. It is not unusual that citizens of certain countries will have to comply with a number of formalities in order to obtain a Visa, and this process often requires a significant amount of time. Therefore, the General Secretariat asks that, as soon as possible, you research whether or not any documentation will be required in order to complete the Visa process.

The central theme and very heart of the Synod will be the consideration and in-depth study of the mandate of our last General Chapter, which committed “the Congregation to proceed with the process of Restructuring begun at the General Synod of 2004 and which will continue at least until the next General Chapter in 2012.”

In this regard I wish to restate several of the points that were made in the Letter to the Congregation of 11 October 2009 concerning the Process of Restructuring: *No. 13: At the General Synod of 2010 the results of the two years of work of the six Configurations will be presented together with their directives for the structures designed for Solidarity in Formation, Personnel and Finances for each Configuration; d) The General Council will similarly present its work for the structures elaborated for the three areas of Solidarity in the entire Congregation; e) The Synod will do its discernment in reference to the new structures for the three areas of Solidarity proposed for the entire Congregation and for the individual Configurations and will make its own decisions or will give suggestions about how to proceed with this process. Therefore, this will be the moment of trial by fire in the process of Restructuring; f) The final phase envisioned for our process will be the period from 2010 to 2012. During this time we should accomplish what was specified by the Synod of 2010 in order to arrive at the General Chapter with the ability to make structural decisions that will be capable of giving new vitality to the life and mission of the Congregation. g) The General Chapter of 2012 will take make appropriate decisions for accomplishing the objective of the process of Restructuring and conclude it.*

Dear brothers, today, 24 June, the solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the day on which we are convoking the next General Synod, offers us points for reflection and calls us to a certain freedom of spirit that characterized the Saint that we

are commemorating. With a selfless spirit and with great conviction he spoke about Jesus: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals” (Mk.1:7); and as Jesus was coming down the mountain going toward the Jordan River: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.” (Jn.1:29) And to his own disciples who followed him and who asked him who he was, John responded: “I am not the Messiah...I am not [Elijah], I am not [the Prophet]. I am ‘the voice of one crying out...’” (Jn.1:20-23). He is the voice of the Spirit, the one who announces the coming of Jesus and who recognizes that he is present among us and that we need to be virtuous in order to worthily receive “the Lamb of God”. It is the announcement of his passion: the Paschal Lamb, Jesus, will take away the sins of the world by his sacrificial death. Everyone saw Jesus, but he “recognized” him and openly proclaimed him. John also tells us that we need to have eyes and hearts that recognize Jesus and his innovative presence among us. Therefore, as a Congregation we need to enter the time period that lies before us-- the upcoming Synod-- like John, not with preconceptions and prejudices, but with interior freedom, with courage, trusting in the Spirit who guides us, and in a spirit of faith and an awareness of the presence of Jesus.

And as we have said at other times and we now reaffirm: it is for the Reign of God and for his Mission that we are undertaking the process of Restructuring and we are convinced that its fruitfulness will be directly proportionate to our ability to listen to the Word and to understand what is it saying to us through the signs of the times in which we are living. May it not be said of us: “They have eyes but see not; they have ears but hear not”— they have hearts, but love not! (Ps.115:5, 6) He is with us in the boat and we need not fear the wind that is against us, nor the turbulent waters of the Lake of Gennesaret: by faith we will arrive at the other shore.

I affectionately and fraternally greet all the religious of the Passionist Family, in particular those who are sick and those who are suffering in mind and body.

I ask each individual religious, the communities, the Passionist nuns, the women religious and the laity of the Passionist Family to pray for the successful outcome of the Synod-- an important phase in our life-journey and our mission. May the heavens be opened above us as they were when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan and may the Spirit of God descend upon us so that we may understand more clearly the plans that He has for the current life and mission of the Congregation.

May our loving mother, Mary and the Holy Family keep us and the Passionist Family united around our hearth and home on Calvary.

Fraternally,

Fr. Ottaviano D’Egidio, C.P.
Superior General

Retreat of Sts. John and Paul
Rome, 24 June 2010
Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist