

Congregatio Passionis  
Jesu Christi

44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter

*ACTS*

Itaici, SP, Brazil  
2000



## **ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY**

*The Chapter is ordinary, since it's being held at the end of the usual six years. However, from its opening, various aspects different from our traditional way of celebrating the Chapter.*

*For the first time in the history of our Congregation, it is not being held at our Generalate in Rome, but in a different location, in Latin Americas at Itaici, Brazil, in the State of São Paulo. As decided, the capitulars arrived on August 12 and 13, despite some difficulties in travel. All were welcomed and well situated at Villa Kostka, a large 400-room retreat house under the direction of the Jesuits.*

*The Villa has modern electronic communication equipment for the Chapter, even an Internet site, so that the Congregation can be informed on proceedings and even participate in some way.*

*Preparations were made not only by the usual preparatory commission, but also by the Superior General's Letter of Convocation of November 13, 1999, in which he stated the theme of the Chapter and the state of the Congregation in his report a few months before the Chapter began.*

*The new aspect is highlighted by the fact that the capitulars are immersed in a context of a spiritual experiences guided by the liturgical commission. Daily prayer flows from and is intertwined with themes being discussed at the Chapter. These experiences are expressed in listening, reflection, dialogue, liturgical prayer and paraliturgical services. This was expressed during the entire morning on the opening day.*



## Monday, August 14

The work of the first day began on the roof terrace of the retreat house with various aspects of the liturgy culminating with the Eucharist in the church. The liturgical commission guided the group in these phases of this evocative celebration, while Fr. General, Jose Agustin Orbezo presided. These were the various phases of the celebration: Forming a large circle so that all could see each other, the capitulars were invited to reflect on their responsibility in representing the Congregation at this historical time. To express this responsibility they were asked to mention names of the brethren in their province and communities. A murmuring of names filled the terrace. Then, fixing their gaze at the large water jar placed next to the cross, they were asked to reflect on what they wanted from this Chapter and what they could bring to it.

They then left the terrace two by two, down the stairs, along the long corridors each sharing his reflections with his confrere. They stopped in the large atrium to the Chapter hall where a model well had been constructed. The paschal candle had been placed next to the well and chairs placed in a circle around it. The penitential act took place here. A large water jar with a broken lip was placed near the model well, symbolizing that something had either been broken or not done properly against Faith and charity and must be repaired.

Following the singing of the Gloria, the reading of a selection from the Convocation Letter took place. The assembly was then asked to reflect on the text in groups of four. When the sharing was at its height, notes of the alleluia verse filled the room and the Bible was carried in. The Gospel of John 4:1-15 was proclaimed. A Brazilian Deacon sang and mimed the text in an inspiring manner. The groups then continued their sharing and drew up the prayer of the faithful.

The assembly was then asked to reflect silently on what each wished to offer to God. Each then vested in alb and stole and, while singing a hymn, went in procession to the church for the liturgy of the Eucharist.

The remainder of the celebration followed the normal roman liturgy. The kiss of peace was substituted at the end of the Eucharist by a fraternal embrace of peace, after being introduced by a theological-pastoral reflection. This embrace of peace at the beginning of the Chapter signified that each is prepared accept his confrere as gift and gratuity offer each other as gift.

The songs and moments of reflection were accompanied with musical instruments such as guitars, mandolin, Irish flute, harmonica, cymbals, drum, tambourine and a Brazilian afoche.

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After this full and unifying celebration, there was nothing left but lunch to close the morning.

In the afternoon the capitulators gathered in the assembly hall, which has a seating capacity for 650 persons. After ascertaining that the electronic equipment was in good working order, Francisco Valadez introduced Fr. Gabriel Gasparin, host-Provincial of CALV Province. In a few words, Father Gabriel welcomed everyone from various parts of the world to Brazil.

Father Francisco Romanelli, the Jesuit Director of Villa Kostka, also welcomed everyone.

Fr. Francisco Valadez then introduced the various individuals and groups at the service of the General Chapter: the Liturgical Commission, composed of religious, men and women, from Latin America; Paul Michalenko, Facilitator who has facilitated various Passionist meetings, Secretary of the Chapter, Fr. Gabriel Cingolani, and his two collaborators, Antonio Munduate and Lawrence Finn, the Interpreters and Translators.

The Facilitator asked the Assembly to approve or not the appointment of the Secretaries by the General Curia, by raising their hands. The approval was unanimous.

After a half-hour break, the assembly again gathered around the model well for some minutes of silent prayer. Passages from the Letter of Convocation were again read. Fr. General blessed some water drawn from the well and drank it. The water also had in it water taken from Jacob's well in Samara during the General Curia's visit there at the time of their pilgrimage of the Holy Land last Holy Week.

The Capitulars then made their way to the chapter Hall blessing themselves with the same blessed water at the entrance to the hall.

While they took their places a brief video was shown of the Holy Father's ceremony opening the Holy Door for the Jubilee 2000.

Father General then read a synthesis of his report on the State of the Congregation.

These are the principal problems and hopes of the Congregation according to Jose Agustin:

- Ongoing formation: "It's a vital law for every institute. Each Provincial chapter and, even more so, every General Chapter becomes a privileged occasion for all the religious to revise their own lives and take part in elaborating guidelines capable of infusing a new dynamism to the life."

*Tuesday, August 15*

- Inculturation and incarnation of our charism: "...means to make our original intuitions both intelligible and livable in other historical and cultural contexts." "Yet, once again, it is hard to put into practice that which we talk about so eloquently."
- The adaptation of our apostolate to situations in the modern world, including the adaptation of our structures and our forms of presence taking into account our decreased personnel. The theme of "charismatic death" returns: "Death isn't always a sign of infidelity and may even be, at times, one of coherence, of an existence lived to the full, of profound freedom And of incarnation in history."
- Community life as a place of forgiveness, communion, sharing. They are essential elements of the new generation: "If we don't realize that our youth need to discover and live the spiritual life as an experience and not just as something out of theology or documents on the religious life and spirituality. If we don't, it's useless to ask God to send us vocations. With the fraternal presence of the superior, all are responsible for community animation. "It's my opinion that we're not availing ourselves sufficiently of all the wealth of experience and wisdom which our senior brother bring with them."
- Finally, e problem of defining the indentity of the institute: The note of "clerical" doesn't seem historically adequate. It's the challenge of integrating the laity into our charism and mission.

As a whole, the situation of the Congregation invites to be hopeful. It's a "crucified hope", because of our difficult times. It's a hope to be lived in patience which is persevering in trials. It's a hope, which is an active and courageous virtue, capable of transforming the present times, while walking toward the future. "He who doesn't change the world doesn't believe in heaven."

**Tuesday, August 15**

Today, the Solemnity of the Assumption, the day began with the celebration of the tenderness of God, Father-Mother, as manifested in Mary.

At the beginning of Morning Prayer, which was held in the large church, mention was made of the Polish Province, which has this Marian title, and of those who celebrated the anniversary of their religious profession.

*Tuesday, August 15*

A small statue of Our Mother of Sorrows was placed on the altar. Capitulars placed on the altar other statues of various sizes commemorating different titles of Mary, which are celebrated in their country. Before placing the particular statue on the altar, each capitular announced the Marian title, to which all answered: Pray for us. So we had Our Lady of Loreto, Our Lady of Pompeii, Queen of Our Congregation, Our Lady of Fatima, of Guadeloupe and of Czestachowa, Our Lady Queen of Medjugorie. Following were those titles celebrated in specific countries: Our Lady of Aparecida (Brazil), of Chiapi (Peru), of Coromoto (Venezuela), of Chiquinquirá (Columbia), as well as Mary, Perpetual Help of Christians (Australia), the Immaculate of Korea and of the Philippines, Our Lady of India and of Japan. At the end, the altar was covered with this international Marian remembrance.

The Letter to the Galatians (4:4), which proclaims the incarnation of the Word “born of a woman,” was read. The assembly silently reflected on this reading. Then the group was asked to assemble in language groups for further sharing on Fr. General’s Report to the Congregation, which he delivered yesterday. The following questions served as aids to the sharing:

*What questions did Fr. Jose Agustin’s Report raise in me?*

Fr. Jose Agustin said: “*I want my Report to be of an inspirational character than a statistical one.*”

*What inspired you and what will you put before the Lord?*

Each group was asked to synthesize its dialogue in a prayer to be recited before the statues of our Lady at the end of the session. Thus, the work will be integrated into the prayer of the Chapter.

So ended this first phase of the morning session. After the break, the capitulars returned to the assembly hall to be introduced to the next phase of group work. The moderator explained that the sharing would revolve around the following questions:

*What type of Chapter do I want?*

*I would be happy if the Chapter .... (Complete the sentence)*

This phase ended at lunchtime.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, the secretary read the telegram Pope John Paul II sent to the Superior General for the Chapter. In part, the Holy Father affirms: “The theme of the Chapter helps to understand how, in the light of the Crucified, the full meaning of life is to give the gift of life.”



The secretary then read a telegram from Archbishop Piergiorgio Nesti and informed the assembly of other messages received, those of spiritual participation, particularly by Passionist Nuns and sisters.

The secretaries of the seven discussion groups then read their reports.

The expectations regarding the first question foresee a Chapter which will offer lines for ongoing formation, both inspirational and a stimulus to a great life of prayer, fraternity and apostolic commitment; that it confirms pluralistic openness, but also accentuates the values which favor unity, fortifies us in our vocation and renders us capable of fortifying others. An experiential and sapiential Chapter is desired with a wide vision, but also capable of resolving concrete situations, indicating new ways of lay participation in our charism, strengthening everyone in the love for life.

In the second part of the dialogue, the expectations look to a new understanding of the crucified as an expression of the sufferings of the world, but also as liberation from every suffering. Others would like the Chapter to make courageous decisions, put individuals who can help toward dialogue at the service of the Congregation, give the new curia the power to favor exchange of persons and goods. There is the hope that the Chapter will, above all, reaffirm the choice for the crucified, inspire enthusiasm and joy of life, offer perspectives of hope, despite difficult situations.

The moderator asked the assembly to highlight often-repeated words coming from the group discussions. They were formation, inspiration, solidarity, life, concrete, restructuring, laity, hope.

The remainder of the afternoon was given over to procedural business.

The Procedural Manual was approved unanimously by a show of hands.

By a more articulated method, four capitulars were to be selected as members of the central coordinating committee (CCC). The moderator pointed out several criteria to keep in mind in selecting these members: a continuity with the preparatory commission, General Chapter experience, that they represent diverse languages, that they be capable of working together.

While meeting in their language groups, the capitulars were asked to nominate one candidate for Italian, Spanish, English, and Portuguese. The assembly then unanimously approved the following by a show of hands: Ottaviano D'Egidio, Octavio Mondragon, Kevin Dance and Eugenio Mezzomo.

*Wednesday, August 16*

The moderator then asked Francisco Valadez to present the names, which the General Curia suggested for the redaction committee. They are: Mark White, Mario Melgosa and Ciro Benedettini. The assembly unanimously approved them.

The daily horarium was also unanimously approved.

Fr. Valadez also presented the Chapter work plan. This, too, was unanimously approved. This ended the afternoon session.

The Assembly ended this day of the Assumption of Mary as it began, in a climate of prayer. When all assembled in church for the Eucharist, they found the altar prepared and the small statues of our Lady on a small table on each side of the altar. The liturgical commission announced that the theme of the celebration is the fecundity of the Spirit. Being open to the Spirit means to be fruitful and become bearers of Christ as Mary was.

Fr. Ottaviano D'Egidio presided at the Eucharist. At the presentation of the gifts, a young, pregnant woman walked down the center aisle and, with arms raised, walked around the altar as a sign of offering her fecundity.

After communion, the concelebrants processed toward the chapter hall following the statue of Our Mother of Sorrows, while responding in song, "O Mother of us all, teach us to say: AMEN," to invocations. The procession stopped at the vestibule of the chapter hall. The presider recited the concluding prayer of the Mass, blessed and dismissed the assembly.

## **Wednesday, August 16**

Morning Prayer was held in the chapter hall with the theme being Creation. While the lector read the story of creation from Genesis various scene of nature were projected on a large screen.

The commentary emphasized that God a human being in his image and likeness in order to continue his work of a perfect and logical creation. But the response had not been faithful.

When the scene on the large screen was a magnificent panorama, the assembly sang: Blessed be the Lord. When the scene was tragic, such as ecological disaster, the assembly implored: Forgive us Lord.

The leader recommended that everyone remember the theme throughout the day and when walking around the grounds to pick up something of its created beauty to offer at the concluding Eucharist of the day.

Following prayer, the assembly turned to the work of the day, which was to listen and deepen the conference of Professor William Burrows, Managing Editor of Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY. Burrows spoke on the theme: "MISSION AND EVANGELIZATION TODAY, Passionists Facing Globalization, Inculturation and Interreligious Interchange."

Since he engaged the speaker, Joseph Jones introduced Prof. Burrows.

Burrows began by observing that the importance of the theme is derived from the "need of the Passionists and the whole Christian community to rekindle faith that our mission is rooted in the cross of Christ and that the Cross of Christ is the universal *axis mundi*, the still point in cosmic history around which all else turns."

"Our fundamental mission as Christians is to reveal that the way of the world is not God's way," he further declared. "It has become ever clearer to me that neither our new interreligious situation nor the question of inculturation can be addressed unless they are placed in the context of globalization." "We live today between crisis and chaos. A crisis is a situation in which one can discern a potentially favorable outcome, plan for it, and then implement the plan. A chaotic situation, on the other hand, is one in which nearly everything appears to be coming "unstuck."

At one point the speaker asked: "How are we to carry on our mission in a world in which we are effectively marginalized?" "It is our task as missionaries of the love of God revealed in the crucified Christ to help both the rich and the poor awake to their vocations as stewards of earth's bounty."

Separated by a coffee break, the presentation filled the entire morning. At the end of each section, the speaker invited the assembly to internalize the contents, which struck them in silence and later ask for clarifications. Because of lack of time, there were only six questions after the first part and three following the second.

The afternoon session opened with announcements by the secretary. Among them that Bernard Hughes had to leave the Chapter temporarily to be at the bedside of his gravely ill brother.

The Moderator then explained the work for the capitulars. They were asked to discuss the talk in groups and then return to the chapter hall for any clarifications or questions.

The following questions were given as aids:

1. How does globalization effect your experience of mission?
2. What are the challenges inculturation and inter-religious relations have on your mission as a Passionist?

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3. How do you experience yourselves as counter-cultural or anti-cultural?

4. What is the one question or thought you want to bring back to the aula and present for discussion?

When the session resumed in the aula, the points discussed in the seven groups touched on: Is the sense of weakness and impotence before the phenomenon of globalization part of the cross? How does one retain his own identity in interreligious dialogue? Globalization has already produced disastrous results in our Passionist life, in our interpersonal relationships, in initial and ongoing formation, in the style of life. Is the demise of liberation theology a sign of the victory of globalization? Is there a relation between the two elements? Why have we become so weak as to permit the present situation to influence us, even to hindering our mission?

The final answers of the presenter insist: Christian identity consists in fleshing out the love of God expressed in Christ Crucified. What's most important for us is to be men of contemplation, because the Spirit can transform us and make us capable of transforming others and the world. This means maintaining our identity. Wanting to be everything to everyone is a mistake. A clear example of counter-cultural is to proclaim the Gospel of life in today's world. It's to go counter to egoism, consumerism, sexism and prevailing violence.

What's important is not that liberation theology may win, but that the Church opts for the poor. This is happening. It doesn't appear that globalization has swept liberation theology away.

Reaction to the oppressive power of globalization can come about by motivated small groups which assume responsibility before the world situation. Globalization, technologization, the growth of capital are as the beginning of a new ice age. These can also have positive aspects, but the major part seems negative. What is certain is the fact that they are unstoppable by present human resources. As glaciers, they can produce destructive effects, as a nuclear war or an ecological disaster. The only positive action is to guide and channel globalization by loading it with the positive values of solidarity and justice. Basically the solution to the problem of globalization is a religious one. It will depend on a change of heart.

The presenter concluded with the hope that the Chapter will contribute to the renewal and strengthening of Passionist fraternity, since they are on the front lines in the commitment for a better world.

*Thursday, August 17*

As an arc which crosses the day, the liturgy concluded the cycle of meetings with its second span. The Eucharistic concelebration, presided over by Fr. Robert Joerger, was held on the roof terrace of Villa Kostka, surrounded by the open arches putting us in contact with nature.

Three posters that were carried before the Concelebrants recalled the day's theme. Each poster had the words globalization, inculturation and compassion written in Spanish, Italian and English. Following the opening prayer, the objects of nature, which had been collected during the day, were placed on the floor before the altar, thus celebrating creation. There were leaves, flowers, twigs, stones, small tree branches, work instruments, etc. A moment of silence observing these objects replaced the first reading of the Mass.

The remainder of the Mass followed the rubrics as in the Roman Missal.

## **Thursday, August 17**

Today, too, Morning Prayer was held in the chapter hall and the explanation of the day's work followed. The theme for the day: God, giver of life.

Those present were invited to listen with eyes closed to music and other sounds while wearing ear phones. There was simultaneous translation when necessary. There were the sounds of running water, bird singing, wind blowing, dances by music and natural sounds. The creation narrative from Genesis was read during this period. From Luke's Gospel the words of Christ were also read: "Do not fear, little flock, because it has pleased the Father entrust the Kingdom to you." It was also recommended to feel those words as addressed to anyone in particular while listening. The half-hour of prayer ended with spontaneous invocations of praise and thanks, while saying after each one: "Thank you Lord God, Father and Mother."

In opening the session, the moderator reminded the capitulars that the previous day they were immersed in the context of globalization, and today they will treat the theme of life. They will enter more deeply into the theme of the Chapter: PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST, PASSION FOR LIFE. Gabriel Cingolani, secretary of the Chapter as well as secretary of the preparatory commission, then reported on the selection of the theme and gave a summary of the two years of commission work. Octavio Mondragon, also a member of the preparatory commission, then delivered his conference on the theme.

*Thursday, August 17*

In his first point, he presented the figure and testament of Moses as an example of vitality: “This man confronts with his whole experience the specter of physical death and the shadow of absolute annihilation: he will not enter the land of his people’s new history and new life.” But identified with his people “he perceived that beyond all appearances lay the possibility of another life.”

Speaking of the attitude of the Congregation before life and death, he reminded all that “the Cross of Jesus is the radical critique of all ideologies and idolatries.” “In other words, that passionist discernment within which we hope to celebrate this chapter of the Congregation, invites us to face up in a specific way to what is happening in our world.” “It seems to me that the highest point of our involvement is to share in God’s own involvement, manifested in the death of Jesus the Messiah.”

He emphasized several elements that need our consideration: the relationship between faith and culture, the expectations of the younger generation, the problem of feminism, and the rights of the poor to life, the respect of nature. “This is something of extreme importance affecting their existence, and which is often expressed through silence: the great distance between the form of belief in God and the actual forms in which life is expressed within today’s culture.”

Regarding the new places women claim: “What is our stance in this regard, not just as men but as the Passionist family? Are we ready to, not simply be onlookers at the emergence of a feminist theology of the cross, but to take up the challenge posed by this phenomenon?”

And speaking about the poor: “The sad reality of our poor brothers and sisters can be a revealing force for us, since it sharply faces us with questions such as, ‘In what kind of God do you believe? To what God do you cling? With what God are you prepared to pass your days, whether many or few?’”

“Creation’s demand to be respected suggests the need for each human being to be changed towards a new culture. This not so much the cultivation of learning as of wisdom.”

On this last point, the presenter proposed biblical-pastoral reflections on the necessity of dying in order to be born, so that the Congregation can renew its vitality.

The entire morning, divided into two parts, was dedicated to the conference. Each part involved listening, silent reflection, sharing in pairs, clarifications and questions. In the first part, there was time for only two capitulars to make an intervention and in the second only three.

Before breaking for lunch, the secretary gave a report on the work of the secretariat of the chapter. The daily work of the chapter was put made its appearance on the Internet site on August 15. After reaching the home page, by clicking into the chapter item, one can see photos and texts of the day. The texts of the conferences presented in the aula can also be read. In addition, material has been sent to 400 passionist e-mail addresses, about the same number to religious and parishes and, till now, about 500 to sites of catholic agencies and organizations. In the electronic mailings to the brethren, a request to post the chronicle was included with the contents. So far, about thirty replies of thanks and appreciation have been received.

The secretary also informed the group that the Acts of the first three days of Chapter would be posted this evening. They will be posted daily. The minutes will not be posted, but will be available in English.

Before ending the morning session, the assembly welcomed Vital Otshudualokoca, who had been delayed because of visa problems.

The afternoon session began in the chapter hall, where the capitulars received their instructions for the group work, which was to continue their discussions on the paper delivered in the morning. The following questions were given as aids:

1. In what sense and in what form can we make of this chapter a prophetic experience?
2. What are the basic criteria of Passionist discernment, which we should practice during the chapter?
3. To what things must we die and what must we re-create in our life?

Returning to the aula after the break, the secretaries of the linguistic groups reported the salient points of the discussions. They centered on the necessity of personal conversion and making concrete decisions. It was further emphasized that the essential criterion of every passionist discernment is the paschal mystery, in so far as life doesn't come after death, but is in dying.

Because of lack of time, it wasn't possible for the presenter to expound on a few areas, nor to reply to questions.

During the last remaining minutes, Francisco Valadez gave the details of the outing on Saturday, August 19. This day is dedicated to visiting various pastoral situations of the Brazilian Church. We are going to see "where the children of God live and how they are." In a sense, it's like answering the question: "Where is your brother?"

*Friday, August 18*

The capitulars are free to choose from ten options. There will be ten vans, each with places for ten people. Each one was asked to indicate his choice by signing up on the specific sheet of paper. Lunch will be on location or at the nearest Passionist community. Morning Prayer will be held before leaving and the Eucharist when the groups return.

The day, centered on life and the God of life, concluded with the Eucharistic celebration. Symbolic gestures were inserted during the liturgy of the word and after communion. For the first symbol, the participants were invited to think of the emotions they felt during the day regarding Life and to express these same sentiments in color on a large banner with the word LIFE on it. The banner was then hung in full sight of everyone.

After communion, the participants were invited to express their esteem for one another by an appropriate gesture.

## **Friday, August 18**

A provident and gratuitous God was the prayer theme for the day. Morning Prayer was held in the chapter hall and opened with the Brazilian hymn: "Passionista me chama a ser." During the hymn a statue of St. Paul of the Cross was carried in and placed on the president's stage.

The first point of reflection was the account of the creation of the human couple from Genesis 1:26-31. The commentary emphasized that God has entrusted creation to us so that we can realize its development as co-creators. The capitulars are exercising an authority entrusted to them of serving life. It's difficult because we are not capable of loving as the Father does.

The reflection zeroed in on a wounded heart traced on a small piece of paper given to each participant. Two questions stimulated interiorization: How do I live my vocation of protecting life? What are the wounds in my hearts? The group was asked to write these on the back of the paper and speak of them in prayer with the person alongside. The image of the wounded heart will be part of the evening Eucharist. The multilingual praying of the Our Father concluded Morning Prayer and set the stage for the day's work.

The moderator informed the assembly that the day would be dedicated to a first look at the proposals sent to the Chapter, especially on government and solidarity. The latter were given priority and were treated in the morning. After a quick explanation of the procedure, Alfonso Iberri,



a member of the Commission on Government and Solidarity, presented the material. He reported on the Commission's work and presented their proposals. After four capitulars asked for and received clarifications, the discussion continued in groups.

When they returned to the aula to report on the dialogue, it was clear that there were several lines of convergence. There was a preference for the present form of general government with the consultors elected for geographical areas, although more clearly defining the areas and adding a consultor for Africa. Many suggested they could be helped by adjunct commissions in the regional conferences.

The groups liked the possibility offered in our Constitutions of leaving the structures of government flexible according to the needs of the times. All areas of the Congregation, especially those on the more far-reaching areas ask for a greater presence of general government among them, indicating a desire for communion.

It seems that central government doesn't have sufficient influence in the distribution of personnel and financial resources, since such power resides more with provincials. Such a limitation is especially felt in the vicariates, which depend on their respective provinces. Some insist that, although maintaining the present method of selecting consultors for geographical areas, they be given the responsibility of animation, which is lacking in the present structure of general government.

The afternoon work was entirely devoted to discussing the proposals presented to the General Chapter. There were only fifteen. The moderators and secretaries of the groups were instructed on how to proceed and summarize their dialogue. The capitulars were asked to evaluate every proposal as to whether it would favor or not the life of the Congregation and to decide whether they would support it or not, or whether further information is needed.

All proposals are equal in this phase of the work. The capitulars must prioritize them and decide their final juridical formulation.

During the last half-hour of work, the secretaries met to report on their group work.

The concluding Eucharist of the day followed the normal rubrics from the roman missal with some expression of the day's theme. At the penitential rite the concelebrants again gazed at the wounded heart drawn on the paper and, reflecting on what attitudes needed change, they asked forgiveness. Meanwhile a large cross was carried in and placed before the altar. On this cross each concelebrant placed his paper with the wounded

*Saturday, August 19*

heart drawn on it.

Following the proclamation of Luke's Gospel, 22:24-26, members of the liturgical committee mimed a scene which alluded to the power of the cross conquering every power. The strongest of power is expressed in the cross of Christ. The Prayer of the Faithful was spontaneous and expressed what was heard, seen and lived during the day. Gabriel Cherubim Moreira presided at the Eucharist.

## **Saturday, August 19**

Today's Chapter agenda called for visiting various sights of Brazilian socio-pastoral ministry and interacting with the people. As Francisco Valadez explained during Thursday afternoon's session, there would be ten sights to visit and the capitulars would be divided into to groups of 10 or 12 for each "Frontier of Mission". The following were the sights:

1. Meeting with Cardinal Paolo Evaristo Arns, Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo, an outstanding figure in the Brazilian Church, above all, for his work. Bairro Jardim Guapira (Jacana), São Paul-Capital.
2. LAR Association (for persons with HIV, or alcohol and chemical dependencies). Bairro Jardim da Gloria, Osasco.
3. Brinquedoteca Project; Pastoral Work for Youth; working alongside children and families who live off the refuse dumps that serve Osasco and Carapicuíba.
4. Pastoral work with the Street People; a hostel for street people in Osasco, Bairro Km 18, Osasco.
5. Pastoral work with children; working for undernourished children in Brazil; Osasco.
6. Pastoral work for marginalized women; Campinas.
7. New Life Project; working with needy children and adolescents who live in the streets. Guanabara section of Campinas.
8. Urban squatters; serious problems of lack of housing; Campinas.
9. Field workers village; Sumare I & II; Campinas region.
10. Landless Rural Workers Movement; a camp in the region of Sorocaba.

*Monday, August 21*

Kevin Dance presided at the Day's Prayer which began in the atrium around the model well where the Chapter began. From here the capitulars departed to visit Christ in the poor, as St. Paul of the Cross instructed us. The capitulars were to return changed in heart and be invited to share their thoughts.

Before departing, ten Candles were lighted from the Paschal Candle and title of each sight was written on a sheet of paper. Each candle represented the ten "Frontier Missions" to be visited and indicated the Risen Christ there present. When the sight was called out, everyone invoked: "Open our ears, O Lord." God was also invoked to open our eyes, so that they see his presence. This last part took place after the reading of the Gospel of the curing of the man born blind from Mark 8:22-26. Water which was blessed at the beginning of the Chapter, was drawn from the well and everyone was invited to wash his hands and eyes.

When all returned in the late afternoon, the Eucharist continued and, those who wished, were invited to share their experience. This concluded the Day's Prayer.

## **Monday, August 21**

The Sunday break, yesterday, August 20, was only from work in the aula or in groups. Morning Liturgical prayer lasted two and one-half hours with the Eucharistic celebration rich in signs and gestures typical of Brazilian creativity. His Excellency Jose Mauro Pereira Bastos, C.P., Bishop-elect of the new Brazilian diocese of Janauba (MG) presided. He was an elected delegate to the General Chapter from CLAP and will be ordained bishop on September 17 next.

The theme of the celebration was: "Jesus, incarnated in cultures." It was also an occasion to welcome the lay representatives from the different areas of the Congregation.

The celebration began in the atrium to the chapter hall around the well now called "Jacob's well" and continued in the Church after the proclamation of the Gospel. Dances and other animations catechists had prepared with the children of the Passionist parish of the Immaculate Conception at Osasco enlivened the celebration. With small baskets filled with sand from the five continents, every participant was asked to fill a small cup into which he later dropped a few seeds, indicating the Word's capability to drop roots into every culture.

*Monday, August 21*

The preceding week, the Chapter prayer centered on God, Father and Mother, Creator and Provident, who calls us to care for our brothers and sisters. From today onward, the theme will center on the Incarnate Word.

Today's Morning Prayer took place in the aula and was based on the faith experience of the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14. Those present were invited to recall their strong experiences of God and bring them into their silent reflection and, then, share them with another confrere.

When work continued, the moderator informed everyone that there will also simultaneous translation in Portuguese this week. He welcomed *Ciro Benedettini* and the temporary guest, His Excellency *Mauro Bastos*. He then asked the lay representatives to introduce themselves.

The secretary of the Chapter, *Gabriele Cingolani*, spoke to the assembly informing the lay representatives of the path followed in the decision to have them present at the Chapter. He also gave them a brief summary of the previous week's work. "We spoke of you various times in previous General Chapters," he affirmed, "but, perhaps, we considered you recipients of our pastoral care or our collaborators. Now we have begun to understand that you have been called to our family, not by us, but by the Holy Spirit."

He recalled that the laity were also involved in the preparation for this Chapter: "With admiration and joy we recognize that several of the life experiences you sent us are better and full of life among all those we have read."

In conclusion he observed: "Now you are here to continue your journey. It is not a concession. It is not simply an honor. It is, above all, a responsibility. You will be with us only during this phase of the Chapter, but your presence is sufficient guarantee that what pertains to you will not be decided without you."

The Moderator informed that the morning's work would be reflecting in groups on the "Narratives" and then reporting to the assembly. The question to aid in discussion: "Where and how does the Congregation experience the passion for life?"

Returning to the aula, the assembly listened to principal reactions. These are a few:

The religious are very committed in various areas of suffering humanity. The enormous verity of situations witnesses to the great vitality of the Congregation. All participate in the *Memoria Passionis* in different situations of suffering, not so much in assisting, but giving the gift of life.

There are in the Congregation many frontier situations involving risks and conflicts, and among the marginalized of society. It seems that the foundational experience of St. Paul of the Cross is being lived, when he went to places where no one wished to go.

Others underlined the hope of life that surges from the experience of death. The Congregation lives and transmits life in the measure that, contemplating Christ Crucified, it obtains the strength to be near the pain of others. It is living its Pasch from the point of view of the passion of the world. The narratives coming from the laity are particularly eloquent.

Six other in-depth interventions followed the secretaries' reports.

In the afternoon, the capitulars listened to the presentation by the Brazilian Bishop of Mariana (MG), Luciano Mendez de Almeida. Speaking without any written text, the Bishop showed the strength of life that flows from the experience of suffering.

Presented by the Provincial of CALV, Gabriele Gasparin, the speaker proposed two points of reference that help to live in today's situation. The first is the "awareness of the world," which offers marvelous opportunities, but also unheard of sufferings. We cannot abstain from these joys, sufferings, and hopes. If we were living in another historical period, everything would be different.

Two salient aspects of this society are the situations of the excluded and the loss of those who don't believe in God. The excluded, of whom we could be responsible, are a scandal, a violence that needs to be crushed at all costs. From the lack of faith flow the lack of universal principles of orientation and, thus, subjective morality. Technical data is more important than those of religion.

The second point of reference is the entrance of God into history with the incarnation. We are now celebrating the second millennium. God places himself beside everyone without any privileged position. In his passion for humanity he assumes the suffering of humanity. From this choice comes the explanation of human suffering for us, a problem which neither reason nor any other religion can solve.

The Passion of Christ is the theological key for explaining this phenomenon. The Just One suffers for the unjust because he loves them. The demonstration of love is stronger when it respects human liberty. After the sin of Adam, God could have eliminated the world, but this was impossible, because of his love.

*Monday, August 21*

In the presence of suffering, we should not think of “our” sin, but that sin exists. We will not be spared from suffering because of our goodness. It’s important that in suffering and death we do not cease to believe that God loves us. We can be bewildered because we cannot explain every case, but we have no right to doubt the love of God, because he has given us definite proofs.

Bishop Mendez further indicated three reasons for hope which could sustain us in fearful moments and in the dangers of our day. First: Be strong in the certitude that God loves us. Second: In a world countersigned by sin, continue to proclaim and witness to God’s love, especially to the youth who have no horizons of life. Third: Know our limitations. Certain sufferings and certain problems – as bioethics, race relations, and balance of power among nations – are solved slowly and we must wait with patience, “We have hope, but not the evidence. We have faith, but remain in pain.”

He concluded: “Without the Cross, there is darkness, and in darkness we have anguish. With the Cross we have light, and with light comes joy.”

The remainder of the time allowed only two capitulars to ask for and receive further explanation of his talk.

Bishop Mendez presided at the Day’s Eucharist. At the homily, he returned to the theme of the poor and the excluded. He illustrated three areas of our relationship with them. First: give them something, by helping them materially. Second: promote their dignity, even on a legislative level, so that every trace of injustice is eliminated. Third: solidarity, following in the example of the Word incarnate who participated in our life.

With an original interpretation, he presented the religious vows as a free choice of solidarity with those who are constricted to support analogous situations, for example, the choice of chastity as solidarity with those who cannot serenely realize their sexual affectivity; the choice of poverty as solidarity with those who cannot own material goods; the choice of obedience as solidarity with those who cannot do what they wish, or go where they like.

## Tuesday, August 22

All were asked to wear their religious habit to Morning Prayer, whose theme was the call to the Passionist life.

The well was also moved to the President's stage in the chapter hall. The leader for prayer impersonated Jesus. He walked around the well and then called three Passionists to follow him. The lay person, brother and priest approached the podium and related their vocation story. Everyone was then asked to think of his own call while gazing on the sign, which had previously been distributed. All were asked to keep alive their remembrance during the day.

The Moderator then presented the next phase of work for the capitulars consisting in listening to the reports of the presidents of the regional conferences. The lay representative of the same area followed each report. The presidents had twenty minutes for their talk and the laity fifteen. Between listening and clarifications, this phase filled the entire morning. Following the presentation of every conference, the assembly spent several minutes in silence. The time remaining was dedicated to further clarifications.

Francisco Valdez, the first to speak, represented the Latin American Regional Conference (CLAP). He presented his report by video. After defining the indigenous of the continent as "humanity's treasures," he described the key points of the conference's activity. These were articulated in general assemblies, in research and in meetings of the Passionist reflective groups of Latin America (ERPAL), in the cooperative work and in meetings of Passionist formators of Latin America (FORPAL), in the experiences of the Castellazzo spirituality, of Gethsemane and Mburucuya (flower of the passiflora), in the vivacity of the lay Passionist communities.

As challenges of the new millenium, he pointed out the problems of inculturation, problem of values, formation, presence of the poor, spirituality, vocational promotion, local level organization, autonomous cultures (indigenous and color).

The representative of the lay Passionists of Latin America, Fatima Aparecida Gomes Heleno, also illustrated her talk with a video. She spoke on the activity of "Kerigma," the lay communities in Brazil, and other Passionist lay groups in Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela. She also remarked on the situation in Porto Rico, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Cuba and Guatemala.

*Tuesday, August 22*

Because of the time restraint, only four capitulars were able to pose questions.

The second conference in the series was the report on the regional conference of Asia and Pacific (PASPAC). Jefferies Foale read his text, giving a general overview and touching on problems of the Congregation in Australia and New Zealand, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. He defined the experience of his office as a “courage-giving ministry”. In every zone of the conference, except Australia, the Congregation is expanding, full of initiatives and transformation.

Mrs. Fe A. Cardino, lay representative of the same conference, describe her work with the Passionists among the indigenous of the B’laans, T’bolis, Kalangs Tribes and others in the Marbel Diocese of South Cotabato and in the Province of Sarangani in Mindanao.

Here, too, lack of time did not allow for all requested clarifications before the discussion. Only six capitulars were able to ask questions.

In the afternoon, the Italian Interprovincial Conference (CIPI) had its turn. Leone Masnata presented his report, specifying that the report was drawn up by an appointed assembly and approved by the executive board. The report embraced the following points, each seen as actualization, challenges and perspectives: inculturation and ongoing formation, unified formation plan, assisting the sick and elderly, apostolate, sharing and solidarity, relationship with the Passionist family, integration and collaboration between the Provinces of CIPI.

The lay representative also followed his presentation. Isabella Capone shared her personal testimony of encountering the Passionists during a mission and expanded on the activity of the lay Passionists in which she is presently engaged.

Again, because of lack of time, only four questions for clarification were possible.

The remainder of available time was spent in discussion groups of three capitulars from different conferences on the day’s presentations. The question as an aid: “In light of what has been presented, what direction do you foresee for the future?”

The vocation of being a Passionist was celebrated in the Eucharist, which began with asking forgiveness for our lack of response. Following the proclamation of the Gospel, the same person who played Christ at



Morning Prayer stood near “Jacob’s well,” now in the provisional chapel.” As he called each capitular by name, the latter looked into the well. A mirror had been placed at the bottom of the well, perhaps simulating water, and on it a crucifix. One’s face was reflected next to the crucifix. After looking up, the capitular was asked: “Do you wish to follow me?” Having answered in the affirmative, the capitular attached his name, written on an adhesive label, to the well.

### **Wednesday, August 23**

The climate of today’s prayer was “Be with Jesus.” The day began with one half hour of silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in one of the nine chapels at Villa Kostka and concluded with Benediction.

Immediately following Morning Prayer, the capitulars assembled in the Chapter Hall where the Moderator traced the day’s work. All the reports of the Regional Conferences should be completed today.

The North American Interprovincial Report (IPCP) was the first of the day. The Provincials, Terence Kristofak and Michael Higgins, alternated their reporting, while an outline was projected on the large screen. Giving the background of the social and ecclesial situations in the United States, they delineated the state of the two provinces and the challenges they face at the present moment. Regarding the Church, it’s important “to learn and to preach the Gospel in a manner efficacious to a wealthy, well educated, individualistic and materialistic population.” For the two provinces, the areas of greater commitment in the near future are integration of the laity, vocational recruitment, reduction of institutional responsibility and planning for guiding and animation of structures.

The lay representative for the area, Manuel Valencia, Deputy Mayor of Los Angeles, once a Passionist novice, recounted his participation in the charism and his involvement in the mission that began with St. Paul of the Cross. He highlighted that the characteristic of the lay charism is not so much collaborating in the apostolate, but being Passionists in a lay manner. He concluded by comparing the present time of the Congregation with that of the Superior General, Anthony Testa. He is called the second founder of the Congregation, since he sent religious to England, Belgium, Ireland, Australia and the USA. In force of the richness of lay participation, “I am strongly convinced that we of the laity and you vowed members are witnessing together to the third founding, the third flowering, of the Passionist Community.

*Wednesday, August 23*

The Reports must have been so exhausting that only one capitular asked for clarifications.

As General Consultor for the Conference of North Europe, Aidan Troy was then invited to speak. He related the situation and the challenges of the Passionist presence in the area and shared salient points of his experience during his service. His report evoked one spontaneous intervention of thanks and four questions for clarifications.

The Interprovincial Iberian Conference (CII) was next. Jose Gonzalez Sendino began his Report by noting that almost half of the religious of the three provinces are in Latin American Vicariates. He then referred to common initiatives in the field of formation and organization of the provinces in the care of the infirm and elderly. There are communities which are entirely conditioned by the presence of the sick, or must limit their apostolate because of them. Looking to the future, he pointed out that participation in the Passion is always a motive for hope. He concluded by underlining that the development of the Secular Passionist Family is an eloquent expression of the vitality of the charism.

The lay representative of the area, Jose A. Larriba, Coordinator of the Secular Passionist Family of Spain and Portugal, spoke on his experiences in the association to which he has belonged from its foundation. Actually, the group is part of the ministry of the parishes and is concerned with the marginalized and has contact with the offspring in Latin America of the Spanish Provinces. He concluded with several proposals for the Chapter: Elaborate criteria of life and action as a common minimum for all the Passionist lay groups and establish means of communication and collaboration among themselves.

Seven capitulars were to ask the two speakers for clarifications.

The afternoon session opened with the Report of the Passionist African Conference (CPA). In the first part of the exposition, the President, Arthur Carrillo, offered elements of the geographical, social, economic, political, religious and Passionist situations on the Continent, illustrating with about thirty pictures projected on the large screen. Among the principal problems of the area, he singled out those of finances, means of communication and language. Despite the difficulties, however, the 122 Passionists of the area are realizing common formation initiatives and are committed to themes of ecological spirituality. They would be grateful if the Chapter would help them elaborate an authentic Africa Passionist life and in planning between the provinces and vicariates. This Chapter will

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respond to the expectations of the African Passionist, if it makes decisions regarding the problems of solidarity and an adequate presence in the General Government.

Four capitulars were able to intervene asking for clarifications.

The afternoon session continued with the Report of the North Europe Passionist Conference (CPNE). Since the office of President is vacant, the Report was communally prepared and delivered by Nicholas Postlethwaite. He pointed out the difficulties of common efforts among the nations of a different history, language and culture, in a context of secularization and situation of aging.. However, the diversities are felt as a richness and they don't impede the realization of common projects, as, for example, the "Reconciliation House" at Belfast, along the "Peace Line" which separates Catholics and Protestants. They also have unified projects in formation, but it is always difficult to find new recruits where elderly prevail.

Monique Verotte mentioned that she speaks only of her experience with the lay Passionist in France. She is not able to speak on situations in other North Europe Countries. She described the spiritual and apostolic experience of the Passionist Fraternities, which began in MICH Province about 15 years ago. They share with the religious the spirituality and charism of St. Paul of the Cross. Formation consists in at least one year of preparation at the end of which they are officially recognized by the province as "lay associates." Some members can also receive specific assignments from the provincial.

Six questions for clarifications ended the presentation of Reports of the Regional Conferences.

The capitulars were asked to continue their dialogue in mini-groups of three until the end of the afternoon work period.

The Eucharist, presided by Clement Baron, continued the Day's theme: Be with Jesus and follow in his ministry. The Gospel text of the calming of the sea (Mk 4:35-40) was mimed with one of the men carrying in a small boat and simulating the rocking of the boat. This helped everyone to reflect and pray on the necessity of keeping alive one's faith and not becoming lost in the following of Christ.

**Thursday, August 24**

Today the capitulars prayed on the theme "To Be Like Jesus." Morning Prayer took place in the atrium to the chapter hall where "Jacob's well" was again placed. Entering the atrium, everyone received a myste-

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rious piece of white string about 26 inches long. The prayer leader reminded everyone that Christ was present in their midst. "We are his disciples, but many obstacles impede our becoming like him." In silence each one thought of the obstacles in his own life and, for every obstacle, tied a knot in the string. Then, divided into groups of two, each person talked about this with his partner. At the end, everyone tied the white string around his companion's wrists, symbolizing that something is holding us back from following Christ more completely. In word and song, the Gospel of John 8:31-32 is read. This culminates with the proclamation: "The truth will make you free." Meanwhile, one of those present burned the piece of string tied to his wrists in the flame of the Paschal Candle, indicating that the truth of Christ will surely free us. While singing a hymn, the capitulars processed to the chapter hall.

Following announcements by the secretary, the Moderator outlined the day's work, which will engage the entire day. The capitulars are to gather the concrete points from the Reports of the previous two days, answering the question: "From what we have heard, what is the way forward for our Chapter?"

Later in the day, the secretaries of the groups met in the aula. The results of the discussions will be an essential crossroad for the successive work of the Chapter and the task of the redaction committee. At 12 noon, the moderators and secretaries met with Paul Michalenko to assess the situation.

Before entering into dialogue, the groups were asked to evaluate their internal organization in order to verify whether all is going well or whether something needed improvement.

The noon meeting showed that only two groups had completed discussing the material. Thus, the Moderator decided to extend the time of discussion. The last 45 minutes of the afternoon work period was reserved for the aula to listen to the secretaries' reports. Michalenko made it clear that, at this aula meeting, only the listing of themes and problems with which the Chapter must deal are to be reported. If desired, some motivation could be added.

All groups reported that the themes to be treated in the Chapter are: formation, inculturation, solidarity, laity, and general government. One group called attention to the problem of the brothers and another to our specific apostolate.

Formation is intended in the wide sense, from initial to ongoing, from vocational recruitment to community life, including a spirituality

based on the Memoria Passionis and an identity defined by the charism.

Inculturation is the inescapable urgency of a charism arisen and experienced in a determined cultural context, but which now is found in the principal cultures of the world.

Solidarity is the need that arises from reconciling the young areas of the Congregation, which are full of life, but poor in means, with traditional areas having adequate means, but scarce in personnel.

The question of the laity is qualifying of this Chapter and must be brought to a conclusion.

Regarding general government, which has engaged reflection in the Congregation for some time, aspects of restructuring the regional conferences, better representation for Africa, a greater efficiency in favor of solidarity came forward.

Cosimo Chianura presided at the Eucharistic celebration which again took place in the atrium of the chapter hall. Upon arrival, the capitulars found different colored ribbons on the chairs. Longer ribbons of the same colors were attached to the Paschal Candle and strung out in a semicircle to the last row of chairs. Following the reading of the Gospel, everyone was asked to reflect on the times the Lord had called him: "Come and see." Then each one tied the piece of ribbon he had to that of the person on either side of him. Lastly, the ribbon was tied to the long ribbon coming from the Paschal Candle. The meaning is clear: By being united to Christ, we will also be united to each other and vice versa. Thus united, the group recited the Nicene Creed with hands elevated and the ribbons thus becoming one thread.

## **Friday, August 25**

Today's capitular prayer concentrated on remembering the martyrs of our times under the phrase: "To Do Like Jesus." In the context of the theme "Passion of Jesus Christ, Passion for Life," we remembered those who gave their total gift.

Excerpts from the lives of several heroic persons of Latin America were projected on the large screen in the chapter hall, culminating with the murder of Oscar Romero on March 24, 1980. A few minutes of silence followed, during which each remembered the martyrs of his own country. Then, those who wanted, called out the name of a martyr and the assembly responded: "Present!" The chorus of the liturgical commission sang the

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song, “Romero Green Hope,” which among others says: “You knew that death would come unexpectedly, but you knew that it’s a seed when the people follow you.”

While the assembly sang the refrain: “If they kill me, I will arise in the life of my people,” four persons carried in the body of a martyr wrapped in a sheet and they placed it on an altar on the president’s stage. The acting martyr was one of the liturgical commission who played the part very well. The chorus continued with the song: “Our Father of the martyrs.” Then the bier was carried out accompanied with the same refrain gradually ending in silence. Then, standing, the assembly prayed the “Our Father” as Jesus taught.

When the session continued, the secretary, Gabriele Cingolani, read the letter Pope John Paul II sent to Jose Agustin Orbegozo on the occasion of the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Congregation. Dated Castel Gandolfo, August 21, 2000, the letter is divided into five sections. The Pope underlined the circumstances and coincidences of the Chapter. It is taking place “during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.” It is the first time in Latin America, as “homage to the great Continent on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its evangelization.” He reflected on the theme which is in harmony with “the theological reflection and spiritual climate of the Jubilee, a year of the glorification of the Trinity and a year intensely Eucharistic.” “The theme of the “Passion of Jesus Christ, passion for life” intends to emphasize as, in the light of the Crucified, that the meaning of life is to give the gift of life in service for others.”

The Holy Father recommended Passionists “to continue to be teachers of prayer and special witnesses of Christ Crucified,” especially by “the preaching of missions,” and “spiritual exercises to clergy and people.” Then pointing out that, “in the chapter work you have programmed special time to reflection on sharing the Passionist charism with the laity,” he affirmed that the theme “constitutes a new chapter that is rich in hope in the history of the relationship between consecrated persons and the laity. It represents a sign of growth of the ecclesial vitality which urges reception and development.”

The letter concludes by entrusting the chapter work to the Virgin Mary, to St. Paul of the Cross, to Passionist saints and blessed, and imparting his apostolic blessing.

Next, the newly named Bishop, Mauro Bastos, took his leave of the Chapter, because of other commitments. “I leave for a new mission,” he said, “but I will not cease being a Passionist and your brother.”

The Moderator informed the assembly of the decision of the CCC to name two new committees in order to move the work along more rapidly. One, together with the liturgical committee, is to prepare the process for the election of the Superior General. It is made up of Clemente Barron, Denis Travers and Enzo Del Brocco. The second committee is to elaborate a concrete proposal, with an alternative, on general government. This committee is made up of Martin Coffey, Robert Joerger and Laurentino Novoa.

Ciro Benedettini then presented the synthesis elaborated by the redaction committee from the groups reports held the preceding day. It concentrated on the following points: Passionist charism, community life, initial and ongoing formation, Passionist family and the role of the laity, new forms of governmental structures and inculturation.

After four capitulars asked questions, the groups continued the task of evaluating the synthesis, by verifying whether or not it contained all that the Chapter intended to treat.

Returning to the aula toward the end of the morning, the capitulars listened to the secretaries of the groups refer to what had been shared. There was a general appreciation of the synthesis presented by the redaction committee. However, a few lacunae were pointed out, as well as several suggestions for a diverse arrangement of the material.

Among those elements that seemed to have been missed were the connection with the Chapter's theme, the treatment of our specific apostolate, the question of the brothers, the centrality of the Memoria Passionis and attention to the crucified, the commitment to vocational recruitment and the mention of Justice and Peace.

Among the requests for a diverse arrangement of the matter are those giving priority and unifying place to the charism, of treating solidarity apart with its own title, inserting inculturation in all aspects of our life. A suggestion was also made that the preamble could clear up many of these aspects and eliminate fragmentation and repetitions. It was also hoped that the Chapter will make decisions or offer concrete suggestions on these themes without simply speaking in the abstract or generically, as has happened in past meetings of the Congregation.

Following the observations by the redaction committee, six capitulars were able to ask for clarifications. A fear was expressed that the assembly was already preoccupied about a document, when, in fact, there was no agreement as yet on the themes to be treated. The Moderator remarked that this is not the case. The scope of the work was to focus more toward the theme and orientation of the Chapter.

*Friday, August 25*

The afternoon session opened with a tribute to Jose Agustin Orbeagozo on the part of PAUL Province. Michael Higgins presented him with a plaque which states that the imminent English publication of the Letters of St. Paul of the Cross is dedicated to him.

The remainder of the afternoon work was dedicated to a round table discussion with the lay representatives. They were invited to the President's table and from there offered their impressions of the past week and presented the following requests:

1. Guidance in formation on the Passionist charism.
2. Participation in Passionists ministries and their commitment to justice.
3. Have organizational criteria for lay communities regarding spirituality and apostolate, especially in view of their increase.
4. Be supported in the vocation of proclaiming Christ Crucified from the prophetic witness of Passionists in community life, prayer and solitude.

During their time, twelve capitulars entered into dialogue, while five were not able because of lack of time. Mostly all the lay representatives replied to the various questions, which regarded, above all, aspects of formation, criteria and orientation.

The speakers stated that there are two currents regarding common criteria. Some want more, others less. In any case, they should not come from above, but should be worked out together, because the specificity "laity" of the Passionist charism cannot be elaborated without the laity. Regarding formation, the laity desire, above all, togetherness and witness.

The Moderator announced that the Chapter work would continue on Monday, August 28. Tomorrow, Saturday, the Eucharistic celebration would be at 8:30 in the morning. The agenda for Sunday calls for the visit with the Passionist Family in Brazil in São Paulo.

Today's Eucharist concluded the celebration of the martyrs which began with Morning Prayer. Cardinal Pablo Evaristo Arns, retired Archbishop of São Paulo, presided at the Liturgy. The Liturgy of the Word was held in the Chapter Hall to facilitate simultaneous translation and the remainder in the Church.

Following the homily, every capitular received a photo of one of the Latin American "martyrs." The procession to the Church sang the refrain "If they kill me, I will arise in the life of my people," to the hymn. Arriving at the altar, each put the photo at the foot of a large wooden cross and around a small globe of the world.



*Monday, August 28*

After Communion, the Deacon acted out the prayer of Christ in the Garden of Olives. He walked down the center aisle holding high a chalice and, in different voice modulations, said the words of Jesus, “Father, if it is possible take away this chalice from me. Not my will, but yours be done,” Rose petals representing blood in the chalice were spilled onto a large Passionist sign near the wooden cross.

## **Monday, August 28**

Before reporting on today’s events, here are interesting elements of the two preceding days. This Chapter is always in process, even when it doesn’t treat Chapter material. No one should be surprised if these Acts feel the singularity of this meeting.

Saturday morning, August 26, the Eucharistic Concelebration emphasized the theme of the Resurrection. It took place in church and Nicholas Postlethwaite presided. The bare wooden cross, around which the photos of the martyrs had been placed the previous evening, was carried in during the Gloria covered with flowers. At Communion time every one received a flower from the cross.

Before the final blessing, the Superior General, gave a memento to the lay representatives who began leaving today. It’s a Passionist sign mounted on a small cross.

Sunday, August 27, the Chapter members departed at 7:30 am in three buses for São Paulo. The schedule called for a celebration with the “Passionist Family.” The celebration took place at St. Lucy’s School, which is under the care of the Brazilian Province of St. Gabriel, of the Passionist Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross. No capitular will forget this event, even if some aspect of the celebration may have had a bit violent cultural impact to some.

There were about 500 members of the Brazilian Passionist Family which had already arrived and some after a 26 hour bus ride. There were men religious, sisters, contemplative nuns and laity from the province, vicariates and the three provinces of Passionist sisters in this Nation. Welcoming banners and posters with appropriate sayings hung on walls: “The Passionist Family celebrates life;” “The laity greet the capitulars;” “The Passionist Family is pleased with the 44th General Chapter,” etc.

*Monday, August 28*

The first gathering was the Eucharistic celebration which lasted over two hours. Every step of the celebration was full of symbolism created by the vitality of this people. The Mass took place in the school gym and was presided by Fr. Luis Fernando Lisboa.

The Vicariate of LIBER was responsible for the Penitential Rite. There was an imploring dance before the crucifix and Passionist sign which concluded with the invocation for forgiveness for all the sins of the Family.

The Gloria was lively and led by the students of CALV who danced and tossed about a large plastic globe of the world. This globe even bounced among the assembly. Meanwhile a large star was formed of multicolored ribbons.

Introduction to the Readings was performed by Passionist sisters and postulants. They danced down the center aisle and, while being accompanied by song, one carried the bible and handed it to the Deacon at the altar.

Following the Gospel, a professional singer from the ISID Vicariate, passed through the congregation in a slow dance step throwing seed and handing out flowers until she reached the altar. The refrain of her song which enraptured the audience was: "Throw seed on the ground; it won't be in vain. Do not be preoccupied about the harvest, but plant for your brothers."

Then, Francisco Valadez welcomed everyone in the name of the capitulars.

The singing of the Creed was also accompanied with dance. Member of VICT Vicariate performed this part of the Liturgy. The group danced down the center aisle led by the crucifix and the Paschal Candle and carrying small flags of nations and manifested the Faith that has planted roots in indigenous religious traditions.

The presentation of the gifts was a multi-step dance executed by members of DOMIN Vicariate. In addition to bread and wine they brought up typical fruits of the area and performing acrobats typical of the people of the Bahia.

After Communion, a choral group made up of members from all the areas of the Passionist Family sang *Panis Angelicus* by C. Frank, thus demonstrating that, in addition to samba rhythm, they can also perform genuine classical music.

A barbecue followed the Eucharistic celebration allowing everyone to interact in various languages and gestures.

In the afternoon, the various components of the Passionists from different areas offered a four hour long spectacle of folk lore and music, composed of songs and dances from their areas, in addition to the “Mariheira” of Peru. Three Passionist Nuns left at the beginning of the entertainment, following a clamorous good-bye by the crowd. Brazilian dances executed were: The Quadrilha, Capoeira, Catira, Folia de Reis and, of course, the Samba. A Pan American group coming from the area of the ISID Vicariate executed the traditional dances of Southern Brazil, as the Rancheira, Pezinho, Chjotes, Carreirinho, Balaio, Chimarrita, Tatu com volta no meio and Chula. Different capitulars also danced in the general dancing, but could not match the agility of the Brazilian male and female dancers.

At the conclusion, Jose Agustin, Superior General, said a few words of congratulation and thanks to the Passionist Family for the day’s meeting. “If anyone would ask me what was the most beautiful thing I’ve seen in Brazil, I would answer: You,” he affirmed among other points. He further promised that the Chapter will continue to reflect on our reality in terms of “Passionist Family,” including all areas, that all would walk together. The road must pass through the desert, but it will lead to the Pasch. It’s essential to discover together where the Lord is calling us today to celebrate the Passover with him. He, then, asked the Passionist Family to bless the capitulars and the capitulars to bless the Passionist Family.

The capitulars returned to Villa Kostka shortly past 8:00 pm.

The theme for today’s prayer which took place in the Chapter Hall was “We Preach Christ Crucified and Risen,” as from 1Cor. 1:17-25 and C. 64. The participants were invited to compose verses of a psalm based on the experience of yesterday’s meeting with the Passionist Family. An excerpt from the Letter of Convocation for the General Chapter was read. This relates the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan woman, who rushed to tell everyone her encounter with Jesus. The well with the names of the capitulars on it was again brought into the Chapter Hall. Whoever wished could read the psalm he had written. The Our Father concluded Morning Prayer.

The Moderator then presented the agenda for the week which will culminate with the election of the Superior General next Saturday. Today was dedicated to the study of the structure of general government for the next term with the hope of approving a proposal as soon as possible. The theme has been studied following requests in the Congregation, by analysis of an appointed commission, by two synods, and, now, a first look by this

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Chapter.

The Chapter Commission nominated by the CCC for further study has elaborated three proposals. They were presented by Martin Coffey.

The first provides for general consultors for geographical areas of the Congregation in three diverse options: six consultors as presently, seven according to geographical areas, namely, by adding a consultor for Africa, and four by reducing the number of geographical areas to: Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia/Pacific. The second proposes four consultors who will have specific areas of responsibility for initial and ongoing formation, solidarity and finances, evangelization, charism and spirituality. The third calls for four consultors to assist the General in the government of the Congregation.

Following clarifications for seven capitulars, the work continued in group discussions answering the question: Which proposal do you wish and why?

Returning to the aula and listening to the secretaries' reports, it appeared that in five groups the option for consultors for geographical areas dominated, but it was not clear on the number of consultors or areas. Several suggested a combination of the diverse proposals in order to provide service both for the geographical areas and animation for the sectors essential to the Congregation. Others proposed something entirely new, as having consultors only for three areas that need special attention (CLAP, PASPAC, CPA), and another three being elected by the superior general for special assignments.

Since neither the group discussions, nor the interventions of fifteen capitulars was able to bring about a clear convergence, it was decided to continue discussing the matter in the afternoon session.

In the afternoon, the assembly was asked to return to the group discussions following this guideline: With the highest possible consensus, every group will draw up one proposal in which it clearly indicates the number of consultors, their role, the number of regional conferences and points relative to general government for future determination, since there is not sufficient information at present.

When the capitulars returned to the aula, the reports of the group discussions showed that there still was no clear consensus. It oscillated between 4 and 7 consultors, from 4 to 7 regional conferences, or for areas of responsibility, or a combination of the two. This led the Moderator to remark: If after six years of analyses and discussions, no consensus has been reached between ten persons, how is it possible to reach it in an assembly of seventy two? Are there, perhaps, underlying reasons which

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some are not able to express?

After another six capitulars attempted to bring light to the situation, the commission specifically nominated by the Chapter on this matter declared its readiness to bring a new unified proposal to the floor at tomorrow afternoon's session.

The Liturgical Commission, of which several members have been following the Chapter sessions in order to harmonize them with the daily prayer, inserted a petition to the Holy Spirit during the Eucharistic celebration that He suggest the best structures for proclaiming Christ Crucified.

Following the reading of the Gospel, a bible entirely bound with string was shown to the assembly to indicate the pharisaical attitude which chains the Word of God. After the string was untied, five multicolored strips of ribbons fell from the book and were handed to capitulars, indicating that the Word is spread in five Continents. A crucifix was placed on the bible, indicating our specific proclamation. Bible and crucifix were then placed on a round pedestal, indicating the need for fitting structures for our mission. Silent prayer and spontaneous petitions tended to seek out and liberate from obstacles that hinder our proclamation of Christ Crucified. Renato Monti presided at the Eucharist.

## **Tuesday, August 29**

The theme for Morning Prayer was: Passionist Spirituality as Exodus. Arriving in the Chapter Hall, one saw two lines of cord marking out a path down the aisle to the crucifix on the President's stage. Placed within the path were paper footprints upon which the word "Exodus" was written in all languages of the Chapter. At his place, each capitular found a blank paper footprint. Following the proclamation of the account of the disciples at Emmaus, Lk 24:13-24, the assembly was asked to reflect on: "What impedes your seeing the risen Christ?" and to write this on the paper footprint. All were then asked to leave their place and walk in the path marked by the cord, continuing the reflection. Having returned to their place, the capitulars were asked to share their reflection with the person near by. Then, the paper footprints were collected together with those in the path leaving the memory that our spirituality is a journey.

The capitulars spent the morning listening to the conference given by Carlos Palacio, S.J. on the "Theological Vision of Life in Latin America."

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Speaking from notes, without any pre-distributed text, he began by positing the impossibility of having an univocal concept of life. He then moved on to several perspectives from the point of view of Latin America.

The first characteristic is that the more difficult life is, the greater the hope and joy of life. Being threatened in a biological, economical, social and political sense, life is affirmed by demographical and human growth. Another peculiarity is that the dominant culture diffuses an abstract concept of life which doesn't correspond to reality. Principles are proclaimed which are regularly disregarded. There are many possibilities of life, but also innumerable presences of death, oscillations between exaltation and destruction of life.

There results a concept of life which is unbalanced, maimed, involved in its content that is guided by a culture of suicide and by a pathological society which only values unlimited abundance and consumerism; thus a life with no history nor future, fundamentally without meaning. It's a life which dehumanizes and kills. Just think of the ecological disasters and those of nature and technology, wars, stress, drugs and immoderate eating.

The speaker presented two perspectives for theological reading of the theme. One from Jesus Christ and the other from the interpretation given to the first Christian community. Developing the first, he emphasized three dimensions: Life as mystery and gift, as task and responsibility, and Paschal mark of life. During the question period he enlarged on other interesting aspects of the theme.

The afternoon session was dedicated to discussion and approval of the new proposal on general government elaborated by the appointed committee. Martin Coffey presented the formulation and replied to ten questions for clarification.

During the discussion in which another nine capitulars spoke, the assembly had a straw vote on the number of consultors. The results: 49 voted for six, 14 for four and 4 abstained.

Seeing the great number in favor of six general consultors for the general council, the group moved toward final approval. Five asked about the role of the consultors and received the response that the text was clear enough. The assembly then moved to a vote on the first part of the proposal which states:

*“The General Chapter will elect six General Consultors who will assist the Superior General in animating the congregation and promoting solidarity in charism and mission among the Conferences of the*

*congregation and with the laity.*

*A consultor may be asked by the Superior General to be the liaison between the general council and one or other of the Conferences.*

This proposal was unanimously approved.

The second part of the proposal treated the method of electing consultors. Sixteen capitulars spoke during the discussion, especially on clarifying the meaning of two names being proposed by each of the seven regional conferences and the role of the superior general in presenting the list of candidates for the office of consultor.

Since time was running out, and to avoid excessively prolonging the discussion, the Moderator asked whether the assembly was ready for a vote. 44 raised their hands as being ready. The capitulars then voted on the second part of the proposal which states:

*Method of Election: (a) The Superior General will consult with the Conferences; (b) Each Conference will propose 2 names to the Superior General; (c) The Superior General will present a list of names to the Chapter; (d) The Chapter will elect 6 consultors."*

Results: Yes-53; No-8; Abstentions-9. The proposal was approved.

Pio Zarrabe presided at the evening Eucharist. He wore some vestments of a Peruvian Tribe and wove cultural elements of the same tribe into the celebration. He was assisted by Aloysius Nguma who spoke about religious cultural traditions of his own African Tribe. At the Penitential Rite, the purification was expressed by carrying burning incense over everyone. The Gospel again was the account of the disciples of Emmaus. The path with paper footprints, which led to the crucifix in the chapter hall, in this chapel, it led to the Paschal Candle as a sign of the Risen Christ.

## Wednesday, August 30

Today's Prayer centered on Jesus as a dinner partner. A sign of this reality is the fraternity which ties us together. We began the day in atrium to the Chapter Hall, listening to excerpts from the Constitutions nn 25, 26, 27, 35. While the assembly sang the refrain, "Ubi Caritas et Amor," a word in large letters was formed on the floor spelling FRATERNIDAD. The Liturgy Committee reminded all that fraternity is sculptured within the human heart, created by God-Love. The an acrostic was formed spelling principal attitudes flowing from fraternity. They are: fidelity, respect, tenderness, love, hope, presence, forgiveness, justice, solidarity, joy, gift

*Wednesday, August 30*

of self. Everyone was invited to silently reflect on the experience of fraternity being lived these days and then express these characteristics out loud. Joy, tenderness, fidelity gift, respect were mentioned. In conclusion, the group prayed the Our Father, while joining hands.

As the work day began, Denis Travers presented the schedule for discernment for the election of the Superior General which will begin tomorrow morning. Following two questions for clarification, the Moderator informed the assembly that the plan would be voted on in the afternoon.

The remainder of the morning was dedicated to listening to the conference of Edenio Valle, SVD on “A View of the Process of Religious Life in Latin America at the Turn of the Century, Journeys and Changes.”

Introduced to the assembly by Gabriel Gasparin, the speaker began by defining the present situation as being at a cross-road. “We stand at a cross-road!” “At a time of cross-road, we need an attitude of humble and patient search...This is a basic condition for living that ‘creative fidelity’ about which the document *Vita Consecrata* speaks.” He subdivided his paper into four sections: (a) Journeys and cross-roads of Latin America Religious Life; (b) Life as correlative of liberation; (c) Changes and problems that mark the process today; (d) The utopia of a Religious Life centered on life.

Speaking on the role of our life in society, he affirmed: “History requires of the Religious Life that it be present in the definite, concrete ‘now’, as witness and agent of a prophetic transformation of the world, in the perspective of the kingdom.”

He pointed out that the theme of life, “the central concern of your 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is also among the concerns of the Church and Religious today in Latin America and in Brazil.” He quotes the pastoral directive of the Brazilian Bishops for the three years 1999-2002, “Unfortunately, under certain aspects, contemporary culture can be called the culture of death because of the multiple forms of sacrifice of human life to the idols of wealth, power and pleasure. The God of life demands respect and promotion of life in all forms and phases.”

He concluded by adding the task “of building a new historic form of the religious life. It doesn’t present a tidy enough appearance, a sufficiently honest and meaningful face, capable of showing forth its evangelical purpose in an immediate way, or why does religious life not succeed in passing on from the cross-road where it is now (placed by the Spirit?).” “The solution is that experienced by Abraham our father in faith when he was called to sacrifice the son in whom all his hopes were invested, for the



*Thursday, August 31*

fulfillment of the promise made to him by God. The attitude that is needed now is both sacrificial and exodus. 'Leave your land and go'."

For the remainder of the morning and part of the afternoon, the speaker extended his remarks on the theme by replying to nine questions. They regarded the sense of listening to the Holy Spirit today, the application of the parable of Abraham, the role of poverty, the difference between political ideology and political culture, formation in human maturity, relationship with the laity, the brothers, community life and the individual choices of religious.

During the second half of the afternoon, the capitulars returned to the discernment presented in the morning. No one felt the need to discuss it. The vote was unanimously favor. The time will be distributed in eleven stages within a 24 hour period. These Acts will refer to the content during the coming days.

The Moderator profited from the time still available to ask the capitulars to engage in dialogue in groups of two or three on the contribution of the talks of the last two days and on the work of the last two weeks. Ten capitulars reported on the results of their dialogue.

The Eucharist, presided over by Apolinario Plaza, was celebrated in the atrium to the Chapter Hall. The acrostic made in the morning around the word fraternidad is still on the floor. At the Penitential Rite, the concelebrants, two by two, were asked to stand back to back, while the guide invoked petitions of forgiveness for being closed, refusals, and reciprocal inattention. At the Our Father, they faced each other putting one hand on the other's shoulder, while before communion they put two hands on each other's shoulders praying for mutual peace and, then, giving each other the sign of peace.

## **Thursday, August 31**

Today the Eucharist was celebrated in the morning, in order to allow time for the reconciliation service in the afternoon. Mass was celebrated in the atrium to the Chapter Hall and Ciro Benedettini presided. The theme was the spiritual journey traveled during the first fifteen days of the Chapter. There was silence during the Liturgy of the Word to give everyone an opportunity to think of the more eloquent symbols which impressed him during this period, be it the first week that centered on God

*Thursday, August 31*

Father-Mother, or the second that centered on the Word Incarnate and the Paschal Mystery. After the reflection, each was free to voice his opinion.

The symbols mentioned were: the broken water jar, the vase with earth and seed, the well with names of the capitulars on it, the wounded heart, the pregnant woman, tears of the prostitute, poor children who came to help us celebrate, the path marked out to the crucifix, the celebration of the martyrs and their blood mixed with that of the crucified and emptied on the Passionist sign, the cross wrapped in flowers. Meanwhile, the cross and Paschal Candle are held up to the assembly.

After Communion, also the sign of the statute of St. Paul of the Cross was carried in and a small crucifix was given to the concelebrants to kiss. The Mass ended with the hymn "Passionista mi chamas a ser," which has become the inspirational theme of this Chapter.

Once in the aula, the Moderator explained the Day's work and, then introduced Giulio Zangaro who presented the financial report. Following a witty observation that he would prefer St. Patrick's Well, which is bottomless, instead of "Jacob's well" or the Samaritan woman, he called attention to the charts attached to the distributed text. On these are summaries of the items of income and expenditures, as well as deposits whether available or vincolated.

He informed the assembly that, during the last six years, the General Treasurer was helped by a Financial Commission which presents a separate report to the Chapter. In addition, he observed that, as matters are at present, it's impossible to have a picture of the financial state of the entire Congregation, since the General Treasurer doesn't have at his disposal the provincial reports. "In the present situation, it's the periphery which controls the central office and not visa versa as the Constitutions state."

Arthur Carrillo presented the report of the General Financial Commission. He reminded everyone that this Commission was requested by the 1994 General Chapter and nominated by the General and his Council who detailed its tasks and responsibilities. He reported on the activity of this Commission for the last six years, which were: Assist the General Treasurer in preparing the annual budget, review the accounting system and the state of the accounts, prepare a financial plan for extraordinary maintenance of the Generalate, suggest norms for security of the financial funds, share the preoccupations of the Generalate's financial problems.

Fourteen capitulars spoke during the discussion on the two reports. The principal points regarded the difficulties still present of submitting punctual and clear financial reports to the central office and the challenge of solidarity, which in its material aspects, is essentially connected with the clarity of available funds. The Moderator pointed out that, for this reason, the financial problem was presented to the capitulars before taking up the theme of solidarity.

Gabriel Antonelli presented a building plan for the Indonesian Passionists which the local General Regional Vicariate considers urgent, but doesn't have the funds to cover building costs. The project involves two student centers – one in Borneo and the other in Flores – three spirituality centers or retreat houses – at Flores, Java and Sumatra – one Provincial House in the capital of Indonesia, for about 800,000 USA Dollars. The expansion is indispensable for accepting new candidates and for engaging them in work conformable to the Passionist charism. Five questions for clarification concluded the morning's work.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, Mark White, of the Redaction Committee, presented of the first draft of the Chapter document. Following seven requests for clarification, the assembly returned to their discussion groups to analyze the draft.

When they returned to the aula, the assembly listened to suggestions and observations. In general, the assembly appreciated the work of the committee.

Jose Agustin Orbegozo presented, in his own name, a proposal regarding the procedure of the election of the Superior General. It should be:

- In a climate of silence and prayer, accompanied by background music;
- Four scrutinizers with the President examine and count the ballots.
- They pass the total number of votes to the secretary who informs the assembly.

After one request for clarification, the proposal was unanimously approved.

The designation of the four scrutineers then took place. Following our tradition, the four youngest members of the Chapter were proposed, namely, Andrew Godiraone Makgetla, Jose Manuel Leon, Paul Cherkoduth, Jose Luis Quintero Sanchez. These, too, were unanimously approved.

## *Friday, September 1*

The day concluded with the Community Reconciliation service, anticipating the discernment process, which takes place tomorrow. Assembled in church, a large wooden cross was placed before the altar during the introductory penitential hymn. Five capitulars beg pardon for the sins of their Continent of origin, while a colored drape is placed on the cross at every invocation: green for Africa; red for North and South America; blue for Oceania; yellow for Asia; white for Europe.

Next, pardon was asked for the sins of the Congregation in the light of Const. nn. 5, 25, 37, 62, 80, 172. After every phrase, the assembly implored: “Lord, forgive our infidelities,” while the following articles, rich in symbolism, accompanied the words: The Passionist sign, the poster representing a community, a lighted candle indicating prayer, sandals of the apostles, open jar symbolizing formation, foot basin alluding to authority.

Asking pardon for personal sins was the next part. The reading from 2 Sam 12:1-12, where the Prophet Nathan confronts David about his sin and consequences, was mimed. Following time for optional individual confession, the service concluded with an embrace of peace.

## **Friday, September 1**

Morning Prayer began the 24 hour period planned for discernment in the election of the Superior General. The background theme was “All are called.” Called to choose the one who will be called. While listening to the reading in Luke 6:12 – Jesus chooses his apostles after spending a night in prayer – the names of all the capitulars are read in place of the twelve. This is followed by the reading from Acts 1:21-26, where Matthias is chosen to replace “the one who abandoned him to go to his own place.” Between these readings, there were large spaces of silence interspersed with the antiphons “confitemini Dominum quoniam bonus” and “Adoramus te, Domine.”

The chapel, dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, was used for all the prayer sessions today. Following Morning Prayer, the capitulars gathered in their usual discussion groups. Their moderators had received instructions regarding the dialogue. During the first phase, in light of what they’ve understood and experienced, they were to surface what they expected of the new Superior General, what he has to face, the style of leadership he should adopt, and what they should privately say to him. All were invited to think of a word or phrase that came up in the group discussion.

During a plenary session of about fifteen minutes, 35 capitulars expressed their syntheses. The expectations were: a brother with a passion for life who would encourage his brothers, charismatic and a prophet, a man of hope, fraternal and humanitarian service, give and elicit confidence, love the Congregation, committed to initial and ongoing formation, transmits joy, instills vitality in every aspect, a pastor and prophetic of the life, contemplative and active, communicates happiness, embodies an authority which is not power, knows how to die in order to live, etc.

Returning to their groups, the capitulars discussed names of possible candidates, exchanging ideas of, and information about, the candidates. Recognizing that, although all are called, only a few have the gift of leadership, they thanked God for the gift of these brothers and attempted to identify them. Each one was invited to write one or more names on a sheet of paper with a Passionist sign drawn on it. The group moderator read the names on the signs out loud. Then he gave them to the Chapter Moderator.

During another pre-lunch plenary session, the Moderator read the list of names which emerged from the groups. There were 23 names: Alfonso Iberri, Antonio Curto, Bernardo Hughes, Clemente Barron, Donald Senior, Federico Soneira, Francisco Valadez, Frans Damen, Gabriele Cingolani, Jefferies Foale, Jesus Maria Iturriotz, Jose A. Orbegozo, Octavio Mondragon, Ottaviano D'Egidio, Kevin Dance, Laurentino Novoa, Leone Masnata, Luis Alberto Cano, Mark White, Martin Coffey, Miguel Gonzalez, Nicholas Postlethwaite, Robert Joerger.

After a brief silence, the excerpt from Acts 1:21-26 was again read and the session ended for lunch.

The afternoon was dedicated to personal prayer. At 3:00 o'clock, the capitulars assembled in the chapel where they listened to the three-fold request of Jesus to Peter recorded in Jn 21:15-19. Alternating in song the antiphons "Bonum est confidere in Domino, bonus est sperare in Domino" and "Ubi Caritas," the remainder of the afternoon was spent in private prayer until the Mass at 6:00 o'clock.

Jose A. Orbegozo presided at the Eucharist and celebrated the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit. After the reading of the Gospel, the lights of the chapel were turned off and a minister entered carrying a flaming brazier. From this flame, 23 capitulars lighted a candle while calling out the name of one of the 23 Superiors General in the History of the Congregation. Jose Orbegozo began with St. Paul of the Cross. At the end, the refrain "Come Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth," was sung. The lights were again turned on and the Mass continued according to the Roman Missal.

*Saturday, September 2*

Let us profit from yesterday's brief report in order to update the telematic dimension of this Chapter. From August 14 to the present, the communication office of the secretariat has transmitted 15 communiqués to about 450 Passionist religious who have an electronic mail box. Other bulletins have been put on our web site [www.passiochristi.org](http://www.passiochristi.org). Following the Home Page, these have contained photos of the day, texts of Liturgical celebrations, talks of the experts, interventions and testimonies. In addition, more than 100 photos have been published, while more than a thousand have been taken.

Although we have not done a survey on the number of hits on our site, the replies by electronic mail and telephonic information assures us the size of our audience is encouraging. So far, we have received 350 messages of appreciation from our confreres and friends. They mention the religious who receive the messages, copy them and tack them on the bulletin board for others to read; of missionaries who spread the news via radio to confreres who work in the forests or on plateaus; of others who adapt them for catechizing.

The more significant replies have been copied and put at the disposition of the capitulars. News from our Chapter has also been sent via e-mail to about 5,000 agencies, associations, parishes and other catholic organizations. Giuseppe Cortese and Miroslaw Lesiecki provide this service, many times working long past midnight.

**Saturday, September 2**

**OTTAVIANO D'EGIDIO**

**24<sup>th</sup> SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION**

HE WAS ELECTED ON THE SECOND BALLOT WITH 55 OUT OF 72 POSSIBLE VOTES. The 2/3 majority needed was 48.

The morning began with the Eucharistic celebration presided by Enzo Del Brocco in the atrium to the Chapter Hall. At the Gospel, the bible was displayed to the assembly with a string tied around it. It was untied at the reading and retied following it. The Deacon sang and mimed Mt. 25:14-30, the parable of the talents, by giving and taking back money destined for the stewards, five, two and one. At the end, he passed through the assembly with a flaming brazier, while the antiphon "Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth" was sung in a fluctuating tone slowly reducing the volume to silence. After Communion, the same Deacon

displayed the tied bible and read Ap 1:1-4 which records the cry of the angel: “Who is worthy to open the book and break open the seals?” He sang this verse repeatedly to the assembly.

At the end of Mass, all processed to the Chapter Hall led by the Deacon carrying the tied bible while all sang the Veni Creator Spiritus in Gregorian. The bible was placed on a lectern on the President’s stage.

To emphasize the unity of action between the Eucharist and election of the Superior General in the Chapter Hall, the capitulars were asked to wear habit and stole, in order to avoid the interruption of returning to their rooms and unvesting from alb and stole.

The Moderator read Const. nn 110 and 133 regarding the procedure and called for the first balloting. The results were: one vote for Jesus M. Iturriotz, Jefferies Foale, Donald Senior, Miguel Gonzalez, Robert Joerger; two votes for Jose A. Orbegozo; Leone Masnata 5, Kevin Dance 14, Francisco Valadez 14, Ottaviano D’Egidio 32.

The assembly proceeded immediately to a second ballot. The results:

- Ottaviano D’Egidio 55
- Kevin Dance 7
- Francisco Valadez 7
- Jose Agustin Orbegozo 1
- Leone Masnata 1
- Jesus Maria Iturriotz 1

Invited to the lectern where the sealed bible was located, Ottaviano opened the book and read from 1 Kgs 19:1-8. Following the reading, bread was offered him and he ate a small piece, indicating strength for the journey, as the reading recounted about Elias. Again in procession, the assembly made its way to the church while singing the Salve Regina and other Marian antiphons. In church, the Blessed Sacrament had already been exposed. Everyone knelt briefly in silent adoration and then sang the Tantum Ergo. The new General again read further from 1 Kgs 19:9-15a, which recalls the presence of God in the silent breeze.

After embracing the outgoing General and the newly elected General, the latter made his profession of faith and delivered a brief discourse to the assembly.

After a brief period on the front steps of the church for photographs, the group dispersed.

The election of the 24<sup>th</sup> Superior General of the Congregation took place in less than a half hour. The capitulars were free for the rest of the day.

## Monday, September 4

Yesterday, Sunday, September 3, the Chapter agenda provided for a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida, Patroness of Brazil. The title derives from an unexpected “apparition” of a small statue of Our Lady to several fishermen who “fished” it from the Paraiba River in October, 1717. The statue recalls that of Our Lady of Loreto. Pope John Paul II consecrated the present basilica in July, 1980.

In agreement with the style of this Chapter, the journey had the scope of inculturation, by presenting an opportunity to participate in the piety of this people. Despite the rainy day, the experience was one of spiritual joy for all. The organization by the shrine staff was particularly impressive. There were large spaces for all the services, impeccable welcoming, appropriate guide for the liturgical celebration and in the catechetical ministry.

The capitulars departed at 6:00 o’clock in the morning and had breakfast at a service area on the highway. They arrived at the shrine about 10:00 o’clock, having traveled a distance of 250 km, and entered into the spiritual atmosphere of the shrine. They concelebrated Mass at 12:00 noon, had lunch at the Redemptorist seminary at 2:00 PM and were back at Villa Kostka at 7:00 PM.

Today was a discernment day for the election of the General Consultors. Morning Prayer and beginning of the work were united. Denis Travers presented the dynamic of the day, followed by several minutes of silence accompanied by the Taize Laudate Dominum. The lectern with the Bible placed on it was on the President’s stage and a rolled up scroll with seven red ribbons tied around it. The account of the Lamb opening the book with the seven seals from Apoc. 7:13-8:2 was read.

The new Superior General briefly outlined his style of government and the type of consultors who were needed to realize it. Following this, the youngest capitular of the seven regional conferences approached the President’s stage to remove one each of the seals around the scroll and bring it to the discussion of the group from each geographical area. Fr. Ottaviano blessed those who removed the seals and the work continued until 5:30 PM.

Each group first spent 15 minutes of the meeting in silence before beginning their dialogue on the following questions:

- What do you hear Ottaviano saying to you and the Conference about the style of leadership?
- In the light of our Chapter experience, what is the Congregation asking of this Conference at this time and what



*Tuesday, September 5*

would this Conference want to say to the General Superior?

From 11:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Fr. Ottaviano met with each Conference in order to concur regarding the individuals most qualified to accompany him in his task. Every Conference proposed one or two names.

At 5:30 the capitulars met in the Chapter Hall to hear from the Superior General the list of candidates. They are: Robert Joerger for the USA and the NEPC Conference; Luis Alberto Cano and Laurentino Novoa for CII ; Jefferies Foale for PASPAC; Augusto Canali for COPAL; Vital Otshudialokoka and Cesare Pozzobon for CPA; Luigi Vaninetti for CIPI.

Each Conference celebrated its own Eucharistic Liturgy this evening.

## **Tuesday, September 5**

The Eucharist was celebrated in the atrium to the Chapter Hall at the beginning of the day. It immediately preceded the plenary session in the aula where the election of the General Consultors took place. Fr. Ottaviano D'Egidio presided. Except for five large colored candles representing the five Continents having a ribbon of the same color attached to it and circling a much larger Paschal Candle, the Liturgy was simple.

Following the Eucharistic celebration, the capitulars processed to the Chapter Hall singing the *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

The Moderator opened the session by reading numbers 135 and 136 from the Constitutions, where the norms for election of the General Consultors are found. The six Consultors were all elected on the first ballot with a quorum well above the required absolute majority of 37 out of 72.

Augusto Canali was elected with 71 votes;

Vital Otshudialokoka received with 58;

Luis Alberto Cano with 57;

Robert Joerger with 56;

Luigi Vaninetti with 58;

Jefferies Foale with 58.

Luis Alberto Cano was then elected First Consultor on the first ballot with 38 votes.

During the afternoon session, the capitulars, discussed, approved, rejected, or returned for further elaboration several proposals presented to the Chapter.

*Tuesday, September 5*

*1. Passage of PASS from a Vice Province to a Province*

The Vice Province of the Passion, Philippines, which has 32 religious in perpetual vows, 5 in temporary, and 3 novices, with 8 houses requested that it be elevated to the rank of province. After a brief discussion in which four capitulars spoke in favor of the request, the assembly unanimously approved the proposal.

*2. Passage of FAT from a Vice Province to a Province*

The Portuguese Vice Province of Our Lady of Fatima also presented a request to be elevated to the rank of province. It has 25 priests, 2 brothers and 7 students in 4 communities. After three requests for clarification, the proposal was voted upon and passed unanimously.

*3. Having the Synod of the Congregation every three years instead of every two*

This involved a proposal which would need a change in the Constitutions and would only be the first step toward that goal (cfr. Const. n. 114). Nevertheless, after three capitulars spoke against the proposal, it was put to a vote. The results: 63 against, 4 in favor, 5 abstentions.

*4. A Plenary Meeting of the General Council with each Regional Conference during the six year term.*

Thirteen capitulars spoke on the proposal before the presenter withdrew it. They shared the spirit of it, which was to foster communication between Central Government and Regional Conferences, but they weren't pleased with the formulation. In addition, it was joined to the hypothesis of having only one synod during the six years. With only two synods, it would be complicated to provide for a meeting with each of the seven Conferences. It was convenient, therefore, that the proposal be withdrawn, and that the Redaction Committee put the spirit of the proposal in the chapter statement.

*5. Proposal on the Brothers*

Edward Hall presented this proposal which was elaborated by the brothers at the Chapter from the various formulations received. Based on a quotation from the Report on the State of the Congregation by Jose Orbegozo, the proposal failed to express the expectations of the Chapter in the matter. After a discussion in which sixteen capitulars spoke, it was seen that the problem touched the profound nature of the charism of religious life, including the Passionist. It cannot, therefore, be reduced to the right of

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full participation of administration of the communities, including the office of superior and the ministries that do not require Holy Orders. The presenters of the proposal accepted the suggestion that, in light of the discussion, the text needed further work.

Evening Prayer again took place in the atrium to the aula near the same well. This time water was taken from the well and the General used it to wash the feet of the four Consultors elected in the morning. The other two were elected from outside the Chapter.

The five large candles circling the larger one with their flame stood out in the shadow of the room. The Gospel book and a small Paschal Candle were carried in with dancing, preceded by a minister who swept the path with palm branches. The Gospel of John 13:1-20 was proclaimed, interrupted by the performance of the account, namely, the washing of feet. Fr. Ottaviano then delivered a brief homily.

### **Wednesday, September 6**

Today and the next several days, each Regional Conference will be responsible for organizing and guiding the day's prayer. PASPAC began today. Paul Hata and Augustin Kim presided at Morning Prayer and Lawrence Finn commented. It consisted in a long period of silent adoration, interspersed with opportune explanations concerning the influence of Buddhism on Christian contemplation in the Orient, sing-song prayers sung by the two presiders in Japanese and Korean, and hymns by the assembly.

Prayer was joined with the history of Christianity in the Asian Continent, especially Japan. Portuguese missionaries brought the Faith there, as in Latin America. During the persecutions, the martyrs went to their death praying the Our Father and Hail Mary in Portuguese, without knowing the exact meaning of what they were saying. In their memory the assembly concluded by praying one Our Father and ten Hail Marys in the same language.

Today's work was done in plenary session. While introducing the task ahead, the Moderator summarized the work accomplished during the past three weeks and a half. The first draft of the Chapter Statement elaborated by the Redaction Committee, showed that the Chapter desired to speak on eight themes which are vital for the Passionist family. Now that time is moving along, it is necessary to take up the matter. There are only

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six work days remaining.

Although not definitive as yet, this was the list of themes: Passionist charism, inculturation, community life and ecology, formation, apostolate, laity, solidarity and communication, government. To render the exchange more fruitful, the CCC constituted a sub-committee for every theme with the task of listening to the assembly and condensing the comments in a “creative report” to be brought back to the capitulars. The following make up the various sub-committees:

*Passionist charism:* Ottavio Mondragon, Bernard Hughes and Laurentino Novoa;

*Inculturation:* Nicholas Postlethwaite, Joseph Jones and Martin Coffey;

*Apostolate:* Leone Masnata, Vittorio Masin and Aidan Troy;

*Solidarity and Communication:* Jefferies Foale, Robert Joerger and Kevin Dance

*Government:* This theme was considered as sufficiently treated, but the Redaction Committee will insert the content.

*Laity:* Francisco Valadez, Giovanni Cipriani and Clemente Barron. However, the task is different from the above sub-committees. This theme, too, has been amply treated. These three members will elaborate a creative text keeping in mind what has been said and experienced to the present, including the laity’s requests and the proposals coming from the Congregation, or expressed during the Chapter, and, from these, draw up recommendations or decrees or other. The capitulars will pronounce on these later on.

After these indications by the Moderator and secretary, there was an open discussion answering the following questions:

*Regarding these themes, where is the passion for life found today?*

*As a Congregation, what must be done to accept and increase it in the future?*

Before discussion in the assembly, the capitulars exchanged ideas with the one next to him, or reflected on them for several minutes in silence. During the day, five of the six themes on the list were covered. There were 101 interventions.

## **PASSIONIST CHARISM**

Twenty-two capitulars spoke on this subject. They held that life is found where one works with the marginalized, rather than with large institutions. The latter should not be abandoned, but reexamined. In the commitment for the poor and for the excluded one finds enthusiasm and

vocations flourish. Such a commitment demands a charismatic conversion which considers the poor as builders of history, including our Passionist history.

Some pointed out that the poor exist even among the wealthy, and refugees, divorced, homosexuals, homeless, and those who have no meaning of life. Others feel that life is working with the laity. Still others insist that life springs from contemplation of the Crucified, who is the specific perspective from which we understand Christian hope and all other values.

### **INCULTURATION**

Eighteen capitulars spoke on this topic. There was some perplexity expressed in seeing the topic treated separate from, rather than inserted in all the others. However, the discussion channeled on the content, which was felt essential and central for our life. The Gospel, as well as the charism, cannot become operative without inculturation. The refounding of the charism cannot happen, if it's not in this context. This is not a theory, but the life that understands the following steps: forget one's culture of origin, know the new one, love it, animate it without comparisons which would block the process.

According to others, inculturation happens gradually: reciprocal adaptation, sharing doubts and certainties, inevitable temporary mixing of contents into a species of syncretism, creative synthesis in which life is expressed in a new cultural formula. It was also observed that cultures are like the Old Testament of diverse peoples, since they contain the seed of the Word. It is always necessary to graft the New Testament on those to whom we wish to proclaim it. The model of every inculturation is the Word Incarnate. This is the challenge of history. The Chapter must commit the Congregation to examine whether it is doing everything possible in this field.

### **LIFE IN COMMUNITY AND ECOLOGY**

Several of the 16 capitulars who spoke were not in favor of this formulation redacted by the CCC. The Moderator recommended not to be concerned for the moment about the union of the two themes, but only their content. The Redaction Committee is free to follow its own format.

It was noted that the title tends to move toward a new vision of life in common. It's not treating simply "community life," and it's not a play on words. Life embraces more than our community. It includes laity, the world, cultures, life in all its meanings, to accept and defend. Hence the

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connection with ecology.

The formulation is most meaningful for the young people. Saying “community life” can result in the community prevailing and conditioning the life. Saying, “life in community,” or community of life, means to give priority to life. Everything is at the service of life, including community and its structures. And for life is intended not only that of the members of the community, but also of the entire world, against violence, air and water pollution, forest extermination, etc.

One made the point that it is risky to seek values of Passionist community outside it. This would disregard internal values, which are rich and for many of us were the reason for choosing our vocation.

Regarding ecology, it was observed that the discourse is ambivalent and one must be cautious in selecting a position. In Africa and Indonesia, for example, if the forest isn't set on fire, one doesn't eat. It's a type of violence which forces the poor to destroy today what will serve for their life tomorrow.

One intervention extolled the brother's life as custodians of life in communities and lovers of ecology through salubrity of foods and environments.

### **APOSTOLATE**

Twenty-three interventions took aim at this, which the Redaction Committee had joined with that of community life. They asked that, under this title, there be some reference to the new evangelization and that the various types of Passionist apostolates be mentioned, such as, preaching of retreats to clergy and laity, spiritual direction and the ministry of reconciliation, and, above all, missions to the people.

Some mentioned that in a world of globalization and dechristianization it is necessary to refound evangelization, basing it on the kerigma whose roots are in the dead and risen Christ. It is necessary to elaborate prototypes of kerigma for diverse ambients and methods for different situations. Others recalled known points of current doctrine, such as community life as the first form of apostolate, or prayer and contemplation as an energetic font of every apostolate.

Passionist Apostolate must start from the proclamation of the Word of the Cross as font of life. We must not transgress our calling to the front line apostolate, which is different from overseas missions. It consists in being engaged in the ministry of the most neglected, in order to bring life those who have no life.

## **INITIAL AND ONGOING FORMATION**

About 22 interventions coalesced around this topic. They recalled the awareness that we all are in constant formation and we need to revitalize ourselves recharging our motivations; the necessity of placing the theology of the cross at the center of our formation and reawaken enthusiasm for the Passion of Jesus, which is most precious for us and for the service of the Church; the importance of forming the formators, because at times the procedure is to improvise in this delicate field. Thus there was an insistence on preparing formation material of a theological, historical and spiritual nature regarding the charism. It was also suggested to have a congregational school for formators.

Important aspects were singled out, such as, attention to human values of respect, welcoming, balance, civility; knowledge of the global phenomenon of communication, whose means are seen as becoming more efficient even for the apostolate; study and intellectual formation, which wrongly has been transgressed in favor of exclusively practical and operative orientations.

It is necessary to create formative experiences for an efficacious formation. While in the past, formation was by information and authoritative transmission of values, today formation must take place through the actual programming of formation experiences, which encourage the young person to change. In the formation community one journeys “together with”, as disciples of Christ, realizing that there is much left to be done and that it will always be necessary to keep making progress. In the achievement of this goal, the leadership of the community has an essential role to play.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, Fr. Ottaviano welcomed Fr. Augusto Canali, the newly elected General Consultor.

The Eucharist was presided by Apolinario Plaza; he wore Filipino vestments; the Mass was celebrated with many Asian cultural elements, from India, Indonesia, Philippines, Australia and Papua New Guinea. The rites began with the blessing of incense and the sprinkling of holy water. At the conclusion, the celebrant expressed his best wishes for the newly elected general curia; he did this by using gesture and symbols of the Filipino culture: rice, water, and a comb, all signs of prosperity, mutual understanding, and good order.

## Friday, September 8

*Yesterday, September 7*, the capitulars experienced another day of inculturation at São Paulo by participating in the “cry of the excluded,” which was part of the demonstrations for Brazil’s independence day. It was a popular gathering with parades, slogans, banners and songs, that included moments of prayer, for social justice and respect for human dignity. The requests were also sustained in the name of the faith, emphasizing that independence in this country won’t be attained as long as the oppressed are excluded.

The capitulars, too, marched behind a banner prepared by the students of CALV province with the saying in four languages: “As Passionists we are united in the same cause,” and the loud speakers made their presence known.

Leaving Itaici in three buses at 8:15 AM, they observed and shared moving about the crowd, which was made up mostly of lively young people. Lunch was offered by COPAL in a “chiurrascaria” and they returned by 5:00 PM.

COPAL organized the Eucharist which was presided by Otaviano Mondragon and linked to the day’s experience. The beginning was outdoors, the sun had already set and the moon looked down from above. This offered the Word of God the opportunity to be heard and observed by the participants. Jn. 5:1-21, the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, was mimed by the usual eight actors of the Liturgical committee.

In a brief homily, Octavio highlighted that, before going to the temple Feast, Jesus went to where the excluded were in order to hear their cry and restore their dignity. To the Pharisees who faced him regarding work on the Sabbath, he replied that he must do what the Father does. In our life, too, it is essential to understand how the Father works in order to imitate him. The Father always operates by giving life.

The Prayer of the Faithful, at which time the Mass continued inside in the atrium to the Chapter Hall, consisted in cries of “shouting” around a minister stretched on the floor as one crucified: Indigenous! Resistance! Dignity! Hope! Work! Daily Bread! At the end, those praying remembered those who were the excluded.

Before the final blessing, Octavio recalled that Jesus, too, according to the synoptics, died with a loud cry. This will remain on high in history until the last creature participates at least in the feast of life.

Regarding today, Morning Prayer centered on the day’s liturgical feast of the Nativity of Mary. Animation and guiding fell to NEPC and USA groups.



At the beginning of the Chapter session, the secretary informed the capitulars that Vittorio Masin had to leave the Chapter to go to his mother's bedside, since she is gravely ill. In the name of the Chapter he also thanked COPAL for the hospitality offered yesterday for the dinner and the Province of CALV for organizing the day. The Moderator reopened the discussion suspended Wednesday evening and took up the theme of *solidarity*.

Seventeen capitulars spoke on the subject. They emphasized that solidarity doesn't only regard the economic aspect, nor simply within the Congregation, but life in all its aspects. It is of ethical and political content has been battered about for a century and a half. Its specific is not primarily the exchange of help, but the creation of structures which guarantee everyone the recognition of their rights with relative practical consequences. This need is present also in our vicariates which must depend on their provinces.

However, the major part of the discussion rolled around the financial aspect. The appeal to transparency returned. It's an essential condition for solidarity and the necessity to have structures which realized them. Otherwise theoretical convictions will never become concrete. In particular, there was the insistence on the creation of a central office for solidarity, whose task several capitulars would give to general government. That office must sensitize the Congregation in the problem and establish the procedures for creating, restructuring and managing the financial resources, at least considering again the idea of exacting a tax on the sale of property. It was clear that no structure will be efficacious if the "spirit" of solidarity, which is to live together as brothers, is lacking.

It was noted that at times the vicariates themselves must be spurred on and to operate their own autonomy and that the formative problem can become an economic problem. It's not always possible to accept candidates because of the difficulty of maintaining them.

Having been asked about the contribution from his office regarding solidarity, the secretary of the missions remarked that it wasn't sent only to our missions, but also to people who work for them. In six years, the office has distributed almost two million lire.

In the second half of the morning, Ciro Benedettini presented the partial reworking of the Chapter Statement which the Redaction Committee is preparing. Nineteen capitulars asked for clarifications or made suggestions.

*Saturday, September 9*

For the remainder of the day the sub-committees met to creatively synthesize the ample discussion in the aula during the last day and a half of intense dialogue. The Moderator stated that it was not necessary to rewrite the Constitutions, nor to repeat what was said on other occasions, but only to gather the life that will serve for future development.

Zbigniew Pisialek presided at the Eucharist.

## **Saturday, September 9**

Capitular prayer today had an African imprint. In the morning, Vital Otshudialokoka, assisted by two capitulars from the same Continent, presided. It consisted of a species of accounts of life while sitting around the fire, interspersed with songs previously taught by the animators. For many African cultures fire is a sign of life and celebration of important circumstances of life. The three gave the history of the Passionist presence in Africa and the hopes for the future.

During the morning session in the aula, the assembly discussed several proposals. The first regarded the commitment of the Congregation to justice, peace and integrity of creation, moving to become part of the non-governmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations. It was presented in the aula by Jefferies Foale and Joseph Jones. Following 12 questions for clarification and 18 interventions, the capitulars decided to treat the matter with the theme of solidarity.

Despite some perplexity, the majority of the group held that the proposal merits support. Many male and female religious institutes already are members of 28,000 NGO. Even if the UN is often powerless and risks politicization, it's the only official body in which those who have no voice can be heard. If the Congregation feels called to support the crucified, this choice is a way of doing it and can contribute to reinforce the UN.

With 42 votes against, 21 abstentions, 4 in favor, the proposal to request representation of the Regional Vicariates at the General Chapter was rejected. It was held that the difficulty was resolved by the Synod of 1998 when it gave to the General Curia the faculty to convoke to the Chapter elected delegates with full rights from those areas which were not sufficiently represented.

The proposal on the Brothers returned to the aula and 26 spoke on the subject. Presented again by Edward Hall, it again included a quotation from the Report of Jose Orbegozo on the State of the Congregation and

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supported by three reasons which the discussion put under careful scrutiny. In the end, it was agreed to reduce the reasons to three simple sentences. When voted upon, the proposal passed with a majority of 60 votes. It was expressed in the following terms which still can be improved:

“The General Chapter recommends to the General and his Council to make a pastoral and juridical reflection on the vocation of the Brother.

“In addition, together with other concerned religious congregations, they should renew the request to the Holy See to acknowledge the full participation of the Religious Brother in the administration of his religious Congregation.

1. In order to emphasize that the fact that it is our call to the consecrated life that is the basis of our living together.
2. With a view to promoting the unique value of the Passionist Brothers’ vocation within our Congregation.
3. Because a community of men dedicated to a single cause should exist in a spirit of equality and mutual respect.”

In the afternoon, the assembly listened to the reports of the seven sub-committees on the vital themes of the Congregation discussed these past days. On the matter of the laity, there were 8 requests for clarification. Regarding the other topics, the reports moved along with only one or two requests for clarification.

At the evening Eucharist, there were the same presider and three animators of the morning Liturgy. The peculiarities of the African Liturgy regarded: Invocations of the Saints at the beginning, the Penitential Rite following the Liturgy of the Word, washing of hands before Communion. The Prayer of the Faithful was articulated with the colors of Africa: black for its people, yellow for the sun, green for the forests, blue for the seas lakes and rivers and red for the blood shed for freedom. Hymns and prayers were in various African languages.

## **Monday, September 11**

*Yesterday, September 10*, the capitulars had their last experience of inculturation as indicated by the agenda. It involved visiting various cultural areas in the city of Sao Paulo. Following the Eucharistic celebration, the group left at 8:30 AM for the city. Their first stop was the museum which is named after the Jesuit Jose de Anchieta. It has exhibits on the catechesis the religious and his community engaged in at the begin-

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ning of their ministry in the area which later would become today's capital of the Brazilian State with the same name. From their they visited the civil museum and then the museum of sacred art. After dinner in a churrascaria, they spent time in the neighborhood of the Cathedral, ending the excursion by visiting monuments and expositions memorable to Latin America. They returned to Itaici slightly past 7:00 PM.

The Liturgical Committee was again in charge of organizing the daily prayer, which this week was centered on the Trinity. Last week it concentrated on the three Persons. To symbolize the mystery - trino and uno - the capitulars were placed in three groups according to language (English, Italian and Portuguese), while the fourth (Spanish) was scattered among the three groups.

The Trinitarian love was symbolized by three small braziers supported by three jars. They were then united into one large brazier which was carried among the assembly and then placed on three jars nearby. The Canticle from Dn 3:57-58 was recited by the three linguistic groups. Following a brief reflection, each one was invited to express in a praying word the experience of fraternity during the Chapter. These words surfaced: generosity, dialogue, sympathy, cooperation, listening, union, life, compassion, family, Eucharist, culture, ambient, friendship, enrichment, work, word, smile, anxiety, respect, availability, etc. The assembly was asked to keep the reflection during the day. Prayer concluded with the group listening to Jn 15:7-10.

At the beginning of the session, the Moderator presented the panorama of the work still to be done in the remaining three days of the Chapter. In addition, he informed that, following the president's decision, the time for new proposals will end at noon today. As a first step of the day, he made a statement regarding the seven reports of the previous Saturday afternoon on the Chapter themes, to verify whether the Congregation's life followed those lines. After the exchange of two-three, the assembly began discussion to which 22 capitulars spoke.

They mentioned that the material was abundant with many inspirational points, but wasn't yet well structured. Several pointed out diversity of style, repetitions, abstractions, disproportions, lacunae regarding dialogue with modern day and with religions. Others lamented the tendency to consider solely our internal problems, forgetting the very serious situations of the people with whom we work, as aids, wars, and poverty in the case of Africa.

There were differences of opinions regarding the nature or opportunity to elaborate a Chapter Statement. Several would not be interested in an abstract text, but only one with a few operative lines with some brief affirmation of principles. The majority, however, want a more articulated document, which can be used for catechesis in the community, in order not to lose the precious material gathered and for transmitting the rich experience lived during the Chapter. For this, one suggested that the reports of the sub-committee be part of the final text.

In the end, the draft document was discussed in language groups, keeping in mind the reports of the sub-commissions on the themes of the Chapter. The secretariat will prepare the translations for the afternoon session.

Arthur Carrillo then presented two proposals of the General Finance Commission. The first concerned a financial plan for extraordinary maintenance of the Generalate. Following clarifications and discussion during which 15 capitulars spoke, the proposal was approved not in its original text, but with modifications presented in the aula without any pre-distributed text.. The complete content is: The General Econome (and/or the new General Finance Commission) will study the need of restructuring and maintaining the Generalate, establish priorities and emergencies. The plan will be submitted to the Synod of 2002. Meanwhile, the Provinces will be asked to increase their annual contribution by 50% for studies and emergencies. The proposal was approved with 68 in favor, 2 abstentions.

The second proposal regarded the new form for the annual financial report from the Provinces to be sent to the General Econome. It was unanimously approved.

Sixteen capitulars spoke regarding the appeal presented by the General Vicariate REPAC, Indonesia, for funding of the urgently needed housing. The need of the Vicariate was recognized as an emergency and, therefore, the Congregation must find a way to meet the need, at least for those considered most urgent. However, what is most felt is that of setting up some organization on the level of solidarity which can deal with similar situations by due programs. There was some discussion on this point, leaving the request unresolved.

The assembly then passed on to the proposal regarding the future of regional vicariates. Twelve capitulars spoke to this proposal. The point of departure was a proposal regarding their representation at The General

*Monday, September 11*

Chapter, which the Chapter did not discuss last Saturday, because it considered the matter settled by the Synod of 1998. That Synod gave the General Government the faculty to convoke to the Chapter those areas not sufficiently represented. Several capitulars held that that faculty was not adequate and presented a wider proposal.

There are vicariates which cannot become vice provinces and provinces simply because they lack financial independence as required by the Constitutions, whereas they meet all the other conditions of number of religious, government, community life, formation, apostolate. It's necessary to realize their juridical independence, too. During the discussion the theme of solidarity was brought up which would solve the financial problem in these situations. In a short time there will be provinces which can not longer sustain their vicariates that are expanding.

The formulation of the proposal was not accepted, because it wasn't clear whether the power to actualize decisions of restructuring was also given to the General Government. Since all considered this proposal important, it was remanded for further elaboration.

In the afternoon, the capitulars met in language groups to discuss the new draft of the document by the Redaction Commission. Reentering the aula in the latter part of the day, they communicated the results of their group discussions. There was general acceptance of the text, with diverse suggestion for a possible improvement of the text.

Martin Coffey presided at the evening Eucharist celebrated in the atrium to the Chapter Hall near the well which served as the altar. During the Liturgy of the Word, the assembly prayed and meditated on the psalm phrases which the capitulars had previously composed. At Gospel time, the large brazier, which symbolized the love of God-Trinity, again appeared. The minister carrying the brazier and the deacon with the bible led the procession followed by the concelebrants outside the atrium. There the deacon proclaimed the Gospel by singing several verses from Jn 15 and 17 on the fraternal charity the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus puts in hearts. At the same time, he walked about the brazier. At the end, he again lifted the brazier which lighted the semidarkness of the evening, while the minister commented that fraternity is an essential but fragile value and often shattered by our inconsistency. At these words, the deacon let the brazier fall to the ground. It shattered, but the flame continued to burn, a sign that the love of God can always be reenkindled in our heart.

## Tuesday, September 12

Today's Prayer was articulated around the Eucharist as a long celebration beginning in the morning, culminating with the liturgy of the Eucharist presided by Mario Melgozo, followed by adoration until 11:00 PM. At the beginning of the day, the capitulars were in the atrium to the Chapter Hall where each one found a small plastic cup on his chair with white flour in it. At the center of the assembly a minister crushed grain in a large mortar, while the guide invited everyone to reflect on what needed milling in his life so that it become flour for baking. This served as the Penitential Rite.

All were invited to pour the flour into the large pan on the table, while they thought on how to renew their life so that it be a gift for the brothers. The Holy Spirit is the yeast who makes the dough ferment and grow, while the Word of God, proclaimed from Lk 9:12-13 is like the water that amalgamates the flour. Silent meditation and the beautiful Brazilian song "To work the bread" followed.

During all this time, the minister energetically kneaded the dough, repeatedly showing and kneading the resulting mass. Then he left with the new dough in a basket on his head to bring it to the oven. The commentator underlined that we have done everything possible. The rest doesn't depend on us, as in life and in the Chapter in progress. We need to trust.

In opening the plenary session, the Superior General invited the assembly to think about the Synod of 2002. Suggestions regarding place, theme and other aspects will be welcomed. The Moderator then moved the assembly into the discussion on the proposal relative to vicariates presented by Martin Coffey and Frans Damen. It was expressed in two different formulations, one with the mandate to study and propose to the next Synod new strategies, the other with the mandate to study and begin to realize it.

Twenty one capitulars spoke on the subject. Those who presented the proposal and those who spoke on it preferred the second of the two. This appeared useless to one, since part of it is already in the faculties of General Authority according to C. 104, since the conditions described in it, the vicariates merit the rank of vice provinces. Nevertheless, it was considered justified because the content was ample. In addition, it doesn't exclude the General from presenting the material at the next Synod.

The Moderator put these texts to a vote: study the situation: 69 in favor, 1 abstention; first formulation: 6 in favor; second formation: 57 in favor, abstentions 6. The formulation approved states: "The Superior General and his Council, in dialogue with the provinces and vicariate study and propose to the next Synod a new strategy with regard to rights, stru-

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ctures, status and representation especially for those vicariates which have arrived at a stage of development that merits juridical autonomy, with an adequate economic base.”

The proposal on solidarity and mission, joined with that of the commitment for justice, peace and integrity of creation, was also passed. The muchly articulated text is composed of a preamble, two decrees each with its own reasons and task specification,, a recommendation and three propositions and a conclusion which indicaes GeneralAuthroity as responsible and coordinator of all. Those who asked for clarifications and made interventions numbered about forty.

Since the preamble speaks of involvement of the entire Passionist family, someone suggested that the laity be involved in decision making. The reply was that they can be by being part of the new tasks and offices foreseen by solidarity. The preamble was approved with 65 in favor and 1 abstention.

The first decree regards the establishment of an office for solidarity and mission. Since the secretary of the missions is already provided for in the Constitutions, the formulation proposed added that this office be part of the new office. This was approved with 67 in favor. The decree was approved with 66 in favor and 1 abstention. It reads:

“There be established an office for solidarity and mission of which the secretary of the missions will be a part.”

The second decree treats the establishment of a “Solidarity and Mission” fund. Several interventions spoke of entrusting the management of the fund to the same office, but this proposal was withdrawn after clarification that no office can decide in place of central authority. The Provinces are foreseen as among contributors to the fund. Another proposal would want only “voluntary” contributions, but this was also withdrawn so as not to preclude the possibility of forced contributions. The decree passed with 66 in favor, 1 abstention. It reads:

“A fund be established for Solidarity and Mission to help the needful areas of the Congregation and to help finance projects which will put us in greater solidarity with the crucified.”



The triple recommendation to move the Congregation to join the non-governmental organization at the UN and the commitment of superiors and superiors general at the organizations for justice and peace. In the discussion it was stated that the representative at NGO need not be a religious. The text that was unanimously approved reads:

“The Chapter supports the request for the Congregation to join the non-governmental organization at the United Nations, as did the province of St. Paul of the Cross.

The Chapter recommends: a) the Passionist representative at the NGO be chosen by a process determined by the Superior General and his Council; b) that the superior General with his Council delegate a religious to participate in the meetings to promote Justice and Peace of the Union of Superiors General (men and women) (USG and UISG) at Rome.”

The conclusion of the proposal establishes that General Authority fix the competencies, limits and modality of the management of what is indicated above. This, too, was approved by 67 votes.

During the afternoon session, the capitulars approved the confirmation of decrees and recommendations of the 43rd General chapter, except those or those parts which have already been done, or eliminated by another norm, or were temporary. The final vote: 66 in favor, 2 abstentions.

Next followed a brief dialogue, first with those sitting next to each other and then in the assembly, regarding the next General Synod, following the request of Fr. Ottaviano earlier in the day. The places suggested were Korea, Indonesia and Portugal. Regarding the theme, these emerged: formation, new forms of evangelization, restructuring of the Congregation, or the same as for this Chapter, “Passion of Jesus Christ, passion for life.” The Superior General requested to continue the discussion after the break only with the Synodal members.

The Eucharist was celebrated in the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier. Fresh loaves of bread baked from the dough of the morning were placed on a table before the altar. The animators invited the concelebrants to consider the life of this Chapter Day and make shared prayer as well. At the end of Mass, after the bread was blessed in the Eucharistic rite, all shared the bread which had symbolized the day.

*Wednesday, September 13*

The Eucharistic centrality of the day was prolonged with voluntary adoration from 8:00 to 11:00 PM. Tomorrow morning adoration will be from 6:00 to 7:30 AM when it will conclude with Benediction, taking the place of morning prayer.

## **Wednesday, September 13**

The last workday began with the full assembly's voting on the final version of the Chapter text, which is divided into two parts, the inspirational and the operational. Ciro Benedettini gave a brief introduction to the latest version to come from the Redaction Commission.

After a brief period for a prayerful reading of the document, the moderator asked for any comments prior to voting of the text. He asked that there not be editing changes presented, only changes or corrections to the content and directives. He reminded the assembly to remember that the text will still have to be edited into a final form. Should there be suggestions regarding the style and usage for a particular language, these can be communicated in writing to the commission.

The review of the text proceeds step-by-step; and some of the sections require more time than was foreseen. In the first part, the introduction and the inspirational material, several of the capitulars suggested the re-writing of the point treating the charism; once submitted to vote, however, the majority of the capitulars approved the text as presented. All of the capitulars, however, were in favor of improving the section on the laity; a new text was to be prepared for presentation later in the afternoon.

Taking up the second section, the chapter discussed and approved the guidelines, the recommendations, and the decrees, some of which had not been previously discussed in the Chapter hall. The discussion and the voting on each part of the text took all day and part of an extraordinary session after supper.

The Eucharist was presided by Tarcilio José Da Maia; it took place in the lobby outside of the chapter hall; and for an altar, the symbol of the well was covered with a poster showing the flags of all nations. The

lengthy penitential rite was a prayer for peace using texts from various religious traditions and cultures. The capitulars were invited to place their little seedlings - which had been planted from seed at the start of the chapter - around the base of the well. Some of the seeds had not sprouted; however, those seedlings which had sprouted well were to be planted on the grounds of the Villa Kostka. At the offering of the gifts, the Capitular's Chapter folder was also placed on the altar.

During the afternoon session, there was a brief evaluation of the chapter process. The chapter moderator asked for a preliminary conversation in two's, and then a general sharing on these questions:

- ♦ *What did this experience mean for you?*
- ♦ *How have you experienced the charism?*
- ♦ *What will you take home with you?*

There was time for only about fifteen capitulars to respond. All were positive in their evaluations, even enthusiastic. Certain adjectives predominated: *wonderful, stupendous, enchanting*; all describing one or another aspect of the Chapter. Some of the especially significant comments are cited here:

- ♦ *The chapter was lead by the Holy Spirit, whose presence was sometimes very strongly felt.*
- ♦ *More than anything, the chapter has gifted us with the presence of the laity, who are a prophetic witness to something new which is being born.*
- ♦ *The laity have given us more reason to live and share our life with others.*
- ♦ *The work of the liturgical commission has not only energized our prayer, but every aspect of our life together during the chapter.*
- ♦ *This has not been only a chapter process, it has been a chapter prayer. This chapter has been a spiritual experience which will leave it mark for years to come.*
- ♦ *This has been the most beautiful chapter experience for one who has been to five chapters, more or less.*
- ♦ *It has been a challenge which we have resolutely accepted; we've made decisions in spite of the difficulties and the resistance which we've faced. We have not resisted a call to conversion, although we know it must be continued.*

*Thursday, September 14.*

- ♦ *Something happened this month that was like a mini-novitiate, with an international formation team, from whom we learned a lot.*

Among other elements that were singled out were: *the experience of fraternity and family; the extraordinary welcome given us by the Brazilian Province of Calvary; the greater realization of what the Congregation is and how it lives.*

Fr Ottaviano ended the evening session by sharing some reflections on the spiritual dimension of the chapter experience and expressing his thanks to those who had worked for the success of the Chapter from the very first steps taken by the preparatory commission until the very last moment of the chapter.

#### **Thursday, September 14.**

The closing Eucharist was celebrated in the church on Thursday, September 14, at 9:00 a.m. The principal celebrant was the Superior General, Fr Ottaviano D'Egidio. The liturgy was for the feast of the Holy Cross. Everyone received a small cross with the Passionist sign on it as a symbol of their being sent out on mission from this chapter.

Thus ended the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Congregation. In our history it will come to be known by different terms: The Chapter in Brazil; the Chapter of the laity; the Chapter with the liturgy well-woven through its process; the Chapter in which inculturation was both a topic and an experience; or the first Chapter-in-cyberspace. For us, for now, it is simply the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

Itaici, Sao Paulo, Brazil  
14 August—14 September, 2000

**Fr Gabriel Cingolani, C.P.**  
Secretary