

Prot.n.20050115 A

The Second Phase of the Restructuring Process

QUESTIONNAIRE
for Provincials, Vice Provincials and Regional Vicars
(and for the information of the Passionist Communities)

Dear Major Superiors,

During the General Synod of 2004 we agreed to begin a process of Restructuring for the Congregation, which would serve as an instrument for the revitalization of Passionist life and ministry and for opening new Passionist horizons and perspectives.

We are currently in the first phase of this process that will continue until the General Chapter in 2012.

Herein we propose three objectives:

- ✚ To encourage every Religious to become involved in this renewal to which we believe God is calling the Congregation.
- ✚ To come to some form of agreement about planning a process for sharing in order to identify and better appreciate our present reality and to establish priorities that can guide us in the future.
- ✚ To discern and re-articulate what it means “to be a Passionist today”, who is faithful to our Founder and responsive to the challenges of the world of tomorrow.

I wish to re-express a question that I posed to you in my letter in May: *What kind of Congregation do we want for our world? How should we structure our life and mission for the present moment and for the future in light of a world that is characterized by secularization, violence and terrorism which affects every dimension of our lives? We can answer this question only if we act in solidarity within the whole Congregation. We need to step beyond our immediate situations to help each other to focus on a greater sense of international unity. In fact, we need to more clearly demonstrate and to share the richness of the diversities that are present within the Congregation.*

The following questionnaire is presented in the form of ‘polarities’ that were gleaned from the responses of the religious, the communities and from the Councils of the Major Superiors. It is very clear that the polarization of the choices that were proposed do not mean that the Congregation must choose one response or the other. In fact, an intermediate choice between the two can also be made or we can suggest other choices that evolve from these.

You expressed many concerns and many different hopes in your responses. We have chosen five of them. They do not represent the total: this is not an exhaustive list. However, they are significant and emerge from all the different parts of the Congrega-

tion. We hope that in replying to them we shall all be helped to further refine what are the key priorities that should form the basis of dialogue between now and the Chapter in 2006 and influence how we shape the dynamics of the Chapter itself.

1. In your responses many of you emphasise a future in which there would be greater concrete articulation of Passionist internationality

A: For some this greater emphasis would take the form of encouraging more immediate and collaborative international efforts. It would require a greater centralization in order to have a more focused, global presence: a willingness to transfer and appoint religious to areas of need: a commitment to greater solidarity in responding to situations of need. In this view we would align our life with the universal calls to communion and solidarity in the Congregation.

B: For others the global nature of the Congregation is expressed more by way of discussions and dialog, involving inter-Provincial agreements and co-operative ventures. Our internationality is emphasised by means of a greater use of technology and media to help us to relate to each other and to proclaim our message to the world. This view holds that our reality is essentially decentralized and that we live out of our identity as Provinces: from this base we more effectively co-operate with each other.

Q: i. Which of these two options more accurately reflects your own view?

Q: ii. Does your response to these alternatives have relevance for your Region and for collaboration and cooperation with other areas of the Congregation?

Q: iii.. What would be the impact of your response on the future development of the Congregation?

2. All the responses highlight the importance of our Passionist Charism at the heart of all we are now and will be in the future.

A: For some this means we should re-express our charism in experiential ways –re-interpreting it as God’s liberating force in the midst of those who are suffering. This view would reflect the teaching of the 2nd Vatican Council concerning God as revealed in the mystery of the human experience, especially in the “crucified” of today.

B: For others the emphasis is on deepening our personal and communal living of the charism embedded in the origins of our Passionist traditions. Here the challenge is to align our lives more closely with the call to holiness, renewing our efforts to study the charism and promote and share it with others through our preaching to all who are suffering in our world.

Q: i. Which of these two options more accurately reflects your own view?

Q: ii. Does your response to these alternatives have relevance for your Region and for collaboration and cooperation with other areas of the Congregation?

Q: iii.. What would be the impact of your response on the future development of the Congregation?

3. In the responses received there is a keen awareness of the role of younger religious in the Congregation.

A: For some there is a stress on encouraging younger religious to be ready to explore and discover new expressions of Passionist life. This stresses a need to encourage experimental structures and initiatives, both “intra and inter provincial” and local initiatives shared with the laity & Passionist sisters. This approach would favor showing greater solidarity in assisting the funding of projects and ministry to young people.

B: For others the emphasis focuses on how to form younger Passionists in preparation for our traditional and present ministries.

Q: i. Which of these two options more accurately reflects your own view?

Q: ii. Does your response to these alternatives have relevance for your Region and for collaboration and cooperation with other areas of the Congregation?

Q: iii. What could your response mean for the future development of the Congregation?

4. Many responses refer to the relationship between Passionists and the poor.

A: On one hand there are those who believe Passionists should be open to everyone – Christ can be found in the spiritually poor as well as the materially poor.

B: Others argue that we must live a life that actively seeks to discover the mystery of the Crucified One alongside those marginalized by society.

Q: i. Which of these two options more accurately reflects your own view?

Q: ii. Does your response to these alternatives have relevance for your Region and for collaboration and cooperation with other areas of the Congregation?

Q: iii. What would be the impact of your response on the future development of the Congregation?

5. In responses received there is a range of views on our relationship to the Local Church

A: Some would say that the primary focus for Passionists is our service of the local church through our traditional ministries – parishes, retreats, missions etc

B: Others argue that we need to have a greater freedom to seek alternative ministries and to undertake mission in new ways. This may mean leaving some of our works for the sake of new initiatives or releasing men for the sake of new initiatives.

Q: i. Which of these two options more accurately reflects your own view?

Q: ii. Does your response to these alternatives have relevance for your Region and for collaboration and cooperation with other areas of the Congregation?

Q: iii. What would be the impact of your response on the future development of the Congregation?

Personal response.

As a leader do you wish to name and/or comment on any other area of concern or of hopefulness that might be used in a second round of consultations with other Superiors?

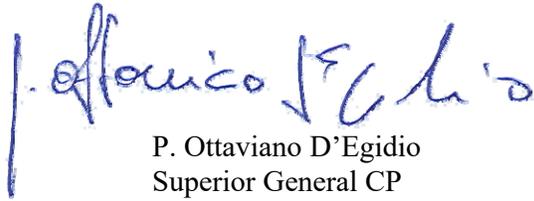
What other elements do you see that would contribute towards a “vision” for the future of the Congregation?

Do you see any issues that should be studied during this consultative phase so that they can form part of the discussion during the Chapter or that can serve to better clarify the “vision” of the Congregation?

Your responses are very important. Please return your responses to Fr. Elie Muakasa, C.P. by December 1st 2005.

Yours fraternally,

Rome, 29 September 2005
Feast of St. Michael the Archangel



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