Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ

XIV GENERAL SYNOD

Rome
October 2010

DOCUMENTS AND CHRONICLES

General Secretariat, Rome

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Letter of the Superior General to the Congregation subsequent to the 2010 General Synod

SALUTATION

Dear brothers of the Congregation and sisters and brothers of the Passionist Family,

Together with the religious of the General Council, I wish to cordially and fraternally greet each and every one of you, both religious and laity, who live in communities or in families in the midst of every day joys and sufferings. I especially wish to remember the sick and those who suffering spiritually, as well as those who are alone or depressed: may the Lord bless you and may our spiritual and human concern be a source of consolation for you.

The purpose of this letter is to share some reflections and insights with you about what took place during the grace-filled event of the General Synod at the end of October 2010 that was celebrated in Rome at our retreat of Sts. John and Paul. The Synod was preceded by a well-prepared and helpful workshop day on the topic of JPIC, in keeping with the recommendation of the last General Chapter that invited us to have a formation day for the Major Superiors. The reflections of Fr. Aquilino Bocos Merino, Claretian, clarified the work of our Synod and encouraged us to proceed with the process of discernment concerning choices to be made in light of our mission.

The theme of the Synod, *"Solidarity for new life and mission"*, was in keeping with the vision and the content of the previous Synod that took place in Cuernavaca, Mexico in 2008. We were not alone in seeking responses to the objective that was proposed to us for our consideration during the days of the Synod; rather we were conscious of the presence of the Lord in our midst with the liturgies, periods of prayer and through our fraternal sharing.

Among the 52 religious that directly participated in the Synod, as well as another 25 religious who assisted with the work of the Synod in various ways, there were diverse cultures and experiences—a multicultural community that represented the Congregation that is present and ministers in sixty nations. The forms of diversity originated from a common source, the Passionist charism and vocation, and pursued a common objective: how to achieve fraternal life that is more genuine and mission that is more efficacious in today's world, conscious of the present-day reality of the Congregation.

We cannot shy away from this task because the Passion of Christ did not end with his death on the Cross; it is alive and contemporary and

continues in a mysterious and real way in the suffering of men and women and in the wounds of creation. Fidelity to God on the Cross identifies us as Passionists and as those who are sent into the world to announce the Good News, especially to those who are "crucified". It is in "keeping alive the memory" that we wish to be rooted and by which we seek to live out solidarity as an objective to be achieved. With this in mind we took additional steps during the Synod in order to address in a more effective way "the evils of the world" of today and to resolve the "difficulties of the Congregation". Over the course of six years of this process we have enumerated and studied the problems both of our globalized world and of the Congregation and the last Synod of 2008 in Mexico which chose "solidarity" as the instrument and means of offering answers to the challenges that confront us today and in the years ahead. Solidarity is not an ideology; rather, it is fidelity to the Gospel of the Cross upon which Jesus achieved the highest expression of solidarity through "service" that becomes the "gift" of life "for others".

The task of the Synod was to continue discerning additional steps to be taken in this project already underway in order to achieve solidarity in the three areas of formation, personnel and finances that we feel are vital for the revitalization of the Congregation. It is a task that we cannot ignore, even if it is necessary to modify or add additional points to our Constitutions or to the General Regulations.

A Congregation that is not capable of changing itself sooner or later loses the capacity and the willingness to change the world and falls into contradiction. We should not fear change. In fact, change concerns "the God of today" and his expectations of us as well as the decisions that we make through prayer and dialog.

The various components and days of the meeting were lived out in a spirit of collaboration and reciprocal trust both in the sessions of the general assembly as well as in the study groups. In my introductory report I stated that it was necessary to live out the Synod as a grace-filled event and not merely as a planning meeting. I briefly recalled the work done prior to the Synod and the steps which have been taken in the process of Restructuring, from its inception at the General Chapter of 2000 to the actual approbation of the process at the Synod of 2004, including the Central Declaration at the General Chapter of 2006 that recognized and confirmed it as a call of God to renewal.

The orientations and the decisions that were made were also based on the criteria that were chosen through discernment and which included the factors of an international reality, the exchange of life between the older and the younger parts of the Congregation, attention to the elderly religious and the option for the poor.

At the Synod of 2008 in Cuernavaca the key word used in the discernment process was "solidarity" in the three areas of priority that were deemed to be necessary for new vitality in the Congregation: Solidarity in formation, in personnel and in finances. We arrived at the conclusion that all parts of the Congregation are responsible for the others. Therefore new territorial Configurations were chosen and approved as the instruments to be used in this process and as the beginning of a new and more ample way of belonging in order to make solidarity effective. These Configurations proceeded to study and to experiment with what was asked of them.

EVALUATION. The evaluation of the process, the difficulties encountered and the accomplishments achieved was done during the recent Synod where, through appropriate dialog and discernment, modifications or corrective changes were made to the process. The next two years, 2010 - 2012 will also be a useful period for verifying the juridical implications of the decisions that were made and the compatibility of the choices that we want to make with the prescriptions of Canon Law.

It may be useful to review what is currently stated in our Constitutions concerning certain juridical aspects: No. 104: *"The establishment, suppression, and joining of Provinces are reserved to the General Chapter, or to the Superior General with the consent of the General Synod."* Thus, No. 104 affords ample possibility for alternatives. Similarly, the Constitutions already give the decision making bodies of the Congregation the faculty to make decisions regarding the constitution, suppression, union or modification of Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates as well as giving them the faculty to be able to dispense from any norm of the General Regulations; however if the present Synod makes a decision that is not addressed in the Constitutions or the General Regulations, we may always ask the Holy See for dispensation from a prescription or for consent for a new norm. Various Congregations have similarly revised their Constitutions.

The meetings of the General Council and the Coordinators were significant events marked by great intensity and, when possible, included the participation of the General Council in the meetings of the Configurations. The letter, *"Where are we in the process of Restructuring?"* of October, 2009, was helpful in clarifying and focusing our attention on the process as well as the Power Point presentations that were used during the canonical visitations of the General Consultors.

The most important thing is to note the change of mentality that is slowly taking place because we are becoming more convinced that we need to make changes in our current situations.

We need to always be especially attentive to avoiding complex structures because one of the objectives of restructuring is that of down-

sizing and simplifying structures.

During the phase that preceded the Synod of 2010, two key points emerged for clarification concerning the ability of the Configurations to continue to function: 1) "Viability", i.e. the validity of their composition and their being together in order to bring about greater vitality among them and with the Congregation through solidarity in the three areas of formation, personnel and finances. 2) "Legislative and executive capacity" for the Councils of the Configurations -- a basic element without which all the good that has been accomplished up to this point in time risks being undone.

After long and often difficult dialog during the months preceding the Synod, the General Council, having heard the opinions of the Coordinators, has proposed a text for the evaluation and approval of the Synod. The text of the proposal which was subsequently approved is included with this present Letter and is also reported in the Acts of the Synod.

My dear brothers and sisters, the project of Restructuring should move forward and become concrete; otherwise the same problems remain unresolved for community life and mission, both for the parts of the Congregation that are growing and for those that are diminishing. Institutionalized Solidarity consists in giving the Configurations the capacity and the power to make decisions, and we should not be afraid because the choices will be made by the Configuration itself and it will make decisions after studying the most significant problematic areas and consulting the religious using the means provided by the Constitutions and by the General Regulations and in keeping with the particular Regulations of the Configurations. This should reassure the doubtful. Restructuring is found in the Constitutions and is not something extraneous to them. Some mechanisms that make Solidarity more stable and efficacious will be modified; but everything will continue to be regulated and enacted according to the spirit of the Constitutions and in accord with what is prescribed therein.

NUMBERS. Examining the number of religious in each Configuration, it may seem that some of these are excessively spread out geographically, and include diverse cultural realities and an excessive number of religious. Some Configurations have a significant number of religious and are geographically dispersed and intercultural. However, I find it interesting and it may serve to enlighten our discernment by dispelling or at least lessening some fear to recall some facts of our history which is also similar to that of other Congregations.

The period of major numerical development of the Congregation took place during the period of 1965-1971 in which our Congregation was composed of 4,331 religious, including 200 novices. Some Provinces had a number of religious that exceeded or was similar to that of the current Configurations, such as PAUL (USA) that was composed of 611 religious and 27 novices; CORI (Spain) 381 religious and 28 novices;

CRUC (USA) 357 religious and 37 novices; CORM (Italy) 304 religious and 25 novices; PIET (Italy) 238 religious and 7 novices; FAM (Spain) 234 religious and 9 novices; SPE (Holland) 225 religious and 10 novices; PATR (Ireland/Scotland) 219 religious and 9 novices; GABR (Belgium) 213 religious and 3 novices, etc. I named only those provinces with more than 200 religious.

In addition to these provinces, so too in the other provinces that numbered less than 200 religious, by the power of their evangelizing missions they expanded to other continents, including other realities that were geographically, socially, culturally and linguistically diverse. It was a time of great courage and missionary zeal.

The Provincial with his council were in charge of coordinating the vitality of all the parts of the Province that extended to other continents. The geographical and cultural distances between provinces and missions that often later became Vicariates and Provinces, did not impede the attention of the Major Superiors to the development of the missions and the newer parts of the Congregation and the growth of their cultural and religious identity. The large numbers gave them a vast potential for development both within the Provinces and the entire Congregation. The same potential for development may also be available in the Configurations.

Another essential instrument for concretely achieving solidarity should be a re-examination of our forms of presence and the number of our communities within a territory for each Configuration. At this point I wish to recall the recovery of the role of the local Superior who lives in the midst of the community every day and exercises the service of inspiration and guide. The Constitutions remind us that the communities are the fundamental cells of the Congregation and therefore we should take great care of them.

We will succeed in this objective of reducing the number of houses only by changing the composition of the decision-making groups, and similarly, by also carefully choosing persons for the service of authority and formation.

Another fear that may impede our process is saying: "We're not ready to take such an important step. We need more time for reflection and study that will lead us to conversion." Yes, surely preparation is always insufficient and can be improved; however if we look at the Gospel and at the choices of Jesus with regard to his Passion, we will be convinced that the time has arrived for overcoming all doubts and for proceeding to decision making in order to accomplish the plans of God.

In fact if we ask ourselves: "Were they ready, were the disciples prepared for the Passion of Jesus?" the answer comes from the Gospel itself. If Jesus had had to wait for understanding and for the disciples to "be ready", Passion Week would never have arrived. The three an-

nouncements of the Passion fell into a void and on the deaf ears of the disciples who had fled in fear during Passion Week. “Slow of heart to believe”, Jesus would say to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were still far from being ready and yet Jesus decided that the time was right for a choice that was so strong and dramatic.

We still have the resources and the energy that is needed (for how long?) and I encourage you to use them to accomplish what God asks of us through the signs of the times and in this moment in history. I am convinced that in the very charism of the Founder can be found the roots for renewal in today’s intercultural context.

SOME MATTERS THAT WERE SUBMITTED FOR VOTING IN THE SYNOD AULA.

1. Proposal of the General Council regarding the legislative (decision-making) and executive power of the Configurations during this period prior to the General Chapter of 2012.

The proposal reported in No. 39 of the "Report of the Superior General" (the complete text is attached to the present letter and is also reported in the Acts of the Synod) allows the Executive Committee of the Configurations, formed by the Major Superiors of the Entities that comprise the Configuration and presided over by the Leader or President of the Configuration, to plan and make decisions for the Configuration concerning the three areas of solidarity, i.e. formation, personnel and finances. The decisions, which are made by the total number of votes or by a majority of votes, become binding for the Configuration. The Leader or President of the Configuration shall be responsible for enacting what was decided; however all of the Major Superiors of the Configuration shall collaborate to implement the decisions that were made. If some difficulty arises, the intervention of the Superior General and his Council may be requested.

The proposal received 45 votes in favor; 2 against and 2 abstentions.

2. Ratification of the composition of the Configurations.

The verification of the "viability" of membership in the Configurations brought about a change in membership by the withdrawal of the ASSUM Province (Poland) and the VULN Vice-Province (Germany-Austria) from the CEB Configuration to the NESP Configuration. Following this change the ratification of the composition of the Configurations was submitted to a vote.

The proposal was formulated as follows: **"Do we agree that the Configurations together with the entities that comprise them shall continue the process of planning and the pursuing of objectives as they are composed at this time, until the Chapter of 2012?" Is the Synod in agreement on this point?**

Unanimous vote in favor: 50 voting; 50 in favor.

3. The separation of the Vicariates from the mother Provinces.

A proposal was approved to study the criteria that can help to clarify and, where necessary, to make operative the separation of the Vicariates from the mother Provinces whether in reference to the financial sit-

uation and the funds needed for the life of the Vicariate itself, as well as what is necessary to make the separation possible also on a juridical level, in preparation for the General Chapter of 2012.

The proposal was submitted for voting and it obtained 49 positive votes of the 49 members voting.

A small study group will further examine any problems and will make suggestions in this matter.

4. Proposal for the Solidarity Fund.

The Finance Commission that was formed by the Synod of 2008 formulated two proposals to increase the Solidarity Fund so that it can financially sustain the poorest areas of the Congregation in their ministry, formation and structures.

A) An annual 2% contribution from gross income.

The first proposal determined that the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates shall contribute to the Solidarity Fund 2% of the gross income from their administration (from the Province or the communities).

B) A 7% Contribution from the sale of properties.

This other proposal stated that all of these administrations shall contribute 7% of what they realize from the alienation of properties (buildings and land) to the Solidarity Fund.

The two proposals (A and B) were approved respectively with 50 votes in favor of the first, and with 49 votes in favor of the second with one abstention.

The two proposals concerning the 2% and 7% contributions as stated above will go into effect on 1 January 2011.

5. Insertion of a reference to the laity in the Constitutions of the Congregation and in the General Regulations.

This proposal was formulated as follows: **"That the General Council consult with the Congregation (Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates) and the laity (lay groups) that live our charism, to discover their opinion regarding the inclusion of reference to them in the Constitutions and/or the General Regulations."**

This proposal was unanimously approved as well as the following question: **"Do we agree that a reference to the laity who share our spirituality should be included in the Constitutions?"** The Synod members unanimously expressed their approval.

6. Recommendation to modify a paragraph of the particular legislations of the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates in order to eliminate discrimination against the religious lay Brothers.

The text of the recommendation is reported in its entirety in the Acts of the Synod. Prior to voting, this recommendation highlighted the importance of formation for the religious Brothers and the essential relevance that they have always had in the Congregation since the time of the Founder. It is incomprehensible how formation personnel or individual religious discourage a young man from becoming a Brother, directing him instead to become a clerical candidate!

The voting for approval of the recommendation was 46 votes in favor; 1 against and 3 abstentions.

CONCLUSION

Finally a list of objectives and goals to be achieved during the next two years was presented. The final two years of the process, 2010-2012, will lead to the General Chapter at which time these goals and objectives will be further modified and the new Configurations will be approved and also the model of government for the various entities and the General Council will be approved.

Each of us is responsible and is called to collaboration according to our ability and with our prayer. Let us accept this as a mission and live out this grace-filled and life-giving event for the renewal of the Congregation and let us bring it to completion. Let us eliminate any resistance to change; let us lower our defenses and opposition; let us set our hearts free. In our discernment and in implementing decisions I am often reminded of the words of Gamaliel, the doctor of the Law in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 5:38-39). These words can serve as an examination of conscience for us and a call to conversion.

At the end of the Synod the itinerary of the process with all its contents and its directives and decisions made presented us with the following realities and perspectives: There are six Configurations of the Congregation composed of the regional Entities as approved by the Synod of 2010.

Two Configurations (SCOR and CEB) are making choices that will lead to their becoming a single Entity while having Regional Entities with regional Major Superiors remain in it. Appropriate statutes or regulations will govern the projects and the faculties of the individual Entity or the regional Entities, while the individual Entity will retain its ability to plan and to implement what is decided in the three areas of solidarity for the entire Configuration.

The other four Configurations (CPA, JCFX, NESP and PASPAC) at this time will not pursue a plan for the union of the entities, but will remain as an Entity with its Major Superiors, while retaining the capacity of the Configuration to plan and to implement whatever is decided in the three areas of solidarity for the entire Configuration. Any appropriate statutes or regulations will govern the faculties and the relations among the various Entities of the Configuration.

I am in favor of studying plans for the union of Entities, even if only partially or for a certain period of time, between the various Entities of the Configuration (between Province and Province, between Province and Vicariates and between Vicariates and Vicariates).

May St. Paul of the Cross bless us and guide us.

Fraternally,

Retreat of Sts. John and Paul
3 January 2011
The birth of St. Paul of the Cross

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

ADDENDA

THE PROPOSAL APPROVED BY THE GENERAL SYNOD OF 2010 AND PUBLISHED BY THE SUPERIOR GENERAL WITH THE APPROVAL OF HIS COUNCIL AS A TEMPORARY NORM FOR THE CONGREGATION FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS, FROM THE SYNOD OF 2010 TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 2012.

The Configuration is comprised of Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Vicariates and Mission Zones.

The Configuration has its own Council/Board composed of the Major Superiors of the various Entities that comprise it and by the Superiors of the Mission Zones (if the Statutes/Regulations of the Configurations provide for the presence of Superiors of the Mission Zones.)

The Major Superiors (and the Superiors of the Mission Zones if prescribed by the Statutes/Regulations) members of the Council/Board assembled in Council have the authority to make decisions—with the consensus of all or with a majority of votes—with regard to the implementation in the Configuration of solidarity in Formation, in Personnel and in Finances.

All of the said Superiors and the Entities within the Configuration shall abide by the decisions made and shall collaborate in their implementation.

The Leader/President of the Configuration, elected by the Council/Board of the Configuration itself, shall be responsible for the implementation of the decisions that are made.

a) *Those decisions that concern the entire Configuration and/or other Configurations shall be communicated to the Superior General and his Council. Each of the Superiors of the Entities that compose the Configuration may have recourse to the Superior General if they do not agree with a decision that is made.*

b) *If during the next two years, an Entity elects a new Major Superior and/or a Superior of a Mission Zone, he shall respect the decisions previously made by the Configuration and shall also abide by the norms contained in the present proposal.*

Therefore, being approved by XIV Synod, the said proposal, by means of this document and with the consensus of the General Council, is established as a temporary Norm for the Congregation with the date of 3 January 2011, until the General Chapter of 2012, at which time it may be confirmed, modified or substituted.

Retreat of Sts. John and Paul
Rome, 3 January 2011
The birth of St. Paul of the Cross

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

PART ONE

CHRONICLES

OF THE XIV GENERAL SYNOD

CHRONICLES
from the Drafting Commission
of the XIV General Synod

(Frs. Adolfo Lippi and Paul Francis Spencer, C.P.)

21 OCTOBER

DAY OF FORMATION AND REFLECTION ON THE THEMES OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC)

Before beginning the work of the Synod properly so called, the members of the Synod were invited to spend a day of formation and reflection on the themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

The general aim of the day was to remind the members of the Synod that JPIC is an integral part of the life and mission of all Passionists.

The specific aims were:

1. To give a general overview of JPIC
2. To highlight the connection between the Gospel, church teaching on JPIC and Passionist spirituality
3. To explain how JPIC is integral to the work of the USG/UISG
4. To encourage provincials to integrate JPIC into the life and ministry of their provinces, especially in initial and ongoing formation programmes
5. To support JPIC animation and encourage development of appropriate structures.

The day was led by Father Gearóid Francisco Ó Conaire OFM, who had worked as a missionary in El Salvador from 1984 to 1998. He later worked as co-coordinator of the Franciscan JPIC office in Rome and is now Secretary General of the JPIC office of the Union of Superiors General USG/UISG. He gave three presentations on the following topics:

1. What is JPIC?
2. JPIC Structures in Religious Life

3. Some Aspects of Franciscan JPIC Structures (as an example of what can be done)

Father Jesús Maria Aristin, Secretary General for Solidarity and Mission (and JPIC co-coordinator for our Congregation), gave a Power-point presentation on JPIC in relation to the Constitutions and spirituality of our Congregation.

There were a number of opportunities for sharing of experiences and views, both in plenary session in the aula and in language groups. In the afternoon, Father Ó Conaire also explained the role of ecclesial organisations working in this field, beginning with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation, set up by Pope Paul VI in 1967.

As evangelizers, we are called to restore right relationships of justice and peace between persons and to defend creation in places where these values are absent. This implies the need to promote Kingdom spirituality, a new way of being in the world which is marked by respect for the other, for one who is different from me, and respect for creation. Where this is missing – and reference was made to many of the terrible situations of our time and dangers for the future – the Kingdom of God and the putting into practice of the Gospel are not present.

Father Ó Conaire referred to the teachings of the Church from Gaudium et Spes of the Second Vatican Council to Benedict XVI's Caritas in Veritate. These documents teach us not to limit ourselves to offering help to the suffering and oppressed but to develop our awareness of the causes of suffering and oppression and, where possible, to intervene against these causes. This undertaking can help us to understand the importance of the presence of the Church and of religious congregations in environments where decisions are taken, such as the United Nations and FAO.

The comment was made that there can be a certain difficulty in connecting the traditional expressions of our charism with the demands of JPIC and that perhaps there have been mistakes or defects in the way that JPIC has been presented. The Superior General also noted that there is perhaps a need to study better the link between the various expressions of the demands of our charism, especially in the context of changing times and the diversity of cultures.

22 OCTOBER

The day began with the Opening Liturgy, celebrated at three 'stations'. In the Atrium of the Crucifix, after prayer and sacred reading, lanyards were conferred on the Synod members who then went in procession to the statue of Saint Paul of the Cross. At this second 'station', the co-coordinator of each configuration received a piece of the Synod logo as a '*Symbolum Fraternitatis*'. After singing '*Salve, Sancte Pater*', the assembly moved to the aula for the third 'station' where the logo-symbol was put together and Synod members attached their lanyards to the completed logo. Then, in the presence of the icon of Mary, '*Salus Populi Romani*', the Synod members invited the Holy Spirit to be present in their midst.

The Formal Opening of the Synod began at 11.00 a.m. in the Aula with a short introduction by the Superior General, Fr Ottaviano D'Egidio. Fr Denis Travers, General Consultor, then introduced the facilitators, Sister Christine Anderson F.C.J. and Fr Michael Mullins S.M.

Fr Ottaviano then gave the first part of his report, explaining that the second and third parts will be given on subsequent days. This first part was inspirational in character and reflected on the role of our Charism in the process of restructuring. The full text is available on the website.

After the Superior General's report, Fr Denis led the Synod members through the procedure of approving the appointment of the Secretary of the Synod, Fr José Luis Quintero. The Synod then approved the general theme (*Solidarity for a New Life and Mission*), the proposed Synod Calendar and the Norms for the Synod. After some discussion on the composition of the Co-coordinating Committee, the Synod approved the following as the members of the committee: the Superior General, the four General Consultors, the Secretary of the Synod, the six Co-coordinators of the Configurations and the two Facilitators of the Synod.

Fr Michael Mullins then reflected on what it means to 'take up Membership of the Synod'. The work of the Synod is to take up and examine the implementation of the General Chapter and to plan the way ahead. The Synod members now embark on a dialogue whose aim is to surface ideas which we don't already have and, in this way, to discover the flow of meaning for us all. This implies neither discussion nor debate, but dialogue. He asked the members to reflect on these questions: 'What were you hearing in the General's report? What stayed with you? What do you hope for from this General Synod?'

Among hopes expressed were the following: a desire for something clear and concrete, leading to a real and specific sharing of resources; a recognition of different cultures and traditions; the willingness to take risks and experience a change of mentality: an equal partnership between new and old parts of the Congregation; a solidarity based on our Passionist spirituality and charism.

In the afternoon Fr Denis presented the General Council's report on restructuring. This was a report on what is happening and why, based on the reports received from the six configurations. He highlighted the challenges of globalisation and the demographic changes we face in the church and world, and also in our Congregation where vocations and students are mostly from the new entities. There is a need for new relationships to enable a new missionary presence in the world. Our new outreach in China, Vietnam and also Nigeria is being carried out by religious from different provinces and vicariates. We need new dialogue and sharing between the older and newer parts of the Congregation.

The report spoke of the different phases of the restructuring process:

2004-2006 Consultation; 2006-2008 Planning Together; 2008-2010 New Structures of Solidarity; 2010-2012 Our Future. Among the tasks for the Synod are the following:

- How do we ensure that solidarity can be lived effectively and practically?
- What authority do we need at the level of the configurations in order to make our decisions binding and effective?
- How do we respect issues like cultural diversity, ethnic and national identity in a more collaborative future?
- How do we balance diminishment and aging in the older provinces with the need to expand and recruit in the newer parts?
- What is the best viable size for a province?

Three possible models for the future have emerged from the reports from the configurations:

1. The Provinces, Vice Provinces and Vicariates within a configuration merge or combine into a new unified entity under one Leader and one Council. The Council members come from entities within the configuration.

2. Some of the Provinces, Vice Provinces or Vicariates within a configuration merge into a new Province and some remain independent entities. The Leaders form a Board which has decision-making power for all matters of solidarity at the level of the configuration. All decisions affecting solidarity for the entire configuration are binding on all.
3. The Provinces, Vice Provinces and Vicariates within a configuration remain independent entities. The Leaders form a Board which has decision-making power for matters of solidarity at the level of the configuration. All decisions affecting solidarity for the entire configuration are binding on all.

The Synod members went into groups to discuss what they have found life-giving in the process of restructuring our mission. Life-giving areas included collaboration, solidarity in formation and finance, finding a common direction, awareness of the need for change. Some reports from groups highlighted the importance of involving all the religious, at grass roots level, in the restructuring process and not just those in leadership.

After a plenary session in the aula, Fr Mullins concluded by inviting us not to rush towards solutions but to stay with the anxiety and uncertainty, seeking God in the reality of our lives. Mass was then celebrated in language groups.

23 OCTOBER

Mass was celebrated in the Retreat House Chapel; the principal celebrant was Fr Michael Ogweno.

The first session in the aula began with a prayer-reflection on the theme of Solidarity and Mission, prepared by the students of the STIP (Passionist Inter-provincial Student Community).

Fr Luis Alberto Cano chaired the session. He began by asking the Synod if they wished to extend the right to vote to the three invited guests: Fr Antony Sikhalele Mdhuli (Regional Vicar, MATAF), Fr Moisés Ríos (Regional Vicar, PAC) and Fr Michael Ogweno (Co-coordinator, CPA). All agreed.

The General Econome, Fr Battista Ramponi, gave a written report on the income and expenditure of the General Curia and also of the Saints John and Paul Community for 2007, 2008, 2009 and the first half of 2010. He also gave similar information regarding the Formation Fund, the Solidarity Fund and funds administered by the Generalate on behalf of other entities. In his comments on the report, Fr Battista raised the question of a Congregational Common Fund, which he had proposed at the last General Chapter, as an aid to the General Administration which, until the present, is resourced solely by contributions from the provinces.

The report included a list of recent major works undertaken at the Generalate: the new boiler room, remodeling of space in the Generalate which is now leased to a group called the 'Lay Centre' which promotes ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue; new low-energy lighting for the garden and grounds; the remodeling of a section of the house near the front door (the 'Garbatella') as a guest area with seven en-suite rooms, small kitchen and sitting room. Improvements to the buildings have brought about the following: greater energy efficiency; restoration and re-use of facilities, bringing increased rental income; better and safer facilities for those resident here and for guests; increase in value of the property through upgrading, remodeling and restoration.

Because of low interest rates, funding for projects within the Congregation is low. This is particularly worrying in the case of the Formation Fund where there is the risk of the fund's capital having to be used to fund formation initiatives, because of the lack of investment income to draw on. This is because in recent times there have been no new contributions to the Formation Fund. Within the context of restructuring, there is a need to provide adequate funds for formation, either through new contributions or

through allocating an amount from the Solidarity Fund, which has received significant contributions, even recently.

The General Administration Budget for 2011-2012, with contributions from the provinces, was distributed and explained and, after a few questions and clarifications (including one about the new Stauros Library facility which has been created at the Generalate), approved unanimously.

The afternoon session was chaired by Fr Clemente Barron. It began with the report from the Secretary General for Solidarity and the Missions, Fr Jesús Maria Aristín. He listed the works done by the Secretariat: seminars, workshops and courses in JPIC in Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, India (PASPAC), Italy, Kenya, Tanzania, Brazil and Portugal; assistance in Haiti following the earthquake (more than $300,000 with support from communities, men and women religious, laity, NGO's and other groups; setting up of "Passionist Solidarity" NGO in Italy; days of prayer and study about JPIC throughout the Congregation; meetings with *Passionists International* (Fr. Kevin Dance); JPIC meetings with the Union of Superiors General; participation in FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations); maintaining our website (www.jpicpassionist.org); publications: in the PIB, the Bulletin of Passionist Missions and magazine articles; participation in various campaigns (Human Rights, Millennium objectives, the Right to Food, etc.). Included in the report was a list of projects being assisted by Fr. Vital Otshudialokoka, Director of Projects for the Solidarity and Mission Secretariat.

Fr. Aristín stressed the importance of JPIC at regional level and asked that all provinces would have a designated JPIC animator. He highlighted the need to support the Congregation's recent foundations and expressed his concern for the needs of the Congregation in Africa, while acknowledging the generous financial support of certain older provinces which can no longer support the newer parts of the Congregation with personnel.

Fr Kevin Dance then gave a presentation on the work of *PASSIONISTS INTERNATIONAL* at the United Nations. He began by examining the demographic, social, economic, environmental and religious changes which are part of our world. The three keys to the future are development (freedom from want), security (freedom from fear) and human rights (free to live in dignity).

The reason Passionists are at the UN is found in n. 65 of our Constitutions. *Passionists International* is active in these areas: Development and People (Commission on the Status of Women, Working Group on Girls, Commission for Social Development); Development and Human Rights

(Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Israel – Palestine; Migration); Financing for Development (Millennium Development Goals, Climate Change). *Passionists International* is a collaborative ministry of our Congregation, the Sisters of the Cross and Passion and the Servants of the Passion. Other groups from the Passionist family are welcome to participate.

Presentations on two initiatives of the Congregation in Asia (PASPAC) were then given by Fr Jefferies Foale and Fr Gabriel Pak. The challenges of founding the Congregation in new cultures with complex historical and political situations were explained. The needs of formation were highlighted, in terms of both personnel and finance. In the interventions which followed, the progress which has been made was recognized by the Synod members.

Before the end of the session, Fr Jesús Maria Aristin requested and received the Synod's approval of a letter of solidarity written by the Superior General, on behalf of the Synod members, to Fr Mario Bartolini in Peru. The letter is available on the Passionist JPIC website.

The Synod members then went to the Retreat House Chapel for Evening Prayer, led by Fr Antony Xavier Tharayil.

SUNDAY, 24 OCTOBER

The day began with Mass celebrated in the Chapel of Saint Paul of the Cross. The principal celebrant and homilist was Fr Antonio Munduate.

The morning session, which was preceded by a prayer reflection prepared by the STIP students, consisted of two talks given by Fr Aquilino Bocos Merino C.M.F. on Restructuring in the Passionist Congregation. Fr Aquilino is a former Superior General of the Claretians who is working for the periodical '*Vida Religiosa*' and for the Theological Institute of Religious Life in Madrid. The session was chaired by Fr Luis Alberto Cano.

Fr Aquilino's first talk covered three topics: the meaning of restructuring; obstacles and opportunities; the ultimate reason for restructuring. In the second talk, he treated these aspects: presuppositions required to make restructuring effective; the relationship between the Congregation and its major organisms (provinces, vice-provinces, vicariates); motivation and co-responsibility in structural innovation; final considerations.

Among the important points raised by Fr Aquilino in the course of the morning were the following:

The starting point must always be the radical following of Jesus: He is all that is necessary. The secret of the process of restructuring is in the formulation of a Project for Life and Mission, with its priorities.

Nothing new is born in this world without pain.

The degree of affective and effective attachment to the Congregation will promote either greater or lesser success in the fulfilment of the objectives of restructuring. One obstacle is the absence of clear ideas or a confusion about the apostolic design of the Institute. Conversion, change and transformation are necessary in order to overcome routine and lethargy. It is probably necessary to go beyond solidarity in the three areas that you have singled out (formation, personnel, finance). This has to do with giving an answer to a challenge which is more radical and present within consecrated life.

How can we organise ourselves to live in a more evangelical way and to serve the Lord and others? Only the primacy of the Holy Spirit in our life can break the circle of mediocrity which is the corrosive force in consecrated life. Founders have always sought the essential in their projects.

A return to the origins awakens solidarity, promotes communion and supports shared responsibility. The Congregation is not a corporation but a community of persons, a community of faith, hope and charity which finds itself within the church. A Congregation is a bringing to-

gether of people who have the same spirit. The first community that we must affirm is the Congregation.

We need to return to the essential and frequent the future.

The future is inside us. It is '*Adventus'*; we don't create it. It comes about through our being faithful to the Now.

A lively question and answer session followed Fr Aquilino's two talks. Today being Sunday, the Synod members were free in the afternoon.

25 OCTOBER

The sessions in the aula, which was chaired by Fr Denis Travers, began with a prayer reflection on the theme 'The Seed of the Passionist Charism Scattered in Many Places', which recalled the sixty different countries in which our Congregation has been established.

The first session was devoted to the second part of the report of the Superior General, Fr Ottaviano D'Egidio, entitled 'Starting afresh after Cuernavaca', a summary of which is given here:

Fr Ottaviano listed the various stages gone through in the process of restructuring, beginning with the General Chapter of 2000. A turning point in the process was the 2008 Synod at Cuernavaca during which six new configurations were established, responding to a new awareness that every part of the Congregation is responsible for the other. During the two years leading up to this Synod, the task of the configurations was to evaluate and experiment with the viability of the composition of each configuration as a hypothetical structure for the future. However, the process of examining the feasibility of the new configurations will not end with the present Synod. During the next two years, we will move towards defining conclusively the new entities and the model of government to be used both at General level and at the level of the configurations. The juridical consequences also need to be clarified during the next two years.

The General then spoke of the meetings of co-coordinators which have taken place and summarised the different directions in which the six configurations are going forward. As, at the level of the configurations, discernment should result in decisions, he suggested that the configurations should be able to make decisions and act on them and, on behalf of the General Council, proposed a text to this effect for the evaluation and approval of the Synod. He also reflected with the Synod on the Congregation's history of expansion and development, the meaning of solidarity in practice, and the means for achieving a culture of solidarity within the Congregation.

After points for clarification had been dealt with, the Synod then went into international groups to discuss two questions given by Fr Michael Mullins S.M.: What further questions do you have following the General's talk? What did you find challenging in the General's talk?

Among issues raised by the groups were the following: Is this way of restructuring the best way of achieving the goal of greater fidelity and mission? Are people happy with the configurations as they are? There is a

lingering quest for clarity. Do the configurations as they are at present really support solidarity, e.g. in relation to the needs of Africa? In the future, our missionaries will be coming from poor countries and provinces; how can we support them? There are internal tensions in some configurations because of the diversity of cultures of the provinces involved. What is to be done if a configuration does not in fact take part in the process of restructuring? How do we recover internationality in the Congregation? Can different configurations have different forms of government? Will the existing provinces lose the power to govern themselves? In the face of what looks like greater centralisation, what can we say about subsidiarity?

Fr Ottaviano expressed surprise at the hesitations which were still present, stressing that what is to be done will be done within the framework of the Constitutions

In the afternoon session, chaired by Fr Luigi Vaninetti, the Synod began looking at the reports from the six Configurations. Fr Michael Mullins introduced the session, reminding all that this is part of the process of discernment; he asked the Synod members to pay attention to the importance of listening and to keep in mind the criteria which had been agreed at the 2008 Synod in Cuernavaca.

Fr Enzo del Brocco reported on behalf of the Configuration of Jesus Crucified. The configuration has set up three commissions as part of its organisational structure; these are the Commissions for Personnel, Formation and Finance. Each commission has established criteria and guidelines to further the work of solidarity in each of these areas. Agreement has been reached about formation, with two novitiates and two student houses envisaged. The configuration intends to create a common fund for formation and other projects. The Personnel Commission is working on a plan of action for mission projects. At an assembly earlier this year, the Major Superiors of the configuration acknowledged the richness of the realities which compose the configuration, while admitting that there is still some perplexity over its vast size. They had examined the possibility of dividing the configuration, but wish to remain together for the time being. The configuration must be considered an open space in which to share and create projects together for a new way and a new life. Fr Enzo's report was supplemented by additional information from Frs. Juan Rosasco (Formation), Francisco Valadez (Finance) and Augusto Canali (Personnel).

The report was discussed in groups and the following observations were made: The plans are very concrete and well organised. Are there still ways of co-operating with CLAP and FORPAL? There have been good de-

velopments for formation, but the sense of mission at configuration level needs to be strengthened. This configuration seems to be too big and geographically spread out. How are the plans of the configuration received by those at the grass roots level? This configuration is a space for dialogue, but does such a large grouping see itself becoming a juridical entity?

After a short break, Fr Antonio Munduate gave the report on behalf of the Configuration of the Sacred Heart. He began by describing the reality in terms of the number and age of the religious, and the countries in which they are working. They are working in solidarity in the area of formation and have begun developing solidarity for mission with four shared projects. They intend to move towards common management of the finances and accounting. The report included a possible form of government where the configuration would become a single jurisdiction, with a regional superior for the entire configuration working with four Consultors, with the configuration divided into four zones. The report hoped that the Synod would clarify the following points: the geographical distribution of the configurations; the goal to be achieved; that a common language and objectives be used. We can proceed at various speeds; however, we all need to be directed towards the same goal and have the same objective.

There was general discussion on the notion of the existing entities being merged into one province. This path has already been agreed in the respective provincial chapters. The importance of recognising different cultures and traditions in Latin America was highlighted.

Evening Prayer followed in the Retreat House Chapel, marking the Passionist Centenary in Brazil.

26 OCTOBER

The day began with Mass in the Retreat House Chapel celebrated by Fr Leone Masnata.

The morning session in the aula, chaired by Fr Clemente Barron, was preceded by a prayer reflection celebrating the centenary of the Passionists in Brazil. Fr Michael Mullins S.M. informed the Synod that the dialogue in response to the reports from configurations would be take place in a single group in the aula. He asked us to ensure that all voices are heard, and gave this background question: What are the key issues that the Synod has to address for the whole Congregation?

Fr Leone Masnata presented the report on behalf of the Configuration of Blessed Eugene Bossilkov. Initially the seven entities of the configuration looked at the following: replies made by provinces of the configuration to the template on restructuring; possible future shape for the configuration; choosing common projects in the areas of solidarity (formation, personnel, finance); decision-making powers of the configuration; ways of consulting the religious of the various provinces on their opinion of the viability of the configuration. The four Italian provinces of the configuration and the French province wish to work towards becoming a single province, with five regions, while ASSUM and VULN wish to continue as distinct entities within the configuration. The configuration has a study group, divided into three sub-groups (formation, personnel, finance), and a permanent secretary. The Italian entities have a common novitiate and student house. Various forms of collaboration exist, including support for the mission in Bulgaria and the house in Lourdes. The configuration has its own website at www.cebnews.eu The viability of the single province will be discussed at the forthcoming provincial chapters in Italy. This must not just be a process of contraction but a way of asking: 'What do the Passionists in Europe want to be?' In addition to this report, there was a document on the position of the Polish province (ASSUM).

These points were raised in the responses: we risk making some changes but keeping the same fundamental structure with different names. Can we keep in mind the important issues raised by Fr Aquilino? Moving towards autonomy for the configurations can work in the old parts of the Congregation which have resources, but in the newer areas (such as Africa),

this gives rise to difficulties. An important task for this Synod is to carry out an evaluation of the configurations.

The next presentation was made by Fr Frans Damen on behalf of the North European Sector of Passionists. The former North European Conference had worked on a proposal for a union of four or five provinces in northern Europe but, after the Synod of 2008, that had to be put on hold. Subsequent changes in North Europe now make such a way of proceeding less likely. Since the last Synod, the configuration has been following the model of the former NECP conference. One commission was set up to work on the three areas of solidarity. This year they are concentrating on ongoing formation.

This presentation was followed by a stimulating conversation in which issues were raised and all four provincials of the configuration responded. The difficulties of caring for our elderly were acknowledged and at the same time challenging questions were asked about the region's future.

In the afternoon, Fr Michael Ogweno reported on the Configuration of Passionists in Africa which, he said, has nothing to *restructure* but instead wants to *structure*. The CPA is a growing part of the Congregation which sees the importance of divisions because it is in small entities that growth will take place. The primary vision of the CPA is 'Solidarity in Formation, Personnel and Finance so as to enhance and make more vital the Life and Mission of the Congregation, especially in Africa.' Each of the entities aspires to self sufficiency and self determination and seeks to exercise its autonomy in a context of collegiality within the CPA. The four regions (MATAF, SALV, GEMM and CARLW) wish to grow and evolve into a collaborative, interdependent and collegial configuration with an appropriate juridical structure. This would be done by means of a board which would exercise (collegial) juridical authority in all matters of solidarity – personnel, formation and finance and whose decisions would be reached by consensus; otherwise a majority vote would be required. For each of the areas of solidarity, there would be an advisory committee, with one member from each region. The configuration intends to work towards self-reliance and financial autonomy, but realises that, in order to become financially viable, CPA will depend initially upon the structures for Solidarity in Finance established at the General level of the Congregation. CPA remains open to other entities or missions joining this configuration.

Among the responses was the suggestion that we need to find a way to increase the capital of the Solidarity Fund in order to support the new parts of the Congregation. The last Synod proposed a levy on the sale of property for this purpose; this proposal would need to be confirmed by this Synod. The notion of solidarity among, rather than just within, the configurations was also raised.

Fr Joachim Rego then presented the report from the PASPAC Configuration, which has adopted this Mission Statement: To ensure the sharing of life, mission and resources throughout the Configuration and Congregation wide. They have elaborated a model where the decision makers are the leaders of the congregational entities within the region, acting together. They are supported by three commissions (Formation, Personnel, and Finance) which will continue PASPAC's rich history of collaboration among the entities. The configuration accepts responsibility for the 'International House of Formation' based at Manila and Adelaide, which was initiated by the former PASPAC Conference.

In the dialogue which followed, the configuration was praised for its history of co-operation across many different cultures. The organizational model seemed quite detailed, but was designed to encourage maximum participation. The aim of the new structure is to have a new way of operating where all are working and deciding together.

Father Fiorenzo Bordo then gave a short presentation on the new mission in Nigeria which has been established by members of PRAES, SALV and CARLW.

The Synod members then went to the Retreat House Chapel for Evening Prayer.

27 OCTOBER

Mass today was celebrated in language groups.

The morning prayer reflection was on the theme of listening and discernment. The opening session was chaired by Fr Denis Travers and began with an update from Fr Juan Maria Santamaría on the situation in Yurimaguas, Peru.

Sister Christine Anderson F.C.J. then introduced the morning's work. One of the main tasks of this Synod is looking at the viability of the configurations. The configurations were an experiment in solidarity in formation, personnel and finance; now the experiment has to be evaluated. Human beings find difficulty in changing, but we have within us the resources needed for change. These are:

1) an open mind, the enemy of which is judging before we have heard everything;
2) an open heart, which allows us to get in touch with our vulnerability, and here the enemy is cynicism;
3) an open will, from which comes the desire for what is best for the mission and values of the Congregation; the enemy here is fear or doubt.

The evaluation would be done in configuration groups. The groups were asked to look in a critical way at their own configuration and ask themselves if it is viable. Sister Christine suggested a viability tool, consisting of six areas for examination:

1) leadership capacity, strategic thinking, focus on Passionist mission;
2) government structures, decision making;
3) financial planning, accountability;
4) initial formation, ongoing formation;
5) communication networks, relatedness to General Council and other configurations.

In the light of all this, can you say you are working effectively towards solidarity of formation, personnel and finance within your configuration? Has your configuration the capacity to offer solidarity to other configurations?

The Synod members were now invited to go into configuration groups, after a period of personal discernment. The groups were given two questions:

1. Do you think the composition of your configuration is viable or do you suggest any changes?
2. Regarding the other configurations, have you suggestions to make them increase solidarity in formation, personnel and finance?

In the afternoon, each configuration reported back on its discussions:

Configuration of Jesus Crucified: The majority of members agree to continue as a configuration, using the model of a neural network with various nodes. A priority is to identify a project for mission which will unite the various entities. There is a need to continue working to involve all the membership of the configuration. The group identified reasons for continuing: the great richness of difference that exists in the configuration; the strong missionary tradition which helps them not to be closed in on themselves. Sharing across configurations for formation (initial, ongoing and formation of laity) would be helpful. CBE should be encouraged to continue working with CPA. We should not establish lifestyles which are not in harmony with the conditions in the country in which we live and work, as this becomes a counter witness to religious poverty.

Passionist Asian/Pacific Configuration (PASPAC): The configuration sees itself as being viable, but wishes to develop communication at grass roots level, through a newsletter or website. They suggest that the General Consultor of reference should be the configuration co-coordinator. Configurations should consist of entities which are in close geographical proximity, but should be open to sending personnel to other areas. Concern was expressed about the importance of financial stability, especially in Africa. There is need for a financial system which can deal with this.

Configuration of Blessed Eugene Bossilkov (CEB): This was a very difficult discussion. CEB is blocked at the moment because the four Italian provinces who are members have to wait until their provincial chapters next year in order to consult their members. In addition, two provinces (ASSUM and VULN) prefer to conserve their autonomy and wish to return to the North European sector. These two have difficulty with the form of government which will follow the creation of a single province for the other five member entities. Perhaps this configuration

has to be looked at in the context of Europe as a whole; possibly its future is to be seen more in terms of a federation, with a missionary focus on Eastern Europe. The configuration proposed that a Solidarity Fund for Africa be set up. A number of members suggested that the Synod discuss paragraph 39 of the second part of the Superior General's report (on a possible norm for decision-making in the configurations).

Sacred Heart: The members agreed unanimously on this configuration's viability, because it has the approval of the three Provincial Chapters in Spain and also of the members of the Vice-Province of Colombia. The configuration needs to incorporate its Latin American members into the process, which is not for survival but to further a charismatic mission. The group has journeyed together in terms of formation and plans to go forward together. Northern Europe and CPA should keep in mind the co-operation that is envisaged between young and older parts of the Congregation. The Configuration of Jesus Crucified seems to cover a very large geographical area.

Conference of Passionists of Africa (CPA): The configuration affirms its viability. Member entities come from one continent and one cultural context, with one theologate: All this fosters solidarity. This is a young and dynamic group. Challenges faced by the configuration include: difficulties in communication caused by distance and access to means of travel; limited decision making powers because the majority of the entities are vicariates, still dependent on provinces in Europe. The configuration seeks financial support for formation and wishes to strengthen the role of the co-coordinator. CPA wishes to promote co-operation across configurations. The co-coordinator should not be the leader of one of the entities; then he can devote himself to the task with greater freedom.

North European Sector of Passionists (NESP): The configuration is viable as it stands, with structures to support the elderly members and to promote formation, both initial and ongoing, and a diversity of ministries. There are no suggestions for other configurations. There is a need to develop the Solidarity Fund in order to meet the needs of the Congregation worldwide.

Responses to the report included the following: The Commission for Solidarity in Finances will prepare a text on funds for Africa and other needy parts of the Congregation. Restructuring is for the vitality of the whole Congregation. CPA, although lacking in material resources, wishes to contribute to that vitality particularly through solidarity in person-

nel. There was discussion, and clarifications, on the desire expressed by ASSUM and VULN to leave the CEB configuration.

A discussion followed on the proposed norm for decision-making in the configurations. There was a desire to empower the configurations but also a wish not to stifle the process by a juridical text. The text needs to have clarity and to reflect the mind of the Synod. The configurations are to be places of dialogue for mission and solidarity, but they need a way of going forward when unanimity is not reached. It was agreed that the text would be referred to a specialist group chosen by the CC.

The day concluded in the Retreat House Chapel with Evening Prayer and Eucharistic Adoration.

28 OCTOBER

Mass for the Feast of Saints Simon and Jude was celebrated by Fr Joachim Rego. The morning prayer reflection was led by Fr Giovanni Cipriani. The session was chaired by Fr Luigi Vaninetti.

The first item was a proposal from the Commission for Solidarity in Finances that all entities should contribute annually 2% of the gross income of their entity's administration to the Solidarity Fund, and that the Synod should confirm the decision of the last General Synod that 7% of the proceeds from any sale of immobile goods (lands or buildings) be contributed to the Solidarity Fund.

A number of clarifications were sought, some in relation to cases where civil governments have requirements linked to the sale of property. Other issues raised included the following: Criteria for the running of the Solidarity Fund were established some time ago and could be revisited. There is a need for co-ordination between funding solidarity at configuration level and at the level of the whole Congregation. Should the Solidarity Fund and Formation Fund be united or remain separate? It would be useful for the Commission to meet with the economes or finance managers of the different entities. Even with these fixed contributions, voluntary contributions to the Solidarity Fund can still be made. After discussion, the proposal was carried with no dissenting voices.

The Superior General then gave the third part of his report. Among issues referred to in the report were: the need to include within our Constitutions and General Regulations a reference to those laity who seek to live our Passionist Charism and be associated with our Congregation; the importance of historical research and publications on our Congregation and its provinces; the work of the Commission for Communications and the setting up of a permanent office for communications; the need for norms to guarantee the safety of financial funds; the 'two pulses' of the heart of our Charism, which are:

a) Contemplating the Passion of Jesus and living in fraternal and poor communities, located in solitude;
b) Announcing the contemplated word of the Cross, giving preference to abandoned places and recognising Jesus in the suffering and the poor).

He also spoke about our presence at the U.N. through *Passionists International*; the need for adequate policies throughout the Congregation for dealing with questions of sexual abuse and promoting the safeguarding the vulnerable; training for formation personnel; the role of brothers in leadership; the required number of houses and religious to constitute a province. Other points referred to in the report were JPIC, the World Youth Day in Madrid next year, the new Manual-Compendium of Passiology being produced for the Congregation by Fr Antonio Artola, a Dictionary of the Passion which is being compiled by a commission of Passionist scholars, the death of two Passionist Bishops since the last Synod (Bishop Venancio C. Orbe Uriarte and Archbishop Piergiorgio Nesti), the beatification of John Henry Newman and the seminar on Newman and Blessed Dominic which will take place at the Lateran University next year, and the 25th anniversary of the approbation of the Constitutions.

The responses to the General's report began with a discussion on his suggestion that we include within our Constitutions and General Regulations a reference to those laity who seek to live our Passionist Charism and be associated with our Congregation. A letter has been submitted to the Synod by the Italian Passionist Lay Movement in which they ask for some common points to be drawn up which would give an identity to all the lay movements linked to our Congregation, and for a comprehensive text on our spirituality for laypeople to be compiled by a group of experts; they also request that a General Consultor be named who would act as a reference point for the various lay movements. We need to examine the Passionist lay movements from a theological point of view and also look at the question of ministry for them. (The CORM Province can no longer staff the house in Castellazzo, but are keeping it until 2012 in the hope that other Passionists or our sisters or laity might wished to become involved in the work of welcoming visitors to Castellazzo.) The desire of lay people to share in the spirituality and charism of religious communities is an important current in the Church today. The configurations need to examine the way in which the various groups and movements relate to us: their place in the life of our provinces and communities, their responsibilities and the commitments they make; how their relationship with us is working. A norm should certainly be drawn up, but after adequate research into the variety and nature of these Passionist lay movements, all of which are called to live the Memory of the Passion according to the Charism of Saint Paul of the Cross.

On the question of Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation, it was pointed out that religious, including those in formation, can apply to work for a short period of time (e.g. 1-3 months) with Fr Kevin Dance at the United Nations. Any religious who are engaged in practical projects which relate to questions of JPIC are encouraged to inform Fr Kevin, as this information can be useful when the United Nations is studying particular questions. It was pointed out that we should not forget the questions related to justice which exist in the developed world such as the arms trade, immigration, the death penalty and the international transfer of capital. Also in our discussions on world poverty, we tend to concentrate on Africa and Latin America, forgetting about India and other countries in Asia.

The afternoon session was devoted to the section on sexual abuse contained in the General's Report. The provincials of CRUC, PATR and PAUL formed a panel with Fr Michael Mullins S.M. and shared with the Synod members their experience of how this question has been and is being responded to in their various countries. Among the points raised were the following: the importance of dealing with child sexual abuse as a crime, rather than simply as a sin or a psychological problem; the necessity of reporting all cases to the statutory authorities; the primacy of listening to the victims and ensuring that they have adequate support, rather than protecting the institution; the need for proper procedures for dealing with those guilty of abuse, whether sexual, physical or emotional. The panel's presentation was followed by a lengthy discussion which highlighted the need for safeguarding of the vulnerable in our ministries, proper procedures in each province or entity for addressing the issues relating to abuse in the proper way, and formation for our religious in understanding this issue.

Evening Prayer was celebrated in the Retreat House Chapel.

29 OCTOBER

Mass today was celebrated in language groups. The morning prayer reflection was on the theme of having the mind of Christ crucified; it was led by Fr Giovanni Cipriani. The session was chaired by Fr Luis Alberto Cano.

An update was given on the situation of Fr Mario Bartolini in Peru. The Synod members had seen a news report which was broadcast on television yesterday. Today they received fresh information from our religious and sisters there about the present state of the case.

On behalf of the interprovincial Passionist Youth Ministry Team in Spain, Fr José Maria Saez gave a presentation about the **World Youth Day** in **Madrid** in 2011. It is important for us as a Congregation to be present at the WYD, as the sign which defines this encounter is the Cross. There will be a meeting of young Passionist religious at Peñafiel from 12 to 14 August. Groups of young people who are part of the Passionist family will be welcomed at Alcalà de Henares during the WYD, from 15 to 21 August. The special Passionist day, referred to in the General's letter on the WYD, will be on 18 August. Those interested in taking part should contact the Youth Ministry Team and also, in the case of the Meeting of Young Religious, the Secretary General here.

The work done by the **Commission on Digital Communications** was then explained by some of its members. The Commission (Frs. Clemente Barron, Ramiro Ruiz, Marco Pasquali and Massimo Granieri) have been working on a new Congregational website which aims to be user friendly and act as a place not just of information but of communication. The site can be used for internal communication within the Congregation and with our associates, but will also have an external mission in the evangelisation of the digital continent. Congregation members will be able to log in to the internal sections of the site, and there is the possibility for our religious of having a blog which is hosted on the site. At a later stage, the site will also be available for video conferencing. This will be an innovative site, unlike any existing site of a religious congregation.

The Synod members then looked at four proposals, which followed from the General's report, on the size of provinces, a norm for decision-making in the configurations, the notion of an addition to the Constitutions regarding Passionist laity, and the question of Brothers being eligible for the role of First Consultor.

At present, there is no fixed criterion for the number of religious required for an entity of the Congregation to be a province. Normally, three canonically constituted communities are required to establish a province, but there are several other questions which are taken into consideration, such as the group's ability to undertake formation of candidates and its financial viability. The relationship of existing vicariates with their respective mother province and with their configuration is also relevant here. This proposal envisages a discussion during the next two years which can permit an examination of criteria for the erection or suppression of provinces; the number of religious would be part of that, but there would also be other criteria. The Synod members were asked to indicate their view on the aim of the proposal; all were in favour.

A one-page proposal on the functioning of the configurations was then presented. After discussion, which included clarifications on the role of the leader ('president') of a configuration and also the question of configuration statutes, it was suggested that Synod members should indicate their acceptance of the content of the proposal, rather than the text of the proposal. In this spirit, a show of hands was asked for: two were against the proposal, two abstained, and the rest were in favour.

The suggestion to include a text on the Passionist lay movements in our Constitutions and General Regulations was then discussed. It was pointed out that as well as laypeople, there are also diocesan priests who seek to live according to our spirit. Is this about a spiritual belonging to the Congregation or is it more than that? In addition to the Missionary Secular Institute of the Passion (which is of Pontifical Right), there are some lay associates who seek to live a form of consecrated life. There were some difficulties with the wording of the proposal: in the text, religious and laypeople seemed to be all mixed up together; the place of the laity was actually defined by negation, saying who they are not, rather than who they are; they were described as being 'together' with us only spiritually whereas, for many, this 'being together' has other dimensions, particularly the dimension of mission. There are also legal considerations in relation to those countries where the constitutions of a religious institute are recognised as binding in civil law. It was proposed that the General Council should study this issue, with a view to a statement on the laity for inclusion in our Constitutions being proposed to the next General Chapter. This suggestion was accepted unanimously.

The proposal on Passionist Brothers was for a recommendation to be approved by the Synod that provinces, vice-provinces and vicariates

modify the norms of their own regulations to allow a Brother to be elected as First Consultor. This would be done by changing existing legislation so that, in the event of the Provincial leaving office, the First Consultor would not automatically become Provincial, but the new Provincial would be chosen in some other way determined by the entity's legislation. Because, at present, a Brother cannot become Provincial, this modification would mean that our Brothers are no longer ineligible for the role of First Consultor. This has already been done in Korea; Br Laurence Finn, who is present at the Synod as a translator, was asked to share his experience of how such a norm had functioned when he was elected First Consultor in Korea some years ago. After this, the proposal was approved, with one against and three abstentions.

Having looked at the four proposals, the Synod members were invited by Sister Christine to reflect on the Synod so far and ask themselves what other issues need to be addressed. The afternoon was to be spent in configuration groups where this could be discussed. The groups were also to look at the question of the configuration's communications with the grass roots: provinces, communities and the religious.

The Synod group photograph was taken at the beginning of the afternoon session, which was spent in its entirety in configuration groups. Evening Prayer was celebrated at the usual time in the Retreat House Chapel.

30 OCTOBER

Fr. Frans Damen was the principal celebrant at the Mass which was celebrated in Spanish.

The morning session was chaired by Fr Denis Travers. It was preceded by a prayer reflection; the theme was 'The Passion of Jesus – The bridge which unites us', based on no. 5 of the Constitutions.

Fr Michael Mullins introduced the day's work. It is difficult to deal with matters *ad experimentum*. Here we need to suspend judgment, particularly canonical judgment. This is a new way of acting, a *systemic* way. The future of the configurations will largely depend on the quality of leadership, particularly at local level. A key element is dialogue at and across the different levels; in this area we learn by doing. Reports on yesterday's questions and reflections were then heard.

The Sacred Heart Configuration report spoke of uncertainties about the future and the fear that the Synod has not gone far enough but has seemed to be going backwards. We want to continue on the road chosen at Cuernavaca. This configuration wants to become a single province with zones. The configuration has a list of initiatives, including a formators course in Rome next January, provincial chapters in the three provinces and an assembly in the vice-province, and various inter-provincial events, including the World Youth Day. The configuration intends to keep the same co-coordinator.

PASPAC suggested that, during the Synod, more time should have been spent in general assembly discussing restructuring. The focus for our restructuring is solidarity in the three areas of personnel, formation and finance. A key characteristic of all three areas is Mission. Some vicariates no longer need their mother province. More concrete decisions are needed, especially regarding situations of real need such as Africa. The process is essentially an experience of conversion. Our religious in general are not so interested in the process, as it doesn't touch their everyday lives. Communication, especially at the time of Visitation, can help. The new website, with its blog possibilities, will be useful. There is a need for younger members of the configuration to gain international experience. The configuration is considering uniting the personnel and formation commissions. It was recommended that the roles of General Consultor and co-coordinator be united.

The Configuration of Passionists in Africa (CPA) affirmed that the overall environment and organisation of the Synod had been good; the JPIC workshop was appreciated. It was good to have time to meet as a configuration and to hear from the other configurations. It is important to follow up on the Synod and not repeat the same things the next time. At this Synod some agreement was reached on solidarity in finance, but progress needs to be made at this level on the other two areas. In Africa, the challenge of communication is because of distance and the lack of infrastructure. However, the configuration is committed to embracing the new means of communication.

The report from the *Configuration of Eugene Bossilkov* (CEB) expressed the view that some of the Synod programme was not clear or well structured; there had been some confusion in the Synod. When we discuss restructuring, there is a tendency to become lost in structural or canonical details. We have to work at communicating the reasons for restructuring: not who we are as Passionists but what we want to do in today's world. We need to reflect on how to bring life to our communities and deepen their theological, spiritual and cultural awareness. The commissions in this configuration will have to be recreated, as ASSUM and VULN have left the configuration. The configuration is now more viable than before, but we cannot be sure of the viability of other configurations. Africa will be viable, but is still on the way, particularly in relation to financial autonomy. The configurations have been strengthened with decision-making powers. Our Congregation has members who are skilled in the new means of communications. The four Provincial Chapters which will be held next year will be opportunities for communications. Enthusiasm comes from the Charism and from new projects. The Congregation has two different paths of restructuring, because one part of the Congregation is growing and the other part is in decline. With the new norm for configurations, where is the role of the co-coordinator now?

The Configuration of Jesus Crucified reported that they found the methodology of the Synod tiring, with many themes being opened up, put aside, and brought back. In addition, there was a general tiredness in the Synod itself. Voting on the spirit of things, rather than on specific texts, was not helpful. The talks by Fr Aquilino were useful and clear. The configuration has various assemblies planned. Exchanges of information about each entity in the configuration would be good. Video conferencing will be helpful for this configuration. Next year, there will be three Provincial Chapters within the configuration. The commissions will continue their work. This configuration has five vicari-

ates, three of which are attached to provinces outside of the configuration.

NESP have reached a satisfactory agreement and have welcomed ASSUM and VULN into the configuration. They are happy that their model of living solidarity has been respected and well received in the Synod. The configuration sees itself as viable; it will be focusing on solidarity in formation. It was felt that the way of conducting business in the Synod, particularly in relation to proposals, was not helpful. The input received, particularly the workshop on JPIC and the panel on sexual abuse, was helpful. (Other configurations agreed on this point.) The group expressed its thanks for the hospitality extended and for the work of the Liturgy Commission.

Sr. Christine then responded to the reports: In her opinion, this Synod was an opportunity to make changes to the configurations. The General Chapter will not be the time to do so. We should ask ourselves what our mission requires in our own area. There will be differences of style for configurations because not all areas are the same, so we need to learn to live with difference. We should look first at charism, then at finances and resources, and then at structures. This group is a leadership group working on behalf of the whole Congregation; we need to remember that most of the others will not be interested in this process. We must not presume that we know what is happening in a particular configuration or situation; there is a need to check it out.

Other comments on the reports included the following : We need to have enthusiasm for our charism in a changing world; the Church today is looking for ways of announcing the Gospel in a world marked by poverty and the absence of God; in France the province is disappearing but the charism is strong, so another structure is needed to continue to strengthen the charism and to give enthusiasm and hope. This is still a time of experimentation; there needs to be the opportunity to move from one configuration to another; we should not close that option down too soon. This discussion is about the fear of change, of doing what we have decided; this process is not about obligation, but an open door; it is about possibility, not structure: the possibility to live together, work together and go forward together.

Fr Denis asked the Synod to indicate if it agreed that the configurations should continue until the next General Chapter. A show of hands indicated that all were in favour.

Sister Christine then presented a text on 'Aims and Objectives for the next two years in preparation for the General Chapter 2012', after which Fr Ottaviano, the Superior General, asked for an indication from the Synod on the preferred place and theme for the General Chapter. Most of those who spoke on the place for the Chapter suggested Rome, with Karungu, Kenya, in second place. Suggestions for a Chapter theme focused mostly on our Mission today and its relationship to our charism, although some suggested that continuing the work of restructuring should take precedence over any theme. It was suggested that participation of the laity in the General Chapter should also be examined. It was suggested that, in preparation for the Chapter, a panel of canonical experts should examine the juridical aspects of the new structures, for example, the status of the council of a configuration and its relationship with the entities which compose the configuration and with the General Council, and the question of whether the Constitutions need to be changed in order to take into account the existence of the configurations. The number of General Consultors also needs to be examined in the light of the needs of the configurations. It is important to examine new ways and look at our options; it could be helpful to set up a commission to study the configurations and to look at new apostolic initiatives. The General Chapter has the task of setting up three commissions for the areas of solidarity; only one (Solidarity in Finance) exists at present; these commissions could help with the preparation of the General Chapter. A request was made for some kind of protocol book for provincials to assist them with procedure; an alternative would be the workshop for new major superiors recommended by the last General Chapter.

Having heard all the responses to the reports from yesterday's meetings of the configurations, Fr Denis moved the session towards its conclusion. Sr. Christine Anderson and Fr Michael Mullins thanked to Synod members for their hard work during these days and expressed their appreciation for what Fr Mullins called 'the privilege of being invited into that sacred space which is the inner workings of a religious congregation. Fr Ottaviano gave a warm vote of thanks to the two facilitators for their guidance. The session was then adjourned until tomorrow.

Evening Prayer was celebrated in the Retreat House Chapel.

SUNDAY, 31 OCTOBER

The closing session began with a prayer reflection led by Fr Orven Gonzaga. The session was chaired by Fr Luigi Vaninetti, who began by saying that the session would consist of four parts: the reading by the Synod Secretary of the decisions taken by the Synod; a statement from the General Econome on the expenses of the Synod; a verbal evaluation of the Synod on the part of the Synod members; the Superior General's concluding remarks.

Fr José Luis Quintero then read the text of the six proposals which had been agreed by the Synod. These are: the proposal on the Solidarity Fund from the Commission on Solidarity in Finance; the proposal to study the question of criteria for the viability of provinces and the situation of the vicariates in preparation for the 2012 General Chapter; the proposal on giving decision-making powers to the configurations; the proposal that the General Council consult our own religious and the members of the various Passionist lay movements and examine the situation of the various groups, with a view to including references to our Passionist lay movements in both the Constitutions and the General Regulations; the recommendation to provinces regarding the eligibility of Passionist Brothers to the role of First Consultor; the proposal that the configurations continue to operate until the 2012 General Chapter.

The General Econome, Fr Battista Ramponi, then gave the Synod members a detailed breakdown of the costs incurred during the Synod, including travel to Rome for Synod members, food and lodging, rental of equipment for the secretariat and translators, costs for facilitators and invited speakers. He compared these to the costs of the last General Synod in Cuernavaca and the last General Chapter in Rome. He explained how the costs, including travel, would be redistributed around the provinces, vice-provinces and vicariates according to their ability to pay, following the same percentages used for the annual contributions to the General Administration.

The statement from the General Econome was followed by a time of sharing for evaluating the Synod. The Synod members had already received a form for a written evaluation on the previous day, containing the following questions: What were the three most useful aspects of this Synod of for you? In what way has the experience of this event impacted on your current configuration in terms of solidarity for formation, personnel and finance? Which aspects of the Synod were less helpful? Do you have some suggestions to make regarding content and process for another Synod? What have you learnt personally during this Synod? Do

you have any other comments? The written responses to these questions were to be returned today and would be collated by the Synod Secretariat but, as a shared evaluation before the Synod would close, the members were now invited to give their views.

Among the opinions expressed were the following: I want to recall what Fr Michael Mullins said about the role of the leadership group as a resource for moving the process forward and his underlining of the need for us to work in a systemic way. The Synod has been a time of critical distance which has strengthened us for going forward, filling us with hope and expectation as Passionist believers, convinced of the importance of the process. The strengthening of the Solidarity Fund is a very positive step and help our presence in Africa and other parts of the global south. The diversity of cultures and apostolic experiences in the configurations is a blessing, teaching us to live with differences in a changing world; the open mind, open heart and open will referred to by Sister Christine will help us in this. I am glad I was able to bring a translator with me; this helped with understanding what people said, but there is another task to be accomplished: that of understanding the situation and culture out of which people speak. It was good that we made some progress on solidarity but we did not look sufficiently at the question of a common mission at the service of the Kingdom of God.

Some of the remarks were directed at the way in which the Synod was conducted: The method lacked a clear way of proceeding. The timetable did not give the topic for each day, after the initial period of receiving input and reports, so it was impossible to prepare for the day's session. During the final days we failed to centre on the important themes. Yesterday, Sister Christine gave us tasks for the next two years, but these should have been the main tasks of this Synod. Language was a problem, especially for interaction with people from other regions. The Synod seemed to come to an abrupt ending; the decisions we were asked to take did not flow from our discussions; the reports from the configurations did not influence the drawing up of the norm for the configurations, which ignored the paths already being followed by CPA and PASPAC. The Synod did a good job in agreeing on solidarity in finance, but I hope it does not take ten years to reach agreement on the other two areas of personnel and formation.

Various people were recognised for their contribution to the work of the Synod, including the facilitators, Fr Francisco Ó Conaire OFM and Fr Aquilino Bocos Merino C.M.F. Fathers Don Webber, Patrick Duffy and Robert Joerger who formed the panel for the session on sexual abuse

were thanked by members of the Synod for the sensitivity and clarity with which they spoke. The various members of the 'staff' of the Synod were also thanked for their work.

Father Ottaviano D'Egidio, Superior General, then gave his concluding remarks. The evaluation has been useful and helpful. There were perhaps some moments of confusion in the Synod, with texts not being sufficiently prepared before being submitted to the assembly. During this Synod we evaluated the viability of the configurations. It was useful to hear the strengths and weaknesses not just of the configurations but also of some of the provinces and vicariates. The General referred to no. 37 of the second part of his report, where he had highlighted the two crucial points which the Synod needed to clarify: 1) the viability of the configurations, and 2) the legislative and executive capacity required by the councils of the configurations. Fr Ottaviano now referred to the four principles of nomads, which can be useful in a time of restructuring: 1) adapt to nature: 2) adapt to other people; 3) practice openness to others; 4) practice reciprocity of life, which means not helping someone so that they will help me, but helping another so that someone in the future will be helped. In one of his novels, Flaubert wrote, 'Do you love this person enough to give up your happiness for their happiness?' Jesus did this for us. The General then went on to thank all those who had worked to support the Synod and all the Synod members for their participation. He said that yesterday had been a disappointing day for him but that now he was more hopeful, and he encouraged the Synod members to go forward in the process of restructuring, without putting a brake on things. It was their task as superiors, he said, to let people know what had happened at the Synod; no one should try to obstruct the move forward, but all should consider themselves bound by what has been decided together. This was the time to go forward joyfully, under the guidance of Saint Paul of the Cross who is smiling down on us.

The session was followed by Mass presided over by Fr Ottaviano, during which he preached the final homily and formally closed the 14th General Synod of the Passionist Congregation.

PART TWO

REPORTS

CONFERENCES

HOMILIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As is customary, I herein state what is prescribed by our Constitutions in this regard. No. 144 states that: "*The General Synod will examine the programmes proposed by the General Chapter and evaluate their implementation. Furthermore, it will suggest initiatives to keep the Congregation continually up to date; it will propose means of settling problems in a spirit of brotherly harmony, and will call the attention of the various Provinces to their duties towards one another*."

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

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

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

The central theme and very heart of the Synod will be the consideration and in-depth study of the mandate of our last General Chapter, which committed "the Congregation to proceed with the process of

Restructuring begun at the General Synod of 2004 and which will continue at least until the next General Chapter in 2012."

In this regard I wish to restate several of the points that were made in the Letter to the Congregation of 11 October 2009 concerning the Process of Restructuring: «*No. 13: Successive phases:[…]*

c) At the General Synod of 2010 the results of the two years of work of the six Configurations will be presented together with their directives for the structures designed for Solidarity in Formation, Personnel and Finances for each Configuration;

d) The General Council will similarly present its work for the structures elaborated for the three areas of Solidarity in the entire Congregation;

e) The Synod will do its discernment in reference to the new structures for the three areas of Solidarity proposed for the entire Congregation and for the individual Configurations and will make its own decisions or will give suggestions about how to proceed with this process. There-fore, this will be the moment of trial by fire in the process of Restructuring;

f) The final phase envisioned for our process will be the period from 2010 to 2012. During this time we should accomplish what was specified by the Synod of 2010 in order to arrive at the General Chapter with the ability to make structural decisions that will be capable of giving new vitality to the life and mission of the Congregation.

g) The General Chapter of 2012 will take make appropriate decisions for accomplishing the objective of the process of Restructuring and conclude it.»

Dear brothers, today, 24 June, the solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the day on which we are convoking the next General Synod, offers us points for reflection and calls us to a certain freedom of spirit that characterized the Saint that we are commemorating. With a selfless spirit and with great conviction he spoke about Jesus: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals" (Mk.1:7); and as Jesus was coming down the mountain going toward the Jordan River: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." (Jn.1:29) And to his own disciples who followed him and who asked him who he was, John responded: "I am not the Messiah…I am not [Elijah], I am not [the Prophet]. I am 'the voice of one crying out…'" (Jn.1:20-23). He is the voice of the Spirit, the one who announces the coming of Jesus and who recognizes that he is present among us and that we need to be virtuous

in order to worthily receive "the Lamb of God". It is the announcement of his passion: the Paschal Lamb, Jesus, will take away the sins of the world by his sacrificial death. Everyone saw Jesus, but he "recognized" him and openly proclaimed him. John also tells us that we need to have eyes and hearts that recognize Jesus and his innovative presence among us. Therefore, as a Congregation we need to enter the time period that lies before us-- the upcoming Synod-- like John, not with preconceptions and prejudices, but with interior freedom, with courage, trusting in the Spirit who guides us, and in a spirit of faith and an awareness of the presence of Jesus.

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

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

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

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

Fraternally,

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

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

REPORT OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO THE XIV GENERAL SYNOD

Retreat of Sts. John and Paul, Rome, 22-31 October 2010

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIONS

1. Dear brothers in Christ Crucified and Risen,

Fraternal greetings and best wishes to all of you here and, in particular, to each of you who, with various titles and responsibilities, are participating in this Synod. I especially wish to greet and welcome those of you who have recently been elected as Major Superiors and who are at a Synod assembly for the first time. You will enrich us with your creativity and enthusiasm.

I also greet all of you in the name of the General Council and the community of Sts. John and Paul that offers us hospitality for the celebration of the XIV Synod of the Congregation. I welcome you and through you, with heart and mind, I see and remember all the religious of our communities and the laity of the Passionist Family who, as laborers called to the vineyard of the Lord, live and work in sixty countries. I especially wish to remember the sick and those who suffer in spirit: may the Lord bless them and may our spiritual and human concern comfort them.

I ask the men and women religious and laity to accompany us with their prayer so that the Synod may be a grace-filled event that enlightens our mind, so that we may discern the ways of the Lord for the Congregation today. May it open our hearts to charity and to generosity, and strengthen our will so that we may act courageously and definitively on what He asks of us.

2. The theme of the Synod, *"Solidarity for a new life and mission"*, is intended to unite us ideologically and substantially with the last Synod of 2008 that was celebrated in Cuernavaca, Mexico. It was an event that continues to offer us wonderful memories and encouragement about what has been accomplished along the journey of the Congregation. We also recall the warm welcome that we received from the religious of the Province of Christ the King, and the women religious and the laity that share our spirituality. Again, thank you: May our Lady of Guadalupe also guide and protect us during this Synod.

3. The graphic design of the Logo of this Synod consists of a Passionist Sign surrounding the world, lands and seas, along with the inscription: "Solidarity for a new life and mission". The words follow the path of the curve of the continents between South America and Australia, encir-

cling lower Africa. It is meant to signify our unity as an integrated family immersed in the charism. The Passionist Sign which envelopes it is meant to enhance solidarity, enlivening our community life and mission. In addition to being an ideal and a hope, as is symbolized by the color green of the contents of the Logo, solidarity is a goal to which we aspire and is indicated by the red-colored fire that forms the background of the Sign, which is immersed in the light of the resurrection and a new dawn.

4. This is the objective that we hope to achieve during these days of the Synod. We are not alone as we look for answers; we are aware of the presence of the Lord in our midst. It is He who has convoked us with the voice of the Church and He is with us in the boat of this synod hall. And even if his place here seems to be vacant, we need to have faith: He is with us and we should not fear the headwinds of the difficult moments that we may encounter during the Synod, or the rough seas of doubt and fear. We must trust that we will arrive at the other shore because He is awake: He calms the winds and the waves become navigable once again.

5. Yes! We must be convinced that He will not leave us alone, as He did not leave the apostles alone after his Ascension into heaven when a cloud took him from their sight. Jesus promised the disciples a Consoler. He assured them that He would not leave them orphans and the Acts of the Apostles recount for us what occurred on the day of Pentecost when they were like we are today and as we will be during these upcoming days – together in one place: *"When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind… And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2: 2-4)

6. My brothers, let us invoke the same Holy Spirit who appeared like tongues of fire over the heads of the disciples. He was alive yesterday and He is alive today: "Come, Holy Spirit/ And send out from heaven Your radiant light/Come, father of the poor/ Come, giver of gifts/ Come, light of our hearts." (Sequence of the liturgy of Pentecost) He will open our minds and our hearts and we will be surprised at what will happen, as the crowd in Jerusalem was surprised*: "They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."* (Acts 2:7-

11) Distances are nullified when God speaks to the heart. It is the language of the Spirit of love that makes us able to understand and move toward each other even if we have different cultures. This innovation that Jesus inaugurated and which was then fulfilled by the Holy Spirit enables us, within the present historical context of humanity and of the Congregation, to look toward the future with trust: *"Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.*" (Ps. 103)

7. Using appropriate discernment we want to seek the future course of our life and identify the current challenges that arise from the process of Restructuring that we have been developing during the past six years. These are possibilities for renovation that are well-rooted in our past and in the charism that the Holy Spirit gave to St. Paul of the Cross and which is our inheritance. It is our task and it is a call from God to discern how we can give renewed life to Passionist values so that we can make the witness of fraternal life in our communities more authentic and give new energy to our mission that originates from the spring of the suffering of the Crucified One. We cannot neglect this task because the Passion of Christ did not end with his death on the cross; rather his Passion is alive and tangible and it continues in a mysterious yet real way, in the suffering of men and women and in the wounds of creation. Being alive and present is being faithful to our vocation; however, if we want to fully live consecrated life that speaks prophetically about salvation and liberation, it is necessary to refocus our lives on Calvary and reassume the cross, the origin of our vocation and the symbol of our identity. Fidelity to the God of the Cross identifies us as Passionists and as those who are sent into the world to announce the Good News to the "crucified".

8. Fidelity to the God of the Cross means living our vocation and following the Founder. In fact Paul, enlightened by the Holy Spirit and, as if after a long journey, is struck by the belief that the Passion of Jesus and the Cross are the salvation of the world. This was the foundational "credo" of Paul of the Cross, writes Fr. Stanislas Breton in "The Passionist Congregation and its Charism". And it is from this fire, from this river of fire that the Passionist Congregation was born. And today it is truly alive to the degree that it owns this origin as the underlying principle of its very being and its Passionist ministry.

The statement: *"I believe that the Cross of Christ is the salvation of the world",* continues Breton, is the Passionist profession of faith. It is a faith that must become service.

St. Paul the Apostle also affirms this in his first Letter to the Corinthians: *"To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit."* (1Cor. 12:7) And the charism, if shared, becomes service.

9. In Paul, the compelling certainty that the Passion of Jesus "is the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love" becomes clear. And he calls it "the miracle of miracles of the love of God", "the sea of love and pain" – love and pain that Paul frequently experienced. Then, considering the time in which he lived, its problems and its difficulties, he had the great insight that "evil is the fruit of and stems from having forgotten the Passion of Jesus."

10. To remember – in the sense of "keeping alive the memory" of the Passion of Jesus – is the most efficacious remedy for the evils that afflict, exhaust and divide humanity, because authentically "keeping alive the memory" means living by it and wanting one's own life, choices and interpersonal and social relationships to be inspired by its logic of love. In this sense, "keeping alive the memory" is not only an authentic spiritual revolution, but also a cultural revolution. It possesses a capacity to produce relevant cultural changes by engendering relationships among people that are characterized by self-giving and love and not, as so frequently occurs today, by selfishness, dominance, violence, wars and the exploitation of entire populations to the point of allowing them to die of starvation.

11. It is within "keeping alive the memory" that we wish to situate and live solidarity as a goal to be attained by taking additional steps during this Synod in order to choose the most efficacious means to confront "the evils of the world" of today and in order to overcome "the difficulties of the Congregation". We want to respond to the evils of today's world in all its complexity and with all its challenges with the most effective instruments and also by challenging ourselves with the reality of the Congregation. Over the last six years of this process we have enumerated and studied the problems of the globalized world and of the Congregation, and the last Synod of 2008 in Mexico singled out solidarity as an instrument and a process for responding to the challenges that we have to address today and in the years ahead.

12. Solidarity is not an ideology, but a way of being faithful to the Gospel of the Cross*: "The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (Mt.20:27) The death of Jesus on the cross is the maximum expression of solidarity by "service" that becomes a "gift" of life "for others".

It is the paschal mystery and the solidarity of God with humanity, similar to the solidarity that exists in the relationship among the persons of the Trinity and which emanates from it, and becomes a model of life and an objective to be pursued in our life choices and mission.

13. In fact, the Trinity itself wanted to be united with humanity: *"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son",* (Jn.3:16) – Jesus said to Nicodemus during the night. The Son of God is incarnated in Mary by the work of the Holy Spirit. God is incarnated and the Son of man is born in solidarity that is so radical that He becomes "one of us". He will be called the Son of God the Most High and at the same time, the Son of David. He will identify with us to the point that He will take upon himself not only our humanity, but also our sins, through the bitter river of his Passion.

14. He will be rejected by his people and the religious authorities and he will feel cut off from the land and every entitlement. He will feel like a stranger among his own people who would not accept him. Even the doors of the synagogue would be closed to him on the Sabbath so that he would not find consolation in the scroll of the Law, reading the words of Isaiah and the prophets that, so many years before, described what was happening then. In addition to being deprived of belonging to the people of Israel on a human level, he had the experience of being uprooted from the Trinity itself: "Father, why have you abandoned me?"—as if the Father had ceased to be Father and He was no longer recognized as the Son.

15. Through the bitter river of the renouncement of every attachment and privilege He assumed all of man's sufferings and He will bear them until the end of time in his wounds that will remain even after the Resurrection. He is risen and we will rise with Him. However the passion of his people continues and it completes His Passion and He is part of it and continues to suffer as a ransom for many.

The Church with its ancient and contemporary martyrs continues to die on the Cross, the crosses that are still planted on Calvary. Once again, as happened during the destruction of Jerusalem, there are no more trees in the forest to build crosses because of the innumerable acts of people's violence in the world. Life is not respected; there is no mutual concern, only abuses of power: *"We will…fix our scales for cheating…We will buy the lowly man for silver; even the refuse of the wheat we will sell!"* (Amos 8:6)

16. We want to work contrary to the mentality of the world. We want to serve and to be a gift to be shared, as Jesus has done for us, for our life and our mission.

It is the task of this Synod to continue discerning additional steps to be taken in the project already underway in order to bring about solidarity in the three areas of formation, personnel and finances which we believe is essential for the revitalization of the Congregation. It is a task

that we cannot shy away from even if we need to modify or add something to our Constitutions or to the General Regulations. In order to achieve the objectives that we are proposing we must assume an attitude of spiritual and cultural responsibility which, in turn will require that we make some changes.

17. Our Founder himself, Paul of the Cross, throughout the long travail leading to the approbation of the Rule, from the beginning until its final approval in 1775, the very year of his death, was convinced of the indefatigable energy of the Spirit and the dynamic presence of God in the history of the world and in the Church, and therefore, in the Congregation. The power of the Spirit is not exhausted and we cannot stop life as if we have arrived at something unassailable; whereas everyday experiences and what occurs in culture, in research and in us is continually new and different.

18. A Congregation that is not capable of changing itself sooner or later loses the capacity to change the world and falls into contradiction. We should not be afraid of change. I recall the exhortation of the Italian episcopacy for the first decade of 2000: "Communicating the Gospel in world of change," which invites us to take a realistic look at the context in which we are called to offer our witness. In fact, it deals with catching a glimpse of "God's today" and its demands on us. We are challenged to address the new millennium with new trust in the presence of the Risen Christ and in the courage that was given to us by the decisive action of the Holy Spirit.

19. And in order to respond to this urgency that is present throughout the Church, as the Apostolic Letter, "Novo millennio ineunte," of John Paul II reminds us, we assumed the process of Restructuring at the Synod of 2004. During these ten days we will continue this process with prayer and fraternal dialog in order to make further decisions and plan courses of action.

20. Let us place our work under the protection of Mary, *Salus Popoli Romani* (the Health of the Roman People), who is venerated in the Borghese chapel of the Basilica of St. Mary Major. It was before this icon that St. Paul of the Cross professed the vow that characterized his life and our Congregation: *"to promote in the hearts of the faithful devotion to the Passion of Jesus and work toward gathering companions to do the same."*

Amen.

PART II

STARTING AFRESH AFTER CUERNAVACA

Dear brothers,

I am continuing my reflections following the first part of the report that I gave last Friday which sought to open up and encourage a spiritual context connected with the opening liturgy of the Synod. Yesterday the reflections of Fr. Aquilino Bocos Merino shed further light on our journey and encouraged us to continue the search for choices that will give us new vitality and energy.

We must afresh again after Cuernavaca and following the decisions that the 2008 Synod made and the direction that it provided. However, in order to understand as well as possible what happened and its meaning we need to review, even if only briefly, the period "before" Cuernavaca.

1. There were twelve provincial Chapters that were celebrated during the two years between the Synods of 2008-2010. There were a significant number of changes in provincial government and therefore it is good to review the steps that were taken in furthering the process of Restructuring because even if it is true that the Congregation is trying to involve all of the religious in the process, it is also true that when someone is called to the ministry of authority the religious understand and perceive him differently and he assumes a greater responsibility for the phases of discernment and the consequences of the decisions that were made.

2. The initial inspiration for the process of Restructuring originated at the General Chapter of 2000: *"The capitulars noted the need for an organizational renewal of structures in the Congregation."* (C.D. 4.7); *"'Solidarity' is the word chosen to describe a new way of being together as Passionists in the mission for the life of the world. New realities call for new responses in faith…Solidarity calls us to a profound conversion of mind and heart. We grow in awareness that life is a gift to be shared."* (C.D. 4.6)

However, the true and actual beginning of the process took place at the Synod of 2004 during which it was recognized as a call from God to conversion and to new, creative fidelity in community life, in mission and in solidarity within the Congregation, giving preference to the poor.

3. The Congregation, Provincial Councils and communities entered into dialog and discernment using the three key words: Charism, Presence and Mission, which were interpreted in prophetic and creative ways. The objectives to be achieved were: a) positively involve every religious in the process of spiritual and institutional renewal; b) create a planned process that would help the Congregation to journey together; and c) reformulate today our Passionist vision for the world of tomorrow.

I again wish to thank the commission composed of Fr. Denis Travers, Fr. Nicholas Postlethwaite and Fr. Adolfo Lippi who creatively worked with the General Council.

4. The General Chapter of 2006, by means of the Central Declaration, the very heart and key to the Chapter itself, encouraged us to earnestly continue the process of Restructuring that was already in process. It acknowledged the process and discerned that it was a call from God to a new way of "reflecting", of "interacting" among us and of accepting the possibility of "re-creating" the structures that are at the service of the charism.

Additionally the Chapter, in order to make the process more efficacious and to allow it to proceed, chose seven Coordinators, one for each of the regional Conferences of the Congregation. At this time I wish to thank those religious who accepted this service of leadership and coordination and, although there will be a way and an opportunity of remembering those who continue in their role as Coordinators, I wish to thank Fr. Joseph Jones (PAUL), Fr. Nicholas Postlethwaite (IOS), Fr. Paul Gabriel Pak (MACOR) and Fr. Norberto Donizetti (CALV) who, for various reasons, have concluded their service as Coordinators.

5. One of the specific fruits of collaboration and dialog between the General Council and the Coordinators was the preparation of a questionnaire for gathering information, called the "Schema-guide" (Templates) for planning Restructuring. The purpose of this instrument was to study the various realities of the Congregation today regarding its strong points and its weak points, the composition of the communities, the number of religious, their age and apostolate, and their presence in a territory. It also collected information about formation and the apostolate, the financial situation and the prospects for the future.

On a positive note, all of the territorial entities – Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates—responded to the "Schema-guide" (Template), supplying the requested information.

6. After reading and analyzing the responses to the Schema-guide, with the expert assistance of Sr. Christine Anderson who moderated the Synod, we were able to understand what we needed and where the Congregation wanted to go in order to: 1) move beyond its needs and limitations; and 2) to increase and share the positive elements that are present. Therefore, we proceeded from the analysis of the responses, to operative theories and decisions to be made.

The orientations and the decisions were also the result of the criteria that were developed during a meeting between the General Council and the Coordinators, and which the Synod in Cuernavaca, through dialog and discernment, owned and developed. Among the criteria are those of the international dimension; the flow of life between the older and younger parts of the Congregation; care of the elderly religious and the option for the poor.

7. These brief "recollections" are described in greater detail in the Chapter Document (CD) of 2000, "The Passion of Jesus Christ, Passion for Life", in the Acts of the Synod of 2004 and in the documents of the General Chapter of 2006, including the Report on the State of the Congregation, the Central Document, the Ten Priorities and the approved Proposals. In all of these documents there is information, including the steps that led us to the celebration of the Synod in Cuernavaca.

8. Development of the Synod. The Constitutions at No.144 prescribe the task of the Synod: *"The General Synod… will examine the programmes proposed by the General Chapter and evaluate their implementation. Furthermore, it will suggest initiatives to keep the Congregation continually up to date; it will propose means of settling problems in a spirit of brotherly harmony, and will call the attention of the various Provinces to their duties towards one another."* Therefore the main topic and the heart of the Synod is that of verifying and studying more in depth the mandate of the last General Chapter that committed *"the Congregation to further the process of Restructuring that was begun at the General Synod of 2004 and will continue at least until the next General Chapter."*

9. Following the opening liturgy in the outdoor garden and under the large trees of our garden in Cuernavaca, we proceeded to the aula for the opening prayer, and then greetings and the formal rites of our Synods. With our hearts and minds warmed and enlightened by the reflections of Fr. Donald Senior (CRUC) and Fr. Octavio Mondragón (REG) we continued with the specific tasks of the Synod.

10. Through the analysis of the responses to the Schema-Template the Synod was directed to the key word "solidarity" that needs to be operative in the three areas of priority for a new vitality in the Congregation: Solidarity in Formation, Solidarity in Personnel and Solidarity in Finances. We can no longer consider these areas of solidarity merely as voluntary generous options in times of difficulty or natural catastrophe, occasions on which the Congregation has always been generous, or as occasional choices of a Chapter or a Provincial Council. Rather, the Synod decided to make this solidarity structural so that it becomes a reality that is shared on a daily basis.

11. There was a new awareness that every part of the Congregation is responsible for the other. Therefore, through research that was first done in group discussion and successively in assembly, the six new territorial Configurations were formed and adopted. They are composed of Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Vicariates and missions and they were formed in the light of the criteria and the possibility of being able to be in solidarity in the three areas of Formation, Personnel and Finances. The predominance of some criteria rather than others gave different connotations to the composition of the Configurations.

12. Experimentation. These Configurations were approved for further study and given the task of evaluating and experimenting, during the two years leading up to the present Synod, with the "viability" of membership in the Configuration as a structural hypothesis for the future. Each of the Coordinators was assigned the task of continuing the work of leading his own Configuration, in collaboration with the General Council and in union with the other Configurations. In fact, we will also need to oversee and discern collaboration between the Configurations especially in the three areas of solidarity so that they do not become isolated within themselves or enclosed in their own problems and therefore risk re-establishing, even if in a different dimension, the current excessive autonomy and isolation of the Provinces.

Additionally, it was decided that each Configuration would have a General Consultor as a reference person.

With these decisions and directives the Synod of Cuernavaca presented the successive steps for proceeding in the process of Restructuring.

13. It was a challenge and it remains so for us today to accomplish what was asked of us because it involves proceeding with a change of mind-set, of points of reference and of perspectives when addressing prob-

lems. In the meeting between different religions that took place at the end of last September in Barcelona, Andrea Riccardi of the St. Egidio Community warned against a dramatization of differences, that results in engendering fear of the other; however, it is not differences that should frighten us, but the fact that we do not know how to react to them; that we do not know how to live together. We need conversion of heart, of mind and of will. "My" needs to be changed into "our". Autonomy should be changed into relationship and profound and efficacious collaboration to the extent that it becomes structural. The sense of being "a Province, Vice-Province and Vicariate" should change into "a sense of being a Configuration and a Congregation".

14. Arriving at this conviction of sharing gifts and making talents flourish for the good of all is an investment and not a loss. During the two years since the Synod of 2008 until the present Synod we have had the task of planning and experimenting with possible ways of accomplishing Solidarity in the three areas of Formation, Personnel and Finances both on a Congregational level as a whole as well as on the level of the Configurations.

15. The General Council created a Commission to study Solidarity in finances, with Frs. Robert Joerger (PAUL), Augusto Canali (CALV) and Edwin Flor (PASS), assisted by Fr. Battista Ramponi (General Econome) and Fr. Jesús María Aristín (Secretary General for the Missions and Solidarity); whereas the sectors of Formation and Personnel judged that it was more prudent and efficacious to attend to the development of the process in the Configurations in order to offer a more adequate response. We are still studying the idea of creating, as an alternative to the Commissions, offices or at least an office for Formation given the importance of this area. It is a possible choice that can even be explored during the present Synod.

16. Despite some delays due to the celebration of twelve Provincial Chapters, the Configurations proceeded to study and to carry out, on an experimental level, what was requested by the Synod through meetings of the Executive Committees of the Configurations that were composed of the Provincials, the Vice-Provincials, the Regional Vicars, the Coordinator and the reference General Consultor, and through the work of the study groups or the Commissions of the Configuration. The Study groups, each in their area of competence, worked at offering guidelines and projects to the Executive Committee. In order to facilitate the choice of initiatives and actions, each of the three areas of solidarity used a discernment instrument

that was the result of the meetings at the end of November 2008 and of June 2009 between the General Council and the Coordinators.

17. Evaluation. The evaluation of the process, the difficulties encountered and the accomplishments achieved, will be done during the current Synod where, through appropriate dialog and discernment, we will see if we need to make modifications or corrective changes to the process. However the itinerary of the process of "feasibility" of the new Configurations will not end with the present Synod, even though it will be an important phase for the Congregation. In fact during the Synod we will confirm or modify the process, addressing any eventual problems that may arise during experimentation and we will evaluate opportunities for study and confirm a model for a decision-making Body for the three areas of solidarity in the Configurations and for the General government, while continuing to recognize the Synod as a transition phase.

18. The two concluding years of the process, 2010-2012, will bring us to the General Chapter where we foresee that the Configurations will conclusively be defined as entities in themselves and also the model of government, both on a general level and for the Configurations, will be approved.

The next two years will also be a useful period for verifying the juridical implications of the decisions that were made and the compatibility of the choices that we want to make in accord with the prescriptions of Canon Law. In fact, juridical verification will only be possible after the present Synod when the objectives that we want to achieve with the process of Restructuring are clearer and more concrete. We cannot request juridical rulings about elements that are not yet well defined.

19. It may be useful to review what is currently stated in our Constitutions concerning juridical aspects: No. 104. *The establishment, suppression, and joining of Provinces are reserved to the General Chapter, or to the Superior General with the consent of the General Synod. The modification of a Province belongs to the Superior General with the consent of his Council, having heard the opinion of the Provincial Authorities concerned. The establishment, modification, and suppression of a 'Vice-Province pertain to the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after having consulted with the others concerned.*

The establishment and suppression of a General Regional Vicariate are reserved to the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

The establishment and suppression of a Provincial Regional Vicariate are reserved to the Provincial Chapter or to another body determined according to the Regulations of the Province, with the previous approval of the Superior General having obtained the consent of his Council.

Const. No. 116. *The Superior General may dispense individual religious. With the consent of his Council, he may dispense individual houses, Vicariates, and Provinces from any disciplinary norms of the Constitutions or from any norm of our General Regulations. With the consent of his Council he may also dispense from the decisions and decrees of Congresses and of Provincial Chapters.*

20. Therefore the Constitutions already give the decision making bodies of the Congregation the faculty to make decisions regarding the constitution, suppression, union or modification of Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates as well as giving them the faculty to be able to dispense from any norm of the General Regulations; however if the present Synod makes a decision that is not addressed in the Constitutions or the General Regulations, we may always ask the Holy See for dispensation from a prescription or for consent for a new norm. The Constitutions and the General Regulations are derived from discernment and the decisions of a General Chapter (1982) and were approved by the Holy See. Another General Chapter has the same authority to modify them and to request approbation from the Holy See. Various Congregations have revised their Constitutions.

21. However, in order to arrive at being able to discern at this point in time, it is necessary to present and evaluate the results of the two years of work of the six Configurations in reference to the concrete accomplishments and orientations that were used for the creation of new structures for the three areas of Solidarity proposed for the entire Congregation and for the individual Configurations. It will also be important to dialog about the doubts and fears that are present in the Configurations or in the individual Provinces and in the religious so that the doubts can be resolved and, as far as possible, we can decide on common structural choices.

22. The meetings of the General Council and the Coordinators were significant events marked by great intensity and, when possible, included the participation of the General Council in the meetings of the Configurations. The letter, “Where are we in the process of Restructuring?” of October, 2009, was helpful in clarifying and focusing our attention on the process.

23. The presentations on the process of Restructuring that were done by the members of the General Council, at times using Power Point, during the canonical or pastoral visitations, were well received and appreciated by the religious. Additionally, the long requested translation of the documents of the Synod of 2008 in more languages and the upgrading (not yet complete) of the Web site have been very helpful.

24. During the two-year period 2008-2010, there were four meetings that lasted approximately three days, between the General Council and the Coordinators with the participation of Sr. Christine Anderson. There were also meetings between the Configurations and the General Council, even if at times incomplete: Sierra Madre (USA), with some Provinces of JCFIX; Nairobi, Kenya, CPA; Munich, CEB and Madrid, SCOR. A meeting was also scheduled with the NECP Configuration of North Europe, but the eruption and smoke of the volcano in Iceland cancelled it. The Finance Commission was, in part, also affected by this situation.

25. Other meetings of the PASPAC and JCFIX Configurations also took place and included the participation of one or two General Consultors. But all of these meetings and the work of the Provincial Councils and the study groups or commissions and their conclusions and the difficulties that they encountered converged to a large degree during the meeting that took place in Rome during last 27 – 29 July, between the General Council and the Coordinators with Sr. Christine as the moderator.

26. The JCFIX Configuration was present at this meeting, and since the Coordinator of the Configuration, Fr. Joseph Jones (PAUL) had resigned from this position, while at the same time submitting a report on the progress of the process in the Configuration, Fr. Fiorenzo Bordo, PRAES Provincial and Fr. Enzo Del Brocco, DOL Provincial were also present. Once again we thank Fr. Joseph Jones for the work that he did and we offer our best wishes to the new Coordinator, Fr. Enzo Del Brocco, who was named at the meeting of the Configuration that took place here in Rome during the past several days.

27. The meeting of last July was: a) informative, with the reporting of the work that was done by the General Council and the Configurations; b) a verification of where we are in the process; c) a verification of the viability of the Configurations; d) an examination of hopes and difficulties; e) a clarification of the objectives of the Synod; and f) a preparation for the Synod.

28. The Coordinators will directly inform the Synod about the work that has been done by the Configurations, the results that were achieved and the difficulties encountered, as well as the prospects and needs for clarification on several vital points of the process.

The work that was done by the General Council is reported, in part, in this document and in part in the Power Point presentation and in other communications offered to the Synod and in the reports of the Coordinators.

29. In order to understand the various problematic areas that are present in the process it is crucial to understand how the various entities that compose them, the Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Vicariates and mission areas, are interrelated in forming their own Configurations.

30. The **CPA Configuration** is undertaking its own experimentation with a model of Configuration in which the Council of the Configuration is formed by the four major superiors of the entities that comprise it. The Council is the decision making body of the Configuration in all that concerns the three areas of solidarity: formation, personnel and finances. The Council has a president who also represents the CPA beyond the Configuration and it has a Vice President. Specific commissions for the three areas of solidarity collaborate with the Council of the Configuration.

31. The CEB Configuration is undertaking its own experimentation with a model of Configuration that includes the union of five Provinces (four Italian and one French) with a single provincial authority while the others remain as Regions with their own Superiors. The other two Provinces (ASSUM and VULN) wish to remain autonomous while at the same time participating with the Configuration in projects of the three areas of Solidarity. The Council of the Configuration is composed of the Major Superiors of the entities that comprise it. The commissions or study groups in for each of the areas of solidarity collaborate with the Council.

32. The JCFIX Configuration is currently formed of all the entities that comprise it, even if requests and plans for a union of Provinces and Vicariates are being studied. The Council is comprised of all the major Superiors of the Configuration who make decisions by a majority of votes in those cases where there is no unanimity. The major Superiors of the various entities should act according to the decisions of the Council. The commissions or study groups for the three areas of solidarity are each composed of three major Superiors of the Configuration. The President of the Council will also assume the role of Coordinator.

There is still discussion about the model of the Configuration: 1) One Configuration divided into two geographical regions; 2) One Configuration with a single zone. Given the size of the configuration, issues of internal flexibility, as well as, flexibility for planning and for activity are being considered.

33. SCOR Configuration. The Configuration is continuing with experimentation about the possibility of a union of the entities that comprise it resulting in a single Province. The executive Council of the Configuration will be composed of the Superiors of the various Zones. The Provincial, with the consent of the Consultors of the Zones will carry out what is decided, using criteria similar to those of the Province, especially for the three areas of solidarity. Commissions and study groups will work together for the programming of the three areas of solidarity.

34. The NECP Configuration. The Configuration of North Europe is moving toward collaboration among the four Provinces that comprise it, using the same criteria and norms that existed in the former Regional Conferences together with its Statutes. They will continue to dialog about how to address the three areas of solidarity, but without creating any juridical bonds among them. The major Superiors themselves will form the commissions.

35. The PASPAC Configuration. The Configuration is formed of the same entities as the former Regional Conference. It is organized into various commissions and study groups for the three areas of solidarity. The Council of the Configuration is composed of the major Superiors of the entities and their missions that comprise it. They feel the need for a body that will make decisions about what is proposed by the Commissions for the three areas of solidarity, but they are still studying the model of governance for the Configuration: A kind of collegial government (Board of Major Superiors) that make decisions in reference to the three areas of solidarity.

36. I will not report on the numerous activities that took place in the various Configurations in the three areas of Solidarity because they will be communicated in the Reports of the Coordinators; but it is encouraging see the projects that were realized, even those that did not involve the large entities, especially in the area of Formation. The most important thing is to note the change of mentality that is slowly taking place because we are becoming more convinced that we need to make changes in our current situations.

We need to always be especially attentive to avoiding complex structures because one of the objectives of restructuring is that of downsizing and simplifying the structures.

37. In the meeting with the Coordinators that was referred to above, but also discussed in all the meetings, it became clear that there is a strong need for the Configurations to be able to function with greater agility and awareness. This should especially clarify two aspects: 1) The "viability", i.e. the validity of their composition and their being together in order to bring about greater vitality among them and with the Congregation through solidarity in the three areas of formation, personnel and finances. 2) "Legislative and executive capacity" for the Councils of the Configurations. It is an open issue that creates great uncertainty in the process of restructuring. One of the tasks of this Synod should be to make a decision in this area, even if only on an experimental basis for the next two years and which would be examined at the next General Chapter.

38. The reports of the Coordinators and the dialog that will take place during the Synod will help us to discern the "viability" of the present compositions of the Configurations or if there will need to be modifications.

As can be seen, within a Configuration there is ample flexibility concerning time frames, ways of proceeding and decisions that are made.

With regard to "decision-making power", we are already convinced that if we do not want to nullify the process of restructuring, and in order for the Configurations to be effective, they should have the capacity, beyond that of discernment, to also be able to make decisions and act on them.

39. After long and often difficult dialog, the General Council, having heard the opinions of the Coordinators, has proposed the following text for the evaluation and approval of the Synod:

"For the next two years, from the Synod of 2010 to the General Chapter of 2012. Every time that the Major Superiors of a Configuration make a decision – by means of consensus or with a majority vote – in order to make a decision or to establish a structure that concerns Solidarity in Personnel, Formation and Finances, for the Configuration, all of the Major Superiors will abide by that decision. All the Superiors and the entities within the Configuration are obliged to collaborate in enacting the decision. The Major Superior of the Configuration – elected from among major superiors of the Configuration – will be responsible for putting the decision into practice.

a) Those decisions that concern the entire Configuration and/or the other Configurations shall be communicated to the Superior General and to his Council.

b) If during the next two years, an entity elects a new Major Superior, the latter must respect the previous decisions were made for the Configuration and abide by the norms stated above.

c) If this is approved by the Synod, then, immediately following the same Synod, the Superior General, with the approval of his Council, will make a temporary norm for the Congregation.

d) This norm will remain in effect until the General Chapter of 2012, at which time it may be confirmed, modified or replaced."

40. Dear brothers, the project of Restructuring should move forward and become concrete; otherwise the same problems remain unresolved for community life and mission, both for the parts of the Congregation that are growing and for those that are diminishing. Institutionalized Solidarity consists of giving the Configurations the capacity and the power to make decisions, and we should not be afraid because the choices will be made by the Configuration itself. Others will not make decisions for the Configuration; rather the Major Superiors of the Configuration will make the decisions. This should reassure the doubtful. We need to give all the Configurations the possibility of having juridical power, as is currently the case in the Provinces that have the juridical capacity to enact what is decided in the Chapters, in the Assemblies and in the Provincial Council, according to our legislation. Restructuring is within the Constitutions and not something extraneous. Some mechanisms will be modified that make Solidarity more stable and efficacious, but everything will continue to be regulated and enacted according to the spirit of the Constitutions and according to what is prescribed therein.

41. Numbers. Examining the number of religious in each Configuration, it may seem that some of these are excessively spread out geographically, and include diverse cultural realities and an excessive number of religious. This may impede direct and effective contact with the major Superior and also awareness of the local reality and language. Certainly there are serious difficulties; there needs to be an ongoing effort to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers especially by encouraging the young because, in a special way, they will be the ones who will fully enact and benefit from these changes.

42. The present Configurations are composed of the following number of religious and communities: 1) **CEB** (ASSUM, CFIXI, CORM, LAT, MICH, PIET, and VULN): 399 religious, median age: 60; number of communities: 57; 2) **JCFIX** (CALV, CONC, CRUC, DOL, DOMIN, FAT, ISID, LIBER, PAC, PAUL, PRAES, REG, VICT): 624 religious; Median age: 61; communities: 107. 3) **SCOR**:(CORI, FAM, FID, RES, SANG): 415 religious; Median age: 58; communities: 70; 4) **CPA**-(CARLW, GEMM, MATAF, SALV): 147 religious; Median age: 42; communities: 36; 5) **NECP** (GABR, JOS, PATR, SPE) 154 religious; Median age: 73; communities: 19; 6) **PASPAC** (MACOR, MAIAP, PASS, REPAC, SPIR, THOM, Vietnam, China): 378 religious; Median age: 45; communities: 64.

43. Some Configurations have a significant number of religious and are geographically dispersed and intercultural. However, I find it interesting and it may serve to enlighten our discernment by dispelling or at least lessening some fear to recall some elements of our history which is also similar to that of other Congregations.

44. The period of major numerical development of the Congregation took place during the period of 1965-1971 in which our Congregation was composed of 4,331 religious, including 200 novices. Some Provinces had a number of religious that exceeded or was similar to that of the current Configurations, such as PAUL (USA) that was composed of 611 religious and 27 novices; CORI (Spain) 381 religious and 28 novices; CRUC (USA) 357 religious and 37 novices; CORM (Italy) 304 religious and 25 novices; PIET (Italy) 238 religious and 7 novices; FAM (Spain) 234 religious and 9 novices; SPE (Holland) 225 religious and 10 novices; PATR (Ireland/Scotland) 219 religious and 9 novices; GABR (Belgium) 213 religious and 3 novices, etc. I named only those provinces with more than 200 religious.

45. In addition to these provinces, so too in the others with numbers less than 200, by the power of their evangelizing missions they expanded to other continents, including other realities that were geographically, socially, culturally and linguistically diverse. It was a time of great courage and missionary zeal.

46. The Provincial with his council were in charge of coordinating the vitality of all the parts of the Province that extended to other continents and also supported the entire Congregation. Thus, for example, the religious who were in Congo had their provincial in Belgium, similar to Italy

for Kenya and Tanzania and Ireland for South Africa and Botswana, and those in Mexico, in Italy or in Spain were also present in almost all of Latin America; those in Korea or Japan or the Philippines or India, in the United States, those of Indonesia in Holland and Italy in Brazil: an intercontinental reality. There are other significant examples, but I don't want to forget the zealous presence in China of the Passionists of the United States, before they were expelled by Communism.

The geographical and cultural distances between provinces and missions that often later became Vicariates and Provinces, did not impede, although during different historical processes, the attention of the Major Superiors on the development of the missions and the newer parts of the Congregation and the growth of their cultural and religious identity. The large numbers gave them the possibility of vast potential for development both within the Provinces and the entire Congregation. The same potential for development may also take place in the Configurations.

47. Obviously the historical situations of the Church and the Congregation have changed over the years. From a phase of general growth, we have arrived at the re-dimensioning of the western world and a phase of uncharted consolidation and inculturation in other areas. It is precisely for this reason that solidarity, made stable and effective by means of institutional forms of the Configuration, can help and coordinate reciprocal support whether in Formation or the other areas of spiritual and material need, and sustain the various realities of the Configuration and the Congregation.

48. In fact, the three areas of solidarity are interconnected with each other and in order to function well they need to be harmonized through shared projects of the Congregation. Solidarity for formation and for personnel are largely interdependent (as we have already seen in these first experiences) because it is especially in the area of formation that solidarity in personnel is needed in order to be able to choose suitable formation personnel and compose formation communities.

49. This sharing will also be helpful among the various Configurations, while not excluding the possibility of solidarity in the area of formation on the level of the Congregation at large, there will be sharing especially internally within the Configurations. Certainly solidarity in personnel may also be useful in the "missions" as it has always been in the Congregation between Provinces and Vicariates with shared missionary projects. While at the same time we want to avoid solidarity in personnel

merely for the preservation of "works", unless these works are part of a shared project of the Congregation.

50. Another essential instrument for concretely achieving solidarity should be a re-examination of our forms of presence and the number of our communities within a territory for each Configuration. At this point I wish to recall the recovery of the role of the local Superior who lives with the community every day and exercises the service of inspiration and guide. The Constitutions remind us that the communities are the fundamental cells of the Congregation and therefore we should take great care of them.

51. In order to accomplish the objective of establishing communities that give powerful witness by their life and their capacity for evangelization, we are challenged to decrease the number of the communities and our presence in a territory. The areas of solidarity that we are proposing cannot become reality if we will not courageously and decisively review the number of communities and their fragmentation, as well as the "excessive number" of services and ministries.

52. We will succeed in this objective of reducing the number of houses only by changing the composition of the decision-making groups, and similarly, by also choosing persons for the service of authority. Because of historical, sentimental, numerical or other issues, the present entities have become blocked and struggle with their responsibility to discern the closure of houses or the choice of religious for various ministries, especially those of formation and authority.

53. Another fear that may impede our process is saying: "We're not ready to take such an important step. We need more time for reflection and study that will lead us to conversion." Yes, surely preparation is always insufficient and can be improved; however if we look at the Gospel and at the choices of Jesus with regard to his Passion, we will be convinced that the time has arrived for overcoming all doubts and for proceeding to decision making in order to accomplish the plans of God.

54. In fact if we ask ourselves: "Were they ready, were the disciples prepared for the Passion of Jesus?" the answer comes from the Gospel itself. If Jesus had had to wait for understanding and for the disciples to "be ready", Passion Week would never have arrived. The three announcements of the Passion fell into a void and on deaf ears. Even after three years of public life, Jesus overcame reluctance: let us go to Jerusalem.

Thomas wanted to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem because of the many dangers that were involved. During the journey of Jesus and the disciples toward Jerusalem, because of the rejection by the inhabitants of a city of Samaria, James and John asked Jesus if they could pray so that fire would rain down on the city and burn it (how far they were from the love that Jesus taught. Rather than seeking revenge, destroying them with fire from heaven, Jesus was going to his death also for those inhabitants of Samaria.) So too, after the second announcement of the Passion in Mark "along the way they were discussing which of them was the greatest." (Mk. 9:34) Surely the disciples were not ready, neither spiritually or culturally, to begin the week that was both spiritually rich and the most difficult in the life of Jesus: there were those who would betray him; there were those who would flee-- they dispersed, overcome by fear. "Slow of heart to believe", Jesus would say to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

55. They were still far from being ready and yet Jesus decided that the time was right for a choice that was so strong and dramatic. He did not rely on the maturity of men, even if as their Master he had done all that was possible to educate the disciples. Rather, he trustingly commended himself to the Father and the action of the Holy Spirit. This should also be our attitude in reference to the choices that we must make. Words of hope that speak of the future but do not lead to action remain just empty words.

56. We have the resources and the energy that is needed and I encourage you to use them to accomplish what God asks of us though the signs of the times and in this moment in history. I am convinced that in the same charism of the Founder can be found the roots for renewal in today's intercultural context. With his arms extended on the Cross, Jesus transcends barriers and cultural prejudices and makes understanding possible by opening new spaces for interaction among us for new Passionist life.

With great confidence, let us entrust ourselves to Mary so that she may obtain for us from her Son the power to fulfill the mission at hand during these days of the Synod, with the same courage and mind-set that she had:

"At the Cross of Jesus was his mother/ strengthened in faith/ renewed in hope/ on fire with ardent zeal in charity." Amen.

PART III
SOME SPECIFIC TOPICS AND CONCLUSION

1. REMINDERS

a) Participation in the General Chapter. According to what is prescribed at No. 130 of the Constitutions and the General Regulations (GR) that determine the number of delegates to the General Chapter. What is prescribed by the G.R. at No. 77 was modified and approved at the General Synod of 2004 and confirmed at the last General Chapter of 2006.

b) Participation at a General Synod. According to No.147 of the Constitutions, the members of the Synod are those who participate at the General Chapter "ex officio".

c) Modifications to the Constitutions. According to what is prescribed by No. 114 for the modification of any point of the Constitutions a two thirds majority of votes in favor of the change, and in order for it to become part of the text of the Constitutions, it needs to be approved a second time at the successive General Chapter.

2. The Laity. The Lay Passionist movements, with various titles throughout the world, are becoming more and more aware of their being called to our charism and to our mission. They exist, they are involved in formation and are collaborating among themselves and the number of those who are consecrated to the Passion as laity is increasing. We know that St. Paul of the Cross wrote numerous letters to lay men and women, trusting in their capacity to live the spirituality of the Passion.

However, neither in our Constitutions nor in our General Regulations is there is any reference to the laity being called to our charism. I believe that the time has arrived for their inclusion in the Constitutions and in the General Regulations as individuals who are associated with the Congregation. A small commission has proposed inserting into the Constitutions the following provisional text that is intended for study and therefore can be modified: "*There are persons who feel an attraction (calling) to the charism of the Passion and who wish to live it in communion with the Passionist Congregation. When they are formally associated with the Congregation, according to the norms established in the General Regulations, they will form an integral part of the Congregation as the Passionist Family.*"

It is suggested that we place this text or something similar, at the end of Chapter II of the Constitutions, the chapter on Community Life, fol-

lowing No. 38. In fact, in that chapter, in addition to the elements of community life, it speaks about the relationship with those outside the community and hospitality. The General Regulations should contain one or two points that define the forms of association and the specific relationships between the laity of the Passionist Family and the Congregation.

3. HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION. VOLUME III.

The third volume of the History of the Congregation, covering the third period (1839-1862, Vol. III) of the research and publication project, was completed by Fr. Fernando Piélagos (FAM).

A brief summary. The decision to begin the project of writing the history of the Congregation was made at the XXXIII General Chapter of 1-21 May, 1952. Fr. Malcolm La Velle named an historical commission composed of Frs. Fabiano Giorgini, Enrico Zoffoli and Paolino Alonso B.

Fr. Fabiano Giorgini completed the first volume, "*History of the Congregation in the life of the Founder, 1720-1775*"; Fr. Amedeo Naselli was able to prepare "*The Succession, 1775-1796*" (Vol. II/1), but he was not able to complete the second part, *Restoration and Expansion, 1796-1839*, which was completed by Fr. Fabiano (Volume II/2).

Fr. Paolino began work on the period 1839-1862 (Vol. III), but due to his death it was not completed. Finally, Fr. Fernando Piélagos, of the same Province (FAM) as Fr. Paolino, recently completed this work and now the Spanish and Italian versions are ready to be printed. Volume IV (1862-1925) and Volume V (1925- to the present time) remain to be written in order to complete this project. We thank all of those who have given their time, their professional skills and their life to do research for publication. They leave us the treasure of our History that is a "teacher of life".

I thank Fr. Fernando Piélagos for the work that he has completed and for the new work that he has immediately begun. We gratefully and fraternally remember in prayer those who preceded him in this work.

Before concluding this point I wish to remind the Provincials and the Regional Vicars about the task of writing the history of their Provinces and Vicariates. Their research may also be useful as a contribution to the History of the Congregation. Fr. Giorgini wrote me a letter in which he described the usefulness of individual histories for the general History and hoped that all the parts of the Congregation would write their own histories.

Among the approved proposals of the last General Chapter, No. 2 concerns the History of the Provinces: *"During the next six years the Provincials and their Councils shall promote documentary research and the drafting of a history of each province."* This is an invitation and a recommendation that I repeat for those who have not yet done this work.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Frequently when dealing with our internal documents (circular letters, Chapter recommendations, etc.) we sense a great need to increase our communications and make them more effective among our religious and also those who wish to share our spirituality and mission. Earlier this year I wrote to the Congregation about this topic with the circular letter entitled: "*Some information about communications*."

We are all aware that at the very center of effective and true communication is the personal dimension, that personal relationship that is not based on personal compatibility and common interests, but on sharing our very vocation and spirituality. The means of communication that modern technology places at our disposal can help us to do precisely this: not substitute, but expand personal relationships by trying to overcome linguistic, geographical and temporal barriers. This is the scope of what the Congregation is doing in this area, i.e. look for opportunities that are offered to us through the "*Global Village*" in order to put them at the service of our charism. In this way we will be a more united family in order to live the same ideals as St. Paul of the Cross.

The first step that we took in beginning a new project using current technology was the naming of Fr. Clemente Barron as the General Consultor responsible for communications so that there would be a permanent office in this sector. A first commission was then named (in addition to Fr. Clemente, Frs. Ramiro Ruíz Betancourt, Marco Pasquali, Miguel Ángel Villanueva, Pierre Mvumbi Ngumba and Mrs. Federica Franco) and they were given the task of analyzing the situation of the different parts that comprise the Congregation and determining their efficiency in the area of communication. Simultaneously a study was begun concerning digital communications in order to ascertain the current technology that is available and how this might be used for our benefit. The commission concluded its work by identifying some strategies for improving communications within the Passionist Family and with the world at large. In particular, they demonstrated the potential of communication in "Real Time" (video-conferencing, chat, etc.) and the different options for improving accessibility, availability and the sharing of documents of the Congregation,

and most importantly, it laid the foundation for establishing a system for connecting Passionists throughout the world via internet.

An executive commission was then added to this original commission. It is a commission for digital communications (composed of Frs. Clemente Barron, Marco Pasquali and Ramiro Ruíz) and its task is to find specific, operative solutions for accomplishing what was stated above. In particular, they analyzed and presented different systems and programs for use in video-conferences; however the project that they worked on most intensely was that of setting up a new Web site for the Congregation. This commission, chaired by Fr. Massimo Granieri (LAT), is working specifically on this project. Its goal is not merely to provide a simple portal through which one can access the information of the Congregation, but a true and proper system of communication for a rapid and efficient sharing of ideas, resources and documents. It will be a kind of "Virtual Plaza" where one can gather and freely speak about the best systems or a homily for the following Sunday. This kind of web will then integrate different services such as a message system among users, the sharing of multimedia resources, a social Network and an environment for discussion forums both private and public. Most importantly, it will help us to maintain a climate of fraternal and reciprocal esteem that can increase our sense of belonging to a sole Passionist Family.

5. FINANCES: PROJECTS, COMMISSION. I will not address any specific topics in the area of finances since Fr. Battista Ramponi, the General Econome, has prepared a precise and detailed description of this situation in his report, and I thank him for the clear exposition and for the service that he has offered for several years with great dedication and professional expertise for the entire Congregation in the area of finances. However, I would like to highlight several points.

Work Projects. The restoration of several parts of the Retreat of Sts. John and Paul has allowed us to re-claim space that was otherwise unusable. I want to point out the restoration of the areas that are located under the refectory that will house the Library of the Passion which will further enrich the collection of books on this topic that already exist in our Library and also the volumes of the Stauros Library of Weezeembeek-Oppen (GABR). We are grateful to them for their generosity and cooperation. The Library of the Passion can be further enriched by donations of volumes on the topic of the Passion from the other Provinces or realities of the Congregation or other sources. The catalog of the library will be accessible via the internet.

Other works that will be done to increase the use of available spaces for the cultural patrimony of the Congregation will be the restoration of the areas of the former heating system that is located beneath the Sala dei Papi. It is a large area on the same level as the General Archives and therefore may be used to store other materials of the Archives of the Provinces and other realities of the Congregation that because of downsizing may wish to use this space for storage. Currently it is an unused space because the area of the heating system was relocated to a different area, outside the retreat, in keeping with regulations concerning materials.

Solidarity Fund and Commission. Although the finance commission will report on its work and proposals, I would simply like to remind you about the need to increase the Solidarity Fund and the Formation Fund. I thank all those who have been generous with these funds. Contributions have come both from within the Congregation and from the Passionist Family.

Norms that guarantee the security of the funds on an administrative level. This is a serious problem that we need to address. Some provinces have already studied and enacted norms that insure the security of financial funds; however the large majority of the entities, Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates and the communities themselves, do not have precise norms that limit the power of the economes with regard to the use of their funds.

They totally trust the honesty and the capability of the Provincial or local Economes who have the power to use all of the financial patrimony of the Province or the community. The funds are only protected by the trustworthiness of the economes or by their honesty. In the Congregation the faith that is usually placed in the economes has been rewarded by their loyalty and their highly ethical demeanor. Unfortunately, there have been some cases where either because of shrewdness or corruption or deceit or incompetence, the economes has depleted all of the financial funds of the Province, the Vicariate or the community. There are numerous recent examples of this and not only in one Province. We need to find a system of security and banking or precise norms in the financial sector that can be used in order to avoid or at least limit the loss of such funds.

Solidarity in Finances. Our last Synod in Cuernavaca, Mexico, approved the following (No. 2, c.iii): "*Apart from voluntary contributions, all Provinces will normally contribute a percentage (at least 7%) from the sale of any property, to the Solidarity Fund."* The time has come to apply this norm as a tangible sign of our willingness to share: *"sell what you have and give to the poor."* (Mc 10, 21)

6. JPIC. I don't want to add anything else to what was very proficiently presented last 21 October during the day dedicated to the formation of Major Superiors, according to the Recommendation of the General Chapter, which chose Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation as its theme for this year. I merely wish to highlight its importance as a part of our charism and its place therein.

St. Paul of the Cross was a great contemplative and missionary; however in his life we find that there is also a clear option for the poor, the suffering, the abandoned populations, including priests, and great sinners such as criminals. Therefore, giving importance to this area, as does the Church especially in this period in which a third of the population of the world dies of hunger and is oppressed by injustice and violence, is not something that compromises the charism because the love of God is authentic when it is expressed in prayer and in caring for those who are most in need, as we are also reminded in No. 65 of the Constitutions.

When we read in the life of St. Paul of the Cross that he saw the name of Jesus written on the forehead of the poor we are not reading something merely poetic; rather it was a spiritual and human conviction of his: in front of him he saw Christ, the poor man. His missionary initiative began in prayer, solitude and silence at the foot of the Cross. However, it was completed with the proclamation of the Passion of Jesus that he contemplated during his meditation in the decision to go as a missionary to preach in those places where no one else wanted to go, being particularly attentive to the "crucified" that he saw around him. The experience at San Gallicano, where, for more than two years he cared for those who were incurably sick, was profound. The heart of the Passionist charism beats with two continuous pulses: a) contemplating the Passion of Jesus and living in fraternal and poor communities, located in solitude; and b) announcing the contemplated word of the Cross, giving preference to abandoned places and recognizing Jesus in the suffering and in the poor.

7. THE U.N. AND CASES OF RADICAL WITNESS. Closely connected and in harmony with the objective of the Passionist mission is our presence at the U.N. with Passionists International and our NGO that is recognized by the United Nations. It desires to be a voice for the voiceless. We are aware that today, in our globalized world, we cannot work alone to address the problems that concern the world. While we realize that in the important international centers of the U.N. such as the FAO (*Food and Agricultural Organization*) in Rome, the WHO (*World Health Organization*)

in Geneva, etc. where decisions are made that affect all of humanity, we as a Congregation, in collaboration with the Passionist Sisters of the Holy Cross and Passion (during this month the request for participation in our NGO was accepted for the Sisters, Daughters of the Passion and Mary, our Mother of Sorrows, Mexico), have decided to be present and to commit ourselves to eliminate poverty. We believe that working in defense of the poor is part of our mission.

In fact, the General Chapter of 2000 and the next Chapter of 2006 confirmed this and decided that, in addition to a missionary presence in a territory of sixty nations in which men and women Passionists live and evangelize, they should also be present at the United Nations to challenge the decisions and the polices of the "powerful of the earth" when they sin against justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The consequences of these decisions can then be observed and experienced in the people of the mission lands where hunger and thirst are a reality, especially for the poorest and the weakest such as children. The two poles, one in the territory and the other at the United Nations, have the same objective: making the land more just and livable and warding off the threat of self-destruction. The present magisterium of the Church continually promotes and highlights the values of social justice. Even our last General Synod of 2008 singled out the values of Solidarity and sharing as the heart of Restructuring.

However, this is not something that is merely theoretical. It is a reality that we experience in our missions where the radical nature of the Gospel is severely tested, even to the point of people putting their life at risk. I refer to the case of Fr. Mario Bartolini (PIET), a missionary in the Amazon region of Peru who, in order to defend the property of the agricultural lands of his parish of Barranquita from voracious, multinational corporations, was threatened with death and is now awaiting trial at the end of October.

So, too, with Fr. Antonio Rodríguez (FAM), in El Salvador who works with young people to help them to be reincorporated into society, was accused of being a member of youth gangs (maras). I also remember our missions among the indigenous peoples of Ingeniero Juarez, Formosa in Argentina and our presence in Haiti of Fr. Richard Frechette (PAUL), a priest and doctor who works with those children who are infected with HIV/AIDS.

There are also many other radical situations in the Congregation such as in China, Viet Nam, Nigeria, Mozambique, Angola and numerous others that challenge us to respond in the territory and in the missions. But

we also want to be present at the UN where we can work to eliminate the causes that engender poverty and injustice. It is true that the Passion of Jesus continues in men, in women and in creation. I wish to thank Fr. Kevin Dance (SPIR), our representative, Sr. Mary Anne Strain, Sr. Joanne Fahey, and Mr. Timothy O'Brien who, together with the other members of the board, and in collaboration with our Secretariat for Solidarity and the Missions has done excellent work. Next June, Fr. Kevin Dance will end his mandate and therefore we will need to think about his replacement, someone that is just as competent. Thank you, Fr. Kevin.

8. SEXUAL ABUSE. Sexual abuse is a serious problem that has involved the Church especially in the United States and Ireland, but it is foreseeable that it will extend to other countries where the Church is present. We unite with the Church and with the world in deploring what has happened and, in a spirit of responsibility and justice, we pray for the victims. It is a significant moment for conversion and for purification for the Church and, on our part, for greater awareness of the problem.

Regarding what has already happened and what may happen in the future, I invite the Major Superiors of the Congregation to be vigilant and to follow the norms established for these cases. In addition to being grave sins before God and the Church, they are also crimes that will be brought to justice and tried with transparency in civil courts. Knowledge of any case of this nature is not something that can be underestimated in the least or be hidden with the intention of not causing scandal or any other reasons. These cases should immediately be reported to the competent authority in order to avoid the risk that this crime against human rights is repeated with deleterious consequences that will dramatically affect the victim for the rest of his/her life. Pope Benedict XIV in his "Letter to the Church of Ireland" (19 March 2010) stated with great humility and courage that in order to overcome this painful wound, the Church needs to recognize before God and others the serious sins committed against defenseless children. "*Such an acknowledgement, accompanied by sincere sorrow for the damage caused to these victims and their families must lead to a concerted effort to ensure the protection of children from similar crimes in the future."* (No.2)

To the priests and religious who have abused children he says: *"you must answer for it before Almighty God and before properly constituted tribunals."* (No.7) Here he clearly states that in the future these crimes will be submitted to ecclesiastical and civil authorities. *"At the same time, God's justice summons us to give an account of our actions and to conceal nothing. Openly acknowledge your guilt, submit yourselves to the demands of justice, but do not despair of God's mercy."* (No. 7)

He urges the bishops and therefore also to Major Superiors *"to establish the truth of what happened in the past, to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again, to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected, and above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes"* (No.5) *"It must be admitted that grave errors of judgment were made and failures of leadership occurred. All this has seriously undermined your credibility and effectiveness. I appreciate the efforts you have made to remedy past mistakes and to guarantee that they do not happen again… Only decisive action carried out with complete honesty and transparency will restore the respect."* (No.11)

Since 2002, in a spirit of transparency and in keeping with the document, "Statutes for the Protection of Children and Minors" of the Episcopal Conference of the United States, our two religious provinces St. Paul of the Cross and Holy Cross, together began a critical study of this matter with the goal of establishing a Policy on Sexual Misconduct. This policy was prepared with the assistance of experts that included a study of the civil norms on this matter. It was published in booklet form and reviewed and approved by the respective provincial councils and published in two languages, English and Spanish. Point No. 4 contains the heart of the policy of the two provinces with the procedure to be followed in the event of accusations: *"investigate promptly all allegations of sexual misconduct involving members regardless of the likelihood of truth; offer compassionate assistance to the victims of sexual misconduct by their members; comply with all applicable legal requirements; adhere to the provisions of any applicable insurance policies; cooperate with the policies of the arch/diocese in which their members serve; and assist the accused, as appropriate, in the process of rehabilitation and recovery."*

Point No. 5 prescribes that the norms be reviewed periodically: the last update took place in March of this year 2010. And point No. 6 prescribes that when a new Provincial Superior is elected he should be informed of his specific duties in this matter.

This is a responsible way to address the problem and may be helpful in understanding the problem, being vigilant and decisively taking action where needed.

I want to conclude with the words that the Holy Father said to the young men of the Roman Seminary last Saturday (18 October 2010): *"Recently we have seen with great dismay that some priests disfigured their ministry… Instead of guiding people to greater human maturity and setting them an example, their abusive behaviour caused great damage for which*

we feel profound shame and regret. As a result of all this, many people, perhaps even some of you, might ask whether it is good to become a priest… Yet even the most reprehensible abuse cannot discredit the priestly mission, which remains great and pure. Thank God, all of us know exemplary priests, men shaped by their faith, who bear witness that one can attain to an authentic, pure and mature humanity in this state and specifically in the life of celibacy. Admittedly, what has happened should make us all the more watchful and attentive, precisely in order to examine ourselves earnestly, before God, as we make our way towards priesthood, so as to understand whether this is his will for me. It is the responsibility of your confessor and your superiors to accompany you and help you along this path of discernment. It is an essential part of your journey to practise the fundamental human virtues, with your gaze fixed on the God who has revealed himself in Christ, and to let yourselves be purified by him ever anew." (No.6)

This is also an invitation to the Major Superiors and to the formation personnel of our young religious to learn how to discern the genuineness of a vocation of a candidate for Passionist religious life, as well as his human and religious values, and his affective and psychological stability.

9. In order to act on **Proposal No. 3 that was approved by the last General Chapter** which recommended to the Superior General and his Council that a "workshop" be established for the formation personnel of the Congregation concerning the essential elements of Passionist life, here in our retreat of Sts. John and Paul, a month-long formation workshop took place for the formation personnel of the Configuration of the Passionists of Africa (CPA). The course took place during 1-31 October 2009 and twelve religious involved in formation attended (three religious from each of the following entities: CARLW, GEMM, MATAF, and SALV). The workshop was organized by Fr. Denis Travers and Fr. Clemente Barron, General Consultors. During the first two weeks of the program they were assisted by Frs. Paul Francis Spencer (PATR) and Mark Robin Hoogland (SPE). During the third week another General Consultor, Fr. Luigi Vaninetti, collaborated with them during the visits to the Passionist sites of Monte Argentario, Tarquinia, Vetralla and Rome. During the last week several conferences and guided dialog were offered by Frs. Patrick Duffy and John Friel (PATR). Thank you to everyone involved.

The final evaluations of the Formation personnel were positive and the workshop and the formation experience that took place among the religious of the four different entities was appreciated to the extent that an-

other month of formation is being prepared for the period 17 January to 17 February 2001, for the Sacred Heart Configuration (SCOR).

10. WORLD YOUTH DAY 2011 IN MADRID. Last May 19th I sent a letter to the Congregation I reporting about the initiative of the General Council concerning World Youth Day that will take place in Madrid, Spain during 16-21 August 2011.

This will be an opportunity for a formation meeting and for dialog with the young Passionist religious and the General Council. It is our hope that young religious from the various Configurations will participate. The last World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008 was a very positive experience for the students and for the young laity of the Passionist Family and those young people who are associated in various ways with our ministry. Once again we thank the SPIR Province for their hospitality and excellent organization. The planning for this event in Madrid is moving along well with the assistance of our religious in Spain. This is a reminder so that the Major Superiors can arrange for the participation of their young religious at this event. The reference General Consultor, Fr. Denis Travers and the General Secretariat are available for further, more specific information.

11. PASSIOLOGICAL MANUAL-COMPENDIUM (General Chapter 2006, Proposal No. 6) concerning the preparation of a "Passiological manual-compendium for the purpose of focusing and directing the vitality and the significance of our Passionist charism", the General Council has entrusted this task to Fr. Antonio Artola (CORI). The Compendium is entitled "PASIOLOGÍA: Introducción Histórico-Teológica" (*Passiology: A Historical-Theological Introduction)* and will soon be ready for printing.

12. DICTIONARY OF THE PASSION. The General Council has approved the preparation of a Dictionary of the Passion, an important project for cultural and formation purposes. We are certain that it will be useful for becoming aware of various aspects of the Passion and for better appreciating the elements of our charism. It will also be useful for initial and on-going formation of the religious and the laity of the Passionist Family and will serve as a pastoral instrument. It will contain philosophical and theological reflections on the Passion of Jesus.

A small commission was formed to work on this project consisting of Frs. Luiz Diez Merino (FAM), Robin Ryan (PAUL) and Adolfo Lippi (PRAES). They have already met several times in order to define the characteristics of the Dictionary: the number and the choices of topics to be

developed, the methodology, additional scholars for consultation, the languages in which the work will be published, financing, etc. Initially they had envisioned a concurrent publication in English, Spanish and Italian, but were advised against this. It would be preferable and more convenient to publish it in one language and then eventually to have it translated. Among the various publishing houses that were contacted, "Città Nuova" in Rome will be responsible for the publication. The scholars who will collaborate in this project were asked to have the text of their assigned topic ready by June 2011; however, there will surely be some delays. Various contributions have already arrived; then various integrations, revisions and translations will have to be done.

13. THE LAY BROTHERS. Proposal No. 1 that was approved by the last General Chapter invites us to establish educational opportunities for our lay Brothers. Additionally, it makes reference to the decision of the Chapters of 1988-1994 and 2000 to petition the competent authorities of the Holy See to establish "that the Congregation is no longer considered a clerical community." Even during these days I heard one of the members of the Synod state that we are still too clerical. Despite our repeated attempts, together with those of other Congregations, we need to realize that at the present moment it is not possible to make this change. However, I would like to make a brief observation: a reflection and a proposal.

Observation: The Constitutions recognize that there is equal dignity between the Priests and the Brothers, except for what pertains to Canon Law concerning priestly Orders and concerning membership in a clerical Congregation, i.e. elements that prohibit a Brother from being elected a Local Superior or a Major Superior. It should be noted that during the past several years, if a Provincial or Vicariate Council named a Brother to be a Local Superior (this has occurred three or four times) and a dispensation for this situation was made to the Congregation for Religious, the dispensation was always granted.

Reflection: Despite the clear indications of the last four General Chapters at which we decided and confirmed our desire to overcome clericalism in the Congregation in order to eliminate any inequality between Priests and Brothers, in reality our mind-set hasn't changed.

During the visitations that I have done in various parts of the Congregation I usually also meet with the young students. On at least three occasions, three of them told me that they wanted to be lay Brothers, but the Superiors and the Formation personnel were forcing them to be clerics. And it is not uncommon that when a young man asks to enter as a Brother, he is

dissuaded and instead invited to become a priest. Why? The lay Brothers, since the time of the Founder, are greatly appreciated and are considered essential components of Passionist life on the level of community life as well as vocation ministry: many religious say that their motivation for entering the Congregation was a decisive meeting with one of our Brothers.

Proposal: In the Korean MACOR Province which, thank God, has a good, significant number of Brothers, at their Provincial Chapter of 2002, in order to eliminate any inequality, changed a norm of the Provincial Regulations. It is a norm that is present in all the Regulations of our Provinces and Vicariates and it concerns the election of the First Consultor. Normally the Regulations state that if, during the mandate of a Provincial Superior (or Regional Vicar), for whatever reason he is no longer able to serve in this capacity, he will be substituted by the First Consultor. The automatic nature of the substitution of the Major Superior excludes the possibility of the election of a lay Brother to the position because it is established that also the First Consultor be a cleric. In the Regulations of the MACOR Province the following substitution was made re. "Automatically": "*In the event that, for whatever reason, the Provincial is unable to function in this office, the First Consultor will communicate that within two months the Provincial Chapter shall elect a new Provincial Superior and a Consultor*." By this norm a Brother may also be elected as First Consultor, something which in fact may happen. All of the Provincial Chapters, if they wish, may similarly modify their own regulations. Even if at the present time there are not many Brothers in an entity, this possibility would be available for the future and it would eliminate, as far as possible, any inequality. It would also make more candidates available to be chosen for the service of authority and assistance.

14. THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A PROVINCE. Various religious and several members of this Synod have asked for discernment on the topic of evaluating the criteria for the number of religious necessary for the existence of a Province and also other criteria. Let's see if at this time it would be good for us to address this topic and if so, where we would insert it in the work of the Synod.

15. REMEMBERING TWO OF OUR BISHOPS. As individuals and as the Synod Assembly, I wish to invite you to join with me in prayerfully and gratefully remembering the last two bishops who have preceded us to the Father: Bishop Venancio C. Orbe Uriarte, bishop emeritus of Moyobamba, Peru who died on 18 July 2008 in Lima. Peru is especially in our thoughts during these days. I also wish to remember Archbishop Piergior-

gio Nesti who died on 13 December 2009 in Rome. For more than ten years he served the Church as the Secretary of the Congregation for Religious. Usually he would preside at vespers at Sts. John and Paul for the Transitus of St. Paul of the Cross in the Chapel of the Founder on the vigil of his feast. This year he celebrated with Bishop Venancio and the Founder himself and with all the holy ones of the Passionist Family in heaven. We invoke their prayers for the protection of the Synod and the Congregation.

16. CARDINAL NEWMAN AND BLESSED DOMINIC BARBERI, apostle of ecumenism—our ninth priority. The beatification of John Henry Newman by Pope Benedict XVI in Birmingham, England last 19 September was also an occasion for our Congregation to thank the Lord for choosing a Passionist religious, Blessed Dominic Barberi, as an instrument of his grace to accept the general confession of Newman. In fact, when he judged that the time was right for him to take the great step of entering the Catholic Church, Newman turned to a Passionist religious whom he admired as a man of God, a "simple and ordinary man", but also "intelligent and astute". And Dominic willingly responded to his request. In his "Apologia" Newman himself recounted how Dominic had arrived in Littlemore, soaking wet from the rain, and how, while he was drying himself by the fireplace, Newman knelt before him and asked to be received into the Catholic Church. It was 8:00 PM on 9 October 1845. The following morning Fr. Dominic celebrated Holy Mass on the desk in Newman's room for him and for the others of the Oxford Movement. In a statement that Newman wrote when he was already a Cardinal he testified that: *"Fr. Dominic of the Mother of God was a most striking missionary and preacher and he had great part in my own conversion and in that of others. His very look had a holy aspect which when his figure came in sight in my circle most singularly affected me, and his remarkable 'bonhomie' in the midst of his sanctity was in itself a real holy preaching. No wonder, then, I became his convert and penitent."*

The beatification of Newman should encourage us and affirm us in our mission and should open our heart and mind to the plans of God, resolute in seeking it and courageous in deciding to overcome any uncertainties or doubts as did the new Blessed. In a letter to a friend of Newman, Dominic wrote: *"Let us forget and leave behind what is past, so that we may look toward the future with greater clarity; may the day arrive when we will be able to glorify the Lord with one heart and one voice."* May it be thus also for our journey during the present Synod.

Information: On 12 November 2010 the "Cattedra Gloria Crucis" will organize a seminar at the Pontifical Lateran University of Rome on

the topic of the relationship between Blessed John Henry Newman and Blessed Dominic Barberi, CP.

17. THE CONSTITUTIONS: THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR APPROBATION. One of the initiatives for commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Constitutions was to request various religious of the Congregation to write reflections and research papers about the various points and values of the Constitutions. Fr. Luis Alberto Cano was the General Consultor responsible for overseeing this project. The following religious participated in this work: Frs. PP. Robin Ryan (PAUL), Christopher Monaghan (SPIR), Octavio Mondragón (REG), Abelardo Quintero Poveda (FID), Miguel Pozuelo Utrilla (FAM), José Manuel Pindado (FAM), Augustine Kunii (MAIAP), Joe Moons (CRUC), Adolfo Lippi (PRAES), Giovanni Cipriani (DOL), Mark Robin Hoogland (SPE), Francisco Murray (CONC), Jesús M. Aristín (CORI), Pierre Mvumbi (SALV), Kevin Dance (SPIR), Fernando Rabanal Calle (FAM), Leonello Leidi (CORM). The topics addressed were: Obedience and the Memoria Passionis; The Apostolic Community; The Memoria Passionis; Chastity and the Memoria Passionis; Poverty and the Memoria Passionis; Passionist Formation; Prayer: The foundation of our life; Formation; The Laity and the Passionist Charism; The Passionist Vocation; The Missions and the Memoria Passionis; Solidarity and JPIC; Fundamentals of Passionist Life; Our Constitutions and the Passion of the World; Our Constitutions and the community of life; and The service of Authority and the Constitutions.

These manuscripts will be printed in two booklets of our formation series, "Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality".

Conclusion. I want to conclude these brief points of information and reflection with the following words of the Prophet Amos (9:13-15) that form a song of faith and optimism:

"Yes, days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the vintager, him who sows the seed; the juice of the grape shall drip down the mountains, and all the hills shall run with it. I will bring about the restoration of my people Israel; they shall rebuild and inhabit their ruined cities, plant vineyards and drink the wine, set out gardens and eat the fruits. I will plant them upon their own ground; never again shall they be plucked from the land I have given them, say I, the Lord, your God."

May it be thus for our Congregation and for the world! Amen**.**

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR SOLIDARITY AND THE MISSIONS

P. Jesús María Aristín, C. P.

Dear brothers:

During these past two years since my previous report at the last Synod, the "new" Secretariat for Solidarity and the Missions, following the mandate of the last General Chapter, has completed the following projects:

1. Work of the Secretariat

The following are the projects that were undertaken in order to arrive at the designated goals:

1) Seminars, workshops and courses in JPIC: We continued with the arduous task of sensitizing and forming the Congregation in the area of JPIC, as was requested of us by the General Chapter. For this purpose we conducted seminars and talks about JPIC in:
   - Mexico, Colombia, Chile and Argentina in May and June, 2009.
   - India (PASPAC) in November 2009.
   - The National Seminar of JPIC in Italy, in April, 2010.
   - Kenya and Tanzania, in June 2010.
   - Brazil and Portugal last month.
2) Assistance in Haiti following the earthquake: This has been the most generous and fraternal response that has taken place during the history of this Office. Communities, men and women religious, laity, NGO's and other groups became involved and in merely two weeks we collected and sent $281,625.00 which, when united with the donations that other communities sent directly, apart from our Office, exceeded $300,000.00. This taught us how to "make our solidarity effective".
3) Since 1 June of this year, we have our NGO: "**Passionist Solidarity**" recognized by the Italian region of Lazio. This has opened new doors for us to pursue help for our Missions on a congregational level. We will be able to present projects and receive donations that are "tax exempt". We hope that the "7 for one thousand" contribution from our communities and religious has been credited to our NGO.
4) In the International Solidarity Commission we also continued to meet and we conducted four days of prayer and study about JPIC, throughout the Congregation:

- **16 October: World Food Day.** Study about the right to food in a hungry world. Additionally, the following day, 17 October is the Universal Day for the Eradication of Poverty. These are two days to reflect on solidarity against hunger and poverty affecting millions of persons.
- **10 December: World Day for Human Rights.** Sixty one years ago the UN proclaimed the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and we want to pray together in all the communities about this important and essential topic.
- **30 January: Day for the Martyrs of Non-violence**. On 1 January we celebrate throughout the Church the World Day of Peace, and since it is a day on which we are involved in other activities, we want to dedicate the entire month of January as a month of Peace and we want to conclude with the anniversary of the death of Gandhi, in order to bring us closer to the Beatitude of Peace.
- **22 March: World Day of Water**. A day on which we can pray together for all the families of the world and particularly reflect on the situation of the children of the world.

5) We have also continued our meetings with Passionists International. Fr. Kevin Dance will report on this point.
6) We also continued to participate in meetings of the USG (Union of Superiors General) at which we obtained various formation materials: 2 DVD's and a booklet: "Guide us in your justice", with formation guidelines for including JPIC in initial and ongoing formation.
7) Participation in the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization): We continue to meet and participate in a group of NGO's of religious and Catholic congregations.
8) We continue to maintain our website: www.jpicpassionist.org and are trying to make it a place of interaction for all those who are working in the area of solidarity, justice and peace.
9) Publications: in the PIB, the Bulletin of Passionist Missions and magazine articles.
10) Participation in various campaigns: Human Rights, Millennium objectives, the Right to Food, etc.

2. Regional JPIC

I am convinced that the work of our Office will be fruitful only to the degree that more men and women religious are associated with JPIC. We need to involve at least one religious from each Province as an animator or promoter of JPIC. There are still some provinces that have not yet designated anyone.

Similarly we need to enable a Network of Passionist Solidarity and JPIC on a regional level. We have taken some positive steps with the meeting of the promoters of JPIC of PASPAC (Asia and Australia). We are making some progress in the area of formation in JPIC of Africa and one Vicariate opened a JPIC Office. In Italy, JPIC has continued to meet and is trying to involve the laity in our study and work. We have had some success in this area and the first JPIC and Passionist Spirituality Seminar that took place in Rome during 16-18 April, 2010 is an example of this. The Passionist NGO, ADECO of Spain, ADECO of Mexico, SSPAS (Passionist Social Service) in El Salvador and *"Rosto solidario"* of Portugal continue to do wonderful work. We hope that in the future the JPIC Spain and CLAP groups will intensify their activities in these areas where they have already exerted much effort.

Generally speaking, we can say that we understand that JPIC is present in our Charism: To keep alive the memory of the Crucified necessarily brings us to the crucified of today because the Passion of Christ continues in the Passion of the world today, in the Passion of the crucified and in the Passion of the earth that has arrived at the point of threatening the very existence of humanity and nature. However, we still have a long way to go to put this into practice. We cannot understand the "Memoria Passionis" without sharing *"in the distress of all, especially those who are poor and neglected. [We continue working] to discern and remove the causes of human suffering."* (Const. No. 3) In a special way, we discover the Crucified One in the lowly and the poor. We see the name of Jesus written on their foreheads; their faces are the faces of the crucified. We need to reclaim the prophetic dimension of Passionist life: *"Our lifestyle must stand out as a prophetic condemnation of the injustices among which we live; it should be a continual witness against the abuses of a consumer society."* (Const.No.72)

The prophetic dimension of our Passionist life is evidenced in a special way today in the self-less and sacrificial work of our missionaries in areas where our presence is truly charged with a "prophetic" dimension and is interwoven into the lives of the poor, such as: Ingeniero Juares (Argentina), or Yurimaguas (Peru), or Randham (India), Mlowa (Tanzania) or Guatemala and many others… There are prophetic witnesses such as Fr. Mario Bartolini, together with the farm workers of Barranquita (Peru), defending their land from multinational interests that want to rob this land from them; or Fr. Antonio Rodríguez, together with

the young gang members of El Salvador who entered into the "maras" (gangs) in order to help these young people to be reincorporated into society. They live very close to the people of God and they evangelize them. Their preaching is not theoretical, nor ideological; rather it is the Gospel of Jesus that has become life and truth. Together with these reflections may they also receive our solidarity and our prayer.

3. Projects

At the beginning of this year, the arrival of Fr. Vital Otshudialokoka to work in this Office has been a great help in advancing a series of projects. We hope that he will persevere in his important collaboration. Below is a report from Fr. Vital.

4. Conclusion: We are a Missionary Congregation and the Missions are our hope.

Since the time of our Founder, we have been characterized as Missionary Congregation. In a particular way today, our mission lands are a source of great hope. This is so not only because the "traditional areas" of the Congregation have decreased in vocations and the "new" areas of the Congregation are increasing; but also because they bring new vitality, youthfulness, new perspectives, hopes and inspiration. The recent foundations in Vietnam and Nigeria encourage us to continue in this vein.
However, I am concerned about the situation in Africa. Recently I visited Kenya and Tanzania and was impressed by the wonderful work that the Italian missionaries have done and continue to do there. Today it can be said that the Congregation in these two countries already had roots and that in future they will bear abundant fruit. However, I was also able to attest to the financial difficulties that they are experiencing. At times these financial difficulties impede their ability to enthusiastically do vocation ministry. One province is also progressing in the area of Restructuring and each year is decreasing the financial assistance offered to its former vicariates that must now seek other means of providing for its needs. At this time we have more than fifteen projects for Africa in our Office and they continue to ask for more. I believe that it is important that we be conscious of this hopeful area of the Congregation and that we try to financially help this region, as we have recently done; but we need to find ways of sustaining this mid-term assistance.

Solidarity in Formation, in Personnel and in Finances, in which we have been involved since the last General Synod, will need to be concretized through specific steps in order to further solidarity on the level of the entire Congregation and not remain reduced to only the Configurations.

REPORT TO THE GENERAL SYNOD

Fr. Kevin Dance, C. P.

1. OVERALL VISION FOR PASSIONIST PRESENCE TO THE UN – CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY, MISSION.

I am sure that some of you still question the purpose of our presence at the United Nations. Some people ask why we are involved there, when there are so many crying needs of evangelisation and traditional ministry. In recalling that this was a decision of our General Chapter which speaks powerfully of justice being an integral part of the spirituality of the Passion, I wish to quote Eberhard Arnold's words:

> ***"People have to recognize the futility of splitting life up into politics, economics, the humanities, and religion. We must be awakened to a life in which all of these things are completely integrated. All the various movements of the past decades will one day converge in a radical awakening of the masses that leads the way to social justice and to God's unity"***

Prophecy is the outward face of mysticism. So, at the United Nations, we Passionists try to give voice to what we have first contemplated in the person of the Crucified and Risen Jesus. ***"In a world where increasing numbers of poor people are being 'crucified' by unjust political and economic structures, our sense of solidarity calls us to proclaim the Gospel of Justice and Peace. Justice is an essential part of the Gospel".***

2. HOW HAVE WE PROGRESSED IN TRANSLATING THE DECISION OF THE CHAPTER AND BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH UN?

I offer the image of the work that is involved in starting a garden. Much preliminary work is needed - laying out garden plots; clearing away weeds and levelling the ground; consulting people who arrived before us; gathering the materials that we will need; discovering potential partners; much trial and error. It has been a similar process at the United Nations. This is how we have moved on.

There are two levels of connection to the UN as an NGO:

a Association with the Department of Public Information (DPI) - December 2003

b Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - May 2009

Association with the United Nations through DPI is a ***passive relationship***. We commit to share with our members information gained from the UN about its purposes and activities.

An NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC has an ***active relationship*** with the UN.

Consultative Status requires an NGO to draw on information gained from its members in the field. Our work among ordinary people will enrich the discussions of Member States of the UN as they address problems facing the world and create policies to address them. We are expected to make a positive contribution.
We do this through:

- **Advocating** with individual States or groups of states by making our concerns known;
- **Calling** States to put people, especially the most vulnerable, at the heart of their policy making.
- **Sharing** "success stories" that have helped us deal with poverty, justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Written or spoken statements that can influence the policy of the UN.
- **Cooperating** closely with other like-minded NGOs in working for justice.

❖ This opens up many possibilities for involvement in different areas
  - o Interfaith cooperation highlighting such issues as poverty eradication, climate change.
  - o environmental concerns
  - o financing for development - to influence the reform of powerful financial institutions
  - o influence shaping of policies to empower people forced to live in poverty
  - o work on behalf of women and children

- advocacy for human rights.
- A new tool – the UPR (Universal Periodic Review of every country) gives us a chance to comment on a country's Human Rights performance.
- Opportunity to engage directly with the UN through presidency of Committees e.g. Co-Chair of Working Group on Girls; Chair of Committee on Financing for Development.

It is my conviction that we are at the UN to effect systemic change. The UN is far from perfect. But it is the only forum where all countries are present to seek solutions to global problems. NGOs speak for 'the people'. We aim to bring our experience, strengthened by prayerful reflection and analysis, to the international negotiating table by giving a voice to those who are voiceless.

Consultative status with ECOSOC offers several benefits. We can now have 5 annual UN grounds passes instead of 2; we can bring Passionists and co-workers to meetings and commissions of the UN; we can sponsor written or oral statements. Our religious or collaborators can work as interns at the UN for shorter or longer periods to gain experience and to support the work we do there.

3. ACHIEVING AN EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

There is much work still to be done here. We are in the very early stages. Passionists International, a project of the whole Passionist Family, will sink or swim to the degree that we build communication, trust and create a two-way relationship of information and advocacy. We hope to strengthen this relationship through:

- ❖ Communicating what we are doing through Newsletters
- ❖ Encouraging more use of the Website of Passionists International which now has a blog and potential for interaction.
- ❖ Establishing a Board of Trustees to guide the work and mission of Passionists International.

→Clear lines of accountability
→Constantly clarifying the focus of PI activity at the UN
→Acting transparently by regular reporting to the Board

- ❖ Welcoming other parts of the Passionist Family into active involvement in the project of Passionists International, such as Las Hijas de la Pasión

- ❖ Conversation to build improved two-way communication. Face-to-face contact of the UN Representative with the various units of the Passionist Congregation and of the wider Passionist Family will help this greatly. It will help greatly for each party to learn what the other is doing and how each can support the other. An obvious time for this to occur is on the occasion of a regional meeting or on the occasion of a meeting of one of the new Passionist Configurations.

4. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

As part of our continued involvement with the UN, we are expected to actively contribute to its development agenda. One way we do this will be in preparing statements and submissions to the various Commissions and UN meetings.

1. To do this well and effectively, we depend on input and information from our members at the grassroots who are the real 'experts'
2. Engagement with Human Rights as well as Development issues.

- ❖ We have the opportunity to expand our presence to Geneva to involve us in the Human Rights agenda of the United Nations. We are planning a part-time presence at the UN in Geneva. It will be 'ad experimentum' and will be evaluated by the Board after one year. As it was in New York, much groundwork will be needed to make our presence there effective. – Work with the Human Rights Council and through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) can be a valuable way to pursue justice as the countries in which we have a Passionist presence are examined on their human rights performance.

- ❖ With Consultative Status comes the obligation to provide a ***Quadrennial Report*** of activities of Passionists International to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- ❖ We are now able to have more of our members come to take part in meetings at the UN. I envisage that people can be alerted to upcoming meetings that are relevant to their ministries and interests so that they might consider if they would wish to attend.

- ❖ Consultative Status gives us the chance to use our experience within the global scope of the UN as an occasion for some further formation of our members. I believe this can enhance our ministry in a world confronting the continuing impact of interdependence and globalisation.

The next phase will demand more work to create a sense our active and ongoing relationship with the UN and Passionist involvement in all the variety of our ministries for justice around the world.

5. PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION TO NEW LEADERSHIP.

The shared wisdom, of several religious who were the first representative of their Congregation at the UN, has been gathered into a "Job Description". It outlines the qualities that would be desirable in someone who is being considered for such a position. It also contains suggested elements of a process to search for and select a representative of the Passionist project that is jointly sponsored and supported by 2 Congregations with potential membership by a 3rd Congregation.

This is how a keen supporter who has worked within the UN system and now lectures graduate students at the New School University sees us:

*"The members of the committee that Kevin chairs are NGOs accredited to the UN in New York. This means that they are, in essence, "registered" lobbyists **for the good**. Depending on the status accorded to their organizations, they can speak in some UN meetings as civil society observers and circulate informal notes. In some instances, their notes can become documents of the Economic and Social Council. But their most important function is in interacting with government delegations, presenting ideas and proposals, seeking to be helpful in finding progressive consensus and fostering anti-poverty programs and policies. Most of the organizations have people in the field, which is one reason governments tend to listen to them, if not necessarily follow their advice".*

WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE ARE AT THE UN

I gained this helpful insight from a Dominican friend of mine. I think it helps express both how and why we should be at the UN

"Why should Dominicans (and other religious organizations) be at the UN? According to Noel Brown, former Executive Director of UNEP, religious communities have a significant place at the United Nations because:

- ***they are all over the world,*** *including some very difficult places;*
- ***they do a lot with a little*** *in terms of resources;*
- ***they do not leave*** *the place or the people when the situation gets difficult;*
- *they have a long history of* ***being with those who are poor;***
- *they come to the international policy table* ***with interests not their own"***

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT REPORT OF THE GENERALATE FINANCIAL OFFICE

P. Battista Ramponi, C. P.
General Econome

Greetings and appreciation

I offer everyone (Synod members, interpreters, translators, secretaries, and co-workers) my most cordial and fraternal **greetings.**

Heart-felt thanks to Fr. Arthur Carrillo, Fr. Ciro Benedettini, and to Fr. Miguel Angel Villanueva for the translation of the texts of my report.

Sincere thanks to Bro. Paulus Aloanto and to Bro. Marsianus for the help which they gave me in the printing and preparation of the booklets of this report.

Finally, if you discover some error or lack of precision, which is not unlikely, charge it exclusively to the account of the undersigned.

Preface

a) My intervention is divided into **two segments**, which correlate with two separate documents which have been given to you.
   - **The management/financial report** of the Generalate Financial Office (texts and spreadsheets)
   - **The presentation of the proposed budget** of the Generalate Financial Office for the period 2011 and 2012.

b) *The criteria* which I have followed are, as always, *transparency, clarity, objectivity, and quality.*

c) For the management/financial report, I have used *spreadsheets (tables)* in order to make the reading easier and more understandable.

d) For the punctuation marks used for *separating the number-values, I have used the European system,* but this is in no way a disregard for the Synod members who use English.

e) I suggest that the clarifications, observations, and suggestions be offered *at the end of the report.*

REPORT

A. ADMINISTRATION

I turn now, with observations, to the balance sheets of the finances.

I ask you, therefore, to take in hand the booklet with the tables, from which I will make reference to only a portion of them.

1. Generalate Financial Office

a) Balances of the ordinary administration (*tables 1-4*)

- **Explanation of *tables Nos. 1* e 2**
- **In these tables, you have the balances of the ordinary administration for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 (= to the 25th of July 2010).**
- **I'll read table n. 1, entirely. From table n. 2, the column relative to the balance on the 25th of July 2010; I will call your attention to only some accounts, both in receipts and disbursements.**

b) Management of ordinary funds: *table n. 3*

- You all know that in the fund management, there are **some sums of money which may be used only for a specific purpose (restricted).** For example, mass offerings may be admitted into the administered accounts and used freely only when the Masses have been celebrated.
- In this table, accordingly, you find balances of those sums which have a designated purpose.
- **Mass stipends**: you will notice that, even in these last two years, the Generalate Financial Office has received a significant amount for Mass Stipends. In this regard, we are especially grateful to the Provinces GABR, PATR, CRUC, PIET, DOL, and FAT.
  Accordingly, the Generalate Financial Office, during the first half of 2010, has been able to redistribute a sum of Mass Stipends.

c) Administration, operations, placement of capital: ***table n. 4***

- The first line reports, summarily, the balance for **ordinary administration**.
- Therefore, in the second line, you have the funds being **"managed",** which includes the net balance of what is in the ordinary administration and in the restricted funds.
- In the third line, you have the **placement distribution (banks, cash held, and investment accounts)** where the monies are deposited.
- ***It is important that the net balance under management be found in the net balances of the placement distribution of the capital.***

2. Casa, ss. Giovanni e Paolo (= group: *community and university students*)

a) Ending Budget figures in ***tables Nos. 5-7***

Notice that in the most recent years, the budget amounts for the Casa Generalizia of ss. Giovanni e Paolo have little by little become more consistent.

I call your attention to table n. 5, specifically certain accounts which are more significant.

With reference to tables Nos. 6 and 7, I will make only a brief reference.

b) Ending Budget figures in ***tables Nos. 8 and 9***

I leave this to your reading. It has to do with a comparison of the budget figures of the Generalate Financial Office with those of the Casa.

3. Funds of the Congregation (*tables Nos. 10-17*)

a) Specific balances for Funds of the Congregation (tables Nos. 10-14)

Tables n. 10 to n. 14 reproduce, year by year, the development and growth of the funds in the currency in which they were created. They also specify the recipients of the grants made. **Each one may review them personally.**

b) Summary of Balances of the Funds of the Congregation (tables Nos. 15, 16, 16/a, 17)

I will briefly detain your attention, however, at tables 15-17, which give the summary balances of the funds of the Congregation from the beginning of 2003 to 25 July 2010.

Table n. 15 states the summary balance **of each** fund of the Congregation from **the beginning of 2003 to 25 July 2010.**

Table n. 16 states **the summary balance from 31 Dec. 2009 to 25 July 2010** of the Funds of the Congregation and of the funds tied to the Congregation.

Table n. 16/a displays the loans/advances outstanding (SALV, GEMM, PASS) (cf. also tables Nos. 11 and 12) **and the excess in our funds** (formation and solidarity) **over the capital amounts determined/established by the Synod of 2004.**

Table n. 17 is very important, because it **reports the contributions** which the Provinces or Vice-Provinces, or others, have sent for the Funds of the Congregation from the beginning **in 2003 to 25 July 2010.**

You may each review them personally.

I feel **obliged to at least express my gratitude and my appreciation** for those who have contributed to the creation and growth of the Funds, and who have, therefore, made possible the exercise of solidarity toward the needs of the Congregation.

4. Balances for the Funds and Deposits tied to the Congregation (*tables nn.18-23)*

Tables 18-23 display the balances of the deposits/funds tied to the Congregation.

I leave the reading to you. I only want to note that you will also find the balance for the Centro-Forum, at the Retreat of St. Joseph on Monte Argentario; it is up to date to 30 June 2010.

***In fact, the Budgets for the Retreat of St. Joseph and the Deposit of funds for Bethany** are administered under the responsibility of the General Curia. I have left them in this group simply for my convenience.*

5. Final Summary Balances or Overall Summary (*tables Nos. 24-27*)

5.1 Table n. 24, displays the **summary balance** for 31 Dec. 2009 to 25 July 2010, ***for the funds of the Congregation and the deposits/funds tied to the Congregation.***
For this table, I will read you only the final column.

5.2 Table n. 25 displays the summary balance on 25 July 2010, including bank accounts and cash, for the amounts that the Generalate Financial Office is managing at this time. **I will read only the net amounts.**

5.3 However, I will stop to explain table n. 27, which displays **the invested capital** up to 25 July 2010.

- Most of the funds of the Congregation and of others are invested.
- The capital has been invested with banks or investment firms **which guarantee security, professionalism and timeliness with respect to operations.**
- The criteria for investments are characterized by **prudence, with diversified types (= fund allocation, bonds, convertible bonds….),** without letting one's head be driven by dreams of massive returns.
- Furthermore, there is also a criterion of **diversification in the location/placement of the investments: IOR, Spain (Banca Privada de Valencia, Banco Santander de Bilbao).**
- **Frequent contact and systematic review** takes place with the banks and investment firms through their financial agents.
- You are all aware of the grave, economic/financial crisis which has spread throughout the world. **We have experienced this crisis, and the last word is yet to be uttered, nevertheless, we have passed through it almost without prejudice.** You can see for yourselves on **table n. 15, by comparing the third column (=net loss) with the fourth (=interest/gains).**
- It is clear that the interest rates and the gains from investments are practically zeroed out. ***Therefore, there is a problem which I will simply point out here: what interest will we use to finance the needs of the Congregation if the interest rates are practically nil?***

B. CONSIDERATION OF SOME TOPICS /PROBLEMS

1. The financial/management structure of the Generalate Financial Office.

The paucity of the remaining funds at the conclusion of the budget terms in recent years.

The remaining funds at the conclusion of the budget years for the General Financial Office, as you can see, **are always quite slim. This is true for the previous four years, which you have in the tables, and for the previous years.** The final figures for the budget year 2010 will not have any better outcome. Take into consideration that in the last five years, with a spirit of solidarity, three provinces have given over funds to the Central Administration.

<u>One of the causes</u> is the intrinsic weakness of the structure of administration of the Generalate Financial Office. This structure **is**

based, one could say, **solely on the arrival of the contributions** from the provinces. I pointed this out at the Synod of 2004 (Rome). I repeated the observation explicitly at the General Chapter of 2006 (Rome), when I proposed as at least a partial solution, that there be created a Congregational Common Fund. This proposal turned out to be unrealizable, and is even more so now with the birth of the Configurations.

Reference to the problem at the Synod of 2008 (Mexico). ***At this Synod emerged the important project of solidarity in finance, which will surely polarize the relationships within the Configurations, and within the Provinces which make them up; between one configuration and another, together with their provinces; and between configurations and the center.***

The commission desired by the Synod of 2008, which was established by the General Council, will surely know what directives must be given in this regard.

2. Administration and extraordinary works.

Another of the reasons for the paucity of residual funds in the end-of-year budget figures of the Generalate Financial Office **comes from the extraordinary work projects** which were undertaken.

2.1 The following were done during 2009-2010:

- **The new boiler room (including the air conditioning for the Choir).**
  The new boiler room produces heating, hot water and steam for the laundry. It cost €407,840.00. Fuel: methane gas. The cost was substantial and was entirely covered by the General Finance Office.
- **The remodeling of some space on the ground floor, and on the third floor of the Curia**
  This area is dedicated to the Lay Centre: 20 long-term guests. Cost: Euro 137,066.33. The cost was substantial and *financed by*: 1/3 the Generalate Financial Office; 1/3 the local financial office of the Casa Generalizia + some maintenance issues; 1/3 the Lay Centre.
  The relationship with the Lay Centre is established by a lease agreement for three years. The Lay Centre is autonomous and independent
- **Lighting for the gardens and grounds**
  The lighting is provided by 106 mini-bulbs. Power consumption: were they to be illuminated all at once for ten hours: € 1.50. Cost for the entire installation: €49,600.00. The cost

was considerable and was *financed by*: 50% Generalate Financial Office; 50% Local Community of the Casa Generalizia.

- **The remodeling of the "Garbatella" and its rooftop**
  The "Garbatella", a section of the Casa which had been unused and abandoned for some years, and its rooftop, lie over the sacristy of the Basilica. Seven rooms with showers, shared bathrooms, and small kitchen and a shared sitting room were outfitted.
  Purpose: hospitality for religious, family members, and benefactors of the Congregation.
  Total Cost (Garbatella + rooftop), including furnishings, telephones and internet service: € 210,000.00. The cost was substantial and *financed by:* 1/3 Casa Generalizia; 2/3 Generalate Financial Office.

2.2 In previous years

Other extraordinary work had been completed. **Some** among them: *modifications to the Chapter Hall, replacing the roof of the ARIS out-building, re-building the coolers and pantries of the kitchen; the air-conditioning of the community refectory and many others.*

2.3 WHAT HAS BEEN OBTAINED

- ***Greater efficiency*** *in the infrastructure* of the Casa (Coolers, boiler room...);
- ***recovery and restoration of the patrimonial goods*** of the Casa (Garbatella, rooftop);
- ***financial savings*** (Boiler room: a savings of more than 50% compared to previously);
- ***broader*** usage of space, ***increase in ability to host, and an economic return*** (Lay Centre: makes a contribution of which 50% goes to the Generalate Financial Office, and 50% goes to the finances of the Casa. In the case of the Garbatella, the Chapter Hall, other spaces: the offerings for hosting are entirely given to the finances of the Casa);
- ***the common areas of the property are more livable*** (Refectory and Choir in both winter and summer); ***the Garden is more useful and safer*** in the late evening for retreatants, religious and guests;

- ***The finances of the Casa, due to the savings in heating and the 50% received from the lease to the Lay Centre, are able to contribute to the expenses for extraordinary works.***
- ***The Generalate Financial Office has benefited from an increase in the rent from ARIS, and furthermore, can depend on the new source of income:*** the 50% of the lease payment of the Lay Centre.
- ***Increase in value of all the parts of the building which were remodeled or restored:*** *increased appraisal value of the patrimonial structure.*
- ***Thus, the administrative operations of the Generalate Financial Office are slowly being strengthened.***

3. Congregational Funds

3.1 Financial resource for the needs of the Congregation

In order to finance the needs of the Congregation (formation, new initiatives, projects and building...) it was decided to use only the interest derived from the capital amount determined for each fund.

a) *Now,* as I pointed out earlier (cf., 5.3, last point), the rate of return which the banks or investment companies decide (the serious ones) *are very low, and this makes it impossible to sustain the costs of certain necessary needs of the Congregation—if we are to use only the interest paid.* This is especially the case for the formation fund (cf., table n. 16a).

b) *The contributions* from the Provinces and Vice-Provinces, which allows the funds to grow, have in the current year *practically stopped.* I seems to me that this is because the Provinces are concerned with the events internal to their Configurations, for which they will need to create funds to underwrite their initiatives.

c) In any case, *the risk exists, especially for the Formation Fund,* of drawing down the increment already added to the funds, because there have not been new contributions.

d) On the other hand, *significant financial aid is being given* to various parts of the Congregation (Vietnam, Novitiate and Student House in PASPAC, Vicariates GEMM (Tanzania) and CARLW (Kenya), Mozambique, Eastern Europe…) which they have a right to, and for which they cannot wait.

Therefore, I have the obligation of appealing to all of the Provinces that they, specifically in light of the project for solidarity in finance, make every effort to renew their contributions for the funds of the Congregation, especially, I repeat, **for the Formation Fund.**

3.2 Solidarity in finance between the Configurations and the Central Administration

- It seems to me that the current phase of the restructuring process *makes it difficult to reconcile solidarity in finance among the Configurations with the Central Administration.*
  As a matter of fact, *the Provinces, within their Configuration, are concerned with creating the right formulae for economic sharing* so as to continue support for their group initiatives, and this, perhaps, causes them to lose light of the attention needed to support the Central Funds of the Congregation.
- Therefore, I believe that it is opportune that *the commission and/or the Synod Finance* Group, which will surely be established for this purpose, *take this delicate matter under consideration.*

3.3 Culture Fund, Vietnam Fund, Bethany Fund.

- *At the Rome Synod of 2004,* there was support for the *establishment of a Culture Fund.* At the *Mexico Synod of 2008,* I anticipated, together with the Superior General, that *the Vietnam Fund and the Bethany Fund would also increase.* With regard to the Vietnam Fund, Fr. General hoped that it would increase to the degree that it would be able to reimburse the great amount which the Solidarity Fund had spent in acquiring the property and building the house in Vietnam. *It can be said that all has remained at the level of anticipation, and hopes have been reduced to pious illusions.*
- Thus, it is for the *commission and/or Synod* Group which will be established for financial questions, *to take into account this point as well,* and give us the necessary determinations to address it.

4. Mass Stipends/Assessments

a. This is not a weird pairing of terms. It is intended to show that there are some Provinces and Vice-Provinces which commit to celebrating a certain number of Masses, **and the offering is used to pay their assessment/contribution.**
   However, the Mass Intentions continue to become scarcer, and, it may be in the future, that they will lack altogether.
b. **Contribution-Assessment/Twinning:** it seems to me that it would be a good thing propose to the Provinces or Vice-Provinces which have difficulty in meeting their assessment-contribution, that they pair, or twin, with Provinces which have greater resources, so that these with greater resources might cooperate, partially or totally, in the payment of the assessment-contribution.

5. Relationship with the Provincial Economes

My relationship with the Provincial Economes, Vice-Provincial Economes, and the Provincial Administrators is marked by appreciation, respect, and recognition of the praiseworthy service that they provide.

With regard to them, I, personally, *have an excellent relationship, and I regularly think of convoking some meeting with them,* although this time in the Restructuring Process is less than ideal, given the exploratory stage of the Configurations as they try to find practical avenues toward solidarity in personnel, formation, and finance.

Here, however I want to thank the Provincial Economes of the Iberian Peninsula because they returned to the administration of the General Econome the interest earned on funds that were given to them three years ago. This is an example of the feasibility of a common regional fund. This fund was constituted at the Banco Santander de Bilbao.

6. Casa Generalizia of ss. Giovanni and Paolo: utilizing space.

In the recent years, many areas of the Casa Generalizia of Sts. John and Paul have been restored, improved, and optimized for the hosting of visitors and groups, with a certain economic return as a consequence.

There is still much to be done, but in our perspective, and in collaboration with the local community's finances, we will try to continue the process reasonably and according to the financial resources available.

CONCLUSION

I end this first intervention of mine, thanking you for your benevolent attention, excusing myself if I have tired you, and remaining at your disposition for any clarifications, observations, and suggestions.
Thanks you.

APPENDIX

Stauros Library

We have acquired the Stauros Library (Library of the Passion), for which we have remodeled the spaces (unused and abandoned for years) beneath the community refectory (and is equivalent to it in size).

The areas which were remodeled were furnished with bookcases, furniture, fire-prevention mechanisms, heating and air-conditioning, and two toilets, one handicap-accessible.

An outside access through a covered staircase was also added.

This new library area will receive the Stauros Library which is still in Belgium at this time; and also the Passion Literature presently held in the Library of Sts. John and Paul.

RESTRUCTURING
IN THE PASSIONIST CONGREGATION

Aquilino Bocos Merino, C.M.F.
Rome, October 24, 2010

Grant us the Spirit's vigilance and Faith's insights so that we may ascertain the terms in which our future and the future of our communities will be rooted. Grant us, Lord, the Gospel-wisdom which can discern the exigencies of these new moments in time, and to be attuned to the last days which your Word and your Life have inaugurated. (Michel Hubaut).

I. THE NAME SIGNALS THE WAY: RESTRUCTURING
- **1. The word we use**
- **2. Solidarity and restructuring**
- **3. Changed situations and new focal points in restructuring**
- **4. Clarity in objectives, and a purifying of attitudes**
- **5. Diverse points of departure when it's time to begin the process**

II. OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES WHICH HAVE ARISEN
- **1. Nothing new is born in this world without pain**
- **2. Obstacles appear**
- **3. Opportunities and positive supports**

III. THE ULTIMATE REASON FOR RESTRUCTURING

IV. PRESUPPOSITIONS REQUIRED TO MAKE RESTRUCTURING EFFECTIVE
- **1. The understanding and conviction that religious life is alive**
- **2. Centrality of the mission, and the primacy of the Spirit**
- **3. Anticipate in order to provide what is needed**
- **4. Be rooted in what is essential: the charism of the Passion**

V. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CONGREGATION AND ITS MAJOR ORGANISMS
- **1. The community of the Congregation, the first reality**
- **2. The Province within the Congregation**
- **3. Some considerations with practical application**
  - a) *The Province is a community with its own personality*
  - *b) About centralization and decentralization*
  - *c) The configuration of Organisms should be relative*
  - *d) Pursue an adequate organization to provide better service*

VI. MOTIVATION AND CO-RESPONSIBILITY IN STRUCTURAL INNOVATION
1. To innovate is to bank on a future
2. Correlation between risk and innovation
3. Motivate and rely on others

VII. SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS
1. Listen to the projects, the buildings and the organizations
2. The spirituality of the process
3. Restructuring postulates a new mentality]

I am grateful for the invitation which Fr. General and his government have offered me; and I appreciate the testimony of your life and mission in the Church. I am most sincerely grateful for the example of your efforts to respond to the great challenges which you face as a Congregation. Most especially, I recognize the very insightful and charismatic foundation which you have put down and upon which you are proceeding: *The Passion of Jesus*, which is certainly not a *dream*, but a FAITH.[1] It is a program for living which is an expression of the *life and work of* Jesus (cf. VC 22).

I don't know whether something any more clear and precise might be added in order to motivate you for the process which has been prepared for you. I believe that the service which you are asking of me will be more one of *confirmation* than of *illumination*. Therefore, humbly and fraternally, should it be of help to you, I will offer you an integral vision on the process of restructuring which is based on the experience I have had through contact with other Institutes.

I have accepted this collaborative effort with you on the basis of three givens: 1) A survey was taken in 2007 to discover the number of religious men and women who read the documents of the Church and of their own Institute. The result was disconcerting: only 5% kept up their reading[2]. 2) Karl Rahner spoke on one occasion of the *heresy of an indifferent memory:* He said, "There is something that we might call *the heresy of an indifferent memory,* it is a lack of attention, a willingness to let things pass. It is a heresy which is perfectly possible even within the Church to a great de-

[1] Cf. Texto del P. General: *¿Dónde estamos en el camino de la reestructuración?* (11-X-09), n. 1. Podría añadirse el pasaje de Juan, 12, 20-36. En este texto Jesús contrapone la vida de los griegos con otro modelo de vida: el que Él encarna. Señala su hora y siente la consiguiente turbación. La supera afirmando la razón de ser de su venida. "Padre, glorifica tu Nombre". El Padre le confirma y nos confirma mientras creamos y caminemos en la luz… Vivir el Misterio Pascual.

[2] Cf. R.COZZA, csj, *Oggi servono minoranze creative*, en "TESTIMONI", 30.09.2009, p. 7.

gree"[3]. 3) It happens among religious that, although they know what is proper to them, that fact that someone from outside the Institute presents it to them seems to have greater effect.

I begin with this affirmation...What hangs in the balance is not the survival of the life of the Congregation, nor of consecrated life; rather it is the renewal of consecrated life. There must always be an option for the new life that springs from the Passion of Christ. It is not enough, therefore, to maintain what already is, rather the works and institutions for the mission called for today must be revitalized. Persons and structures are for service to a greater cause: the Kingdom of God. The Church exists for evangelization, and religious life is found at the very heart of the Church as a determinative force in the promotion of its mission (cf. VC 3). The renewal and adaptation of the *structures* or of the Organizational Structures, ought to be done in creative fidelity to the charism, in response to the signs of the times and places.

I. THE NAME SIGNALS THE WAY: RESTRUCTURING

1. The word we use

Restructuring refers to a *structure* which suggests ordered parts within a whole, which are systematically inter-related rather than as inherently separate entities.[4].

When we say **structures,** we are speaking of the juridical elements, or of the norms by which we are directed, the organizational forms, the buildings which we occupy, the apostolic activities which we conduct, the form of government by which we direct our own lives, the way in which we manage and administer our goods, the plans and sites dedicated to formation, the fabric of our community life, the various ways we are inter-related in the Church, in society and in our cultural expressions.

There was a time when the clamor for the revision of structures was mixed with misunderstandings around the relationship between *charism* and *institution; organization and liberty*. Today, these dialectical elements are essentially a thing of the past, and the insistence on the revision of structures, although it may have other immediate causes, is derived from a desire for evangelical authenticity, and the desire to respond to the needs overlooked by the encompassing society; to respond to the more aggravating poverties where there is less social assistance.

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[3] K. RAHNER, *Fundamentación sacramental del estado laical en la Iglesia*, en "Escritos de Teología", Taurus, Madrid, 1969, t. VII, p. 357.

[4] Cf. X. ZUBIRI, en *Estructura dinámica de la realidad*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1989, p. 37.

2. Solidarity and restructuring

The motto for this Synod is **"Solidarity for a new life and mission".** Solidarity with Jesus of Nazareth gives this expression depth and density, since the man, Jesus, is in solidarity with all persons through to his *death on the cross* (Phil 2:8). In Jesus we recognize the living symbol of the immeasurable and transcendent love of *God with us,* who takes charge of the ills of his people, walks with them, saves them, and brings about their unity[5].

When one lives this solidarity with Jesus profoundly, there is no one who can impede, nor anything to be excluded from, the restructuring process. One is obliged to determine and leave aside what might be of no importance, what is of lesser importance, and those things which are obstacles, so that the dynamics of charity will allow us go where we are needed with the greater urgency[6].

3. Changed situations and new focal points in restructuring

Restructuring, in all of its variations, is as old as the ongoing journey of Religious Institutes in the Church. In every historical moment, restructuring is conditioned by a diversity of social, cultural and ecclesial elements. Every living organization renews itself, corrects itself, absorbs other models of self-improvement, and recreates itself from different perspectives. We can see this in business, in universities, in political parties, in cultural associations, in sports clubs, etc. They use a language like "fusion", "reconversion" and "program review". It is not a matter of religious life's mimicking the process. Rather, it is applying a contemporary process to a sign of its vitality which is centuries old.

Shortly before and immediately after the Council, structural changes were made through expansion. The Organizational Structures were remodeled, missions were established under the care of existing Provinces, and a significant number of demarcations were subdivided. This same renewing force derived from the Council (cf., PC 3) and the option to enter into and share the lives of the people, chipped away at the traditional apostolates. It

[5] Cf GS 32.

[6] Remito a las palabras del P. General: "**La palabra Solidaridad, que tiene su máxima expresión en la Cruz**, también es la palabra clave para nosotros, en la fase actual del proceso de reestructuración. Pero para que no se quede sólo en "palabra", nuestra conversión ha de capacitarnos para hacer realidad una nueva manera de estar, como pasionistas, en misión. Debe crecer en nosotros la convicción de que la vida es un don que tiene que ser compartido entre las diversas regiones de la Congregación. La Solidaridad concreta e institucionalizada en la formación, en el personal y en la economía mostrará si es auténtica nuestra capacidad de compartir o si es una simple palabra, que se escucha con agrado, pero que está vacía de contenido. No ha sido una palabra vacía en la Cruz, ni fue una palabra vacía en las primitivas comunidades cristianas que "ponían todo en común". L.c. n. 6.

paid special care to persons and social contexts. The wave of review of positions that washed over the Church affected the buildings, territorial circumscriptions, and more than anything else, had repercussions in lifestyles, in pastoral choices, in formation, in spirituality, in governance and in finances.

At the beginning of the 1990's, a new consideration of restructuring came around. The diminution of vocational candidates is noted. The institutes have fewer but older members to maintain a greater number of works. They are promptly obliged to re-evaluate their apostolates and distribution. The Church was concerned about this problem[7]. *Vita Consecrata* offers some criteria for restructuring[8]. Soon, it was obvious that this process would lead to a reorganization of Provinces or Major Structures.

There are a few, but there are some, Religious Institutes which have moved forward with their reorganization on the basis of the missionary exigencies of the Church and the world. However, the majority of Religious Institutes have undertaken this process because of their decline in numbers, the advanced age of their personnel, the vocational hemorrhage which continues, and consequently, because of the excessive amount of work and duties which falls back on the same persons. However, what must be done is not a withdrawal, but a relaunch.

4. Clarity in objectives, and a purifying of attitudes

Religious Institutes, as they prepare and undertake their restructuring, may choose the path of fusion, or of confederation, etc. They draw up plans to generate an analysis of their situations, reflections to sensitize their members to the situation they are in, narratives about others' experiences, programming over a period of time, etc. What we know is that determining factor for the successful outcome of this process, is the clarity of the ***objectives*** and the purification of the ***attitudes*** with which one faces the task.

With greater or lesser precision, *the objectives* have been clear: to promote ***the quality of evangelical life*** and ***the evangelizing mission.***

With respect to *the attitudes,* they differ according to the individuals. For some, the most common attitudes are **negative,** such as fear, closed-mindedness, obstinacy...which are then expressed as evasion, flight, and ten-

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7 Cf. VF 67; VC 63 y, de una manera más genérica, en *Caminar desde Cristo.*

8 "En otros institutos se plantea más bien el problema de la reestructuración de sus obras. Esta tarea, nada fácil y no pocas veces dolorosa, requiere estudio y discernimiento a la luz de algunos criterios. Es preciso, por ejemplo, salvaguardar el sentido del propio carisma, promover la vida fraterna, estar atentos a las necesidades de la Iglesia tanto universal como particular, ocuparse de aquello que el mundo descuida, responder generosamente y con audacia, aunque sea con intervenciones obligadamente exiguas, a las nuevas pobrezas, sobre todo en los lugares más abandonados " (VC 63).

sion. For others, the attitudes are **positive** ones, constructive ones, because these persons believe that new opportunities will arise. These persons are ready and willing, they are courageous and audacious for the mission. Some speak of *exorcising the demons* which obstruct the progress of the process; for example, the attitudes of pessimism, negativism, unwillingness to move, mistrust, and resignation, etc.

In discernment, which must accompany the entire process, there will be an effect from intimate personal crises. These are not easily uncovered, and they have deep roots in the psychological, familial, cultural, social and ecclesial underpinnings of the individual.

5. Diverse points of departure when it's time to begin the process

There are different focal points manifest when it becomes time to organize and begin this process:

a) *We begin from the radical following of Jesus.* We have professed the evangelical counsels as a response to the love which God has for us, and from the conviction that **He is all that is necessary**[9]. To engage in restructuring with this as the fundamental point of departure will mollify doubts and resistance. It will eliminate the rationalizations that try to justify a greater importance for what should remain secondary. Nothing of worth should be negated, but the radical following of Jesus puts order into our scale of values. Abraham taught us to sacrifice the son of the promise (cf. Gn. 22). We must learn to sacrifice our aspirations, our personal projects, all that we have invested in our own works....God is greater.

b) *The starting point of mission as the regenerative principle and promoter of abundant life.* The mission of Jesus, according to the modality given by religious founders, directs and channels the energy of the Institute for service in the Church. Restructuring keeps the expanding wave of the charism streaming outward. Mission co-involves the young and the old, it involves the Organizational Structures of those who have and of those who lack vocations. That Mission makes us go beyond borders, makes us accentuate a sharing of spirituality and apostolic labors, and makes us begin to cooperate with other Institutes (Inter-congregational). The Mission widens ones point of view and opens the heart to constitute Church and to construct the Kingdom. Efforts for union, fusion or Federation of Organizational Structures have emerged from that perspective.

The secret of the process of restructuring is in the formulation of a ***Project for life and mission,*** with its priorities.

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[9] El P. General hace alusión al texto de *Mt 10, 17-30*. L.c. n. 4

c) *Interculturalness as a starting point.* Given the human movement which is occurring in the world, *the way of interculturalness* will be a great sign and a strong stimulus for universal fraternity in the Church and society. When restructuring begins in this way, from this perspective, especially in intercontinental religious institutes, new possibilities for interchange appear, although we may have to admit that the integration is slow, fatiguing and requires sacrifice.

d) *How to carry it out:* There are those who wish to be efficient; they operate from above, vertically, by imposition on the rest. There are others who wish to carry it out actively, through the dynamics of information-sharing, dialogue, discernment, consensus and decision-making. A restructuring which is imposed from above can cause grave injury, which will be difficult to heal, and not a few resistant feelings which will make the effort futile.

II. OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES WHICH HAVE ARISEN

1. Nothing new is born in this world without pain

Mario Benedetti says in one of his verses: "Everything depends on the *sorrow* through which one sees things." This is how it is with restructuring. Everything depends on the "sorrow" with which one confronts the complex reality of the life and mission of the Congregation. However, shouldn't we change our slogan? Wouldn't it be better to say: "Everything depends on the *love* with which we see things? Whenever we look about us with love, everything is surrounded by understanding, compassion, and the good will to be of help.

Our experience tells us that the Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Vicariates, or our major organizational structures strongly resist their dying, especially if they should be in the same national territory and have their own long history. In fact, their resistance is greater in the Provinces with a rich tradition, although they are now small and can grasp the advantages in fusion or confederation[10].

There are three items which, if not well provided for, usually produce the greater number of obstacles. They are: **spaces, attachments,** and **belongings.**

Obviously, the abstract concept of *space* is something about which we are not indifferent. Nevertheless, when we analyze its associations (place, surface, territory, nation, land of one's birth, home) which are then paired with *displacement,* transitions, travels, and migrations, we begin to sense the repercussions between what is "my own" and what is "foreign to

[10] Cf. L. NAVA, *Riorganizzazione delle circoscrizioni provinciali.* VitCon, 38 (2002) 223 and ff...

me", what is intimate and what is public, what is mine and what is not, the person and the community in all of its levels (local, provincial, and Congregational). Something similar happens with one's attachments (where one has lived, his experiences, his passions) which equally become problematic for the public and private spheres, they tend to oppose the rational and the affective with the natural consequences for self-identification, groupings, belongings, collective memories, etc.[11]

All human beings feel compelled to harmonize those belongings which are rooted in our origins (territorial, ethnic, cultural, familial, religious, professional) with our other affinities (political, sports, etc.). Everyone's identity is multidimensional. It is not reducible to one or another of the factors just laid out. Among so many levels of belonging, we will observe influences, implications, and inter-relationships which are reciprocal dynamics. The harmonizing and ordering of spheres of belonging supposes a certain sacrifice.

The degree of *affective* and *effective* attachment to the Congregation will promote either greater or lesser success in the fulfillment of the objectives of restructuring. "Belonging" to the Congregation is often understood from a juridical perspective, as a measure of longevity in the Congregation. However, it is an error to believe that this "belonging" will have significance in persons who are living out of individual interests. The itinerary of your restructuring will regenerate the charismatic fabric of the Congregation. It is a matter of applying the pedagogy of involvement and corresponsibility.

2. Obstacles appear

a) *The absence of clear ideas, or the confusion* about the *apostolic design* for the future of the Institute. To allow oneself to sink into a chaos, to fall into the trap of numbers, and to focus more on quantity rather than quality, have been obstacles to the changes which renew.

b) *The identification of mission and works,* often includes the error of thinking that the structures are more important than the evangelical life of the members. Such belief is supported by the notion that persons pass on, while the structures remain.

c) *Stalling the analysis of the situation*: ...with regard to persons, ages, prior preparation, abilities, and the real possibilities of growth and of maintenance; these appear to be unending problems and are repeated many times over.

d) *Fear of the unknown,* the magnification of the differences among cultures, histories, customs, and to believe that the proper identity of the

[11] Cf. L. ARTUCH (ed) *Pensar este tiempo. Espacios, afectos, pertenencias*. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 2005.

group will be lost. There is a fear of losing autonomy and independence. This is a very subtle point in our religious life because, given the multiplicity of belongings which we cultivate, we are victims of a gratifying dispersion by which we can justify almost everything which we do.

e) *The prejudices which must be overcome*. There are those who have had sorrowful experiences with restructuring, they have not overcome the traumas produced. Others have seen the Organizational Structure to which they belong be born, grow, develop; some have lived almost always in the same locality, they feel comfortable and they move about confidently in that environment. Others find themselves identified with the work they do, with no religious or apostolic perspective. Some feel that they have put down roots where they are and they confuse their welfare with fidelity to the local hierarchy, to the benefactors, etc. All of these types of individuals will find reasons to ask that others be the ones to be moved.

f) *The weakness in leadership* in the Organizational Structures (Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Vicariates, Delegations...). Sometimes there is no defined leadership, and the situation is not confronted, no decisions are made.

g) *Impediments and obstacles on the part of bishops, family members, professors, civil authorities, etc.* Restructuring usually is accompanied by the cessation of positions which provide or promote competent services to the Church or society. There will be resistance or obstacles from those who feel that their offices will be affected. A discernment is absolutely necessary so that personal interests are not given priority over the universal good; or the good of a particular church against the good of the universal Church; the advantage to one population or some families against other communities or families whose needs are greater; of some concrete individuals against the good of the Institute.

3. Opportunities and positive supports

He is not the only realist who sees difficulties in restructuring; a realist is also the one who understands that in the life of the Institutes there are positive signs in favor of change and creativity. Difficulties are to be confronted and overcome. The great sculptors make beautiful figures emerge from stone. Out of fallen trees, they make statues. The emergent signs of hope which have appeared are the fruit of those many persons who have believed in the future and have taken risks in order to respond to the challenges posed by the uncertainties which generate crises. Fr. Schiller was not without reason when he said: "Whoever does not dare to go beyond reality will never conquer truth"[12].

[12] F. SCHILLER, Cartas sobre la educación estética del hombre, Aguilar, Buenos Aires, 1981, p. 68.

The restructuring experience produces a convergence of opportunities which, when taken advantage of, revive the apostolic charism and agility of the Institute.

a) *The conversion to or the conviction that change and transformation are necessary* in order to overcome routine, the absence of vitality in the communities, and the dysfunction of its services in the social and ecclesial contexts.

b) *The strength of communion.* A dialogue on charity, the spirituality of communion, the movements working for communitarian living, all relativize the cultural, and formative differences and the customs which exist among the Organizational Structures.

c) *A missionary conscience demands a revitalization.* The challenges of the new evangelization call into question our way of life, of being, and how we communicate the message. A missionary creativity in the face of disbelieve requires new strategies. Many Institutes, in the streamlining of their structures, by concentrating their efforts and welcoming a collaboration in mission, have begun new and ground-breaking missionary posts.

d) *Present options in consecrated life.* In harmony with the Church, the three great options of the post-conciliar period continue to stimulate Religious Life: the option for the poor, the option for Mission "ad gentes", and the option for universal brotherhood. These allow you to determine where you ought to be.

e) *The interrelationship, interchange and collaboration among charisms.* The interrelationship among charisms, among Institutes, demands a special mention. They can seek common works, and the multiplication of intercongregational cooperation are forms of carrying out apostolic commitments.

f) *The recognition of the vocation and mission of the laity.* They are not only collaborators; consecrated life should promote a mission which is shared with them as laity.

g) *Having confidence in what is being done.* When people have their eyes opened to a new horizon, their confidence grows. To the degree that their sensibility is promoted, doubts and fears dissolve; risks are seen as less great and the sacrifices to be undertaken are embraced more easily.

Restructuring moves forward when there is good information and transparency about the evangelical and charismatic task at hand. Positive support comes from a correct pedagogy, the collaboration among those who, convinced of the road to take, participate and speak out publicly. A future is being prepared by maximizing participation, overcoming prejudices, and by making oneself available to work in shedding light on what is to come.

III. THE ULTIMATE REASON FOR RESTRUCTURING

Although we have theoretical agreement that restructuring is good, the question which must be stated succinctly, being the most challenging hurdle to overcome, is, "why are we going to restructure?" This is the "million dollar question," we must give the most exact answer to it. "What are we about?" – An apostolic efficiency on the basis of the concentration of our efforts? - A greater coordination in government, elimination of excessive and unnecessary levels of authority? – Greater flexibility in solidarity with the Congregation, whether in human resources, formation resources, or economic resources? – A greater autonomy in some part of the Congregation? We must consider the possibilities because the answer is made up of theoretical and practical reasons.

Let us now get to the bottom of the question. There is something at hand here that is more than a task of institutional architecture or conventional adaptation: change in juridical structures, the delimitation of geographical areas or the reorganization of personnel and services. It is probably necessary to go beyond solidarity in the three areas which you have singled out. It has to do with giving an answer to a challenge which is more radical and present within consecrated life.

There is no lack of those who say: "They think they're going to fool us! If we were not as bad off as we are, there would be no need to reorganize or restructure or whatever it is they wish to call it". The situation of precariousness and limitations is one aspect, but not the most important. The situation we are going through is a strong call to conversion. Even if our houses of formation were full, today we would have to face various new options: the way of thinking; the form of life; the places where we are present; the means with which we manage our material goods; the relationships with other vocations in the Church (laity and priests). We would have to move to where we are most needed. We would have to seek other spaces and establish different rhythms of life in order to reveal our capacity of being welcoming and solicitous, to make our fraternity more evident and to carry out with consistency our option for the poor, the excluded, emigrants, the "others", whatever the social and cultural condition and religion may be.

Our vocation demands a dynamic answer which is shown in wonderment, in openness, in the search and in availability. It carries the tag of *greater quality* of evangelical life and *greater apostolic audacity*. The questions which we must honestly give answer to are: What does the Lord ask of us who are consecrated to Him, here and now? How can we organize ourselves to live in a more evangelical way and to serve the Lord and our brothers better? Where are we and where should we be? What are the hopes of the local churches and the territories where we are present or where we should go to?

IV. ASSUMPTIONS FOR MAKING A REORGANIZATION EFFECTIVE.

1. Awareness and conviction that religious life is alive

We cannot allow ourselves to become influenced by those "prophets of doom" who speak of the imminent extinction of religious life. It is obvious that they do not know that the consecrated life is essential to the Church. It could be that we are going through a difficult winter. It depends on the latitude. In any case, as St. Augustine said, "the root lives during the winter". It is not a time of infertility and death, rather it is the re-concentration of the essentials of life that it may bloom, re-flourish, bring forth fruit. In fact, if we look at the world, at the Church and at consecrated life, we can take stock that there are many positive signs of the presence of the Spirit among us: spiritual health, human maturity, apostolic restlessness and a tuning in to the deep concerns of the people of our time. As Don Quijote would say: "Is there still sunlight on the wall?"[13] The restructuring of a Congregation is unviable if there nests within its members a suspicion in the face of their life project or if they are undermined by disenchantment and mediocrity. The conviction that religious life is alive and that its charism is still current and has a future has to be foremost in the consciousness of all the brothers. Neither declarations nor rational affirmations are sufficient, rather what is necessary is the creation of a corporate consciousness which shows that, effectively, it believes in its vitality and its future. It is necessary to *believe*. A rational understanding of consecrated life leads to strategic formulations, but not to an inherent renewal which assumes a reorganization, which always implies an entering into the Mystery, in the dynamic of the free gift of the Spirit in the Church. Without beliefs there are no convictions and without convictions, one can only attempt to patch up. However, a deep renovation, which includes a reorganization, assumes serious and firm convictions about who we are and what we are for.

2. Centrality of mission and the primacy of the Spirit

In many ways it is becoming evident that mission is turning into the central axis of the restructuring process. Mission is something deeper and more radical, also more extensive, than apostolic activities or "missio ad gentes". It is not only action, but also passion. As with Jesus, it is "servitium caritatis". It is the memory of the Passion in life and in words (cf. Const. 1).

Mission becomes the prime agent of inspiration, the articulator and animator of the life of individuals and communities; it infuses confidence in the future and gives content to every gesture, to every word, to every activity and to every work. Mission guides spirituality, formation, leadership and economy. Aspiring to continue the merciful mission of Jesus, all of our se-

[13] M. De Cervantes: *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, Parte II, cap. 3

curities are removed and we launch ourselves towards a more radical commitment on all fronts. The challenges of evangelization question our way of being and of communicating the message. Missionary inventiveness and creativity in the face of unbelief obliges us to adopt new strategies. Mission is for impassioned men and women who break molds and cross borders, because they are impelled by the love of Christ (2Cor 5,14).

On the other hand, only the primacy of the Spirit in our life can break the circle of mediocrity, which is the corrosive force in consecrated life. Evangelical radicalism disappears in the person who dwells in mediocrity as he becomes accustomed to living under the demands of the immediate. When the Spirit is missing, the Word of God does not take root, prayer is postponed until altogether abandoned, the poor become a nuisance, difficult missions are reserved for the adventurers, cultural diversity is reduced to folklore and human rights and injustices become political issues … a mediocre and irrelevant heart opens up to gratitude, surprise and marvel with difficulty. It lives anesthetized by the media show. It does not perceive the presence of God in the history of the peoples. It lacks missionary availability. Only a docility to the Spirit can lead us to keep or to take on different approaches, in which neither age nor numbers count, but the quality of consecrated life which carries within itself an extraordinary energy to live and develop mission.

3. Foresee in order to provide

It is necessary to foresee in order to provide. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?" (Lk. 14:28). And in the Gospel of John we see Mary, the Mother of Jesus, with her special intuition and persistence as the woman of the Kingdom, anticipating the "hour" of Jesus (cf Jn. 2: 1-12).

M. Merleau-Ponty said that "it is certain that the world is what we see and yet, we need to learn how to look at it"[14]. We need to make an effort in order to discover what it shows us and to read that which transcends the immediate experience. It is good to ask one's self "how do we read the changes of the times, the journey of the Church, the statistics of consecrated life and the Congregation, the signs of new life which appear?"

When analyzing human groups and attempting to open them up to new horizons, there is the insistence to offer them a "vision" for the future. The well known author Anselm Grün writes: "the person who attends solely to daily problems will not be able to arouse motivations and will not change anything essential. There is a lack of vision that is capable of creating

[14] M. Merleau-Ponty, *Lo visible y lo invisible*, Seix Barral, Barcelona, 1970, p.20.

movement in this world. Vision creates motivation, awakens new energies in collaborators. It gives them the sensation that they are cooperating in something important, that they are contributing to the decisive realization of the humanization of this world. Vision creates communion. It creates unity among different personalities and their respective talents and provides the collaborators with a direction for their activities"[15].

We need to *purchase ointment* for the cure of our eyes (cf. Rev 3,9). This ointment is the Spirit which broadens our vision (cf. 1Jn 2,27) and helps us to see that this world too is loved by God and that there is no need to fear. We need to know how to read and understand the blessing which we receive with new vocations in countries unknown until now and that bring with them the gift of their cultures, their languages and their religious sensitivity. They favour important dialogues (of life, ecumenical and inter religious) and they multiply the efforts for the great causes of humanity.

We still have a long way to go before we can come to term with differences, integrating contrasts and preparing ourselves as evangelizing communities in this complex world. We also need to reconsider the criteria of leadership in order to strengthen unity in diversity, which is not necessarily centralization, but participation at different areas and levels. Persons and material goods are to be seen as "common patrimony". All is at the service of mission, however an interdependence and economic solidarity must be promoted just as much within the Congregation as in the Christian communities which can contribute with their material goods for the spreading of the Kingdom.

4. Situating self in the essential: the charism of the Passion

The fourth condition required to begin the restructuring process is to be situated in the essential, that *the world might be reborn and live*. There is an increase of voices calling forth for the recovery of the essential and the original and this includes commercial language with its references to the origin, taste and the quality of genuine, unadulterated products. Founders have always sought the essential in their projects. They understood the reach and the primacy of the love of God. It is necessary to live from the point of view of the compass: a fixed point (a life of theological virtues) which makes it possible to reach different spaces and tasks. When there is a fixed point we can always draw a circumference, otherwise we draw hieroglyphics.

The *clamor for the essential* in the Church and in religious life is a movement towards Galilee where everything began and to Cesarea Philippi where Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Lord and is also a gaze towards the future: "I am the first and the last, and the living one" (Rev 1,

[15] A. Grün, *Orientar personas, despertar vidas,* Verbo Divino, Estrella, 2002. p.150.

17-18). In his magisterium, Benedict XVI is showing himself to be a true apostle of the essential. He has demonstrated this in his encyclicals and in his talks directed to religious, whom he considers to be searchers and witnesses of the essential.

Schweitzer compared the method of centering self on the essential with the behavior of a spider. He says that the genius of the spider consists in spreading the lines of its web around a center point. The tauter the lines, the more beautiful the design. Everything crumbles however when spread out. When the vocational experience of the Passionist, which is a gift of the Spirit, is constructed in harmony with an encounter with Christ on the Cross, in communion with the Church and in service to humankind, there is the joyful experience of journeying towards renewal. However, when we place the divine gift within parentheses, we forget the contemplation of the suffering face of Christ, we become entangled in secondary affairs and we are taken over by despondency. We begin to experience a devitalization.

Turning towards the Founder, to St. Paul of the Cross, as indicated by the Father General, marks the path towards a proper reorganization. Turning towards the Founder is not a return to the past, but a retrieval of his prophetic vision and a re-launching of his charismatic mission. It is a continual invitation to live the Passionist vocation as reflected in numbers 1-4 of the Constitutions. All Founders are situated in the eschatological dimension and in the "come, Lord". For this reason, the return to them, the return to the origins, awakens solidarity, promotes communion and supports shared responsibility. What must grow is the congregational "ours" and the rest falls to second place. The figure of St. Paul of the Cross is not only one of model, teacher and intercessor but above all, of father. From this ever-present paternity, perceptions, judgments and attitudes are transformed.

From this life current, whatever the structural situation of an Institute may be, everything begins to be saturated in meaning, joy, security and apostolic strength.

V. Relationship between Congregation and Major Organisms

Your Constitutions offer a correct understanding of the relationship between the Congregation and Provinces, vice Provinces, Vicariates (Const. 103-104). However, since this is one of the more difficult points to digest at the moment of reorganization, I will offer some considerations.

1. The community of the Congregation, primary reality

The Congregation is a community brought forth by the Spirit in the Church and for the world (Const. 2). St. Paul of the Cross is the mediator of the Spirit. Therefore the Congregation is not a corporation but a community

of persons, gathered and animated by the Spirit through St. Paul of the Cross and his companions to proclaim Jesus Christ. This community is the receiver of the charism and mission. As with all Institutes of Pontifical Right, it remains at the disposal of the Universal Church. As well, when it organizes itself in different juridical territories, the ecclesial character of its foundational charism remains. The Congregation, as a universal community, is the first reality which must be affirmed in relation to the different territories. This affirmation of the charismatic community is the best remedy to every nationalism and provincialism which are expressions of sterile collective egocentricities opposed to the mission of the Congregation.

At times, much importance was give to the expansion and numerical growth of persons, at others, cultural or linguistic diversity were central in the creation of new organizations in institutes to maintain an adequate representation at Chapters. Today these values are still in vigour but they can no longer be the sole determining ones, especially if we take into account that individuals have received a vocation with a universal scope. The organization in communities is opportune in that individuals could grow in the foundational charism and offer better missionary services.

There are those who, in an attempt to defend their organization, strongly invoke their role in the local reality, apparently denying the value of any reference to the Universal Church. There is no perfect analogy between the Province and the local Church since Provinces are present in different local churches and like yours, they are also supra-national.

On the other hand, affirming the charism, living its universal dynamism faithfully, we must break the circle of the immediate and must broaden our vision: from the local community to the provincial community then on to the congregational community and finally on to the ecclesial and community of human kind. Every foundational charism carries within it an expansive wave which reaches and re-creates the most varied historical and local situations.

The growth or the decrease of the Congregation affects all of its members. If the Congregation has on one hand a future or, to the contrary if is becoming extinct, it is necessary to confront the situation from the view point of charism and mission. The basis of this lies in the communion of life and of material goods which is in turn translated into organic and ordered systems of collaboration. In order to maintain this communion and special collaboration alive and, if necessary to reorganize it, the authority of the General Chapter has its role.

The Congregation, by its very nature, has at heart the vocational, formative, spiritual, apostolic and economic well-being of each of the Provinces. In these times when numbers of new entries are decreasing and the age of individuals is increasing, the smaller Provinces find themselves in

particular difficulty with the project of reorganization. The formula of *inter-provincial collaboration* is showing signs of collapse. There are those who enthusiastically aim at this option, as long as there is no request for economic assistance or transfer of personnel. In the face of such inconsistency, the only remedy appears to be reorganization.

We need to **make Congregation.** Conjugate these verbs in the first person plural: entrust; qualify; construct; render credible; inculturate; extend; collaborate. This leads us to articulate the inter-relationship between Congregation and Province; between Province and local community. Communion between all the parts does not imply uniformity. Communion integrates the diversity of spheres and levels in life and apostolate.

2. The Province within the Congregation

As the Congregation is not a "Federation of Organizations" but a *Universal Apostolic Community*, the Province within the Congregation is to be understood as a Community of communities. It is a *part* of the Congregation and must *integrate and unite* in order to complete the end of the Institute. This two-sided relationship makes demands on the life and the mission of the Province. Its autonomy is not absolute, rather it is engraved in the joint life and mission of the universal Congregation and contributes to its development and well-being. An Organization recovers its strength when it shares what it has and it becomes impoverished each time it concentrates on its own problems or becomes disinterested in the needs of others.

3. Considerations with practical applications

a) *A Province is a community with its own personality*. It enjoys autonomy. With the passing of years it acquires expressions in the areas of relations, language, customs and traditions. Bonds of affection are created as in a family where one is born, grows, lives and dies. All this attributes to a provincial community something more than a juridical personality. The Province acquires a cultural personality within the Congregation. Not having absolute autonomy, it is necessary to harmonize values and at times, prioritizing these same values. The truth is that there still exist old notions of Province with deep national and colonial roots with a smugness that today have no reason to exist.

b) *On centralization and decentralization*. In religious life government is exercised *orderly*, that is, within a hierarchy of competencies and a decentralization of functions (cf. Const. chap. VII & nums. 121-122). Your style of government is indicated in the Constitutions. There exists a balance between centralization and decentralization. It is the interest of the Congregation that the Provinces be vigorous and carry out their lives and apostolic

activities in the best possible way, remaining supportive however with the whole of the Congregation.

c) *Relativizing the configuration of the Organization.* The Congregation may, in effect, restructure itself in many different ways. That which cannot be lost is unity; the ties of the different parts and its members to the community of the Congregation.

d) *Searching for an adequate organization to better serve.* I am insisting. I know. If we are speaking today of the advisability and the possibility of reorganizing it is because what is at stake is the goal of serving the more urgent needs of evangelization through the means proper to the Institute.

VI. Motivation and Shared Responsibility in the Structural Innovation

1. To innovate is to invest in the future

Structural innovation within consecrated life is sustained and animated by the primacy of the innovative action of the Spirit. To innovate is to enter into the journey of the founders, into their creative imagination and in their continual forward movement. In order to actuate innovation from the charismatic heart of the Institute, we need to have a broad and corporate vision of plans and problems. The fact that a major Organization suffers a lack of vocations and is aging, does not mean it is badly off. We have to look at the wider picture. It is possible that in other places vocations are abundant and that the mission in the Universal Church is prolonged.

We experience precariousness as a situation of dependency, of vulnerability and fragility. Without a doubt, many times it generates insecurity, instability and uncertainty. It is necessary to convert precariousness into a trampoline in order to overcome. In fact, in a climate of opulence and adoption of bourgeois ways, bureaucratic mechanisms of security work more than innovation. In this way, the future is not prepared for.

2. Correlation between precariousness and innovation

The correlation between precariousness and innovation, applied to consecrated life, guides us to radical poverty and gospel simplicity. It is similar to becoming like children so that we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Mt 18, 1-4). In the child we see at once precariousness, openness, curiosity, wonderment and receptivity to all that is new and trust in those who can help. Childhood is not only a stage of life but a way of being, in simplicity, trust and openness. It is keeping the heart turned towards the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who continues to suffer for our sake. If we want the

spirit of innovation to pass through us and to face up to the future, we will need to cultivate poverty, dispossession, compassion and solidarity.

It is crucial to nurture the motivation which includes meaning, process and trusting others. If we do not work together at the task which sustains the mysticism of the proposed project, all becomes sterile. It is useful to remain open and to compare our own experience to that of other Institutes. An asphyxiated creativity can be attributed to the lack of a wider vision and of an intrinsic motivation, an indifference in the face of challenges, dissatisfaction with what we carry within our hands, external pressures and not having been vigilant in opposing and overcoming negative forces.

3. Motivating and trusting others

Official declarations, cold reasoning and nice plans on paper are not sufficient to motivate. Revitalization and reorganization are not achieved by decree but by communal enthusiasm. Only a community, which lives off its charismatic roots and irradiates this charism in the Church together with other forms of Christian life (especially the laity) will render possible the reflourishing, the hope and the renewed journey of the Passionist mission. Those institutions which have served their purpose will collapse under their own weight.

Over the past 25 years the Church has done us an immense favour by correlating charisms and ministries, diverse vocations and states of life. It has asked us to cultivate interrelationships and to encourage shared responsibility. This favours the process towards a better organization and dissipates the anxiety of independence, the exaggerated exaltation of differences and of attachment to what is one's own. Many projects which are the fruit of cooperation are appearing.

VII. SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Listening to the works, the buildings, the organizations

Our organizational structures, our presence and pastoral services speak. Let us look at their present situation and their future within a span of 20 years. If we listen to what they have to say, they will speak to us of achievements and deficiencies, dysfunctions and predictions. If we do not listen, if we are incapable of capturing their message of vitality or of death, of disenchantment or of new hopes and projects, then perhaps we are living in the most sterile indifference.

Let us ask ourselves: "how would we like our community, our Province, our Institute, or simply our school or parish to be within 10 years?" These kinds of inquires help us to question our own life style, our availability, our material goods and the validity of our works.

2. Spirituality in the process

Reorganization is a principle of healthy realism. It allows us to place ourselves face to face with reality as it is and impedes us from dreaming about the future. It requires us to pose questions of the short, medium and long range in nature. The Congregation is a long train but there are persons who prefer to travel comfortably in local trains, without posing questions about the radical demands that the Passion of Christ poses on humanity and without risking new missionary horizons.

It is not enough to restructure and then remain tranquil; just as it is not enough to work for an organization when what we require is a revitalization. It is obvious to think that the juridical, organizational and economic structures are geared towards the quality of an evangelical life and at the service of mission and that there will be no innovation without a good dose of spirituality, without adequate leadership and a solid formation. But we have to continue inquiring about what style of spirituality, leadership and formation will favour the formation, the mission of the Congregation of the Passion.

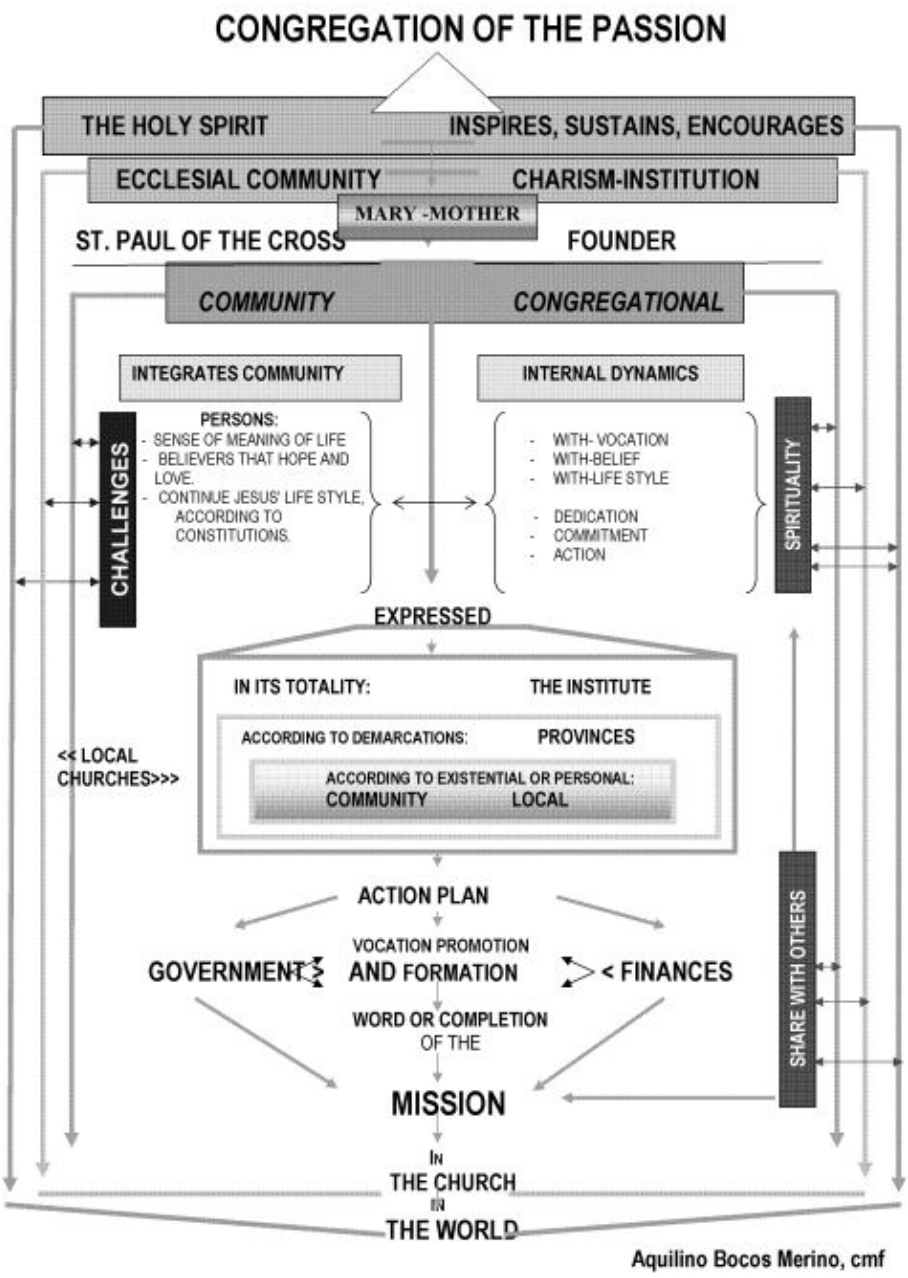
Spirituality is not a stage one has to arrive at in order to continue the journey. It must be seen as a journey following Jesus in the Spirit; it is the process of abandonment into the hands of the Father in order to communicate His life. "When we skate on weak ice, our safety depends on our speed" (Ralph Waldo Emerson). If we wish to respond to the challenges of the present moment we will need to create conditions of life that will encourage wonder, contemplation of the mystery, acceptance of the different, missionary audacity and all that this means in the face of poverty, cultures and solidarity.

3. Restructuring proposes a new mentality

We have already said that reorganization is not a survival tactic, nor can it be reduced to pragmatic management, efficiency, because the energies of religious life are seen as not sufficiently taken advantage of or are sterile and repetitive. The process has to be seen from another point of view. It is not enough to join the pack of hounds, for only the one who has seen the fox will pursue it to the end.

There was a time when we were preoccupied with our identity. **Who** are we in the Church? We felt better when we reached a certain clarity of ideas. It was not sufficient for us to say who we are, but we had to express it, witness to it, centering our attention on **how** to live consecrated life.

Further on the question regarded means and places. **Where are we and what are we doing**? Today the central question is **"from where"** do we live, organize ourselves and work. **We need to return to the essential and frequent the future.**


CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION
THE HOLY SPIRIT
INSPIRES, SUSTAINS, ENCOURAGES
ECCLESIAL COMMUNITY
CHARISM-INSTITUTION
MARY -MOTHER
ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS
FOUNDER
COMMUNITY
CONGREGATIONAL
INTEGRATES COMMUNITY
INTERNAL DYNAMICS
CHALLENGES
PERSONS:
- SENSE OF MEANING OF LIFE
- BELIEVERS THAT HOPE AND LOVE.
- CONTINUE JESUS' LIFE STYLE, ACCORDING TO CONSTITUTIONS.
- WITH- VOCATION
- WITH-BELIEF
- WITH-LIFE STYLE
- DEDICATION
- COMMITMENT
- ACTION
SPIRITUALITY
EXPRESSED
IN ITS TOTALITY:
THE INSTITUTE
ACCORDING TO DEMARCATIONS:
PROVINCES
<< LOCAL CHURCHES>>>
ACCORDING TO EXISTENTIAL OR PERSONAL:
COMMUNITY
LOCAL
ACTION PLAN
VOCATION PROMOTION
GOVERNMENT
AND FORMATION
< FINANCES
WORD OR COMPLETION
OF THE
MISSION
SHARE WITH OTHERS
IN
THE CHURCH
IN
THE WORLD
Aquilino Bocos Merino, cmf

Beginning the Process

Reorganization entails entering into a dynamic which demands that we be open to surprises and that we possess a good measure of good will on the part of those who are affected by the process. This spirit of cooperation needs to be more present in the General and Provincial Governments or in those individuals who are entrusted with coordination them.

At the beginning of the process, it would be good to elaborate the agenda or the plan that will be followed and which needs to be adapted according to the Institute or the characteristics of the zones that they are trying to reorganize; for example, it could consist of the these points:

1) State precisely the objectives and define the work areas.
2) State the priorities in light of revitalization, charism and evangelizing mission.
3) State the form of proceeding: animation.
4) Propose activities in order to attain objectives: diagnostic, identification of problems and proposals for the future.
5) Assign administrators and directors.
6) Establish a time-line for the development of the various stages.
7) Set deadlines for final decisions.

Basic assumptions for beginning the process

In summary form, based on what has been said as well as what we will discuss, the basic assumptions that underlie the process are:

1. Assume the reality of diminution and envision the future with hope.
2. Emphasize the charism over and above institutions.
3. Place mission at the center of the process.
4. Encourage renewal rather survival.
5. Give priority to quality of life rather than numerical quantity.
6. Begin with the Congregation rather than the Provinces.
7. Give priority to individuals rather than institutions and works.
8. Proceed positively, involving everyone.
9. Rely on the collaboration of other charisms (Shared mission).
10. Favor creativity and innovation.

Curriculum vitae of Aquilino Bocos

Born in Canillas de Esguiva (Valladolid, Spain) in May, 1938. He received his formation in the minor and major seminaries of the Claretian Province of Castile. He professed vows in 1956 and was ordained in 1963.

During the first ten years of his ministry he taught philosophy in the Claretian Seminary of Segovia, completed his studies in philosophy at the Pontifical University of Salamanca and was on the formation staff of the International Claretian Theologate of Salamanca and spiritual director of the Maronite Major Seminary of the same City.

In 1971 he was named director of the periodical "Vida Religiosa", forming part of the founding team (and principal motivator) of the Theological Institute of Religious Institute of Madrid. In 1972 he organized the first National Week of Religious Life, setting this service to the Church on route, now celebrating 40 years uninterrupted activity.

In 1980 he was elected Provincial Superior of Castile. During these years he was president of FERE and published a book on the mission of catholic schools.

In 1985 he was elected Superior General of his Congregation and re-elected in 1997 (until 2003).

During these years he was member of the Council of the Union of Major Superiors and of the Council of the 16 of the Congregation for Institutes of Religious Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. He participated in three Synods. In 1994 Pope John Paul II named him member of the same Vatican Dicastery, an assignment which was renewed in 1999.

At present he works assiduously for the periodical "Vida Religiosa" and for the Theological Institute of Religious Life and is very much sought after by religious for his services as speaker and moderator. A theme which he has been working on intensely during recent years is the "reorganization" of religious institutes.

His thoughts on consecrated life can be found in an infinity of articles in specialized periodicals and are in some way summarized (albeit from a Claretian point of view) in three large volumes published between 2006 and 2008 under the titles "Legacy and Prophecy", "Walking Together" and "Times of Communion and Mission".

HOMILIES

Saturday 23 October 2010

Fr. Michael Ogweno, C. P. (PATR-MATAF)

(Eph 4, 7-16; Lk 13, 1-9)

When some people arrive to tell Jesus of the tragedy and misfortune that befell some Galileans and sort of suggested that they were more sinners than the rest of the Galileans, Jesus takes the opportunity to refute that kind of a mentality; a mentality that is not totally alien to us. It is common for us to think that when everything is going on well; when we have everything we need and have stocked enough for the foreseeable future, it is because of our hard work and better planning. That the good life is a reward from God for something good we did just as misfortune is a punishment for something bad. We often then keep away from those who seem to move from one disaster to another; some times out of fear that their misfortune can come to us; that they can taint or contaminate us. And while we sometimes feel sorry and pity them, we do not really identify ourselves with them. We suspect that their tragedy, misfortune, pain and sufferings is caused by something wrong they did or failed to do.

Jesus tells his listeners as he tells us today, that misfortune, tragedy and sufferings are no sign of greater sins in those who suffer them. We all share a basic similarity with those who suffer in any way. Everyone, says Jesus, is a sinner and therefore in need of repentance. Unless you repent, you will all perish as they did! Disaster, accidents and sufferings are not inflicted on people by God as a punishment for sins. The God of Jesus Christ, our Father, is intrinsically a God of love, who is merciful and generous to all his people including those we would want to categorize as sinners. His mercy and generosity towards us, is an invitation to us, to in turn be merciful and generous with one another. No one should look at his gifts, resources and think he deserved better than the other, or look upon anyone who does not have as being punished for something he did or failed to do. Whatever life and prosperity anyone has is to be understood, seen and received as a complete gift, given by God simply because God has chosen to do so, out of his generosity and not because anybody deserved better than the other. God cares for all and he demands that we do the same for one another. Unless you repent you will all perish as they did!

To illustrate his point further, Jesus uses the parable of the unfruitful fig tree. The reason for any farmer to plant fig trees in his vineyard is to enjoy their fruits. And so we can understand the disappointment of this vineyard owner who after three years of finding no fruits on the tree, decided to cut the tree down all together. However, due to the pleading of the vinedresser and the owners' generous nature, he allows the tree to remain, and hopefully with the hard work of the vinedresser, fulfil the purpose for which it was planted; produce fruits. The vinedresser undertakes to pay particular attention to the unfruitful tree and the owner, despite the length of time the tree has taken without producing, give more time for the tree to produce the desired fruits. The vineyard of course is our world and we are the trees that are planted in order to produce fruits. Fruits of love, compassion, mercy, generosity, humility, self sacrifice... And although many times these fruits are not very visible in each one of us, through Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit, God our father allows us more time to produce the fruits for which we were planted here on earth. To love one another and work together to build and spread the reign of God, which is expressed in unity, oneness; as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one, so too all of us though many and varied in many ways, must work towards that unity. There must never be a "we and them". Unless you repent, you will all perish as they did!

It is providential and a work of the Holy Spirit that we have this reading at a time when we gather as a Congregation to grapple with questions of vitality, life, diminishment, and lack of growth within the Congregation. Of course we recognize and thank God for having blessed us, as individual members and entities of the congregation, right from the Founder's time to this gathering, with visible signs of His presence, graces and talents. He has been watering us with all the life giving resources and we must be continuously grateful and bow our heads in gratitude to Him.

At the same time, we also know that there are individual member and entities of the congregation who are suffering a lack of vitality, growth and the production of the desired fruits, just like the unfruitful fig tree in our parable today. We do know that given the right conditions, manure, and water... the tree possesses within itself, the seed of its own fruits. The same principle can be applied to our Congregation. The questions that we have to face and answer, in the light of the Gospel we have just read, are: Do we want to cut the unfruitful trees down or do we want to give them a chance, by providing the manure, water and life supporting resources, so that they can produce the desired fruits? What sort of a mentality or attitude do we have towards those members or entities that are not experiencing the fullness of life? Do we look upon them with a bit of suspicion, that may be there is something they did or failed to do, that has resulted in their lack and strug-

gle? Do we understand that we are in it together, that those who are experiencing difficulties of whatever kind, need our special attention and care, in the same way Jesus pleads for us to the Father to the point of giving up his life that we may have life and have it to the full? Do we understand that diminishment in any part, is our own diminishment, or do we have a "we and them" attitude. Unless you repent you will all perish as they did!

The invitation and the challenge the Gospel presents to us today is that each one of us, individually and as entities, should act like the vinedresser and plead for the tree to be given more time; while we do all in our power and ability to create a conducive environment that will allow the tree to bring forth its fruits.

As we gather to once again look into this matter of life, vitality and fruitfulness of our tree, our Congregation, let there be no holding back, no separations between "us and them", no questions of who is at fault or responsible for the lack and diminishment, but that there should only be one question for all of us to answer: What can I as an individual, community and entity do to enhance this life and fruitfulness within the Passionist world.

Sunday 24 October 2010 (DOMUND)[1]

Fr. Antonio Munduate, C. P. (FID)

(Sir 35,12-14; Lk 18,9-14)

The Word of God, which is proclaimed on this Sunday Liturgy for the 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time, invites us to review our relationship with God—which is our prayer life; and asks how is our relationship with our brothers and sisters. Let us remember that contemplating divine realities and union with God through prayer ought to be the first and primary obligation of all religious (canon 663). This prayer is certainly not be overlooked on this World Sunday for the Propagation of the Faith (DOMUND), "*Our prayer thus takes on a hidden apostolic fruitfulness for the People of God, and echoes our solidarity with our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and suffering*" (Const. 38).

The parable which we have just proclaimed is a powerful call to conversion. Jesus compares two kinds of persons, two attitudes, two kinds of prayer. Jesus does not compare a sinner with a just man; rather, he compares a humble sinner with a self-satisfied just man, who looks down on others. When we proclaim the Word of God in the Eucharist, we do not do it in order to know what happened two thousand years ago, rather, we do it because we want the Word be alive today and for us. It is, therefore, inevitable that when we receive this Word, we will be confronted with the question: Where are we portrayed? ..in the Pharisee or in the publican?

The Pharisee is a good person; he is more observant than most: he fasts beyond what the Law calls for; he tithes more than is called for in the law; he does not steal nor kill. We have no reason to doubt what he declares. He begins his prayer with a thanksgiving to God for keeping him good, not for the goodness in God; and he concludes with a disregard for others. He believes that all in him is godly. He is unaware that he loves no one, neither God nor his neighbor; he doesn't recognize how corrupted his prayer has become. He sees evil outside of himself. All others are unjust, adulterers, and thieves. It is others who do not keep

[1] *Domund* is the acronym that refers to the World Mission Sunday. It was created in 1943, in Spain, by the Pontifical Missionary Works. Its first director, Bishop Angel Sagarminaga, launched the slogan "DoMund" (Domingo Mundial de las Misiones)

their word. He feels secure and safe because of his own merits. He loves little and is full of his own sanctimony.

The publican, considered a sinner on two counts: being a bad person and because he collected taxes for Rome, expresses his relationship with God in a simple supplication that he repeats various times, as he strikes his chest: "*Oh God, have compassion on this sinner*". Given his extreme poverty, it is only in God that he can find his salvation.

Jesus praised the publican. In doing so, Jesus is not inviting us to be sinners so that God will pay attention to us. Jesus is inviting us to discover that we are loved for our frailty and not for our excess of piety. He asks us to be humble; not to come before God (nor before others) praising our virtues and our good works. Whoever thinks he is rich, asks for nothing. Whoever considers himself wise, doesn't ask questions. Whoever thinks he is perfect, has no need to beg pardon for anything. Nevertheless, "*God is not overwhelmed by appearances...the prayer of the humble person rises above the clouds.*" (1st Reading).

As the celebration of the solemnity of our Holy Father and Founder still echoes for us, we remember his words when he wrote: "*we must cooperate with the divine call, seeing to our practice of the virtues, especially that of humility of heart. This sublime knowledge is learned through prayer at the feet of the Crucified.*" (Lett. II, 7). The importance of this virtue is derived from true humility; "*it is a golden chain which brings with it all of the other virtues*" (Lett. II, 367). Still, Paul of the Cross can also assert that "*one grain of pride is sufficient to cause the downfall of a great mountain of holiness.*" (Lett. I, 117).

The Virgin Mary, in her *Magnificat*, comes forward not as the center of her universe, but rather as the object of God's mercy: "*he has done great things for me...he has looked upon the humility of his servant*". She then pronounces words that are a pre-echo of what her son, Jesus Christ, will utter in naming the preference of God: "*he brings the mighty down from their thrones, and he raises up the humble*".

Contrasting with these reflections would appear to be St. Paul the Apostle's attitude as he praises his own merits: *I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me*. We know that Paul is not exaggerating in summing up his adventures and his sufferings for Christ. Paul states that should he glory in any aspect of his life, it should be on the Cross of Chr-

ist. Thus, he recognizes that the prize which God has prepared for him is not only for him: *...and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance.* What is more important: he recognizes that *...the Lord stood by me and gave me strength...I was rescued from the lion's mouth*. The Apostle does not fall into self-sufficiency, but rather into the attitude of gratitude because of the good that God has permitted him to do for the sake of the Christian Communities and for the evangelization of the world.

Today, we who are gathered as the General Synod of the Congregation, are also invited to recognize what God has done for us, and what He wants to keep doing through us. We are aware that the road to restructuring is not easy, and that this road, without a renewal of spiritual energies, will not be traversed. We are constrained by many things, and we must be freed of them in order to be truly free, and so place ourselves in God's hands with a humble heart. Perhaps, as happened to the Pharisee, we may be asked to free ourselves from the letter of the law in order to be faithful to the spirit of the law.

In the midst of uncertainties, what is certain for us, as it was for Paul, is that in looking to the future, *The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Tuesday 26 October 2010

Fr. Leone Masnata, C. P. (CORM)

The Mustard Seed … or Beans?

(Lk 13, 18-21)

Luke preferred to assemble the parables which highlighted the behavior and the destiny of people in this world: the Parable of the Good Samaritan (10, 25-37); the Parable of the Rich Fool (12, 16-21); the Parable of the Prodigal Son (15, 11-32); the Parable of the Dishonest Manager (16, 1-13); and the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16, 19-31). In this parable however, he speaks of the Kingdom of God hidden in the reality and in the behavior of the mustard seed which, proverbially small, becomes a robust bush; and the handful of yeast which ferments within a large quantity of flour.

The Kingdom of God is already at work in the world, but it acts in the style of Jesus: in poverty and with little political and religious consideration. God fulfills His plan with that which is small, despised and nothing (cf. 2Cor 2, 4ff). As the mustard seed, Jesus too was taken and thrown under the ground. In this way He became the tree of life offered to all. He was taken and hidden quickly, as something vile, on the eve of Passover (cf. Jn. 19: 31-32). In this way he became the yeast which leavened the earth, opening up the tombs (cf. Mt. 27: 52-53).

These parables help us to see and to understand the plan of God as He sees it. What happened to Jesus also happens to the Church and to every single Christian. The seed grows and produces life only if it dies (cf. Jn. 12:24). While everything else that dies decomposes forever; the seed, dying, becomes a plant, a flour, and fruit. Death cannot overcome it but fulfills it; it makes it what it is, life that overcomes death.

The seed is planted in the earth, the yeast is hidden in the flour. The effectiveness of the Kingdom of God is not human efficiency but the continuation of the story of Jesus humiliated, rejected and buried in the earth. Ostentation and greatness are opposed to the Kingdom and they ruin the Church and its mission in the world. The yeast which must leaven the mass of flour which is the world, is the wisdom of Christ crucified. The dough of the world must pass from the yeast of the Pharisees (cf. Lk 12,1) to that of Christ: through poverty, humility and humiliation.

Otherwise we do nothing but hinder the work of God in history. On this earth the Kingdom is rendered present in the community of Jesus and those who belong to it. It is a small reality that must face the great task of evangelizing and saving the world, but the aggressive power of the yeast must not be lost, that is, the message of Christ must not be diluted. Those who have accepted the invitation of Christ and have taken on the task of leavening all of humanity, cannot remain segregated from the world. The Christian community does not always understand its role as yeast for the world; the awareness of this mission does not allow one to sit quietly in indolence but awakens and engages all one's energies.

Jesus did not look upon humanity from a distance, He did not separate Himself from the society he turned to but He tried to leaven it from within. Christians turned in on themselves, either as individuals or as groups, centered on their own interests, even spiritual, are the negation of the spirit and the meaning of the parable of the yeast.

These parables were recalled in order to strengthen the hope and fidelity of those early Christians who remained surprised that coming and the Saviour bore no immediate results and that His Word had seemingly changed nothing. How could it be that this Word, if of God, does not convince everyone and is apparently ineffective? The parable explains the mystery: the Kingdom of God is already here, because the seed has been sown, all will be transformed, slowly, in secret and humility, but irresistibly … it is a small seed, but it carries great power.

I would like to awaken within us the same hope and trust with regard to our Congregation engaged in its reorganization: all may seem to proceed as before, but the seed has been sown. We are preparing the terrain (the reorganization) so that the good seed that the Spirit has given to the Congregation (the charism) might not be suffocated. We must however not only believe in the truth of the Word of the Cross, but more challenging yet, we must trust in its effectiveness. If we lack in this trust, all will crumble!

Our engagement in the process of reorganization must not be reduced to the simple preparation of the terrain so that it may bear fruit but we must also be concerned that the seed remain good. From the Second Vatican Council to our day, in all fields, from pastoral work to evangelization, from the renewal of the Liturgy to that of Religious Institutes, etc., it has been generally easier in the Church to study and choose structures and methodologies than to reflect on their content. The earth has been turned over often, as was necessary, but it was equally necessary to

sow good seed. In the journey of reorganization we must avoid the error that one aspect overshadows another.

The time has come that we seek not only "*how to say and how to do*" but "*what to say and what to do*". The seed is the Crucified and Risen Christ. In order to complete an authentic reorganization - as the Superior General has often reminded us throughout the process - it must be total, that is, including structures if necessary, but also renewing all of us with regard to the central values of the spiritual life, community life and apostolate according to the teachings of St. Paul of the Cross as present in the Constitutions, that is, to the essential values of our charism.

To conclude, the Memory of the Crucified Son of God is our leaven and our seed. But these appear to be small, weak, ineffective and scandalous. We are therefore constantly tempted to do something more spectacular, stronger and in keeping with the expectations of the times we live in … tempted to prefer … "*the beans*" which are fatter, hardier and tastier … however this is the law and the experience of the Church: if you plant beans, only beans will grow; if you sow the Word of the Cross, the Kingdom of God will be manifested!

Thursday 28 October 2010

Fr. Joachim Rego, C. P. (SPIR)

Ss Simon & Jude

(Eph 2,19-22. Lk 6,12-19)

The Gospel chosen for the feast of the Ss Simon and Jude is the passage from Luke which accounts for us Jesus spending the night in prayer on the mountain, after which he *called* his disciples, *chose* twelve of them, and *named* them apostles. These are the men that Jesus selected personally to walk closely with him, to be formed in the mysteries of the Kingdom, and to be sent to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom to all the world.

We celebrate two of the Twelve today: Simon & Jude – named in the Gospel as disciples who were called to a further commitment to Christ, in mission, as *apostles*. They were sent to be faithful witnesses in the word (preaching/teaching) and in the blood (service), giving up everything in sacrifice with Jesus Christ. Both, Simon and Jude spent their lives preaching the Gospel to a pagan world, and it is believed that each died a martyr's death for his faith.

By our baptism and religious profession as Passionists, we, too, are *called*, *chosen* and *sent* to give such radical witness as Passionist apostles, and to make sacrifices for Christ and his mission in our world today. We are no strangers to the mysteries of Christ. Indeed, we share in his passion and in his dying and rising. Through the power of the Holy Spirit our faith overcomes our fear and makes our witness unashamed and bold. We are not temporary residents in the Church. Indeed, we have signed on the dotted line. We are at home in the Body of Christ; our life doesn't make sense anymore without Christ and his Church. In the words of today's first reading from Ephesians:

> *"We are no longer strangers and aliens, but citizens with the saints and also members of God's household, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone."*

This commemoration of the apostles today – the foundation upon whom we are built – should rekindle the "fire in our bellies", that original fervor and zeal which we all experienced when we were *called*, *chosen* and

sent by Christ, as Passionists, to proclaim the Good News of the Passion – the message of God's Compassion and Love for all of creation, as expressed in the giving of His Son, Jesus, through his passion, death and resurrection.

Our work during this Synod has been to listen, review and reflect on the continuing work of Congregation Restructuring which, we believe, is a result of the movement of the Spirit, encouraging us to not become complacent or mundane in our life and mission, thus risking being irrelevant and ineffective in our increasingly fragmented world. We know that as Passionists today we cannot "keep on going" as we have always done; the world has changed and so must we be creative in finding new approaches in our life and mission.

Our process of discernment has led us to take bold steps in opting for Solidarity as our focus, our way of being in the Congregation, so that our mission – that for which we exist and are sent – may be given greater vitality and be more effective in the reality of today's world.

The apostolic witness of Ss Simon and Jude was their commitment and zeal in preaching the Gospel to a pagan world and dying a martyr's death as a consequence of this mission. While we hope that no such life threatening demands are put upon us, yet we know that we are being challenged at this time of our Congregation's history to make other sacrifices which impinge upon our personal and communal lives, that is, the call to conversion (renewal) and Solidarity.

How willing are we to shed our comforts, attachments, luxuries – and even our blood – to give witness to Christ?

Saturday 30 October 2010

Fr. Frans Damen, C. P. (GABR)

(Phil. 18b-26; Lk. 14, 1,7-11)

*"When you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that... you will be honored..."*This recommendation by Jesus releases uneasiness. Is this not false, hypocritical modesty? Does this really fit Jesus?

In any case, Jesus thereupon said to the man who invited him: *"When you give a dinner or banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid; But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just"*, (v. 13-14)

Here, Jesus is breaking with a rule which is functioning until today in all cultures of the world: that invitation and return invitation must be kept in balance; the rule of reciprocity

This is a rule, which really does not fit Jesus at all. He checks up the games we are playing with one another, and that usually are steered by our own profit. He puts himself on the side the poor, the cripple and the blind: those who fall out with our party games. The reconciliation he is looking for, is certainly not provided by the blind and the poor. But God is involved! This unbalance makes us think.

Jesus shows us the marvelous freedom and dignity which we can gain, if we do not get involved in the small game of: Who is the biggest? What can I impose on others? Do I get back what I invested? Jesus draws us out of these bad games

Jesus asks us: Why are you so conventional, so unoriginal? Why do you so try to conform to established rules and habits? Why not do things in a different way, and see what happens You will experience something you did not expect! God might make somewhat out of it. Because:

To break with the old games, and to do things in another way, that is what Jesus recommends. These are the dynamics to which God sticks. Through these dynamics, God wants to change the world. Remember the parabola of the guests unwilling to attend the banquet. "*Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor en maimed and*

blind and lame". (Lk. 14, 21) There they are again! Those who were excluded from the table communion. Exactly those who cannot extend a return invitation! They are Gods favorite guests.

Where are we in this unbalance? We cannot reimburse God for what we received. Therefore: If we invite persons who cannot invite us in return, we make common cause with God! We do the same thing as God does. This dynamic has a transforming, healing power. It really provokes changes.

To "*sit in the lowest place*", that is what Jesus steadfastly did. He sat down in the lowest place, together with sinners, children, the sick; he sat down at the feet of his disciples. Saying: "*I am among you as one who serves*" (Lk 22, 27). This is how God acts not by a game of reciprocity, but a commitment to an unbalanced service; service which is transforming the world.

In the first reading we read from Paul's letter to his beloved community at Phillipi. In it, he expresses how his divine mission is linked up with the inner experience and growth as a person, and his union with Jesus Christ.

During this General Synod in Rome, we have been working on the restructuring of our Congregation. How did we report on it to our beloved community? What were the dynamics we were involved in? Did we invite those who will not invite us in return? Did we stick the rules? Did we also sit dawn with the those who, as a rule, are not invited to the banquet? Were we really united with Christ?

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Note: The homily of 31 October 2010 preached by the Superior General on the occasion of the Closing of the Synod, can be found in the section of the Acts of the Synod, p. 221.

PART THREE

ACTS

21 OCTOBER

Formation and Study Day for Major Superiors
JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Formation)

Presenter and Moderator of the meeting:
Gearoid Francisco O' Conaire OFM and Jesús María Aristin, CP

The meeting began with a moment of prayer using the Power Point presentation: "**The Lament of the Servant**". This was followed by words of welcome by Fr. Ottaviano D'Egidio. He reminded those present that the theme of the day was the 4th proposal approved by the 44th General Chapter in which the General Council was asked to organize a workshop/formation day every four years for the Major Superiors, if possible coinciding with the celebration of the Synod. One of the priorities mentioned for formation was that of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC). He recalled the link between JPIC and the Passionist charism that is present in the Constitutions (No.3). At the heart of the charism is the contemplation of the Crucified and service and mission to the crucified.

Fr. Jesús María Aristín, Secretary General for Solidarity and the Missions stated the objective of the day: **reflection and personal conversion leading to solidarity in relation to JPIC**. He then presented and thanked the presenter for the day: Gearóid Francisco OFM, Executive Secretary of the JPIC Commission (USG/UISG).

Part I

His first presentation had a double objective: examination of conscience regarding the reality of injustice that plagues humanity, and the spiritual challenge it poses and, on the other hand, help in deepening our appreciation of the Gospel values that are present in JPIC. He proposed a time for interpersonal sharing and then large-group sharing of the major

injustices that we perceive in this world and in our concrete situations, trying to name the causes that bring them about. He also suggested that we share how we live in the midst of these situations.

Some of these are:

- Indifference toward the poor and injustices.
- Lack of involvement and lack of trust in the projects and proposals for the Missions that are offered by JPIC because they seem far from our traditional values of apostolate and mission.
- The arrogance of the wealthy countries and the loss of hope for the future.

The following were named among the great injustices of our world: victims of drug trafficking; excessive spending in the light of great needs; the exploitation of women; the interests of major powers; racism; the caste system; the arms race; the assault on nature by those interested in speculation and trade. At the root of all this reality, they noted the insatiable desire for possessions and it was noted that our preaching needs to change attitudes towards a culture of generosity and giving that originates in the new man that is born from the Paschal experience and recognizes creation as a work of the Trinitarian God for all of humanity.

Intervention of the Presenter.

On the basis of the dialog, he presented us with the context in which to situate JPIC.

1. When confronted with suffering and injustice we tend to withdraw; it is at this point that we need a new attitude that sees "relationships" in the world: with ourselves, with others and with creation. JPIC wants to offer a way of being active and co-responsible and of being involved with these radical challenges.
2. Radical protest comes from the Gospel and from the mission of Jesus (Lk.4: 18-19) that invites us to freedom in order to assume new and just relationships that originate in the creative power of God that is expressed in challenging and harmonizing diversity. All attempts against creation in the name of party interests destroy men and women, creatures of God.
3. This new awareness is an expression of the perception of reality, of the "signs of the times" and the trust that is sustained by the movement of the Holy Spirit. It is Kingdom Spirituality that initiates a new way of being in the world through the paschal logic of the Cross. It is generosity that overflows.

4. This new sensitivity is a way of "feeling with" and "being with". It is a "committed" response in a dynamic of Mission that give rise to "changes of heart" and "Changes of structure".
5. From this spirituality that is incarnated in the horizon of JPIC, we propose a new way of being in the world, a way of living the Gospel, driven by love. The common gift of creation recalls the commitment with God who gave the work of his hands to men to further creation, expressing his being that is Trinitarian Communion.

Following this presentation, the presenter once again provided a time period for sharing in small groups and then in the Assembly. The open-ended question was: *What resonated with you?* First he cited some concrete situations of Passionists who are living in difficulty because they are trying to defend the weak: Frs. Bartolini, Antonio R. and other situations in other places such as Indonesia and Africa. Additionally, he pointed out the marginal situations of injustice throughout the world. The great underlying question is identifying who are the poor in the Western world and how can we preach and live the Gospel in a coherent way so that our words are accompanied by the witness of our lives. A challenge: If we are not committed to the values of the charism it is difficult to respond to the challenges of today.

After the break, Fr. Jesús María Aristín addressed the assembly.

His question: *How can we be Passionists in the reality of the world of today?* As an answer to this question he proposes the spirituality and mystical dimension of JPIC showing how this stems from the *Memoria Passionis*, is present in the writing of St. Paul of the Cross, is present in the Constitutions and energizes our form of solidarity today. The Crucified One and the crucified are inseparable. To say "the Passion of Christ" is to say "the passion of humanity" and "the passion of creation". JPIC forms part of the charism and is our way of being Passionists today, the way of walking humbly with God in human history. This reference has to be the central axis that expresses the *Memoria Passionis* in life and mission. His presentation was in the form of power point and a written text. After his presentation there was an opportunity in the aula for sharing and reflection.

The central theme of the reflection was the question: What in our charism and spirituality motivates us to live and assume these values?

The responses were in two categories:

- The reality of suffering and injustice demands commitment that is translated into projects of humanization and concern, which are inserted into an integral mission of evangelization.
- The dimension of the "evangelizing Passion" that stems from the charism and is expressed on various levels: assistance, promotion and liberation. The last of these involves drawing near to the causes of suffering and its objective is to generate new structures, something more difficult to accomplish.
- Work and study together about these dimensions engenders hope and generosity and we over-come the problem of reducing the Gospel to an ideology.
- The dignity and credibility of the Gospel are also involved. What challenges us is living a coherent "life style".
- This new perspective certainly raises some doubt about the relationship with values and traditional options. We recognize that there is a certain difficulty in correlating the two.

Again there was the matter of living the charism and identification of the Crucified with the crucified ones. In certain cases of the Passionist mentality prejudice exists and it is considered inappropriate for a Passionist to be concerned with the demands of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. In response we need to say that the reason for this is that there is a lack of charismatic living and the person is limited in perceiving things from a global perspective. The ministry of evangelization is directed toward the person who is suffering, offering him compassion, understanding and assistance and the one who has caused the suffering needs to change his lifestyle. This impacts all of human life.

In the afternoon the moderator again presented some the characteristics of commitment and mind-set of JPIC. He offered us also an overview of the reports and activities that the USG/UISG is developing.

1. JPIC has its origin and is founded on the **social doctrine of the Church** which should be present in the various formation programs and which need to be expressed in life and action.
2. It tries to develop a **mentality of conversion and collaboration** in accord with the plan of God that transcends one's own projects, working with others or helping others to accomplish such projects.

3. It presupposes **having and being involved in a network** of communications, of solidarity, presence and participation in projects or in protest campaigns in which we can become involved.
4. It entails and implies a new paradigm of Mission. It seeks to create a spirit and a way of working. It is not merely achieving objectives, but building and initiating processes, offering a methodology in order to create new relationships.

The final work of the day was proposed for the language groups. The guidelines consisted of three questions: 1) What do you do to promote the values and projects of JPIC in the life and pastoral activity of the Province/Vice Province? 2) How can we help our brothers with a concrete project of JPIC? 3) What do you want to ask of the Passionist Secretary for Solidarity and the Missions?

The answers reflected these uncertainties:

- There is still certain hesitancy toward this new formulation. We don't clearly see the connection with the charism. There is a need for more formation and commitment in this area, insisting that it be part of formation plans.
- We acknowledge the work that is being done in this area, perhaps without giving it this name. We also see the need not only for individuals to be involved, but also communities.
- This consciousness is clearly rooted in the charism, and demands a lifestyle that is coherent. There is a need to rediscover a way of being in relationship with ourselves, with others, with creation that is part of the gift of God and his Kingdom.
- The work that the Secretary for Solidarity and the Missions is doing to raise consciousness about JPIC is viewed as positive.

Finally, the Secretariat of the Commission for the Missions and Solidarity re-stated the need to name a JPIC delegate in each Province/Vice-Province.

The meeting concluded with several words of gratitude to the presenters by Fr. Ottaviano.

Afterward we celebrated the Eucharist.

22 OCTOBER

OPENING OF THE SYNOD

Prayer in the garden

The group gathered at the large Crucifix; each member received a yellow lanyard as a symbol of rapprochement and communion; we processed together towards the statue of St. Paul of the Cross and after having invoked his spirit and charism, we moved towards the Synod Hall.

Opening Session (11 am)

Gathered together in the new Synod Hall, Fr. Ottaviano repeated his welcome to all and introduced the three parts that together form his Report and which would be subsequently presented. The first part is inspirational; the second part deals with the process of restructuring and the third with concrete questions to be resolved. At this time only the first part of the Report will be presented.

The 1stConsultor, Fr. Denis, introduced the facilitators Christine Anderson and Michael Mullins.

Fr. Ottaviano then read the first part of his Report which each member of the Assembly had a copy of in one of the three official languages of the Congregation.

The Facilitator, Fr. Mullins, asked the members of the Synod to briefly discuss what they found of particular interest in the General's words.

Fr. Denis, as a member of the General Council, in this initial phase had taken on the role of moderator and proposed a number of official acts:

1. The approval of the facilitators proposed by the General Council. The majority of the Assembly approved.
2. The proposal of Fr. José Luis Quintero as Secretary of the Synod. The Assembly approved.
3. Approval of the Regulations of the Synod. It was made known that they are the Regulations of the previous Synod. Approved.
4. The proposed members of the CCC (Central Coordinating Commission) were the Superior General, the facilitators, members of the General Council and the Secretary, while considering the possibility that the coordinators may be invited at any time. The General Council proposes this composition in order of its functionality. The floor expressed some opinions, according to which the CCC should be formed of elected members of the Synod. It was suggested that it should include some of the coordinators, two each

day, some permanently. It was also noted that if the CCC were too numerous there would be functional difficulties.

After having heard the opinions a vote was taken:
- in favour of the proposal of the General Council: 26 votes
- against: 12
- abstentions: 7

The CCC was composed of the Father General, the facilitators, the members of the General Council and the Secretary.

The facilitator, Fr. Mullins, S.M., then spoke offering a few key motivations:

- We have diverse places of origin; what unites is being Passionists. At this moment, more than Major Superiors, each is an active and creative member of the Synod with a task to complete.
- We embark on a dialogue whose aim is to surface ideas we don't already have. What is at stake is not a debate or a discussion but the discovery of a dialogue.
- We must think and feel with a vision of the whole and not in a partisan way. We must give ourselves over to different tasks.
- Some questions for reflection were suggested: what did you hear in the report of the Father General? What is it in his report that struck you and what would you like to happen in this Synod? What are you looking for and what do you think is the use of this Synod?

Some answers:
- Something concrete that will make possible the sharing of resources, persons and projects; a journey to take that is born of the sharing of everyone.
- My desire is that our sharing and solidarity flows from the charism and is attentive to challenges; an open mind and heart for new relationships among us and with the world.
- While the word "solidarity" has different sounds among us, we must be aware of culture and the mentality we belong to, respectful of each other.
- Hope for clarity in the process and to be able to share it and communicate it to the brothers.
- Hope for clarity while recognizing that we are men of faith at the moment when decisions must be made.

Sr. Christine concluded the sharing by inviting to an awareness of what is truly desired. She noted that the word "solidarity" evokes different feelings, making it necessary for us to have a profile in mind.

Afternoon

First Session. Presence of the General Council in the process of restructuring.

Fr. Denis took the floor with a Power Point presentation divided in two parts: the context of restructuring; and the path taken up to the present moment.

After the presentation, the facilitator opened the floor to clarifications. The questions were oriented to-wards the need for more information and an explanation of the suggested models. The General Consul-tor, Fr. Denis, responded insisting that the presentation was meant to be informative of the path taken and not determining of guidelines to be followed.

Workgroups

The facilitators suggested inter-linguistic workgroups, guided by the following question: in the process of restructuring our mission and our motivation for restructuring, what has been energizing and life-giving for you?

The sharing was taken up again at 18.00

The spokesperson of each group presented a summary of their meeting:

1. The restructuring process is the guiding process of the three areas (formation, personnel and finances). It has had great influence within these. Difficulties remain but the desire to remain together and meet the challenges is greater.
2. Up to the present moment the cooperation in favour of formation has been positive; frustrations come from lack of collaboration.
3. The process is very positive and creative even if sometimes death must be accepted in order to arrive at a new way of being.
4. We are more aware of the need to change. The questions regarding "where" provoke a certain un-ease.
5. There are numerous reasons for hope that flow from the prospect of a wider cooperation. Structures must collaborate in an effective way with the mission and must be evaluated from this perspective.
6. Restructuring supposes a new openness of mind and heart; it favours the missionary experience and places us in an attitude of attentiveness to the Spirit.

7. While there is an enthusiastic sense of belonging to a Province, there still exist some worries and anxieties over it. It is a future that must still be understood.

The facilitator proposed another moment of dialogue and reflection, inviting all to express how one felt after having listened to the presentation of the path of restructuring. Some thoughts were expressed:

- The presentation was enlightening and hopeful. It shows an open and realistic spirit. The way is not known but there is the conviction that it is necessary.
- There are experiences of life and generosity which flow from this process.
- Once again it is asked how the whole Congregation lives it, beginning with those religious who did not participate in the meetings, chapters and assemblies. The lack of information renders understanding and openness difficult. The interest and dedication of the major superiors in the process is evident.
- It is beautiful to live in times of change; this situation opens to a process of life and a gestation of the new.

The facilitator closed the session with a final notice: there is a temptation to search for quick solutions, but we are called to stay with the anxiety. It is necessary to remain in this phase of suffering which permits a serene discernment, asking what it is that God asks of us as Passionists. Among other things, we must ask ourselves what we must free ourselves from in order to feel and be free. It is an Ignatian dynamic to be sensitive to the passions, feelings, consolations and desolations which accompany the process of discernment.

The day in the Hall concluded at 18.30. The Eucharist was celebrated in the different language groups.

23 OCTOBER

Morning session: Financial Report of the General Treasurer.

The Synod participants gathered in the Hall at 9.00 am, after the celebration of the Eucharist. The session began with a brief moment of prayer aided by a Power Point presentation on the Passionist charism.

The Moderator of this Session was Fr. Luis Alberto Cano who proposed **the possibility that all those invited to the Synod by the Superior General be allowed to vote**. These persons are: the Coordinator of the CPA (Michael Ogweno) and the Vicars Antony Sikhalele Mdhluli (MATAF) and Moisés Rios (PAC). The Synod participants voted: 38 in favour; 3 abstentions.

The Secretary for Missions, Fr. Jesús Maria Aristín, presented **Fr. Ottaviano's letter of support to Fr. Mario Bartolini** in response to the legal actions taken against him in Peru. The letter was published on the web page and the Assembly was asked if it could be sent as a letter of the Synod.

The Report of Fr. Battista Ramponi, General Treasurer

Two documents were presented: a balance sheet relative to the period following the previous Synod up until 25 July 2010; and a second document, the budget for 2011-2012.

The first report presented a detailed list of the ordinary and extraordinary incomes and expenditures. A number of works taken on during this period were highlighted: the renovation of the boiler room; the new lighting system of the garden; the renovation of the section of the house called "la Garbatella" with its seven new rooms; and the space dedicated to the Stauros Library. The Treasurer drew attention to the fact that these works permit considerable savings and are also a source of income; he also spoke of the rental of a section of the house to the interreligious group known as the "Lay Centre".

He then presented the funds which the General Treasury manages. There is the formation fund, the solidarity fund and the fund for Vietnam. He underlined how the formation fund is insufficient for the projects and the formation programs of the newer areas of the Congregation. The solidarity fund has grown considerably while the income of the fund for Vietnam is equal to its expenditures.

He underlined the importance of the contributions of the Provinces to the formation fund. He also showed how the restructuring proc-

ess and the creation of Configurations have led to the creation of funds within certain Configurations but not to increasing the funds of the Congregation as such.

The floor was opened for questions and clarifications

The members of the Assembly thanked Fr. Ramponi for the clarity of his presentation.

Some clarifications:

- *The influence of the economic crisis*. The Treasurer responded that, while we are not an island, the diversification of investments has protected us from the negative impact of the crisis.
- *Why could monies not be transferred from one fund to another, according to need, especially in regard to the formation fund?* There were different opinions, some favourable, others not, recalling the origins of the different funds and the reasons for which they were created. The Treasurer also recalled the floating of an idea for the creation of a general fund which would have been used for various needs.
- *A clarification was asked for regarding the use of Stauros funds*. The Treasurer recalled that the authorization was granted by the General Assembly.

Presentation of the Budget for 2011-2012.

Fr. Battista gave a detailed presentation. There are no major changes except for the amount requested from the Provinces for their contributions. Clarifications were called for with regard to the amount of contribution required of each Province to be forwarded to the General Treasury. Fr. Battista responded that the sum is calculated according to the number of religious, the buying power of the nation and other factors. The Assembly was asked to vote on the budget. **The motion was approved with a majority vote**.

Afternoon: ***Secretariat for Missions and Solidarity, presence at the U.N., the Passionist presence in Vietnam and China.***

The General Consultor Fr. Clemente Barron acted as Moderator and Fr. Jesus Aristín presented his report which had been translated into three different languages. He divided his presentation into three parts: 1) Actions of the Secretariat; 2) Regional JPIC's; 3) Projects. The help that Fr. Vital Otshudialokoka(SALV) has given to the Secretariat since his arrival was brought to the Assembly's attention. First, a list of the courses offered in different areas of the Congregation, the organization of different days and the publication of materials was presented. Second, the

charism as motivation for the creation of regional JPIC structures and third, he presented a list of projects.

Following his presentation the floor was opened up to a discussion regarding JPIC and its link to the charism. There is a wish to incorporate JPIC in all the realities of religious life and in the Church itself.

In a second phase, Fr. Kevin Dance presented the work of the Congregation and the International Passionist Association at the U.N.

He underlined that our presence is an expression of the Memoria Passionis and wishes to be a contribution, together with other organizations, in a place where all Nations are present. Ours is not a passive presence, rather we are being incorporated into organizations which are permitted a more active interaction. Our voice in the organizations wants to be a call to the importance of the development of justice and peace. We are at the U.N., said Fr. Kevin, as a response to the Passion of Christ which continues in the world. We have taken on and supported the Millennium Goals; he respect and promotion of women; indigenous causes; immigration; the promotion of children; respect for the environment; education; health and food.

The work of *Passionists International* includes the presence of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion and the Daughters of the Passion.

It has also recommended a link between the presence at the U.N. and the Passionists present in different parts of the world.

After the presentation the floor was opened to a discussion and questions were asked about the daily life of the Association and the possibility of defending freedom of religion in some nations. Other interventions referred to how we present the Cross of Christ, thereby going beyond mere devotion.

Passionist presence in Vietnam

Fr. Jeff Foale (SPIR) made a presentation explaining the social and religious context of the place where the three Passionists are present. The difficulties of the Country do not prevent youth from coming to know and becoming enthusiastic for the charism of Passionist life. The process is slow and accompaniment difficult but there are young men in the novitiate in Australia. Their presence is a small seed which gives hope and trust. Fr. Jeff asked for the help of other Passionists to accompany the work of formation.

During the open discussion, the story was told of how in 2005 the idea to create a foundation in Vietnam was born. What encouraged the General Council was the definition of the nation as a "land of passion and suffering". Added to this is the support of Teresa, a lay Passionist. He showed the assembly a symbol which expresses the beginnings: the Passionist Sign holding within it the outline of Vietnam in red.

Passionist presence in China

Fr. Gabriel Pak (MACOR) and Br. Laurence Finn made the presentation. They described the situation of post revolution China and how numerous Congregations are increasingly present in the country, without ever manifesting their identity. The Passionists in China carry out a non-ministerial role which allows them to maintain residence. After the Olympics there was a greater openness to other forms of activity. The presence is discreet but full of hope. Some youth are in the novitiate program in Manila and continue their formation in the PASS Centre. The relationship with the local bishops is positive.

Fr. Gabriel concluded his intervention pointing out the considerable personal and financial effort which the MACOR Province has made. Questions were asked about the situation of the Church in China.

Before the closing of the session, Fr. Aristin asked the Assembly of the Synod if they would like to sign the letter of support which Fr. Ottaviano will send to Fr. Mario Bartolini, C.P. The majority of the Assembly approved.

Finally, Fr. Giuseppe Martinelli (CORM) asked if some time could be found during the Synod to present the situation of the Passionists in Nigeria.

The day concluded at 7.15 p.m.

24 OCTOBER
Day of Reflection and Rest

The day began with the **celebration of the Eucharist** in the chapel of the Founder. Fr. Antonio Munduate (V-Provincial FID and Coordinator of the SCOR Configuration) presided. It was Mission Sunday and this added to the richness of the Liturgy of the Word. We were invited to consider the sincerity of our prayer and to recognize that the presence of the Lord's generosity strengthens and exceeds our weakness.

Following the prayer, **Fr. Aquilino Bocos Merino**, CMF, ex Superior General and an expert on religious life, offered us his reflections in two presentations entitled: "*Restructuring in the Congregation of the Passion*". The text was previously translated into the three official languages of the Congregation.

The parts of his presentation were marked by great clarity indicative of this experience in this field: 1) The name signifies the journey: restructuring; 2) Obstacles and opportunities that have been addressed; 3) the final objective of Restructuring; 4) Proposals for making Restructuring effective; 5) Relationship between the Congregation and older organizations; 6) Motivation and co-responsibility in structural innovation; and 7) Some final considerations.

Some of his primary points were:

1. We do not have to try so much to ask: **how does one do Restructuring**; rather how do we dispose ourselves that Restructuring may take place. What we are talking about is an attitude of evangelical radicalism and faith in the Mission.
2. **Restructuring is** nothing new. It concerns **entering into the dynamic of responding to the challenges** that emerge from new situations, urged forward by the Spirit and our particular charism.
3. Beyond the concrete situations of impoverishment or weakness, what we are talking about is **vitality and re-energizing for life and mission**.
4. **The Congregational identity and the sense of belonging are fundamental**. And these realities are dynamic, multi-centered and challenging. To reconstruct and to revitalize one's identity is a permanent, patient process that requires perseverance.
5. It is fundamental in this process not to lose sight of **the Congregation**. Before being an institution, it **is a faith community**, convoked by the Holy Trinity in the midst of the Church to give witness by its life and mission to the overflowing love of Jesus Christ. This aspect of communion informs and conforms according to the mission of the entire Congregation.

6. **This dimension has to be discovered in the Constitutions, seeing these as an act of faith**. It assumes that we recognize that the first Community to which I belong is the Congregation. Convocation, cooperation, co-responsibility, subsidiarity in a context of love and in radical passion is the means of expressing our being a Congregation.
7. There are fears, resistance, insecurity, obstacles that threaten the process. In this sense, Restructuring is a **spirituality of creative fidelity to the charism, attentive examination of the present and prophecy, perceiving the permanent advent of God in the future**. And it is for this reason that we are searching for more adequate institutional ways to incarnate it.

During the dialog that followed some questions were raised:

- The elderly and the sick are not an obstacle in this process, rather they offer their dedication and their experience and they should be thanked and loved.
- The figure of the Founder was presented as "father". This is a living reality by which he is present in the lives of his sons. His sons need to re-live and re-formulate the original identity.
- He insisted on the importance of stating priorities, making generous and profound choices; be conscious of the need for time to elaborate a pedagogy that is challenging and co-responsible. The Mission always opens horizons and creates the future.

Finally he suggested that we should be aware that our three priorities for solidarity have to be developed from our awareness of the charismatic action of the Spirit and of the Mission.

Fr. Ottaviano concluded the meeting by thanking him for this reflection.

Sunday afternoon was a period of rest from the activities of the Synod.

25 OCTOBER

The Synod participants began the day with the celebration of the Eucharist in the different language groups. The session began at 9.00 in the Synod Hall. The Moderator, Fr. Denis, a member of the General Curia, greeted all present and remembered those religious who celebrated Birthdays today: G. Cipriani; G. Lenzen and R. Mangiti.

The Liturgical Commission led a brief moment of prayer inspired by the 100th anniversary of the Passionists in Brazil.

As per the order of the day, Fr. Ottaviano presented the second part of his report centered on the progress of the restructuring process while making some concrete proposals. The report had been previously distributed to the Synod participants in the three official languages of the Congregation.

Once the presentation was finished, the floor was opened for clarifications.

- A question was raised regarding the function of the finance commission (n. 15) and its coordination. With reference to n.39 of the report, it was asked whether it be possible or not that the coordinator could be the major superior of the Configuration. Fr. Ottaviano responded that these are points of reflection for the Synod.
- Could the Configurations be modified during the work of the Synod? Fr. General answers that this too is a point to be resolved by the Synod.
- Since the report mentioned that the boundaries of the Provinces could be changed, Fr. Ottaviano was asked if requests in that direction had already been made. Fr. Ottaviano said that it is necessary to clarify the decision making powers of the Configurations. It is necessary to have 3 stages clear: the project following discernment, the decision and the implementation of what had been decided.

The Moderator's questions for the Group Sessions

Two questions:

1. What further questions do you have following the General's talk?

2. What did you find challenging in the General's talk?

He suggested that the groups arrive at a certain level of consensus or agreement with the conviction that a unity of mind and heart is being discovered and constructed.

After a 45 minute period the results were shared.

SHARING OF THE GROUPS

- the first group posed itself the question if this is the path towards the vitalization of the Congregation. It also pointed out the difficulty due to the peculiarity of each Configuration. The question of how the greater part of the religious are living the process was also raised. The importance of the local community in the process was underlined.
- the second group asked whether all the Configurations will have the same form of government and organization.
- the third group underlined that all religious should be informed and involved.
- the fourth group focused its attention on the need to simplify the structures and to understand whether the Configurations as they stand today are capable of responding to the three areas of solidarity.
- the fifth group pointed out possible tensions within the Configurations, given the different rhythms of the Provinces.
- the sixth group maintained that it is important to harmonize the autonomy and the co-responsibility of the Configurations.
- the seventh group found the manner of configuring the system of government challenging.

Fr. Ottaviano intervened to express his impressions and his opinions. In broad strokes, the following are his thoughts: *the questions are interesting and noteworthy. A certain fear is perceived, which I do not understand. The conflict with authority does not present a problem because there are realities which are guided by distinct entities: the Holy See; central government; Provincial leadership. These are distinct levels and one level does not eliminate the power of another. The General Council has received authority and it communicates it ... higher decisions come from the Synod or the General Chapter ... they are levels which do not interfere with one another and will be the same for the Configuration. The Synod offers something to the Configuration and the latter will have to put it into context. We create a project together and each single Configuration carries it forward.*

Institutional solidarity means that a project that has been approved is then carried forward together, remaining united in a common goal. In this way we avoid suspicion; we are a unitary complex, although in different places ... they are different levels. According to the Constitutions, that which the Chapter decides is then carried out by the General or his delegate. The levels are subsidiary and have their origin in the

content of faith. If the person at a certain level does not act, he may be asked to do so, without being replaced.

I do not understand the difficulty if dealing with common agreements. It strikes me as a lack of trust in one another, as if things were obscure. Solutions are sought together, this is the originality. In my opinion, that which is important is life, not the technical aspects. It is important to receive energy for the life and the generosity of the mission. Furthermore, the principle of flexibility is necessary with internal problems while remaining oriented towards a common goal. It could be slow-going. The criterion of life is more important. Let's go ahead and we shall see what happens.

At the end of the morning session the Facilitator, Michael Mullins, presented the task scheduled for the afternoon.

This afternoon we will begin to receive the reports of the Coordinators. As you listen to their reports I would invite you to remember the criteria you accepted for this General Synod. This is part of the mosaic. Next to the criteria of the previous Synod, keep in mind the contribution of the Father General and the principles proposed yesterday by Fr. Aquilino Bocos.

AFTERNOON SESSION

PRESENTATION OF THE CONFIGURATION OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

The presentation was made by the Coordinator, Fr. Enzo Del Brocco.

With the aid of a Power Point presentation, he presented the activities carried out in the three areas of solidarity beginning with the meetings of the Major Superiors and the various commissions.

Financial solidarity. The setting up of a fund for the Configuration was proposed along with regulations for its management. The funds are in Rome and the criteria have yet to be formulated.

Solidarity of personnel. A list was made of different individuals available for different ministries; improved communication with regard to the Restructuring process; a greater involvement of the multilingual religious of the Province; various criteria for mission and new forms of apostolate.

Before the assembly in Rome, the Configuration had two coordinators. They now have one elected coordinator and a secretary. This is the organism which coordinates information. The major superiors of the

Configuration and the Coordinator together with the presidents of the commissions will animate the work of the Configuration.

A meeting was held in Rome from October 16 -18 during which Fr. Enzo was elected Coordinator. Possibilities and limits of the 'structure' of the Configuration were discussed. Alongside the advantages, some difficulties were noted: the advanced age and the lack of vocations foretell a diminution of religious. This encourages us to collaborate for the improvement of community life and mission.

On a number of occasions a division of the Configuration in two zones was considered but this would lead to an impoverishment. There is the recognized need for greater flexibility, maintaining trust in the Configuration.

Concrete projects for solidarity in formation.

There are two novitiates (Italy and Brazil). There is at present a formation community in Italy and in January one will be established in Brazil. There is a project for a post-novitiate program to begin in March. The pastoral experience takes place before perpetual vows. By 2012 a new program of continual formation will be elaborated.

Financial projects

The configuration has benefitted from the presence of experts in the field of finance. The fund at present has 100,000 Euro. The travel costs of the three commissions have been covered. The generosity of the groups within the Configuration has been important. It is hoped that a more solid fund can be created so that the interest could be used for different works and projects.

Commission for personnel for mission.

A project will be elaborated for the next year. The criteria and the choice of the projects have been established. It has yet to be seen how many religious are available for the mission, how many intend to return to their country of origin and the regularization of those living outside of community. The assembly tends towards certain projects: Haiti, Angola, Nigeria, Mozambique and "Misionero Juarez" in Argentina, but we still want the reaction of each of the entities.

Some time for questions.

The Facilitator presented two questions for the workgroups

1. To what point has the Configuration progressed in the area of solidarity?

2. What practical suggestions would you make to this Configuration?

Sharing.

- the groups expressed their appreciation for the work done by the Configuration and highlighted its international character. They appreciate the projects that are being worked on together, especially those to do with formation and mission. It was asked what the experience of the religious in this Configuration is and how they live with its vast ethnic diversity.

Following the discussion some groups questioned the methodology. The CCC was convoked during the break.

After its meeting, the CCC communicated to the Assembly that the opinions manifested were taken into consideration and the proposal was made to listen to the reports and after a brief voicing of opinions an exchange in the Hall would take place. A proposal was made that the CCC should decide on the methodology at a later time. The Facilitator insisted on the importance of deepening the understanding of what the Configurations are experiencing and that all be able to express their opinion.

THE "SACRED HEART" CONFIGURATION

Coordinator: Antonio Munduate

Fr. Antonio Munduate made his Power Point presentation and handed to all the participants a detailed guide.

His presentation began with an analysis of the reality of the Configuration: nations; personnel; age; distribution; the progress made in the various meetings and assemblies. He underlined that the Provinces that form the Configuration had ratified their inclusion in the restructuring process at their respective Chapters. During successive meetings attention was drawn to the priorities of formation (common novitiate and post-novitiate). With regard to personnel, there are mission projects at the Configuration level and with respect to finances, there is an awareness that the goods of the members of the Configuration are at the service of the entire Configuration and its needs.

Finally, there is the intention to create a single Province with 4 zones, each with its Consultor. The project is not yet sufficiently clear, but it is on the horizon.

After his presentation the floor was opened for clarifications and comments which revolved around two themes:

- **the relationship between Spain and the Americas as two realities which, although sharing one language and origin, are in different contexts.**
- **the progress made in regard to solidarity in finances.**
- **the way to conceive the government of the Configuration.**
- **the list of religious indigenous to each area and the need to strengthen formation and the leadership of those areas.**

The Coordinator insisted that directives be given along with the profiling of the different areas of competence. The Synod could offer some clarifications in these areas.

The Facilitator thanked everyone for their contributions and pointed out that the Coordinators will continue with their presentations.

The announcement was made that the Stauros Assembly would meet at 9.00 p.m. and that Fr. Mario Bartolini would be arraigned in Peru tomorrow.

At 7.30 p.m. the Assembly was invited to evening prayer.

26 OCTOBER

The day for the Synod members began with the celebration of the Eucharist at 7:00 AM. Fr. Leone Masnata (CFIXI) presided. In his homily he invited us to sow the mustard seed that for us is the Passionist charism, from which the Reign of God will flower at this time in history.

THE CEB (EUGENE BOSSILKOV) CONFIGURATION

At 9:00 AM we began in the Synod Hall with the presentation of the Reports of the remaining configurations. Again Fr. Leone Masnata as the Coordinator presented his report on the CEB (Eugene Bossilkov) Configuration. He used a power point presentation and also a prepared text that the members of the Synod had in translation. He pointed out the reality of the situation, the internal dynamic that was being used, and what was planned in the three areas of solidarity. He spoke at length about what they are doing to try to envision the future and the style of government. In the Configuration it seems that they are leaning toward having the Italian provinces that are part of the Configuration and the French Province become one single province, while the German and Polish provinces would remain as they are currently. The relationship among them would be equal. The Configuration would consist of these three entities that would establish lines of solidarity in the proposed areas, trying to achieve forms of close collaboration.

Following his presentation there were clarification questions:

- He was asked how they had been working with the fact that some of the Italian provinces belong to a different configuration. He responded that they are living with this reality calmly and respectfully, while maintaining some of the realities that they had when they were the CIPI Conference.
- It is said that are resigned to the choice of the two Provinces which, for various reasons, decided to move to another Configuration: historical reasons and the awareness their identity are motives for their choice.
- Again, there was a comment that beyond the structures, what we are dealing with is life and new projects that are founded on the charism. The Configuration is not trying to bring about death; rather it is trying to open horizons, although it will be difficult to combine projects concerning formation, finances and personnel.
- Someone stated that it seems that the reality of the Configurations is that of inward gazing, rather than aiming at the goal of solidarity which is going beyond the present reality.

After the break, Fr. Frans Damen (GABR) presented his Report on the NESP CONFIGURATION: Passionists of North Europe.

He followed the outline that was previously distributed.

His basic argument was: In the NESP Configuration the provincials are the decision-making body for matters of solidarity in personnel and finances. They want to remain as four autonomous entities that comprise the Configuration. They do not want to use any structure that is hierarchical and centralized. The organizational and administrative body is composed of the four provincials who work together as superiors of the Configuration.

After the presentation there was opportunity for dialog.

- A question was asked about the vocation ministry that is being done and the personnel situation. Fr. Frans responded that they are all elderly religious and they have difficulty assuming new projects. They are living through a very difficult period due to the decrease in personnel and aging and therefore it is difficult to undertake any mission.
- A question was asked about the survival of the Congregation in these areas. Fr. Frans responded that the period of significant growth and generosity in the missions has ended. And now they were preparing to die, but it is hoped that this does not mean annihilation.
- He further emphasized that it did not seem to be a good idea to ask for help from other zones since there were other options for new forms of presence in other places and the process of inculturation that is encouraged would not be recommended.
- The provincials of the Provinces of the Configuration spoke about the options that they are working on at this time with other possible members: options with the poor in marginalized areas. They also emphasized that in this period of secularization and the abandonment of the Church these might be challenges for a new radical dimension, and the Passionist charism offers some key elements for living in this situation.
- They cited possibilities for collaboration with other configurations present in Europe that are having similar experiences.
- He also pointed out that prior to the Synod in Cuernavaca, the Conference was moving toward unification, but this process halted after the Synod and the change of Provincial councils slowed down the process and moved it toward the present situation.
- The assembly did not want to conclude this segment without mentioning the richness and the generosity of these provinces in other moments of history and that we trust that the efficacy of the Gospel is latent in their lives and in the witness of fidelity of so many religious of the past and the present.
- Someone asked: Who should decide the disappearance of the Congregation in an area?

The morning's work concluded with the observation of the Facilitator that the Assembly was moving deeper into its work of discerning the forms of Mission and the way of being prepared to give a response.

THE FIRST AFTERNOON SESSION.

It began with the reading of two letters of the Italian Lay Passionist Movement that were written to the Synod. Fr. Luis Alberto Cano was the moderator for this session.

PRESENTATION OF THE CPA CONFIGURATION.

Fr. Michael Ogweno (MATAF) delivered the report of this Configuration. He began with a brief description of the configuration. He stated: We believe that we do not need to re-structure, but to structure (to build). And this is something unique. We have to work from weakness since we are in a weak economy and have no history compared with the other Configurations. We are an entity that is growing. Our entities are Vicariates, with one Vice-province. They depend on Provinces that are in different Configurations and this causes a certain amount of tension. After the Synod of 2008 we decided to participate in the process making a declaration concerning the three areas. Solidarity in this context will occur with exchange of personnel in formation; accepting projects and the search for finances so that we may move forward. We need funds to guarantee our life and mission. Each entity is trying to attain self-sufficiency, trying to maintain autonomy in a collegial system of CPA. Our present context is that we have 60 students in the pre-novitiate and we foresee a period of growth for the next ten years.

There are structures that favor solidarity and they need to be developed in this area. We hope to be able to achieve this by 2012. We want to have authority within the context of solidarity. There will be a centralization of projects. The four religious who are in positions of authority will make decisions on the level of solidarity and they will also communicate this to the other configurations.

After his presentation there was dialog.

These were the issues that were discussed:

- There is a need to institutionalize solidarity with the CPA Configuration in the light of this new situation. The Vicariates of Africa in this new reality form part of provinces that belong to another Configuration. This new reality decreases the support of the Provinces if they don't find a way of continuing it for a period or create other resources. Various Synod members spoke about the urgent need to strengthen the Solidarity Fund that is insufficient for sustaining the growth of Africa and the needs for formation and the mission in this Configuration. We need to study the ques-

tion of Solidarity in Africa on an inter-Configuration level and with the General Council.

- The experience of Congo is enlightening. They are independent, yet they have significant financial problems. And the same thing can happen in other areas. It was stated that not only is there a need to create funds, but also to study whether these will cover the needs and permit them to begin new projects or develop new forms of autonomy and self-sufficiency.
- The presence of zones that belong to other configurations should not be viewed as a difficulty; rather as an expression of a presence of the Congregation. This is what happened in Angola and Mozambique, with the new foundation in Nigeria and with the help that continues to arrive from North Europe.
- Members of the CPA Configuration noted the sense of abandonment and the lack of autonomy to be able to decide and accomplish what the Configuration is planning on the level of the three areas of Solidarity. Reference was made to some concrete projects and to the fact that in the Vicariates, ultimate authority lies with Provinces that may be outside of the Configuration.

PRESENTATION OF THE PASPAC CONFIGURATION.

Fr. Joachim Rego (SPIR) gave the presentation assisted by Bro. Laurence Finn (CRUC). For his presentation he used the text that was given to the Assembly as well as a power point presentation. He described a series of meetings that took place and wide communication and coordination that was established in light of the size and the diversity of the Configuration. It was a model of collective-assemblies with many cultures and languages. Decisions will be made in common in an assembly that is held every two years, with another annual meeting for those who are responsible for the different areas. He concluded by affirming that there is a consensus that we want to remain as we are.

In the discussion that followed these points were raised:

- The organizational work that was done was seen as something positive, although maybe excessive. One can see the great cultural and linguistic diversity of the Configuration and this demands work in creating relationships for participation and subsidiarity.
- It was also noted that from the presentation one can deduce that the strong point is the dimension of the Assembly as a space to understand needs and possibilities that are placed in relationship.
- In the Configuration one can see the new concept that is present in this new mode that is inter-relational with regard to the previous model. In the Configuration we are all included in the process of decision-making regarding the choice and the acceptance of

projects and options for Passionist Life and Mission. A new way of being in relationship with each other and of making decisions is something that is very new for us.

- The final comment: if we know the means, is there a willingness to work together? Also are we doing this conscious of the criteria of poverty and austerity truly in keeping with the Life and Mission of the Congregation.

During the last fifteen minutes, **Fr. Fiorenzo Bordo (PRAES) spoke about the new Mission in Nigeria**. He offered some facts, but asked forgiveness because he was not well prepared.

He presented some points: This mission was founded in collaboration with the PRAES, SALV and CORM Provinces, and was begun following a request. The request was from Mr. Maurizio Ibo who is the president of an important group in the country. He visited Rome where we have some Nigerian students. He wanted to give his town a church and he wanted to entrust it to a religious community. The bishop agreed; it is the first male religious community in the diocese. The General Council said that the reference Consultor for Africa would be responsible for the foundation and so they spoke with him. We began a small project and visited the place last November and it was presented in the African conference. Congo and Tanzania agreed to be part of the project. There are eight postulants. The language spoken is the local language. On October 1 the postulancy began. With CPA we spoke about leadership in the PRAES Province and then we will see. Nearby is a community of Passionist Sisters (SIGNA). The sisters want to be responsible for the school. The house is large and Mr. Ibo paid for all the building work. Everything else is paid by the Province (we have invested $35,000.00). We also made a contribution to the Vicariate in Brazil – signs of solidarity. We are thinking about creating a pharmacy with primary assistance. They have said that they will work toward becoming self-sufficient.

The day's work concluded with words of gratitude from the Facilitator, Sister Christine. She also announced the work for the following day:

We have already listened; tomorrow we need to reflect on and study the viability of the Configurations.

Are they large, small, can they sustain themselves, carry out a mission? …these are some of the questions.

At 7:30 PM the members gathered for prayer.

27 OCTOBER

Fr. Denis acted as Moderator and Sr. Christine was the facilitator for the morning session.

We began by remembering those Provinces in which religious had died during the Synod. We were also told that Fr. Kevin Dance had returned to New York and the UN.

The liturgical commission invited us to pray with a Biblical passage regarding Mount Horeb and Elias searching for God on the mountain. We were invited to go within our hearts and search for the will of God.

Fr. Juan María Santamaría (CORI) offered some brief information about the status of Fr. Mario Bartolini. He spoke with the Bishop of Yurimaguas. There were seven who were on trial for violating laws of expropriation and the sale of land. The trial was delayed because of a strike of the judges against the government. The sentence was delayed and therefore the uncertainty continues. If the sentence is delayed it would be something positive since they are near to election time. Perhaps there would be a change in government and this would be something positive. We still don't know what will happen and although we are peaceful, there is still uncertainty.

Sr. Christine stated: **We have arrived at the moment to analyze viability. You have done everything possible to test the viability of the Configurations.** It was good work. Now we have to evaluate it.

She offered various instruments for discernment; one of these is: Why is it so difficult to change?

1. Within us there are resources for change and the first is an open mind. The mind is like a parachute; if it is not open it doesn't work. An enemy is judgment; judging before hearing everything; taking a position before knowing the entire reality, from a personal view point and not that of the group.
2. The second resource is to have an open heart. Our hearts will be open if we don't pretend that we are strong when in reality we are vulnerable. The model is that of the cross. The enemy of an open heart is cynicism (there is nothing new in the world). We have to examine and overcome this opinion. Cynicism keeps us from working well together.
3. The third resource is the desire to have a free will, the desire to want the best for the mission, not only for me. The enemy of will

is apprehension, fear, doubt, allowing myself to be dragged along by difficulties, instead of maintaining a sense of mission.

The last Chapter gave you ten priorities, JPIC among them. I have followed the Coordinators and I noted that they have courage for the mission. This is impressive. We have to do more. They have to work within the configurations.

There are two parts:

1) First Part

In a critical way look together at your configuration – is it viable?

In order to respond to viability she proposed questions or criteria in the form of an instrument of viability:

--the Instrument of Viability: Viability comes from the word "via" – way. It presents us a way forward. The capacity of leadership: do they have the leaders who can move forward?

-- Is there strategic planning? Are they planning for the future?

-- Are they thinking about the entire mission or only their own?

-- Have they spoke enough about government, how they are going to make decisions?

-- Who and how will everyone be consulted? What kind of subsidiarity will exist? How are we going to move forward?

-- Financial Planning: Few have spoken about responsibility for finances. In religious life, it seems that the sense of poverty has diminished because of a lack of responsibility.

-- Initial formation: Is there solidarity in the area of initial formation? Is on-going formation offered so that the members can know and embrace the process of solidarity?

-- The lines of communication: Is there communication between the General Curia and the other Configurations?

-- If you are going to remain as a part, you have to think about the global dimension of the Congregation in Life and Mission.

-- Are you working efficiently in the three areas? Is it real or just a fantasy?

-- Do you have the capacity to extend to other configurations?

We can help the other with something…

It might be that there are other aspects…

2) Second Part

Do you believe that the composition is viable or should there be changes? Are there suggestions for the other configurations… to increase solidarity?

She proposed this methodology: In a group, first some time for discernment. We are searching for where the Lord is taking us at this moment and considering the challenges of today: what do we need to be freed from for our mission? What would St. Paul of the Cross say to us?

We will have some moments of consolation and desolation.

We ask ourselves: Is this leading me to deeper faith and hope or despair? We will know this through discernment and not only through an exchange of ideas. Let us take some time for silence…

This is an important time… We need to note the movements in each of us after hearing from the Configurations… It is part of the process of the Spirit. We need to ask ourselves: What is coming to me? Is it coming from God or from the corridor? Before God we need time and we need and we have time…

After questions for clarification, they proceeded to group work by Configuration. The work lasted all morning.

WORK IN THE AFTERNOON

RESPONSES OF THE CONFIGURATIONS

Guidelines were given to each of the Configurations:

1. Do you believe that the composition of your configuration is viable as it is or should changes be made? Group response and motivations.
2. Regarding the other configurations: Do you have some suggestions to help them to grow in solidarity in formation, personnel and finances?

Reponses from the group and motivations.

There was a period for listening and receiving the reports of the configurations and then there was open discussion.

1. JESUS CRUCIFIED

- There was overall agreement about what is viable. We see ourselves as a network with different connection points. There is no center. We need to work on the aspect of Mission. We need a mission project that will unite us. We need a project design. We don't need to work so much on structures. We need to keep working more in order to involve all the religious. We need two more years to keep working, and this long term work is critical in order to keep discerning what is at the basis. There are internal dialogs that the Configuration needs to make stronger: Italy within itself.

The reasons why we want to stay united:
- The richness of the differences: young zones and older zones.
- Great missionary tradition: richness of experience and vitality of new ventures.
- The difficulties keep us realistic.

- Questions…
  - Share student centers and novitiates with other configurations.
  - On-going formation and the laity.
  - The local religious should be consulted, greater interaction.
  - Formation project, thinking as a team.
  - Common projects in countries where there are two configurations (e.g. Mexico).
  - Guarantees for effective and efficient financial security. Gather people who are capable of managing funds (laity and religious).
  - CPA will continue formulating projects in common.
  - The CEB configuration should continue with its commitment to CPA.
  - CPA has difficulties, but we don't have the information to analyze the causes; the Constitutions offer remedies for emergency situations.
  - Good communication between the Configurations. We need to share information among ourselves.

2. PASPAC CONFIGURATION

- Our configuration is viable. We suggest:
  - The role of General Consultor and Coordinator should be the same.
  - We need better communication directed at the base.
  - We believe that the Configurations should be formed with neighboring areas.
  - They need to be open to giving and receiving from each other in order to favor Life and Mission.
  - We are concerned about finances in Africa. We need to find a system for establishing stability in each configuration.

3. THE CEB CONFIGURATION

Fr. Guy, the spokesperson, said that initial conversation was difficult because the presentation wasn't clear. These were the questions:

- The Configuration seems to be blocked for various reasons: 1) The four Italian provinces haven't had their Chapters yet and they don't know what the base is thinking; 2) the German and Polish provinces prefer to remain totally autonomous and also return to the other provinces of North Europe; 3) these two provinces have difficulty with the government for the Configuration that was proposed for the new entity.
- Suggestions: Return to thinking about the configuration in the totality of Europe and they could also keep this configuration with the autonomy of the provinces as if it was a configuration. We will need to emphasize the commitment to the Mission of Eastern Europe.
- Another suggestion: Propose a solidarity fund to sustain the finances of the African entity. Various persons of the group suggested that No. 39 of the General's report be studied.

4. THE SCOR (SACRED HEART) CONFIGURATION

- It is viable. The fundamental reason is that there was support from the Provincial Chapters and the approval of the Colombia Vice-Province.
- North Europe and Africa would be positive if they kept in mind the mixtures and mutual support among the new regions and the older regions.
- JCFIX: the vast geographical dispersion is obvious.

We recognize that our Configuration needs to:

- Find ways of readjusting structures of government and formation programs.
- Incorporate the religious of the Latin American countries actively and responsibly.
- We are not trying to survive; we want to be creative and be involved in charismatic, meaningful missions.
- Participate together in Vocation ministry and formation using the experience of the past.
- Program meetings of the formation personnel for the configuration.
- We want to grow in a fraternal spirit and poverty and give more participation to the local communities.

5. CPA (AFRICA)

- Our configuration is viable. The members belong to the same continent and have a similar culture that enables them to have greater availability.
- There are some disadvantages. The Configuration has challenges with distance, means of transportation, lack of autonomy and financial needs.
- We want to sincerely make decisions even with the difficulty of being vicariates in most of the cases.
- We are asking for financial help with formation that strengthens the mission, within and outside the Configuration.
- We wish to consolidate the role of the Coordinator who will serve as a bridge to the outside.

CPA encourages the initiatives of the other Configurations, but it has some proposals:

- Being open to other Configurations.
- The role of the Coordinator: It should be someone other than the Superior of the Configuration.
- CPA does not anticipate any changes and it hopes that the current structures will be viable.

6. NESP (NORTH EUROPE)

- The Configuration is viable as it is. There is no need for change. The context of the reality of the six criteria that were proposed makes us viable. We can care for the elderly, attend to formation and continue with our ministries.
  - The model of solidarity is viable for the Congregation.
- We have no comments for the other configurations.
  - Only that the financial solidarity of the Congregation should be systematically developed to serve all the needs of the Congregation and the world.

There was open dialog and some questions arose.

Many were open to solidarity with Africa. We need to talk about ways of creating these funds. The finance commission is preparing a report. Fr. Michael Ogweno, the CPA expressed gratitude for the response of the Configurations to help CPA with a fund, but he asks: Was restructuring for the revitalization and the life of the entire Congregation? How can CPA contribute to the Congregation? The Facilitator, Sr. Christine, responded: It will be done with the contribution of being available for Mission. But, I do not feel that there is an openness. The solidarity fund is on an international level, the General Curia, but I do not see solidarity among the Configurations.

The Facilitator asked the **VULN and ASSUM Provincials for the reasons why they want to withdraw from the CEB** Configuration and perhaps join the NESP Configuration.

Fr. Waldemar, ASSUM Provincial, stated that the reasons were given by the spokesperson of the group. In our configuration there are

two kinds of provinces with two different histories. Much work has been done. The work was not done in the other two realities. Two different kinds of perspective and aims were created. There are different perspectives that have caused us to block one another and life cannot continue. Arguing is counter-productive, including causing delays. In order to give space to true creativity, this decision was made.

Fr. Gregor Lenzen (VULN) stated that we were asked to think about the Configuration and see if they were viable and if we should remain as such. We thought about this in the past and I tried to clarify the situation and give others freedom. The goal of the five provinces is to form a single entity and remain a province. ASSUM and VULN never agreed with this; we thought about another way of being together and not create new structures. The process was not merely about structures. Listening to the NESP Configuration I feel freer with the model that was described. Therefore after examining the situation I think that it would be better if we withdrew from the Configuration.

Fr. Ottaviano stated that each Configuration has to organize itself as it is. The question is if there is difficulty due to the common projects with the provinces and with the Configuration. Some will want to unite and others will opt for another form. But we need to try to make it work; the important thing is that in the Configuration itself there is collaboration and coordination. It would be good to take some time; we can decide later. We are always free before God and the Congregation.

Fr. Leone Masnata, Coordinator of the CEB Configuration, commented that perhaps we began wanting to arrive at maximum communion. Within the Configuration it was agreed that five provinces would unite; we accepted that the other two would remain as they are. We asked for no more than that they remain autonomous. We didn't ask if it was possible for us to undertake common projects…

The Facilitator felt that this topic should be tabled for another time.

The Facilitator proposed returning to the second part of Fr. General's report and analyzing the proposal at No. 39.

Proposal of the General Council (reported at No. 39 in the Report to the Synod, Part II)

"For the next two years, from the Synod of 2010 to the General Chapter of 2012. ***(Revised text)***

The Configuration is comprised of Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Vicariates and Mission Zones.

The Configuration has its own Council/Board composed of the Major Superiors of the various Entities that comprise it and by the Superiors of the Mission Zones (if the Statutes/Regulations of the Configurations provide for the presence of Superiors of the Mission Zones.)

The Major Superiors (and the Superiors of the Mission Zones if prescribed by the Statutes/Regulations) members of the Council/Board assem-

bled in Council have the authority to make decisions—with the consensus of all or with a majority of votes—with regard to the implementation in the Configuration of solidarity in Formation, in Personnel and in Finances.

All of the said Superiors and the Entities within the Configuration shall abide by the decisions made and shall collaborate in their implementation.

The Leader/President of the Configuration, elected by the Council/Board of the Configuration itself, shall be responsible for the implementation of the decisions that are made.

a) Those decisions that concern the entire Configuration and/or other Configurations shall be communicated to the Superior General and his Council. Each of the Superiors of the Entities that compose the Configuration may have recourse to the Superior General if they do not agree with a decision that is made.

b) If during the next two years, an Entity elects a new Major Superior and/or a Superior of a Mission Zone, he shall respect the decisions previously made by the Configuration and shall also abide by the norms contained in the present proposal.

c) If this is approved by the Synod, then, immediately following the same Synod, the Superior General, with the approval of his Council, will make a temporary norm for the Congregation.

d) This norm will remain in effect until the General Chapter of 2012, at which time it may be confirmed, modified or replaced."

Fr. General insisted that this is experimental for two years until the General Chapter. The executive committee is working on a common project, then there is consensus. If there is not a majority, they vote. And the majority approves; all agree. In general the majority is sought, unanimity; but the power is given to the majority. And the other have to accept this.

The point (a) An example: If one Major Superior does not agree. The Council evaluates those who do not agree and they will try to understand the situation. If within a Configuration a province may not agree then the General Council can intervene.

If it is approved a decree will be made establishing a temporary norm. It will be in effect until 2012.

The following points were made:

- In Cuernavaca the Conferences were suspended, but in fact the current Configurations do not have a juridical norm. This is a norm that should have been introduced before… This has caused a certain amount of annoyance. The juridical element was lacking. Nevertheless, is there still provincial or vicariate authority? On a local level does this also have to be accepted?
- A juridical text – we need to rely on a written text. This norm is open to the majority. A province need to feel more obliged than convinced. The Configurations have more juridical capacity than the juridical entities. The executive council of the Configuration, composed of the Major Superiors of the entities that comprise the Configuration, will discuss various matters, especially those pertaining to the area of solidarity. Therefore, they will plan and make decisions and the entities, the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates that compose the Configuration, will collaborate on those matter that are within their competence in order to enact what was decided by the executive committee of the Configuration. In point b) there is something more than merely the principle of continuity; a change in personnel does not change the decision of a collegial body. In other words: don't we try to freeze decisions? Isn't this point too limited?
- Fr. Ottaviano: He affirmed the points stated above concerning b). The decisions can always be made again, they are studied and the decisions are owned again. This is what normally happens in life. If there is a project, the one who comes assumes it; this is obvious. The juridical disorder does not exist; it is an organism on different levels. There is no disorder. What is important is the decision; these are different levels. The old Conferences had a weak point: i.e. the capacity to decide and to link the entities of the Conference to the decisions that were made. With the Configurations we want to overcome this weak point by offering the ability to make decisions and to enact those decisions that were made by a majority of votes of the Executive Committee. It is the power to decide and to act. There is no great juridical revolution. The council of the Configuration meets. This is the grain that is planted, the capacity to make projects in order to bring about solidarity. It is not juridical, it is animation and planning; the capacity for mission and being able to choose. The Configuration has the possibility of making decisions together, in order to overcome the poverty of the other, and the sharing of life. It is not a juridical reality; it is animation, with the Constitutions within them. I don't see any great difficulties.

There were more opinions:

- Letter a) Is communication necessary or do we want to have to ask for approbation in certain cases? Fr. Ottaviano: clarified that this is not a sacred text; it is a text that can be modified. In certain cases we cannot refer the matter to the higher authority. There is freedom within a group that does not agree and the General Council may intervene.
- Point a) states what it means. I would like to say that a Major Superior may appeal to the Superior General. If he makes a decision in the Configuration, something contrary to the entity, must we comply?
- According to politics and about juridical difficulties. It is a proposal of a body with decision making power, that is converted into a Province. It is difficult to find in the CIC an intermediary authority without the intervention of the Superior General. Only for the formality of the text. We agree with the content.

Fr. Ottaviano clarified that there could be possible conflict between the Provincial and the Configuration. There will be experts on the CIC who can look at the juridical aspects. First we should address the policy decision, in terms of its substance.

One more question:

- *I am referring to the last phrase of the last paragraph: Is the coordinator necessary? What is the role of the coordinator?* Fr. Ottaviano: They elect an executive superior. The Coordinator is not taken into consideration at this moment. The "Executive Superior" is elected by the Executive Council of the Configuration. The role of the Coordinator is what he has to do. A Configuration identified him, but this is a decision that we have not made.
- *Why is this level of dialog needed among us? I don't know why we are drowning in legal matters. Why is this necessary?* Fr. Ottaviano: It is a matter of life that we have to do together. A council needs to know that it is united and what it can do… What can we do together? This needs to be addressed from the perspective of viability.
- It is true that is part of life… Isn't this insistence on power contrary to the Gospel? When are we going to stop talking about major superiors? A major superior elected by all of the major superiors? Less religious and more provincials? When are we going to un-do all of this? Restructuring for life… we are less and we want more power. Is it necessary?… What would St. Paul of the Cross say?

Are we jumping to other things? What mission and not what provincials? Mission is what is important.

- Probably the proposal has a political underpinning and it moves into juridical details that create confusion, but it will be necessary to see directions. We need respect. You ask us about political elements but you say concrete things… Modify the proposal and let them decide the juridical modality. We understand the motivation and we need to seek a motivation for life and it will be seen in concrete decisions to bring us forward.
- I agree with the PASPAC opinion. The major superior eliminates 25% of the major superiors of PASPAC. In PASPAC we use the concept of leaders without juridical authority.
- In PASPAC it was suggested that the one who is elected among the major superiors should not be a major superior so that he will be free to do this service.
- It is an instrument for guidance. Intuition is needed. We need to realize this because there are things of the Spirit that may seem strange.
- The configuration is a place for dialog that enriches us and deepens our mission. It is a space for enabling and carrying out solidarity. It is operative and feasible. This experience has raised the need for a reality that can make solidarity effective and permanent and when needed, support the level of collaboration. This number has a strategy and motivation.

Fr. Ottaviano: affirmed that he agreed with the matter of the *Major Superiors*; better a president or leader; it was something undefined and it is not defined. The suspension of the Conferences was something that impoverished the situation in PASPAC; not so in the others. They were not suspended capriciously, rather so as not to disturb the new configurations. This is a time of passage, but the direction is the Mission, not organization. It is at the service of the mission and not to dominate.

The Facilitator concluded that they need to ask this question: If it needs to be adopted. We need a work group for this.

If we are not going to adopt this text as it stands, the CCC will work on it. We will establish a commission to look at it.

She pointed out some **pending matters**:

-- Solidarity in finances.
-- The relationship with Africa.
-- A configuration spoke about relationship (collaboration) with other configurations.
-- Two autonomous provinces.
-- Web site.
-- The role of the Consultor and the coordinator.

Other matters that may be raised. And if proposed:

- The proposal of ASSUM: Is it take into consideration?
- The third part of the General's report.
- Someone asked: Would it be possible for a definition of the language of the coordinator; what is a leader; an executive commission? We are not giving the same connotations to the same words.

The Facilitator concluded that this would be work for a Workshop following the Synod.

The work of the Synod Assembly concluded at 7:00 PM.

28 OCTOBER

On this Feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude, the day began with the celebration of the Eucharist presided over by Fr. Joachim Rego.

In the Synod Hall at 9.00 a.m. the Liturgical Commission invited us to pray with the awareness of the profound attitudes which should motivate Restructuring: from the depth, from a sense of belonging to the Congregation; flowing from the heart and from faith. We concluded by invoking St. Paul of the Cross: *Salve Sancte Pater*.

The moderator this morning was Fr. Luigi Vaninetti. He foresaw a full day of work and decisions ahead. The first point was the proposal of the Finance Commission.

It was presented by Robert Joerger (PAUL)

Answers to calls for clarifications from the floor.

The problem was raised of how to make solidarity effective and how to create awareness of needs. To this end the previous Synod asked for the creation of a commission. Its tasks are found in the previous Synod; the commission has just begun its work but offers some proposals. The commission is formed by Augusto Canali, Edwin Flor and Robert Joerger, assisted by Frs. Battista Ramponi and Jesús María Aristín.

Structure for financial solidarity of the Congregation

1. Solidarity and equitable distribution of goods. The following initiatives/proposals must be read and taken with a spirit of solidarity and evangelical poverty which characterize us and lead us to distribute/redistribute the goods of the Congregation equitably and with a sense of responsibility with the intent of helping those areas most in need.

2. New feature: in the past the growth of the solidarity fund depended totally upon the donations of provinces and vice provinces. From now on, all provinces, vice provinces and vicariates will contribute to the solidarity fund by annually giving 2% of their income (province/houses).

3. Specific nature and goal of the fund: This contribution refers exclusively to the growth of the solidarity fund of the Congregation and is distinct from the contribution/quota that the provinces and vice provinces must consign to the General Treasurer for management. This process of solidarity is intended to financially sus-

tain the poorer regions of the Congregation so that they may attend to their mission, formation and structures.

4. Application/Extension to all. All provinces, vice provinces and vicariates will contribute to the Solidarity Fund giving 7% of the sums earned by the sale or alienation of properties (land or buildings).

Dialogue following the presentation

It was pointed out that proposal n. 4 was approved at Cuernavaca. The second, third and fourth proposal were discussed.
Clarifications were requested:

- The fund which we are speaking of is the already existing Solidarity Fund.
- It was asked whether the sum raised for the fund with the new contributions can be calculated. The General Treasurer replied that it is difficult but it will be built up to some degree.
  There was an insistence on the link between this fund and the Formation Fund which is poorer. It was pointed out that n. 3 specifies the fund can financially sustain the poorer regions of the Congregation so that they may attend to their mission, formation and structures.
- The Commission pointed out that the funds interact between themselves.
- It was again insisted upon that the norms established for requests for help be respected: projects approved by the provincial council, duly specified.
- Finally, it was asked that when the norms in this area are formulated, special circumstances be kept in mind.

The proposals were put to a vote.

n. 1 .... is inspirational, no vote was taken
n. 2 .... 50 in favour
n. 3 .... 50 in favour
n. 4 .... 49 in favour with 1 abstention

SECOND SESSION

PRESENTATION OF THE GENERAL'S REPORT (PART 3)

Fr. Ottaviano read the third part of his report which had been previously distributed to the participants in 3 languages.

The Facilitator Sr. Christine pointed out that the document has themes and proposals: laity; WYD; review the concept of Province in reference to the minimum number of religious that comprise it.

Discussion of some themes

1. The laity (n. 2)

The different experiences of the lay associations inspired by our charism were acknowledged as well as their desire to live it in a more binding way. The proposal found in the General's report was simply an observation.

According to Fr. Ottaviano, the objective of the proposal was to ascertain if the Synod wishes to include a mention of these groups in the Constitutions with practical norms included in the General Regulations, giving more strength to their belonging while guaranteeing their recognition.

- It was suggested that a norm will come about but the time is not now. The place to gather the diverse forms of participation is within each Configuration. It is the voice of some places, the religious are their voice. We need to share experiences and develop something at the General Chapter if we are ready to do so.
- It is a task that should be undertaken during the next two years, beginning in the Configurations.

The Italian Lay Movement is asking to be accompanied and is calling for the creation of a commission which will establish a program of formation.

The Facilitator concludes:

- It appeared some would like to deal with the question but the time was not yet ripe.
- It is a subject to be treated within the Configurations.
- They do not present the identity of the lay associate. There are different models in other congregations.
- The theme needed to be developed further and we would return to it on the following morning.
- The subject of communications would also be discussed tomorrow morning.

On behalf of Fr. Kevin Dance, Fr. Denis communicates that since Passionists International has been present at the U.N., there is the opportunity for a religious to participate for a few months in the work that is being done there.

N. 8 of the Report: sexual abuse

Appreciation was expressed to Fr. Ottaviano for having referred to the issue in his report. Some questions were raised for the purposes of clarification and for the prevention of attitudes and behaviours. References were also made to the guidelines of the Holy See, some Episcopal conferences and the Congregation for Religious.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon begins with a video projection on Fr. Mario Bartolini being interviewed by Fr. Aristin.

Fr. Clemente Barrón acted as moderator.

The theme was that of our response to the issue of abuse of minors and a round table with the participation of 3 provincials and the facilitator was formed.

Among the points raised were the following: the importance of dealing with child sexual abuse as a crime, rather than simply as a sin or a psychological problem; the necessity of reporting all cases to the statutory authorities; the primacy of listening to the victims and ensuring that they have adequate support, rather than protecting the institution; the need for proper procedures for dealing with those guilty of abuse, whether sexual, physical or emotional.

The panel's presentation was followed by a lengthy discussion which highlighted the need for safeguarding of the vulnerable in our ministries, proper procedures in each province or entity for addressing the issues relating to abuse in the proper way, and formation for our religious in understanding this issue.

Some specific questions arose: Is there some way of informing or forming the major Superiors about this area and others? Specific directions were given in this matter.

At the end of a day of intense work, the meeting was adjourned until 9:00 AM the following day.

29 OCTOBER

The Synod Assembly gathered at 9:00 AM to begin work.

The liturgy group invited us to assume an attitude of conversion according to the Wisdom of the Cross, in the mind-set of Christ Crucified (1Cor:23-25).

Fr. Luis Alberto Cano acted as moderator and Sr. Christine as facilitator.

We remembered the anniversary of ordination of Fr. Sabinus Lohin (REPAC) and two messages were read, one from the Religious Servants of the Passion and the other from Fr. Clemente Sobrado.

The Facilitator, Sr. Christine, proposed the following work plan: **conclude the reflections on the proposal offered by Fr. General in the third part of his report, then the World Youth Day, Communications and finally other points re. the path to be followed in the next two years until the General Chapter of 2012.**

She left open the possibility of including other points.

The Assembly agreed with the choice of topics; however there were suggestions to distribute well the time available and to give a greater amount of time to discussion about the Configurations.

1. Information about WYD 2011 in Madrid.

On behalf of the Spanish team coordinating this event, **Fr. José María Saez Martín (SANG) spoke about this event**. After reminding the assembly about the aims of WYD, he spoke about the two meetings that are scheduled, one for young Passionist religious in Peñafiel and the other for youth of the Passionist family in Alcalá. He offered detailed information including the various steps to be taken regarding registration and he spoke about the places proposed for the meetings.

Fr. Denis Travers, General Consultor, gave some clarifications about the religious who want to participate: six or eight for every Configuration, who are younger than 35 yrs. old and are professed. He also recalled how positive the meeting in Australia was for the religious and also for the General Council. The topics and the dynamic for every day will be coordinated by the General Council and the organizing commission of the Configuration.

2. Communications (Web site)

Fr. Clemente Barrón, the reference General Consultor for digital communications, presented the members of the Commission for Communications that was created by the General Council.

Fr. Marco Pasquali (PIET) and Fr. Massimo Granieri (LAT) presented their report on the work that has been done to improve communications within the Congregation, using all of the technical possibilities that are offered today in the world of communications. Furthermore, it is necessary to enter into the network of communications in order to offer our message so that it will be available to greatest number of persons.

They spoke about several possibilities that are available in the area of digital communications: interactions, access to documents, places for gathering and interaction, and internet resources.

The work that has been done thus far includes an analysis and evaluation of the needs and the priorities of the Congregation.

3. Study of the proposals included in the third part of the report of Fr. General

- ***Study about the number of religious in each province and the situation of the vicariates when they become autonomous after the General Chapter of 2012.***

Before voting, some clarifications were requested regarding the content and the consequences. It was said that we do not foresee changes in the relationships within the provinces before 2012 and that we need to keep in mind the criteria regarding the practical aspects for the Provinces and for the vicariates (number of religious, vitality, financial sufficiency, the number of communities, etc.)

Vote: 49 voting. 49 in favor.

- ***No. 39 Proposal of the General Council regarding the executive power of the Configurations during the period preceding the General Chapter of 2012.***

The proposal was reformulated following yesterday's discussion in the aula. Some confusing juridical points were eliminated and were replaced with more generic terms, such as "president" and "leader", in order to include more possibilities and to be sensitive to linguistic differences.

Vote: 49 voting – 2 no – 2 abstain – 45 in favor.

- ***Include a reference to the laity in the Constitutions and in the Statutes (Community Life, No. 37 or No. 100).***

For various reasons, such as juridical consequences and culturally diverse ways of understanding the formulation of the text of the proposal, as it was presented, it was not accepted.

The following **proposal** was formulated: that the General Council consult the Congregation and the laity in order to hear their opinion regarding the inclusion of a reference to the laity in the Constitutions. This proposal was presented for voting and was unanimously approved.

It was made more precise by a second question: Do we agree that there should be reference to the laity in the Constitutions? The Synod unanimously showed that it agreed with the inclusion of a reference to the laity in the Constitutions and in the General Regulations following the proposed consultation.

- ***No. 13 of the report of Fr. General. The recommendation to include a proposal in the particular legislations to permit access to Brothers to service as First Provincial or Vicarial Consultor.***

Before voting, the importance of the formation of the Brothers as noted. Secondly, mention was made about all the study that was done about their status in the Congregation and that we had repeatedly requested, together with other Congregations, that the Holy See no longer consider our Congregation to be "clerical"; to which the Congregation for Religious responded that our Congregation in fact was "clerical". The recommendation is to continue the process in this direction.

Vote: 49 voting – 1 no — 3 abstentions – 45 in favor.

Sr. Christine, the Facilitator, proposed the work to be done during the afternoon session.

These are the guidelines: the goal and objectives for the next two years in preparation for the General Chapter of 2012.

Improve the work of the Configurations that have been established at this Synod of 2010 and prepare for the General Chapter of 2012.

Objectives:

1. **Enable (inform) the members of each Configuration.**
2. **Establish secure channels of communications for the entire Congregation.**
3. **Address specific questions within each Configuration in the light of the decisions made at the 2010 Synod.**

4. **Establish clear procedures for decision making and information about what was decided within the Configuration and with the General Council.**
5. **Clarify additional questions that may be addressed at the General Chapter of 2012 that have to do with each Configuration.**

AFTERNOON WORK.

At 15.30 each Configuration met individually. At some points the two facilitators offered some help and also each of the General Consultors visited the Configuration for which he is responsible.

At 19.00 the coordinators met with the CCC.

Group meetings by Configuration.

Reflection and topics that were of interest to them.

Address communications on the basic level, otherwise the Configuration will not have roots. Reflection on what we have and what has to done to improve communications.

19.30 The coordinators met.

30 OCTOBER

The day began with the celebration of the Eucharist at 7.00 a.m., presided over by Fr. Frans Damen (GABR). The work of the Synod began at 9.00 a.m. with Fr. Denis in the role of moderator. He asked the assembly to remember the young Kenyans who will be ordained today. He added that a book, a gift of the DOL Province, has been made available. It is a collection of the proceedings of a meeting held on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Constitutions of the Congregation.

The Liturgical Commission invited us to pray with n. 5 of the Constitutions.

The Facilitator, Fr. Michael Mullins, gave some instructions regarding the work of the day:

During the work of the Synod some foundations were laid for our future Passionist identity. Many aspects are "ad experimentum": the juridical aspect must be looked at; you are learning a new way of living with each other. The image of a small sailboat may be of help to you: when the wind is against us we can use it to our advantage if we place ourselves at an angle ... the wind can bring us to our destination.

The future of your Congregation will depend on the local leadership of where you work. It is here that one must arrive at a solidarity in the three areas. Individuals cannot necessarily work or plan even with the best of structures. Dialogue at every level is opportune and the best way to learn dialogue is by practice. Yesterday you worked within your Configurations and later the Coordinators met with the Council. We asked if there were any pending situations and how to begin in your communities.

We will now receive the answers to this work and later we will proceed to a vote to decide whether the Configurations as they stand shall continue for the next 2 years and finally we shall see how to continue with the work.

The Configurations

1. THE "SACRED HEART" CONFIGURATION

1. Worries with regard to the work of the Synod and the future of the Configuration

- There is a feeling of disappointment and anxiety in the face of the work proposed by the Synod. There is the impression that as a Congregation we are moving backward, to the old Conferences. To assure solidarity, we should not be electing an authority to decide what we could decide together. Otherwise, a decision that was made together as a Congregation disappears. There are provinces that are not included in the process and with the door open to establish a number of religious per province, it seems there is a will to create other provinces outside the process.
- We have planned our future: turning back, as autonomous provinces continually opening up to a collaboration in the three areas of solidarity, or look ahead? Without a doubt we unanimously want to carry forward the process begun at Cuernavaca. We continue to count on the creation of a single province in our Configuration and we are committed to continuing to move in this direction.
- We are engaged in making our Passionist mission a priority: what we shall do and where. Later we will seek the most adequate form of government in agreement with the 4 zones presented at the beginning of the Synod or a form that seems more appropriate.

2. Method of Communication

- we wish to maintain and strengthen the channels already in place.
- we will increase the number of meetings per zone and category with the goal of moving ahead with the following projects.
  - Courses for formators: Rome, January 16 – 17 February.
  - Second week of November: meeting of provincials with Spanish Consultor.
  - December: Christmas letter of all the major superiors of the Configuration presenting this new stage of the process along with the hopes we desire to instill. In the same way, the major superiors will send out letters at Easter and on the Feast of St. Paul of the Cross offering information.
  - Beginning of January: each province will hold its assembly in central Spain.

- During the months of January/March good use will be made of the visit of the provincials to Latin America to render the restructuring process dynamic. Making use of this visit or another occasion, the major superiors should meet with the Consultors residing in the zone to see how a concrete plan of action, similar to the one in Spain, can be organized. Given the distances, the meetings may have to take place per zone or through representatives.
- April. Easter Week: a pre-congress will be held in Colombia and an inter-provincial assembly in Spain.
- June: a congress of the vice province will be held in Colombia.
- at the beginning of the course – end of September – there should be a meeting of all the local superiors of Spain. Furthermore, at a time to be determined, before the year's end, a meeting will be held for all Spanish religious under the age of 55.
- possibility of exchange of religious between provinces to favour knowledge of people and different realities.
- exchange of major superiors for the canonical visit of 2011.

3. Other aspects:

- It is considered opportune that the same coordinator be kept during this time and that it be he, in agreement with the approved proposal, who assumes the role of the authority that accompanies the decisions that are made in the Configuration.

2. PASPAC

- We could have used more time to speak of restructuring. After Cuernavaca we asked ourselves how to live solidarity and if we needed to change the configuration of the provinces. We spoke of finances: has this become the sole subject? We needed more time to discuss the situation of the Configurations; we need clearer guidelines. The greatest challenge is the conversion process; we need greater courage to be more open, while recognizing our limits. There is a movement which desires to resolve one's own needs and those of others with a sense of solidarity and co-responsibility. Our brothers are not interested in this process because it does not touch their daily lives. When something urgent arises requiring our attention we forget that there is an on-going process.

- Canonical visits would be a good time to speak of the process
  - We in PASPAC are an entity which gives and which receives
  - New technologies of communication will not be of great use, although we need translations.
  - Our youth need more experience abroad.

- Other aspects:
  - There is concern over the "Jesus Crucified" Configuration: what does "multi-centered" mean?
  - It should be underlined that mission is that which unites the three areas of solidarity.
  - We believe it fitting that the roles of coordinator and leader be in agreement
  - We propose that there be six Consultors
  - Unifying the persons in the formation commission.

3. CPA (Conference of Passionists in Africa)

- Reflection of the Configuration on the Synod
  - the development has been good, the day dedicated to the JPIC important; the opportunity to meet as a Configuration and Congregation has helped make some progress and strengthen communion.
  - we have come to know other realities and share with them; solidarity exists and the climate of the Synod aided sharing.
  - The reports of the Father General and the different Configurations alternated arguments of some importance with others that were insignificant.

- Regarding the future
  - there is the need of an organism to respond to what has been asked of the Configuration
  - there is still the need to reach a consensus on solidarity of personnel and formation
  - there has been much work done on solidarity within the Configurations but not between them.
  - communication with the base is a challenge; therefore we will engage ourselves in the use of new technologies.

4. CEB (Eugene Bossilkov Configuration)

Only a few points from yesterday's meeting were presented.

- we noted some confusion in the coordination of themes: JPIC and sexual abuse; solidarity and decisions regarding economic issues. We made some progress on this last issue but too many subjects were taken into consideration. There were moments when the tasks were unmanageable.
- it appears we are dwelling on formal and structural aspects for which a foundation is lacking; and on questions which are unrelated to the substance of restructuring.
- what do we wish to do as Passionists in today's world? If the reality of the *memoria passionis* is missing, the quality of our presence diminishes.
- we are having some difficulty communicating what we are doing to our religious. They ask us of what use are these structures which we are modifying for the third time in a short space. We need to explain to the grass roots the reasons for the restructuring.
- to the question whether our Configuration is viable we respond affirmatively.
- it is difficult to speak of our own Configuration and much more so of the others. We are confused: Africa does not appear to have all the characteristics which will make it viable, there are economic problems. A serious assessment of its viability must be made.
- we believe that communication is possible; we use this option.
- the provincial chapters offer the occasion in which to reflect with all the members of the province. It will not be difficult to reach the understanding that we will move forward. We need to explain that a change has already come about with the creation of a decision-making body with an executive competence.
- what has happened is not a step backwards but a different way of moving forward .. we must begin again.
- it is important to communicate the reason for this new structure. It is important that it create an enthusiasm which flows from the charism and projects, because the world has changed. It is necessary to join together in order to bring about something new.
- it appears that the Congregation is following two distinct paths of restructuring: one in the newer zones of growth; and another in the older, diminishing areas of the Congregation. Why are they not open to mutual exchange?
- we did not speak of the "coordinator question".

5. The Configuration of JESUS CRUCIFIED

- the Synod has offered much information but we note a general fatigue not so much in regard to the work on the Configurations as in relation to methodology: many themes were mentioned and then dropped.
- we do not vote on ideas but on proposals which must be clear in order to avoid endless discussion.
- the Configuration appears to be viable. We received confirmation in some of the criteria offered by Aquilino Bocos in his conference.
- we are not capable of judging the viability of other configurations.
- there must be a greater reference to mission which is the point on the horizon which helps us to decide.
- Proposals to put into action:
  - the Coordinator will send a letter of information on the Synod
  - use already scheduled meetings to motivate and inform on the Synod and on paths yet to be taken.
  - create and reinforce the communication network, involving all of the religious.
  - positive evaluation regarding video conferencing.
  - we highlight the importance of personal encounters.
  - The next assembly will take place in September.
  - it seems that the Synod has said little on the contribution and the study of the Vicariates.

6. NESP (Northern Europe)

We would like principally to share what we discussed in a brief meeting between 8.30 and 9.00 this morning. The Provincials of the ASSUM and VULN Provinces were present at the meeting during which they asked to join our Configuration. We needed the entire afternoon to decide and in the end we accepted. The decision was communicated to the CCC. We are content because our way of living solidarity has been welcomed. At least four members of the Configuration believe it is viable. The Synod's way of conducting business was not helpful in the way that proposals were dealt with. This should have been avoided. We received much information, many problems. We could have been informed about these prior to the Synod so that we could have worked on them.

For the first two years: work on putting in place the model we have chosen. We wish to have a greater participation in the preparation of the General Chapter, giving greater weight to formation.

Brief observations

What is important is to walk as a Configuration; this is the path of the Congregation at this time.

The Facilitator (Sr. Christine) made the following comments: it has been an opportunity to see if the Configurations function. It would not be right to make changes before the General Chapter, we need to be assured of their practicability. Furthermore, you must offer each other information.

The question of mission is fundamental; restructuring is a way of carrying the charism forward and the first to do this are the leaders; economic resources are for mission; structures are administrative in nature. Within 10 years the Configurations will have changed. That is why structures must be treated with flexibility. The superior or leader has the important role of animator. Remember to dialogue with each other. Two Provinces have switched Configuration; ask, dialogue.

Other interventions:

- If enthusiasm and the concern to look at the world from the point of view of the charism is lacking, then we cannot understand the restructuring of the Congregation. The Church is aware of the profound changes that the world is going through and is asking how the poorer regions and those who deny the presence of God can be evangelised. If we are not aware of the richness of our charism then all this effort is useless. In those countries where we are diminishing the concern is how to maintain our presence. The conviction that the wealth of the charism comes from our heart is necessary; it is from here that enthusiasm flows.
- I am concerned about a criterion developed in Mexico which is not very present. The NESP and CEB Configurations do not have relationships with the new areas. What is their intention in this regard? How does one live when there is no direct relationship? Northern Europe thought that we would have said ‘let us die in peace’; it makes me enthusiastic to hear that they are asking why they are and who they are. Ours is a time of spirituality and not spiritualism.

There are many opportunities present in different areas. Northern Europe should have relationships with those who help keep a healthy tension alive. As for our Configuration (Jesus Crucified), we have discussed the subject of size but the thought of being nodes without a centre makes us viable. We are aware that numbers will diminish in the future and that we must keep an open dialogue regarding our internal structures.

- we should perceive ourselves in a trial phase until 2012 without becoming alarmed over changes and potential difficulties.

Sr. Christine: *you are here to create projects and when one person changes, the project changes. Mission is important. What shall we do to carry it forward?*

Fr. Ottaviano reflected: *there is a tendency to highlight the negative. This is a reading dictated by fear. We have decided to go ahead but we fear to put into place what we have decided. We are afraid of being on the bridge, we are in difficulty. Restructuring is an open door, a possibility to express solidarity in our apostolate and not a project to impose ... it's about discussing strategies, living together. We need to be culturally converted as well; personal resistance is due to lack of faith. Fear is for the most part unjustified. I would have greater trust because there is faith in the Congregation*.

SECOND SESSION

The question to discuss upon returning:

Do we agree that the Configurations should continue as they are until the Chapter of 2012?

Is the Synod in agreement? *Unanimously so.*

Presentation of the Document on ends and objectives.

- a Power Point presentation in November prepared by the General Council for the whole Congregation.
- deciding the program of formation
- specific questions: quota, internal changes to the structures

- clear processes: authority within the Configuration, attention to subsidiarity.
- clarification of other matters. Juridical aspects must be presented to the General Chapter and must be clear. The General Council must remain in communication.

The Synod members then discussed the place and theme of the General Chapter.

Fr. Denis proposed the following to the assembly.

- **Date**: September 2012.
- T**heme**. Mission: Passion for Christ and Passion for the World.
- **Place**: Rome (PASPAC) or Nairobi (even though this is not a Passionist place). Rome was proposed given the logistics, cost, and possibilities. Other sites (like Nairobi) were suggested but there were difficulties.

Sr. Christine suggests that not all Chapters have a theme. The purpose of a Chapter is to evaluate the progress made, to orient and plan. If you have a theme, something to think about is: what has been significant in these years? What can take us to 2018?

After a time of silence, the following themes were suggested:

- Passion for Christ, Passion for the World.
- The mission of the Congregation today.
- How to reach the crucified of today.
- Solidarity for mission.
- Renewal of witness to the crucified of today.
- The charism in face of the challenges of our day.
- The Passionist charism: invitation to witness and service.
- Passionist: passionate about the cross and about life.
- Life and mission in the light of the Cross of Christ.
- Passionist. Do not fear, cast the net.
- Double dimension: spirituality and mission as the foundation of the restructuring process.

It was suggested that setting a theme carries the risk of creating or imposing an ideology on the Chapter. Restructuring means bringing the charism to the present day. Titles are useful.

Other suggested themes were presence of restructuring; restructuring for mission; restructuring for solidarity and mission; beginning a new journey.

After two years in the process of restructuring, it must be ratified at the Chapter and it must be seen how the Configurations can facilitate the mission. What can the Chapter do so that the charism can be a challenge today? It was suggested that there should be no theme for the Chapter.

The comment was made that the laity must be present. They make us realistic. We should welcome not only their presence but their proposals as sources of enlightenment.

The most frequently suggested themes were about consistency in the light of the Passion and the crucified.

The juridical dimension was also discussed. What is to be done with the juridical aspects before the Chapter of 2012?

- It was suggested that a team of intellectuals could reformulate the theme presented. Experts in Canon Law are needed. The suppression of provinces and vicariates must be examined in depth. We need a definition of the type of institution we are working with from the juridical point of view.
- The importance of the presence of canonists to overcome doubts and obstacles was highlighted. There should be a proposal on the number of Consultors. The Chapter may decide; no fewer than 4. We need to consider a wider pastoral and administrative council in Rome. Guidelines on this subject are found in the 2006 report of the General. An important issue for the Chapter is the distribution of goods in the light of lands and buildings from the restructuring perspective.
- Guidelines are necessary on the security of funds.
- On the Wills (Testaments) of religious that do not have legal value: it would be good to structure them according to law.
- Through some commissions, we should seek missions and realistic apostolic paths for the Configurations that avoid improvisations.
- Consult canonists in order to dissipate doubts: with the prospect of Configurations, must changes be made in the Constitutions?
- Are two Synods needed in the pre-Chapter period?
- Examine juridical guidelines for religious who refuse to be transferred. The major superior writes 3 canonical admonitions; after

which the religious is dismissed from the Congregation and the case is handed over to the civil authority.

- The General Curia has the following tasks: the three commissions; formation; personnel and finances.
- Guidelines to assist provincials in the sale of property and in cases of the sexual abuse of minors. Local Bishops organize week long seminars offering instruction on practical matters, we could do something similar.

Father Ottaviano announced that there would be a visit to the Passion Library in the afternoon.

A proposal for an open forum on specific theme was not approved.

Sr. Christine thanked the assembly, manifesting her satisfaction with the work done, grateful for the time together. Fr. Michael also expressed his gratitude, mentioning that he considered it a privilege to work on such "holy ground" that is a Synod for a Congregation. Fr. Ottaviano thanked them both for their professionalism and friendliness.

The Synod work for the day comes to a close and will resume tomorrow at 9.00 in the Hall.

31 OCTOBER

Final Session: Evaluation and Conclusion.

The meeting began in the aula at 9:00 AM. The Liturgy group led the assembly in a period of prayer. The theme was: "Another humanity".

Fr. Luigi Vaninetti moderated this final session that consisted of three parts:

- the presentation by the Secretary of the Synod on the status of the preparation of the Acts and the proposals approved in the aula by direct voting;
- information from the General Econome;
- verbal evaluations by the Synod members.

1. Presentation by the Secretary. He reported that the Acts are almost all translated in the three languages. He also offered information about the proposals approved in the aula.
2. Presentation by Fr. Battista Ramponi. Fr. Battista briefly reported about the expense of the Synod. The overall cost was Euro 118,000. Compared with other Synods that were celebrated outside of Rome, the cost of holding the Synod here in the Generalate was less expensive.
3. Evaluation of the Synod. Fr. Luigi Vaninetti spoke about what took place during the course of the Synod. He recalled that the moderators insisted that a fundamental element of this process was the activity of those who are responsible for each of the Configurations and entities. A large part of the development of the process depended on the attitude of those religious who exercise the ministry of authority. In general, the interventions evaluated what was accomplished during the Synod -- an opportunity to meet and plan together. We also evaluate the possibility of dialog and of appreciating what has taken place within the Configurations. Among the limitations noted was the large amount of information that was received, which at times was difficult to situate within the total process. He noted the need for a program that is more developed and focused.

Fr. Ottaviano concluded: *The Synod will conclude with the Eucharist. I listened to the evaluations in which we can observe strong points and weak points. Life is always new and unpredictable. This morning I was thinking: We evaluated the Configurations since Cuernavaca; perhaps we should have done this by province. Are the current Provinces viable? Look at your own realities and see if they are viable in their life, mission and in the ability to do planning.*

In point No. 37 of my Report I noted two objectives for the Synod: The viability of the composition of the Configurations and the decision-making ability of the councils of the Configuration. We did this after we discussed it. We continue in this direction. They are in process.

Perhaps we need the three principles of nomads: adapt yourself to nature, to others and openness to reciprocity: I will help you not so that you can help me; rather because someone else will help me. It is open reciprocity. My generosity will allow the Lord to bring forth additional generosity.

Let us move on together. The bodies that were constituted to make decisions are already in place. The major superiors, the religious entrusted with the service of authority should communicate to the religious what we have decided and experienced during this Synod. At the conclusion we will celebrate the Eucharist.

The Mass was celebrated at 11:00 AM and Fr. Ottaviano presided. At the conclusion he dismissed the Synod members to return to their communities to communicate what they have experienced and decided.

HOMILY FOR THE CLOSING OF THE XIV GENERAL SYNOD

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

(Wis.11:22-12:22; Thes.1:11-2:2; Lk.19:1-10)

My dearest Brothers of the Congregation,

Let us thank God for these days that we have spent together. Let us do this with the Eucharist where Jesus himself becomes thanksgiving to the Father by his death that is renewed and offered in another "Last Supper" in the cenacle of this chapel where He again is priest and victim and where we, together with Him, form the mystical body which is the Church.

Solidarity has its maximum expression on the Cross where Jesus dies for us and in the Cenacle where He takes bread, which is His body, and breaks it and shares it among the disciples. He takes the cup, which is His blood, and he gives it to the disciples so that they may all drink from it. Breaking and sharing the same bread and drinking from the same cup are the "sign" of sharing and solidarity and doing this we "remember." We do this in this Eucharistic sacrifice where: "Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." (1Cor.10:17) Personal choices, choices as a Synod and as a Congregation cannot contradict what we are celebrating. It was sharing and breaking the bread that it could be distributed, that enabled the disciples of Emmaus to recognize Jesus.

However, the days of this Synod, two years after the Synod of Cuernavaca, were not easy. We experienced foggy days, feeling lost, feeling afraid and feeling tempted to a "reverse Exodus"—wanting to turn back, like Israel, to slave labor and the precarious life in Egypt. God had a plan for his people; it was not a plan to help the powerful, but to free the oppressed.

Moses himself had his doubts and he resisted the call of God who reassured him: "I will be with you." (Ex.3:12) It is a small phrase, but it has a strong meaning: what does man have to fear if God is with him? Man can fulfill the mission that was entrusted to him because he will not be alone in fulfilling it – God will be with him.

The presence of God strengthens, encourages and transforms. This is what today's gospel reminds us with the account of the meeting of Zacchaeus with Jesus in the biblical city of Jericho—a vast oasis rich in water, date palms and fruit trees, and there are also sycamore trees that appear in today's gospel episode. Jesus is travelling toward Jerusalem (we, too, as a Congregation during this historic period of Restructuring are travelling toward Jerusalem). In the crowd that gathers around Jesus, there are two indi-

viduals who are on a similar faith journey: an anonymous blind man who cries out: "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" (Lk.18:38) He screams out, and he is annoying because in addition to yelling he is also begging; but Jesus, always accessible and welcoming, heals him: "Have sight; your faith has saved you." (Lk.18:42) The other individual is Zacchaeus and both of them, the blind man and Zacchaeus, at the moment that Jesus is passing by, react, take the initiative, and finally are able to "see" Jesus and to find salvation in Him: salvation is offered to the poor man, but also to the rich and the sinner.

The biblical exegetes say that the episode of Zacchaeus is among the most meaningful in the gospel of Luke because it contains many of the elements that are cherished by the evangelist: the journey, wealth, the desire to see, the encounter, the contrasting of values, the immediacy of salvation, and the mission of Jesus who was sent to bring Good News to the poor.

They are many elements that describe Zacchaeus: he was rich, he was small in stature, he was a sinner – a Jewish man at the service of the Roman occupation troops- he extorted money from his fellow citizens; however, he wanted to "see" Jesus. The gospel says he "ran ahead" and he climbed a sycamore tree. And up there, he waits and he watches from a distance, not wanting to get too involved; but Jesus looks up and calls him by name: ""Zacchaeus, come down quickly.." and surprisingly Jesus invites himself to his home…"for today I must stay at your house."Salvation is offered today. We, too, are aware that it is often this "today" that is present in our search for answers for our mission and as yeast in today's world. Using the current process of reviewing positions and the weaknesses and strengths of our communities, there is the common desire to discern appropriate responses to the "today" of God whose Reign is in our midst. "Today I must stay at your house"-- Zacchaeus hurries down and welcomes Jesus with joy. If it is authentic, the meeting with Jesus accomplishes salvation: "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." It is sharing; it is a change of view and relationship with others; it is the capacity to act with generosity. Jesus, observing the conversion that took place in Zacchaeus during the encounter ("Today I must stay at your house.") says: "Today salvation has come to this house." This "today" from the mouth of Jesus still resounds, confirming the divine intervention in that moment of grace and responsibility. It is a "today" that is always new, that becomes the future for the Church and for the Congregation and for our young and for us who are responsible to them for the task entrusted to us as elder brothers. This refers to the Restructuring and choices that we are making. However, faithfulness requires of us greater enthusiasm, courage and faith in God. Let us avoid

impeding the future by each of us remaining ensconced in our houses and in our own situations: God has invited us to leave the encampment.

Zacchaeus does not make any other statements to Jesus: he is only happy to receive Him and he promises solidarity with the poor and the restitution of goods to those that he has defrauded, and Jesus says that salvation has entered that house. The same thing will happen in the first community of Jerusalem where powerful witness was given when the disciples placed their goods in common. (Acts 4:34 ff.) Similarly, Zacchaeus strove to share his wealth and to repay what he had unjustly extorted.

Justice that is restored reconstitutes him as a son of Abraham; solidarity affords him new membership among the people of Israel. Meeting with Jesus–Solidarity—Salvation: three words and three realities that are intimately connected in this episode. Each is a result of the others. They are also symbolic for us and for what we are trying to do as a Congregation during these years and during the days of this Synod: they should be directives and confirmations of what God wants from us "today"—a word that Jesus says repeatedly in this gospel.

And I am not surprised that this gospel is offered to us today for our study and reflection, as if God was closely following our journey. He knows our weakness and indecision; but he wants to affirm the plan He has for us in our spirit and in our heart. The gospel episode of Zacchaeus is his word for us as we close the Synod. It is his prophecy for us. He wants to tell us that meeting and living with Jesus ("I must stay at your house") is fundamental and it is the premise for every act of salvation. It is an invitation to a profound spiritual life and intimacy in community with the Lord ("at your house").We want to assert that an authentic encounter with Jesus converts and helps to restore justice and to recognize the rights of the poor. It generates and strengthens the capacity to share goods and lives. And this initiates salvation; it is the Reign of God in us and in the Congregation. And the gospel, in its mystery, also reminds us about the mission that "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost." It summarizes the meaning of the entire mission of Jesus and our mission through the Passionist vocation that we received. In fact, He is the shepherd who came to search for the lost sheep and He did so by going to the houses of "sinners" and by allowing himself to be crucified among "thieves".

In the reading from the Letter to the Thessalonians, Paul begins with a prayer in which he asks that the Lord "bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith" so that the Christians of Thessalonica could always be "worthy of his calling" and through them, "the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified." It is an invitation also to us to carry out the work that has been entrusted to us.

In the first reading from the book of Wisdom, it states that God loves everything that he created. Love has a determining role to play in creation- "you love all things that are" because his "imperishable spirit is in all things"—and this is especially true for human beings. God has compassion on everyone; little by little he corrects; he forgives our sins and he loves life. God wants to convince us of his love for us – an infinite love that we have come to know on the Cross where Jesus, out of compassion for us, went to take our place: the innocent One who became the guilty victim for all the sins of the world. And as a Congregation, and as the Passionist Family, through our vocation we are witnesses of this through the charism of St. Paul of the Cross and the mandate of the Church. I thank each and every one of you especially for your presence and your participation: we are a gift to each other. Let us entrust the work of this Synod and the next two years in preparation for the General Chapter to the protection of Mary, "Salus Populi Romani" (The Health of the Roman People).

May St. Paul of the Cross bless us and protect you as you travel home. Amen.

Some of the Matters proposed for voting in the Synod Aula Extracts from the Acts

1. PROPOSALS FOR THE SOLIDARITY FUND.

The Finance Commission that was established at the Synod of 2008 formulated two proposals to increase the Solidarity Fund so that it can help to financially assist the poorest regions of the Congregation in the areas of mission, formation and structures. The text of the proposal was presented during the morning session of 28 October by Fr. Robert Joerger, President of the Commission. The first proposal determined that the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates will contribute 2% of their overall annual income from their administrations (Province/community) to the Solidarity Fund. The other proposal stated that all of these same administrations will contribute 7% of what they receive from the alienation of their real estate (buildings and land). The two proposals were approved respectively with 50 votes in favor of the first proposal and 49 votes and one abstention in favor of the second.).

2. THE STUDY OF THE PROPOSALS OR RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDED IN THE THIRD PART OF THE REPORT OF FR. GENERAL.

Some of the proposals contained in the report of the Superior General were presented for discussion and voting during the morning session of 29 October. Some were presented the previous day, but they were sent to the redaction committee to improve the text. In the aula some of these were approved whereas in other cases they spoke about the need to vote more on the content of these rather than on their formulation which needed more precision and clarity.

3) The Proposal was approved to the study the criteria that can lead to eventual clarification and to render operative, where necessary, the separation of the Vicariates from the mother province. Specifically, this is in reference to the financial situation and the funds needed for the life of the Vicariates themselves and also what is needed to make the separation possible on a juridical level in preparation for the General Chapter of 2012.
Vote: 49 voting. 49 in favor (affirmative)

4) **Proposal of the General Council regarding the legislative (decision-making) and executive power of the Configurations during this period prior to the General Chapter of 2012.**
The proposal as reported at No. 39 of the Report of the Superior General was reformulated following discussion the day before in the aula. Some areas of possible juridical confusion were eliminated and more generic terms were used, for example, "leader" or "president" in order to allow for more different possibilities and linguistic sensitivities. The proposal, that includes a delineated text, gives the Executive Committee of the Configurations, composed of the Major Superiors of the entities that comprise the Configuration, the power to plan and make decisions in the three areas of solidarity: formation, personnel and finances. The decisions made by the totality of the votes or by a majority of the votes, shall be binding for the Configuration. Everyone shall endeavor to collaborate in enacting the decisions that were made. If any difficulty arises an intervention may be requested from the Superior General and his Council.
Vote: Yes: 45; No: 2; Abstentions: 2

5) **Include a reference to the Laity in the Constitutions and in the Regulations.**
As it was presented the proposal was not accepted for different reasons: legal consequences in some countries; confusion and a lack of precision in the formulation; insufficient consideration of the laity.
The following proposal was then formulated: **In order to hear their opinion with regard to the inclusion of this reference to them in the Constitutions the General Council shall consult with the Congregation and with the laity (lay groups) who share our charism**. Vote: unanimously approved.

In order to eliminate any further doubt a second question was posed at the Synod: **Do we agree that a reference to the laity who share our spirituality should be included in the Constitutions?**
The Synod agreed unanimously.

6) **Recommendation to modify the particular legislation of the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates to eliminate any discrimination toward the lay religious Brothers. In fact, if the Regulations of the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates allow for the case in which the Provincial, Vice-Provincial or Regional Vicar, for whatever reason, leaves office and he is automatically replaced by the First Consultor, then any lay Brother may not be elected First Consultor. If this point of automatic succession of the First Consultor is removed from the legislation then a lay Brother may also be elected as First Consultor.**

Before voting on this recommendation, mention was again made about the importance of formation for religious Brothers. Secondly, mention was made about all the study that was done about their status in the Congregation and that we had repeatedly requested, together with other Congregations, that the Holy See no longer consider our Congregation to be "clerical". One of the reasons for this was to eliminate any discrimination toward the religious Brothers. In response, the Sacred Congregation stated that for now our Congregation is confirmed as "clerical". This recommendation seeks to eliminate any disparity toward the religious Brothers who, according to Canon Law, may not be elected either local Superiors or Provincials. Furthermore, according to particular legislation, which we can modify, we impede them from carrying out the ministry of First Consultor. This recommendation seeks to eliminate this impediment.
Vote on the Recommendation:
Yes: 46; No: 1; Abstentions: 3

7. RATIFICATION OF THE FORMATION OF THE CONFIGURATIONS.

This matter was submitted for voting at the beginning of the second morning session of 30 October.

The item for voting was formulated as follows:

Do we agree that the Configurations, as they are at this moment, together with the entities that compose them, continue their process of planning and working toward their objectives until the General Chapter of 2012?

Does this Synod agree with this?

50 voting; 50 in favor. Unanimously approved.

PARTICIPANTS
to the XIV GENERAL SYNOD

Members of the General Curia:

1. Ottaviano D'Egidio	Superior General
2. Denis Travers	I General Consultor
3. Clemente Barrón	General Consultor
4. Luis Alberto Cano	General Consultor
5. Luigi Vaninetti	General Consultor
6. Floriano De Fabiis	Procurator general
7. Ramiro Ruiz Betancourt	Secretary general
8. Battista Ramponi	General Econome
9. Jesús María Aristín	Secretary General for Solidarity and the Missions
10. José Agustín Orbegozo J.	Ex Superior General

Provincials, Vice-Provincials:

11. ASSUM:	Waldemar Linke
12. CALV:	Augusto Canali
13. CFIXI:	Leone Masnata
14. CONC:	Juan Rosasco
15. CORI:	Juan María Santamaría
16. CORM:	Giuseppe Martinelli
17. CRUC:	Donald Webber
18. DOL:	Enzo Del Brocco
19. FAM:	Fernando Rabanal Calle
20. FAT:	Laureano Alves Pereira
21. FID:	Antonio María Munduate
22. GABR:	Frans Damen
23. IOS:	John Sherrington
24. LAT:	Antonio Curto
25. MACOR:	Gabriel Pak
26.	*Laurence Finn (MACOR interpreter)*
27. MAIAP:	Isaia Kishi
28.	*Paul Matsumoto (MAIAP interpreter)*
29. MICH:	Guy Sionneau
30. PASS:	Julito Villarente
31. PATR:	Patrick Duffy
32. PAUL:	Robert Joerger
33. PIET:	Piergiorgio Bartoli

34. PRAES:	Fiorenzo Bordo
35. REG:	Francisco Valadez Ramírez
36. REPAC:	Sabinus Lohin
37.	Paolo Aureli *(REPAC interpreter)*
38. SALV:	Emery Kibal
39. SANG:	José María Sáez
40. SPE:	Leo Bos
41. SPIR:	Joachim Rego
42. VULN:	Gregor Lenzen

Regional Vicars:

43. CARLW:	Raphael Mangiti
44. RES:	Javier Areitioaurtena
45. THOM:	Antony Tharayil
46. VICT:	Luis Carlos Meneghetti
47. DOMIN:	Pedro Bacchiocchi
48. GEMM:	Aloysius John Nguma

Guests:

49. MATAF:	Antony Sikhalele Mdhluli
50. PAC:	Moisés Ríos
51. CPA:	Michael Ogweno (MATAF), Coordinator
52. SPIR:	Jefferies Foale, Superior: Viet Nam
53. SPIR:	Kevin Dance, UN Representative

Conference Presenter:	Aquilino Bocos Merino, CMF
Moderators:	Christine Anderson, FCJ Michael Mullins, SM
Secretary:	José Luis Quintero (SANG)
Assistant for secr. services:	Vital Otshudialokoka (SALV)
Secretarial assistants:	Anton Lässer (VULN) - Federica Franco
Editorial Commission:	Adolfo Lippi (PRAES) Alejandro Ferrari (CONC) Paul Francis Spencer (PATR)

Interpreters:

Spanish/Italian: Daniella Persia
English/Italian: Daniella Persia
Spanish/English: Arthur Carrillo (CRUC)
Italian/English: Patrick Rogers (PATR)
English/Spanish: Arthur Carrillo (CRUC)
Italian/ Spanish: Luis E. Bernal Acevedo (FID)

Translators:

Italian/ English: Joseph Barbieri (LAT)
Spanish/ English: Lawrence Rywalt (PAUL)

Spanish/ Italian: Massimo Parisi (DOL)
English/ Italian: Tarcisio Tagliabue (CORM)

English/ Spanish: Alejandro Ferrari (CONC)
Italian / Spanish: Fernando Piélagos (FAM)

Translator for the General Council: Robert Coward (CRUC)

Communications/internet:

Marco Pasquali (PIET) - **Coordinator**
Miguel Angel Villanueva (REG)
Massimo Granieri (LAT)

Logistics Commission:

Mirosław Lesiecki (ASSUM) - **Coordinator**
Battista Ramponi (CORM)
Vito Patera (LAT)
Miguel Angel Villanueva (REG)
Giuseppe Pugliese (CORM)

Liturgical Group:

Giovanni Cipriani and STIP Students - **Coordinator**
Vito Patera (LAT)
Orven Obispo Gonzaga (PASS)

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Horarium

07:00 Eucharist	15:30 Session
07:45 Breakfast	17.00 Break
09:00 Session	17:30 Session
10:30 Break	19:00 Conclusion of work
11:00 Session	19:30 Evening Prayer
12:30 Break	20:00 Supper
13:00 Dinner	