



CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST
47th GENERAL CHAPTER
Rome, 6-27 October 2018

Report of the CPA Configuration

I. DATA

The CPA configuration is composed of 4 young vice provinces that I outline here by giving some statistical elements.

Vice Province of Saint Charles Lwanga - Kenya = CARLW.

Number of religious: 60
Average age: 38yrs
Number of houses: Canonical: 5; Residence: 9
Students: Novices - 3; Professed - 24

Vice Province of Saint Gemma Galgani - Tanzania = GEMM.

Number of religious: 40
Average age: 46,2yrs
Number of houses: Canonical: 3; Residence: 3
Students: Novices - 5; Professed - 9

Vice Province of MATAF - Botswana, South Africa and Zambia.

Number of religious: 24
Average age: 33,4yrs
Number of houses: Canonical: 4; Residence: 5
Students: Novices: - 3; Professed - 8

Vice Province of SALV.

Number of religious: 52
Average age: 45
Number of houses: Canonical: 8; residence: 7
Students: Novices: 2; Professed: 7

II. ANALYSIS

The Configuration of CPA is still very young. It has only been two years that three juridical entities have been elevated to the rank of vice province, while the vice Province of Salv. has 14yrs.

The CPA Configuration

The Configuration of CPA is very appreciative towards God for having given the opportunity to our missionaries (Italians, Belgians and Irish) to make the African people participate in this noble charism of our Congregation as desired by our founder, Saint Paul of the Cross. We, as Africans, are proud to live the passionist charism and spirituality. We believe and are convinced that the African land is very rich and offers many assets to welcome the passionist life with its rich spirituality and charism. We are blessed to be a Configuration that has young strength and hope, even though we have our weaknesses.

ASSETS OR POTENTIALITIES

As I have already highlighted, our Configuration presents a very young personnel. Our average age is 39 years. We find among the youth, an enthusiasm to live the Passionist life and share the charism and spirituality with brothers and sisters around whom they are sent to give the good news.

Our African environments are favourable to live our specific vow of honouring the Passion of the Lord and to keep its memory by word and deed. For we find in our environment many men and women who live the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to whom the message of the cross may relieve immensely. In Africa, we find many of the crucified whom we speak of each time in our assemblies.

The African values such as: a high regard for life, a strong sense of community and family, solidarity, hospitality, the religious dimension implanted in the African culture... enable Africans to live the passionist charism and spirituality. Since these values are directed towards life, and the passion of Christ remains an indelible act of the love of God towards man, so that he has life in abundance. These African values make of us beings that are totally turned towards others for their welfare. Living the passionist charism and spirituality, is in a way, consequently assuming African values in their spiritual and religious dimensions. It is through our African values that we transmit to our brothers and sisters this infinite love of God and this life in abundance.

During the past six years, our Configuration has essentially leaned towards reinforcing our collaboration in the field of formation. We want to arrive at having a communal formation, following our general programme of formation in the Congregation and our formation policy in Africa.

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

The Configuration of CPA seeks to found the passionist life in an African tradition and live the passionist charism and spirituality in an African way. Our passionist missionaries, to whom we express our profound gratitude for their apostolic zeal, since they are the ones who brought us the good news of salvation in general and particularly the passionist life, have had several challenges to be

overcome. Their first preoccupation was to found local churches and structure them later on in dioceses with the native clergy.

Their first concern was not to implant the passionist life in Africans, even though they loved African people. They worked in parishes and schools and living in community in their parish houses. At their departure, we have to continue their work, at least where they exercised the ministry. The passionist tradition tells us that passionists live in community and in religious houses, and go out to preach the Word of God. Our first work therefore, is not the administration of a parish, but rather preaching. This will of continuing the work of our missionaries in parishes, did not favour the creation of initiatives proper to passionists. It is in the recent past that we have started having, for example, retreat houses.

Our survival or expenses: the missionaries have always been considered as extremely generous people who give a solution to any problem brought up by the faithful entrusted unto them. They exercised all trades: they were preachers, they were in schools, and they were nurses and farmers. In short, they did everything in their mission. At that time, nobody spoke of the faithful taking in charge the priests and religious. This change is now lived in the reverse; it is not and will never be easy. It has caused frustrations among native pastoral agents. With time, this current is being overtaken, but with a lot of struggles and slowness.

The socio-political situations of many of our African countries do not usually favour our growth, neither the fervour in works of development. During the past years, many of our African countries have fallen into an unstable political and economic atmosphere. It is in this context of conflict that we face great difficulties to take caution and convince our faithful to support us.

The diverse internal languages in our countries are more obvious than those at the level of the countries we are settled in. This reduces our missionary run-up and at times it delays our collaboration in personnel especially in our houses of formation. We try to awaken the conscience of our religious confreres for this missionary openness, and not to fear having to learn a new language. When the Configuration of CPA arrives at an effective collaboration in terms of personnel, it will become stronger and more credible.

These challenges which the Configuration of CPA is called to overcome have direct consequences in the daily life of each Vice Province. We desire to work together and strengthen our collaboration in all areas, but the economic factor often fails us and makes us vulnerable and unable. Examples that prove this are many.

At the level of collaboration with other Configurations, the Configuration of CPA, regardless of its weaknesses and gaps, is open and available to all initiatives coming from other configurations. It hesitates however to make the first step because of the wrong conception of Africa as a continent which only presents problems. We believe and are convinced that the Configuration of Africa is not only a configuration of problems, but it contains in its bosom certain potentialities that may contribute to the life of other parts of the Congregation.

The CPA Configuration

The Configuration of CPA lives in 6 different countries and depends on the political, economic and social growth of these countries. When international media speaks of African misery, we do not make an exception to this as a religious family. When the media speaks of the calamities which rage in Africa, it is not an exaggeration.

The Configuration of CPA has the desire and wish to grow in all levels and hence reach its autonomy in all sectors. But unfortunately, we cannot claim to reach there for the moment. Formation is the most demanding sector in the life of each vice province in Africa. The youth are still at our doors requesting entrance into the Congregation. Many present themselves and we ought to discern well and arrive at a good choice of candidates. We thank Father General and his Council for their extraordinary support in the sphere of formation. They are not expenses which any Vice Province of the Configuration of CPA can face without the help from the solidarity fund. We ask this chapter to incline in favour of the problems of survival faced by the Congregation in Africa. There are many other challenges which certain juridical entities of the Configuration of CPA cannot confront itself, for example all the problems of social security. There are countries where these are simply dead words. We are also relatively young, but we do not fall back, although in contrary we are advancing in age. What will be our future when we will no longer be able to hold on by ourselves?

I thank you for your kind attention.

On behalf of the Configuration,

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