

ADDRESSING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 22 TO 25 OCTOBER 2015

INTRODUCTION

My dear confreres, good morning everyone, a very warm welcome to all of you gathered here for this General Assembly. I am indeed delighted and feel good to be here with you and glad as well to become a part of this general assembly and fraternal get-together. Let me begin thanking God for His protection, grace and blessings upon each one of us. Thanking you as well for allowing us to come together as one family. Well, we all know that we are united here as a family to share our fraternal support and encouragement, the love and concern for each one, to listen to each other, to plan out the future looking into the horizons of our consecrated life and to share our viewpoints and suggestions on becoming a province. Above all, we get together to look into, beyond the plan of becoming a province, the shared vision for our province. It is an opportunity for all of us to seriously delve into the life and different dimensions of this province in the future, particularly in the areas of collaborative ministry and fraternity. We have been given sufficient time to reflect and share our views and ideas, comments and feedback, suggestions and proposals and each confrere and each community has made its own remarks and feedback in its report to the committee. I feel good and feel supported and encouraged fraternally by all the confreres of our vice province and I also would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your concern and commitment for this vice province. I would also like to express a special word of appreciation to all of you, very specially to our vice provincial counsellors, community superiors and confreres abroad for their efforts and commitments for the growth and well-being of this vice province. The efforts you have made to come here are a clear message to our confreres that we are important and that we appreciate the healing ministry we live out. Sincere appreciation to Fr. Vittorio and his counsellors and gratefully acknowledge their sustained support, spiritual guidance and timely intervention, love and concern, availability and generosity and above all, for making each one of us to grow to this stages of our lives. We feel his absence with us and we understand his current position and inability to come for the assembly but we appreciate his message. A special thanks to our superior general and the Consulta, particularly for Fr. Leocir Pessini for his inspiring message for this assembly. We are 53 perpetually professed religious and right now, only 36 are present in the assembly and we are sure that those who are absent would be with us spiritually with their prayers. A special thanks and hearty welcome to our missionaries abroad who made themselves available for this assembly, representing confreres working in abroad.

BACKDROP

Camillians arrived in India in 1980 when Fr. Antonio Crotti of the Lombardo Venetian (Italy) Province received the permission to begin vocation promotion and formation in the diocese of Mananthavady in Kerala. In the beginning Fr. Armando Tenuzzo and Fr. Tom Welu helped the formation. The first minor seminary at Mananthavady was inaugurated by the then Superior General Fr. Calisto Vendrame on October 25, 1984.

From 1986 onwards Fr. Ernesto Nidini was in charge of Indian mission. Since then, the Order has been growing and has opened many more houses both for formation and ministry in various parts of the country. In January 1997, Camillian Foundation in India became a Delegation, and on July 20, 2009 the Indian Delegation was erected into the status of Vice Province by the Superior General Fr. Renato Salvatore. Now we are ready to step into the other level of our growth as province. Other Superior Generals during this period of about 35 years are: Angelo Brusco, and Frank Monks. The provincial when we started in India was Fr. Giuseppe Bressanin (Senior), Fr. Gianni Matrignoni, Fr. Giuseppe Bressanin (Junior), Fr. Lino Tamanini and the present provincial.

We realize the fact that we are guided by the true spirit of our Founder, St. Camillus and we are in a special way protected by the divine presence and accompaniment of Mary, Queen of the Ministers of the Infirm. There are so many people and provinces who contributed generously their human and financial resources for the growth of our vice province. There have been many different provinces of our Order extending their support and encouragement and helping us grow by holding close to their hearts. We remember Austrian Province, very particularly Fr. Gregotsch for his constant guidance, financial contributions and accompaniment from our initial journey to this point of life, Taiwan (Far East Province earlier and now Philippine province and Taiwan delegation) Province and particularly Fr. Joseph Didone for his concern and generosity, Irish Province, German and Spanish provinces. We gratefully remember the remarkable services of the Benedictines Fathers, CMI fathers, Mananthavady and Bangalore dioceses, Bishops and priests, Norbertin fathers, Camillian sisters and other religious. A special and kind gesture of love and gratitude to our beloved formators, Fr. Geroqe Moolayil at Mount Mary College, Fr. George Padannamakkil CMI, Fr. Paulinose OSB, Fr. Calderaro, Fr. John Contarin, Albino Turcato, Rino Metrini and Fr. Jacob Nadayath, our spiritual father. A special thanks to Bro. Luca for his personal commitment to launch our healthcare ministry in India.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

It is a moment of grace and blessing, I strongly feel that we have been called and blessed by the Lord today to come together as one family in the Year of Consecrated Life. Now, coming to our vice province, it is also good to note the spiritual enhancement and nourishment that have taken place in our vice province and in a very particular way in the lives of our confreres. We feel a sound spiritual wellbeing in our communities and the earnest desire to be with the Lord and to get in touch with the spirit of St. Camillus. It gives a positive impression when we see our confreres being very much into their healing ministry with all their hearts, minds and bodies. I would just like to highlight the remarkable efforts and renowned commitments that our confreres, both in India and in abroad, are putting across in our ministry and formation, and I really want to acknowledge your selfless service to others who are sick and those in need. I do appreciate your genuine interest and motivation, your intense love for our charism and spirituality, your timely availability and generosity, your sense of mission and vision for our vice province. This sense of mission, enthusiasm and commitment enhance the quality of our consecration even in the midst of trials, challenges and in the moments of sadness. We have lost the physical presence of Fr. Shibin two years ago but we are happy now that he is in heaven to protect us and intercede for us. Biju Nannatt has left his consecration to Priesthood and that made us sad. We know that in everything God works for good with those who love and who are called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28). We are fortunate to have so committed and dedicated confreres who were ready and even willing to sacrifice their lives in the Ebola mission in Sierra Leone and in Iraq mission. A sincere appreciation to Bro. Madhu, Fr. Antony Kunnel and Fr. Sebastian Christi for your heroic witness of the merciful love of Christ and living out practically our Camillian fourth vow to witness even at the risk of ones' life

In the first general gathering of the present administration that held on 2nd February 2014, had a discussion about becoming a province and in view of which we have formed a committee and Fr. Babychan Pazhanilath as its chairman. The committee met together and circulated a set of questionnaires to be discussed in the community and personally as well. I express my sincere thanks to all the members of the committee and to you all for your comments, feedback and suggestions. However, the Chairman will be presenting the report, the actual summary of the points of the discussion that you sent to it. We will be presenting it in a detailed way. Therefore, in this assembly our main focus would be on the themes and the suggestions that are being proposed in the report and we also discuss on other matters concerned the life of the vice province in view of becoming a province.

In line with Fr. General's fraternal visit, his personal dialogue with the confreres and following the proceedings of the general gathering, held on 25th April 2015, I was asked to present the details of the vice province in the meeting of the major superiors, held from 18th to 24th May 2015 in Poland. I did the presentation along with Fr. Vittorio and also proposed a date of becoming a province on 2nd February 2016. Now we get united to discuss together about it and to have enough time to reflect upon the proposals of the Confreres. I am pretty sure that we are in the process of becoming a province, Fr. General and General Consulta, Fr. Vittorio and his council, all other provincials and delegates are in favour of making our vice province an autonomous entity, a province by evaluating the life of the vice province in terms of its physical structures, confreres and their spiritual life, communities and community life, ministry and mission, financial administration and practically the date of the declaration of the province is also suitably finalized on 2nd February 2016. When we come together as one unit guided by the Holy Spirit and inspired by the model of St. Camillus, our focus should be on the themes that are presented here and more importantly, in this general assembly, our focus should be on our shared vision for this province after becoming a province. Knowing the fact that it is not the work of the administration alone but rather, it should be the mind, thinking and feeling of this assembly that would be the vision, the program, the project and life of the province in the future. Therefore I strongly recommend all of you to put across your heart and mind, thoughts and feelings, suggestions and proposals in view of having a solid foundation and a shared vision of our province.

Consecrated life (the Camillians in particular) has been threatened by the situation of the loss of its core values and meaning, fragmented approaches and programs of the ministry and the lack of passion and creativity in living our charism (Camillian Project 2013). Our focus is to start afresh in our witnessing to the merciful Christ by subjecting our commitment to a critical and authentic discernment towards revitalization and reorganization of the Order. Our focus should be to develop a shared vision. Camillian vision 2025- practical lines of pastoral action plan for the province. This would be: Revitalization-

- ✓ To broaden the horizons of the actuation of the Camillian charism by integrating the approach of care with the great challenges of the world of health such as prevention and promotion of public health. Engage in healthcare programs which empowers and builds capacities of the most vulnerable who don't have access to health care services. Conference of the Grand Camillian Family healthcare professional

- ✓ To launch a common project n formation and research in the field pastoral healthcare and revitalizing the chaplaincy. Coordination of all the Camillian centres for humanization and pastoral care of health. Meeting of pastoral healthcare centre directors and hospital chaplain conference.
- ✓ To appraise our communion with the local Church and collaboration with lay people and coordinate our ministry with the needs and pastoral plans of the Church. Strengthening our presence in the local Church.
- ✓ To foster a change of mentality towards international/provincial cooperation and change our perspective which means the Order should be lived as a body, a single organism, even though it is multiform and diversified, which finds renewed efficacy in the harmony of different forms of cooperation.

Looking back to the years and months passed, I feel loved and encouraged and I did always enjoy your fraternal support and encouragement, strengthened and motivated by your positive and negative feedback and genuine criticism. Before I delve into the life events of the vice province, I would like to present you the current status of the vice province.

ABOUT THE VICE PROVINCE

Communities

Number of Communities: 10

Number of Residence: 01

Religious in the vice province: 56

Religious Priests: 50

Religious Brother: 01

Perpetually professed: 02

Temporary professed: 03

Candidates under Formation

Pre-Novices: 01

Regents: 05

Philosophy Students: 28

Aspirants 75

Religious: Working and studying in abroad (19 Religious)

Religious in the Italian Province: 05 (4 working and 1 studying)

Religious in Austria: 03 (3 working)

Religious in Ireland: 07 (7 working)

Religious in USA delegation: 01 (1 working/studying)

Religious in Uganda: 03 (missionaries)

1. Secretariats for the Vice Province

- ✓ Secretary for Spiritual and Community Life
- ✓ Secretary for Formation
- ✓ Secretary for Ministry
- ✓ Secretary for Finance and Mission

2. Commissions

- ✓ Commission for Finance (Economic Commission)
- ✓ Commission for Health and Development
- ✓ Commission for Fund Raising Program
- ✓ Commission for Construction and Maintenance
- ✓ Commission for CTF

3. Publication and Communication

- ✓ **VARTHA-** Official News Bulletin of the Vice Province
- ✓ **VITA CAMILLIANS INDIA-** The Official publication of the Life Events of the Vice Province
- ✓ **CAMILLIAN UPDATES- P.R.O.,** Official information on the day to day life and activities of the Confreres and the Vice Province
- ✓ Websites: www.camilliansindia.org,
www.snehacharitabletrust.org

PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

The whole area of spirituality is very closely bound up with the question of identity. Our spirituality is none other than how we live and exercise our charism. It is the basis of our religious consecration. The fundamental aspects of our Camillian spirituality is our personal experience of God in our daily life and these aspects are being highlighted in the message of our superior general. We have, in all our communities, Eucharistic celebration, and meditation on the Word of God, daily morning and evening prayers, Camillian community prayers or praying with Constitution at noon time, week day holy adoration, regular monthly recollection and other spiritual exercises to nourish and sustain our spiritual and prayer life. It is also good to highlight the spiritual activities of our confreres in the parishes, in other religious communities and in the

retreat centres and I would like to appreciate you for having such an intense passion for Christ as St Camillus had and making yourselves available to the spiritual needs of the community inside and outside as well. A sense of prayer and a spirit of prayer are very much seen in the lives of our confreres. At the same time, I have also observed that in certain communities, there is a need to have regular community prayers and other spiritual exercises like daily rosary and monthly recollection. Secondly, I feel the need of having a spiritual guide for all the confreres in the community. Some of you have already your spiritual guide and many others do not have and it is good to have a spiritual guide for all of us in our religious consecrated life. Thirdly, for the ministry communities, it is the responsibility of the superiors to facilitate the spiritual and prayer exercises of the community and to re-organize the prayer schedule according to the nature of ministry involvements and community activities.

COMMUNITY AND FRATERNAL LIFE

The community life is the essence of consecrated life. Fraternal life in the community is, in fact, the divine grace of God and it is true that we experience the real presence and grace of God, only in our fraternal brotherhood. Living fraternity by caressing conflicts. It is true, at times we are cruel. We experience the common temptation to criticize for personal satisfaction or to obtain a personal advantage. It is positively observed that we live our fraternity always valuing and evaluating the importance and significance of our religious consecration and commitment. It is true that we have lots of responsibilities in our communities and we have only a few members in our communities. Sometimes, we give more importance to work/ministry and we might have tendencies/temptations to compromise our spiritual exercises like community prayer, mass, meditation, adoration, personal prayers, confessions and such spiritual exercises. Neglecting spiritual exercises may gradually result in spiritual dryness and we may remain mere social healthcare workers than religious persons who are called to follow Jesus in a more intimate manner. Well, I have a few observations in this regard; first of all, we have a positive high regard for our religious and we genuinely appreciate and acknowledge the efforts and hard work of the members of the community. Sometimes it is subtle that it endangers the communitarian dimensions of religious life; individuals and their involvements become primary than that of the religious community. Here we may have to humbly look inwardly to see what needs we are trying to meet and whose needs are we trying to meet. Let us put effort to understand that ministry is the source of our collective identity as Camillians, and hence, not to give it personal / individual overtone. In this line we also may have to consider the fact that our identity is not that of a social worker, but that of a Camillian religious. Secondly, we have good rapport and

healthy personal relationship among the confreres in the vice province and very easily communicate each other the different events and programs of the communities. Thirdly, there is a need to have our presence in the communities that is, there should be someone, be it in the ministry centre or in the formation community, to take care and facilitate the daily events of the community. Fourthly, the involvements of the lay people, the professionals, health care workers, family members and friends in the administration and in the daily events of the community and very precisely in the administrative activities of our social centres are to be well disciplined, strictly monitored and periodically evaluated. We value them in terms of quality of care and their professional competence. Thus, it is highly recommended to have and to promote only professional relationship with our staff or professionals.

VOCATION PROMOTION, FORMATION AND ON GOING FORMATION

Thank you for the work you do as formators and vocation promoters. You are all very close to our heart and to the heart of this vice province as our future is, to a certain extent, in your hands. Our most precious gift, the new vocations, is in your keeping. You are preparing our tomorrow. It is a daunting task, a challenging task, but it is also a beautiful task as it affords you an opportunity to do so much good as you seek to pass on the spirit of our Founder to eager young minds.

1. Animation and Vocation Promotion

- ✓ St. Camillus Kerala Zone Vocation Promotion Centre at Aluva
- ✓ St. Camillus Tamil Nadu Zone Vocation Promotion Centre at Trichy
- ✓ St. Camillus Karnataka Zone Vocation Promotion Centre at Mangalore
- ✓ St. Camillus Andhra Zone Vocation Promotion Centre at Eluru
- ✓ St. Camillus North Zone Vocation Promotion Centre at Nagpur
- ✓ National Vocation Promoter (Full-time ministry)

2. Formation Communities

- ✓ St. Camillus Minor Seminary at Mananthavady
- ✓ St. Camillus Minor Seminary at Trichy
- ✓ St. Camillus Minor Seminary at Nagpur
- ✓ St. Camillus Philosophate at Eluru
- ✓ St. Camillus Novitiate at Bengaluru
- ✓ St. Camillus Theologate at Bengaluru

It was encouraging to hear that some of you give great attention to vocation promotion. It is the duty of all the religious to promote vocations and to facilitate the discernment process of the true religious vocation. This year we have zone wise vocation promotion and each zone has a coordinator and also a team consists of a few members to make it more effective and active way of promoting vocations. We feel and think that these coordinators are really getting into it with the help of other group members. I do really appreciate these coordinators for their availability for promoting more vocations to our Order. In this regard, I am pretty sure that our full time vocation promoter would be able to coordinate the vocation promotion activities of the vice province under the secretariat of Formation.

We feel proud to have solid formation programs for our candidates and for religious. We have a couple of trained formators with us and we appreciate your availability and generosity in guiding our young brothers in their personal formation. You accompany them in their journey in making proper discernment of their religious call and create enough space for the development of their personality and other social skills.

MISSION

We are indeed blessed with a charism that is very alive in every moment of our life that is to witness to the merciful love of Jesus and to proclaim the Gospel to the people around.

We have 19 confreres living abroad (Italy 5, four working and one for work and study, Austria 3, three are working, Ireland 7 and all are working, USA 1 and studying CPE, Uganda 3, all are missionaries helping the Irish Province). We feel proud to have such committed confreres who are working in abroad in the hospitals as chaplains and in the parish. Indeed they are very much part of us and we do value their fraternal support and encouragement and gratefully acknowledge their financial contribution to the vice province.

MINISTRY

Our main focus is the ministry activities and we are known by our healing ministries as Camillians.

MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

1. Pastoral Health Care Ministry and Hospital Chaplaincy

- ✓ Hospital Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care Service at St. Philomena's Hospital, Bengaluru

- ✓ Pastoral Health Care assistance at St. Vincent Hospital, Mananthavady and at Government Hospital, Mananthavady
- ✓ Pastoral Care and Counselling at St. Martin Hospital, Ambalavayal

2. Health and Community Centres for the HIV/AIDS

- ✓ Social and Rehabilitation centres for HIV/AIDS at Snehadaan, in Bengaluru, at Snehasadan in Mangalore, at Snehakiran in Hyderabad and at Snehatheeram in Aluva
- ✓ School for the HIV Infected Children- Sneha Care Home at Bengaluru
- ✓ Vocational Training, Skill Development Centre and Rehabilitation for the HIV Adolescent Children at Snehagram in Krishnagiri
- ✓ St. Camillus Out-Reach Care and Ambulance Services at Snehatheeram in Aluva

3. Health Care Centre for mentally and physically challenged

- ✓ Social and Rehabilitation centre for Mentally and Physically Challenged Children at St. Camillus Home at Yellampet, Hyderabad (to be launched soon)

4. Social and Community Centres

- ✓ Pain and Palliative Care centre in Snehadaan, Bengaluru
- ✓ Social Centre for the Elderly and Destitute at Snehatheeram and at Snehasadan
- ✓ San Camillio Counselling Centre at Upasana, Bengaluru

5. Social and Pastoral Health Animation

- ✓ Camillian Pastoral Health Centre at Bengaluru
- ✓ Training of Health Care Personnel at CPHC, Bengaluru
- ✓ Animation of Health Care Ministry of the Church in Karnataka
- ✓ Save a Family projects
- ✓ Animation of nurse's gild in the Archdiocese of Bengaluru

6. Camillian Task Force

- ✓ Commission for CTF
- ✓ Medical Relief Camps
- ✓ Rehabilitation
- ✓ CTF Volunteers

- ✓ Training on Disaster management
- ✓ Network and Collaboration with CRS and CARITAS

7. Health Ministry in the Local Church

- ✓ Secretary to the Health Commission and ecclesiastical advisor of the Nursing Guild of the Archdiocese of Bengaluru
- ✓ Secretary to the Health Commission of CBCI
- ✓ Save a Family Project board member, Kerala

8. Fund Raising Program

9. OVC Coordinator

10. Health Promoting Initiatives

- ✓ Life-drops which is a blood donating movement
- ✓ Nama-St. Camillus Outreach program
- ✓ Life-Beats: An Organ donation movement
- ✓ CTF activities

I have also a few observations regarding our ministry involvements and activities. First of all, I would say that we are putting across our maximum efforts to make them run in a better way through active fund raising and local donations. I do really want to appreciate all the directors and administrators of our ministry centres for your hard work, availability and commitments to our vice province. Secondly, I would like to highlight the positive energy and the new initiatives that have been taken place in all our ministry centres. Thirdly, it is interesting to note that being aware of the financial difficulty and financial sustainability; you are doing and getting involved with new ministry activities.

Finance and Administration

We have been registered as Society and Trust and our ministry initiatives are running under the banner of Sneha Charitable Trust. Our ministry centres are mostly run by the project funds, generous people, good benefactors, well-wishers and local fund raising programs. We have also our own confreres working inside and outside of India and I gratefully acknowledge their commitments and services to our province and in a special way I would like to highlight, with great acknowledgement and appreciation for the remarkable service of our confreres who work abroad.

A special word of appreciation to our fund raising team for organizing fund raising programs to sustain our social and rehabilitation centres. Fr. Bijoy, the vice provincial Bursar will do the presentation about the current financial scenario of our vice province, the projects that we undertake today, the project proposal that have been submitted to the different agencies, salaries and incomes, the details of the administration of fixed assets and land, legal issues of our land, future financial plans and the trial balance of our society and Sneha Charitable Trust.

Conclusion

In these concluding words I would like to share with you some of my thoughts and impressions based on your own reflections and decisions on the themes of the Assembly. The experience of sharing and reflecting during these days form part of the effort that both our vice province and the entire Order of the Ministers of the Infirm have been making, for re-vitalizing and renewing the quality of our presence and pastoral service in the important areas of Consecrated mission. At the same time there are certain areas that need to be looked into in order to ensure Camillian quality. Therefore, our main focus of this assembly would be to develop the Camillian vision 2025 and to arrive at relevant lines of action for the Province. Besides formulating the *Camillian Vision 2025*, practical lines of action to translate this vision into concrete steps need to be taken at the level of Province, communities and individual institutions.. Secondly, the need to strengthen the existing collaboration with other provinces, congregations and promote further collaboration in order to enhance the collaborative ministry. Thirdly, the need to form lay people capable of sharing our vision and commitment- Lay Camillian Family. Collaboration and involvement of as many as possible, within our works and with other groups and institutions in the locality. Fourthly, the need to foster a sense of fraternity among us and the readiness to enhance the quality of our fraternal living.

By putting mankind together, we shall transform society; by liberating and educating, we shall advance the Reign of God in history. This is the great hope that guides and encourages, to face the challenges that today's situation presents us. Only people with great hope in their hearts can be true religious. Only they can awaken in the hearts of others, especially those whom society excludes as the least in the society. We shall not be short of difficulties. But I am confident that we can face them with the courage and faith of St. Camillus. All together, we can journey along, slowly but surely, in the service of healthcare world by offering quality Camillian Presence that the sick expect and deserve and Indian society asks for. This Assembly offers us an opportunity for reawakening, re-vitalizing and re-launching.

Our present situation gives us a wonderful opportunity for personal conversion and renewal as we explore and implement new pastoral plans and approaches. This journey of faith that we are called to make is not one that we make alone. We find hope in the words of Jesus: *I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.* (Matthew 28:20). The mission is His. We share in His mission. Put out into the deep! These words ring out for us today, and they invite us to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8). I conclude wishing the participants in the assembly every success, fraternal dialogue and interactions, sharing of experiences and vision, with the blessing of God, with the spirit of St. Camillus and Mary, Queen of the Ministers of the Infirm. May the good Lord continue to imbue each one of us with that love for the sick which burned so intensely in the heart of St. Camillus.

Fraternally

Fr. Baby Ellickal MI

Vicar Provincial – India.

22nd October 2015