
**MESSAGE of the SUPERIOR GENERAL
to the CAMILLIAN DELEGATION of CHILE**

**SAN BERNARDO - CHILE
14- 15 January 2016**

‘Similarly, the apostolic effectiveness of consecrated life does not depend on the efficiency of its methods. It depends on the eloquence of your lives, lives which radiate the joy and beauty of living the Gospel and following Christ to the full’

‘That the old saying will always be true: “Where there are religious, there is joy”. We are called to know and show that God is able to fill our hearts to the brim with happiness; that we need not seek our happiness elsewhere’

Pope Francis, *Apostolic Letter to all Consecrated People*

Rev. Fr. Eligio Castaldo MI

Delegate of the Camillian Delegation of Chile,
the Province of Rome

**Dear Fr. Pietro Magliozzi MI, Fr. Paul Ceron MI;
religious brother Basil Friederich Darker Gaete**

Dear religious brothers,
Health and peace in the Lord of our lives!

In recent years I have experienced various important moments with you, amongst which, as Provincial Superior, the beginning of the partnership of the Camillian Province of Brazil with the Delegation of Chile/the Province of Rome. The Province of Brazil worked with you through the activity of a Camillian religious, Carlos P. Toselli, who was in this mission for about seven years, and then through the presence of Fr. Renato Prado de Faria who spent a year and a half here. As Superior General of the Order, this is the second time that I have visited this mission. The first visit was of a more informal nature (it took place on 6-8 August 2014). This time my fraternal visit had a more pastoral and canonical character, concentrated almost completely around 14 January 2016, the day when there was the meeting with the Delegation, individual dialogue, the celebration of the Eucharist in the Parish of St. Camillus, and the visit of the local bishop of the diocese of San Bernardo, Msgr. Juan Ignacio González Errázuriz, who demonstrated great appreciation for the work that has been done by the Camillians.

During the meeting with the delegates and through the individual conversations that were held, I had an opportunity to present the priorities that the government of the Order gave itself for the six-year period 2014-2020 in the context of the Camillian Project for the revitalisation of consecrated life, which was approved at the last Extraordinary General Chapter of June 2014 (held in Ariccia/Roma): a. economics – the reorganisation of the economic side of things starting with the generalate house; b. formation and the promotion of vocations – our hope for a future existence; c. communication – without this one cannot construct a community that lives in fraternity and in communion.

In historical terms we are going through an ecclesial moment which is rich in extraordinary opportunities for spiritual and pastoral growth, to be lived as a ‘surprise of the Spirit’. For the first time in history we have a Pope from Latin America, Francis, an acknowledged world leader both in Catholicism and in other religions, who with courage defends the dignity of existence and being, in

particular of the humblest of the earth (the poor, the sick, refugees, the victims of violence, etc.).

We celebrated the Year of Consecrated Life (2015) and now we are celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy (2016).

During the Year of Consecrated Life we worked employing a historical approach to our religious existence, looking at the past with an attitude of gratitude; living the present with compassion and as Camillians serving the last with Samaritan compassion; and embracing the future with hope.

In following this historical paradigm, I take advantage of this message to remember the people who made the history of the Roman Camillian mission in Chile. Knowing the history of this initiative enriches our religious reality. Remembering history is also a service that we offer to our religious brothers who do not know about this reality in such a way as to feel in spiritual communion with you.

Members of a family appreciate each other, love each other, care for each other and naturally communicate with each other; they share challenges and the hopes of life. Normal people only communicate with people that they appreciate, love and respect! For we consecrated men, things should not be otherwise... however...

Chile is one of the most developed countries in Latin America, It has a population of 17.5 million people (2012) and the official language is Spanish. 5,951,554 inhabitants live in the capital – Santiago. This countries extends from the cordillera of the Andes to the Pacific Ocean. When looking at it on a geographical map one realises that it is a large strip of land, with a maximum width of 176km, and a length of over 4,300km. The majority of the population is Christian (87.5%) and Catholics make up 67% of the population

A Brief Look at the Past

The Camillian presence in Chile began in the eighteenth century. We had in this country a small group of religious who were called by everyone the ‘brothers of the good death’. The figure of Br. Camilo Henriquez Gonzales (1769-1825) stands out in that historical period. Camillo Henriquez, who was known by everyone as a ‘brother of the good death’, studied in Lima, in Peru, in our religious house of the Buoenamuerte, and he was one of the leaders of the movement for the independence of Chile. He also lived in Ecuador and in Argentina. He is seen as one of the fathers of Chile and also as the father of Chilean journalism. Indeed, he was the founder of the review *Aurora de Chile*. Together with him there were two other Chileans who studied in Lima in the same religious house: Brother Nicasio Gonzales and Brother Antonio Herrera Gomez. Camillians from the Province of Spain arrived from Argentina in the years 1920-1940.

Today in Chile we can say that we have all the representatives of the great family of St. Camillus. Indeed, we also find in this country women Ministers of the Sick who began their activities in 1996, and Daughters of St. Camillus who arrived in the year 2000.

The current Camillian mission in Chile this year celebrated the eleventh anniversary of its activity. The first Camillianst to arrive during the contemporary epoch were Fr. Eligio Castaldo, who after 32 years as a missionary in Africa (in Nurkina Faso) decided to begin a new challenge in Latin America and thus arrived in Santiago on 5 January 2005, and Fr. Pietro Magliozzi, who joined him on 12 February 2005.

Recently we had the joy of having the first Chilean Camillian religious: Pablo Ceron Urrutia. In the year 2014 I had the privilege as Superior General of receiving his perpetual religious profession. Fr. Pablo was ordained a priest on 31 October 2015. Today the Delegation also has the presence of a religious who has made his temporary vows, Basil, a medical student who completed his second

year of theology in 2015, and of a young postulant who at the present time is engaging in experience of community life: Jairo.

One breathes in a positive atmosphere which is nourished by the hope of being able to grow at a vocational level. Without new vocations it will be difficult for us to think of a future. One thus understands the importance of organising a methodical and continuous work which is well integrated into the ecclesial context. This is one of the priorities of the Order at this historical moment, as I have already observed.

The Present – Camillian Ministry

The Camillians with their community constitute a small – but not for this reason unimportant – presence in this country of Latin America: Nuestra Señora de la Salud which has Fr. Pedro as its Superior, Fr. Pablo as its financial administrator, and Fr. Eligio as the parish priest of the Parish of St. Camillus.

Fr. Pietro coordinates pastoral care in health on behalf of the Chilean Bishops' Conference and is also a lecturer in medical anthropology at the Catholic University of Chile. Given that he is a medical doctor, he recently also became a chaplain at the Parish Hospital of San Bernardo which belongs to the diocese of San Bernardo, a centre that is near to our community

What Future for the Camillian Presence in this Country?

Fr. Eligio, a missionary with a great deal of experience, on one occasion quoted a popular saying which is very well known in Latin America and which says: 'Traveller, a journey does not exist. The journey is made journeying!' So then, let us journey with courage, happiness and hope!

However, we cannot forget the anxieties about the future because of the relatively low number of religious. On various occasions I was with you, exchanging views about certain dynamics of community life, and often reference was made to the closure of the Delegation and the wish to return to Italy. During the visit, paying great attention to the conversations that were held, I never heard anyone speak about our Camillian presence in Chile. Fortunately, the first Chilean Camillian arrived to bring new air, a new life and a new prospect of continuity, presence and future existence.

During the visit we spoke about the Camillian geography of the Americas. I would like to observe that the Camillian Project for the revitalisation of consecrated life as it presently exists emphasises the need to reorganise our forces in the places where we are present. I warn you: on our own, isolated, we have no future. We must construct together a new network, we must be like communicating vases, to provide more nearness, encounter, help and mutual economic sustainability. There are already some positive signs of cooperation in the sector of formation, for example: Chilean novices who attend the novitiate in Lima, with the cooperation of the Vice-Province of Peru. Major Superiors responsible for the various areas of our presence in Latin America regularly meet and discuss problematic questions.

You have received expressions of mutual assistance and the provisions of human resources from the Camillian religious of the Province of Brazil (Fr. Toselli and Fr. Renato) and from the Vice-Province of Peru (Fr. Enrique). This experience, with its lights and shadows, is a positive fact even though it gives rise to internal conflicts caused by different cultural identities and personal idiosyncrasies. We are faced with the challenge of inculturation and evangelisation which was so dear to Pope Paul VI and which he expressed immediately after the Second Vatican Council in his

famous encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* returns to this subject, laying emphasis on the importance of cultural challenges (nn. 61-67), the challenges of the inculturation of the faith (nn. 68-70), and the challenges of urban culture (nn. 71-75).

We must ask ourselves honestly: what have we learnt from this experience? The future of consecrated life, we are reminded by the theologians of this area, will require a greater openness on our part and respect for different realities and cultures. This is what unity is. The much dreamed of membership of mission is never the outcome of uniformity, as it was in the past. It is the result, instead, of the respectful coexistence of different religions and cultures.

Such is the challenge: to be Camillians with a capital 'C', before absolutising different cultural aspects (I am Bolivian, Chilean and Colombian). We are faced with a constant challenge. Let us use our knowledge, our wisdom, with humility; let us cultivate a dialogue based upon respect.

I will end this message with an expression of gratitude for the warm welcome that you always displayed towards me. I thank you in the name of the whole of the Order for the good that you have done, and continue to do, in the field of our Camillian ministry in the context of health and health care, in society, and in the ecclesial world.

May St. Camillus our Founder and Mary, the Mother of Health, protect you in good, in truth, in joy and in hope!

Fraternally,

Medellín, Colombia, 18 January 2016

Fr. Leocir Pessini
Superior General of the Camillians