

## Message of the Superior General to the Camillian Community from Burkina Faso in Florence

1-2 April 2016

‘Brothers, even if a person is caught in some transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a gentle spirit, looking to yourself, so that you also may not be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ’ (Gal 6:1-2).

‘A fertile journey to be travelled in the exercise of contemplation is what calls us to nearness. It is the journey of encounter where faces look for each other and find each other. Every human face is unique and never to be repeated. The extraordinary diversity of faces makes us easily recognisable in the complex social contexts in which we live and fosters and facilitates the recognition and the discovery of the other’ (*Contemplate*, n. 58)

***Dearest Fr. Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo and esteemed religious brothers Fr. Pascal Béré, Fr. K. Jean Dieudonné Bei, Fr. Bernard Marie Yaméogo, Fr. Emmanuel Zongo and Fr. Pascal Kaboré of the community of Florence,***

With joy I was able to visit and meet your community at the beginning of this month of April in the company of the Vicar General, Fr. Laurent Zoungrana. We thank you for your welcome and your fraternity.

With you we had a community meeting and individual conversations which enabled us to know who you are and what type of ministry you are providing in Florence. Together we celebrated a suffrage Holy Mass for the father of Fr. Bei – Mr. Ambroise – and for Br. Giovanni Grigoletto who has been a missionary in Burkina Faso for about thirty years. The Holy Mass witnessed the participation of some religious brothers of ours who are priests (amongst whom Fr. Umberto Ruffino, the last *Roman* Camillian in Florence who attends to the *Confraternity of Mercy* of Florence, the oldest of the ‘Mercies’ which goes back to the year 1244) and of two sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Together we shared meals, amongst which a lunch which had a ‘touch of Burkina Faso’.

The buildings of your community are located in the heart of Florence, the world capital of art and crafts, a few steps away from the Duomo. The rectory of the Church of *Santa Maria Maggiore*, which is entrusted to you, forms a part of your home. For almost 200 years (since 1817) the Camillians have looked after and animated this historic church where you have lived for only three years and which is visited by very many tourists, visitors to the city. Being a rectory, your ministry in this church is principally the service of the Eucharist and confession.

You are active in two hospitals: the *St. John of God* Hospital of Torregalli, a general hospital with over thirty beds, and a smaller hospital, the *Santa Maria Nuova* Hospital (one of the oldest hospitals that exists) which was founded in 1288 by the father of *Beatrix*, the woman who was so loved by that great poet *Dante*. This is the only hospital that is presently located in the historic centre of Florence. We were not able to visit these places of ministry but we are convinced of the good that you are doing there. In addition to ministry, one of you is studying at the agrarian faculty of Florence.

With you we talked about the priorities of the Order (economics, the animation of vocation and formation, and communication) and the stimuli offered by the Year of Consecrated Life when Pope Francis invited us to look to the past with gratitude, to the future with hope and to live the present with passion, which becomes for Camillians Samaritan compassion.

We also touched upon the subject of the Year of Grace that we are currently living through: the Jubilee of Mercy which Pope Francis gave to us. We spoke to you about these elements so that you could become aware of their importance, reflecting on them and seeking to give practical expression to them in your Camillian consecrated lives.

We greatly appreciated the talk given by Father Emilio Blasi, the Provincial Superior of the Camillian Province of Rome, which had the task of helping you to address the challenges that are to be found in your common life and your ministry.

Thanking you for your fraternal welcome, we recommend a clear organisation of your roles and tasks, as well as frequent and fraternal communication with each other, through the organisation of meetings to assess your lives and ministry. The *youth* of your community and of each one of you will lead you to formulate these recommendations for your life together.

We hope that the Vice-Provincial Superior of Burkina Faso will be able to visit you and meet you frequently in order to address together with you challenges that are certainly not absent and to encourage you in your mission.

May the Virgin Mary – the Mother of Divine Mercy – and St. Camillus intercede for you so that you may live your lives, your ministry and your studies in serenity and joy!

*Rome 3 April 2016*  
*Sunday of Divine Mercy*

**Fr. Leocir PESSINI**  
*Superior General*

**Fr. Laurent ZOUNGRANA**  
*Vicar General*