

MESSAGE of the SUPERIOR GENERAL
To the CAMILLIAN PROVINCE of BRAZIL
Fraternal, Pastoral and Canonical Visit

2-24 May 2016

‘By the promotion of health, the treatment of disease and the relief of pain, we cooperate in the work of God the creator, we glorify God in the human body and express our faith in the resurrection. In relieving and comforting the sick we pay attention to their psychological condition, and to their family and social problems’.

(Constitution, n. 45).

‘You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things’...look to the past with gratitude...live the present with passion... embrace the future with hope’.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter to all Consecrated People on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life

‘All Camillian institutions should strive to achieve efficacy, transparency and witness to the Camillian charism. In every form of cooperation that is established... assure that the mission, the identity, the religious teachings and the ethical guidelines of the Catholic Church are respected (art. 73). The *Charter of Principles* of Brazilian Camillian institutions, as well as the *Magna Carta* of the Order for socio/health-care works, are the framework of reference for the values of all of our activity in the world of health’.

Provincial General Statutes of the Camillian Province of Brazil, n. 77.

M. Rev. Fr. Antonio Mendes Freitas, Provincial Superior of the Camillian Province of Brazil
Religious brothers of ours of the Provincial Council,

Dear Religious Brothers in Camillian life, health and peace!

Moved by the boldness and the spiritual charism of Pope Francis, who has invited us to engage in a ‘personal exodus’ in order to ‘go out and meet other people’, the members of the general government of the Order have been present amongst the Camillians of Brazil. After twenty days of fraternal presence amongst you, principally visiting the Camillian communities and also some works of yours, from the North to the South of this great country which is the size of a continent, on the occasion of our canonical visit, as is customary in the tradition of our Order we will end this mission with a message.

This (pastoral and canonical) fraternal visit was carefully planned, with the involvement of both the Province of Brazil and the general government of the Order. The details were agreed upon in good time and carefully with the date of the visit being fixed for 2-24 May 2016. The Superior General had already (twice) visited the two Delegations of the Province of Brazil: the Camillian community in Bolivia in Santa Cruz della Sierra (on two occasions: 1-4 August 2014 and 11-13 January 2016), and the Camillian community of the United States of America in Milwaukee (7-15 June 2015).

1. How the visit to meet our religious brothers of Brazil was planned

The visit was opened officially on 2 May, in the afternoon, at the *St. Pius X* community for formation in Granja Viana, Cotia (SP), with a meeting of the members of the general government of the Order with the Superior and the Council of the Camillian Province of Brazil. Fr. Antonio Mendes Freitas, the Provincial Superior, welcomed the visitors and then offered an overall survey of the current situation of this religious Province (religious, communities, areas of ministry) and the various civil institutions that are connected with it.

It is important to observe a singular feature of the Camillian Province of Brazil. The current Superior General of the Order, Fr. Leocir Pessini – the undersigned – is a *son* of this Province and has a very good knowledge of its realities, having been a Provincial councillor for fifteen years and then Provincial Superior of the Province. For the second time in the history of the Order, the Camillian Province of Brazil has offered to the general government a Superior General from Brazil. The first was our unforgettable Fr. Calisto Vendrame (1977-1989).

To engage in this pastoral visit to the Camillians of Brazil, taking into account the fact that the country is the size of a continent and also bearing in mind the geographical position of the remotest regions of the country, the Father General was joined by three members of the General Consulta: Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla, the member of the General Consultor responsible for missions and the general financial administrator of the Order; Fr. Aris Miranda, the member of the General Consulta responsible for Camillian ministry (*CADIS*, pastoral care in health, parishes, education and care-providing projects, chaplaincies, etc.); and Fr. Gianfranco Lunardon, the member of the General Consulta responsible for the general secretariat of the Order.

To complete the visit, Fr. Leocir and Br. Ignacio – who on this occasion met the communities of the Centre-South of Brazil – will visit the Camillian communities in the North, the North-East and the East of the country on 11-23 July 2016: the Superior General has the constitutional duty and responsibility to meet all the religious of the Order, without any exclusions.

Fr. Gianfranco Lunardon and Fr. Aris Miranda visited the Camillian communities that live in the Centre, the North and the North-East of Brazil: Brasilia (DF) (3-4 May); Macapa (AP) (5-8 May); Fortaleza (CE) and its three communities *Cura D’Ars*, *S. Maria Maddalena* and *San Camillo* (9-12 May); Cachoierio de Itapemirim (ES) (14-16 May); and Rio de Janeiro (RJ) (18-20 May).

The communities situated in the Centre-South of Brazil were visited by the Superior General and by Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla in the following order: San Paolo – Cotia (SP), the *San Pio X* community (2-4 May); the residence of Belo Horizonte (MG) (11 May); Santos (SP) (5 May); Monte Santo de Minas (MG) (6-8 May); São Paulo (SP) – the community of *Nossa Sra.do Rosario de V. Pompeia* (9-10 May); São Paulo (SP) – the *Enrique Rebuschini* community (12-14 May); Curitiba (PR) (16-17 May); and Iomerê (SC) (18-20 May).

We had an opportunity to visit the Camillian works, the parishes and the Christian communities connected with the Camillians; we met priests, some bishops of the dioceses where we are present, people who work with our works, volunteers, and members of the Lay Camillian Family.

2. The priorities of the Order at the current historical moment

In our meetings with our religious brothers we sought to describe the current situation of our Order and the priorities that were established by the General Chapters of May 2013 and June 2014, which were summarised and proposed in the *Camillian Project for a Faithful and Creative Life*, a project for the revitalisation of our Camillian consecrated lives, which was also entrusted to the general government for the six-year period 2014-2020.

Starting with the most urgent and emergent problems, one can enucleate three priorities:

Economics. The internal reorganisation of the economics of the generalate house, through a reconfiguration of the Central Economic Commission of the Order as well. This commission is entrusted with monitoring the financial and economic affairs of the Order, helping those Provinces that

are in difficulty, bringing together the financial administrators of the Order, and analysing and approving projects.

The promotion of vocations and initial and ongoing formation. In this area, our very future is at stake. In Europe there is a lack of vocations, we are growing old, and our numbers are decreasing. We have great hopes in Latin America, Africa and Asia (the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, the Island of Flores). Today we can understand the concept of ongoing formation as living in a constant state of formation until the last breath of our lives. This is a process which, once it has been set in motion, cannot, and must not, ever be interrupted. The General Chapter also asked for an updating of our *handbook for formation*, a work composed almost twenty years ago.

Communication. Without communication it is not possible to construct communion and even less is it possible to build fraternity and community. In addition to communicating the obituaries of our deceased religious brothers, a process that is always very swift and efficient, it is increasingly necessary to be able to share, or simply to learn about, more details and significant events in order to keep alive our knowledge about, and our connections with, people, facts and news (birthdays, anniversaries, the inauguration of new projects and works, etc.), which bring hope and bear witness to the fact that we are alive, active and authentically engaged in implementing our charism. From this point of view, the General Chapter pointed to the need to have a central office for communications which would allow an appropriate exchange of news and information in an efficient way between the general government and all of the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Delegations of the Order, and vice versa! From this springs the need on the part of the Provinces, the Vice-Provinces and the Delegations to have effective communications with us but also in relation to their local ecclesial communities and societies as a whole. The current general government is continuing the publication of the traditional three-monthly review *Camilliani/Camillians*, the digital Newsletter has also been begun and this has now reached its twenty-fourth number; and the web site of the Order (cf. www.camilliani.org) has also been completely updated in its form and contents, something that has made it more interactive and easier to access and consult.

In our community and individual meetings we reflected on the providential fact that this process involving the revitalisation of the Camillian Order belongs to this historical moment, with its very singular ecclesial context, with the magisterium of Pope Francis, a Jesuit religious who as such knows about the deep dynamics of consecrated life *from within*: it was specifically his sensitivity as a ‘pastor’ that led him first to dedicate a special year to consecrated life (2015) and then to proclaim the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (2015-2016). For we Camillians, who received through our founder St. Camillus de Lellis ‘the charism of mercy towards the sick’, these initiatives have a great charge of gospel creativity, for our renewal, relaunch and spiritual growth.

In the letter that Pope Francis sent to all consecrated people on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, we are invited to engage in discernment together, as regards our concrete life journeys, from a historical perspective. The Holy Father observes that consecrated men and women are not only the recipients of a glorious history that should be remembered and narrated. They also, with the intercession of the Holy Spirit, have before them a great future to be accomplished. We Camillians have almost half a millennium of history of service in the world of health and health care caring for sick people. In this historical movement, we must look to the past with gratitude, in order to live the present with passion, as authentic instruments of communion, serving with Samaritan compassion and embracing the future with hope.

On 23 April last the seventieth anniversary took place of the foundation of the Camillian Province of Brazil, its first Provincial Superior being Father Innocente Radrizzani. In less than six years (the year 2022), the first centenary of the arrival of the Camillians in Brazil (1922-2022) will be celebrated. This will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate this important anniversary of our birth in Brazil from a historical-providential point of view: ‘celebrating the centenary with gratitude, passion and hope’.

The Provincial Chapter, which will be celebrated at the beginning of the year 2017, could be a propitious opportunity to think about this question and make projects in this direction, with an approach involving a movement of revitalisation of our historical memory which bears witness to our unmistakable Camillian identity, starting with the personal experiences of our pioneering religious who were true heroes and offered the best of themselves (Italian missionaries) so that the Camillians could be what they are today in Brazil, organising wise planning for the future.

Another suggestion in this sense is that of planning and implementing some initiatives in favour of the family relatives of all our religious, both living and dead. When a religious brother of ours dies, it would appear that from that moment onwards his non-religious family no longer exists, with an ending of all relations with the Order and/or Province. These families generously offered their sons to the Order. We often remember our benefactors but we forget the families of our religious. This would be a fine initiative that we could develop with regional celebrations of the anniversary of the arrival of the Camillians in Brazil.

For all those who do not know about the realities of Brazil – for example Camillians who live in other continents of the world – we believe that it is important to offer some information on this nation in order to have a greater and better understanding of the presence and the activities of the Camillians in Brazil.

3. Some rapid information on Brazil: between history and current realities

During the period of our visit, Brazil was going through a delicate and grave political crisis, with an impeachment underway against the President of the Republic, Dilma Rousseff. The accusations of corruption, confirmed and verified by the judiciary, perpetrated by *Petrobras* (the oil company of Brazil), that were made against many politicians and large building companies of the country, has generated a great deal of indignation in Brazilian civil society. This political instability has also been affecting the economy and has led to the loss of investments, the closing down of many companies, and an increase in unemployment (at the present time the estimate is that there are eleven million unemployed). Social tension has increased. Brazil, which is the seventh most structured economy in the world, runs the risk of regression as regards the social advances that have been achieved over recent decades.

We hope that this general situation will not also destabilise the whole of the sector of public health care, which is already suffering from an endemic lack of investments and resource, with the hope that the government honours its commitments with respect to supporting and providing care to the sick and the poor. If this does not occur, we Camillian as well, being involved in a substantial way in the field of hospital institutions, will have to face up to the risk of grave repercussions in this sector of health care. For that matter, some public hospitals which were entrusted to Camillians at the level of management have ‘returned’ to being administered by the local States because of the increasing dangers of a lack of resources available to the central government.

This complex political scene has also compromised the image of Brazil abroad a few months before the inauguration of the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, and this at a time when the whole world of the international sports media is concentrating its attention on Brazil. Fortunately, there has not been violence in the streets, only peaceful demonstrations by the members of the population.

Brazil was discovered by the Portuguese navigator and explorer Pedro Alvares Cabral on 21 April 1500. Brazil has a territory of 8,515,767 km² and is the fifth largest country in the world. It is the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world – it is not a Spanish-speaking country, as is often hastily thought by people abroad. It is the only country in Latin America where Portuguese is spoken. The country in a constitutional sense is a federation and is made up of twenty-six States and a federal district. The federal capital is Brasilia and this has a population of about 2.5 million inhabitants. The national territory of this nation is the same size as Europe.

Today Brazil is the seventh economic power in the world with a GDP of 1.9 trillion dollars in the year 2015, although with a minus growth rate of 3%. The employed population is 90,640,000. The unemployment rate during the first quarter of 2016 was 10.9%. The minimum wage is 880.00 *reais* (R\$), a sum equal to 220 euros or 254 American dollars.

In 2014 Brazil had a population of 220 million people, whose racial make-up is as follows: 46.3% white; 44.9% mulatto; 8.01% black; 0.5% yellow; 0.3% indigenous. The population of Brazil is the result of a racial mixing which took place during the sixteenth century – at the time of the foreign discoverers of the country – of the *Indios*, whites, and blacks deported from Africa in a state of slavery. As regards religion, 98.8% of the population is Christian, of whom 76.1% are Catholics; 17.2% Protestants; 12.6% others (15.11% dual membership; 4.8% animists; 3% agnostics and atheists; 1.4% others).

Life expectancy at birth in Brazil rose to 75.2 years in the year 2014. According to the IBGE – the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics – life expectancy for women is 78.8 years and for men 71.6 years. The State of the federation in which people live the longest is the State of *Santa Catarina*, with an average of 78.4 years – 75.1 years for men and 81.8 years for women.

The *National Health Service* (SUS) covers 155 million people, whereas about 50 million Brazilians have private health coverage. Infancy death rates in the year 2014 were 14.4 deaths for every thousand live births. In 1940, for example, the infancy death rates were 146.6 deaths for every thousand live births and life expectancy was only 45.5 years.

Abroad, when people speak about Brazil they speak about poverty, football and the carnival. But Brazil is not a poor country even though there are many pockets of poverty: the *favelas* in the large cities. In reality we have before us a country which has many natural resources and an enormous potential as regards its future development.

In the agriculture-food sector, Brazil is one of the most developed countries in the world, with many raw materials. In the industrial sector, as well, there are lines of production of undoubted value. *Embraer* is a Brazilian company that assembles aeroplanes that transport 120 passengers and it is classified as being the fourth industrial producer of aeroplanes in the world.

Brazil seems to be instead – unfortunately – still an ‘unfair and unequal country’!

4. The arrival of the Camillians in Brazil: the facts and pioneers of this mission

Let us express gratitude for our past

The arrival of the first two Camillian religious in Brazil, Fr. Innocente Radrizzani and Fr. Eugenio Della Giacoma, was recorded by Fr. Innocente himself in distinctly poetic tones: ‘We left Genoa on 29 August 1922 at 22.00 and we arrived at Rio de Janeiro in the morning of 15 September, two days ahead of schedule’.

‘It was two o’clock at night, on 15 September 1922, the day consecrated to Our Lady of Sorrows, when our packet ship *Pincio* (vessel) arrived in the waters of the Bay of Guanabara. This was a thrilling spectacle! Up above was the clear sky painted with stars, below was the amphitheatre of the beach, and the hills of Corcovado and Pão de Açúcar (‘Sugar Bread’), monuments that are illuminated in an extraordinary way. In the water that separated us from dry land, ships and warships of various nations shone in a fantastic spectacle of many coloured lights, celebrating. Indeed, we spent days of celebration and joy. The homeland of Brazil solemnised those days, the first centenary of its independence, with a great patriotic explosion. The National Eucharistic Congress, the papal delegation, various international representatives of the nations, etc... At four o’clock in the morning, we celebrated Holy Mass, then we had the health examinations prescribed by the Brazilian authorities, prepared our luggage, said goodbye and left the friends that we had met on our voyage, and, lastly, disembarked, at ten o’clock and stepped onto Brazilian soil: *Deo Gratis*’.

How did this story begin? In the month of February 1922, at the hospital of Padua, a Brazilian priest was admitted, one Don Teofilo Sanson, a native of Sete Lagoas, of the diocese of Mariana, in Minas Gerais. After a grave illness, he died within a few months, in Italy, before the departure of the Camillians for Brazil. He was especially edified by the zeal of the Camillians, the chaplains who were involved in service inside this hospital. After some contacts with these chaplains, and more specifically with Fr. Giovanni Lucca, the Superior of the Camillian community of Padua, Don Teofilo decided to write to the Archbishop of Mariana, Dom Silvério Gomes Pimenta, to ask for a Camillian foundation in his diocese.

After talks with Fr. Angelo Carazzo, the Provincial Superior of the Province of Lombardy and Veneto, the letter was delivered to the Superior General, Fr. Alfonso Maria Andrioli (who was seriously ill and died after only two years as the Superior General of the Order, 1920-22 December 1922). Fr. Andrioli read in the letter of Archbishop Dom Silvério a discernment of the will of God, as is brought out by what Fr. Radrizzani remembered: 'I cannot die happy without carrying out the will of God, which is so evident in the letter of Dom Silvério and so present in my spirit'. Fr. Innocente wrote: 'the Province of Brazil was born in the heart of Fr. Andrioli, who accompanied its first steps, helping it with his prayers, strengthening it with his sufferings'.

Dom Silvério died on 30 August 1922 when the first Camillians were crossing the Atlantic to begin the mission in Brail, and more precisely in Mariana, their envisaged destination from the outset. With the death of their 'protector' Dom Silvério, and after being advised to settle in a larger city, Rio de Janeiro or San Paolo, Fr. Innocente and Fr. Della Giacoma returned to San Paolo where they began the new foundation. To begin with, in both Rio de Janeiro and San Paolo, they were the guests of Salesian religious.

In San Paolo, Fr. Innocente was received by the Archbishop, Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, who was very cordial during the audience that was granted to the new arrival on 9 October 1922: 'Father, I have read your memorial...I like the programme of your Order...it will be providential for my diocese and for Brazil...Let's not waste time, let's get down to the clauses'. The road had finally been outlined and opened for the beginning of the activities of the Camillians in San Paolo. To begin with they worked as chaplains in various hospitals of the city, amongst which the *Humberto Primo* Hospital (15/11/1922) and the *Santa Casa di Misericordia* Hospital of San Paolo (8/10/1923). In the month of November 1923, after the agreements with the Curia, in the neighbourhood of *Vila Pompéia* work was begun on creating the seminary, the church and the hospital. On 25 April 1924 they also took on responsibility for the chaplaincy of the *Santa Casa di Misericordia di Santos*, the oldest hospital in Brazil which had been founded by Braz Cubas in 1554. In 1925 religious service was begun at the *Asilo do Inválidos em Guapira* (Jaçanã) and then at the chaplaincy of the sanatorium (for lepers) of Guapira which was transferred to Santo Ângelo in 1928.

The first Brazilian to enter the Order of the Camillians was Br. Arnaldo Ribeiro and this took place in the year 1933. However, he died of a heart attack on 15 July 1937 while travelling on a bus in *Vila Pompeia* while begging for medical products for the poor patients of the *São Camilo* clinic.

The Camillian foundation in Brazil, in addition to the pioneers Fr. Innocente Radrizzani and Fr. Eugenio Dalla Giacoma, was enriched by the presence of four other religious: Fr. Silvio Silvestri (1923), Fr. Carlo Quagliaroli and Fr. Ludovico Zanol (1924) and subsequently Fr. Antonio Lazzari. These priests were the first six Italian Camillians of the Province of Lombardy and Veneto to come as missionaries to Brazil. Over the last ninety-four years, after the arrival of the pioneers in 1922, thirty-nine Italian Camillian religious have been involved in the Brazilian mission. At the present time the only Italian Camillian in Brazil is Fr. Adolfo Serripiero, who was posted definitively to the Camillian Province of Brazil in the year 2012, being responsible for its works in Fortaleza (CE).

Various Superior Generals have visited the new Camillian foundation of Brazil since its beginnings. The first was Fr. Pio Holzer who went in the month of August 1927: this visit provoked very much joy in the missionaries, with the approval of the new programme of the foundation which was in line with the project of Fr. Radrizzani. The Superior General Fr. Florindo Rbini visited the

Brazilian Camillians of San Paolo on 13 January 1937 and on 22 January of the same year he also visited Iomerê (SC).

The *Sociedade Beneficente São Camilo* officially began its activities on 17 July 1923. The *São Camilo* Polyclinic was inaugurated and this would subsequently be transformed into the *São Camilo* Hospital. This institution would be a point of irradiation for all the care, social and formation activities of the Camillians in the world of health and health care in Brazil.

In the view of Fr. Innocente, when thinking about the future of the Camillians in Brazil in terms of vocations, they could not remain in the city of San Paolo alone. If this had taken place, 'we would be fossilised': 'fossilised in the house of San Paolo, or going forward and looking elsewhere for our expansion'. Fr. Innocente then went on: 'taking into account the experience of other religious institutes, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná offer abundant and good vocations. Perhaps this is due to the mild climate and the presence of German and Italian colonies who in numerous villages and in agricultural concerns conserve their religious spirit and spirit of morality as in Europe, offering good vocations. Despite this, these countries have the disadvantage of being far away from San Paolo, and we will be forced to leave the postulants far from our centre, one, two to three days away by train'.

It was for this reason that on the map of the Camillian geography of the beginnings there appeared the village of Faxinal Branco, today's Iomerê (SC). It was here that Camillian life with the postulants began. In the view of Fr. Silvio Silvestre, the director of the postulants, in that locality 'the overwhelming majority of people are from Veneto and work simply with their jobs, conserving their Christian traditions as they previously existed' (8/11/1935). He wrote to his Provincial, Fr. A. Carazzo, telling him that the Brazilian students were 'lively and intelligent and cannot be disciplined in the way the German students can' (1/06/1933). Fr. Simoni, the Superior of this community of postulants, shared the same diagnosis of the first Brazilian seminarians and he wrote to his Provincial Superior, Fr. A. Carazzo: 'we are in the first school year and this experience has taught us many things. We have accepted 24 postulants and seven have remained. The Brazilians have poor health (as a result of which five left); they do not have strong characters, they are good but voluble (as a result of which we lost another six); the indecision of their fathers (who came to find their sons who would have chosen to remain, and for this reason we lost another four); another two received dispensations. Conclusion: the experience of the others demonstrates to us and teaches us that we should look for others if we want a few of them to remain; if we were satisfied with a few it would be a fiasco' (21/11/1933). These few testimonies are sufficient for us to have an idea of the challenges that the pioneers of Iomerê (SC) addressed in the sector of formation for the future Camillians of Brazil. On 11 February 1935 the bishop, Dom Daniel Hostin (of the diocese of Lages), erected the new parish of São Luiz, and on 19 March Fr. Garzotti took responsibility for it as its parish priest. Without Iomerê one would not understand the history of the Order of Brazil and even less the character of the Camillians in that country.

The Camillian community in Brazil was erected into a Province on 3 May 1946 and Fr. Innocente Radrizzani was its first Provincial Superior. This year, 2016, the Province of Brazil has celebrated its seventieth anniversary. Fr. Eugenio Della Giacoma, after spending a number of years in Brazil, returned to Italy for good. Fr. Innocente Radrizzani went back to Italy when he was appointed Provincial Superior of the Province of Lombardy and Veneto and the Province of Rome (1929-1935), but his love for his Brazilian Camillian Province led him to return and to remain there for the rest of his life. He died on 27 April 1978 at the age of nearly ninety-two!

The library of the *São Camilo* University Centre in San Paolo is dedicated to him – it is called the '*Biblioteca Padre Innocente Radrizzani*'. This is a rightful tribute to a man who left behind him a valuable legacy, as well as numerous writings on the lives of the first Camillian religious in Brazil. He was very concerned about the future of the Province and wanted it to conserve its Camillian historical memory. Hence his obsessive concern to conserve every document on the Order and on the life of the Camillians in Brazil.

(Bibliographical sources consulted: SANNAZZARO, Piero. **Sessant'anni fa P. I. Radrizzani arrivava in Brasile 1922-1982**. Estratto da "Quaderni di Storia" della Provincia Lombardo-Veneta dei Ministri degli Infermi. vol. V-March 1983. MUNARO, Julio S.; PESSINI, L. (Orgs.) **Pe. Inocente Radrizzani fundador dos religiosos Camilianos no Brasil**. São Paulo, Província Camiliana Brasileira, 2012; PIGATTO, Carlos A. (Org.) **Reminiscências históricas da fundação camiliana no Brasil**, Província Camiliana Brasileira, Iomerê, 2014).

5. The Camillians in Brazil today: a strong presence in the world of health and health care

To live the present with passion and serve with Samaritan compassion

Today in Brazil, the number of Camillian religious who have taken solemn vows is 92. 85 religious are priests and 7 religious are brothers (including the Delegation of North America and the community in Bolivia). 73 religious live and work in Brazil and 19 live and work abroad. 37 religious are aged between 28 and 50; 28 are aged between 51 and 70; and 27 are aged between 71 and 91.

The Camillian community in Bolivia, in Santa Cruz della Sierra, with three religious, and the Delegation of North America, in Milwaukee (WI), adhere to the Camillian Province of Brazil. The Delegation was aggregated to the Province in the year 2010 and today has 13 religious who have taken solemn vows.

At the level of vocations, in Brazil there are 3 candidates at the preparatory stage, 10 students of philosophy, 2 novices, and 5 students of theology who have taken solemn vows.

In Brazil there are 13 Camillian communities and these may be listed in their chronological order of their foundation: 1) *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (V. Pompeia, S. Paulo, Capital), which was canonically erected in 1925; 2) *Santa Cruz* (Santos, SP), which was canonically erected in 1925; 3) *São Luís Gonzaga* (Iomerê, SC), which was canonically erected in 1936; 4) *São Camilo* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ), which was canonically erected in 1941; 5) *São Pio X* (Cotia, SP, Granja Viana), which was canonically erected in 1960; 6) *São Camilo* (Pinhais PR, na grande Curitiba), which was canonically erected in 1967; 7) *São Camilo* (Macapá, AP), which was canonically erected in 1976; 8) *São Camilo* (Brasília, DF), which was canonically erected in 1976; 9) *São Camilo* (Monte Santo de Minas, MG), which was canonically erected in 1983; 10) *Santa Maria Madalena* (Fortaleza, CE), which was canonically erected in 1992; 11) *São Camilo* (Fortaleza, CE, Lagoa Redonda), which was canonically erected in 1997; 12) *São Camilo* (Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, ES), which was canonically erected 2007; 13) *Santo Cura D'Arce* (Fortaleza, CE), which was canonically erected in 2011; and 14) *Henrique Rebuschini* (São Paulo, SP, Pompeia), which was canonically erected in 2007.

The Province has pastoral responsibility for eleven parishes: the oldest are the parishes of *São Luís Gonzaga*, in Iomerê, Santa Catarina (1935), and of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Vila Pompeia*, in San Paolo (1939).

Since 2011, these parishes have had *statutes* which seek to define the Camillian face of these ecclesial communities: the development of pastoral care in health, the formation of pastoral workers in caring for sick people in their homes, and liturgical celebrations for special occasions in the liturgical calendar. The kind of relationship that they should have with the Province is also set out, in line with what is envisaged in the *Code of Canon Law*, under the pastoral guidance of the Ordinary of the dioceses to which they belong.

As regards its role in society and its social responsibilities, the Camillian Province of Brazil is present through thirteen civil institutions in the hospital, social and educational fields. In the world of hospitals it is present in 14 States of the federation with 51 hospitals, of which it owns 23 and 28 are owned by third parties but whose management is entrusted to the Camillians.

In the sector of formation in health and health care, there are about 5,000 students who in the main attend courses of the two Camillian university centres. The formation that is on offer develops from childhood until post-graduate work. In a strict sense, qualifications are awarded in nursing, nutrition and bioethics. With respect to the study of bioethics, the 'Camillian' academic 'pathway' awards doctorates and post-doctorate qualifications. In Brazil, in this field, the Camillians are seen as pioneers, just as they are as regards training in management and administration in the health-care field. Brazil has the only Faculty of Medicine of the Order.

In synergy with the state government of San Paolo, one of the Camillian institutions administers 23 centres for children and 4 social centres: for children, for teenagers, for young people, as well as the social centre for elderly people.

To sum up, we can offer some overall statistics in order to give a rapid idea of the enormous social responsibilities of the Camillians in Brazil: 1) 19 direct registered employees (CLT) – 24,327; 2) number of hospital beds – 5,243; 3) students from nursery school to university degrees – 14,038; 4) medical doctors in various registered institutions – 16,903; 5) medical doctors trained at the Camillian Medical School in 2015 – 80; 6) nurses who took a degree in 2015 at the Camillian University – 354; 7) children in day care centres in the city of San Paolo – 2,840; 8) care for the elderly in two institutions in San Paolo – 303; 9) health-care cases in hospitals in the year 2015: 201,957 in clinics; 13,136,074 examinations; 5,941,094 consultations; 346,672 admissions; 65,836 births. These are some of the overall statistics relating to the services of the Camillians in the field of health and health care in Brazil.

6. Some fraternal recommendations for the present and the future

Embracing the future with hope

The following observations were formulated within the context of the fraternal visit to the communities of your Province, in community meetings, in conversations and during individual talks with religious. They are proposed solely for the good of the Province and its growth. In essential terms, a canonical visitation involves the exercise of 'looking at oneself in the mirror with different eyes' – as was suggested to us once by a Superior General who was rich in experience.

Let us begin our thoughts by sharing an idea of Fr. Saverio Cannistrà, the Superior General of the barefoot Carmelites, which he expressed at the last meeting of Superior Generals which was held in Rome on 25-28 May 2016. It concerns the dimension of 'prophecy in consecrated life' today: 'the world today is full of shadows, but there are also lights which light up along our journey as we search for truth. On the one hand, religious life does not live by luminous certainty or by irreprehensible consistency. Rather, it advances going forward in a desert, amidst temptations, with rapid moves forward and falls. At one time religious life was identified with a prophecy, today this identification has to be obtained through witness'.

Pope Francis, when commenting on some aspects of fraternal life, observed that: 'the tendency towards individualism is in essential terms a way of not suffering fraternity. At times it is difficult to live fraternity, but if you do not live it, it cannot be fertile. Work, including 'apostolic' work, can become a flight from fraternal life. If a person cannot live fraternity he cannot live the religious life'. The Pope then went on: 'conflicts within a community are inevitable; in a certain sense they have to exist if the community is animated by sincere and loyal relationships. Life is like that. To think of a community without brothers who live in difficulties is senseless; it is not good. Reality teaches us that in every family, in all human groups, conflicts exist. And conflict should be embraced not denied. . . Life without conflict is not life'. Cf. SPADARO Antonio, 'Svegliate il mondo. Colloquio di papa Francesco con i Superiori generali', in *Civiltà Cattolica*, 4 January 2014, pp. 3-17.

When entering the heart of your religious family, and when listening to its pulsations, we observed that in general a good climate of serenity and organisation prevails. As regards community life, we have small communities, with only three or four religious but with many ministerial responsibilities, which are very much appreciated by the Christian communities in which our religious brothers live.

In some cases (this is not a general feeling) frustration was felt because of the perception of a separation, a discrimination, between two *classes* of religious – the ‘**high and low clergy**’. There are religious who ‘produce’ and are very much esteemed and valued, differently from religious who ‘do not produce’, with consequent lifestyles and ministerial responsibilities that are very diversified: the risk is that of drawing away from the image that is expected of a religious.

There is the risk of being too isolated, dispersed in a very wide context, which is what Brazil is. May God free us from a tyrannical search for pure and simple results, for their own sake or for our own personal gratification and/or personal ambitions! We run the risk of sliding into a heartless pragmatism, at an economic and administrative level, without taking into due consideration the dimension of human and spiritual values. We have to cultivate a long-term vision, and reformulate our own motivations in the light of the authentic needs of the Province and the professional, charismatic and ministerial choices of the religious.

The question of the salary of some religious recurs again and again. Some religious involved in the management of Camillian works receive high salaries. This is normal if these salaries are in line with their responsibilities and competence in this sector. However, this situation places them in the condition of being able to manage their own lives in an economic sense, without paying much attention to their duties towards the religious community. It is asked whether all the religious contribute in an effective way to the community and/or to the Province, given that, as we all know, the salary does not belong to that individual religious but to the community and everyone must contribute specifically as a true experience of communion.

Within the context of the *governance* of the Province, there is a strong request for the Provincial Superior to cultivate a profile that is more consonant with that of a *pastor* than an *administrator*, and, as a consequence, he should not be directly involved in executive roles and have professional and administrative responsibilities as regards works. This is the approach also constantly called for by Pope Francis: ‘the pastor must have the smell of the sheep’.

In previous Chapters of the Province there have already been decisions that move in this direction. Every area superintendent has the obligation, at a hierarchical level, to report constantly to the Provincial Superior and his council. If this does not take place, we return to the old times and the construction of unity and communion is not in the least helped, with the generation of suffering in all the religious.

The last Provincial Superiors fully took on pastoral responsibility for the Province and its pastoral accompanying and left to one side their administrative responsibilities, albeit conserving their role as its legal representative, that is to say the presidency of all the institutions, in order to conserve and assure union on various fronts, both of the Province and of Camillian institutions.

As regards the next Provincial Chapter, it will be very important to discuss whether this is really the best approach to governance for the Province itself.

We have here a great Province, with a growing number of young men, with complex existential dynamics and growing needs at the level of presence and community life that are very detailed and deep, and which has an enormous social responsibility. All of this requires full-time dedication. In this delicate aspect of our religious lives, we cannot delegate decisions, missions or commitments to other people. This is not an undertaking that is normally directed with the help of competent and trusted lay people.

We invite you to a further thought – the missionary spirit of the Province should be animated and stimulated. At the level of the Latin American Church – cf. the meeting of CELAM at Aparecida in the year 2007 – we are all invited to be ‘missionary disciples’. What sign would be given by our ‘accommodated’ young men ‘answering no, with irony and a sense of abandonment’ to the invitation of the Provincial to be missionaries? What resonance does this generate in our minds and our hearts? What is the missionary future of the Province of Brazil (Macapà, Fortalesa, Bolivia)? Is there a personal

and community interest on the part of the Province in relation to this direct involvement with the poor in the 'geographical outskirts' of the world of health, illness and cultural and human poverty?

As regards the parishes, the Camillian Province of Brazil, within the global context of the Order, has the largest number: eleven! We should remember that starting with the initial moment of the presence of the Camillians in Brazil, the pre-condition for being accepted in a diocese was to take responsibility for pastoral care in a chapel and/or a parish. Fr. Innocente Radrizzani wrote to the Superior General Fr. Pio Holzer in the following way on 26 March 1926: 'A parish in Brazil is not as frightening as in Italy... Because of the scarcity of national clergy, we need to meet the requests of the bishops'.

The regular meetings of parish priests, which have always sought to emphasise the 'Camillian face' of Camillian parishes, have always been very positive. The drawing up, and the adoption of, the *statutes* of Camillian parishes in Brazil – on 10 June 2011 – remains an important initiative in this direction. The last extraordinary General Chapter of the Order, which was held in Rome/Ariccia in June 2014, asked the general government to draw up *statutes* for all Camillian parishes. The contribution of the Brazilian experience, in this sphere, will be very fruitful for everyone.

The seriousness with which you are developing the process of formation of future Camillians and ongoing formation for the religious of the Province is worthy of praise. Always try to attend to the formation of those providing formation, and not only the formation of those receiving formation, in a ever better way.

Pope Francis has called on us in this very delicate and valuable sphere as well: 'Formation is a work of art, not a police action. We must form their hearts. Otherwise we are creating little monsters. And these little monsters mould the People of God'. 'We must always think of the faithful, of the faithful people of God. Persons must be formed who are witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. The person providing formation should keep in mind that the person in formation will be called to care for the People of God. We always must think of the People of God in all of this. Just think of religious who have hearts that are as sour as vinegar: they are not made for the people. In the end, we must not form administrators, managers, but fathers, brothers, travelling companions'. This means that emphasis should be placed more on *being* than on *doing*: action always arrives much later and is always the consequence of our identity!

It is important for us to commit ourselves as well to always presenting the profile of the 'Camillian brother religious' in the process of formation of the new generations of young men. In a season marked by a certain clericalism, this may seem a little strange. This is a concern of the Order. In his *testamentary* letter, St. Camillus, when reflecting upon the future of the Order itself, linked the continuation of the foundation of the institute with the presence of 'brothers'. In this sense, a thoughtful reading and discussion of the document of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, entitled 'The Identity and Mission of the Religious Brothers in the Church' (4 October 2015), could be a source of inspiration.

This pathway of formation must help us to ensure the rebirth within us and in young men of everything that can generate enthusiasm and fascination for consecrated life. In this sense, Pope Francis, a Jesuit religious, has pointed to some salient elements for consecrated life today: religious must be carriers of today, prophets who stimulate the history of the world, experts in communion, able to meet wounded humanity in existential and geographical outskirts, responding to what God and humanity ask us today. Lastly, Pope Francis stresses the need for courage!

In the sphere of the Camillian institutions, both in the health-care sector and in the socio-educational field, there is a large amount of economic, financial and administrative activity. We may observe with gratitude that a great deal of good is being done for many people who have few chances of getting treatment and depend on the national health system of the state (SS). Looking at the various actors in one photograph, without doubt we have before us a large company that must be managed professionally as a company, but with 'Camillian values'.

In the religious who engage in roles involving administrative leadership, there is a need to assure direct, frank and respectful communication between the religious themselves, without resorting to the

mediation of lay professionals to send directives to other religious. We must ensure that in the *command chain* decisions are always dealt with between religious and not between religious and lay people (lawyers, managers, consultants...). We all know that these dynamics – ‘lay people command the religious’ – do not foster a good organisational climate.

Only religious should take part in the monthly administrative meetings, although they should naturally be helped by technical experts when this is necessary. These meetings should constitute a privileged form to align and realign all the processes that involve us: minds, hearts and actions. This will enable us to avoid unpleasant surprises. There is always something that escapes our control, some mistake, however much we try to be rigorous and ethical in our behaviour and conduct. We are not infallible; we all have feet of clay...In the light of these situations, let us never lose respect for each other, speak ill of others, denigrate the honour of other people: this should be the golden rule! In a history of lights and shadows, we should not curse the dark but turn on a light: this is the choice that makes the difference. This applies to all the dimensions of our lives.

Identity and a sense of belonging are fundamental in a religious family like ours in order to be able to see ourselves as really persons, as happy and fulfilled religious, committing our lives to serving as Camillians with our talents, capacities, talents and specialisations in the various areas of the Camillian presence in our Provinces and our Order.

We would like to raise one question which can be a point of departure for thought for everyone. We should pay greater attention to the quality of our religious identity – in all sectors. The most demanding point is without doubt the technical and administrative part of that identity. ‘The wish of religious to be seen as laymen is very strange’: we heard this observation frequently, and not only from some obedient and faithful lay person but also from some religious of marked experience involved in ministerial responsibilities as well! Too much ‘worldliness’ and secularisation, Pope Francis would say!

We could also speak about a crisis of belonging which is expressed in the fact that some religious in our works do not offer real witness to Camillian values, which are directed preferentially towards vulnerable people (geographical outskirts) and suffering people (existential outskirts).

It is legitimate and even necessary to make a distinction between two fields: the civil-lay field and the religious field. At an institutional level this is comprehensible but we must be careful to ensure that people do not interpret this approach as a denial of our ‘being religious’ at a personal level. Today there is no place in any religious community for people who want only ‘to appear to be’ or simply ‘pretend to be’ or act according to personal interests. It is incumbent upon us to remember that all posts involving responsibility and trust are always, on the basis of our Constitution and the Provincial Statutes, delegated responsibilities and derive from our ‘being religious’ and not the contrary.

For our analysis and also to achieve a clear and correct identification of the direction that we should take in the future, it is important for us to pose questions. We are living in an epoch that has been termed ‘liquid and plural’, in which the most solid historical values and institutional identities are called into question. We should today reaffirm our identity. What does it mean to be a Camillian today? What is there that is specific and unique in being religious?

In the present commercial context, with an institution that has a clear and unique identity, are we consistent when ‘we try to be there and not to be’? Do we transform what ‘we are’ for a civil and lay definition of our function into what ‘we do’? This mentality cannot, and must not, prosper because it will create conflicts and sufferings for the whole of our religious family. Let us strive to persevere in our identity, unity, communion fraternity and ministerial vales.

It is increasingly important and necessary for us to journey in the same direction, bearing in mind what the Provincial general statutes proclaim as regards Camillian institutions: ‘the agencies and the institutions are organs of the Camillian Province of Brazil which uses them to carry out its service, structuring it in an increasingly intelligent and organised way, in favour of those who are most in need. In the services of the various Camillian institutions, it is the Camillian family itself that diversifies its areas of service in order to serve in a better way – forming and healing. As the Province is the source and the mother of all the Camillian activities and all the Camillian institutions of Brazil, the most

important decisions of these institutions must be assessed, approved and controlled by the Provincial Superior and his council, as its ultimate responsible component' (*Introduction*, n. 62.).

The Camillian Province of Brazil, in the management of its works (institutions), owes its success to the synergy and services of a united and highly professional team which seeks to assure an alignment of the administrative procedures and a gospel transparency of its works, recognising that the Provincial Superior and his council are the reference point as regards responsibility (control units) (cf. Provincial General Statutes, chap. 7) for its works and guarantors of the transparency of the values which determine the Camillian profile of our works – values that are well listed in the *Charter of Principles* of the Camillian institutions of Brazil. We read as follows in our *Provincial General Statutes* (n. 62): 'We do not possess the goods that Divine Providence has placed in our hands so that we may manage them in favour of the suffering poor. Thus the financial administrators, superintendents and directors of houses, institutions and agencies are simply faithful administrators of goods that do not belong to them and in their administration they are subject to the respective wishes of their respective Superiors, at the summit of which is the Provincial Superior and his council'.

We know that all the works of the Camillians in Brazil are philanthropic entities and are non-profit making organisations, but, obviously enough, if they do not have some profits they cannot survive. Legal respect for those requirements that enable a work to be seen as being of a philanthropic nature is very demanding. However, we cannot be satisfied simply with respecting legislation. Philanthropy in itself does not meet all the needs of evangelical charity. In some hospitals, where the service given to the poor of the community is not so evident, would it not be interesting to institute the reality of a 'bed of charity'? That is to say, would welcoming and treating poor patients who are not able to pay be a *romantic ideal*? It is important for us to ask ourselves about the profile and the gospel meaning of these works in order to overcome the risk of being, or appearing to be, only institutions of a commercial character.

Pope Francis, when speaking to the *Orionine Fathers* on the occasion of their last General Chapter of 27 May 2016, told them that serving Jesus in the poor and the excluded of society 'means touching and serving the flesh of Christ and growing in unity with them, always being careful to ensure that faith does not become ideology, charity is not reduced to philanthropy, and the Church does not shrink into being an NGO'.

In addition, it is always important to remember that the search for 'perfection' in terms of professional services should never neglect the person or care for humanised professional relationships. The witness of the Camillian philosophy of 'putting more heart in those hands' exhorts us to go beyond the mere legality of work relationships. In the *Provincial General Statutes* (n. 74) it is stated that 'it is necessary to invest in professional competence which is a duty, and even more in the human, ethical, Christian and Catholic training of the people who work with us'.

We should – and this is something that should be hoped for – grow continuously in our sense of identity and belonging, not only as regards the Province but also with respect to the Order in its complex and multicultural identity and unity. It is important to remember that when we profess our religious vows, on the basis of our Constitution, we do so in relation to the Order in its fullness and totality! It is very helpful to make this evangelical sensitivity of young Camillians grow and mature starting with the first years of their formation. In a world shaped by the process of globalisation we cannot cultivate solely a narrow vision 'of our house'. We are a global Order that is present in the five continents of the planet. In its history, the Province of Brazil has always cooperated with the Order and its members, providing service as members of the General Consulta, members of the various committees of the Order (ministry, economics, ADIS, etc.), and this – fortunately – is something that is continuing today.

There is the risk that some religious will continue to have a passive approach to personal formation, specialist studies and active participation in the events of the life of the Province. In not attending to our own updating, in not taking part in the events of the Province, in withdrawing from ongoing formation, in the long-term we become repetitive, shallow, without motivations and thus

critical of everyone and everything! Today we must advance the belief that formation never ends and that until the last breath of our lives we are able to learn and to grow: it is important for us to cultivate a healthy sense of belonging and fraternal communion.

The Camillians in Brazil enjoy great esteem and this has been acquired by them through their role in the coordination of pastoral care in health at a diocesan level, in many dioceses of the country, as well. It is always very beautiful to hear the appreciation and affection that people and the Church have for you. It is important for us not to lose the leadership of pastoral care in health inside the Brazilian Church. We invite you not to sit on your laurels and not to be afraid to be bold in your role in the ecclesial communities in which we work.

The Province of Brazil emerges as being very well organised and structured, attending to its administrative, technical and economic dimensions. It sets a good example to follow. Praiseworthy are the great efforts that have recently been made to attend to, and communicate, your memory of the valuable history of the pioneering religious who began this presence of the Camillians in Brazil, with the organisation of a specific place and a museum, with objects, writings and other relics of the first religious of our Order. Our congratulations to you on this initiative!

We will end this message with a solemn expression of thanks for the splendid welcome you gave us and for the great hospitality that you gave to us in all of your communities. As you have heard many times before: 'we felt at home'. During the last days of our visit, we had an opportunity to interact with your lay co-workers, health-care workers, directors, nurses, medical doctors and teachers and we reflected together on St. Camillus from the point of view of the *prodigal son* who is transformed into a *Good Samaritan*.

We also talked about the efforts that the Order is making in the organisation of aid for the victims of disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis and epidemics, through the CADIS (*Camillian Disaster International Service*) Foundation as well. We ended our visit with a fraternal meeting of the Superior General, the Provincial Superior and their councillors and then with a fraternal meeting with all the Superiors of the Camillian communities in Brazil: this was a valuable opportunity to present subjects of interest regarding the life of the Order. A celebration of the Eucharist and a fraternal lunch brought our visit to its close.

As the last act of our presence in Brazil, we sealed this pastoral visit with a brief pilgrimage to the *National Sanctuary of Aparecida* in Aparecida (SP). In front of the Mother of the Lord and our patron saint of the people of Brazil, we appreciated even more the experience and the fraternity of our visit and we prayed to the Black Virgin of Aparacida that through her maternal care and her intercession she will help us to take care of the whole of our Order and in particular the Camillians of Brazil.

May God, the Lord of our lives, and St. Camillus our father founder and source of inspiration, always bless us and protect us! May they help us to always live with joy, in the belief that we should be what we are, with the sensitivity of Samaritan compassion and mercy, in order to serve the world of health and health care 'with our hearts in our hands'. Dear religious brothers of Brazil, let us cultivate the hope that comes from above in order to live happily and serve with Samaritan sensitivity in the present! May we always be able to express our gratitude to those who came before us (the past) and sought to do the best that they could! On the broader horizon that opens up before us, may we always be able to embrace the future with hope!

St. Paul reminds us that: 'hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us' (Rom 5:5).

Rome, 3 June 2016

Feast day of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Fr. Leocir Pessini
Superior General

Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla

Member of the General Consulta responsible for economics and missions

Fr. Aris Miranda

Member of the General Consulta responsible for Camillian ministry

Fr. Gianfranco Lunardon

Member of the General Consulta responsible for the general secretariat and communications