

MESSAGE OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL to the Camillian Province of Spain

Pastoral Visit – 24 June-3 July 2016

'Men and women who see that the darkness of the night that consecrated life is going through – which like every ecclesial life is a reality – is not a tunnel from which we do not know how and when to exit from, but, rather, a moment of purification and pruning, as was the approach of great mystics: from it consecrated life will emerge with more life and consecration. They are men and women who see this winter season not as a season of death, but, rather, as a season where consecrated life is called to return to its origins, to work at the level of its roots on the essential elements of religious life'.

José Rodríguez Carballo

Archbishop-Secretary of the CIVCSVA

'Before religious life was identified with prophecy; at the present time this position has to be gained with witness... We are present in a world where God is absent; our lives speak, even if we do not speak explicitly of God; for this reason, consecrated people must be impassioned about God and bear witness to Him through their lives. It would be difficult for religious life to manage to speak about God because it is seen as a comfortable and rich life that is settled in its certainties: an institution that belongs to others. Prophecy, expressed through the eschatological dimension, invites us to justify our identity starting not with functionality and the tasks that we perform but with the final destination that we are now living in the form of incompleteness, waiting, frailty, humility, concealment, marginality and patience... Only an intense and profound spiritual life which nourishes fraternity and mission is able to manifest its prophecy'.

The Prophecy of Religious Life

Final document of the USG (Union of General Superiors) Assembly

Rome, 25-27 May 2016

***Esteemed Br. José Carlos Bermejo,
General Delegate of the Camillian Province of Spain,
Members of the Provincial Council and all our Religious of the Province,
Greetings to everyone with best wishes for good health and peace in the Lord of our lives!***

We spent some days together with you in your communities. I still have strongly fixed in my memory and my heart the meetings that I had together with Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla, the General Consultor who is responsible for financial administration and for missions, during our (canonical) pastoral and fraternal visit to the Camillian Province of Spain on 24 June to 3 July 2016. Previously I had already twice visited the Camillian Delegation of Argentina (Buenos Aires and the community of Vagues) on 18-19 July 2014 and on 26-30 December 2015.

We began our visit with a meeting with Br. José Carlos Bermejo, the General Delegate of your religious Province, who provided us with an overall survey of the Province itself: its members, its communities, its ministerial activities connected with pastoral care in health, its chaplaincies and the works which belong to the Province. The economic report of the Province was presented afterwards when we visited the community of *Sant Pere de Ribes*. It was the work of the administrator of the Province, Dr. Emilio Villar, a layman, medical doctor and trusted administrator, as well as a member of the Central Economic Commission of the Order.

The itinerary, which had been drawn up with precision, enabled us to meet all the religious of the five communities of the Province: those of *Tres Cantos* (Madrid) on 24 June; of *Seville* on 25-26 June; of *Valencia* on 27 June; of *Sant Pere de Ribes* on 28-29 June; and of *Barcelona* on 30 June. In all the places where groups of the Lay Camillian Family are present (*Tres Cantos*, *Seville*, *Valencia* and *Sant Pere de Ribes*) we had an opportunity to be able meet a large number of its members.

In concomitance with our pastoral visit, a meeting-retreat of the Province was planned for 1-3 July at the *Hotel-Balneario Cervantes* in the city of Santa Cruz de Mudela (Ciudad Real). This place is rich in Camillian history which was described in very great detail by Fr. Dionisio Manso at the beginning of the meeting and which will be outlined below in brief fashion in a historical summary of the Province of Spain.

The programme for the retreat was based on the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (2015-2016) and was organised around papers, reflection and meditation on mercy in St. Camillus de Lellis; on mercy in relation to health; and on mercy and its Christological dimension. We also had time for fraternal interaction and looking after our bodies with an opportunity to spend some time at the hot springs. During these days we ended the pastoral visit to the Province with a meeting with the Provincial Council and a celebration of the Eucharist with all those who came, which I had the honour to preside over.

The most substantial part of the pastoral visit was taken up with a crowded calendar of personal and community meetings during which we had an opportunity to dialogue with almost all the religious and celebrate the Eucharist together. This enabled us to listen to the heartbeat of the Province and to learn about its religious. In various communities, we had an opportunity to present the way in which the Order is developing the objectives that were established by the last two General Chapters (of 2013 and 2014) through the implementation of the Camillian project for the revitalisation of our consecrated lives (the six-year period of 2014-2020) as well as the three urgent and emergent priorities for the whole of the Order, which are: a) organising our economics and improving the checking of accounts and finances in order to achieve increasing transparency, beginning with the generalate house; b) stimulating the promotion of vocations and initial and ongoing formation, given that upon formation depends the possibility of the future existence of the Order; and c) increasing and engaging in internal and external communication between the Order, the Provinces, the Vice-Provinces and the Delegations. Without efficient and effective communication, it is impossible to speak about communion and fraternal life.

We also emphasised that we are experiencing an extremely favourable ecclesial context with the leadership of Pope Francis who is emerging as the principal moral leader of humanity as well as animating the Catholic Church through his magisterium. To be able to rely upon a pastor of this pastoral level and a point of reference for the whole of humanity, fills us, as Catholics, with pride. Being a Jesuit religious, Pope Francis knows well the interior dynamics of religious life, its lights (prophetic witness) and its shadows (crisis, ageing, the lack of vocations, the drastic reduction in the number of consecrated people...)

In this sense, the Year of Consecrated Life (2015-2016) and the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, with all their array of meanings for Camillian religious, who have received from God, through St. Camillus, *the charism of mercy*, are very opportune for our growth.

We highlighted the thought expressed by Pope Francis in his apostolic letter that was addressed to all consecrated men and women on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life: 'religious have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also *a great history still to be accomplished!* Looking to the past we must live with gratitude, live in the present with passion [and for we Camillians to serve with Samaritan compassion] and always embrace the future with hope'.

It is precisely in this history that we can meet the challenge of constructing the present and the future, placing ourselves in it as protagonists. At this moment in history, when we must cultivate the fear of disappearing because of the scarcity of vocations, ageing and the reduction in the number of religious, it will be very healthy, for your Provincial community as well, to engage in an exercise of analysis and planning about 'which future you wish to build'.

Some Flashes on the Long, Complex and Rich History of the Province of Spain

The community meeting of all the religious of the Province (1-3 July) took place in an enchanting place and one that is charged with symbolism and historical meaning for Camillians: Santa Cruz de Mudela, which is two and a half hours' drive by car from Madrid.

We stayed in a spa in the region of *Mancia* which was immortalised by the famous Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (born in Alcalá de Henares, 1547-1616) in his masterpiece of Spanish literature, *Las aventuras del ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*. This is a very beautiful rural region characterised by the cultivation of cereals, vineyards, olive groves and also by the presence, up to now, of the famous windmills against which Don Quixote tilted, given that he confused them with giant enemies. The *Balneario Cervantes* is near to Santa Cruz de Mudela where it is possible to visit the chapel and one of the hot springs which is dedicated to St. Camillus!

The Camillians arrived at this locality in the year 1737: at that time they were known in Spain as the '*Padres Agonizantes*' (because of their devotion to the dying). In Santa Cruz de Mudela the Camillians have provided pastoral service for almost a century (98 years) at the hospital *Lazareto de Jesús Nazareno*. It was the Camillians who discovered and utilised the hot springs in the area where the *Balneario* is now to be found. During their presence in this locality, the Camillians have had many vocations. In the same region, in a nearby village, *Villanueva de los Infantes*, Fr. Bartolomé Martínez Corella was born. He was later elected the Superior General of the Order. The *Padres Agonizantes* abandoned the area of Santa Cruz de Mudela in the year 1835, forced to do so by the violent suppression in the whole of Spain of all the religious Orders. The memory of those religious is still keenly felt by people in the region.

For those who do not know about the history of the Province of Spain, I would like to offer a short summary of the most important historical facts which can help us to contextualise the current presence of the Camillians in Spain.

The Province of Spain was the first to be established outside Italy. Its foundation was requested and sought after unsuccessfully by St. Camillus on two occasions. The third and final initiative, which involved its actual foundation, took place on 7 July 1634 when the General Consulta decided to send two Spanish Camillian religious to Spain, Fr. Alfonso López and Fr. Miguel Montserrat, together with a Genoese, Br. Francesco Isola, with a view to establishing the foundation in Spain. After initial resistance had been overcome, authorisation was granted by the Council of the Kingdom of Spain for the establishment of the first Camillian community in Madrid. After a rapid growth of the Camillian foundation, with the opening of new communities, on 6 September 1684 the canonical erection of the Province of Spain took place.

During these three centuries and a half since the foundation in Spain, the Camillians have written heroic pages of service to the sick but at the same time the Province has gone through vicissitudes of various kinds.

In these heroic pages service to sick and wounded soldiers during the war between Spain and France (between 1640 and 1659) stand out. In the year 1664 three Camillians involved in helping the wounded in an improvised field hospital in Fraga (Lleida) fell ill because of the great heat and hard work and in the end they died. They were the religious Centurione and Castagnola and the oblate Nicolò Fantite.

During the plague that devastated the city of Murcia in the year 1677, to which the Camillians had been called by King Carlos II (through the knight of the Order of St. James, Don Antonio Sevil de Santelires) to care for sick people who had been abandoned to their destiny by the local civil and ecclesiastical authorities, the Camillian Fr. José González Cortez died of the disease. The other four Camillian religious who had reached Murcia to serve the plague-stricken returned to their community in Madrid once the epidemic – during which they bore great witness to charity – had finished.

And nearer to us in time, during the epidemic of influenza of 1918, which in Europe was known as 'Spanish' influenza and in Spain simply as 'influenza', Fr. Urbano Izquierdo (in the locality of Pujalt) and Br. Vincenzo Coll (in Marines, Valencia) died helping the sick.

During the course of the eighteenth century, albeit with stages of advance and then of retreat because of vicissitudes of various kinds, the Province of Spain also entered the lands of South America

which belonged to the crown of Spain, achieving foundations in Peru (Lima 1736), Mexico (Mexico City 1755), Colombia (Bogota 1776), Bolivia (La Paz 1775), and Ecuador (Quito 1789). With the exception of the community of Lima which has existed since its foundation until the present day, all these presences were extinguished with the separation from the Kingdom of Spain and the creation of the new independent States of Latin America which then proceeded to decree the elimination of the religious institutes that had been previously established in their territories. The current presence of the Camillians in all these countries is the result of the new foundations which took place at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of our century.

From 1793 until 1909 the Province of Spain lived separated from the rest of the Order as an autonomous Congregation with its own statutes and privileges: it reached this status following a long process of discussion which culminated in the papal Breve *Apostolicae sedis auctoritas* issued by Pope Pius VI on 29 January 1793. This 'separate Province of Spain' included the houses of Spain and Latin America which, brought together, acquired the status of a Vice-Province.

The presence of the Camillian Order in Spain ended in 1835 following the decree by the government that closed down the religious Orders and Congregations. This edict was known as the *confisca di Mendizábal*. The Province was founded again in 1893 when political circumstances allowed this and a great effort was made by the various Camillian Provinces of Europe to achieve this end. The first Camillian religious to settle in Valencia, sent by the Superior General Fr. Mattis in 1893, was Fr. Stanislao Carcereri who was later joined by Fr. Angelo Morandini, Fr. Giuseppe Camillo Ciman, Fr. Luigi Steccanella, Br. Alessandro Bruschi, Fr. Joseph Holzapfel and Fr. Pio Holzer (this took place between October 1893 and the spring of 1894). In 1909 the houses of the Camillians in Spain created an autonomous Province, and the house of Lima, which was the only Camillian community in Latin America, joined this Province.

A tragic event marked the Province of Spain in the twentieth century at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939): twelve Camillian religious died as victims of the religious persecution which had been unleashed in Spain. As in the case of the other 6,832 religious (who included 13 bishops, 4,184 priests, 2,365 male religious and 283 women religious), the mere fact of being a religious and/or a priest was a 'good' reason for these political murders which in general were carried out by shootings by the Republican militias without any form of trial or formal sentence by a court.

The Province of Spain has 'given' four Superior Generals to the Order: Fr. Francisco Pérez Moreno (1728-1734), Fr. Sebastián López Cueto (1740-1743), Fr. Gabriel Marín de Moya (1764-1770) and Fr. Bartolomé Martínez Corella (1776-1782), to whom we can add a fifth: Fr. Pio Holzer (1923-1929) who was born in Trentino, belonged to the Province of France and received his formation in Verona and Roermond (Holland) but who from an early age exercised the Camillian ministry in Spain, where, indeed, he died.

The Camillian Province of Spain Today: the Human Assets and Ministry

The Camillian Province of Spain is currently made up of seven communities, of which two are in Argentina and the other two in Spain. In total there are 32 religious with perpetual vows, three temporary professed from the Delegation of Argentina, five religious of the Vice-Province of Peru, two religious of the Vice-Province of Burkina Faso, and two religious of the Vice-Province of Benin-Togo.

The average age of the religious is 63. If we take into consideration only the perpetually professed religious and one excludes from the calculation the religious from 'other Provinces', the average age is 73. We thus have before us a group of elderly religious.

As regards the exercise of the Camillian ministry, most of the religious who are 'fathers' devote themselves to spiritual care for the sick in hospital chaplaincies, above all in public hospitals, but they also engage in activity in private clinics. In some places, cooperation is engaged in with dioceses in coordinating pastoral care in health and the formation of agents of pastoral care in health.

The Province has two important works of its own: the *Hogar San Camilo* in Vagues (Argentina) where children and young people with grave physical and mental disabilities are cared for,

and the *Centro San Camilo* in Tres Cantos which is made up of the *Centro Asistencial* (whose mission is care) and the *Centro de Humanización de la Salud* (whose mission is to teach people how to provide care). The *Centro Asistencial* relies for its functioning upon the work of 136 professionals and 140 volunteers.

There is also a home for elderly people who cannot look after themselves and this has 141 beds (this institution has been operational since 1983); a day centre for elderly people who cannot look after themselves which has thirty places; and a palliative care unit for thirty-three patients (this has been operational since 2001). Through its service of psycho-social support, the *Centro Asistencial* accompanies sick people who are nearing the end of their lives, in other hospitals as well and in the homes of these people (this service has been operational since 2009). In 2015, this service offered its help to 1,038 patients in their homes or in the hospitals of Madrid. In the *Centro Asistencial* there is also the *Fundación Asistencial San Camilo* which with its seventy professionals offers constant assistance to sick people and elderly people in their homes – in the year 2015 this institution accompanied in all 283 people.

The building of the *Centro San Camilo* is one of the locations (the other is in the capital city of the country) of the *Centro de Escucha San Camilo*. There are various rooms which are used exclusively for individual listening to people who are in a state of difficulty (above all people in mourning or with ‘complicated’ situations) and there are other rooms for self-help groups (which in the same way are for people who find themselves in situations of pain, mourning and frailty).

The service offered by the listening centre is completely free for the users and is provided by four professionals and 160 volunteers. The listening centre also has a very original service in the form of a ‘mobile unit’: with the help of a camper, it travels throughout Spain to meet people who are going through mourning which has been made worse by a variety of factors, for example accidents, disasters and various kinds of tragedies. This mobile unit has a team of 25 volunteers who in the year 2015 managed to meet 655 people. Following the model of the *Centro de Escucha San Camilo*, in recent years a network of 23 consultation centres in various provinces has been established.

The *Centro de Humanización de la Salud* (which has been operational since 1989) has twenty-two professionals and a number of volunteers. It offers a notably vast gamut of courses for formation (at its buildings or at a distance) for a total of about 20,000 students. It has signed agreements with various universities for the teaching of postgraduate courses. It also organises a series of annual events, such as the *Jornadas de Humanización*, the *Jornadas de Alzheimer*, the *Jornadas de Luto*, and the *Jornadas de Cuidados Paliativos*, in each of which hundreds of people take part.

The *Centro de Humanización de la Salud* has a catalogue of its own publications with more than a hundred titles and thereby constitutes a qualified point of reference in Spain. This catalogue is shared with other Spanish-speaking Camillian centres in Latin America (Guadalajara, Bogotá, Quito, Santiago del Chile, Lima and Buenos Aires). For more than twenty years the *Centro de Humanización de la Salud* has published its review *Humanizar*, a two-monthly general publication which addresses subjects connected with pastoral care in health and the humanisation of health, and this review reaches more than 36 countries.

Another activity that deserves to be highlighted is the service provided by the Camillian Province of Spain to all the consecrated men and women of Spain through the *Fundación Hospital-Residencia Sant Camil* whose headquarters is at Sant Pere de Ribes (Barcelona). This is an inter-Congregational initiative which is called the *Programa de cuidados para la vida consagrada*. It was created in 2012 in response to a request made by various religious Congregations which needed to organise assistance for elderly religious in their communities or infirmaries. This initiative has been developed according to a philosophy of cooperation and has involved other Congregations as well, reaching about 45 infirmaries of thirty religious Congregations. At the present time, it has 423 people working for it and helps 1,195 men and women religious.

Some Observations and Recommendations

I will now offer a photographic flash to describe your Province: ‘The Province is going through a difficult situation which cannot be described easily in a few words. On the one hand, the age of the religious who are Spanish is increasing – there are no new vocations in Spain. Secondly, with us there are nine young religious – from Peru (5), Burkina Faso (2) and Benin (2) – both in Argentina and in Spain, with agreements that give them an active and a passive voice in our Province, as well as three religious with temporary vows who were in Argentina and are now in Spain’. This is how the General Delegate, Br. José Carlos Bermejo, described the current situation of the Province (cf. *Saludo tras la visita pastoral a la Provincia Española, Información del Delegado General*, Tres Cantos, 2 June 2016).

During our visit, through our personal and community dialogues, and as was also brought out by the initial diagnosis of the General Delegate, it emerged that you are worried about the future because of the rapid ageing of your religious, the lack of new vocations, and the decreased number of religious available for ministry. The *volume* of ministry of the religious is in gradual decline in terms of service provided to the Church and society, in the same way as the number of religious who engage in this ministry is also decreasing. This is taking place at the same time as the number of religious who for reasons of age or illness have retired and/or need health care has increased. However, with the cooperation of competent and committed lay people, and the coordination provided by some of you, ministerial activities on your various fronts of action – above all care and formation – have continued to grow.

As regards the subject of inter-Provincial cooperation, the young religious who arrive in Spain should not always be ‘passing through’. They should have a status that fosters in them a greater sense of belonging to, and continuity with, your Province. The provisional character of this ‘passing through’ offers a feeling of rejuvenation to the Province (which is a very positive thing) but it does not help us as regards taking responsibility in the long term. We invite you to examine this relationship, beyond this ‘temporary provisional character’ of the stay of these young religious.

Cooperation between religious and lay people in the professional sector of health care and formation, with a large and rather creative set of volunteers, is an important support and it is to be hoped that it can be increasingly strengthened. It would be important to involve a larger number of religious in this cooperation in order to avoid the responsibility for this project falling on the shoulders of one religious alone.

There are also questions about growth in terms of leadership which is now a challenge that has to be addressed, not only in the professional technical sector but also in the world of communities, through religious that are able to have the responsibility of being a superior and a financial administrator with serenity, capacity and a spirit of service. Improvisation is always disastrous and creates a fertile terrain for mediocrity. ‘But if there people are not there what can we do?’ This is a phrase that we heard a number of times. Let us go forward with trust and hope in He who has chosen us and will not abandon us with His providence now just as He did not abandon St. Camillus during his moments of suffering.

Today it appears to be especially necessary for the leadership of the Province to pay especial attention to taking care of those human vulnerabilities that are connected with the needs of the elderly religious and needs connected with other situations of illness experienced by religious. We agree with your concern and your initiatives to provide care in this area of community life, which does not have easy solutions, as, indeed, was said during our discussions during the course of the meeting of the Provincial Council in Santa Cruz de Mudela.

The Lay Camillian Family is by now an institution that is widespread in those parts of the world where the Camillians are present. The number of its members (about 3,000) is more than double the number of Camillian religious. In Spain we found various consolidated groups of the Lay Camillian Family in almost all the regions where the Camillians are present. However, we found a certain ageing of its members and excessive work for some of its other members. The groups of the Lay Camillian Family seem to experience great difficulty in attracting new members. We wonder whether this indicates, perhaps, a loss of initial charismatic appeal and attraction. Are we committed, we may ask, to supporting and accompanying in a spiritual sense these lay people? I encourage you to continue to

accompany these lay people who do, and achieve, so much good for sick people and for our communities in many situations. Sharing our charism with lay people is a challenge. In some situations and places in the world, the Lay Camillian Family constitutes the only hope that the Camillian charism will not disappear given that in a few years' time in these areas there will no longer be any Camillian religious.

At a ministerial level, as regards your works involving assistance and formation (which are discussed above) we were struck positively by the gospel transparency of the Camillian and Samaritan care offered to the 'last' people of society ('go towards those who live in the outskirts of existence', Pope Francis loves to repeat). Differently from some parts of the Camillian world where the purely commercial, administrative and technical aspects of our works are stronger, we appreciated that this does not take place in your institutions. Given the current situation of the economy in a globalised world, which is now undergoing a major crisis, maintaining economic and financial balance in institutions that work with agreements with state governments constitutes an authentic challenge. The news that you simply do not have any debts seemed to us to be extraordinary news!

We hope for effective, competent and efficient management that is supported by that wisdom of gospel and Camillian values which should conserve this reality and also know how to address your relationship with the political and economic situation of the health-care world, without injuring or jeopardising the future of these works of yours. There can be no doubt that we have before us prophetic witness to caring for the 'last of the last' in our *culture of discarding people*, helping with technical and scientific competence and with the competence of the heart, in the same way as you teach other people to take care of their neighbours. We would like to emphasise the deep operational harmony that exists between care, assistance, formation and teaching people to take care of others that you have achieved in your institutions.

We would also like to emphasise the constant cooperation between your Province and the general government of the Order: it has been visible through your participation from the outset in the activities of the International Institute for the Theology of Pastoral Care in Health (the *Camillianum*) as lecturers and through financial support. We here remember the figure and the role of Fr. Francisco Álvarez who died not long ago.

For many years the cooperation as a teacher (not without sacrifices!) of Br. José Carlos Bermejo at the *Camillianum* has continued. Your contribution to the creation, growth and strengthening of a new culture of care in the field of health and health care in the context of the universal Church continues every year with the award by the Province of Spain of a number of study grants to a number of students who do not have sufficient financial resources who come above all else from Africa and Latin America. In recent decades the Province of Spain has offered some of its religious as members of the General Consulta, namely in the past Fr. Francisco Álvarez, Br. Yokin Kámara, Fr. Jesús María Ruiz, and at the present time Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla, the financial administrator, treasurer and member of the General Consultor for missions.

We renew our profound appreciation of the financial help that you offered to the generalate house at the beginning of the year 2014 during a sad moment in the crisis whose tragic events we all know about. May God reward you for the great generosity and solidarity that you offered at a particularly difficult moment for the general government of the Order!

Another fine example of openness and cooperation as regards the international events of the Order was experienced by you with the organisation in Tres Cantos of the event of the 'Madrid Exchange' in April of this year. This was a meeting of all the centres for humanisation and pastoral care in health and other expressions of formation of the Order together with Camillian religious who are medical doctors. Next September in Buenos Aires you will host those taking part in the meeting of animators of vocations and people providing formation of the Pan-American area. The investment of people and economic resources that the Delegation of Argentina is making in the promotion of vocations is praiseworthy and must be continued and supported. If we are not visible and we are not

capable of attracting people, in a short time we will be unrecognisable and insignificant for other people.

In Spain we saw a well organised Camillian Province, with economic transparency on the part of the religious as regards the financial situation, a Province without debts (halleluia!) and with a reasonable economic reserve which allows you to go forward with ease of mind as regards your various projects of evangelisation and mission. The sector of communication is very developed and pursues a commendable synergy with the communications apparatus of the Order. It performs in an effective way the function and the mission of rapidly sharing news and communications with all the religious.

We are certain that these subjects, together with other topics in which you have shared interest, will be taken into consideration in the planning of the next local Chapters and the Provincial Chapter which will be celebrated in the first months of 2017 – these are subjects and questions that deserve to be examined, reviewed and redirected, if this is necessary, in order to plan and construct a promising future. The future is not a mere accidental reality. We certainly believe in Divine Providence but we are aware that we need to offer our responsible and aware contribution. We have in our hands a precious responsibility and we cannot flee from it. We must not waste the opportunity of being protagonists of our history starting with what we have inherited (expression of gratitude) and faced with the challenges of our time (embracing the future with hope). It is always healthy for us to ask ourselves about the legacy that we are building and handing down to the future generations of Camillian religious!

At the end of this message we are aware that this pastoral visit was ‘very quick’ and did not allow us enough time to speak with the authorities of the local Church in which you live and work or to visit some of the works in which you exercise the Camillian ministry, or even less to relax and visit some of the important expressions of Spanish culture. There is no doubt that some more days were necessary, but this is what we were able to do at that specific moment. The promise that was made at the time of the meeting with the Provincial Council remains valid, namely to come back again to make up for these gaps. This time our visit was concentrated exclusively on encounter and on personal and community dialogue with the religious.

Before sending our final greetings, we want to express our gratitude to you for your warm welcome, your hospitality and for taking care of our personal needs, which, indeed, we experienced in all of your communities. As Camillians we truly felt at home!

May the God of life who has called us to be missionary disciples in the world of health and health care always keep us impassioned to live and live with others, and above all happy to be able to serve with Samaritan compassion in the ‘existential outskirts of the human heart’ (cf. Pope Francis)! May St. Camillus, our Father and Founder, whose feast day is celebrated on 14 July, always protect you in your concerns and hopes! May Mary, Our Lady of Health, Mother of Mercy, cover you with her maternal cloak against the dangers of discouragement and pessimism that at times tempt us!

We rely upon the prayers of all of you! We leave you, emphasising again our appreciation of this valuable time of sharing and being together in a fraternal way!

Rome, 14 July 2016

The feast day of St. Camillus de Lellis – 402 years after his death

Fr. Leocir Pessini

Superior General

Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla

Financial administrator and General Consultor for Missions