

CONCLUSION OF THE (PASTORAL AND CANONICAL) FRATERNAL VISIT TO THE CAMILLIAN PROVINCE OF BRAZIL

Expression of Gratitude

‘Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism!’
(*Pope Francis, Misericordiae vultus*, n. 15)

‘The Church has acknowledged in St. Camillus and his Order the charism of mercy towards the sick and has seen in it the source of our mission, defining the work of the Founder as a “new school of charity”’
(Constitution of the Camillian Order, n. 9)

Rev. Fr. Antonio Mendes Freitas /the Provincial Council,

The Provincial Superior of the Camillian Province of Brazil,

Dear Camillian Religious,

Health and peace!

At the end of our (fraternal and canonical) pastoral visit to the Camillian Province of Brazil, we express our most sincere thanks to you for the preparations, the fraternal welcome and the various occasions of shared company that you organised for us so that we could be together, during our individual conversations, community meetings, and moments of celebration and festivity. It was truly a moment of grace and fraternal and spiritual growth.

This expression of gratitude is extended to all the Camillian communities of Brazil that we met during the first stage of the visit (2-24 May 2016), and it is now extended in particular to the Camillian communities that we visited during the second stage of this visit (12-14 July 2016) in the Centre-North, North-East and East of Brazil: Brasilia (DF), Macapà (AP), Fortaleza (CE) – the ‘San Camillo di Lagoa Redonda’ community; the ‘Curato d’Ars’ community; and the ‘Maria Maddalena’ community of Itapemirim (ES) and Rio de Janeiro (RJ).

In the message that we sent at the end of the pastoral visit to your Province (dated 3 June 2016), we observed that ‘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’. Now that all the religious of the Province have been visited by the Superior General, one can consider the pastoral visit to the Camillian Province of Brazil officially ended.

We hope that the message to the Province (3 June 2016), like the messages of the Superior General at the end of his visits to the two Delegations of the Camillian Province of Brazil – Bolivia (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, January 2016) and the United States of America (Milwaukee (WI), June 2015) – have been the subjects of reading and reflection and have been taken into consideration in the preparations for the next Provincial Chapter which will be celebrated at the end of January 2017, as well as placed on its list of subjects for deliberation. We would like to suggest that all the members

of the Chapter have in their dossiers for this Chapter a copy of this document in order to facilitate the decisions that are taken as regards the priorities at the level of work for the next three years of the government of your Province.

As proposals or suggestions for the Province, we hereby point to certain questions that are of relevance in addressing the next Provincial Chapter, as indicated in the pastoral letter that was sent after our first visit (3 June 2016). Amongst the various suggestions, we would like to emphasise:

1. **The missionary spirit of the Province.** What can we do in concrete terms to relaunch the missionary outlook of the Province? How can we animate and encourage the younger religious to live this ‘personal exodus’ to go towards the ‘existential and geographical fringes’ (cf. Pope Francis)? What must we do to strengthen the missionary frontiers of the Province?
2. **The promotion of vocations.** If we are not able to be generators of new generations of Camillians, in the future we will no longer exist. How can we strengthen the way things are, involving more people in order to direct and animate the inter-Congregational weekly vocational meetings which seem to be a promising way and style by which to awaken new Camillian vocations?
3. **Our (care-providing, educational and social) works.** The Province of Brazil, in the context of the Camillian Order as a whole, is the Province which has the greatest social responsibility and the highest number of professional lay people. Only counting people who work with the Province, the figure reaches over 25,000.
 - 3.1. Connecting and living the **requirements of philanthropy** within the requirements of the law is already a great guarantee that the part of the population that is most in need will continue to be helped as regards its health needs. This is also a matter of continuing to meet the requirements of the law in an exemplary way. Is it still really possible to have works of charity where philanthropy is not actually present and where our presence is identified with ‘mere commercial or business activity’ (‘We are called to live in the present with passion and serve with Samaritan compassion’)?
 - 3.2. **Revisiting the text of the Charter of Principles of Brazilian Camillian Institutions** and assessing how it is used as an instrument for humanisation and evangelisation. What concrete results have we obtained through having an effective appreciation of this document and not seeing it solely as ‘a publicity document to be shown to people’ or a simple instrument of marketing?
 - 3.3. **Lay professionals as employees:** what happens at the concrete level of evangelisation and humanisation with the lay professionals who work in our institutions? Could one not perhaps organise better, for example, the strategy of voluntary work? For example, the Marcelline sisters, in San Paolo, organise and do voluntary work with their employees at the Camillian ‘La Croix’ Hospital in Zinvié, Benin, Africa.
 - 3.4. **The Camillian Family.** Its members seem to be visibly advanced in years and above all there is a lack of new members. What support are we offering to strengthen and rejuvenate this team?
4. **The future of the Province (‘embracing the future with hope’).** In the year 2022, in six years’ time, the Camillian Province of Brazil will celebrate its first centenary of the arrival of the first Camillian religious in Brazil.
 - What programme looking forward to this important appointment is being considered in order to obtain greater visibility in the Church and society, as well as personal, community and Provincial rebirth?

- What should be done to conserve the memory of our pioneers, the true heroes of the first Camillian ‘hour’ in Brazil? As regards the family relatives of these religious, would it not be an example of human and Christian sensitivity, and also evangelical justice, to remember them and do something for them...remembering the families of Fr. Calisto, Fr. Angelo Pigatto, Fr. Giulio, Fr. Dionisio...and many others...(**‘looking at the past with gratitude’**).
5. ***Fraternal experience in our communities***: how are we living the **‘communion of goods’**?
- Do we try to choose time to cultivate our spirituality and mission and to spend time together?
 - Are we vigilant and prudent in order to ensure that we do not fall into activism or a heartless pragmatism, as a result of which ‘because of the work of the harvest of the Lord we run the risk of forgetting about the Owner of the harvest’?
 - Religious identity and professional practice (above all when we behave like managers): why is it uncomfortable to present ourselves with our own religious identity? Should we deny or uphold our identity? What is the pathway of our witness?

We take our leave of you, renewing once again our gratitude for the welcome and the fraternity that we experienced and to which you bore witness.

May the Lord and St. Camillus help us so that we can be increasingly merciful towards those who are on the ‘geographical and existential fringes’, through our personal witness and through the numerous Camillian works and parishes that are to be found throughout Brazil!

Rome, 31 July 2016
Memorial of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Fr. Leocir PESSINI
Superior General

Br. José Ignacio SANTAOLALLA
Financial administrator and member of the General Consulta responsible for missions