

MESSAGE TO THE CAMILLIAN RELIGIOUS OF THE VICE-PROVINCE OF PERU
After the visit of 14-18 August 2016 which completed the pastoral visit of August 2015

‘With all its possible differences, religious fraternity is an experience of love that goes beyond conflicts. Community conflicts are inevitable: in a certain sense they have to exist if the community really lives sincere and loyal relationships. That is life. To think of a community without brothers who live in difficulty has no meaning, and is not good. If in a community conflicts are not suffered, this means that something is lacking. Reality tells us that in all families and in all human groups there is conflict. And conflict should be taken on: it must not be ignored. If covered, it creates pressure and then explodes. A life without conflicts is not life...Tenderness helps to overcome conflicts...At times we are very cruel. We experience the common temptation to criticise for personal satisfaction or to obtain a personal advantage. At times, the crises of fraternity are due to the frailty of a personality and in this case the help of a professional, of a psychologist, should be asked for. We should not be afraid of this; we must not be afraid of necessarily falling into psychologism. But never, never must we act as administrators of the conflict of a brother. We must involve our hearts’.

Pope Francis to the Union of Superior Generals, Eighty-second General Assembly, Rome, 29 November 2013

‘The problem of money is a very serious problem, both in consecrated life and in the diocesan Church. We must never forget that the devil enters “through our pockets”: the pockets of the bishop and the pockets of the congregation. This touches on the problem of poverty...But greed for money is the first step towards corruption in a parish, in a diocese, in a congregation of consecrated life: it is the first step... It is prudent to have savings; it is prudent to have good administration, perhaps with some investment, that is prudent: for the houses of formation, to continue works for the poor, to manage schools for the poor, to continue apostolic works...If poverty becomes destitution, this too causes harm. There one sees the spiritual prudence of the community in common discernment... But please, do not let yourselves be fooled by friends of the congregation, who then fleece you and take everything from you...There are many cunning people, so many. Prudence means never consulting only one person: when you need something, consult various people, different ones. The administration of assets is a very serious responsibility, very serious, in consecrated life...But money is never, never a solution to spiritual problems. It is a necessary aid, but just that. Saint Ignatius said that poverty is the “mother” and “wall” of religious life. It enables us to grow in religious life like a mother, and protects it. Decadence begins when poverty is lacking’.

Pope Francis to the Plenary Assembly of the International Union of Superior Generals (UISG) – Rome, 12 May 2016

***Dear Fr. Wilson Enrique Gonzales Carbajal, Vice-Provincial Superior of Peru,
 Esteemed members of the Council of the Camillian Vice-Province of Peru,
 Peruvian Camillian religious brothers,***

Health and peace in the Lord of our lives!

At the end of our visit of 13-18 August 2016 (which complemented and completed the pastoral visit of 19-31 August 2015), we still have vivid in our hearts and memories the moments of encounter that we experienced during the meeting of the Vice-Province (at the *Siloam* House of Exercises, Chosica, on 15-16 August). The principal objective of this meeting was to finalise a ‘reflection upon, and initial consultation about, the possibility of acquiring the status of a Province in the near future’.

The general government of the Order was present at this meeting through Fr. Leocir Pessini, the Superior General, and Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla, the member of the General Consulta of the Order responsible for finances and mission. We would like to observe that we promised our presence at this meeting, which we ourselves suggested during the pastoral visit of 19-31 August 2015.

During this period also present in Lima was Fr. Arnaldo Pangrazzi – a lecturer at the *Camillianum* (Rome) and a supervisor in clinical pastoral education. For the whole month of August, Fr. Arnaldo engaged in a course in clinical pastoral care for a group of fourteen people, amongst whom were men and women Camillian religious and consecrated people from other religious Congregations; for some members of the Camillian family; and for other lay people from Peru and other countries of Latin America such as Colombia and Ecuador.

The participation of religious in the meeting was very satisfactory – most of the religious of the Vice-Province of Peru took part. The meeting was organised around two days (15-16 August). The first day was dedicated to a retreat which was experienced as meditation and where we were accompanied by the thoughts and the sharing of life experiences of Fr. Cesar Torres, a Redemptorist religious who is very well known and appreciated in Peru. Various meditations were offered on the theme: ‘Consecrated Life in the Year of Mercy and Today’s Challenges for Religious Identity’.

The second day, at the beginning of the session, witnessed the reading and discussion of an article by the General Inspector of the Salesians, Don Angel Fernandez Artime, on the subject: ‘Consecrated Life: between ‘Loving Poverty’, ‘Necessary Management’ and ‘the Temptation of Power’’. This had been read on the occasion of the last general assembly of the Union of Superior Generals held in Rome on 26-28 May 2016).

Afterwards an attempt was made to go to the heart of the chief purpose of the meeting: to assess the possibility of the Vice-Province becoming a Province in the near future. To do this, during the weeks prior to the general assembly you organised preparatory work in all your communities when you discussed this basic question. During the assembly a summary of all the contributions of the communities was presented according to the method of ‘seeing, judging, acting’, analysing the strong points, the weak points, the advisable steps, the threats/forms of resistance (SWOT), and the procedure to be followed to achieve the goal of becoming a Province. This document was discussed in groups that were asked to select three principal elements for each of the questions of strength, weakness, advisable steps, and resistance, and to identify three pathways of action for a strengthening and/or implementation of the characteristics that had been identified and agreed upon.

One group thought about the question: *what should we do to become a Province?* The conclusions of its deliberations were communicated to, and then discussed by, the plenary assembly. With the participants arranged in groups, all the contributions of the seven communities of your Vice-Province were then addressed. The groups selected three principal characteristics of the following aspects: points of strength, points of weakness, advisable steps and threats/tensions, together with three pathways of action which were proposed to strengthen and finalise what had been agreed upon.

We here present the results of this document enriched by the discussion which took place during the plenary assembly. This analysis could be an important and in-depth document for the next Chapter of the Vice-Province which is envisaged for the beginning of the year 2017.

POINTS OF STRENGTH

1. The Vice-Province has adequate infrastructures: formation, various ministerial communities, the formation of pastoral workers, works (as an expression of the charism for the good of the communities in which you live).

Implementation:

- Being more recognised and valued in the places where we live and work.
- Thinking about how to re-modulate our spaces for new ministerial initiatives.
- Generating income using certain spaces/environments which otherwise would not have the resources for their own maintenance.

2. We have the human and material resources which will allow us to take responsibility for other chaplaincies and enjoy an income from this ministerial activity.

Implementation:

- Recognising and remembering that all the religious of the Vice-Province are valuable. In addition, valuing the very low average age of the religious themselves.
- Assessing and recognising the gifts of each religious which can, and must enrich, the Camillian charism.
- Implementing the self-sustainability of ministerial communities.

3. The Vice-Province perceives the wish of its religious to improve and grow both intellectually and spiritually.

Implementation:

- Adopting ongoing formation as a necessary and indispensable instrument for the maturity of each religious.
- Strengthening meetings between chaplains as an opportunity for updating.
- Valuing the help that you receive from abroad in the formation and in the specialisation of religious.

ADVISABLE STEPS

1. The riches of the Camillian charism

- All the religious should acquire and live a concrete and real experience of Camillian ministry: our works and our parishes should be experienced as an intense Camillian proposal within the social and civil realities to which they belong.
- A 'professional' grounding of religious so that they can make their contribution to the world of health and health care, in particular amongst health-care workers.
- Strengthening and giving space to religious who have already received their formation so that they can share with lay people and religious the abilities and skills that they have already acquired during their formation.

2. A community as a place of fraternal life together

- The pursuit of sincere, honest and transparent relationships.
- The promotion of shared spaces amongst religious.
- A greater commitment to respecting the agreements reached within a community.

3. Gratitude: towards the community and towards 'older brothers'

- Valuing what the Camillian community has done for each one of us through the people that have accompanied us hitherto on our journey of studies, formation and ministry.
- Taking into consideration and valuing our elderly religious who have offered the best of their energies for our Vice-Province. Also honouring the memory of those who have preceded us in charity through the witness of their lives.
- Implementing my contribution to the community as a sign of gratitude.

WEAKNESSES

1. As regards formation: a lack of religious identity as regards our charism and spirituality; a low level of interest in ongoing formation and the formation of those providing formation.

A commitment to:

- Revising our rules for formation and adapting them to the *new times*.
- Identifying from amongst the religious of the Vice-Province new providers of formation who can meet the needs of the young men of today.
- Thinking anew about how the promotion of vocations is practised.

2. Interpersonal relationships within communities and above all between religious.

A commitment to:

- A necessary and patient recognition by religious of one another in order to achieve mutual acceptance.
- Setting in motion a pathway of fraternity, pursuing sincerity and personal, mature and respectful dialogue, against all forms of hypocrisy.
- The promotion of community life against an individualism that is very much emphasised in our social realities.

3. A lack of leadership in authority.

A commitment to:

- Local Superiors and animators, and the Vice-Province, working for each individual religious so that his personal charisms are used for the good of the Order.
- They must promote honest, transparent and mature dialogue, always seeking to be merciful, with patience and an aptitude for listening. They must be sensitive and efficient.
- They must promote amongst us an atmosphere of transparency, in particular from an economic point of view, which is so central in the life of the Vice-Province.

THREATS/FORMS OF RESISTANCE

1. A lack of openness to dialogue: resentment

The promotion of:

- Measured, respectful and transparent dialogue between the members of a community. Personal questions should be resolved only between the 'two' involved.
- In the case of conflicts that are no longer manageable, the mediation of the Superior or another religious should be sought in order to conserve a fraternal atmosphere.
- We cannot pay people back – in a vindictive way – for the injustices that we have endured.

2. Keeping a person in the same post and not moving him: authoritarianism

The promotion of:

- The presence of one or more religious in our works in order to facilitate the visibility and the coordination of our Camillian presence.
- Providing formation to people who can take on the management of works, accompanied by a religious who already knows the work of the institutions involved. There must be an operational continuity as regards work: it is not possible to start every activity from zero when a new religious takes responsibility for it.
- Improving trust in the capacities of young religious.

3. Absence when it comes to the decisions of the community.

The promotion of:

- The eradication of the search for personal advantages to the detriment of the community or the other religious.
- The concern of each of the members of the community for their fellow religious: leaving a task and not delegating this task to the Superior alone.
- Trust as an instrument that helps us in achieving an understanding of the personal or family problems that can be experienced by a religious so that the community helps him in his search for support and accompanying.

What steps must be taken to become a Province?

1. The reconciliation and integration of everyone. How can this be achieved?

- Through personal dialogue. Promoting meetings to resolve, analyse and address personal conflicts.
- The building up of *healing communities* that welcome, engage in dialogue, understand, support and listen means the creation of places of celebration and happiness.
- Celebrating mercy and reconciliation between everyone.

2. Strengthening our identity and a sense of belonging to our religious family. How can this be achieved?

- Encouraging participation, commitment and involvement in the decisions and activities of a community that are proposed by the Vice-Province.
- Revitalising the capacity for formation of all the religious and above all of the team responsible for formation.
- Encouraging the commitment of all those who make up the Vice-Province. There can be no excuses here.

3. Promoting and enriching our community through the search for values such as honesty, trust, dialogue, respect and fraternal correction. How can this be achieved?

- Working with joy in our ministry and consecration: there are many complaints and few joys. Let us remember that we have committed ourselves to being happy.
- Learning to mature amidst crises.
- Knowing how to look for help when we are able to recognise our own limitations. Having the courage and the humility to be helped and accompanied.

After the reports had been read out to the assembly, time was dedicated to strengthening some ideas or proposing new ones.

The Vice-Provincial, Fr. Enrique, concluded by observing that we must look in a responsible way at the work and the commitment of each religious and that we must help each other through the promotion of dialogue and not division, using the instruments that are needed to be transparent in all the questions that involve use of the instruments or responsibilities that are required for the smooth running of the Vice-Province.

At the end of this work there were some moments of tension and discussion in relation to personal situations and these generated a certain apprehension in the whole of the group. It is certainly the case that these questions relating to personal conflicts which cause dissatisfaction and concern for everyone, altering the serenity and the peace of community life, must be addressed (managed in an evangelical way) as a priority by the Vice-Provincial and his council.

As Pope Francis observed in a passage in his dialogue with the Superior Generals at their General Assembly on 29 November 2013 – in a text that is to be found at the beginning of this message – we must not be afraid of conflicts: a life without conflict would not be an authentic life. The crucial question is how to ‘manage’ these personal conflicts. If they are not addressed, conflicts will compromise the life of fraternity and the feeling of belonging to the Vice-Province and the Order. Here there is a need to go on a journey, a process of reconciliation in order to live mutual respect in peace and serenity. We need to live ‘for each other’ and not ‘against each other’.

A great deal was also said by many people about the economic and financial self-sustainability of the Vice-Province. This is certainly a great challenge and one that has to be addressed, but without giving way to despair. The need repeatedly emerged to achieve a responsible and transparent management of the presentation of the accounts of the Vice-Province and its works.

Representing the central government of the Order, we suggest that to begin with every three months, and then every month, there should be a meeting of all the institutions of the Vice-Province (the CEFOSA, the St. Camillus Clinic, the *Hogar San Camilo*, and others). This should be coordinated by the Vice-Provincial and his council, with the participation of all the functionaries and managers of these institutions, in order to present budgets (strategic planning, difficulties, challenges and achievements). Only by creating synergy between these institutions, with the necessary central coordination, will it be possible to proceed safely and with serenity in this field, which must help those most in need, without falling into the temptation of power! Alone and isolated it is easy to fall into discouragement which in the ends burns people and does not generate any kind of evangelical witness. This is certainly not the way to proceed – indeed, it is a style that should be avoided.

We need to establish and actuate a new mentality as regards the management and production of accounts in full transparency. This does not take place without coordination. I invite you, and I encourage you, to continue to advance in the work that has already been done in the Vice-Province

to coordinate all the infrastructural and economic resources. It is a sad fact, but this is something that we must remember, that the ‘non communion of goods’ is a grave offence to the vow of poverty and can constitute a grave reason for the expulsion of a religious from the Order.

Both if it is decided to move to the status of a Province and if it is decided to remain a Vice-Province, there is a need for change to overcome an ‘atmosphere of subterranean pain’ which exists in the Vice-Province, as was highlighted by some of you.

The third day of our presence in Peru was dedicated to two celebrations. The first was with the community of the Daughters of St. Camillus who now live where Fr. Luigi Tezza lived and died. These spaces have been completely renewed and decorated. Now it has the appearance of a very fine and dignified place, with a museum in which the objects that belonged to this Blessed are on display. Together with the Vice-Provincial, I presided over the celebration of the Eucharist and then I blessed the various places of this historic community. On the occasion of this celebration I was able to meet many men and women religious and lay people. The second celebration was in the evening of 17 August when we celebrated the Eucharist in the church of the religious house of the *Buenamuerte*, celebrating the Assumption of Our Lady with a notable presence of Camillian religious, students, and lay people connected with the Camillian charism.

We thank the government of the Vice-Province in the person of Fr. Enrique and his councillors for the valuable service that has been rendered in terms of the coordination and animation of the lives of the Camillians in Peru. Let us go forward on our mission, without losing heart and without being discouraged, even amidst ‘examples of incomprehension’. As Pope Francis often reminds us, in carrying out this mission we will always be ‘on a cross’, often unjustly, but we are searching for the way of truth and the common good.

We appreciate the hospitality that you gave us. We found feeling at home amongst you simple and easy. You have before you a work agenda that is very delicate and demanding. Address it in a spirit of gospel truth and mutual respect! Let us remember that who is responsible is not only the central government of the Vice-Province – each one of you is co-responsible!

We hope that the next Chapter of the Vice-Province will be a moment of *kairos*, of the presence of the grace of God, and of discernment on your part so that you it makes you responsible to history in advancing towards the future which should be constructed following the designs of God.

We greet you fraternally and pray to St. Camillus, our Father Founder, and the Blessed Luigi Tezza, ‘the apostle of Lima’, so that they may stimulate you to journey forward without fear of the future, addressing with courage the challenges that we discussed during our pastoral visit, and whose urgency we have reminded you about in this letter, with gospel serenity, sensitivity and truth.

San Pablo/Madrid, 23 August 2016

*Feast Day of **Saint Rose of Lima** (1586-1617) – the first saint of the Americas*

Fr. Leocir PESSINI

Superiore General

Br. José Ignacio SANTAOLALLA

General Financial Administrator and Member of the General Consulta Responsible for Missions