

TO THE MAJOR SUPERIORS OF THE ORDER LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT GENERAL CHAPTERS OF THE PROVINCES, VICE-PROVINCES AND DELEGATIONS

Religious assume responsibility for the life of the Order primarily in chapters. All who have the right participate in them in order to express their viewpoint and to decide on matters pertaining to religious life, under the direction of the superior or the presiding officer (cf. Constitution, n. 112).

Esteemed Camillian religious, Superiors of Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Delegations, greetings!

Following our shared reflections of the recent meeting that we held together in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on 9-16 October last, by this letter I wish to suggest some elements for thought for the by now imminent General Chapters of Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Delegations that you will celebrate at the beginning of the year 2017.

The Camillian Project 'Towards a Faithful and Creative Life: Challenges and Opportunities' can be a useful instrument in the preparations for these General Chapters, both for individuals and for communities, with an assessment and planning of your Provincial initiatives according to the three priorities that the Project identified: (initial and ongoing) formation; transparency and rigour at an economic level; and commitment in communication in order to create greater communion. The same may be said of the Messages that I sent you at the end of my fraternal and pastoral visits to you.

I invite everyone to address certain questions which I believe are of vital importance for the future organisation of our communities in the Order and thus for the growth of our Camillian lives, the quality of our fraternity, and profound belief in our ministry in all its forms.

1. The possibility of inter-Provincial cooperation, starting with the *Camillian Project*; the challenges/futures of the continents to which we belong; and cooperation at the level of ministry and formation.
2. The question of the *diaspora* of religious between different Provinces. By now this is a phenomenon that involves the whole of the Order (above all from the 'youngest' and most numerous Camillian Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Delegations towards those that are most 'elderly' and least provided for in terms of numbers) which we can no longer dismiss as an event that provides temporary support to certain Provinces which are in a state of difficulty. Do we need guidelines that can accompany and assure the transparency of institutional and fraternal relations in this exchange of religious?
3. The European Provinces are asked to focus on the prospects for their own survival (fusion, union, amalgamation, elimination, becoming a Delegation of...) and to try to achieve a sufficiently agreed upon formulation of practical proposals that take into due account their 'practical management'; the immediate future of their internal leadership; their organisation of formation and the animation of vocations; their responsibilities towards their communities of mission that are outside Europe (where these exist); their ministerial activities; their ownership of goods; the management of the works that they own; the identification of timetables and stages for the assessment of pathways of unification...
4. The General Chapters are moments of dialogue to assess and plan the life of a Province, Vice-Province or Delegation, with a view to the identification and the proposing of some priorities that can then accompany, at least for a three-year period, the concrete events of our Camillian lives. I hope that they will be events where serenity and frankness in dialogue will assure that everyone has the freedom to express their own viewpoints and their votes on questions that

emerge as being of priority importance for the coming years and on the people who are called, in the logic of service, to take on the roles and responsibilities of leadership and animation.

On this point, I would like to emphasise a further element that will be useful for your discernment as regards the approach and outlook of the next major Superiors. They should be religious who feel involved in this kind of service-authority-role, seeing it as a priority and holding it to exclusive, above all in the largest Provinces, with young and elderly religious, activities at the level of ministry and formation, fellow workers, volunteers, engagement in their local areas and local Churches...which require from them authentic full immersion.

The itinerary of the elections for the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors

As soon as the *slate* of candidates is known (this applies to those who use this system of prior consultation), an election will take place for the new Provincial Superior. All religious are called to vote and to send their vote ***before Palm Sunday (9 April 2017)*** to the generalate house of Rome. The heads of the secretariats of the General Chapters are invited to send in the written proceedings of the General Chapters.

Immediately after Easter, the Superior General will proceed to the appointment of the new Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors. From the moment of the publication of these appointments, it will be possible to vote for the Provincial or Vice-Provincial General Councils. The ballot papers for these elections should be sent to the generalate house in Rome as soon as possible.

Wishing all of you a fruitful conclusion to the Holy Year of Mercy and a good journey towards Advent, preparing for the event of the Incarnation of the Son of God, I send to you my fraternal greetings!

*Rome, 11 November 2016
St. Martin of Tours – Saint of Mercy*

Fr. Leocir PESSINI
Superior General