

INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF CAMILLIAN FORMATORS AND VOCATION ANIMATORS

***The Camillian promotion
of vocation and formation in harmony with the signs of the times
and new needs in order to build a future of Hope***

ROME 12 - 18 OCTOBER 2017 202017

**Villa Primavera –
Suore Ancelle dell’Incarnazione**

Message of the Formators and the Vocation Animators to the Order

The Consulta has organized an international meeting of Camillian formators and vocation animators on October 12-18, 2017 in Rome. The meeting took place at Villa Primavera, at the house of the Handmaids of the Incarnation. This meeting is part of the priorities of the Consulta in these six-year term in response to the call of the last Extraordinary General Chapter (Ariccia, Rome, June 2014) as mandated by the *Camillian Project, Towards a Creative and Faithful Life: Challenges and Opportunities*. The theme of this meeting is *"Vocation promotion and Camillian formation in harmony with the signs of the times and the changing needs in order to build a future of hope."*

We are more than 50 participants, mostly young Camillians who are in-charged of formation and vocation promotion coming from the different geographical areas of the Order, together with some sisters of the Daughters of St. Camillus and the Handmaids of the Incarnation. The primary focus of the meeting is the updating of the Guidelines of Formation and the revitalization of our vision and programs, of the tools and strategies in the area of vocation promotion and formation to Camillian life.

In communion with the entire Order, we want to make a diagnosis in order to deepen our understanding of some characteristics of the youth of today in a globalized world; to revisit St. Camillus' process of discernment of vocations of his time; to consider the aspect of interculturality in the process of vocation discernment and formation; to facilitate exchange and reflection on promotion of vocation and formation experiences.

To enrich our reflection, we received three conferences. The first one, given by Father Pascual Chávez (former Major Rector of the Salesians), has focused on the following questions: Where we meet the young people today? From where are they coming to us and what are their reasons? Finally, what is concretely our approach in discerning their human and spiritual needs in formation?

In a world marked by the influence of social media, the studies and research have shown the fact that many young people of today are suffering from psychological fragility, vocation inconsistency, and moral relativism. Faced with this reality, we are called, as formators and animators, to develop new skills to discern and to know the key points of their pleas to help them find the meaning of their lives and develop a well-informed conscience to be able to swim against the current. Knowing their real needs, we can touch and warm their hearts and mind to engage in their journey to conversion and growth.

With the help of Father Laurent Ouedraogo, (Camillian), in the second conference, we look back at our history by analyzing the 19 letters of St. Camillus addressed to both formators and consultors regarding vocation discernment process of the Camillian candidates. From his letters, St. Camillus suggests to the formators to accept only the good, making sure of the candidate's spiritual maturity, verifying the signs of authenticity and progress in his vocation in the light of the Holy Spirit. Beyond human and intellectual capacities, vocation discernment, according to St. Camillus, is first and foremost a faith-process through which we try to observe the authenticity of the call and promote fidelity to it.

The seedling of Saint Camillus is now planted in 41 countries and growing in diverse cultures. The fact of multiculturalism in the Order calls us to reflect on the interculturality. The third conference of Father Matthew Wattamattam (General superior of the Claretians), has offered us essential insights on the concern of interculturality. In fact, in our time, there are new phenomena that mark the entire human relationship and challenge the possibility and capacity of a new attitude of humanity. The phenomenon of globalization has highlighted the growing interdependence and exposed many disparities of the otherness.¹ The other, the problem of the other and the relationship with the other,

¹ MOUNIER E, *Gli esistenzialismi*, Ecumenica, Bari 1981, 102.

is an anthropological and ethical challenge that vested our epoch.² The nature of this era is expressed fundamentally in the problem of interpersonal relations that contemporary philosophy and the sociology of the integration³ are facing a shift in emphasis from the individual to the person, from the self to others, from subjectivity to inter-subjectivity.

Formation in the context of interculturality requires that each one continually fulfills his own “interior pilgrimage”: from the culture of belongingness to the culture of the other and all together towards the culture of the Gospel and consecrated life. It is important to recognize that there is no ideal culture or a superior culture. We are all gathered by Christ. Our differences are the values that each of us need to know how to accept and appreciate. The fundamentals of interculturality come from the fact that we have received from the same Holy Spirit who has called us and we responded to it being a person of culture.

Intercultural education in the period of formation can be an opportunity and a challenge. Assuming multiculturalism as a value will become an opportunity for growth and personal and communitarian enrichment. If our communities do not become intercultural, we will not survive. The group sharing and the updating of the Guidelines of Formation offer some proposals to the Consulta for its implementation.

Dear confreres of the Order, in these days we feel your closeness and prayers which help us to carry on our work and our reflections. It is an appropriate time for each of the Camillian to pray and reflect in the community and personally on our approach to the young and our way of caring them. How do we take care of our candidates in our houses of formation?

We believe that the fidelity and witness of our lives and the daily service to the sick according to our charism constitute the first vocation promotion. In addition to the problem of the person or a group (formation or youth worker), the entire Order through each member is the promoter of vocation. If we know how to accept in our hearts the suffering of young people, if we look at them with empathy without reservation, allowing them to pour their pains in our hearts with the tenderness and mercy of the Father, many of them will take on the journey of conversion and consecration.

² Cfr. ROSSI B., *Identità e differenza. I compiti dell'educazione*, La Scuola, Brescia 1994; DE BENI M., *Prosocialità e altruismo. Guida all'educazione socio-affettiva*, Erickson, Trento 1998

³ Cfr. KHELLIL M., *Sociologie de l'intégration*, PUF, Paris 2005.

To all the formators of the Order, in love with God and passionate for the human, we invite you to experience God in his tenderness letting His mercy creates in you a human and compassionate heart; capable of unveiling the fire behind the ashes of those who seem to have lost hope and regain the strength of the flame that is seemingly dying, to stand up again despite the disappointments and failures that inevitably we will encounter.

To the candidates to religious life in our Order, we wish you courage and firmness in your choice. Do not be afraid to share with your formators the hard work of conversion, the difficulty of leaving behind everything to follow Christ and the generous response at the expense of sacrifices. During your formation, cultivate with constant commitment an upright and sincere heart, a life without hypocrisy and a clear vision to live an authentic communion with God and with our confreres.

Onwards, their opens the horizon and the journey towards the Synodal Assembly of 2018, on the theme of “*Youth, faith and vocation discernment.*” Together with the Universal Church, we look to the future with great hope despite the challenges of the times. In the history of salvation, the night always has a mysterious fecundity. In communion with our prayer for one another, let us entrust to the maternal intercession of Mary Most Holy and our Father St. Camillus, the joys, the concerns and the challenges of vocation promotion and formation of consecrated life in our Order.