

**Celebration of the 25th anniversary of the
arrival of the Camillians in Vietnam
MESSAGE FROM
THE GENERAL SUPERIOR**

Most. Rev. Fr. Rocco Pairat Sriprasert, MI

Provincial Superior of the Camillian Tai Province

Most. Rev. Fr. Joseph Tran Van Phat, MI

Provincial Delegate of the Camillian Vietnamese Delegation

*Dear Fr. Rocco and Fr. Joseph,
Health and Peace in the Lord of our lives!*

It was really a wonderful human and fraternal experience, a truly deeply heart felt moment of *Kairos* (God's grace) to be with you all for the occasion of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the arrival of the Camillians in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, on last December 9, 2017. A historic and special day for you and for our entire Camillian Order.

It was my third visit to your beautiful Country and to our beloved Young Camillian Vietnamese Delegation¹. During the days that I was among you, I had the opportunity to meet spontaneously and to talk with all the religious that are part of your Delegation, as well as with many students that are in the formation journey in order to be Camillians in a near future. I met also with the Camillians that came from other parts of the world, mainly from your mother Province of Thailand and from other parts of Asia, many of your friends, volunteers, and lay benefactors. Unforgettable and Blessed moments we lived together in sharing meals together and visiting the people that you are ministering as *Samaritans*: sick children with HIV/AIDS and poor people that you take care in the various Clinics (ambulatories) that you run in several places in Ho Chi Minh Archdiocese.

A very special and touching moment for me and for sure also that for all present in the Church during the main celebration of the 25th anniversary, having the chance to thank personally in the name of the entire Camillian Order the pioneers of this Young Vietnamese Delegation. Fr. Armando Te Nuzzo, Fr. Sante Tocchetto and Fr. Felice Chech (the first Camillian that with Fr. Antonio Didoné visited Vietnam in order to start a new Camillian Mission field 27 years ago) among the Camillians.

At the beginning of this mission, we had the fraternal help of some Salesians religious: Fr. Peter Nguyen Van De, SDB, at that time Parish Pastor of the Cathedral of Ho Chi Minh and now is the Bishop of Thai Binh Diocese and Fr. Joseph Nguyen Tien My, SDB, who accompanied the firsts camillians seminarians in their initial formation.

¹ This third visit happened on December 5-10, 2017 with the specific purpose of participating of the celebration for the 25th anniversary of the arrival of the first Camillians in Vietnam. The other two Pastoral visits to the Thai Camillian Province and to the Delegation of Vietnam were done, the first one, from September 22 – October 2, 2014 and the second from January 7/28, 2017 (Cf. PESSINI L. & CONSULTORS, *Being a Camillian and Samaritan Today: With your heart in your hands in the existential and geographical fringes of the World of health*, Rome, Generalate House, 2017, p. 29-32; 143-158).

The only absent was Fr Joseph Nguyen Chan Hung, SDB, that for personal reasons could not be present. In the initial moments of our new Camillian Delegation, we had the inter-congregational collaboration that Pope Francis asks today so frequently to all the religious Orders and Congregations.

We must be proud in feeling and seeing how these Young Camillians are respect by the people and loved by the church authorities! What is the reason? The wonderful testimony and commitment, as truly Samaritan, with the sick and the abandoned and discriminated ones because of HIV/Aids.

We all know that as a Young Delegation you had a very demanding agenda when we look at the future in order to continue to grow, flourish and to bear fruits being *the salt of the earth and the light of the world* (Mt 5,13-14). Being the “*salt and light*” of the good news of the gospel in the Health Care field, serving as good Samaritans, like our beloved founder Saint Camillus gave us the example. As I mentioned in the two previous pastoral visit, to your Province and Delegation (2014 and 2017), you have the responsibility of to teach us Camillians from the Western hemisphere *in what does evangelizing and being a missionary disciple of Jesus mean in the context of Buddhist culture?* We received from God, thru Saint Camillus inspiration and blessed by the Church, the *charism of compassion*, and in our doing ministry *to put our heart into our hands*... and compassion is so central to your cultural and religious values!

My dear confreres let us not forget to embrace joyfully the future with hope in the certainty that *this work belongs to God and not to us* (Saint Camillus). This is our strength and secret to overcome any kind of difficulty that may appear in your journey. Let us trust that He the Lord or our lives will be blessing us with many holy vocations in this beautiful and promising land of the world camillian geography.

Fraternally,

Fr. Leocir Pessini, MI

December 17, 2017

3th Sunday of the Advent – the Sunday of Joy