

Message of the Superior General on the Occasion of the Pastoral Visit to the Camillian Community in Chile (the Province of Rome)

Santiago, 8-12 August 2018



'In Latin America too, today, and in the Caribbean, consecrated life is called to be witness to a life of discipleship that loves Jesus Christ, and is profoundly mystic and communitarian'.

***Documento of Aparecida.** The final text of the Fifth Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (13-31 May 2007), p. 220.*

*"Fathers and brothers", Camillus repeated to his religious, "the poor and the sick that we serve will make us one day behold the face of God". **St. Camillus de Lellis***

Most Reverend Fr. Antonio Marzano,

Provincial Superior of the Province of Rome

Rev. Fr. Eligio Castaldo,

Superior of the Camillian Delegation of Chile

Rev. Fr. Pietro Magliozzi,

Superior of the local Camillian community

Rev. Fr. Paul Ceron Urrutia (the financial administrator of the community), **Basil Darker Gaete** and **Diaswon Villa** (a Haitian postulant)

Dear Camillian confreres,

Health and peace in the Lord of our lives!

To be able to return to your community for a second pastoral visit after experiencing the first (canonical) pastoral visit of 14-15 January 2016 was a cause of great joy. Initially, the visit was envisaged for the month of April of this year, for the beginning of holy week, but for reasons of health (strong influenza) I was forced to postpone it to this month of August. Fr. Eligio Castaldo, the Superior of the Camillian Delegation of Chile, was enjoying a well-deserved holiday in Italy. This time I had an opportunity to meet personally all the religious of the community, as well to share both formally and informally their fraternal life of prayer and ministry: the atmosphere of simplicity, of sobriety in fraternal life, of spirituality and of communal prayer, touched me deeply.

I was able to observe that the period that the Catholic Church in Chile is going through, in particular the bishops, is profoundly delicate and complex, because of the accusations of abuse of minors and of a cover up of the problem by the clergy. We are faced with an unprecedented crisis in the history of the Church in Chile. The very determined intervention of Pope Francis in order to be able to clarify this situation, with his summoning of all the bishops to Rome, was very positive and was appreciated by the faithful. An attitude of hope is being cultivated so that from this suffering of the Church new pastors can arise who have evangelical hearts and spirits that respect the faithful.

The presence of the Camillians in Chile is a modest one: it involves only four religious at the moment – two Italians (Fr. Pietro and Fr. Eligio) and two Chileans (Fr. Pablo and Basil; the latter has recently made his perpetual profession). There is also a postulant from Haiti. Yes, there are few of you but you are courageous workers in the field of Camillian ministry. Providentially, we now also have the first two religious from Chile itself. This Camillian Delegation began in the year 2005: it has followed a unique pathway; it has gone through critical moments when reference was also made to its ‘closure’ and a return of the Italian religious to Italy because of a lack of concrete prospects as regards vocations. Today these fears have been overcome.

We discussed the possibility of celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Camillian Delegation of Chile (2020) with the prospect of bringing the relic of the heart of St. Camillus to Chile. This would be a form of mission that could make St. Camillus and the Camillians more known about, opening up some concrete prospects of promoting vocations as well.

That personality of holiness, Nicola D’Onofrio, our Servant of God who is very well known in Chile, can secure even more visibility in the social and ecclesial context of this country. This already happened during the presence of the relic of the heart of St. Camillus in Peru and Basil (2012): we have a very important example of how Latin American peoples in their religiosity and popular culture value the relics of saints. I invite your community to reflect on this proposal and if there is a concrete possibility of doing this to organise itself with this in mind, transforming into reality this ‘dream’ of a new presence of St. Camillus in Latin America. Certainly, this will require dedication, determination, organisation and creativity, involving lay people, the Camillian family, health-care professionals, the agents of pastoral care in health and the local Church in this project.

At the present time, Camillian ministerial activity takes place in the parish dedicated to St Camillus, with the involvement of another two ‘chapels’. An innovation much appreciated by the parishioners has been the initiative of ongoing adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament in the chapel built on the left-hand side of the entrance to the ‘mother’ church.

You are present as chaplains day and night in the *Hospital Paroquial de San Bernardo*, as a part of the coordination of pastoral care in health of the Bishops’ Conference of Chile, and at the Catholic University of Chile. This is intense work, with the involvement of a significant number of lay people and a group of the Lay Camillian Family, which is growing and has already developed valuable works since the tragic event of the earthquake in Chile a few years ago.

I was especially struck by the visit that I received in the community from a gentleman aged 82, Ramon, your friend and a man who works with you in your projects, who wanted to talk to me about the importance of what you do and your witness in the ecclesial community of *San Bernardo*. “The Camillians are a treasure that we have in our neighbourhood. Unfortunately, many people still do not know about them and therefore they do not appreciate them. We must make them more known about”, he repeated, with emphasis and in tears, this wise gentleman!

At the end of this message I would like to thank you for the fraternal welcome and for the health care (my influenza and cough) provided to me by the two *Camillian* doctors.

May St. Camillus and Our Lady of Health always protect you so that you may continue to serve people in the wholeness of their being, especially those who are most in need!

With the joy of living and serving in a Samaritan way, let us journey towards the building of the future with hope!

Fraternally,
Sao Paulo, 15 August 2018
The Assumption of Mary to Heaven

Fr. Leocir PESSINI
Superior General