

The Family in Joy and in Pain



The Thirtieth National Congress of the AIPAS

The Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the **Family** came to a close a few days ago. The echo of this event is still rather strong, in particular as regards two questions of major importance, even though they are not correlated. They literally catalysed the attention of the mass media above all but perhaps somewhat less that of the most perceptive Christians, who are aware that the challenges to the 'small domestic church' are dealt with above all on other fronts which are larger and involve greater responsibility than the two questions which emerged for the general public: should divorced people receive communion or not? What attitudes or decisions should be adopted in relation to homosexual couples?

Almost at the same time in Assisi the AIPAS (the Italian Association for Pastoral Care in Health) was also engaged in a serious analysis of the family: *the family during the demanding season of pain and suffering of one of its members!*

The family asks for *travelling companions* who support the weakened steps of those who struggle with illness and pain; *it asks for workers who are able to accompany the loss of certainties and help a future that illness has darkened*, with an

empathetic relationship that is able to be mediation and a sacrament of that hope that comes from the Above. Hence certain operational recommendations: first of all to pass from 'the diagnosis of situations to operational answers. Proclamations and resolutions to shoulder responsibilities are not enough – good practices are needed, which people should also learn about'. In addition, pastoral care in health 'that has at its centre care for the family must be integrated into a more overall project', in harmony and in synergy with 'the whole of the ecclesial community in its various expressions' in order to achieve an integral taking of responsibility for the family. Lastly, an invitation to the Christian community to have the courage to become the voice of those who are victims of a '*reject culture*' so that those who have administrative responsibilities 'foster health care that is suitable for the family'.

If the family, as the Pope has often observed, is the primary cell of every society, then its health is a pre-condition for a healthy social fabric, whereas where the family is ill a sick society is generated. We have to bring where, how and when we can, the specific contribution of those who work in the world of health and health care so that the *Christian community becomes aware that suffering, illness, death and tribulations connected with the various seasons and situations of life are a substantial and determining part of the life of a family*. Just as it is also necessary to help families to understand their own lives as a sacred story, a story inhabited by God, even when things turn out differently from the projects that have been made and life becomes dark because of pain, suffering, failure, illness and death.

Indeed, we know how persistent is the *attempt to experience illness only as an event from which to liberate oneself more than an event to liberate*, or how old age is seen as a time after real life and not a time of life, and how death is an unspeakable and scandalous event.

Pope Francis, when speaking to the Italian bishops during the general assembly of last May, expressed himself as follows: *'Today the domestic community is strongly penalised by a culture that privileges individual rights and transmits a logic of the provisional. Become convinced voices of what is the first cell of every society. Bear witness to its centrality and beauty. Promote the life of the unborn and that of the elderly. Support parents in the difficult and thrilling educational journey. And do not neglect to bend down with the compassion of the Samaritan to those who are wounded in their affections and see their own life projects compromised'*.

The Pope invites us to bear witness to the centrality and beauty of the family. The task of the Christian community is first and foremost **to proclaim and bear witness to the beauty and the love of God and the goodness of His life project for His creatures**. In medical science the study of physiology comes before the study of pathology. The first task of the Christian community and therefore of pastoral care is to proclaim, to bear witness to and to serve the Gospel of the family. The attempt to denounce situations of crisis must be proportionately accompanied and preceded by an equal attempt to make the good life of the Gospel experienced in the domestic church shine forth, at times of tribulation as well. It is true that there are very many families that abandon their elderly, but it is equally true that – and these are greater in number – that there are families which care for them by keeping them in their homes, and this is done not without difficulties. It is true that there are families that do not allow their disabled members to come into this world but there are also holy couples who not only welcome the frail life of a child wounded in his or her mind but also work to adopt others. Let us not support the devil who enjoys darkening clear skies with black clouds that are full of hail and only of use in destroying a harvest that at times has been prepared for with great hard work. The Church does not need prophets of ill fortune but, rather, witnesses to hope.

In this context we can state that *the family is a subject of pastoral care in health every time it is a credible witness to the Gospel of life, first of all by taking care of its suffering members*. The family is the subject of pastoral care in health not only when it is the actor of special events where it makes its voice heard but also every time it takes care of its frail members; when parents bring up their children in the good life of the Gospel and healthy lifestyles; when it is a witness to charity in taking care of elderly people who are not independent; and when it attends to its own loved one by keeping him or her at home as long as possible. The Christian community has the task of making this song of charity heard forcefully, a song in which there are certainly melancholic and painful notes but also wonderful symphonies.

Like pastoral care in health, so also pastoral care for families traverses every season and situation of a person's existence. There is no person or situation that is not connected with the family.

From perfection to completion: to which perfection are we called? That of seeing every physical and moral frailty overcome? The absence of repeatedly experienced wounds of the body and the spirit? That is a utopia. A certain erroneous idea of perfection that has its roots more in Greek philosophy and theosophy than in the Bible has done harm to the Christian community. Christian perfection is achieved through a process of the completion of existence which at times not only tolerates but also passes by way of the experience of frailty and limitations.

Cardinal Martini would say that we need to reason in terms of surplus and not equivalence. That is to say we should not speak about the accompanying of families in general but, rather, about the accompanying of each individual family in particular, in its individuality, in its history and its situation. Great sociological analyses are not needed to be aware of how complex and multiform is care provided at home. To achieve all of this *we need ministers of comfort who are experts in the art of relationships, who are trained and competent and who, like Christ on the road to Emmaus, know how to journey with the disappointed and to be a sacrament of that presence that is able to make hearts burn in our chests.*

Fr. Gianfranco Lunardon

FROM THE CAMILLIAN WORLD



An initiative for the **YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE.**

On **29 November 2014** the Year of Consecrated Life will begin. This is an important appointment to pray, reflect, dialogue, convert, act...in relation to our choice to have a 'Camillian' consecration.

We offer a simple initiative which will unfold during the whole of this year (29 November 2014 – 2 February 2016) to keep attention towards and reflection upon our consecrated lives alive: **OUR personal witness!**

We invite you to put this on **PAPER** (one/two/three pages, if you want with your photograph) and/or a **VIDEO** (4/5 minutes, using a *smartphone* or a *tablet* or other simple devices) – using your language or the one you prefer – and to send it to the general secretariat (segreteria.generale@camilliani.org): these testimonies will then be steadily made available on our web site www.camilliani.org during the whole of the year 2014-2016.

A few lines on paper and/or a few minutes on a video to express:

- **An aspect of your idea of Consecrated Life**
- **And/or your personal way of living it**
- **And/or your wish for a renewed dynamic of Consecrated Life**

During this Year there will not be only an abstract **IDEA** of Consecrated Life but also a **COLLECTION/GALLERY** of **REAL CONSECRATED MEN** (all of us!). We ask you – **if you wish to join the initiative and this is possible for you!** – to send us your written text and/or video by the end of November 2014, or at the latest by the feast day of the Immaculate Mary (8 December 2014).

A Vocational Table has been organised for 29 November at the generalate house to reflect upon formation and the animation of vocations and this will involve all of the great Camillian Family. For more information **click here.**



Fr. Alessandro Toe'

FATHER ALESSANDRO TOE'

The Superior General has appointed Dr. Paolo Villotta postulator for the cause of beatification of [Fr. Alessandro Toe', a Camillian religious](#), a son of Burkina Faso. On 5 November the Vicariate of Rome decided to transfer the diocesan inquiry to the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Ouagadougou. [Read here](#) the letters sent to His Eminence Cardinal Philippe Ouédraogo.

DAUGHTERS OF ST CAMILLUS



Sr. Zelia and Pope Francis

On 28 October a group of women religious belonging to the Daughters of St. Camillus, accompanied by the **Mother General Sr. Zelia**, took part in a **Holy Mass presided over by Pope Francis** at the *domus* Santa Marta.

[PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY](#)

THE PROVINCE OF SPAIN



José Carlos Bermejo

[Here](#) you can see the video of the Inauguration of the **X Jornadas de Duelo** which was celebrated on **5-6 November**.

Present at this meeting were: José Carlos Bermejo, the Director of the 'Humanización de la Salud' Centre; Dr. Alvaro Gándara, the President of the 'Sociedad Española de Cuidados Paliativos (SECPAL)'; Dr. Piedad López, the Vice-Director of 'Información y Atención al Paciente' of the Council for Health Care of the Community of Madrid; and Dr. Jesús Moreno, the mayor of Tres Cantos (Madrid).



THE PHILIPPINES: QUEZON CITY

The Camillian Task Force-Philippines Seminar-Workshop

At the Marju Krisel Hotel (San Policarpo, Calbayog City) on 6-8 November a seminar was held on 'The Management of Disasters, Systems, Protocols and Humanitarian Instruments' organised by the Camillian Task Force of the Philippines. Thirty-eight people took part in the workshop and they all came from the diocese of Calbayong.

TAIWAN by Fr. G. Didonè:



Pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Chiaoshi

Preparations for the tenth anniversary of the sanctuary of Chiaoshi. Chiaoshi is a town twenty kilometres from Lotung. There is a sanctuary there which is dedicated to Our Lady and whose origins go back to an initiative of our religious brother, **Br. Luigi Pavan.** Every Sunday afternoon, in order to rest from the hard work of the hospital, with a number of employees Br. Pavan used to walk in the

mountains of **Chiaoshi carrying tools to open up paths to go to the top.** On the top he built a kind of shelter and placed a statue of Our Lady inside it. When the shelter was opened to all climbers it was called the '**Refuge of Our Lady**'.

On 9 November 1982 climbers from Taipei climbed up to the shelter with other people. Five of them were not believers. There was a typhoon brewing but they decided to go back down despite the exhortations of the others to say. It was raining heavily and they could no longer see the path but at a certain point **a lady dressed in white appeared to them, pointed out the path to them and they reached the town.**

That day they told everyone what they had seen and in interviews with journalists said that the lady who had appeared before them was the one in front of whom they had prayed before going back down. **After this news the pilgrimages began and on 9 November 2005,** at the site of the apparition, a fine little church in a modern style was inaugurated. Next year will be the tenth anniversary of its foundation.

On the ninth day of every month the parishes organise pilgrimages. Amongst ourselves **we call her Our Lady of Pavan.** On 11 November of this year there was the pilgrimage from our parish.



Fr. Didonè speaks at the round table on public health in Taiwan.

A round table on public health in Taiwan: Every year in Taiwan a **national meeting of directors of public health** is organised which is open to both Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals. This year this meeting was organised in Lotung on 16-17 November. On 16 November the participants had an opportunity to visit our initiatives: the hospital, the centre for handicapped people and the centre for the elderly. They made an excellent impression. On 17 November a series of papers were given. At the outset Fr. Giuseppe Didonè and the director of the hospital described the specific characteristics of a Catholic hospital and **referred to St.**

Camillus and his charism as well. There were about 100 people present, including the heads of the various departments.

THE PROVINCE OF ITALY



The second meeting for young people organised by the youth pastoral care section of Camillian religious will be held on 6-8 December at the Camillian Centre for Formation of Verona. Its title will be 'Love...with Faith'.

'The aim is to demonstrate how believing changes one's horizons, strength and style in loving and to lead those taking part to shine truth upon their behaviour, lifestyles and choices/habits of which they are more or less aware and are the masters. Space will be given to the Word of God and to exploring the psychological dynamics of man. People will discover how an authentic spiritual experience is a question of desire – a human desire that is liberated. This is a decisive and important but not automatic passage – one to be learnt! And how one changes in loving God and allowing oneself to be loved by Him, as happens with love between people'.

For more information [click here](#)

SIERRA LEONE – [BROTHERS OF EBOLA](#)



The efforts of the Camillians have become more intense through the Camillian Task Force and the Lay Camillian Family in supporting the activity of care and treatment at the *Holy Spirit Hospital* of Makeni in Sierra Leone.

THE AGENDA OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL



Fr. Pessini at the Latin American Bishops' Conference (Celam)

On 29 October to 1 November, the Superior General took part in the conference on humanisation of the world of health which was organised by the Latin American Bishops' Conference (Celam) at the Camillian Centre for Pastoral Care of Bogota.

[PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY](#)



Fr. Pessini and Fr. Lunardon during the Holy Mass celebrated in the rectory of 'S.Giuliano', Verona

From Friday 14 November to Sunday 16 November the Superior General **visited the religious brothers of the Camillian communities of Verona: the community of 'S. Giuliano', the 'S. Maria del Paradiso' house for formation, and the chaplains of the Borgo Trento hospital of Verona.**



The Camillianum

On Wednesday 19 November – as the general moderator – **the Superior General presided over the inauguration of the academic year of the Camillianum, also presiding over the celebration of the Eucharist with the lecturers, the students and the workers of the institute and taking part in the *lectio magistralis***

On Thursday 20 November – after the meeting with the Provincial Superiors and their councils of the Province of Italy and the Province of Sicily and Naples – the Superior General **also met Fr. Emilio Blasi, the Provincial Superior of the Province of Rome, and his council.** The objective remains that of being able to have a complete as possible vision of the lives, the projects and the difficulties that are religious brothers experience in the Italian context.

On Monday 24 November **he will meet** – together with the members of the General Consulta, at the generalate house of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene – **Fr. V. Paleari, Fr. E. Blasi and Fr. R. Mauriello**, respectively the Provincial Superiors of the Provinces of Italy, of Rome and of Sicily and Naples.

On 26-27-28 November the Superior General will take part in the annual meeting of the Union of Superior Generals which will be held this year at the generalate house of the Salesians in Rome.

On Monday 8 December – the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary – the Superior General will preside over the liturgy of the renewal of religious vows in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, in line with the ancient tradition of our Order.

Immediately afterwards he will leave for a fraternal visit – accompanied by Fr. Laurent Zoungrana – to our Camillian religious brothers of Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo, spending about ten days in meetings with Camillians and the people who work with them, and visiting works and initiatives in which our religious brothers are involved.

ROME: THE CAMILLIANUM



On Wednesday 19 November, students, lecturers and supporters took part in the inauguration of the academic year 2014/2015 of the *International Institute of the Theology of Pastoral Care in Health* (Camillianum). The morning was marked by the celebration of the Eucharist presided over by the Superior General and moderator of the institute, **Fr. Leocir Pessini**, and the *lectio magistralis* of **Msgr. Dal Covolo**, the Rector of the Pontifical Lateran University, which was on *care for the sick in the early Christian communities*.

PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY

ROME – Launch of the two volumes on the history of Provinces of the Order of St. Camillus



On Thursday 4 December at 17.00, at the generalate house, there will be the launch of the latest two volumes published in the series of historical research on the oldest Camillian Provinces: [Storia dell'Ordine di San Camillo. La Provincia Spagnola](#), Raoul Antonelli, Isabella De Renzi, Giovanni Pizzorusso, Rubbettino Editore; [Storia dell'Ordine di San Camillo. La Provincia Tedesca](#), Gerhard Kuck, Rubbettino Editore.

To read the article [click here](#)

ROME - 8 DECEMBER 2014



The Church of St. Mary Magdalene

Leocir Pessini, the Superior General of the Camillians, together with our religious brothers of the community of St. Mary Magdalene in Rome, extends an invitation for **the renewal of religious vows on Monday 8 December 2014, the 'Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary', at 16.00 at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene.** The liturgy will be animated by the Daughters of St. Camillus and will witness the

participation of Camillians present in the various communities of Rome, women Ministers of the Sick of St. Camillus, the Handmaidens of the Incarnation, and the Friends of the Great Family of St. Camillus.

AGENDA OF THE GENERAL CONSULTA

Fr. Laurent Zoungrana – the Vicar General – will leave on 5 December for Burkina Faso and from there for Benin where on 10 December, together with the Superior General, he will take part in the fraternal visit to the Vice-Province of Benin-Togo and Burkina Faso.

On 6 December Aris Miranda will leave for Burkina Faso where the *Camillian Task Force* has organised a strategic planning meeting for the emergencies with the local members of the CTF.

APPOINTMENTS OF THE GENERAL CONSULTA



Luciano Ramponi

Luciano Ramponi (Delegation of Colombia-Ecuador) has been appointed coordinator of communications for the pan-American area.



Enrique Gonzales Carbajal

Enrique Gonzales Carbajal (Vice-Province of Peru) has been appointed coordinator of ministry for the pan-American area.

Hermann Pablo Ceron Hurrutia (Province of Rome – Delegation of Chile) has been admitted to the perpetual profession of religious vows.

After previously making a request to the dicastery for religious for a dispensation of the canon law that a cleric must be appointed, so as to appoint a brother as **Provincial Superior of the Province of Spain**, and after observing that the higher decision was not to grant this dispensation, it was decided to communicate the decision to our religious brothers of the Province of Spain and to ask to proceed to a **new consultation with a view to the appointment of the new Provincial Superior**.

In response to a request made by the Provincial Superior of Brazil and his council, **the Camillian house of Ipiranga, San Paulo, Brazil, has been dissolved**.

[PRESS INFORMATION](#)