



*Il Superiore Generale*  
*Superior General*

**To Those Taking Part in the Meeting  
of the Financial Administrators of the Order of Camillians  
Rome, 14-18 March 2016**

*'As each one has received a gift,  
use it to serve one another  
as good stewards  
of God's varied grace' (1 Pet 4:10)*

Dearest Religious Brothers,

Health and peace in the Lord of our lives!

I extend to all of you my most cordial greetings to Rome during the Year of the *Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy!*

Not being able to take part in your meeting because of a previous engagement connected with my pastoral visit to our religious brothers in Africa, through this message, shared with **Br. Ignazio Santaolalla**, the General Consultor for Economics and Missions, as well as the general coordinator of your meeting, I wish to greet all of you and thank you for your presence, thanking you in a special and grateful way for your intelligence, dedication and responsibility in attending to the material resources and possessions of our Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Delegations!

The last extraordinary General Chapter of the Order (Ariccia-Rome, 16-21 June 2014), through its approval of the **Camillian project for the revitalisation of our consecrated lives**, indicated to us in a clear way three priorities for this six-year period (2014-2020): transparency and honesty in the sector of economics; a renewed commitment to the promotion of vocations and (initial and ongoing) formation; and greater synergy in communication between the various institutions of the Order itself.

As can be deduced from this, economics constitutes the first and most urgent priority that we are faced with: we are called to address this subject with responsibility and with a systematic work of organisation of the whole of this sector. Starting with the generalate house and its dependent institutions (the Rebuschini House and the *Camillianum*), we must establish a unified and permanent system of control and accounting which is understandable and simple in its use, as regards access to it, and in the way it is shared by all those who have responsibilities for these areas.

When economic data are transformed into *a question of faith* (my God!), great difficulties certainly appear on the horizon. When a necessary transparency of data begins to be absent, the most important performance of a responsible duty specific to every religious, accounting, also disappears: at this point, inevitably, the debts increase. We cannot forget that in economics *trust* (a founding and intangible value in every dimension of our lives) should always be *proved, confirmed and 'audited'* (that is to say confirmed by external experts).

We have before us the great challenge of reinventing ourselves in this special sector of economics, beginning with the generalate house, and also with many of our Provinces, Vice-provinces and Delegations. We should emphasise with satisfaction, as a question of justice, that some of our areas act in this field with great professional competence and organised thoroughness.

It is no longer tolerable that at the beginning of each six-year period of each new general government, time, energy and idealism are wasted, beginning from scratch with accounting and economic controls! This style of working, which has been going on for a number of years, constitutes a situation of injustice and irresponsibility in which we must not be accomplices! We feel the need to respond to it not only with a great deal of commitment and good will but also, and above all else, with increasing training and professionalism.

To address this challenge, we have already taken certain decisions and certain steps forward have been made: the Central Economic Commission has been re-established and during the one and half years of its existence it has already met three times. The former CTF (*Camillian Task Force*), now the *Camillian Disaster International Service Foundation (CADIS)*, has been endowed with its own legal status. The best means by which to provide the Camillianum with its own legal status is also being studied, allowing it to be detached fiscally and in its working from the Province of Rome. Moves are being made to organise the economic management of the generalate house through cost centres.

Below are listed some elements specific to the present international economic situation and our Order.

- The world (and the economy) has changed a great deal over recent years and will continue to change: we cannot continue to act with the same *clichés*, in an amateur way! We should not take experience acquired over time as the constant and sole point of reference without adopting the innovations that are needed.
- Europe and North America are no longer the centre of gravity of the world or of Camillian geography.
- The ancient Provinces of Europe can no longer support economically the younger Provinces and Delegations which until a short time ago were defined as being *outlying*.
- The international economic crisis has hit Europe especially, bringing about a contraction in its economic resources which until a few years ago were plentiful. The cuts imposed by many Western governments in the sectors of health care and welfare have made the management of those health-care and social works that have special agreements with state governments, regional governments, provincial governments and local agencies, increasingly demanding.
- Provinces and Vice-Provinces which have been traditionally dependent are now called to organise themselves so as to achieve their own economic sustainability with greater speed.
- Ministerial works must be charismatic but also self-sustainable. If some works are charismatically effective but structurally involve deficits (the income that comes from donations, charity or providence is not sufficient), the implementation of other structures that can compensate for the deficits of the first is necessary.
- We wish to stress that the future of the Order depends on pastoral care for vocations and on the formation of candidates for Camillian religious life. Pastoral care for vocations and formation involve, and always will involve, deficits. For this reason, we

should think of another kind of activity that is able to generate resources to finance, and compensate for, in a congruous way, the whole of the pathway of formation of candidates.

- We have to learn to delegate a great deal of work to lay people, with the realistic awareness that control and ultimate responsibility cannot be delegated.
- We need to take advantage of the professionalism and skills of (lay and/or religious) consultants outside the Order but they cannot act as replacements when it comes to the general responsibility of the Order and in particular of the Superiors.
- The financial administrators, albeit aware that they do not have the highest rank and are not the only people responsible for the economic management of the Institute (which, indeed, is the task of the Superiors), play a very important role as regards that economic management. In the healthy logic of the sharing of responsibility, a financial administrator has the task of the administration of economic matters whereas the Superior has the task of their direction.
- It is more necessary than ever before to have prudent, transparent and vigilant administration. The material possessions that still remain within religious Institutes are a source of attraction for opportunists and swindlers of every kind. Experience teaches us that we have to work as a team, making all members of the Council (general, provincial, local) participate in making important decisions concerning economic matters as prescribed by the Canon Law and the specific law of the Institute and the national civil laws. It is very risky to act individually, bypassing controls or avoiding asking opinions, permission and consensus.

This list could be much longer. We have wanted only to specify some of the most imminent challenges brought about by our most pressing problems.

Without doubt we have before us a work agenda that is very demanding. Let us want to begin to change a cultural style that is no longer of any use to the cause of our Camillian charism! None of us wants to be, even in our wildest dreams, or even thinks of being, involved in financial scandals, which the mass media very frequently highlight in religious Institutes (principally in Italy).

I wish for everyone a fruitful meeting in fraternity to achieve a growth in professionalism, with the hope that the objectives of this meeting are fully achieved for the good of our Order.

May St. Camillus and our Blessed Enrico Rebuschini (who was an accountant and for a long period of time had the job of being a financial administrator) continue to illumine your intelligence and your wisdom!

*Rome, 14 March 2016*



**Fr. Leo Pessini**  
*Superior General*



**Br. José Ignacio Santaolalla**  
*General Bursar and  
Consultor for Missions*