

# **BEHOLD THE REALITIES WITH THE EYES OF JESUS**

**Behold the Reality of Camillian Prophecy in terms of Spirituality-Charism-Ministry in the context of a post-European Order, recalling the situation of change caused by the post-pandemic situation**

## **RETREAT FOR THE MEMBERS OF GENERAL CHAPTER**

**Fr. William Eronimoose MI**  
**(Province of India)**

**2-3 May 2022**

**Centro 'Ad Gentes', nella Cittadina Di Nemi**  
**(Castelli Romani)**

## General Introduction

*Beholding the reality with the eyes of Jesus* is nothing but entering into the perspectives of Jesus with regards to life's many realities.

As Camillian Chapter members united together, we are called to behold the reality of Camillian Prophecy regarding our spirituality, charism, and our ministry with the Eyes of Jesus because the Camillian prophecy is a prophecy of God's direct intervention through the Merciful Eyes of Jesus in the life of St. Camillus for the sick vulnerable people.

Therefore, the Camillian prophecy is an Incarnated prophecy, a pitched-tent prophecy, 'a-taking-the-weight-of-others' prophecy that has the message of preaching the Gospel and healing the sick by wearing the vulnerability of the sick. By this incarnated prophecy, God had already intervened in the particular context of the abandonment of the sick to the then cultural *milieu*. This prophecy resonates even today in the context of pandemic and post-pandemic lived experiences.

As such, the Camillian Prophecy is the decision of all Camillians in the context of synodality in order to discern with open hearts and open minds what God is still speaking about our identity: spirituality, charism and ministry of the Fourth Vow to the sick, where He is leading us to go; and what meaning our Camillian identity in a novel way has to do with in the world of sickness, while taking into account the post-Pandemic time and the post-European context of our Order.

May this Retreat be one of inspiration and enlightenment, discernment and decision according to the movements of the Holy Spirit so that our Order will become prophetic to bring the Good News of God first of all to all Camillians and then to all the sick people who are "our lords and masters".

## SCHEMA

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Reflection 1: | Camillian Prophecy from Pandemic to post-Pandemic          |
| Reflection 2: | Camillian Prophecy from Fixed Reality to Rooted Reality    |
| Reflection 3: | Camillian Prophecy from Religiosity to Spirituality        |
| Reflection 4: | Camillian Prophecy from Static Charism to Dynamic Charism  |
| Reflection 5: | Camillian Prophecy from Ordinarieness to Extraordinariness |
| Reflection 6: | Camillian Prophecy from Individuality to Synodality        |

## Talk 1

### Camillian Prophecy from Pandemic to post-Pandemic

*Blessed and happy that minister of the infirm who will consume his life in this holy service with his hands inside the dough of this charity (St. Camillus)*

#### Introduction

Reflection 1 deals with Camillian prophecy that moves away from pandemic to post-pandemic with hope and courage and with innovation and fidelity.

#### Pandemic Reality calls for a new Theodicy

The life of faith is not simply a possession, but a path that knows dark tunnels and uncertain paths. The pandemic years (2019 to 2022+) have been years when our faith in God has been questioned. These years have been a period ups and downs, leaps and delusions, explorations and nostalgic closures.

As God is questioned, so too our Camillian presence is questioned because Covid-19 is an issue of 'health'. It is an issue pertaining to our Fourth Vow: *caring for the sick even in danger to our life*. In some parts of the world, our Vow has been lived out rather well because the government has allowed us, while in some other parts it has been difficult to live it out.

Nevertheless, we have the mysterious lowering of God on our life and our events from which is born the Messianic salvation achieved by Christ. This salvation or healing willed by God, achieved by Christ and communicated to us by the Holy Spirit becomes the *grace of hope* in times of pandemic and post-pandemic reality.

Thus, the post-Pandemic is an invitation to reflect about God and to speak a new discourse about God (*Theodicy*) in line with our Camillian charism and spirituality which is the result of the interventions carried out by St. Camillus and his companions during plagues. Following the same path tread by St. Camillus is the *grace of hope* during hopeless situation.

As we give new meaning and discourse on God through our charism and spirituality, we are pushed with the faith that it is God who guides the cloud always because *He was, is, and will be the Guiding Cloud* always as we read in **Exodus 40:36-38**:

*Throughout their journeys, whenever the cloud would be taken up and leave the tabernacle, the children of Israel would break camp. If the cloud did not go up, they did not leave until it went up. Throughout their journeys the cloud of the LORD remained in the tabernacle during the day, and during the night there was a fire in it, visible to all the households of Israel.*

St. Camillus was never afraid to explore God in the known and the unknown and in the wild, barren edges of life, in the epidemics and in the pandemics because he was guided by the Cloud. He believed in God and entrusted himself to the guidance of God during his struggling in front of the Crucifix. It is because our Founder himself always imitated Jesus' struggling in His life before handing Himself on the Cross.

Similarly, we should not be afraid to place underneath the Cloud our wild and barren edges of our hearts due to pandemic that we sometimes tuck away out of fear. God wants to guide us day and night when we are afraid or struggling to give meaning, to make meaning or to find meaning in times of unwanted vulnerabilities of life.

Our General Chapter is a grace-filled space and time of our Order to walk with Christ in the most difficult moments in the footsteps of St. Camillus. Let us throw wide the doors of our hearts in communion to God and allow His grace to move within us through the Holy Spirit.

The great epic of the Exodus from the slavery of Egypt to the Promised Land becomes an evocative icon that recalls our pandemic and post-Pandemic as an invitation of “stop and go, pause and start, patience and resourcefulness”, which means:

- *Stop and go*: God has taught us Camillians of *today, here and now*, through the Pandemic reality to go back to our *past* so as to be faithful to our history (*stop and go*);
- *Pause and start*: God is still teaching us at the post-Pandemic time to do an *introspection* in the *present* so as to be more *innovative* in our practice of our charism (*pause and start*);
- *Patience and resourcefulness*: God will teach us in the *future* to strike the chord of symphony between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic (*patience and resourcefulness*).

### **Interconnectedness between Innovation and Fidelity**

This “stop and go, pause and start, patience and resourcefulness” during the post-pandemic time in our Order calls for an interconnectedness between *innovation and fidelity*.

At the level of ‘innovation’, Camillians are called to be innovative in doing the ministry of reaching out, which is an expression of our commitment to the Fourth Vow as per cultural *milieu* of each particular province. At the level of ‘fidelity’, our familiar collaborative role of caring for the sick through projects of action in communion, participation and mission is a faithfulness to our Camillian history and identity.

This intermingling of ‘something innovative’ and ‘something faithful’ may seem difficult for some at this juncture, but the Scripture invites us to be both innovative and faithful.

This fact is found in John Skinner’s *Prophecy and Religion* in which he says Jeremiah’s life marked the emergence of personal religion, Christianity (something innovative), while his life was spent for the conversion of the people of Israel (something faithful).

What is implied here is that the prophecy of Jeremiah is an invitation for a *shub* (conversion) of the people in getting back to God (fidelity): **a backward movement**. At the same time, the prophecy of Jeremiah foresaw, gained and proclaimed a *metanoia* (conversion) of the people in going towards Jesus (innovation): **a forward movement**.

Applying this implication, we can say that the commitment to the Fourth Vow of every individual province, delegation and mission is forward movement of innovation. At the same time, the same commitment has to be in line with communion, participation and collaboration as a backward movement of fidelity.

Being shaken by the Pandemic, this ‘interconnectedness’ between innovation and fidelity has to be worked out well in our Chapter in such a way that

- We will prophesy together so as to have a future (common vision);
- We will program together so as to project new humanitarian actions (common mission);
- We will journey together so as to reach the goal (common synodality);
- We will work together (belongingness) so as to be concentric (common home - Order).

### **Relevance of Prophecy**

For this common vision, mission, synodality and home, we need to be moved by the light of ‘Prophecy’ which is a charism of God given through the Holy Spirit to ordinary individuals

who are intermediaries with extraordinary love and fidelity for God. It is a channel of divine truth and wisdom by communicating what God wants to communicate.

God wants everyone to become the channel of divine truth. The Scripture reveals this fact:

- When Joshua told Moses to stop Eldad and Medad from prophesying, Moses answered him, “If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets! And the Lord gave His Spirit to them all” (**Numbers 11:27-30**);
- I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy; I will pour out my spirit in those days (**Joel 2:28-29**).

Of course, the disciples were promised by the Lord that He would pour His Spirit upon them and they would become prophets in the last days:

- You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth (**Acts 1:8**);
- All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (**Acts 2:4**).

This implies that we receive this charism with our whole hearts so that God can intervene *today and here and now*.

Pope Francis in his colloquium with Major Superiors in 2014 said, “Never a religious should renounce to his prophecy.”

As prophecy requires a great deal of on-going pastoral discernment and diagnosis (*cf. Camillian Constitution #58 & #112*) of God’s Will, every prophet today has to understand personally the Will of God for today’s society. This Will has to be discerned together so as to become prophetic interveners of God’s entry into history.

Prophetic intervention that discerns the Will of God for today’s society has 3 characteristics:

- **Selection:** prophets generally select what has to be communicated to people according to their ‘here and now’ of their story. God goes on speaking; prophets discern well; they select as per the signs of the time; and communicate to the people as per the need of the hour: *Do we diagnose what to select for today’s here and now?*
- **Connection:** prophets, have to connect the people to God through their powerful message of God’s intervention. They are the bridges between God and people to connect them to the Umbilical Cord of God: *Are we online with God so as to connect Him to the people?*
- **Renewal:** prophets are the ones who open the people to renewal because of their responsible obedience either to the Spirit or to the solicitations of the Magisterium: *In leading the people to renewal, are we docile to the Spirit and to the Church?*

## **Reality of Camillian Prophecy**

The cloud of light and fire that guided the people of Israel in total obedience and full vigilance from the part of the people, is eloquent for us Camillians. Our Order for some decades driven by the prophetic impulse of St. Camillus had walked as if it followed signals of the Cloud of the Lord. Now in the post-Pandemic period we have to walk under the new cloud, that is, the cloud of Camillian Prophecy.

It is because the Camillian prophecy seems to envelop now more fire, that is, the fire of the Holy Spirit. Even if at times we can walk in darkness and lukewarmness which risk disturbing our hearts (*cf. Jn 14:1*), the faith awakens the certainty that within the Camillian Prophecy the Presence of the Lord has not failed: *it is the glow of a flaming fire during the night* (*Is 4, 5*), beyond the darkness.

Camillian prophecy is a historical prophecy with Jesus at its head and with St. Camillus as its heart. Let us have an explanation for this:

- Jesus, the Prophet is dated around 2000 years ago. St. Camillus as partner came to the scene in 1550.
- He, starting out as a powerful saint, became a family, a people, a nation. Under St. Camillus, the new Prophet, the followers became an Order and got it spread everywhere.
- This was the peak of Camillian history; from St. Camillus all the way up to Camillians took 472 years and Camillian history took slow but sure climb to the peak of its answer to the question: who is my neighbour?
- Even though Camillians went downhill in the history, but to this day we look back on St. Camillus as the Prophet who resembled the Historical Jesus who is the Healer.
- Today, people are still hoping for another Camillus to take the weight of the sick again.

Being a Camillian prophet involves seeing the history of Camillians from a prophetic point of view. He sees his history as the prophets see it and sees it the way God sees it and therefore his history is named after the *prophet* who dominate the story, that is, St. Camillus.

Each Camillian of today has to re-write the Camillian story as St. Camillus wrote down his story from God's point of view. Therefore, he has to include things that are important to God and exclude things that are of no interest to God, include what is to be narrated to future generations and exclude what should not be handed on.

Many congregations have already become prophets through their voice heard. In this context, each Camillian, being dissatisfied with the signs of the time and discontent with his deficiency, is called to become the voice of God heard *loudly, clearly, distinctively and meaningfully*. He is the reverberation of God's voice *heard* in the sighs and lamentations of the sick and is the denunciation of what is not good for the sick.

Regarding this, St. John Paul II rightly said,

The prophetic witness is a denunciation of what is contrary to the divine will and with the exploration of new ways to implement the Gospel in history.

### **Efficacy of Camillian Prophecy**

#### **1) It is a prophecy of life in conformity to the Gospel**

Camillian prophecy places the Gospel. It is rooted in the Word so as to get uprooted for others. It is against sleepy eyes (cf. Lk 9:32) with the discernment of the movements of the cloud which guides our path (cf. Num 9:17) and with the recognition of the Presence of the Lord of life and hope in the small and fragile signs.

#### **2) It is a prophecy of vigilance**

Camillian prophecy has to be very much vigilant. Pope Francis passionately encourages us to be guided by the Spirit, never to be rigid and closed, always to open to the voice of God who speaks, who opens, who leads, who invites us to go towards the horizon (18<sup>th</sup> World Day for Consecrated Life). Camillian prophecy is a call to welcome the *today* of God and to the surprises of God in faithfulness without fear or resistance, to testify Jesus' life on this earth and to announce His kingdom in its perfection.

#### **3) It is a prophecy of preaching**

It is a prophecy of preaching which can offer believers, as well as the lukewarm and the non-practising, new joy in the faith and fruitfulness in the work of evangelization. Camillian prophecy is to be faithful to the heart of the preaching which is always the same:

*God revealed His immense love in the Crucified and Risen Christ; God constantly renews His faithful ones, whatever their age; Christ is the “eternal Gospel” (Rev 14:6); He “is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8), yet his riches and beauty are inexhaustible; He is for ever young and a constant source of newness; The Church never fails to be amazed at “the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom 11:33).*

#### **4) It is a prophecy of Synodality**

The Church is becoming synodal and journeying together towards the promised land (paradise of God). In this context, Camillian prophecy is called to be a synodal prophecy. This synodal prophecy is a combination of: *Collaboration and communion; Mater and magistra: compassionate as a mother and defending as a teacher; Good Samaritan (cf. Luke 15) and good Shepherd (cf. John 10); Comforting and edifying (cf. Cam. Const., # 12); Ascending love (in the Tent) and descending love (for the tents).*

#### **5) It is a prophecy of RM<sup>2</sup>**

RM<sup>2</sup> means: ***Reason x Motivation x Model:***

- ***Reason:*** Camillian prophet is the one who knows the reason of his vocation: to be a candidate for paradise and to make others candidates for paradise;
- ***Motivation:*** Camillian prophet is the one who is motivated by the track of Jesus which is the track of humility, the track of Cross (Red Cross), the track that leads humans to eternal life;
- ***Model:*** Camillian prophet is a model for himself and for others in line with Moses (to *be aloft in contemplation and completely engaged in helping those who suffer* - cf. Ex. 33) and in line with St. Camillus (to discern God’s will and to decide in His presence the Work of the Lord).

#### **6) It is a prophecy of immutability**

Being a Camillian prophet means following Jesus who is unchanging.

It is like following a GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver to help us to reach our desired destination. It works by taking readings from 3-4 satellites orbiting above the earth. Using that data, the GPS can determine the exact position and give the driver turn-by-turn instructions to reach his destination. Such accurate guidance is possible only because the GPS receiver maintains continuous contact with the outside reference points.

Following Christ functions in a similar way. It is like your personal satellite for navigating your way through life and you must maintain contact with it. And this satellite is fully reliable because it always remains the same, who is Jesus. **Hebrews 13:8** tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. So too is the Camillian prophecy: unchanging.

#### **Provocation of Pope Francis**

The religious are prophets. They are those who have chosen a following of Jesus who imitates his life with obedience to the Father, in poverty, community life, and in chastity. In the Church, the religious are called in particular to be prophets who testify how Jesus lived on this earth, and who announce how the Kingdom of God will be in its perfection. A religious must never renounce his prophecy.

## Talk 2

### Camillian Prophecy from Fixed Reality to Rooted Reality

*Blessed are the ministers of the sick who know the greatness of their vocation and have the holy zeal of Our Holy Institute (St. Camillus De Lellis)*

#### Introduction

In the first talk we have reflected upon the reality and the need of Camillian prophecy as per the model of St. Camillus who walked in the footsteps of Jesus, the Prophet. In this 2<sup>nd</sup> reflection, we shall deal with Camillian prophecy from fixed reality to rooted reality.

As different Local chapters have given way to General Chapter - 2022, we are here at this most sacred time of our Order with a sense of gratitude, awe, and wonder. Sometimes we enter perplexed but still cling to the hope of renewal of our commitment to the sick. This is a holy time of a special Chapter after a long waiting when we witness the greatest act of love that comes alive for us today through the presence of various superiors and delegates.

We feel a deeper sense of God's presence, and our religious imagination as Camillians comes alive. What we learn from the Chapter will give our Order the concept of our rootedness so that we can truly come away from our fixedness in a special way as Chapter members and to spread it to other members of the Order.

Thus, the Reflection 2 deals with Camillian prophecy that moves away from some of our fixations to rooted reality of our Order and that invites us towards an *introspection* in humility. It is a return to the Camillian identity wherein we rediscover the first love for Jesus / for St. Camillus, with which we have started our journey as Camillians. It is a rediscovery into our *past* that gives meaning to our life *today* and naturally *hope* in the future.

#### Scripture Reading from the Book of Revelation 2: 2-4

*God to the Church in Ephesus writes: <sup>2</sup>I know your deeds, your hard work, your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup>You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup>Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.*

God is discontent with the Church of Ephesus because she had lost the first love with which she started her commitment. The crucial point in this passage is that all that is done without the first love is considered to be unimportant and useless by God because activities or ministries should flow from the life lived in and for the first of love.

Therefore, it is very important to return to the first love. This returning consists of 3 important signposts: 1) Remain in the love of Jesus, 2) Return to the Camillian Root, and 3) Return to the Forgotten Route.

#### 1. Remain in the Love of Jesus (cf. John 15:4, 9)

*Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.*

God bestows many talents on human beings: 10, 5, 2 (talents). All these talents are secondary if they do not correspond to the only ultimate talent, that is, "abiding in the love of Jesus" by which we become the beloved of God and of others. But many are in search of making use of these talents without first abiding in the love of Jesus. Thus, these talents take them towards two negative ways, namely, 1) way of privacy and 2) way of activism:

**The first way is the way of Privacy** which is one of many terrible sins of our time especially in religious life. Though it is accepted by all that no one should be violated of privacy, privacy still is one of mystery, secrecy and non-transparency.

Privacy makes persons do the things hiding, makes them less and less or no transparent, mysterious, selfish, lonely, and narcissistic. It makes them individualistic: personally (I, me, mine, my, myself) and collectively (we, us, ours, our, ourselves). Personal and collective individualism create disunity.

Jerome P. Theisen in his book *Community and Disunity: Symbols of Grace and Sin* speaks about the disunity which is the result of privacy, free choice, and individualism:

*Disunity is a symbol of sin and this disunity assumes a freedom of choice and will, and the result of a free choice is self-centredness. This free choice is weak in its ability to say 'yes' to God and 'yes' to others. In this free choice, the individual views himself as the centre of the universe with all things readily available to him/herself. Because of this, individuals are incapable of building up their community, and thus communities diminish and fall apart.*

**The second way is the way of Activism** which makes a person active in his own talents. It makes him hero. It intoxicates him with self-glory or self-glorification. It takes him to search for his own world where he is there alone. If at all there is someone, that person may be of his own character.

It is the sin of Saul in the OT who built a monument for himself:

*So, when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal (1 Samuel 15:12).*

The sin of Saul (today's religious) turns his ministry into *monument*

- A monument is a structure built to memorialize greatness; it calls attention to the significant accomplishments of a person in a way that his importance is commemorated into posterity.
- Building a monument is an act of arrogance which *is resisted by God* (cf. James 4:6).
- When Saul raised that monument to himself, he was taking the glory that belonged to God. This is against God who boldly decrees in Isaiah 42:8: "My glory I will not give to another!"

As a whole, the common denominator of these two negative ways is *weakness of God and weakness of the other*. As these 2 ways do not help us to be the beloved of God and others, we have to search for an alternative way, a different way: **the way of solitude**.

**Way of Solitude** is aloneness in the presence of God and in the presence of others truly and sincerely to express our loving nature as the result of our being in the presence of Jesus.

Solitude involves the following:

- It is an opportunity to focus on our intimacy with Jesus, to unhook from our daily responsibilities and the people we interact with, in order to attend to the Lord alone.
- In solitude we don't try to make anything happen. We just bring our naked self to the Lord to be with him;
- It is the creation of an open space in life by purposely abstaining from interaction with human beings, so that, freed from competitions, we are found by God.

We find the importance of Solitude in the OT:

- God speaks to Moses, face to face in the Tent of meeting (cf. Exodus 33:7, 11)
- God came to Elijah in a cave with a gentle whisper (cf. 1 Kings 19:9, 12).

- The Lord leads me beside quiet waters to restore my soul (cf. Psalm 23:1-3).
- Let him sit alone in silence, for the Lord has laid it on him (cf. Lamentations 3:28).

The way of Solitude is the way of Jesus who had remained in the love of God for 30 years and became the beloved of God and of others:

- It is the way of Jesus who has submersed into water so as to be lifted up;
- It is the way of Jesus in desert to prepare for mission (cf. Mark 1:12-13);
- It is the way of Jesus spending His time with God (cf. Mk 1:35, Lk 5:16, Mt 14:13);
- It is the way of Jesus in Transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8), Mk 9:2-8, Lk 9:28-36);
- It is the way of Jesus in the sweat of blood (Lk 22:44, Mt 26:38, Mk 14:34);
- It is the way of Jesus on the Cross with Dismas, the good thief (cf. Luke 23:43).

Jesus calls us to join Him in solitude for various reasons:

- Since we are busy without time for God and for the community, Jesus says to us: *Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest* (cf. Mk 6:31-32),
- Since we are weary, Jesus says: *Come to me and I will give you rest* (c. Mt 11:28)
- Since we are arrogant and proud, Jesus says to us: *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart* (Matthew 11:29-30).
- Since we are worried about so many rewards, *Jesus takes us with him and transfigures us into His likeness, which is the greatest reward in life* (cf. Mt 17:1-2).

Following the path of Jesus and accepting His invitation to be with Him in solitude, the early Christian Celts were heavily influenced by the early desert hermits, desert fathers and mothers of Egypt such as Anthony the Great, Sarah of the Desert, and John Cassian.

The Irish word *ysert* or *diser*, meaning “desert,” today retains its original meaning, referring to a place of solitude or a retreat for a more intimate encounter with God.

The effect of solitude for an encounter with God is one of creating space for cradling new life for our Order as we find in the life-story of St. Kevin, the Irish famous hermit monk of Glendalough who was renowned for his love of silence and stillness, as one legend about his life reveals:

*One morning as Kevin was praying, a blackbird landed in his outstretched hands. So afraid was Kevin to disturb the bird that he allowed it to make a nest in his hands. The legend tells us that the eggs hatched on a bright Easter morning and flew from Kevin’s hands.*

Similarly, when we practice solitude which is the result of our remaining in the love of Jesus, our own hands – our whole being – our whole life – become a space to cradle new life in our Order. Each of us ought to place our love for Jesus in solitude and seek out spaces for solitude when the world becomes too rushed and noisy.

During this Chapter, let us set aside distractions such as privacy and activism; let us set aside our being busy with unwanted talks and corrupted mindsets which influence us without any constructive agenda. Instead, let us enter into retreat (solitude) for a time with the Lord during the Chapter for cradling new life in our Order.

## **2. Return to the Camillian Root**

The second way to remain in the love of Jesus is the decision to return to the Camillian Root, to the Camillian history, to the first of love towards our Founder, to the first love with which we have started our Camillian journey. Despite many healing ministries carried out today, we are still called to rediscover our root, our past, our history.

Returning to the Camillian root involves an understanding of history at general level: Every history, generally speaking, is spoken at four levels:

- Personalities: important characters,
- People: nations, countries, cultures,
- Patterns: rises and failures,
- Purpose: circular or linear.

Our Camillian history too fulfils these 4 levels of general history in the following manner in such a way that we the Camillians of today can return to our roots:

**1) Personality and Character:** we return to St. Camillus to become *altus Camillus* because

- He is the figure, the person, the saint, the wounded, the healer, the change-maker, the meaning-seeker, the meaning-giver, the meaning-sharer, the healer, the missionary, the visionary, the protector, the provider, the prodigal;
- He is the one proclaimed by the people ‘Saint of Rome’ while living on this earth as St. John Paul II ‘Il Santo Subito’;
- He is the one who changed the face of curse (sickness) into the face of blessing (healing) in times of cold attitude towards the sick, the poor, the mentally sick;
- He is an ordinary minister with extraordinary love.

**2) People and Nation:** we return to Bucchianico so as to become *altus Bucchianicos* because

- It is a place of gentleness and respect towards each other;
- It is a place of commitment to the community;
- It has its people with strong character but with obedience to the Church;
- It is a place which in 1612 St. Camillus left saying ‘good bye’;
- It is a place of uninterrupted pilgrimage because St. Camillus is still alive;
- It is a place to which St. Camillus connects us;
- It is a place of shelter because we become the ‘*altus Bucchianicos*’ of our time;
- It is a place whose scandal created by Camillus can be removed by each Camillian.

**3) Patterns:** we return to the Camillian history to become *altus vincitori* because:

- There had been falls, failures, predicaments, focus-less-ness, although there have been success-stories in our life, in our institutions, in our order, in our communities, but
- the only success throughout the history of St. Camillus and Camillians is the constant and consistent commitment to the sick of the society in their wholistic care.

**4) Purpose:** we return to the Camillian scope to become *altus telos*:

- Circle direction (*Camillus’ life in the beginning*): in this, there was no purpose, no place for God; his history had only human way of thinking and doing which had as result human futility. It is all because his history was not in line with God;
- Linear direction (*Camillus’ life after the conversion*): in this, there was a purpose - beginning, middle and end – his history was His (God’s) story in line with God: “*Camillus, it is not your work, but mine*”;
- Our Camillian history has to be something linear, that is, in line with God’s story.

In the sense of personality, people, pattern, and purpose, the story of St. Camillus is the story of God and therefore we have to return to that story in order to find a deep meaning in our being Camillians.

### **3. Return to the Forgotten Route (of God)**

Remaining in love also takes a third return, a return to the Route that is forgotten or not undertaken because of having taken another route. It can be explained through two analogies:

### ***1) 40 years rather than 11 days:***

- The people of Israel followed a different route of 40 years to reach the promised land. During these years, (cf. Book of Numbers) an entire generation died;
- all the adults (except Joshua, Caleb and Moses) who crossed the Red Sea and came to Mount Sinai and died.
- It is because they took different route by themselves, that is, they broke the way of God.
- Had they taken 11 days, that is, had they followed God's way, they would have all reached the Promised Land.
- Taking a different route means entailing loss of life, property and future.

### ***2) Broad Route rather than narrow route***

Broad route involves '*a playing*' in various ways:

- Playing 'god': power, money, prestige, utilitarianism,
- Playing 'fundamentalist': majoritarianism, favouritism, conformism,
- Playing 'big': partiality, diplomacy, discrimination, indifference,
- Playing 'Saul': power-abuse,
- Playing 'dictator': abuse of rights.

Jesus calls every Camillian to take the forgotten route of Israel (11 days) that takes us to God, avoiding thus a long route (40 years) that takes us to perdition. In other words, He calls to take the narrow route that entails blessing and salvation, rather than broad route that entails curse and perdition:

*Enter the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it (Matthew 7:13-14).*

### **Provocation of Pope Francis**

It is important to have the habit of asking for the grace of the memory of the journey that the people of God made. It is also important to ask the grace of "personal memory: what did God do in my life; how did He make me walk? We must also know how to "ask for the grace of hope which is to renew every day the covenant with the Lord who called us."

### **Conclusion**

The grace of hope for a Camillian is to remember his first love and to return to it. It is a point of arrival for a point of departure to the first love even if there have been experiences like those of the prodigal son.

But the negative side is not at all important for God, that is, the content (the lived experiences of the prodigal son) is not at all important because what is consumed is consumed, but the introduction (the life that he had in the beginning at home with comforts) and the conclusion (the life that he would have after coming back) are important.

The personal memory of every Camillian is to own up the first love and to hold fast to what lies ahead in the future in our Order.

## Talk 3

### Camillian Prophecy from Religiosity to Spirituality

*Blessed are the ministers of the sick who employ the talent entrusted and work in the Lord's vineyard with a life of self-denial and charity towards the suffering members of Christ (St. Camillus)*

#### Introduction

Reflection 3 deals with Camillian prophecy that moves away from mere religiosity to well-founded Camillian spirituality which is a call to be faithful to our Camillian identity. This spirituality is our ability to recognize 1) the presence of Christ (*Christus patiens*) in the suffering which makes us associate ourselves with the sick, 2) the presence of Christ in ourselves (*Christus Camilliani*) and 3) the becoming as another Christ (*altus Christus*).

#### 1. Christ in the suffering leading to Camillians in the suffering

*Christus Patiens* is a spirituality of seeing the presence of God / Jesus already passed amidst the vulnerable people before we try to be near to them. It is the ability to recognize God in the suffering rather than ourselves at the centre. Exodus 3:7 witnesses to this:

*The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering."*

It is a spirituality of affirming and confirming the presence of God / Christ who has already passed with His tenderness and care and who has taken upon Himself all that is wounded and vulnerable. Thus, *Christus patiens* is a spirituality of *cum-patire* (suffering with) of God which takes the *patire* (suffering) of Jesus.

*Cum-patire* is the silent suffering of God due to various vulnerabilities of the people in the OT. God's suffering because of their messes had been for about 400 years as God stopped talking to them beginning from Prophet Malachi and up to St. John the Baptist.

At last, this *cumpatire* took reality, made flesh, incarnated, pitched Tent, tabernacled amidst us, as *patire* (suffering) of Jesus. This means that God bore or manifested His suffering in SILENCE through the "*patire*" (suffering) of Jesus in WORD. God's Silence gave birth to God's Word, Jesus. God broke the silence and expressed it in the suffering of Jesus on the Cross. God suffers with the suffering people in and through Jesus whose birth is the concrete manifestation of God's care and compassion.

The SILENCE in the Bosom of God became the WORD in the bosom of human suffering.

When we recognize God's *cumpatire* as the centre revealed in the *patire* of Jesus, it is an invitation for us Camillians to enter into the suffering of the people as per the invitation of Jesus: *Love one another as I have loved you; there is no greater love than this to lay down one's life for one's friends.* And thus we become Camillians in the suffering.

Both these "*compatire*" of God and "*patire*" of Jesus which are supposed to be assimilated by every pastor (Camillian) are very well illustrated in *Deus Caritas Est*. In #7, Pope Benedict XVI cites St. Gregory the Great who invites his pastors to be like Moses and St. Paul who were in the contemplation in the Tent of God, that is, in the "*compatire* of God" and who entered in the human tents, that is, in the "*patire* of Jesus" for the humanity.

DCE #7 reads: *Pope Gregory the Great in his Pastoral Rule tells us that the good pastor must be rooted in contemplation (compatire). Only in this way will he be able to take upon himself the needs of others (patire) and make them his own. He speaks in this context of Saint Paul who was borne aloft to the most exalted mysteries of*

God (*compatire*), and hence, having descended once more, he was able to become all things to all men (*patire* - cf. 2 Cor 12:2-4; 1 Cor 9:22). He also points to the example of Moses who entered the tabernacle time and again, remaining in dialogue with God (*compatire*), so that when he emerged, he could be at the service of his people (*patire*).

Being in God's Tent means an ascending love which takes a concrete participation through descending love: 'being in the *compatire* of God' to enter into the *patire* of Jesus in human suffering.

The Message of Pope Francis for the 30<sup>th</sup> World Day of the Sick, 2022, speaks about God's *compatire* and Jesus' *patire*:

- God as the Mercy cares for us with the strength of a father and the tenderness of a mother; he unceasingly desires to give us new life in the Holy Spirit (#1);
- The supreme witness of the Father's merciful love for the sick is his only-begotten Son, Jesus who showed such great concern for the sick, so much so that He made it paramount in the mission of the apostles, who were sent by the Master to proclaim the Gospel and to heal the sick (cf. Lk 9:2) (#2);
- The sick are the suffering flesh of Christ (#3), who are our lords and masters (St. Camillus).

The spirituality of *Christus patiens* demands our participation in it, not a participation through mere words but a concrete participation which demands two conditions:

- **Removing the sandals:** The Lord said to Moses: Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). This 'Take off your sandals, for the ground is holy' pastorally means "take off your comforts, and wear the discomforts of others" (cf. Phil 2:6-8).
- **Throwing down the staff and holding it at the tail:** "Throw away the stick and hold it at the tail" (cf. Exodus 4:2-4)) implies "throwing away one's power, position, authority on which one rests and holding oneself at the tail so that one counts on God, rather than on oneself.

Thus, *Christus patiens* is a *compatire* of God through *patire* of Jesus through way of participation by wearing the discomforts of others and counting on God. If so, our spirituality will be a spirituality of Jesus and we will become *Christus Camilliani*.

## 2. *Christus Camilliani: Christ in Camillians*

*Christus Camilliani* is a spirituality of affirming the Presence of Christ in each Camillian. It is an owning up of our Camillian identity as partners and ambassadors of Christ. It is a spirituality of getting healed of our woundedness and failures. The ability to be partners of Christ will be the result of ourselves getting healed. There is woundedness in us, that resembles the woundedness of famous personalities in the Bible. For example:

- We are wounded like Jacob because of his waywardness without God;
- We are wounded like people of Israel because of taking a broader route of 40 years instead of taking a narrow route of 11 days;
- We are wounded like Moses because of our failure to listen to God's plan of action;
- We are wounded like St. Peter because of our denial of our own identity;

The life experience or 'the thorn-in-the-flesh' of St. Paul will teach us how we have to make a transition from being 'The Apostle to the worst sinner'.

C'erano 4 momenti della conversione di san Paolo:

- Sono io l'Apostolo;
- Sono uno degli apostoli;
- Sono uno dei peccatori;
- Sono il peggior peccatore.

The experience of ‘darkness’ in some of the saints will be an example,

- *Dark night of the soul of St. John of the Cross* who wrote: Everything in my soul and heart goes dark and results in a state of absence of God;
- *Dark moments of St. Theresa of Kolkata* who wrote: The pain within me is so great. The place of God in my soul is blank: there is no God in me;
- *Silence of God of St. Theresa of Child Jesus* who wrote: God hides, is wrapped in darkness.

All these different personalities teach us how we are wounded. Every Camillian has to make an effort of transition from woundedness to wholeness. When we realize our woundedness and the absence of God, we will not be left alone but we will be assured of peace. When we have peace, we become bridge-builders of peace.

Every Camillian who is healed of his woundedness sees himself as bridge-builder of peace like Jesus. The dramatic healings and multiplication of loaves were just the most obvious manifestation of what was going on within the hearts of those gathered: they were in want of peace which they got through Jesus.

Peace begins within; it is an inner disposition, a turning towards another in hope and generosity. As we are *Christus Camilliani*, let us look for these inner movements – in ourselves and in others. And then, let us look for how that quiet stirring manifests itself into signs of peace during the entire Chapter.

As a sign of inner movements, let us have during the break some better photographers of external gestures of our interior peace, for example, our smiles, our warm embraces, our determined handshakes, our hope-spreading dialogues and our unthreatening presence.

These external good gestures are possible only when we allow ourselves to be glanced at by God as *Christus Camilliani*. God can behold every single one of us with a single glance as He sees all of us simultaneously. And God is fully aware of our success stories, our failures, our personalities, our depth because the light of Jesus is shining in each one’s beautiful face.

God has a long hall where he hangs pictures of all members of our Order. God might group us together only in terms of *Christus Camilliani* saying: all are very, very good. In this action, God the Father spreads the goodness of our Order that is contagious. God teaches us and the newcomers of our Order how to glance at all with the goodness. It is because we are saturated with goodness as God sees all facets of us throughout all time. Each *Christus Camilliani* has to portrait his goodness to others. If so, we become *altus Christus*.

### **3. *Altus Christus – another Christ***

The spirituality of Camillians that starts from *Christus patiens* and travels through *Christus Camilliani* is a spirituality of *altus Christus*.

To become another Christ means to grow in Christ-Likeness. 2 Peter 1:5-7 provides a list of eight characteristics to become Christ-Like: Faith, Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (or love).

I would like to concentrate on **knowledge** here because to become another Christ or Christ-Like is first of all to know Him.

Everyone knows what knowledge is and how valuable it is. A vast amount of knowledge is available or sold today. There are over 7,000 universities in the world where knowledge can be acquired, and over 129 million books have been published. That is a lot of knowledge! But how much of it is really useful or needful?

A story is told that an engine of a huge ship broke down, and its owners were losing lots of money for the ship could not sail and it remained in the harbour for days. They tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure out how to fix the engine. Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was a young. He carried a large bag of tools with him, and when he arrived, he immediately went to work. He inspected the engine very carefully, from top to bottom. Two of the ship's owners were there, watching this man, hoping he would know what to do. After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed! A week later, the owners received a bill from the man of \$10,000. "What?!" the owners exclaimed. "He did nothing!" So, they wrote him, "Please send us a bill." The man sent them a bill that read: Tapping with a hammer: \$2; Knowing specifically where to tap: \$9,998.

The kind of knowledge that we need to cultivate is just like that: it is specific! The term for knowledge in v.5 of our text is actually a very specific kind of knowledge. This specific kind of knowledge that is really worth pursuing as it never loses its usefulness is the knowledge of Jesus Christ!

*As Paul said in Colossians 2:3, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. And then in Philippians 3:8, Paul testified that he "counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." In John 17:3, Jesus Himself said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

We need this Knowledge because by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, we have all the knowledge we need to live a life of moral excellence, a life that fulfils the purpose we were made for. And one important feature of this knowledge is that it never changes. The knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is permanently fixed. It never becomes outdated, unlike much of the knowledge that is relied on today.

The only one person in the history who was considered to have become *altus christus* and Christ-Like is St. Francis Assisi who had the knowledge of Jesus. But for us Camillians, that saint is our Founder because he **knew** Jesus in the sick and in those who care for the sick and in himself as the healer and comforter.

St. Camillus, wandering along the way of worldliness, living like the prodigal son, facing the hard realities of life, became the wounded: the whole person was wounded – from the head to the tail – he was miraculously intervened by God and was made to say: no more to the world, no more to the world.

This "no more to the world, no more to the world" resonates another side: *forever to Jesus, forever to Jesus*. This 'yes to Jesus' brought about the wholeness that helped him to found the Order. He knew the Lord in the sick and took upon the pain of the sick as Jesus took upon Himself. He knew meaning in the Cross and gave new meaning to it by transforming it to Red Cross.

Being and becoming *altus Christus* needs a lot of hard work. It needs "Tilling the Soil".

We ask the Holy Spirit to be with us as we till deeper into the place where our relationship with Jesus grows. When we till the soil, we break through the hard surface layer, break up the clumps of soil, and remove the rocks and old roots.

In trying to 'till the soil' so as to become *altus Christus*, let us avoid some religiosities, some false spiritualities, which do not help us to nourish the seed of the Word of God, to soften the hardness and to get rid of the stones and clumps that block growth.

The religiosities that are to be avoided are:

- Plastic surgery of the soul
- Pharisaic negativity
- Spiritual worldliness
- Ritual practices
- Social activities
- Falling in love with Jesus

Against these false spiritualities, we should have a spirituality that goes against the law of gravity (si butta a terra dal soffitto una roccia che cade a terra), that is, “rising in love” (si butta se stesso all’amore e si alza nell’amore): this spirituality is called “Rising in the sweetness of the Cross, that is, in the Red Cross.”

Rising in the Sweetness of the Cross means

- Cultivating friendship with Jesus, sitting and talking with Him about our questions, trying to be as honest as we would with our best friend or someone who truly and completely loves us,
- Associating ourselves with the meaning found in the Cross which might be a scandal and absurdity, but finding meaning in the Cross as victory and triumph because without Cross, there is no joy.

St. Camillus chose the Red Cross in order to tell the world that the life of every Camillian is a sacrifice on the Cross of human suffering.

- This Red Cross has attracted many in the history to sacrifice their lives in the battlefield of pandemics and epidemics and to become martyrs of Charity.
- It is because they associated themselves with Jesus who took upon Himself the Cross of the humanity.

St. Camillus,

- being born in the manger, became Christ in humility;
- being born in the world of suffering, became Christ on the Cross;
- being spent for the sick, became Christ the wounded;
- being present at the side of the sick, became Christ the Healer;
- being Christ to the sick, became *altus Christus*.

Every Camillian who rises himself on the sweetness of the Red Cross becomes motif for charity, love and sacrifice. Thus, he becomes *altus Christus*.

### **Provocation of Pope Francis**

In the second chapter, “A stranger on the road”, of *Fratelli Tutti*, dedicated to the figure of the Good Samaritan, Pope Francis emphasizes that in an unhealthy society that turns its back on suffering and that is “illiterate” in caring for the frail and vulnerable (see Par 64-65), we are all called – just like the Good Samaritan – to become neighbours to others (see Par 81), overcoming prejudices, personal interests, historic and cultural barriers. We all, in fact, are co-responsible in creating a society that is able to include, integrate and lift up those who have fallen or are suffering (see Par 77). Love builds bridges and “we were made for love” (Par 88).

### **Conclusion**

We are united as Camillian religious to reflect on Camillian prophecy as a prophecy which makes us recognize the true face of Christ in the sick, in us and thus become another Christ.

## Talk 4

### Camillian Prophecy from Static to Dynamic Charism

*Blessed are those ministers of the sick who will taste this holy heavenly liquor, the works of charity in hospitals (St. Camillus)*

#### Introduction

Reflection 4 deals with Camillian prophecy from a static charism to a dynamic charism. This dynamicity is found in the Camillian charism that invokes our pleas in front of many sighs, that evokes our remembrance in front of amnesia, that provokes our involvement in front of indifference, and that convokes our togetherness in front of estrangement.

#### Defining Charism

Charism is defined *as the free gift of the Holy Spirit intended for the building up of the Church, the Body of Christ.*

There are 3 Greek roots that will explain this definition:

- Charism comes from **Char**, meaning favour or gift: It is a gift entrusted to us to build up the Order to which we belong: As such, char makes us construct, strengthen, reinforce, unite, and bind our Order because charism is a gift like cement, brick, or other material, that together edifies our Order.
- Charism comes from **Chara** meaning joy or blessedness or beatitude: as such it is a task, a responsibility, an endeavour, a settlement, an entrustment: Camillians who receive charism are persons who do not depend upon anyone for joy but on Jesus so as to become joy-provider in the places where it is missing.
- Charism comes from **Eucharistia** meaning ‘caressing’: literally it means good (*eu*) and caressing (*charestia*): good caressing. When we receive charism, we become the subject of goodness; our gestures become those of good caressing; we who receive charism cannot be thought of transmitting bad gestures.

#### Charism in the Bible

Charism has its roots in one of the dominant themes of the Old Testament, “creatio continua.” Yahweh, the author of creation, continues to bestow His gifts (charisma) upon His chosen people. For their part, the people must never forget that Yahweh is the source of all blessings.

The lesson is clear: *divine gifts must never be separated from the Divine.*

In the NT, “charism” occurs sixteen times, especially in St. Paul. It has two senses:

- the broad sense of “charism” as the free gifts which are generally spiritual, and
- the narrow sense of “charism” as “free gifts appropriated by one person or another which allows him to accomplish through the Spirit activities suited to the community’s good.”

Charism in the Bible as free gifts means:

- They are gifts of the Holy Spirit,
- They play a vital role in the constitution and daily life of the Church;
- all religious by virtue of their profession are recipients of charism;
- charisms are given to individuals primarily for the building up of the Body of Christ.

As free gift, charism demands a precondition, that is, **docility** to the Holy Spirit, to the Church, to our Order and to our religious commitment.

## Nature of the person who receives ‘charism’

Charism purifies a person, through him/her, edifies others, and through them glorifies God. Thus, the person’s nature becomes the following: 1) Pneumatic, 2) Charismatic, 3) Immanuel, 4) *Go’el* and 5) Genetic.

**1) Pneumatic:** As charism is attributed to Holy Spirit, a person becomes: *Spirit-filled, spiritual, and eternal.*

- ***Spirit-filled:*** the person becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit; he participates in the mission of Advocacy of the Holy Spirit, which is to safeguard, defend, and protect others of their dignity from danger, manipulation and exploitation. A Spirit-filled person becomes the Advocate of others (example, the practice in Roman world).
- ***Spiritual:*** the gifts are infused within a person, and therefore a person becomes completely spiritual. This is consistent with the Pauline conception of the Christian life as entirely “spiritual.” To be spiritual is a permanent reality as per the Name of God, YAHWAH, meaning “always”. As God is always unchanging, so a spiritual person is always spiritual.
- ***Eternal:*** when a person is given charism, he is eternally meant for God; he is eternally readiness of God. Though his body is subject to decay, he remains eternally present in the heart of God because “when God created us, a sample of our heart is there with God” (Fulton Sheen). Therefore, charism makes a person long for God: “My soul never rests until it rests in You” (St. Augustine).

**2) Charismatic:** A person who receives charism becomes a charismatic person, that is, he becomes an extraordinary person possessed with extraordinary gifts. This extraordinary gift is nothing but ***hovering over*** nature of the Holy Spirit. Thus, he becomes

- all enveloping, that is, keeping safe mystery and history of another,
- all pervading, that is, he is called not to lose any chosen of God,
- all constancy and consistency till the work is accomplished,
- never-getting-tired of keeping watch at the Master’s artwork,
- is busy with God’s affair in Holy Spirit.

So, a charismatic person is slowly getting into the place of God’s will of renewing the entire world including humans from the corrupting and corrupted elements of today’s culture.

A charismatic person **ANALOGICALLY** has 2 eyes (I) in front, and 1 eye (I) on the back. Accordingly, he is the one:

- who makes an **IMPRESSION** among people,
- who creates an **IMPRINTING** in their life, and
- who bestows the **INDWELLING** spiritual effects of the Holy Spirit.

**3) Immanuel:** Charism given by the Holy Spirit makes a person ‘Immanuel’, that is, God-with-us.

This ‘God-with-us’ is pronounced as per the accent given on these 3 words: God, with, us.

- If the accent is on **God**, it is pronounced as **God** is with us, with the stress on “**God**”,
- If the accent is on **with**, it is pronounced as God is **with** us, with the stress on “**With**”,
- If the accent is on **us**, it is pronounced as God is with **us**, with the stress on “**us**”.

But biblically, the accent is on “**us**”, i.e., God is with **US**. It means “**us**” is important because

- the Order is important,
- each individual province/delegation/mission is important;
- each culture is important,
- each community is important,

- each Camillian is important, thus
- synodality is important.

When a Camillian becomes ‘Immanuel’, for him the Order is his own family. He unties his umbilical cord from his natural family and ties it with the family, that is, our Order. Thus, he becomes ‘God-is-with-us’ with the stress on ‘US’, that is, the family, that is, our Order.

**4) Go’el:** every person who receives charism is a *go’el*, which means ‘closest relative’.

This word is very important in the book of Ruth because for Ruth God became the closest relative to care for her.

In Hebrew, it means redeemer. It denotes God as the redeemer in the Bible:

- If anyone of your kin falls into difficulty and sells a piece of property, then the next of kin shall come and redeem what the relative has sold (Lev 25:25);
- After they have sold themselves, they shall have the right of redemption; one of their brothers may redeem them (Lev. 25:28);
- It is also caring for the widows and orphans (Pro 23:11; Jer 50:34).

As a whole, it means God is the closest relative who protects and redeems His people and He becomes ‘*the*’ neighbour (relative) as the good Samaritan (**Jesus**).

Every Camillian who receives charism becomes *go’el* of the other, as the closest relative to the members of our Order, and to the sick as good Samaritans (neighbours).

**5) Genetic:** to be a genetic person is to pass on his charism to the next generation.

In the OT, God is called the God of *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob* because they passed the Nature of God to the next generation and thus, they remained *genetic* in their life. In the NT, God is called the God of *Jesus* because He continued the Nature of God.

So, if there is continuity needed today, we have to pass the Nature of God and Jesus in and through our life in order to be faithful to our being *genetic*.

**Mathew 16:13-16**, besides giving us the importance of the confession of Peter about Jesus as the Christ, gives us implicitly a glance of this genetic nature of a charismatic person. The passage goes like this:

*When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets.” “But you,” he said to them, “who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

The mention of these names *Caesarea Philippi, John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah and one of the Prophets* is very important as regards to our genetic nature:

- Caesarea Philippi (Caesar and Philip): they did not pass on to others the nature of God as they were basically selfish people (**not in line with being genetic**);
- John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah and one of the Prophets: they passed on the nature of God as they remained selfless prophets (**in line with being genetic**).

Similarly, if we pass on the Nature of God, that is, if we continue to live as *imago Dei* and pass on to others as *imago Dei*, the answer to the question “who do you say that I am – some say “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets” – will continue like this: some say ‘each Camillian’.

It is an invitation to rewrite **Mathew 13:14**: “Some say “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets, *still others say... (adding our names)*).

As receivers of charism, we are called to continue the Trinitarian imprinting (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit) to the next generation.

Then God will be called the God of the name of each one of us like God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus, John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, etc.

### **Charism of St. Camillus**

The Charism of our Founder is the action of Triune God for the sick in the Church. Our Constitution holds this truth:

*The Order of the Ministers of the infirm, a living part of the Church, received from God, through the founder St. Camillus, the gift of reliving Christ's ever-present merciful love for the sick and of bearing witness to it to the world. St. Camillus, himself an object of mercy and matured by the experience of pain, following the impious and teaching of the merciful Christ, was called by God to assist the sick and teach others how to serve them (art. #1 and #8)*

The imprinting nature of God was seen very much in St. Camillus as he received the charism of the ministry to the sick:

- God the Father decided what charism to be bestowed upon St. Camillus;
- God the Son made sure that he received it because it was God's work;
- God the Holy Spirit showered on Camillus because he himself was object of mercy;
- God the Merciful made him receptive like the good soil to assist and to teach;
- God the Builder and Edifier builds and edifies our charism in the Church.

Since the charism of St. Camillus is the initiative of the Triune God's imprinting in him, it is paramount that it should not be side-lined or forgotten or changed. We are called to be faithful to our charism as today many congregations, orders, societies or pious associations have already changed their original charism of their founders.

Thanks to Camillians that we still continue the original charism of our Founder irrespective of waves that were battering and are still battering.

To keep up the original charism, and not to get sunk by the waves, we have to keep in mind the *Principle of Continuity*, which doesn't lie in any 'thing' or 'element' but in a Person, Jesus of Nazareth (Word Became Flesh). In Jesus, everything became *locus theologicus*, the theological centre from which continued all that we are today.

St. Camillus is one of those who have respected this Centre. Fulfilling the Will of God to heal humanity through Jesus is the whole purpose of the Charism and St. Camillus did fulfil it through healing the sick and preaching the Gospel.

### **Practical implications of our Charism**

Charism in general and charism in particular, that is, the charism of Camillians practically revolves around 4 'tion':

1) Our Charism is not an activity but an *invocation*:

- It invokes the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the receiver as the consoler to others.
- It is a request for the spiritual presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit in the events of life.

2) Our Charism is not a forgetfulness but an *evocation*:

- It is an act of bringing or recalling a memory of our history to the conscious mind;
- It is an act of bringing to memory whatever St. Camillus did to the poor sick;
- It is a present act of narrating to the future whatever is the past;
- We evoke the goodness of our Order in past, we live it in present and we narrate to our future;
- As the Bible is the result of narration, so is our Order the result of our narration.

3) Our Charism is not an indifference but a *provocation*:

- It is an act of being dissatisfied with our doing and being, in this sense, it is an introspection;
- It is a call to take up the weight of others, in this sense it is a solidarity;
- It is a call to intervene when and where it is needed, in this sense, it is a subsidiarity;
- It is a call to drive away all unwantedness from the temple (our Order).

4) Our Charism is not an isolation but a *convocation*:

- It is an act of togetherness to plan out our projects that are in line with our spirituality;
- It is a convocation of mature people to work out without partiality;
- It is a convocation of pneumatic people spirit-filled, spiritual and eternal;
- It is a convocation of charismatic people who hovers over the others;
- It is a convocation of prophetic people who are the voice of the voiceless;
- It is a convocation of genetic people who continue the nature of God to the next generation;
- And it is a convocation of people faithful to our Order irrespective of our cultural milieu.

**Provocation of Pope Francis (Fratelli tutti – Chapter 3: vision of an open world)**

In the chapter “Envisaging and engendering an open world”, Pope Francis exhorts us to go “‘outside’ the self” in order to find “a fuller existence in another” (Par 88), opening ourselves up to the other according to the dynamism of charity which makes us tend toward “universal fulfilment” (Par 95). Pope Francis says that the spiritual stature of a person’s life is measured by love, which always “takes first place” and leads us to seek better for the life of the other, far from all selfishness (Par 92-93). The sense of solidarity and of fraternity begin within the family (our Order), which are to be safeguarded and respected in their “primary and vital mission of education” (Par 114).

**Conclusion**

Dynamic nature of the Charism of Camillians is to love the sick as a mother who cares for her only child who is sick. The sick are our lords and masters. To love the sick who are our lords and masters means to be faithful to the charism of our Founder in being pneumatic, charismatic, Immanuel, go’el, genetic in a world which is corrupted by selfishness and with evil spirit. We need to envision and engender an open world of selflessness and other-centredness within our family, that is, our Order.

## Talk 5

### Camillian Prophecy from Ordinariness to Extraordinariness

*Blessed are you if, contenting yourself with your simplicity, you continue in the best way possible in the service of the poor of Jesus Christ (St. Camillus)*

#### Introduction

Reflection 5 deals with Camillian Prophecy that goes beyond our ordinary ways of doing ministries to extraordinary essence of our Charism. It calls for our ministries to be rethought, revitalized, relived and reworked within the perspectives of extraordinariness which lies in the following three elements: 1) Verification, 2) Reconciliation and 3) Life Laundry.

#### 1. Verification

We are all convoked together in this Chapter especially in the grace-filled time of Easter. We are all good at doing our ordinary ministries of healing the sick. By doing these ministries, we are not doing any extraordinary thing.

But the most important thing that we are asked to carry out in our Chapter and then in our life is the extraordinary ministry of verification.

It is because we are called and committed to verify rather than to be verified. It is a task assigned to us by God. This means that we should never become objects of verification, that is, it is not the task of the people to verify us.

Gone are those two moments (before temporary profession and before final commitment those for brotherhood) or three moments (before temporary profession, before final commitment those for priesthood) when we have been verified by a team of our worthiness to become religious. Now it is time for us to verify and let us own up that we are the verifiers.

What does it mean to verify? It means:

- to see that everything is in order or not;
- every ministry we carry out is in order or not,
- our Camillian life is in order or not;
- our relationship with God, in community, with sick people is in order or not,
- our Order is in order or not.

The Holy Spirit will help us to do verification in line 3 verifications of Jesus. Let us see one by one and then apply each one in our Order:

#### ***1) Verification of peace in our Order (cf. Luke 19: 28, 41-44)***

*And when he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes... because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

Entering into Jerusalem, He started crying. Why? It is because

- there was no peace due to which there were problems for Jerusalem,
- they were busy with many other things except things that would make for peace,
- they knew everything but did not want to know the time of God's visitation,
- they did not want the Lord of peace.

Today Jesus visits us with his gentle touch, healing and warmth. We are invited to sow the seeds of peace. The Chapter is the time of recognizing Jesus' visitation among us to see that we are people of peace and we are constructors of peace in our Order through constructive discussion that will make for peace.

## **2) Verification of being focused (cf. Luke 22: 39-46)**

*And Jesus said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Pray that you may not enter into temptation."*

Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, after sweating blood and water, comes to verify the reality of disciples: He goes back, sweats blood, comes back to verify again; goes again and comes back; 3 times he verifies: 3 times indicates the 3 falls of the disciples.

Today Jesus comes back to us to ask us whether we are focused or not. The invitation of Jesus is a call to focus our life on Him. Otherwise, there will be a danger.

Revelation 3:14-17, and 20 speak about this danger and a solution to get out of this danger:

*"To the angel of the Church in Laodicea, write: "These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the source of God's creation: "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either hot or cold. As it is, since you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, 'I am rich; I have prospered; I have everything I want,' never realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. "Behold, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with that person and that person with me."*

"I wish you were either hot or cold" is an invitation of the *Amen* to us in order to say 'yes' to open the door when Jesus is knocking at. This shows our focus, our readiness and our partnership with Jesus. Without Jesus, our life is wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked, that is, we are nothing without Jesus.

The General Chapter is the time to focus our discussion on Jesus, our spirituality, our rootedness and our readiness to continue our life as Camillians.

## **3) Verification of being risen (cf. Luke 16: 26 and 30)**

<sup>26</sup> *Moreover, between us and you a great chasm has been established, so that no one who wishes to do so can pass from our side to yours, nor can anyone pass from your side to ours.'*

<sup>30</sup> *Abraham answered, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'*

Jesus did this verification through the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He speaks about two important points:

1) 'Great chasm' indicates the fact that salvation is possible only when we are alive, that is, we have to do the things that will help us to achieve salvation before death. Similarly, our Order is called to carry out the things that will help the members to attain salvation on this earth. Otherwise, it will be impossible;

2) 'Neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead' indicates the fact that the Resurrection of Jesus is very important for us to live a life of resurrection, that is, we live changed, converted: some impact should take place in me and others. We who believe in Jesus' Resurrection are asked to verify whether we live as resurrected people or not.

The movie 'The Risen' has an important episode of someone interviewing some of the disciples whether Jesus has truly risen or not. When interviewed, Mary Magdalene and some of the disciples said, "We are truly risen because Jesus is truly risen."

If Jesus comes to do interview with us regarding the impact of His Resurrection in our life, what will be the answer? The answer will simply be: we are truly risen because we live as risen people.

As a whole, these 3 verifications done by Jesus have to be done in our Order so as to live a life of discipleship, commitment and service to the sick

- by being an Order of peace against peaceless situation (1<sup>st</sup> verification),
- by being focused on Jesus against focused on other things (2<sup>nd</sup> verification) and
- by being saved and risen people against all the dead attitudes of life (3<sup>rd</sup> verification).

## 2. Reconciliation / Restoration

The second extraordinary ministry that we are called to carry out through our ordinary ministry is the ministry of reconciliation for a restoration within our Order. Reconciliation is the value of the religious to restore the broken relationship.

**Genesis 45: 4-7** is one of the best examples for reconciliation and restoration:

*Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me!" They approached him, and he said to them, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But do not be grieved and do not be angry with yourselves for having sold me down here, for God sent me here before you to save your lives. The famine has already lasted two years in the land, and there are another five years in which there will be neither ploughing nor reaping. God sent me here before you, to preserve a remnant for you on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

Joseph took the ministry of reconciliation to restore the lost relationship due to jealousy and anger. Joseph, the healed healer, mended the broken relationship with his brothers. It had taken many years for the restoration, which was possible only because Joseph said: "After all we are brothers."

Reconciliation is possible when consider ourselves and others as brothers. The sixth chapter, "Dialogue and friendship in society" of **Fratelli tutti**, is an exemplary one for us to create space for brotherhood through dialogue and friendship within our Order by considering everyone in our Order as brothers even if we belong to different provinces and delegations.

In this chapter, Pope Francis defines the concept of life as the "art of encounter" with everyone, even with the world's peripheries and with original peoples, because "each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable" (Par 215). Then, of particular note, is the Pope's reference to the miracle of "kindness", an attitude to be recovered because it is a star "shining in the midst of darkness" and "frees us from the cruelty... the anxiety... the frantic flurry of activity" that prevail in the contemporary era (Par 222-224) without giving much importance to dialogue and friendship that lead to reconciliation while forgetting the painful past to restore others as our brothers.

In **Matthew 5:23-24**, Jesus invites us with a vehement need for reconciliation:

*"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."*

How can we offer gifts, exchange gifts, or make use of the gifts if we are not reconciled to each other? Every 'good lunch' indicates the fact of reconciliation in the community because everyone is restored to sit at the table of banquet.

Jesus following the path of God in reconciling us to Himself has reconciled us with the Father through His Body and Blood.

It is not an ordinary body and blood but the Body and Blood of Jesus who says: *This is my Body and Blood which will be broken and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins* (Origen).

Everyone who is reconciled is called to carry out the ministry of reconciliation for it is the initiative of God in Jesus Christ. This fact is explained by St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21:

*All this has been done by God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation. In other words, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and not holding people's transgressions against them, and he committed to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is appealing to you through us. We implore you through Christ to be reconciled to God. He made him who did not know sin to be sin for our sake, so that through him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Every reconciler is the one who has been reconciled with God in Christ and thus he carries out the ministry of reconciliation. Every reconciler restores brokenness not only in his homeland but also in the mission countries and he becomes the ambassador of reconciliation.

Broken relationships are mended when we are clever to deal with the issues properly, when we are shrewd enough, when we know how to deal with and when we are mature enough to deal with. Broken relationships are mended when we are innocent enough like doves, that is, when we are new creation in Christ (cf. Matthew 10:16).

Broken relationships are mended when we value and promote peace and forgiveness. This fact is reflected on in 7<sup>th</sup> chapter *Paths of renewed encounter* of *Fratelli tutti*:

Far from the desire for vengeance, peace is “proactive” and aims at forming a society based on service to others and on the pursuit of reconciliation and mutual development (see Par 227-229). Thus, peace is an “art” that involves and regards everyone and in which each one must do his or her part in “a never-ending task” (see Par 227-232). Forgiveness is linked to peace: we must love everyone, without exception but loving an oppressor means helping him to change and not allowing him to continue oppressing his neighbour (see Par 241-242). Forgiveness does not mean impunity, but rather, justice and remembrance, because to forgive does not mean to forget, but to renounce the destructive power of evil and the desire for revenge.

Forgiveness is an invitation ‘for giving something that is lacking in the other’, that is, if a person lacks love, give love; if he lacks justice, give justice; if he lacks mercy, be merciful; if he lacks humility, fight the pride with humility. In this way, there will be peace, reconciliation, forgiveness and restoration.

God called St. Camillus to do the ministry of reconciliation and so each Camillian is called to continue the same path of the Founder to get reconciled to God and to reconcile and to forgive and work for peace.

The General Chapter is the time when we are convoked together:

- To restore to union and friendship after estrangement (*reconcilen*):
- To restore (the fallen) to favour or to grace (*reconcilier*)
- To bring together again, to regain, to win over again from variance (*reconcilare*)
- To make friendly (*conciliare*) again (*re*) within the Order.

### **3. Life-Laundry**

Verification and Reconciliation lead to the third extraordinary ministry, that is, the ministry of life-laundry within the Order. Life-laundry consists of 3 kinds of washing: 1) washing of self-dependence, 2) washing of disintegrated life, and 3) Washing of craving for greatness.

#### **1) Washing of self-dependence**

We are called to wash away from our self-dependence. **Luke 23:32-39** speaks about our self-dependence and selfishness:

*And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He **saved** others; let Him **save** Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, **save** Yourself." And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, **save** Yourself and us."*

Three times the word 'save' is used: 1) *Save Himself*, 2) *Save Yourself*, and 3) *Save Yourself and us*. This indicates 2 important truths about the reality of human beings:

- Since we know how to save ourselves, it is time for you (Jesus) to save yourself;
- Since we are basically selfish people, it is good for you (Jesus) to be selfish.

This kind of attitude of those yelling at Jesus to save Himself is the same attitude of today:

- People often say: we are full, we are not in need, we have everything, we know how to take care of ourselves; we are concerned about self-preservation; we don't want anything from God or from others.
- People often say: we are selfish people and we teach others to be selfish too.

So, we are called to do this life-laundry of self-dependence and selfishness.

## **2) Washing of our disintegrated life or our lack of integrity**

When we go back to see what happened on the Palm Sunday, we understand that it is full of ingenuity, incoherence and dis-integrity. **Luke 19: 37-40** reads:

*The multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

The same mouth that sang hosanna said: ***crucify him, crucify him.***

What an ingenuity! What an incoherence! What a dis-integrity! Their life of many often becomes a life of convenience and compromises, and so there is dis-integrity. So, we are called to wash our disintegrated, incoherent and ingenuine life.

## **3) Washing of our craving for greatness**

The third washing is washing away of our **megalomania**. **John 13: 3-5** reads:

*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel."*

This Last Supper with the washing of the feet by Jesus indicates the invitation of Jesus to do life-laundry of the desire for power or greatness as there is a lot of megalomania.

## **Provocation of Pope Francis**

You are a leaven that can produce good bread for many, that bread for which there is so much hunger for: listening to the needs, desires, disappointments, hope. Like those who preceded you in your vocation, you can restore hope to everyone and spread love in every place and in every situation. If this does not happen, if your ordinary life lacks testimony and prophecy, then, I repeat to you, a conversion is urgently needed.

## **Conclusion**

This conversion is an act of verification, reconciliation and life-laundry which is paramount in our Chapter. The ways and means may not be clear but the Holy Spirit will help us to discern, provided we shall be docile to the Holy Spirit.

## Talk 6

### Camillian Prophecy from Individuality to Synodality

*I want to persuade myself that Our Lord God has given me great grace by calling me to this holy vineyard, and on this path, I try to please him, and serve him. Neither must I bend to the right nor to the left, but walk straight, with a soul united to the Creator (St. Camillus).*

#### Introduction

Reflection 6 deals with Camillian prophecy that goes beyond our individual cultures to collective or synodal culture while being faithful to our individuality. It is an invitation for each Camillian to be synodal. This synodality involves two things: 1) being missionary Camillians and 2) being synodal Camillians.

#### 1. Being Missionary Camillians

When the Bible was translated into Latin, the word that Christ used when sending out the disciples to preach the Gospel, is *missionem* meaning “act of sending” or *mittere* meaning “to send.” *Missionem* was later translated into English as “missionary.”

So, the word “missionary” has the following elements: 1) Someone sending, 2) the one sent is a mystic, and 3) the one sent is an ambassador. Let us reflect on one by one.

##### 1) *Being missionary involves ‘Someone sending’*

There is Someone (in our case Jesus) who does the very act of sending someone (in our case the disciple). Then, Jesus who decides to send someone does it freely without anyone to control Him over His free decision.

Sending involves 2 presuppositions: 1) free choice and 2) faithfulness:

1) First of all, sending involves free choice: there is freedom to choose from the part of Jesus:

*You did not choose me. Rather, I chose you. And I appointed you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will remain, so that the Father may give you whatever you ask him in my name (John 15:16).*

2) Secondly, it involves faithfulness from the part of Jesus who owns up whatever decision He makes and helps the one to be faithful as He himself is faithful:

*The one who calls you is faithful, and he will accomplish this (1 Thessalonians 5:24).*

Very often “being sent as missionary” is misunderstood as the free and faithful decision of the one who is sent. Instead, it lies in Jesus’ freedom and fidelity.

From the part of the one who is sent, that is, from a Camillian missionary, what is expected of him is to be responsible enough for all the activities for which he is called to carry out. And a responsible missionary takes into account whatever fruit he bears in the sent missions because the Father gives whatever fruit the missionary asks Him in Jesus’ name.

The best fruit a Camillian missionary asks from God is the fruit of serving the sick. The whole world belongs to us Camillians to go and bear the fruit of serving the sick.

##### 2) *Being missionary involves a mystic spirituality:*

Mystic spirituality, also known as mysticism that consists of searching ways to reach communion with God, or the Highest Divinity. The word originates from Greek *mystikos* or *myein* which refers to something secret, something sparky, something rooted.

### **It is something secret:**

A mystic spirituality is a way to find the secret path that takes the one who is close to the Divine, who enters into such relationship so as to know the Divine, to encounter Him, to dialogue with Him, and to experience Him. As a result of knowing the secret path revealed to the one who is close to the Divine, the person does not hold this mystical experience and therefore he makes known and proclaims the Divine to the people who are willing to enter into such mystical experience.

### **It is something sparky:**

A mystic is always 'sparky' because the Divine sparks out in him. This spark is the love between the Mystery (God) and the mystic (human person). A mystical person is the one who enters into God in a primacy of love. As St. Francis of Assisi says,

*Everything, every scripture, every law, every action, every history itself is to be interpreted in the light of the primacy of Love and Christ over all.*

A mystic with his primacy of love and for Christ longs for Him, adores Him with all strength, and enjoys His presence, and thus he or she is on the missionary voyage to spell out this love.

### **It is something 'no bargaining':**

A mystic is the one who satisfies the thirst of Jesus on the Cross and in the people. For this reason, he thirsts for Jesus. There is no bargaining in his life because he completely yearns for Jesus.

A story is told a boy who was selling water bottles at the railway station. At the stop of train, the boy enters into train to sell the bottles. A gentleman asked the boy the price. The boy then said, "10 rupees." The gentleman started bargaining for "5" rupees. The boy unwilling to come down with the price again said, "10 rupees." The gentleman replied, "If you don't come down with the price, you will never sell off the bottles." To this, the boy replied, "Sir, if you are thirsty, you will never bargain."

A mystic person never bargains in his religious life because he only longs for Jesus and his mission is to satisfy Jesus and not himself.

### **It is something rooted:**

A mystical person is the one who is rooted and uprooted for others. The Gospel Parable of the Sower (cf. Luke 8:4-15) invites the audience (disciples) to be rooted in the Word.

The question we need to ask is:

How much are we rooted in the Word, the Bible? Someone has put it this way, using the word BIBLE as an acronym: Believer's Instructions Before Leaving Earth.

A mystical person thinks of the Bible as a personal road safety manual which contains valuable information on how to reach heaven safely. He thinks of the Bible as a personal love-letter from God.

A mystical person is the one who is rooted in a good soil of Jesus and then receives the ability to produce fruits that Jesus wants him to produce.

A rooted mystical person is compared to *Moso* bamboo tree that only grows in China, which lies beneath the earth 30 years and after 30 years grows so fast, high, and huge that it stands still and occupies the entire space. Rootedness of this tree can be compared to a mystical person's rootedness in Jesus' rootedness for 30 years.

The core nature of a true and faithful Camillian mystic is that he is a mystic

- in contemplating on the Great Missionary (Jesus),
- in learning to leap into places which are only known to the Sender (the Order/God),
- in surrendering his or life to whatever is awaiting (Red Cross), and
- in helping the people to believe in Jesus and in the One who sent Him (Healing/Salvation).

### 3) *Being missionary involves 'an ambassadorship'*

A missionary who is a mystic is also an ambassador for Christ. St. Paul underlines this fact in *2 Corinthians 5:20*.

As such, an ambassador is the one who is sent in a mission land, brings the Good News to those people, stays there till he is called back, dispatches those fruits to the Sender, comes back home detached, and ready to move to other places.

We Camillians are appointed by God to be ambassadors for Christ.

Like any appointed ambassador who goes to a mission land, each Camillian should have the following qualities:

- Committed to the cause of God's project,
- Appointed to represent Jesus Christ,
- Never becoming attached,
- Enduring suffering because of commitment,
- Ready to return once the mission is over,
- Highly educated in the school of the Cross,
- Highly influential for being persuasive,
- Speaking only the truth,
- Professional and diplomatic in the Holy Spirit.

Besides, every Camillian to be an ambassador should be sure of his salvation so as to assure salvation to others and to serve the Lord selflessly in a mission land.

Rev. Charles Seet says,

Therefore, it is good for you to have the assurance of your salvation, for a very important reason: It enables you to serve the Lord with gladness, and out of pure selfless motives of love and gratitude to Him. When you have that assurance, you will no longer have this nagging worry in your mind that you may still end up in danger. The assurance liberates you from this fear, so that you can go on to live for the Lord and serve Him selflessly. Then you will be able to sing with deep conviction the chorus that goes like this

Things are different now, something happened to me when I gave my heart to Jesus,  
Things are different now, I was changed, it must be when I gave my heart to Him,  
Things I loved before have passed away, things I love far more have come to stay;  
Things are different now, something happened that day, when I gave my heart to Him.

As an ambassador, every Camillian is different and thus he becomes a man of virtue:

- Virtue which is nothing but a hunger for purity

Here's an illustration:

In many parts of the world, there is an animal called an ermine. It is a small rodent well-known for its gleaming white fur. It takes very good care of its fur, grooming it and preventing it from getting dirty or dull. And hence, hunters will take advantage of this. The hunters don't set any traps to capture this animal. What they would do is firstly find its home, which would be a small cave or a dead log, then they would put black tar at the entrance and also inside. Then the hunters would then call forth their dogs to frighten the ermine by the loud barking and

chasing. The ermine would run towards its home, but once finding that the entrance and interior covered with this substance, it would not enter in. Rather than dirty its glossy white fur, it would rather face the dogs and the hunters with courage. Its purity was far dearer than its own life.

**Genesis 39** tells of Joseph who refused to commit fornication with Mrs Potiphar for fear of sinning against God. Another example is that of Daniel.

It was said of him in **Daniel 1:8** that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. The very act of purposing showed his virtue, courage in the face of great opposition.

Besides these, a Camillian as an ambassador has the following values:

- Patience, Wisdom, Graciousness in speech, Generous, Reasonableness, Readiness of mind, Honesty, Spokesperson before others.

When we have the aforesaid qualities, virtue and values, there will come about lots of benefits: health (healing), prosperity (fullness), protection (fraternal living), and relationship (mutual acceptance).

Rooted in the Word as a mystic and uprooted for others as a missionary is a call to be an ambassador of Jesus. We have to go back to God for our missing sample our heart (a rooted mystic), to love others wholeheartedly and to reach out to them so as to get them back to God for their missing sample of their hearts (a rooted missionary) in a land where one is sent (ambassadorship).

## **2. Being Synodal Camillians**

Let us reflect as Chapter members on the importance of being synodal Camillians in today's world according to the synodality of the Church which Pope Francis has called so as to have the participation of all the Camillians from all over the world.

St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians 2:19-22 says,

*So, you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but are fellow citizens with members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

### **Describing Synodality**

The International Theological Commission (ITC) describes 'Synodality' as an ancient and venerable word in the Tradition of the Church, whose meaning draws on the deepest themes of Revelation:

- It indicates the path along which the People of God walk together.
- It refers to Jesus who presents Himself as 'the way, the truth and the life'.
- It denotes the particular style of Jesus who calls the life and mission of the Church as synodal,
- It expresses the nature of the Church journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.
- It ought to be expressed in the Church's ordinary way of living and working.

### **Nature of Synodality**

The nature of synodal journey is a 3-fold: 1) narrative, 2) sapiential, and 3) prophetic:

### 1) Narration: biblically rooted, historically lived, and experientially passed on:

- Narration of ourselves to others, of our province, of our Order,
- Narration involves listening to each other in small groups without fear of sharing,
- Narration involves Manna (what is it): what is our Order?
- Narration involves rise and fall of our Order / province / delegation / mission,
- Narration involves personal copywrite rather than copying the copywrite of others.

### 2) Sapiential: the fruit of narration is wisdom / knowledge:

- this synodal process of our Chapter should reflect the pilgrim nature of the Church, as she moves towards the heavenly Jerusalem (*Lumen Gentium*, Ch. 7) with openness to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.
- We are pilgrims with a proclamation – along the way, we are called to share with others the good news of where the Holy Spirit is leading: to abundant life in Christ.
- Synodal process is inseparable from the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the Order's central mission of evangelization.
- We say 'no' to the Pharisaic knowledge, but 'yes' to shepherd's and wise men's knowledge, which is the knowledge of the Holy Spirit.

### 3) Prophecy: the fruit of the intervention of the Holy Spirit to be prophetic (Camillian).

This entails 3 important contours: Communion, Participation and Mission:

- **Communion:** the communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. The Triune God gathers us in communion as Chapter members: in bearing the imprinting of our *past* history, living out the imprinting of our charism in the *present*, and passing the imprinting of *sensus fidei* spirituality to the *future* Camillians.
- **Participation:** it is a call for the involvement of all who belong to our Order – priests, brothers and lay Camillians – to engage in the exercise of deep and respectful listening to one another. This listening creates space for us to hear the Holy Spirit, and guides our aspirations for our Order in the post-Pandemic. A synodal Camillian Order is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond to God's will. Genuine efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of every member.
- **Mission:** as we have already seen the missionary nature of our Order, we Camillians exist to evangelize: preach the Gospel and heal the sick. We can never be centred on ourselves, our individualism. Our mission is to witness the love of God and is intended to enable the Order to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on peripheries of our world. In this way, Camillian synodality is a path by which the Order can more fruitfully leaven at the service of the sick.

Far from being simply another Chapter with a completion date, the Chapter has to answer the fundamental questions as synodal Camillians in announcing the Gospel and healing the sick:

- How is this "journeying together" in communion, participation and mission happening today in our Order through narration, knowledge and prophecy? 2) What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together" as synodal Camillians?

The members of our Order are being asked to recall our experiences, to re-read these experiences in greater depth, and then to gather the fruits to share, so that we can discern what paths the Spirit is opening up for our Order in times of post-Pandemic.

### Practical Ways of Being Missionary and Synodal Camillians

#### 1) *Being Rhythmic:*

- There should be a rhythm in our Order, a rhythm that establishes beauty, goodness and truthfulness in Camillians;
- Rhythmic human starts playing his or her notes in ascending love (being in the Tent of God) and descending love (becoming tents for others)

- Rhythmic involves creativity in establishing a relationship with God and others.

## **2) Being Symphonic:**

- Every Camillian gifted with the Camillian charism makes the life and the surrounding symphonic.
- Cara Callback in her article “The symphony of your day” speaks about capturing every sigh of the heart, not only routine sighs, but also those sighs of God in those who suffer.
- Likewise, our Order capture every sigh in the light of Camillian spirituality so that a collective conscience plays a symphony that soothes every melancholic soul.

## **3) Being Synchronic:**

- Every Camillian makes a chord to get connected to the Umbilical Cord of God so as to play the music God wants of him. This is what is called synchronization.
- Spiritual synchronicities are orchestrated and perfectly aligned to deliver a message, provide guidance, or provide reassurance that we are on the right musical synchronized note of right path in our Order.

## **4) Being Synergic:**

- There is a law called synergy that states that when the joint action of agents is brought together, it increases each other’s effectiveness.
- That’s why Jesus in Mathew 18:19 says,
  - *Again, I say to you, that if two-believers on earth agree (that is, are of one mind, in harmony) about anything that they ask (within the will of God), it will be done for them by my Father in Heaven.”*
- Every Camillian is in synergic with other Camillians so that the charism turns out to be a melody that is good, effective, soothing, peaceful and healing.

## **Provocation of Pope Francis**

When the Lord wants a mission, he wants to give us a job, he prepares us to do it well just as he prepared Elijah. what is important is not that he has encountered the Lord but all the way to reach the mission that the Lord entrusts. this is precisely the difference between the apostolic mission that the Lord gives us and a human, honest, good task. Therefore, when the Lord gives a mission, he always makes us enter into a process of purification, a process of discernment, a process of obedience, a process of prayer.

## **Conclusion**

For the synodal and missionary Camillian Order to be fruitful, any exercise of listening and reflecting in this Chapter must, above all, be root(ed) in meditation on Camillian prophecy, spirituality, charism and ministry.”

How exactly this listening and discernment will look like across the Order will vary greatly depending on the Chapter reflections.

The Chapter can present a wide range of possibilities.

But the thread running through all of these efforts is the spirit of authentic fellowship and a faithful openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

This will require “creativity and a certain audacity.”

But we should have ears that ought to hear what the Spirit says to our Order (Rev. 2:29).