



## Configuration "Jesus Crucified"

My dear brothers,

I wish to address you at this special time of preparation for the approaching Christmas celebrations. I wish to offer my best wishes that you are filled with the joy of anticipation of Him Who comes to live among us, becoming incarnate in history and in time.

Each of us is called to discover "the arrival" of God into our lives; to recognize him in events, in the faces of our brothers, in life's opportunities, and at times of decision. Once again, the Lord comes to remind us of his great love for humanity, a love which traverses the centuries and is part of them through the sanctifying work of the Church, and, therefore, through our activities.

A short time ago, the Third Ordinary Assembly of the Configuration took place in Rome. Once again we realized how certainly great is the extension of the Configuration, and how difficult it is to describe the richness of its cultures and its societal milieu. Nevertheless, we also find conditions of struggle and insufficiency, such as poverty, secularism, still more forms of excluding persons, injustice, a market economy which discriminates. In this world, into this reality, Jesus is born; it is into this reality that our proclamation of peace should be born, so that it becomes solidarity with peoples, with the last and least, with the weak and defenseless.

Before the face of these problematic conditions, which are diffuse throughout our globalized world, the Congregation has taken up the challenge of realizing a new manner of "being together" under the banner of solidarity. We must, therefore, "re-found" our manner of relating to one another, in order to better work together. This means a true "conversion", which ought to be expressed in new forms of bonds, of governing, and of provincial and inter-provincial administration, so that our "solidarity" might be transformed into "communion."

In these last few years, due to globalization and a reduced number of Passionists, we have felt the need to join forces and endeavors in order to be ever more effectively engaged in the one "mission" of the Church, that of proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth. We want to act, according to our charism, as a body; we will create ties and synergies with one another, so that through defined and shared priorities, objectives and actions, we may accomplish our projects.

I realize that it is difficult, but it is ever more necessary that we coordinate our movements, and "overcome our boundaries", which boundaries may be necessary in order to have a local identity, but which should not become impediments to our working together. When all is said and done, we are part of the same Congregation and we have one and the same mission.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary in these times and situations in which we live, and in the Configuration we live in, to be open to the signs of the times with creativity and liberty which ought to characterize us. It is indispensable that we discover and adopt new pathways, which will help us to know one another better, to support each other, to seek out common projects, to be able to share our experiences and articulate future undertakings.

In this perspective, at the last Assembly, we recognized the need to involve everyone, to the extent possible, in the creation of "networks" and the development of a diffused leadership. In order to test the capability of the "network", it will be necessary to establish objectives, targets and projects.

In the last circular letter, I suggested the formation of three "poles" within the Configuration; at the Assembly work was conducted in the light of these "poles", highlighting the shared work already done, and that which could be done in the future. The work undertaken up to the present is the following:

- this last year, three provincial chapters were held (CRUC, DOL, PRAES), and two Congresses (DOMIN and VICT);
- in January 2011, the novitiate at Pontagrossa was begun for the southern hemisphere, and in July the novices at Falvaterra made their first profession;
- in August, the theologate began at Dorado (Puerto Rico), students are present from the jurisdictions FAT, DOL and PAC;
- I was able to participate last January 2011 at the Interprovincial Council Meeting (CRUC, PAUL, REG e PAC) in Puerto Rico; it dealt with youth and young adult ministry and vocational recruitment; the topic was presented by the Team *Talita Kum* from the CONC Province; shortly thereafter, in February, I met with the students in Mexico City, at our house in Escandón;
- in April 2011, there was a meeting of the Provincial Curias from DOL, PRAES and FAT in Falvaterra. This meeting helped us to know one another better, and it was decided to plan a future meeting of the local superiors, as well as a meeting for the treasurers, and one for the young religious;
- in September 2011, Pole B (CALV - CONC - DOMIN - ISID - LIBER - VICT) met at Curitiba together with the Superior General and the Coordinator. In this session, the decision was made to transform Pole B from the six entities named, into two provinces as follows: (CALV - CONC - ISID) and (DOMIN - LIBER - VICT). The stages and procedure for the transformation were established, in

order to formally request the next General Chapter's approval for this decision;

- in this year, I conducted the retreats for the REG Province in Cuernavaca, to the religious of Pole B at Pontagrossa, and in February of next year, I will conduct the retreat to the PAC Vicariate. Still in February of 2011, Fr. Augusto Canali, Provincial of CALV, conducted the retreat for the PAC Vicariate (Puerto Rico), and in the month of September 2011, Fr. P. Eugenio Mezzomo (CALV) conducted the retreat for the FAT Province.

My hope is that the other entities will undertake similar initiatives to highlight the process of restructuring, and especially the process of conversion and of walking "together" in the path of the Lord. I can attest that the Retreats were moments of true sharing and reflection on the process of restructuring in the light of faith; they were moments of sincere sharing of concerns, and a source of suggestions regarding the process of restructuring already underway.

- At the last Assembly, **the three "Poles" decided on the following** (as will be reported in their Acts):

**Pole A: (CRUC - PAC - PAUL - REG)**

- Continue the collaboration among the Provinces: USA, MEXICO, and PUERTO RICO/DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, principally at the level of the apostolate;
- Continue the project of sending students into the USA provinces for the study of English;
- Mexico will soon celebrate the Provincial Chapter at which other religious of the entity will be present;
- Continue the Interprovincial Council Meetings, at which are present the Curias, the Passionist Sisters and lay Passionists from Pole A.
- Conduct a retreat in Mexico, open to religious of the other Provinces.

**Pole B: (CALV - CONC - DOMIN - ISID - LIBER - VICT)**

- Make two provinces out of Pole B; one North (DOMIN - LIBER - VICT) and one South (CALV - CONC - ISID).
- To begin the process, there will be information given to all of the religious through letters and in their individual Assemblies;
- There will be a General Assembly (March 2012), a Retreat (July 2012) (NORD); Assemblies within each entity; an Assembly/Retreat (SUD).

**Pole C: (DOL - FAT - PRAES)**

- Invest in ongoing formation with workshops to be held at Falvaterra and at Monte Argentario;

- Plan a Passionist spiritual itinerary/pilgrimage with stops at the historical houses of the two Italian entities;
  - Plan a gathering of the young religious for a sharing of experiences, and with an eye toward youth and vocational ministries;
  - Create a common Secretariat to serve the missions in Angola and Nigeria;
  - Continue the meetings of the Curias of Pole C, and plan for a meeting of the local superiors, and another for the local treasurers of the three Provinces;
  - Have an Assembly of the two Italian Provinces in order to augment their common effort to establish a foundation for a greater collaboration and communion.
- **The present model of government in our Configuration is:**
    - The General Assembly of the Major Superiors, it has decision-making power, and it meets at least once a year;
    - the Coordinator is responsible for executing the decisions taken, using the means and the persons specified by the Assembly; he facilitates and promotes the process of restructuring;
    - the Secretary looks after the statistics, the database, communication, the exchange of information, translation, and the bulletin;
    - the three Commissions for solidarity are responsible for presenting projects to be approved, and the means of evaluating these projects. The President of each Commission is a Major Superior and the three Presidents, together with the Coordinator, make up the Coordination Team;
    - the Coordination Team is responsible for helping the Coordinator in the motivation of the Configuration, and in preparing for Assemblies.
  - On November 7-9 of this year, a meeting was held in Rome of the Coordinators with the General Curia and the Preparatory Commission for the next General Chapter.

The Coordinators described their own Configurations' present situations, and the work done by the Configurations. While I await the detailed report to be offered by the General Curia, I can summarize how these other Configurations are moving forward:

**Configuration Eugenio Bossilkov:** it is working to create a single Province; the present five Provinces will become "Regions". Some have asked that this direction be taken slowly, in a gradual manner. They intend to begin with an "Executive", to be made up of the five Provincials, who will work in the three areas of solidarity. It has been stated that the unification is not a "fusing" of five realities into one, each reality retaining its singular characteristics, but rather to become a "new"

Province as measured by quality of life and community; objectives are not yet set; naturally, the mission will determine its structure. At this time, there are six Commissions: ongoing formation, initial formation and vocations, apostolate, finance, juridic aspects, and liturgy.

**Configuration S. Cuore:** it also is moving toward the formation of a single Province.

The formators of the Configuration met in Rome during January-February 2011; the Provincial Councils met in Conocoto (Ecuador); the religious were given a questionnaire that asked what type of collaboration each was willing to offer; there was a meeting of the younger religious in Spain during the World Youth Day; a meeting was held in Spain of the Provincial Councils and Treasurers.

*Solidarity in Formation:* the students finish their philosophy studies in the place they are from; the novitiate is either in Daimiel (Spain) or in Chosica (Perù). Those students who make their vows in Chosica will study Theology at Cajicà (Colombia), those who profess their vows at Daimiel will study Theology in El Salvador. The formation teams at both Chosica and Cajicà shall be international.

*Solidarity in personnel:* the three entities are planning their collaboration in the formation of three communities: a vocational community, an evangelization community, and one for the Passionist Family.

*Solidarity in finance:* a study is underway to determine how to centralize the finances for all of the Configuration. Shortly there will be a meeting of the treasurers and an interprovincial Assembly.

**Configuration PASPAC:** it has decided to continue its working together in the three areas of solidarity by establishing three Commissions which will have their first meeting following this meeting, in the Philippines. The locale is due to the great expanse of territory, together with the diversity of cultures and languages that exists among their nations (India, China, Korea, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea). The Configuration has adopted English as its basic language, even though, for the majority, this is a second or even a third language. The juridic model which is being followed is different from that of the Bossilkov or Sacred Heart Configurations because they are not proposing to create a single Province.

**Configuration CPA:** with regard to models of government, they are on the same track as PASPAC, while with regard to communications, there are difficulties due to the absence of technologies in some areas. The principal object is to reinforce each entity and assure them a stability for their future growth, especially through self-sufficiency and local leadership, which are both the current weaknesses in the Configuration.

**Configuration NESP:** up to now, there have been three meetings, one of which was

with the General Curia; each year there is an Assembly, held in different places so that they may get to know each other better and to improve the collegial model already present in other Configurations. Concentration is on formation and the Commission for Formation is organizing a meeting for the younger religious in the summer of 2012, and also a course for ongoing formation in the year 2013. With regard to finances, the situation is positive.

### **In light of the next General Chapter**

During the meeting of the Coordinators, we were invited to reflect on three points; three points which I also ask you to consider, and then to possibly send me your reflections for fraternal sharing. The three points are: *Passion - Mission - Potential*. We might ask ourselves:

1. What is your passion? What is the passion of your community, entity, Configuration?
2. What is our mission/objective in today's context?
3. What are the potentialities that you see, or upon which we should invest for the future?

After some moments of reflection and sharing, as coordinators we came together around three points which we believe should be treated by the next General Chapter; they are:

- a. Mission: what are the challenges of the mission for each Configuration?
- b. Authority: what kind of leadership should underpin our responses to our mission?
- c. Interconnection: how can we create the fundamental connections between the religious within the Configurations, and between one Configuration and another, in the light of the mission?

**The Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter** has sent the following questions, so that each religious might give his personal contribution. These are:

- I. What are the three principal themes which you would like to be treated during the next General Chapter in order to better respond to the contemporary global context? Is there something else which you would like to say to the General Chapter from a personal or provincial level?
- II. What are the strong points, and the weak points, the fears and the hopes of your Configuration?
- III. What kind of formation would you suggest for the future Passionist in the light of the needs and challenges which arise in your Configuration.
- IV. What new missions and apostolates are you developing to respond to the new situations?

I invite the major superiors to do what is necessary for each religious and community to reflect on these questions, and to send to the undersigned's e-mail the responses received ([senzodb@gmail.com](mailto:senzodb@gmail.com)) . I further suggest that these responses be studied and shared in the meetings already scheduled in the three "Poles". The responses should be sent to me before May 1, 2012, so that they may be forwarded to the Preparatory Commission in the allotted time.

Dear Brothers, much has been done and there is much still to be done. There are some beautiful projects yet to be carried out for the future of our Congregation, and especially so that it might give an even more convincing and insightful contribution to the Church of Christ. May Christ, Himself, whom we contemplate these days as an infant-Bambino, made Man for us, give us the impetus and the joy to live this moment with faith and solidarity among us and with our brothers and sisters.

**Blessed Christmas to all, and Happy New Year!**

Naples, 19 December 2011

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