#### CHARITAS n. 225

## RESERVED TO THE SERVANTS OF CHARITY YEAR LXXXVIII - APRIL 2010

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# LETTER OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

## FOLLOWING THE VI GENERAL CONSULTATION

#### Dear Confreres:

The VI General Consultation, celebrated in Rome from January 11 to January 17, 2010, was a moment of grace. The General Council, through the interventions of the Provincial Superiors and the confreres attending the meeting, had the opportunity to ponder on the journey made by the Congregation in the past three and half years after the last 2006 General Chapter. The atmosphere of fraternity and dialogue that characterized our meeting makes us confident in continuing our task of animation and government. We feel supported by God's grace, by the powerful presence of the Founder, and by the sense of responsibility that we are seeing in the confreres. They are truly eager to keep alive the fire of charity that the Lord himself entrusted to us by calling us to a "higher mission" and to enjoy the beauty of our vocation.

The expressions that characterize the purpose of the Consultation, like dealing with the most pressing matters, evaluations, stimulations, and exchange of impressions, can be summarized by the experience we lived in our desire to promote unity, the greater good of the Congregation and the fervor of our apostolic zeal.

The main task that the Consultation entrusted to us is to rekindle and sustain our fidelity to the gifts that the Lord had given us throughout the history of our Institute.

My letter should be interpreted as an exhortation like the meaning that our Constitutions give to the Consultation similar to what the Magisterium does after the Synods of Bishops that had taken into consideration an aspect of the life of the Church. It is a journey that we should undertake together once we become aware of the positive and negative issues present in our communities.

Sometimes, when dealing with a social or ecclesial event (at times even regarding individuals), we develop great hopes for a change that, when not completely realized as expected, turn into disappointment. It is necessary to be aware that changes are reached through collective cooperation and through a perseverant daily commitment that, step by step, increases the good we have done. That commitment fills the gaps and weaknesses that prevent our progress.

The Consultation allowed us to look more serenely into the 'lights and shadows' of our situation.

The Provincial Superiors presented the situation of their own province or delegation and from that we gladly recognized all the good, great and beautiful work that is being done in the Congregation.

Perhaps, our weaknesses have being overlooked. They surfaced later on when, with each Provincial, we analyzed more deeply the situation of our Communities. While we give thanks to the Lord for the commitment of many confreres, their exemplary life and zeal in the exercise of charity, we also feel the duty to mention the concern we have. This is not meant to discourage, judge, or excuse our faults. However, it should compel us to be more responsible toward our confreres and the progress of the Congregation.

Before taking into consideration the content of the Consultation, I think it is appropriate to share with you the major concerns emerged in these days that are rendering more difficult the delicate task of animation and government of the Superiors. I acknowledge your Provincial Superiors' enthusiasm and love toward the Congregation even when they have to face uncomfortable situations often resulting from attitudes and behaviors not totally fitting with religious life and spirit. It is always a difficult task when we have to mention negative, problematic issues to adult religious. Either because it is not right to generalize or because we may run the risk to focus our attention or curiosity mostly on the malfunction and not perceive the positive aspects on which we may capitalize.

We have to face our reality with serenity. The difficulties we are living today are common to religious life in general. In this particular moment

of uncertainty, consecrated life is going through a period of identity crisis, and is seeking new models that may help to make clearer its prophesy in front of a culture of relativism that is abandoning any reference to God and the true common good.

This is the main danger and reason of our concern. I would like to mention some of these issues to help us understand better the virtue of vigilance and renew a greater commitment and fidelity to our Constitutions.

Therefore, the lax attitude of some confreres will not become cause of uncertainty to others, especially the young confreres.

- 1) The casual hint or request by some confreres to leave the Congregation for a Diocese. Often personal issues toward obedience and community life cause this.
- 2) The weak sense of belonging to the Congregation and of Guanellian identity. For some confreres, this happens after several years of formation.
- 3) Opposition in complying with obedience by easily bringing up reasons strictly personal and easy to overcome.
- 4) A certain relativism and, at time, imprudence in understanding and carrying out the duties inherent to the vow of chastity.
- 5) The creation of their own niche in a particular location or assuming a role which ignores the Community and makes more difficult the rotation of the confrere to another Community or another role or even the acceptance of new confreres in the House.
- 6) Some confreres present an unjustified resistance to change their mentality or to accept innovations and stimulating suggestions necessary for the mission of the community. That can disturb their quiet life-style or their apathy.
- 7) What hurts most is above all the lack of communion that is shown in different ways even among us. Partiality, aloofness, indifference, bias and sometimes even conflicts with no will for reconciliation.

Let us welcome the suggestions of the Consultation for a new impetus and will to walk on the footpath of the Founder. We have put many hopes in the much-desired canonization of the Founder that seems instead going slower than our expectations. Definitely, the canonization will happen in 2011. May this be the occasion to prepare ourselves in a better way to welcome this grace.

By following the draft of reflection of the last General Chapter, I would like to offer a view of the main points that were taken into consideration by the VI Consultation and to propose them as guidelines for the next three years.

#### CHARISM AND SPIRIT

#### 1. Objectives and motivations

In general especially among the young confreres, there is a true desire to deepen our charism perceived as rich of a specific spirituality and appreciated by the local Churches and society.

Often we hear that our charism is difficult to accept, to assimilate and to carry out. Maybe, because charity summarizes all charisms, it is not so easy to perceive our own human realization in the service to the poor, because we are unable to understand this gift in its full potentiality, or because we are superficial in doing charity and carrying out an efficient service in our Houses.

We need to get closer to the Founder and know him more deeply. We need to go beyond the trite slogans that, at times, are mere words that do not come from the heart and do not even reach the heart. They are words not built on a life of faith, as Father Guanella had, because only faith is able to give sense to our ministry.

We must add that our charism is not a stagnant entity, but a dynamic grace that has to be constantly incarnated in the cultural and social context in which we like to express it and propose it.

The logical consequence comes from the insistence of the Consultation to carry out a double and serious commitment of continuing the positives things of the past:

1) Deeper knowledge of our charism, gift of the Holy Spirit to the Founder and to the Congregation. We have to grasp its essence (even and especially the mystical one), and also its applications and historical developments according to the times and Church guidelines.

2) The vital assimilation of the charism that will inidcate a road toward personal holiness, community joy, and evangelizing energy for mission. To assimilate the charism, besides a strong spirituality, we need to make the presence of the poor more relevant in our life. The Lord calls us for them. For them we fulfill our vocation. They are those who help us to understand the richness of the charism. They are our teachers and evangelizers.

Another element of the charism's vitality is the expansion of the Congregation in other countries, were we are committed to pass it on faithfully to our young confreres and, at the same time, to welcome all the positive aspects of sensitivity and cultural expressions that may enrich it.

#### 2. The situation and the wants emerged from the Consultation

- We should render our spirituality more specific and inspired by the charism. The Guanellian spirituality cannot be lived only at personal level, but it needs also be proposed to those we serve both as a journey of faith and as an educational method of relationships which makes more visible the charism in our community life and in our apostolic and charitable ministry. We have asked ourselves, which are the concrete indicators to perceive and spread the charism!
- We need to screen carefully our charitable services in their methods, structures and organization in order to make them more responsive to the local culture and society.
- Regarding the transmission and deepening of the charism, the Consultation invites the confreres to appreciate the rich patrimony we already possess and to re-propose it to foster among the confreres a stronger charismatic identity.
- This same charism, God's gift to the Church, asks us to be more courageous and committed to propose it to the lay people who are collaborating with our mission in different ways, so that it may be enriched by their lay vocation and life.

#### 3. Operative Proposal

- The Congregation leadership and especially the Centro Studi Guanelliano in Rome, in cooperation with the present or future Provincial Centers, should continue to offer programs oriented toward the deepening and the formation on the charism. For example, Guanellian Seminars for confreres and laity, Guanellian courses on the charism, etc. Special attention should be given to our Theological Seminaries and the charismatic education of the Formators.
- We also express the desire to establish in the Congregation a Scientific Institute of Guanellian Studies...
- We should foster good translations of texts and important documents regarding the charism, the history of the congregation and the supportive tools for formation and animation. We insist that all confreres should learn to speak the Italian language fluently.
- We should favor the participation of the Guanellian laity to formative activities regarding the charism, organized by the Congregation or by the Provinces.

### FRATERNAL COMMUNION AND COMMUNION WITH GOD

#### 1. Objectives and motivations

The Consultation began with a half day of recollection on "Fraternal communion and communion with God." The Claretian Fr. Rovira had an inspiring talk on "The future is called Communion, Fraternity." He elaborated the relationships between authority and obedience, community and superior, within the frame of the common commitment to do God's will. Communion is the essence of the service of authority and obedience.

He offered a practical "Decalogue" of how our community relationships should be so that fraternity may become a visible sign of evangelical communion. (Please, refer to the Consultation Acts for the full text).

Here I offer some of his considerations.

- Several surveys show that the most difficult aspect of today's religious life is fraternity, the struggle of living together.
- Young people looking into religious life expect to find in it a true fraternal life. Most of the time they are disappointed. Moreover, a good number of adult or elderly confreres resign themselves to experience a low level of fraternal life.
- For us Guanellians, the grace and the fulfillment of our call to holiness runs through the mission and communion with our brothers. That should bring us to trust the brothers whom the Lord had put at our side.
- Through our religious profession, we widen our human and spiritual horizons by welcoming into our way of thinking and acting the way of thinking and acting of our brothers. Each "I" should feel, think and act as "We." Until we reach this level, we have not yet become part of the Community.
- Legitimate authority of the Superiors needs to be rooted in authoritativeness and formal obedience should foster a sense of co-responsibility in everyone even to the point of washing each other's feet.
- The Consultation reminded that among the most important duties of the Superior stands the duty of accompanying spiritually and charismatically all the confreres to answer their call to holiness.
- A major problem we experience today is the motivation to obey.
   Obedience must be always reasonable, but it cannot be always merely rational, because it will exclude the decisive role of faith.

#### 2. The situation, the challenges, the wants

The analysis of our situation, especially the one emerging from the meetings with the Provincial Superiors, has confirmed the presence of some flaws within our fraternal life, sometimes considered less important than the mission. We have noticed on one side the difficulty to welcome obedience in a spirit of faith, and on the other, to accept the responsibility and service of authority.

As the General Chapter had suggested, we took into consideration two points that should help us to rekindle our fraternal life:

- The community plan is an important tool in our hands to help us overcome individualism, superficiality and lack of true relationships; to reduce the risk of having some confreres overburdened with work while others shy from responsibility and involvement.
- Preparation of the superiors in their fundamental role of spiritual leaders of their communities and animators of the mission for the educational community. Heavily felt was the necessity to accompany the younger confreres especially those who live and serve in most recently established missions. Here the service of authority is often entrusted to young confreres who often have to exercise it over confreres of the same age.

For the **spiritual life**, Fr. Wladimiro presented the 2010-2011 Pastoral Plan. We are invited to study it and to apply it carefully and convincingly.

The Assembly dialogue brought up two important items regarding our spiritual life. They are detailed in the Pastoral Plan:

- The practice of daily meditation that is losing its importance in our communities. Meditation should not be left to the good will of the individual, but it should be reclaimed as a community component.
- The increasing necessity for us and for the laity of deepening and living our Guanellian spirituality and walking paths of Guanellian holiness.

#### 3. Operative Suggestions

- We confirm the importance of the Community Plan as a constant tool of reference. The Plan should pay special attention to the vocation promotion ministry: each Community should attract, welcome young people and foster the sense of vocation in their lives and promote among the youth the vocational meaning in their life.
- By entrusting to the laity financial and administrative tasks, the confreres shall set apart regular time dedicated to nurture their spiritual life and fraternal communion.
- During initial formation, great care should be dedicated to the development of the sense of belonging to their community. It is necessary, therefore, that candidates should experience, in their different stages of formation, a true community life by having also the opportunity to have at their side a suitable number of confreres.

- Given the rising average age of our confreres, it is also necessary to give particular care to the aging and sick confreres to make them part of the life and mission of the community. Let us give them also, besides the necessary medical care, a community atmosphere in which they feel welcomed as "truly chosen portion and source of blessing" for the Congregation.
- -To promote the **Formation of Superiors** in their role of leadership and animation, a specifice course should be organized: the first part of the course, in a form of seminar, should be planned and offered to all in Italy. The second part should be offered by the Provinces to their confreres, focusing on practical aspects and implications typical of each geographical area.
- The **Pastoral Plan** should be a guideline for the community meetings.
- The General Council is requested to review the manual of prayer for the Congregation.

#### **CONSECRATED LIFE**

The Consultation did not dwell specifically on Consecrated life. That theme was mentioned nevertheless within the context of the discussion on charism and spirit, life of Fraternal Communion, and more practically, while meeting with each Provincial.

It is a common belief that the joyful witness of our vocation is the foundation of our mission's effectiveness. This belief should be constantly reinforced in order to continually welcome and live joyfully the gift of vocation held in earthern vessels. Immersed, as we are, in a secular culture very often hostile and indifferent to the evangelical values, we religious need to achieve a solid human and spiritual maturity. The initial formation should be oriented towards these goals by providing formative experiences. The same objectives should be attained by the continuous process of ongoing formation and personal conversion.

#### **VOCATION MINISTRY AND FORMATION**

#### 1. Objectives and motivations

The Provincial Superiors pointed out the priority they had given to this theme by presenting the situation of their Province and the activities carried out regarding youth vocation ministry and formation.

Not always and everywhere, our confreres are willing to get involved in this particular field. Much more could be done in our Parishes whether by opening our communities to the youth for volunteering, prayer, spiritual direction or follow more closely "those who show interest to our life and mission" (C 87), for a better and deeper spiritual, charismatic growth.

A bold vocation proposal demands and commits all of us to offer a joyful witness of our religious life. We have to affect the young people by our passion for God and for the poor while carrying out our Guanellian mission.

Regarding formation, all agree on the validity of the **Ratio** as a special instrument for a good Guanellian formation, for unity, coordination and continuity along the formation journey. The Ratio has to become the instrument each confrere has to use and assimilate in order to make effective its potentiality.

#### 2. The situation, the challenges, the wants

We are aware that our Congregation is presently engaged and particularly involve in welcoming and forming a good number of vocation from nations and cultures different from the countries where its tradition originated. In a few years, the membership majority of the Congregation will move decidedly toward other parts of the world.

It is an event that challenges us and demands our attention right now, because we have the duty to ensure that the Guanellian charism is faithfully passed on and an adequate method that takes into account the plurality of cultures.

We have to consider also the generation gap that the Congregation is experiencing. Young confreres are prevalent in some areas, while in others the number of aging confreres is increasing. At the Consultation, it

was brought to our attention the dire necessity to have more experienced formators available for the seminaries in Africa and India.

Many were the themes discussed at the Consultation. Ongoing formation; choice and preparation of formators; the international theological seminary in Rome; the vocation plan of the Congregation; the necessity of a better coordination among the different stages of formation; the Practicum year (Regency) which needs a more attentive care.

However, the most urgent issues were the preparation of formators, and the formation of the young confreres in their first years in the mission field (Tutelage, Ratio 288), and Practicum. On these subjects, the Consultation offers the following operative suggestions. They reflect the different situations of the Congregation and we should apply them by taking into consideration the particular circumstances where we carry out our vocation ministry and formation. In fact, even the discussion on these themes was held by geographical areas.

## 3. Operative Suggestions (Some apply to particular situations, while others are valid for all)

#### European Group (The two Italian Provinces)

- The collaboration between the two Italian Provinces should go on for the activities of vocation ministry. It is important to finalize the study of the Guanellian Vocation Pastoral Plan. Some sections could be also useful to other Provinces.
- Our presence in the local Church youth ministry should be requalified by making our spirituality and charismatic inspiration more valuable, and by offering to young people opportunities for spiritual direction, community life experiences and service to the poor.
- Organize opportunities of ongoing formation for the confreres keeping in mind their age and those difficulties that in the past hindered their involvement.
- Special care should be given to the formation of local superiors to support them in their mission of service to the spiritual growth of their confreres and the vocation ministry carried out by their community.

- For the **Practicum**, we stress the necessity to accompany with special care to the young confreres, particularly those coming from different countries of the congregation. Their exposure to the Guanellian Ministries will deepen their Guanellian spirit and be a learning and fruitful training experience, in the service of the poor.

#### Central and South American Group and Spain

- The vocation ministry should continue the coordination among the many Latino countries through mutual help and interchange of experiences.
- Set up general guidelines and common resources to allow each Province to prepare and put into action a Provincial vocation ministry plan, with the strong support of its Council.
- In the provincial gatherings of Pastors, the topic of vocation ministry should be a matter of primary concern.
- The young confreres in charge of formation should be assisted by more experienced confreres even by exchanging personnel among the Provinces.
- Encourage the study and the awareness of the Ratio Formationis in each community. Its presentation is not enough.

## **English speaking Group** (Divine Providence Province and Our Lady of Hope Delegation)

- There is a strong need in the Province and the Delegation for more confreres with experience in assisting those in formation and the young confreres perpetually professed, especially about the Guanellian charism. Cooperation among the superiors would facilitate this project. The General Council, together with Province and Delegation, should continue the activity of the itinerant team for the presentation, study and application of the Ratio.
- Superiors should commit themselves to select a young confrere willing to undertake studies on the Guanellian Charism.
   (Guanellian School in collaboration with the Centro Studi in Rome). Later on, this confrere may act as a reference point and stimulus to the confreres of his Province or Delegation.

 Possibly, future formators should experience a first-hand Guanellian ministry before their appointment to full time formation.

#### **For All**

- The next World Youth Day in Madrid, on August 16-21, 2011, is an opportunity to propose to the Guanellian youth a spiritual journey of preparation and, where possible, direct participation to the event.

#### **MISSION**

#### 1. Objectives and motivations

Through our mission, we share the evangelization work of the universal Church. According to the different social situations in which the Congregation is present and works, our mission takes on a particular aspect. However, at the same time, we need a serious discernment of our charism enculturation whether in the old or new contexts, through old or new models and methods, to assure fidelity to the charism itself.

For a clearer identity of our evangelizing mission in the areas we operate, it is necessary to update the mission of giving "Bread and Lord" in a more visible form, especially where there is a large presence of lay staff and in regions of diversified faiths.

Like the Church, the Congregation has the duty of clearly proclaiming its original and binding foundation, otherwise it becomes a mere philanthropic association.

Today another aspect of our mission is association with the local religious and social groups. It needs to "Network" with other Congregations and Public Entities vowed to defend the integral promotion of people. Thus, we will be more influential within the groups and institutions on behalf of the poor as well as the old and new destitute through a more globalized and integral view of charity.

#### 2. The situation, the challenges, the wants

In some countries, our mission suffers for lack of vocations. Therefore, the burden of responsibility and continuity for our Houses, some very large, falls upon a smaller number of confreres.

In other regions, on the contrary, we ought to expand our services in order to offer to our new candidates and confreres a larger variety of Guanellian apostolic experiences. In this case, however, we face the problem of financial sustainability of these new foundations.

To assure the balance between expansion of mission and its sustainability is clearly our urgent concern. Sharing of religious personnel has already started. It is also prudent to support the established and more financially sound communities that are capable of assisting our missions in other poor areas of the Congregation.

Our Houses have also the problem of financial dependence from State or Public Institutions that are imposing administrative standards and demanding high quality of service without the corresponding financial support.

This makes it more difficult for the confreres and communities to be "animating core" rather than mere administrators of our charitable facilities.

Administrative and financial worries sometimes have the upper hand in our Council meetings of every level.

The provincial superiors, in their report underlined that this concern is growing among the confreres. However, more needs to be done, especially in the case where only one confrere is responsible for all the activities. Instead, the religious community in its entirety should be perceived as the animating core of the Local Mission project.

Another aspect of our mission that the Consultation considered was the dynamism of our mission. On the one hand, we have found some stagnation, especially in our large facilities conditioned by aging confreres and financial difficulties, even though these facilities are still valid because of their qualified service. On the other hand, we appreciate the dynamism of some activities carried out in newly opened missions and in new areas. If the historically more advanced Provinces will support them, this dynamism will bring new vitality to all.

#### 3. Operative Suggestions

- We should insist that our communities put into practice (and in different forms according to the cultural situations) the "animating core" model
- The confreres, besides the usual roles of administrative responsibility, should have roles that are more pastoral, like ministry of listening, support of our residents' family, closeness to our staff, catechesis, formation on the charism, ministry for the suffering and dying.
- We need to rediscover of the Basic Document for the Guanellian Mission and other specific Plans. They are valuable instruments to educate our staff on the Guanellian Method, caring especially for the formation of our co-workers in places where our preventive method and family style are not yet practiced.
- In the new places where our Guanellian presence is taken root, we should study new forms of answering the needs of the poor. It is not necessary to copy traditional models and structures. Though it is important to keep in mind that our facilities have to reach their financial independence, we should never forget to put our trust in Divine Providence. We have to be creative in finding locally the necessary means for our ministry to the poor.
- Even where our facilities are functioning and self-sufficient, the religious community should look for the other forms of services that our tradition calls angoli di carita or techos fraternos in Latin America.
- Our Parishes have to operate more and more as "Samaritan Parishes." Through micro-projects they can involve the laity to keep alive the concern toward the new poverties that often are kept hidden in the parish. The lay people should also show their concern toward our missions by organizing the missionary group.

#### THE GUANELLIAN LAITY

#### 1. Goals and Reasons

Our Congregation, following the example of the Founder, the directives of the Church and Vatican II, is becoming more conscious of the duty to share with the laity our charism and to develop more and more their collaboration to our mission.

The laity, by living their baptismal vocation in their state of life and responsibility in society, can enrich our charism in many areas so far unknown to us. They can give our mission a new energy through their commitment, competence and contribution to "make charity the heart of the world".

We need each other if we want to make our witness and apostolate more visible in a society that tends to marginalize both religious values, the poor and lesser people.

The joint journey to spark this energy with the laity urges us religious to a change of mentality. This new mentality calls for a relationship of better awareness and appreciation of each other's identity, together with the diversity of duties and ministries to which we are called in the Church and in the world.

The religious and the laity complement their vocations. In the mutual exchange of our talents, we will make possible an effective participation and sharing of our mission. Thus, we can reach the true coresponsibility in organizing the activities necessary to enlarge the "tent of charity." We will reach this shared responsibility if gradually we will be able to put into action more challenging activities for us and for the lay people. The lay Guanellian can participate in the charism and to the mission in many different ways. That requires that we religious convincingly acknowledge that the promotion among the laity of partaking in our mission is a necessary part of our spirituality.

Among the Guanellian laity, the Cooperators should be helped to be aware that they are the heart and engine of the Guanellian Lay Movement, together with the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence and the Servants of Charity.

Another way of closeness and partaking of our Congregation is the form of "Associate Member." One can choose an appropriate way of life and presence in one of our religious communities.

#### 2. The situation, the challenges, the wants

We have approved the well-received and appreciated Document "Making Charity the heart of the world." Now we have to promote both the document and its spirit, making clear to all that the GLM is not another big structure that absorbs the identity and organization of the existing groups. On the contrary, the GLM is and should be an organization for a better coordination, a service for a better dialog and an incentive for all lay Guanellians to live in fullness the values of the Guanellian spirit and to feel part and members of the Greater Guanellian family.

Both the Consultation and the GLM Assembly (Rome, 23-24 January 2010) pointed out the necessity that we religious should guide and form the laity in their learning and living the charism with us. We should be more courageous in encouraging the laity higher levels of participation in our spirit and practice with our poor through their personal involvement. It is not enough to share our Guanellian spirit as a mere inspiration to their family and social life.

#### 3. Operative Suggestions

- Be more resolute in proposing the vocation of Guanellian Cooperator to the GLM groups.
- Help the Cooperators to seek legal recognition in their own country. Then they can expand their collaboration with other groups of neighboring geographical areas until reaching a worldwide level of organization.
- Favor the growth of the GLM around each one of our religious communities. One confrere should be assigned to that, as the representative of the local community. The Guanellian Cooperators are the obvious group to stand as the "animating core" of the GLM.

- In choosing the staff of our facilities, we should follow the principles found in the booklet "With faith, love and competence." We should expect from those who deal with our patients/residents to share the values of our charism. To the administrative staff, we should request the adoption of the Guanellian charism and education system as basic reference of their service.
- Organize valid formation activities for the lay collaborators of our facilities in collaboration with the DSMP, the Cooperators and the GLM Councils.
- Where the local religious community delegates the administration and/or management to lay people, the local superior (and in some cases the Provincial Superior) has to be always the ultimately responsible of the activity or the facility.
- The superior in a spirit of true shared responsibility, coordinates the organisms that he thinks appropriate for the animation and proper functioning of our charitable activities: Boards, Councils, Teams, etc...
- The confreres should be open to the possibility of welcoming a person as "Associate Member" of the community, and the Provinces, in turn, need to define in their Provincial Directory the conditions, the duties and the rights of the "Associate Members" according to the Norms published by the General Council.

#### **GOVERNMENT**

#### 1. Goals and Reasons

The Consultation, with the help of the Provincial Superiors and the delegates of each Province, has given an evaluation of the relationship between central Government and Provinces, and between each Province in the last three years.

Since the beginning of our mandate, we have set as a goal of our relationship the best possible balance of the principle of "unity of direction" with the supplementary principle and autonomy of the individual Organisms of the Congregation to foster everyone's responsibility.

Today the complexity of many situations requires that we assume the interior disposition of recognizing our limits, asking for advice and help to reach the best discernment. Through open dialogue and fraternal correction, we will be able to fulfill better our responsibility, with its implications of sacrifice, perseverance and even incomprehension.

In their task of animation and government, the Superiors need to balance mercy and justice, charity and truth, especially in those cases in which mercy can lead to laxity. It is with great regret that in certain circumstances we have reached drastic and unpleasant decisions. I exhort all confreres not to read the tolerance of the superiors as an endorsement of mediocrity.

#### 2. The situation, the challenges, the wants

In general, the relationship and communication among Superiors received a good evaluation, though it can improve.

Sometimes it was not easy to respect the proper jurisdiction and necessary procedures when taking decisions that were involving different organisms of government that had a different view on the matter. Therefore, it is important to be faithful to the Constitutions and Regulations. Each one in their own role must trust the confreres of their own respective Council: House Council, Provincial Council, and General Council.

Usually from the Minutes, we can see that unanimity is reached through dialogue and open discussion. At times, however, after a decision is made, some confreres have difficulty to accept it and to put it into practice. They would like to discuss it all over again, running the risk that a few may convince all others.

 $This \, generates \, uncertainty \, and \, division.$ 

#### 3. Operative Suggestions

- The minutes could be improved in a way that the opinion of each member of the Council and the reasons for a decision may result clearer.
- The General Council will continue to support the Provincial Governments. It will make up where it was less attentive without interfering or taking over those decisions and orientations that belong to the Provincial Council.

- We should clarify better the role of Director of Activity where someone different from the local superior holds that role and function. It could be useful to codify these roles and functions and to explain them to the lay collaborators.

#### FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

The general treasurer presented to the confreres at the Consultation an ample documentation on the financial plan of the Congregation. He reviewed how motions and proposals of the general chapter had been applied until now and the financial plan of the General House in Rome. He introduced the financial and administrative manual and the profile of the lay treasurer of our Houses.

The general treasurer had taken into consideration the latter topic, helping us to know the necessary steps we have to take when we entrust to lay people the responsibility of financial matters or the management of our activities.

Here are only some aspects discussed in the Assembly.

- The weak financial situation of our Congregation is a consequence of the worldwide crisis. It is becoming increasingly difficult to run our facilities, especially the large ones that in previous years were contributing heavily to support the more needy Houses. This situation is creating a big concern for the Congregation because the communities are not able to contribute their dues established by the General Chapter. It is necessary to show more trust toward Divine Providence and a serious commitment to solve this problem.
- It is necessary to stimulate our imagination and creativity so that each House or the single Provinces reach sustainability. We thank God for the commitment and collaboration of Guanellian Organizations like ASCI, Puentes NGO, Procura Missioni in Germany, and countless benefactors, that are coming to the rescue of our missions.

- Development of an Endowment Fund to support our facilities possibly even by the sale or management of properties owned by the Congregation. In these cases, all should scrupulously follow the directives of the competent superiors.
- In some Provinces, there is the need to prepare confreres and lay people to manage the funds and the properties in observance of the administrative norms contained in the Financial-Administrative Manual that is going to be published and distributed very soon.

#### **CONCLUSION**

We have to give thanks to God for his presence among us during the days of the Consultation and for his assistance in discerning the good of the Congregation in fidelity to the Founder and the charism.

I thank those who have participated, those who gave time and energy in preparing it, and those who have offered their prayers and encouragement.

We have felt intensely the universal heart of our Congregation that urges us to a greater opening and communion.

 $\it I$  invite all confreres to welcome with generous heart the directives expressed in this Consultation.

They are exhortative in nature, point us, and help us to apply properly our normative text: Constitutions, Regulations and all the decisions of our General Chapters. During the few days of the Consultations, we could not for sure take into account all the aspects of our life and mission, except the most basic and urgent ones.

Moreover, it is not always possible to find guidelines suitable for all cultures. Each Province should be creative enough to apply them according to their local needs.

During the Consultation, we were faced at times by the necessity to define better certain important issues for a better adjustment of our norms to changing times. This is, however, the task of the General Chapter. We have to reach the next one well prepared, even through well-tested and

with authorized methods. I am referring especially to activities of greater involvement and co-responsibility of the lay people in our mission, and to some revisions regarding the communion of goods or the organization of our communities.

The long awaited canonization of the Founder, at this point moving to a positive conclusion though later than we had expected, should find us better prepared to honor him through the fervor and dynamism of our apostolic commitment and, above all, through our holiness of life.

On the day of the Presentation of Jesus to the Temple and World Day of Consecrated Life, we entrust to Mary our best resolutions.

Rome, February 2, 2010, World Day of Consecrated Life

Father Alfonso Crippa Superior General

## MESSAGES OF THE POPE

#### MESSAGE OF HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI FOR THE 18th WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The 18th World Day of the Sick will be celebrated in the Vatican Basilica next 11 February, the liturgical Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes. Its felicitous coincidence with the 25th anniversary of the Institution of the *Pontifical Council for Health-Care Workers* is another reason to thank God for the ground covered so far in the sector of the pastoral care of health. I sincerely hope that this event will be an opportunity to give a more generous apostolic impetus to the service of the sick and of those who look after them.

With the annual World Day of the Sick, the Church intends to carry out a far-reaching operation, raising the ecclesial community's awareness to the importance of pastoral service in the vast world of health care. This service is an integral part of the Church's role since it is engraved in Christ's saving mission itself. He, the divine Doctor, "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10: 38). In the mystery of his Passion, death and Resurrection, human suffering takes on meaning and the fullness of light. In his Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris*, the Servant of God John Paul II offers enlightening words in this regard. "Human suffering, has reached its culmination in the Passion of Christ", he wrote. "And at the same time it has entered into a completely new dimension and a new order: it has been linked to love... to that love which creates good, also drawing it out from evil by means of suffering, just as the supreme good of the Redemption of the world was drawn from the Cross of

Christ, and from that Cross constantly takes its beginning. The Cross of Christ has become a source from which flow rivers of living water" (n. 18).

At the Last Supper, before returning to the Father, the Lord Jesus knelt to wash the Apostles' feet, anticipating the supreme act of love on the Cross. With this act he invited his disciples to enter into the same logic of love that is given especially to the lowliest and to the needy (cf. *Jn* 13: 12-17). Following his example, every Christian is called to relive, in different and ever new contexts, the Parable of the Good Samaritan who, passing by a man whom robbers had left half dead by the roadside, "saw him and had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back" (cf. *Lk* 10: 33-35).

At the end of the parable, Jesus said: "Go and do likewise" (*Lk* 10: 37). With these words he is also addressing us. Jesus exhorts us to bend over the physical and mental wounds of so many of our brothers and sisters whom we meet on the highways of the world. He helps us to understand that with God's grace, accepted and lived out in our daily life, the experience of sickness and suffering can become a school of hope. In truth, as I said in the Encyclical *Spe salvi*, "It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love" (n. 37).

The Second Ecumenical Vatican Council had already recalled the Church's important task of caring for human suffering. In the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* we read that "Christ was sent by the Father 'to bring good news to the poor... to heal the contrite of heart' (Lk 4: 18), 'to seek and to save what was lost' (Lk 19: 10)... Similarly, the Church encompasses with her love all those who are afflicted by human misery and she recognizes in those who are poor and who suffer, the image of her poor and suffering Founder. She does all in her power to relieve their need and in them she strives to serve Christ' (n. 8). The ecclesial community's humanitarian and spiritual action for the sick and the suffering has been expressed down the centuries in many forms and health-care structures, also of an institutional character. I would like here to recall those directly managed by the dioceses and those born from the generosity of various religious Institutes. It is a precious "patrimony" that corresponds with the fact that "love... needs to be organized if it is to be an ordered service to the community" (Encyclical Deus caritas est, n. 20). The creation of the Pontifical Council for Health-Care Workers 25 years ago complies with the Church's solicitude for the world of health care. And I am anxious to add that at this moment in history and culture we are feeling even more acutely the need for an attentive and far-reaching ecclesial presence beside the sick, as well as a presence in society that can effectively pass on the Gospel values that safeguard human life in all its phases, from its conception to its natural end.

I would like here to take up the *Message to the Poor, the Sick, and the Suffering* which the Council Fathers addressed to the world at the end of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council: "All of you who feel heavily the weight of the Cross" they said, "you who weep... you the unknown victims of suffering, take courage. You are the preferred children of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of hope, happiness, and life. You are the brothers of the suffering Christ, and with him, if you wish, you are saving the world" (*The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, sj). I warmly thank those who, every day, "serve the sick and the suffering", so that "the apostolate of God's mercy may ever more effectively respond to people's expectations and needs" (cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, Art. 152).

In this Year for Priests, my thoughts turn in particular to you, dear priests, "ministers of the sick", signs and instruments of Christ's compassion who must reach out to every person marked by suffering. I ask you, dear presbyters, to spare no effort in giving them care and comfort. Time spent beside those who are put to the test may bear fruits of grace for all the other dimensions of pastoral care. Lastly I address you, dear sick people and I ask you to pray and to offer your suffering up for priests, so that they may continue to be faithful to their vocation and that their ministry may be rich in spiritual fruits for the benefit of the whole Church.

With these sentiments, I implore, for the sick, as well as for all who nurse them, the maternal protection of Mary *Salus Infirmorum*, and I wholeheartedly impart the Apostolic Blessing to all.

From the Vatican, 22 November 2009, Solemnity of Christ the King.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

## COMMUNICATIONS

#### A) CONFRERES

#### a) Members at the end of december 2009

	Bishops	Priests	Seminarians	Brothers	Total
Perpetual Vows	1	319	12	33	365
Temporary Vows	_	_	115	7	122
Novices	_	_	_	_	32
Associates	_	1	_	1	2
Total	1	320	127	41	521

#### b) Geography of the Congregation

NT. 4*	G 4	Perpetual professed			Temporary		NT.	Asso-	Total	
Nation	Community	Bishops	Priests	Seminar.	Brothers	Seminar.	Brothers	Novices	1 otai	
Argentina	6	_	20	_	4	2	_	4	_	30
Brasile	11	1	31	_	5	2	1	_	_	40
Cile	3	_	7	_	6	2	_	_	_	15
Colombia	1	_	3	_	_	_	_	_	_	3
Filippine	2	_	9	_	_	3	_	_	_	12
Ghana	1	_	4	_	1	1	_	_	_	6
Guatemala	1	_	3	_	1	_	_	_	_	4
India	5	_	26	11	_	37	_	15	_	89
Israele	1	_	1	_	1	_	_	_	_	2
Italia (S. Cuore)	20	_	96	_	10	4	1	_	_	111
Italia (Romana)	12	_	58	_	1	_	_	_	2	61
Italia (Curia)	2	_	11	_	_	25	_	_	_	36
Messico	2	_	8	_	1	_	_	_	_	9
Nigeria	2	_	7	_	2	34	1	12	_	56
Paraguay	3	_	8	_	_	_	_	_	_	8
Polonia	1	_	2	_	_	_	_	_	_	2
R.D. Congo	2	_	5	1	1	5	4	_	_	16
Spagna	2	_	6	_	_	_	_	_	_	6
Svizzera	1	_	5	_	_	_	_	_	l —	5
U.S.A.	2	_	9			_		1	_	10
Total	80	1	319	12	33	115	7	32	2	521

#### c) 2010 Joyful Events

1. Ninety and Above		Age
Romanò don Luigi	09-03-1916	94
Bredice don Armando	22-08-1917	93
Nervi fratel Battista	29-06-1920	90
Cantoni don Giuseppe	16-07-1920	<b>»</b>
2. Above-eighty		
Credaro don Tito	11-02-1922	88
Vaccari don Danilo	01-12-1922	<b>&gt;&gt;</b>
Invernizzi don Antonio	06-12-1922	<b>&gt;&gt;</b>
Altieri don Vincenzo	11-12-1922	<b>»</b>
Nesa don Nino	11-01-1923	87
Belotti don Francesco	06-02-1923	<b>&gt;&gt;</b>
Di Ruscio don Romano	24-04-1923	<b>»</b>
Frangi don Luigi	30-03-1924	86
Barindelli don Carlo	05-04-1924	<b>»</b>
Fogliamanzillo fratel Salvatore	05-04-1924	<b>»</b>
Antonini don Alberto	12-05-1924	<b>&gt;&gt;</b>
Moroni don Angelo	25-09-1924	<b>»</b>
Altieri don Marcello	27-12-1924	<b>»</b>
Ottaviano don Antonio	27-12-1924	<b>»</b>
Rizziero don Giuliano	29-12-1924	<b>»</b>
Castelnuovo don Mario	23-08-1925	85
Matteazzi don Matteo	15-12-1925	<b>»</b>
Maglia don Carlo	21-07-1926	84
Liborio don Battista	05-09-1926	<b>»</b>
Della Morte don Loreto	26-01-1927	83
Maniero don Pietro	18-05-1927	<b>&gt;&gt;</b>
Pasquali don Pietro	09-10-1927	<b>»</b>
Nastro don Antonio	17-11-1927	<b>»</b>
Gandossini don Anselmo	22-07-1928	82
Gridelli don Tonino	13-12-1928	<b>»</b>
Duratti don Giovanni	10-06-1929	81
Scano don Pietro	15-06-1929	<b>»</b>
Bianchi Mordini don Maurizio	26-09-1929	<b>»</b>
Tamburini don Antonio	23-10-1929	<b>»</b>

#### 3. Eighty

Mattiuzzo don Celio	31-01-1930
Saginario don Domenico	07-02-1930
Casali don Tarcisio	10-02-1930
Cornaggia don Franco	11-12-1930

#### 4. Fifty

De La Torre Carbonero don Fernando	26-03-1960
Maesani don Marco	28-06-1960
Cecchinato fratel Mauro	25-09-1960
Maidana fratel Hugo	01-12-1960

#### 5. Fiftieth of profession

Camurri don Dante	24/09/1960
Di Tullio don Pietro	24/09/1960
Vismara don Calimero	24/09/1960

#### 6. Twenty-fifth of profession

Contreras fratel Rolando	01-03-1985
Leiva don Cesar	01-03-1985
Silguero don Cecilio	01-03-1985
Vera Morel don Alberto	01-03-1985
Cecchinato fratel Mauro	07-09-1985
Minuzzo fratel Giulio	07-09-1985
Pallotta don Fabio	07-09-1985

#### 7. Fiftieth of ordination

Bini don Giuseppe	26-06-1960
Cornaggia don Franco	26-06-1960
Dall'Amico don Guido	26-06-1960
Rossetti don Alfredo	26-06-1960
Ostinelli don Antonio	17-12-1960

#### 8. Twenty-fifth of ordination

De Melo Viana don Antonio	07-12-1985
Mapelli don Mario Lino	08-06-1985

#### **B) EVENTS OF CONSECRATION**

#### a) Novices

#### 1. Bangalore

#### (Divine Providence Province)

Antony Samy Antony Arockia Vanathaiyan, Arockia Samy Michael Durai Samy, Augustine Joseph Abraham Amala Selvam, Badugu Christuraju, Jesudoss Arockia Doss, Joseph Xavier Robert, Maria John Joseph Periyanayagam, Pascas Leobin Regith Kumar, Peddarappu Joseph, Ratna Pandi Antony Xaviour Sammanasu Nathan Joseph Fernandez, Thumma Maria Dileep Joseph Reddy, Vissampalli Maria Bala Yesu, Yohan Jonnalagadda, Xavier Thambusamy,

#### 2. Lujan (Provincia Cruz del Sur)

Barraza Diaz Alexis Andrè Sosa Gimenez Pedro Franco Martinez Javier Mardones Rojas Edurado Antonio

#### 3. Nnebukwu

#### (Delegazione N. S. della Speranza)

Apen Sunday Bampempe Ndomba Alex Bokafo Betoko Jean Pierre Eke Donald Chibuike Ibrahim Ali Moses Nwobi Francis Chukwuemeka Lukumu Ladzus Philèmon Mata Mbunga Arnold Nkiere Mbo Deudonnè Nlemvo Diasolua Matthieu Onwukwe Bonaventure D. Sieta Mbalanda Sylvain

## 4. Springfield (Divine Providence Province)

Niemeyer Robert Francis

#### b) First profession

Aguilera Gerardo Sebastian Provincia Cruz del Sur Caceres Lescano Carlos Cesar Provincia Cruz del Sur Rivera Luis Geronimo Provincia Cruz del Sur Muller Darlan Jose' Lantana Provincia Santa Cruz Abah Idioko Francis Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Ebalasani Giscara Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Ekoue Daniel Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Emerite Chikwado Achillus Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Iwuchukwu Jerome Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Kibwamusitu Bruno Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Mgbechi Ukachukwu Pul Leonard Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Ntambo Enewa Gedeon Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Oguejifor Chukwudi Vincent Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Delegazione N.S. della Speranza Ozokoye Chijioke Alamer Alfredo Divine Providence Province Amico Giovanni Provincia San Giuseppe Jaroslaw Januszewski Provincia San Giuseppe

#### c) Perpetual Profession

Adones Contreras Carlos	(Chile)	a San Ramon de	14-03-2009
		la Nueva Oran	
Bravo Julio	(Spagna)	a Roma Trionfale	21-03-2009
Kingo Mabwata Georges	(R.D. Congo)	a Kinshasa	18-04-2009

#### d) Perpetual Profession and Diaconate

Selvaraj Vincent	(India)	a Cuddalore	11-02-2009	12-02-2009
John Samson				
Rajasegaran	(India)	a Cuddalore	11-02-2009	12-02-2009
Bente Di Giambattista				
Sebastian	(Italia)	a Roma Trionf.	21-03-2009	22-03-2009
Da Costa Ferreira Helio	(Italia)	a Roma Trionf.	21-03-2009	22-03-2009
Mora Gelvez Pablo				
Emilio	(Italia)	a Roma Trionf.	21-03-2009	22-03-2009
Owamanam Leonard				
Emeka	(Africa)	a Kinshasa	18-04-2009	03-05-2009
S. Antony Lourdu Raj	(India)	a Cuddalore	18-06-2009	20-06-2009
Irudayaraj Constantain	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Selvaraj Francis	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Antony Francis Assisi	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Irudayasamy George				
Vensula	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Antony Irudayaraj				
Jerin Prasenna	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Savarirayar John				
Kennedy	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Mathew John Paul	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Rosario Lawrence				
Thambusamy	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Chinnappan Lourduraj	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Kaspar Raj Maria				
Paul Raj	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009
Xavier Sahaya Rajesh	(India)	a Cuddalore	08-12-2009	09-12-2009

#### e) DIACONATE

Antonysamy Selvaraj (India) a Cuddalore 20-06-2009

#### f) Presbyterate

Rossi Roberto	(Italia)	a Como	18-04-2009
Selvaraj Vincent	(India)	a Cuddalore	06-08-2009
John Samson Rajasegaran	(India)	a Cuddalore	06-08-2009

Pitchai Paul Raj	(India)	a Cuddalore	06-08-2009
3	` /		
Mora Gelvez Pablo Emilio	(Colombia)	ad Aguachica	05-09-2009
Ferreira Da Costa Helio	(Brasile)	a Fortaleza	19-09-2009
Antony Durairaj	(India)	a Thannuthu	24-09-2009
Bente Sebastian	(Argentina)	a Tapiales	17-10-2009
Singarayar Antony Loudu Raj	(India)	a Cuddalore	09-12-2009
Antonysamy Selvaraj	(India)	a Cuddalore	09-12-2009
Owamanam Leonard Emeka	(Nigeria)	a Nnebukwu	12-12-2009

#### C) IMPORTANT EVENTS

#### **Introduction**

Like all years, even the year 2009 was full of events that had an impact in the world, our countries, and our Congregation: terrible calamities (earthquakes in Haiti and Italy), the typhoon in Manila (Philippines), the too many wars and genocides that are becoming too common and – unfortunately – no more catching the attention of the most. In spite of all that, it was also a year of great events affecting our faith: the Year of St. Paul, the opening of the Year for the Priests, the Synod for Africa, the Holy Father visiting Africa...

Regarding our Congregation, the year 2009 brought to Heaven a relevant number of confreres, a number never so high: 16 or 18 if we want to add also the former confreres Fr. Mario Merlin, founder of the Congregation *Opus Mariae Reginae*, and Fr. Cipriano Vianini.

The number of the members of the Congregation, 521, is the same of the last year, after the deceased and those who left. 17 confreres made their first profession. 22 made their final vows. 11 were ordained priests. To this good number of young confreres we should add 32 new novices. The average age of the Congregation is 47 years.

The Divine Providence and Our Lady of Guadalupe Provinces held their first provincial chapter, an important moment for planning a future filled with great hope.

The religious life and the ministry of charity of the majority of our communities are good. The two Italian Provinces are hit by a very fast aging of their confreres. Forty of them in their eighties and nineties are still active in some ministry.

The burden of mega-structures is getting its toll all over the Congregation.

Fr. Guanella taught us to take care of emergencies, and we went to L'Aquila area after a devastating earthquake to give our ministry to people living under tents.

For months, different confreres offered their time and energy and went to Fontecchio to assist the spiritual needs of the survivors.

We did not miss the opportunity to go to Goma (Congo) among the thousands refugees. A reportage was carried by our web-site.

In the Philippines, our confreres in Quezon City promptly offered food and hospitality to hundreds of people that have lost everything because of a terrible typhoon. Now they are helping out – through a contribution of the Italian Conference of Bishops – the local people to fix their homes destroyed by the calamity.

The activity of the Superior General and his Council besides the day-to day administration was in view of the sixth General Consultation that was held in January. We may read a summary of the event in this same Charitas.

The traveling of the Superior General has become a "special" visit to the communities and it will continue through 2010. His councillors tried to give the best of themselves to keep united the Congregation present in the different parts of the world. We are present in 19 countries, included the new presence in Saigon (Vietnam).

A confrere from India is stationed there guest of the Salesians. He is studying the language and local culture keeping an eye on the most urgent needs of that population.

The presence of some confreres in the Italian Major Superiors Conference and Charitas Association is covered successfully. A recent convention sponsored by these two Associations focused on "The Gospel in the works of charity and social activities of religious in Italy". Our confreres were active members of the organizing committees.

The concluding celebrations of the Centennial of our Congregation had seen a good participation of our Provinces.

Everywhere, the communities underlined the fidelity to the charism of the Founder, not to receive gratification but to be one with the Church in its evangelization and works of charity. In Rome, the concluding celebration was held in the Basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls. A few months later, the Holy Land pilgrimage was held.

It is comforting to see in these solemn events of our Guanellian family the presence of many lay people, members of the GLM. The Movement was strongly supported by the 2000 and 2006 General Chapters. This year, the GLM reached a very important goal, the publication of the Document that identifies the figure of the GLM. It was published on the feast of Mary, Mother of Divine Providence, on November 12. It is the result of a long period of study and discussion among the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, the Servants of Charity, the Cooperators and the Italian GLM.

It was distributed at the National Assembly of the Italian GLM, held at Domus Urbis, Rome, on 23-24 January 2010. At this point, a second phase has begun the involvement of the different local groups in studying it and putting it into action in the years ahead.

Finally, the joyful news of the approval of the miracle by the Medical Committee held in Rome on November 12, 2009, and by the Theological Committee on January 30, 2010. That should open the last step toward the canonization of the Founder. We now wait for the Consistory and the final approval from the Holy Father that should take place in a few months.

General Secretary Fr. Piero Lippoli

## 1. VI General Consultation

From January 11th through 16th, 2010, at the Motherhouse of the Pie Discepole in Via Portuense, Rome, the VI General Consultation was held. Its participants were from all the Guanellian world: 20 confreres representing 19 countries, six Provinces and one Delegation. All found themselves at home though the house was not a Guanellian one. Hearts not walls make a home... and hearts do not lie. The comment was: "It seemed that we have always lived together: young and old, Indians, South-Americans, Africans, and Italians".

All felt united by the same charism that, by the grace of the Spirit, they bring to the world.

On **January 11, morning**, Fr. Jose' Rovida, Claretian, led us in a day of recollection by giving a brilliant meditation: "The future is called communion, fraternity". Very appealing the first four points: *In the beginning was communion - Communion as reason for existence of authority and obedience - The service of those presiding over fraternity - The right relationship between superior and confreres regarding communion.* 

The fifth point delved into an interesting Decalogue on the communal relationships regarding communion. Ample room was given for personal meditation and Eucharistic Adoration closed by the celebration of the Holy Mass presided by Fr. Rovida.



At 3:30 PM, the VI General Consultation was officially opened by the fraternal greetings of the Superior General to the participants and by invoking the Holy Spirit upon the assembly. He outlined the program and methodology of the Consultation, expressing his desire that it be stimulating and direct.

The afternoon was spent in the "Analytical Evaluation of the 18th General Chapter's Motions and Proposals", according to the index of the Final Document of the same Chapter: Charism and Spirit - Fraternal Life in Communion - Life in Communion with God - Charism and Consecrated Life - Youth Ministry, Vocation Ministry and Formation - Charism and Mission. The General Treasurer concluded by presenting Motions and Proposal regarding Charism and Administration.

After each theme, time was available for discussion.

January 12th opened with the celebration of Mass presided over by the Vicar General, Fr. Umberto Brugnoni. Then, Fr. Wladimiro Bogoni gave a preview of the 2011 Pastoral Plan, "Revive your prayer at the springs of the Charism".

He asked the Fathers to point out practical and specific aspects useful to the theme. The remainder of the day was dedicated to group activity: three groups of confreres discussed and presented suggestions on the first three themes mentioned above.

Afterwards, the six Provincials and the Delegate reported on the progress made by the Provinces regarding the three themes under consideration, and on what is still to be done. Group work followed.

Everyone reconvened at 5:00 PM for the reports of the secretaries of the three groups on their discussion. Interesting observations and suggestions were made in order to intensify the knowledge of the charism and how to live it out. They stressed once again the importance of fraternal communion and communion with God, and supplied good tips on how to make them significant to the life of our communities.

January 13th is opened again by the Eucharistic Concelebration presided over by Fr. Carlos Blanchoud. At the assembly, Fr. Alessandro Allegra and Fr. Nico Rutigliano were present because they were directly involved in the discussion of two important themes, "Formation and Youth/Vocation Ministry". Father General introduces the two themes. The related reports of the Provincials and Delegate follow.

In the afternoon, the assembly is convened for the reports of the three groups secretaries and for clarifications or corrections. The three themes seem very important to the Fathers. The majority participate in the discussion. Suggestions are directed toward a more intense work regarding youth ministry and on the necessity for the young confreres of the new Provinces to deepen their own formation.

January 14th is dedicated to the Laity. Fr. Wladimiro Bogoni is the main celebrant at the Mass. During the homily he gives some suggestions useful for the work of the day. Father General, once back to the assembly hall, presents his own report on the topic and then gives the podium to the Provincials and Delegate.

Before the group activity, Fr. Bogoni presents the newly published Document on the Guanellian Lay Movement (GLM) and the history of the Movement. A discussion ensues. Father General begins by saying that "...now no one in the Congregation has the right to act against the Document and its content. Every Superior here has to be firm in demanding from his own confreres support and respect of the Document". The following discussion reveals that all are on the same tune of the Superior General and promise their commitment that the GLM from now on has to proceed more quickly on the tracks pointed out by the Document.

When the work group is over, the confreres get together once again to listen to the secretaries' report. No problem in seconding their reports.

January 15th is the day dedicated to Finances. Fr. Mario Nava, the general treasurer, presides over Holy Eucharist, and then makes his financial report to the assembly. Afterwards, confreres discuss the report. All praise his report and also his good work carried out in this sometimes difficult field. Regarding the case to

allow the presence of a lay treasurer, not many are interested. The majority would prefer to continue the praxis of having a religious treasurer helped by lay people. However, a limited experience of having a lay treasurer is accepted.

The afternoon is dedicated to the General Secretary who presents some official communications and important norms regarding ways of communication, translations, and sending documents.

January 16th is the concluding day. Fr. Piero Lippoli, General Secretary, presides over the concelebration. Father Superior General presents to the assembly the last issue: Government. Discussion ensues.

Provincials and Delegate present the situation of their provinces. It seems that almost everywhere certain individualism is emerging, an individualism that at times reaches the point of rejecting obedience.

There are however many positive aspects both in the provinces and in the local communities: many confreres are very dedicated in their daily "yes" to the poor.

At the end of the discussion, the General Secretary, Fr. Piero Lippoli, presents the operative points as they were summarized, by keeping in mind the reports of the work groups and the discussions in the general assembly. Confreres ask for clarifications and integrations.

Time is dedicated to the issue of translations: what should be translated and who should translate. The confreres agree to entrust to the Study Center of Rome the translation of "classic" documents of the Founder and whatsoever is strictly connected to them. The General House and to the Provinces are entrusted with the translation of current informative documents and those concerning the animation of religious life.

Once all the debating is over and after taking a few final decisions, the Superior General closes the VI General Consultation. He thanks the confreres for their commitment during the Consultation and wishes that what has been decided – a short collection will be published later on – may become truly operative everywhere the service of charity is carried out.

Fr. Piero Lippoli

## 2. The Provincial Chapters

# A) The first Provincial Chapter of the Divine Providence Province "The Love of Christ urges us"

The opening day was dedicated to a spiritual retreat. Two religious Salesian animated the day through insights on charism, community life and formation according to the Pauline theme of the Chapter "The Love of Christ urges us".

In the evening, after supper, the Chapter's first arrangements were set up: The registration of the capitulars, all present with the exception of Fr Silvio De Nard, who is in Italy due to his mothers' severe illness and Fr Joseph Rinaldo, who will arrive during the night.

The capitulars are 22 (included Fr Joseph Rinaldo) plus the General Superior, Fr Alfonso Crippa, Fr Piero Lippoli, Secretary General, Fr Nico Rutigliano and Fr Giancarlo Frigerio.

Following Father General's words of welcome and good wishes, two Moderators, two Secretaries and two Scrutinizers were elected.

Fr Soosai Rathinam and Fr Battista Omodei were elected Moderators. Fr Dennis Weber and Fr Benson were elected Secretaries. The confreres, not yet ordained, Selvaraj and Samson, were elected as Scrutinizers.

A short discussion decided the program for the following day and the organization into work groups.

*May 18, 2009*. This day is totally occupied by the reports of the Provincial Superior, the provincial treasurer and the procurator of the Indian Societies' Fr Peter Sebastian. To each report, sufficient time for questions and answers followed. The Provincial's report follows the lead of the Constitutions, and very practical, marks the lights and shadows of the past and first two years in the life of the new Province. The confreres appreciated the report.

Fr Joseph Rinaldo's report was good in terms of proposals offered, but it needed to be completed by the financial report.

May 19. Begins with the second part of the financial report started the previous day. Then it was the turn of the work groups. Three groups working on three fundamental topics: Charismatic Identity, Fraternal Communion, Mission. Each group needs to study only one topic and present proposals and motions to the assembly. In the evening, the secretaries of each group related the discussion of their group. Two topics were completed and the Mission was tabled for the following morning.

- **May 20.** The work groups engage two other important subjects: *Vocational Promotion/Formation and Financial/Administrative issues*. For each of these subjects a report was given to the assembly.
- *May 21.* The morning was occupied by the discussion on the draft of the Province Directory. The interventions were many, repetitive and inconclusive. The leadership decided to suspend the discussion and presented a motion, to be voted later, delegating the Provincial Council to write a draft of the Directory in consultation with the grass root.

In the afternoon the Motions and proposals' text and meaning was clarified for a better understanding before voting the following day. In the evening, the concelebrating was presided by the Most Rev. Bernard Mores, Archbishop of Bangalore, who joined the community for supper.

*May 22.* Closing day. The morning is busy with the last touches on the various Motions and proposals. The final count between Motions and Proposals is 44.

They are voted in the afternoon in less than two hours. The capitulars approved almost all of them.

Toward the end, the Superior General offers some reflections inviting all confreres to become supporters of the Chapter's choices, each in his own community. Now the hard work begins. Everyone, Superiors and confreres, are called to the highest level of commitment to make progress in the areas stressed by this Chapter: Charismatic Identity, Fraternal Communion, Mission, Formation, Vocational Promotion and Administration.

Fr Luigi concluded with some words of appreciation recaptured also during the Mass of thanksgiving.

# B) First Provincial Chapter Our Lady of Guadalupe

On June 27, 2009, at the Mariapolis El Diamante, Acatzingo-Puebla (Mexico), the first provincial chapter of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province was closed. Besides the chapters fathers, there were also present some lay people, the Vicar general, Fr. Umberto Brugnoni, and the general Councillor Fr. Carlos Blanchoud.

They were days of intense work, prayer and fraternity. Fr. Blanchoud offered a presentation on "Fraternal Life in the Spirit", followed by group discussion on the life of our communities and on the context in which they are living and operating. Fr. Brugnoni had a talk on "Youth and Vocation Ministry" followed by a discussion on the local Guanellian youth groups, their future and expectations. Fr. Vargas talked about "Formation and Communication". Each evening, the chapter

members had the opportunity to watch some DVD on our ministry in Colombia, Guatemala, Spain and Mexico. The last day was dedicated to financial and administrative issues

Rich and stimulating were the homilies delivered by Priests from the Dominican Order and Focolare Movement.

There were also moments of prayer held with the representatives of the Lay Movement and our Sisters. On Friday 26, Laity and religious discussed the theme "Sharing the Mission".

Fifty-nine Motions and Proposals were discussed and approved.

Fr. Enrico Colafemina, Provincial Superior, commented, "Now we have to put into action in our daily life what the chapter had offered: to renew our commitment in living religious life, to be more forceful in living community life, to enrich dialogue among confreres.

The first provincial chapter turned out to be a family, an authentic dialogue on life-experience, joys and shadows, mutual acceptance and attention to each other. The different subjects on the table were taken into consideration by a simple methodology and participation. Our future perspectives are rich in hope and stimulating.

The 59 proposals and motions show our will to deepen the vital aspects of the life and mission of the communities belonging to the province. We should treasure this atmosphere in order to strengthen our identity, our sense of belonging, and our acceptance of people and structures for more convinced and transparent witness of our religious life".

On Sunday 28, at our Corpus Christi Parish (Mexico City), the participants closed the chapter by concelebrating Mass, a visible sign of thanksgiving for the days spent together.

## 3. The New Provincial Councils

Nel mese di dicembre hanno terminato il loro triennio 3 Consigli Provinciali: quello della Provincia Sacro Cuore, quello della Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe e quello della Provincia Cruz del Sur. Dopo aver consultato i rispettivi consiglieri e Superiori provinciali, ricevuto il voto positivo del suo Consiglio, il Superiore generale ha deciso di confermare per un altro triennio il Consiglio della Provincia Sacro Cuore.

Mentre per la Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe e per la Provincia Cruz del Sur sono state indette nuove consultazioni. Al termine delle medesime sono stati nominati i due nuovi Consigli provinciali:

## • Per la Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe:

Don Nino Minetti, Superiore provinciale Don Fabio Lorenzetti, 1<sub>o</sub> Consigliere e Vicario Don Nico Rutigliano, 2<sub>o</sub> Consigliere Don Matteo Rinaldi, 3<sub>o</sub> Consigliere Don Aldo Mosca, 4<sub>o</sub> Consigliere

#### • Per la Provincia Cruz del Sur:

- P. Sergio Rojas, Superiore provinciale
- P. Nelson Jerez, 10 Consigliere e Vicario
- P. Gustavo De Bonis, 20 Consigliere
- P. Eladio Adorno, 3<sub>0</sub> Consigliere
- P. Ernan Latin, 40 Consigliere

#### 4. Towards the canonization of our Founder

## • The long awaited miracle

On Thursday, November 12th, liturgical solemnity of Mary, Mother of Divine Providence, so loved by Fr. Luigi Guanella, the Medical Commission at the Congregation for the Causes of Saints gave its approval to the presumed miracle attributed to Bl. Luigi Guanella.

The "miracle" took place in the United States of America, precisely at Springfield, outside Philadelphia, the major city of the State of Pennsylvania.

It regards the exceptional healing, according to medical-scientific criteria, of William Glisson, now 28.

Bill, on the evening of March  $15_{th}$ , 2002, was skating with one of his friends along Baltimore Pike, Springfield, going very fast and wearing no helmet. Because of a hole on the road, he fell backwards suffering an extreme serious trauma at his skull.

Immediately assisted, the ambulance paramedics found him still conscious and brought him to the nearby Crozer Keystone Hospital, a highly specialized center for traumas, where he arrived in coma. Immediately informed, his mother rushed to the hospital where the doctors informed her that her son was in an extremely critical situation: he had very thin chances to survive. From the clinical file of the hospital we read that "a CAT scan done at the ER showed severe traumatic brain injury, a serious frontal contusion with left epidural blood clot, a

left subdural parietal blood clot, a right frontal contusion and also a right temporal contusion, extended bleeding in arachnoids area, a "massa" effect from left toward right with a moving of the median line and a fracture of the base of the skull that extended to the right occipital bone".

The doctors performed two surgeries one after another, yet the patient's conditions were getting worse and worse.

Four days later, on the feast of St. Joseph, March 19, Dr. Noreen Yoder, a family friend that had worked at our Guanellian Center for disabled in Springfield for years, gave to Bill's mother two first class relics of Fr. Guanella. Showing great faith, the mother tied one relic around her son's wrist and the second around her own neck.

From that moment on, a crusade of prayers to the Lord through the intercession of Bl. Luigi Guanella began not only among family members but also in our facility and among friends of Bill's sister who was attending a local Catholic school. In the meantime, two more surgeries were performed on Bill without success.

On March 25, something began to change: for the first time in ten days, doctors realized that the patient was responding.

In the following days, Bill improved so much that on April 9 he was dismissed from the hospital. For two months he attended a program for functional neurological-motor rehabilitation.

The results were so astounding that the same neurosurgeons could not explain what happened.

Bill went through many neurological tests, and everything was found negative, no intellectual or neurologicalpsychological deficit.

After eight months from the accident, William went back to work with his father as a carpenter.

After four years from the accident, the clinical condition is optimal, and was confirmed by the two neurological "periti" appointed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia during the Diocesan Canonical Process.

Last year, William got married and leads a perfectly normal life. It is interesting that the miracle happened in the United States, the first Guanellian mission across the Atlantic Ocean.

Fr. Guanella went there in person on the end of 1912, welcomed and accompanied by Scalabrinians priests.

In 1913, the Founder sent to Chicago the first group of Sisters to assist the children of Italian Immigrants.

We have to make clear to all that the miracle will continue to be considered "alleged" until the Holy Father will declare it an extraordinary grace from God that had happened for the intercession of Fr. Guanella.

### Another important step

Saturday, January 30th, 2010, brought another significant step toward the canonization of our Founder, Luigi Guanella. At the Vatican, the Theological Commission, presided by Msgr. Alessandro Corradini, General Promoter of Faith, expressed unanimously their favorable opinion on the intercession of Blessed Luigi Guanella regarding the healing of William Glisson from Springfield, in the suburbs of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

While skating on March 15th, 2002, he fell on the ground suffering a very serious head trauma that left no hope for his survival.

The Theologians' opinion will be submitted to the Congress of Cardinals and Bishops who, after discussion and approval, should send to the Holy Father their own opinion.

The Holy Father can recognize officially the miracle and decide to publish the final Decree and the date of the canonization.

Most Rev. Diego Coletti, Bishop of Como, said: "Our Church in Como has joyfully welcomed the news on the last important step of the process toward the canonization of Blessed Luigi Guanella. As a man and priest he is exemplary model. For instance, his deep faith and ability to foresee and carry out in truth and respect works of charity at the service of everyone in need. My deep desire is that during this Year for Priests, called by the Holy Father Benedict XVI, a priest of our own diocese may be chosen to be a model of priestly holiness".

Fr. Mario Carrera, General Postulator of the causes of saints among the Servants of Charity, echoes Bishop Coletti: "By the recognition of his sanctity, Father Guanella becomes an authentic exegete of the Gospel of Charity and a beacon that shows the secure port of our journey.

## 5. 2009-2010 Year of the Priest

Benedict XVI, last March 16, during the Audience of The Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Clergy, gave the announcement of the proclamation of a special Year of the Priests.

The theme of the Year of the Priest will be, "Fidelity of Christ Fidelity of the Priest." It is a double fidelity. Fidelity of Christ who, when calling someone, establishes a covenant that will never cease.

The fidelity of the Priest implies an answer without delays and hesitations to the one who chose him. The inaugural ceremony will be held on June 19, solemnity of the Sacred Heart, at the St. Peter's Square, with the celebration of Vespers presided by the Pope.

The Year of the Priest will conclude on June 19, 2010 with a meeting of priests coming from churches all over the world. On that occasion, The Pope will proclaim the Holy Pastor of Ars, St John Marie Vianney, a Model of holiness and ministry for every priest.

Several activities will mark this Year of the Priest. Meetings and seminars on the nature and mission of Christian priesthood, Formation of seminarians and young priests. Additionally, a "Directory for Confessors and Spiritual Directors" will be published as well as a collection of writings from the Popes on Priesthood.

Encouraging the priests to deepen their knowledge of the Holy Scripture and to conform their life and mission to its teachings, Pope Benedict XVI referred to his personal life.

"At the vigil of my ordination, 58 years ago, I opened the Bible because I wanted to receive once more a word from the Lord for that day and for my future journey as a priest. My eyes fell on these words, "Consecrated in truth, your word is truth." Then I understood that the Lord was talking about me and was talking to me. Precisely the same thing will happen to me tomorrow".

Happy Year of the Priest!

# 6. Conclusion of Centennial Anniversary

## • Pilgrimage to the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls

Wednesday, March 25, solemnity of the Annunciation, we had closed – with a pilgrimage of Guanellians to the basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls – the centennial anniversary of the first religious profession of the Founder and of the official recognition of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence Institute. The centennial was opened on March 24, 2008, in the Sacred Heart Shrine in Como.

The participants gathered at the Pyramid at 14:30 PM and then they walked to the basilica reciting the Rosary. All male and female Guanellian communities in Rome were present together with 250 lay people from St. Joseph al Trionfale Parish and from Naples. Many were the residents and staff from the Houses of Via Aurelia, Via della Nocetta and St. Rose. The introductory rites were celebrated in the outside courtyard. We processed then into the basilica through the Holy Door. The celebration was presided over by the superior general Fr. Crippa surrounded by 22 confreres.

"The centenary allowed us to study more and more the Guanellian charism and to rekindle it in us as the most precious gift that the Founder passed on us. We have to carry it out today according to the requests and expectations of the Church calling us to a new evangelization", the superior general said in his homily.

"Each charism is for the life of the Church and is carried out by sharing it. St. Paul was "furious" against those who were spreading divisions in the Church in the name of their personal charisms".

There are two consequences: (1) "We have to strengthen the ties with our history and (2) we have to cultivate a constant openness of mind and heart in living a spirituality of communion". We should reach a balance of contemplation and action to overcome with a renewed spirit the difficulties that our mission presents.

Is there any comparison we can make between *St. Paul and Blessed Guanella?* Their *apostolic zeal* is evident by the running of Fr. Guanella and the incessant wandering of St. Paul. "It is the Spirit that breathes on us and gives us the necessary strength to go where the needs are". This openness to the Spirit brings out self-giving and total dedication to the Gospel.

St. Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (*Gal* 2:10). Fr. Guanella echoes him by saying: "Good cannot be accomplished other than by climbing the wearisome path of Calvary".

Christian charity is a "charity toward people" Fr. Guanella states. St. Paul bears witness to it in his many writings rich of personal episodes, rich of love and passion.

"The charism should not be known only theoretically, in our mind, but also in our heart. Thus, the charism can transform our heart and change our weakness into strength. The poor that we serve eventually will discover our ardent heart... We need to put our trust also in our and others weakness, that is, to see in them the presence of Divine Providence. Today we need to re-discover simplicity and trust in others. The many poor around us are the visible proof that God is present among us!".

Father Superior General then mentions Mary. "Father Guanella, by choosing the feast of the Annunciation as the day of his religious profession, is telling us that he too wanted to say his 'yes' to God in union with Mary". He invites the present to be docile like Mary so that the Holy Spirit may do great things. "Let us entrust to Mary our Congregations. The witness of our faith and charity may bear fruit in our mission and give more zeal to all of us".

Before the final blessing, Sr. Georgina Alves da Costa, vicar general of the DSMP, thanks those present and invites all to continue with renewed vigor to announce the goodness of God the Father.

#### • Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Saturday, May 9, the *second Guanellian pilgrimage to the Holy Land* was wrapped up. It was held as one of the celebrations remembering the Centennial of our Founder's profession.

*33 people participated*: Guanellian religious, priests, brothers and sisters, from all the Provinces of the Congregations (Beati Luigi e Chiara, S. Pio X, Sacro Cuore, S. Giuseppe (Italy); N.S. Aparecida, S. Cruz (Brazil); S. Giuseppe, Cruz del Sur, N.S. di Guadalupe (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Spain), two Sisters from India and one from Romania.

With them there was the vicar general Fr. Umberto Brugnoni, SdC, who was in charge, Sr. Georgina Alves de Costa, the general councillors Fr. Carlos Blanchoud and Sr. Franca Vendramin.

Amor Christi Crucifxi trait nos (The love of Christ Crucified impels us) was the inspirational motif. It was the same motif that inspired the 1st Italian National Pilgrimage (1902) led by Bl. Andrea Cardinal Ferrari. Fr. Guanella was one of the members and he participated with great faith and joy as we may read from the magazine "La Divina Provvidenza".

The *program* was intense and diversified. The pilgrimage was held in a climate of prayer and fraternity. The first stop was Nazareth (2-5 May), followed by Bethlehem (6 May) and Jerusalem (7-9 May). The pilgrims visited the basilica of the Annunciation, the Church of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, Capernaum, Tabga and the Mount of the Beatitudes, the basilica of the Nativity and the Shepherds Field.

The heart of the visit was Jerusalem: the garden of Olives, Gethsemane, the Holy Sepulcher and Calvary. They were intense visits allowing the pilgrims to enter into profound meditations on the fundamental mysteries of our faith.

**The day was usually open by common prayer** and the reading of passages from the Holy Land diary of the Founder. Once arrived at a place, we were reading the evangelical episodes regarding that location.

Diversified and inspiring were the meditations delivered by participants in Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Very well done the liturgy prepared by the Sisters.

There were other intense moments. The renewal of the baptismal promises at the Jordan River and the crossing of the Sea of Galilee during which we recalled the call of the first disciples and of ours. The personal prayer on the mountains at the Judean Desert. The celebration of Holy Mass at the Cenacle (*Last Supper Room*) and the renewal of priestly and religious vows. The meditation at the Bethesda Pool of the "I have no one", (Jn 5), favored saying of the Guanellians. the

stations of the Cross with the Franciscans Fathers ended at the Calvary and Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The concluding Holy Mass was at Emmaus.

We could not omit a *visit to our Guanellian "Holy Family House" in Nazareth* where Fr. Marco Riva, SdC, and Bro. Carlo Fondrini, SdC, joyfully welcome the pilgrims.

There we celebrated Mass; we dined and had a meeting with the "angels" of the Center for disabled children. It was one of the most moving moments of our pilgrimage as Guanellian Family.

The Founder at the end of his pilgrimage wrote, "My good-bye to the land that had seen the birth, the life and the death of our divine Savior was tearful... The mind and heart of the pilgrim were filled with consolation. Even the body found rest. Many of us, in spite of the exhausting traveling, the changing of air, habits, and of almost everything were feeling better and went back home rejuvenated in spirit, in will and even health".

That is what happened to us too.

# 7. Meeting of the Two Guanellian General Councils

Tuesday, January 20th, 2009, at the General House of the Servants of Charity the first meeting of the two General Councils was held.

All their councillors attended. The meeting was opened by a prayer for Christian Unity and by reading some passages of the sermon delivered by Benedict XVI during his first audience of the year 2009. He invited the Christian people to rekindle in them the pledge to open to Christ mind and heart so that they may live as his true friends. Under this wishes, we begin our meeting and discussion on the agenda topics.

1. Up-to-date on the GLM after the meeting between the two general councils, the Fathers and Mothers Provincial of Italy and the GLM Italian Council, that was held at Villa S. Rosa in Rome, on October 4-5, 2008.

## Conclusions are following:

 The superior general Fr. Alfonso Crippa should review his reflexions on the GLM elaborated last year that were later on expanded on its being part of the Church. The two general councils will then read and evaluate it.

- At the end of March, president Vittore Mariani will receive guidelines and suggestions related to the GLM. Those indications should be integrated with many suggestions that were sent before Christmas by some superiors who had participated to the meeting in Rome last October.
- What should be done during the first months of this year is to reach the
  objective recommended by the October meeting: to carry out before
  summer 2009 a meeting among the GLM Italian Council, the two
  General Councils, the Italian Provincial Superiors finalized to approve
  the Document.

#### 2. Need to separate and follow the Association of the Guanellian Cooperators.

All agree that the two Councils will take into consideration the "Cooperators" issue. Their results will be communicated to each other.

## 3. Association "Mediterranean Sea without handicap".

We ponder on this Association. We point out that after the Malta Congress seven meetings were held in Italy though we perceive that such "relapse" did not follow the expectations.

#### 4. Guanellian Centro Studi in Rome

We mention once again the role of the reference person appointed by the General Councils. We hint at an answer to be given to the Minutes of the meeting that evaluated and planned the activities of the Centro Studi that were sent by its director.

## 5. Common guidelines and initiatives concerning the Canonization of the Founder

We put on the table some ideas that should be further reviewed and advanced to a future committee to be established at the proper time. The meeting ends by sharing information of the life of the two Institutes.

a) ITALY

## • Meeting with the Pontifical Council for the Laity

Friday, March 6, 2009, made history: Fr. Wladimiro Bogoni, SdC, Sr. Franca Vendramin, DSMP, and Prof. Vittore Mariani, representing the GLM National Council, the two Guanellian General Councils, and the four Guanellian Italian Provinces, held a meeting at the Pontifical Council for the Laity. With the Under-secretary Prof. Guzman Carriquiry they had a long and fruitful conversation regarding the GLM possibility to be recognized by the Church as one of its Ecclesial Movements.

He explained to us the necessary criteria and requirements that have to be inspired by the Gospel, the Teaching of the Catholic Church, and the Founder. Those requirements could also be open to all those men and women of good will – though not Catholic – who want to exercise works of mercy within the Guanellian experience of life.

A report was later on forwarded to the two Guanellian superior generals. Though pleased by the content of the meeting, they decided to wait better days and to give time to the GLM to take more solid roots all over the Guanellian world. Only then, the two Institutes will seriously take into consideration the opportunity to become a Movement officially approved by the Church.

## Meeting between the Italian GLM Council and the Two Guanellian General Councils

On Saturday, October 31, 2009, the General Councils of the DSMP and SdC had a meeting with the Italian GLM Council to discuss and approve the final draft of the GLM Document.

The Document was unanimously approved under the title, "Making Charity the Heart of the World".

The GLM Council announces that, in accord with the DSMP and SdC Councils, the Document will be presented for study and discussion at the National GLM Assembly, to be held in Rome, Domus Urbis, Via della Buffalotta, 550, on January 23-24, 2010.

At the Assembly, the Document will be officially distributed.

# • Italian GLM General Assembly: "Charity as mission"

The Assembly was held at the Domus Urbis, Via della Buffalotta, 550, Rome, on January 23-24, 2010.

Saturday morning Prof Mariani opened and greeted the participants. The two General Superiors expressed appreciation and welcome to those present wishing them a productive work.

Over 100 people, laity and religious, had arrived from all Italy and ready to receive the new Document "Making Charity the Heart of the World." The DSMP and SdC Councils recently approved it after so many years of work especially on the part of the Guanellian lay people that are close to us in many ways. Three delegates, Fr. Wladimiro Bogoni, Sr. Franca Vendramin and Prof Vittore Mariani, drafted the final document. The result was an attractive booklet filled with nutrient substance.

On Saturday afternoon, Prof Guzman Carriquiry, from the Pontifical Council for the Laity, held a conference on "Lay people and Movements in the Church, after twenty years from the publication of Christifideles Laici." He offered a well-done ecclesiological and theological study of the Apostolic Exhortation underlining the fact that without the lay people evangelization would be mutilated. Numerous were the people who appreciated the talk and asked for further clarifications.

On Sunday, January 24, Fr. Bogoni presented his reflexions that were well accepted by the assembly. He presented the history and the future perspectives of the Guanellian Laity, Laity that have an important place in our ministry. Very interesting his historical mention of Father Guanella, who was ahead of time, a precursor of the Vatican II regarding welcoming the Lay world.

Several people made their observations on the importance of the Document and on the future perspectives of the Movement. The interventions made by young people were more than welcomed.

The interest was so high that the discussion went over the established time, until the president had to close it at 12:15 pm to give the opportunity to people to attend Mass that was supposed to be celebrated at 11:00 am.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Superior General surrounded by 11 confreres. Each participant showed great satisfaction for the job well done. They went home convinced that much more should be done especially in involving the local Guanellian groups in carrying out the content and suggestions of the new Document.

## • Third Meeting of the Spanish GLM

On April 18, 2009, at Villa San José in Palencia the third meeting of the Spanish GLM was held. Present were the lay people from Madrid and Palencia together for a day of joyful gathering, to examine the situation of the association, and to share experience, worries, prayer and fun.

Though the time span was unfortunately restricted by the many activities, it was a profitable meeting. After the welcome remarks, the discussion touched the different ideas underlining the annual slogan "Walking together" that should be interpreted as walking with the Guanellian family and sharing with it spirituality and mission.

Divided into small groups, the participants had the opportunity to discuss questions and needs dear to them that will be brought at the attention of the Provincial Chapter to be held in Mexico at the end of June 2009. These were the major questions: "List the values of the Guanellian spirit that you think are more important", "What you would like to ask from the Guanellian religious", "What you would like to receive from the Guanellian world".

From the many answers, we will mention only a few of them.

- 1) Guanellian values: family spirit, patience, charism, work among the marginalized, service and cooperation.
- 2) From the Guanellian religious: formation, communities as point of reference and witness, closeness, help in difficult times, trust in what the laity does, communication.
- 3) From the Guanellian world: tearing down barriers for a stronger unity, sincerity, ability to listen, openness, asking only for what is needed, plain-spoken talk, being accompanied and not left alone, working for attracting more Guanellian volunteers.

Many things still need more reflection and discussion. However, we are glad that now we know better what to do together and especially the faces of our friends, their worries, their life-stories, and their smile. With them, we have to reach the Lord through a common Guanellian heart.

What is more important now is to trust each other and to walk together... and have the time to do what we have to do.

## • Fourth National GLM Meeting, Chicago, 2-4 October 2009

We arrived from coast to coast: from Vancouver (Canada); from Syracuse (New York); from Springfield and Elverson (Pennsylvania); from Minnesota; from Milbank (South Dakota); from Chelsea and Grass Lake (Michigan); from Illinois and Massachusetts.

We arrived by train, by car, and by airplane, and even by walking. We arrived and we were welcome by the typical wind of Chicago and rain of Michigan. It was one of those days that forces people to stay at home. A day that could belong to autumn or winter. The communities of St. Mary, St. Rose and Mount St. Joseph opened their warm Houses and made the assembly a pleasure and fruitful. Dr. Francisco Lopez, psychiatrist at the University of Michigan, validly presented the topic "Lay Vocation in the Church and the Guanellian Charism".

Dr. Lopez, familiarly known as *Paco*, by his unmistakable solid and humoristic style, let the audience into understanding and enjoying the statement, "*Know, O Christian, your dignity!*".

He described what the Guanellian mission has in store for us and he gave us some questions to think on and answer later on.

Besides the presence of the Servants of Charity and the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, there were many GLM veterans plus new comers. Appreciated was the presence of some members of the GLM belonging to other faiths and denominations.

Their precious presence helped us to appreciate experiences of faith and charity carried out by other religious groups.

The meeting was opened and closed by the Eucharistic celebration in the Chapel of St. Mary House in Chicago, the motherhouse of the Guanellian presence in the United States. Before leaving, we paid a visit to the elderly Sisters at Queen of Peace House, the "shrine of holiness" as we call it, and to the cemetery where the pioneer of our Guanellian spirituality and charity are resting. Soon we will celebrate the first centennial of the Guanellian presence in the country.

Our promise and plan is to gather each year and to increase our support to the GLM in each Guanellian House.

## • The GLM first steps in Springfield (Pennsylvania)

On September 27, 2009, around fifty people, a good number of Italian descents, gathered for the first meeting at the Don Guanella School under the leadership of Fr. Paul Oggioni, SdC.

For years, local Italian people, usually immigrants from Abruzzo were used to come at the House of Formation for their gatherings. Thanks to the presence of the late Fr. Sante Piacente, from Abruzzo too, that group began to support some activities in favor of the disabled children and adults residing at Don Guanella Village.

To them, Fr. Paul presented the opportunity to share their charitable activities with Americans and Latinos under the common banner of Father Guanella's spirit and charism.

"Witness of the Gospel of Charity for a new world" was the theme of the meeting.

There, we introduced the main points of the GLM, its purpose and the efficacy of the Guanellian mission in the local Church and society.

In particular, we think about activities that should promote the human and spiritual life of the residents of Divine Providence Village, the apostolate among the South/Central American Latinos, assistance to local elderly and sick, and people living in emergency situations because of housing, health or food. For those activities, we are valuing with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia the possibility to use an abandoned convent own by the same Archdiocese.

We closed by inviting all to a refreshment, another occasion for informal evaluations and discussions.

The next meeting will be held on October 31, a second step toward a further involvement in Guanellian formation and charitable works. Together we will also celebrate the Feast of Bl. Louis Guanella.

#### SCHEMA DELL'ARGOMENTO TRATTATO

#### Che cos'è il MLG

«Il mondo degli interessati si unisce in associazioni di commercio, di industria, di studio e di scienze per avanzarsi nel cammino di un progresso umano: il mondo dei cristiani, che credono e che praticano, è giusto che si congiungano in

associazioni di aiuto materiale e di sussidio morale e religioso per la prosperità temporale e spirituale della società crescente.

La ragione lo vuole, la legge ecclesiastica incoraggia, la legge degli stati civili deve consentire» (Reg. 1910).

Il MLG è una associazione che riunisce persone che, ispirate dallo spirito e dalla missione del Beato Luigi Guanella, si mettono insieme per aiutare spiritualmente e materialmente quanti stanno soffrendo per situazioni di povertà, malattia e solitudine.

#### Chi sono i membri del MLG

Ispirati dallo Spirito Santo e coscienti della loro responsabilità e cooperazione nella missione della Chiesa di annunciare il Vangelo di Cristo al mondo, i membri del Movimento Laici Guanelliani condividono lo spirito e la missione delle Congregazioni dei Servi della Carità e delle Figlie di Santa Maria della Provvidenza.

#### Conoscere don Guanella e farlo conoscere

I laici guanelliani sono consapevoli che don Luigi Guanella è stato dotato dallo Spirito Santo di un cuore docile e misericordioso, capace di percepire Dio come "Padre"; un cuore ricco di bontà e di provvidenza desideroso di raccogliere tutti i popoli in un'unica famiglia.

Dal Cuore di Cristo egli ha attinto una straordinaria sensibilità nel riconoscere, capire e correre in aiuto di quanti fossero nel bisogno, riconoscendo in ciascuno il volto di Cristo.

#### Situazione attuale del MLG nel mondo

- In processo di crescita in Italia e Sud America e Filippine.
- Allo stato di infanzia in Nord America.
- In situazione di progetto in Africa e India.

#### In USA

- Collaborazione tra SdC e FSMP.
- Due aree: East (PA, RI, MA, NY), Middle East (MI, IL, WI, SD).

## Progetti dei Servi della Carità nell'Arcidiocesi di Filadelfia

- Presenza di evangelizzazione e promozione umana e spirituale:
- Springfield: CKC, Divine Providence Village, St. Edmund.
- Apostolato tra gli immigrati da varie parti del mondo e in modo particolare tra quanti giungono dal Sud America.
- Possibile futuro sviluppo con un'attività con i poveri nella quale la cooperazione dei laici guanelliani sarà propizia e fruttuosa.
- Quali poveri? Gli anziani soli nelle loro case, gli ammalati, le persone in situazione di emergenza per casa, salute e cibo con interventi mirati e ben definiti.
- Per questa futura attività si sta chiedendo all'Arcidiocesi la cessione di un Convento inabitato dove cominciare una differente presenza di carità in Filadelfia.

## Progetti per Incontri e Formazione del MLG

- Incontri ogni ultimo sabato del mese per la Messa in Italiano e con momenti di formazione e convivenza.
- Diffondere tra gli italiani, i loro discendenti ed altri amici questa idea di presenza e di servizio ai più bisognosi.
- Progressivo sviluppo del MLG in modo che in esso confluiscano amici e simpatizzanti di lingua italiana, inglese e spagnola.

d) Colombia

# • GLM Program for the Year 2009

- Strengthening the Guanellian Religious (DSMP and SdC) by common activities on the charism and fraternal life: Centennial closing day (7-8 March) in Bucaramanga, and Spiritual Retreat DSMP-SdC in Bogota' (1-4 July).
- Strengthening the Guanellian Youth vocation ministry. Each local GLM should have and should support a youth group. Each GLM member should bring a young person into the Youth Group.

- The members of the local GLM Council should help their brothers and sisters in their formative journey in spirit of fraternity and charismatic zeal.
- Favoring in our Guanellian Centers a more professional relationship with the laity, by inviting them to join the GLM according to art. 26 of our document, *Caminos de Comunion*.
- Preparation to the First Provincial Chapter (22-27 June in Mexico) through study and prayer. Sending to it a document already prepared by the National Council and given to the local groups.

#### THE COOPERATORS

## Don Umberto Brugnoni, Assistent for the Cooperators

On July 29th, the Superior general, in order to help the Association of Guanellian Cooperators, third branch of the Guanellian Family, as requested by the 18th general chapter, and to give some kind of unity to the Association itself, by the consent of the general council of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, and of his own council, has appointed don Umberto Brugnoni as general Assistant of the Guanellian Cooperators.

Greeting letter sent by Fr. Umberto Brugnoni, the new Assistant for the Cooperators

*At the service of a vocation* 

Dear Guanellian Cooperators.

I willingly accepted the invitation offered to me by the two General Councils of the SdC and DSMP to take care of your Association that, though being part of the GLM is, according to the Constitutions of the two Congregations, the third branch of the Guanellian family so cherished by our Blessed Founder, Father Louis Guanella.

My task is to be the general assistant of the Association of Guanellian Cooperators.

I ask from the Holy Spirit the grace to be faithful to this commitment entrusted to me, to collaborate with those in charge of the GLM and with the local and provincial spiritual assistants of all groups. I will give all my energies during the next three years especially to you, Guanellian Cooperators. I would like to give my thanks to your spiritual assistants as they walk with you with passion and self giving.

All together, as an answer to the 18th General Chapter of the SdC, let us promote the "vocation" of being Guanellian Cooperators where we live and work.

The desire of the two Guanellian Congregations is that you, Cooperators, may reach the point when you, yourselves, will assume upon your shoulders the task of animating the GLM. It demands a time of preparation.

During this year for priests, I am sure you will draw close, by your prayer, to all priests and religious of the world.

Also you must be faithfully committed to carrying out your formative meetings, necessary steps to grow in the love of the heavenly Father that has called you, through Fr. Guanella, to be "apostles of mercy toward the most disadvantaged in body and spirit".

You should never forget that you, too, are sent to "show this great and merciful heart wherever you are" (Guanellian Cooperators Statute, 15).

Several people asked me to outline some themes for your formative curriculum during this year for priests. I have already contacted your Provincial superiors.

I know that some of you already have a functioning a curriculum. I invite you to continue it, accompanied by the Guanellian priests and Sisters. To other groups I would like to offer the enclosed working papers.

Taking inspiration from the Letter that the Holy Father sent to the Priests on the occasion of the year for priests (June 19, 2009), I have envisioned 10 meetings around a Decalogue taken from the Letter of Pope Benedict.

It is an opportunity to know, first hand, the spiritual/pastoral journey that your priests are invited to travel during this year, particularly dedicated to them. You should accompany them by your prayer and, because of your being baptized and involved in the Guanellian charism, you should commit yourselves to carrying out the same values.

The Holy Father urges priests to put the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the center of their pastoral activities.

We too, the Guanellian Cooperators Association, would like to make the Papal invitation our own, and make the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as explained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the focus of our formative meetings.

You, your family, your groups are in my daily prayer to St. Joseph, our great protector. I invite you to learn and to pray the traditional prayer that Guanellian religious are reciting every day.

"O Saint Joseph, we beseech you that religious vocations to this Work of Mercy be multiplied, and that those who are called for help be eager to respond for the glory and honor of God, and the relief of many who suffer in misery and abandonment. Amen".

My regards to all and have a good journey.

Rome, 8 September 2009

Fr. Umberto Brugnoni

## Monthly Formation Meetings for Guanellian Cooperators

The Holy Father, in his presentation of the life and apostolate of Saint John Vianney, the Cure' of Ars, asks from priests:

- 1. An attitude of humility in front of the undeserved gift of priesthood
- 2. Awareness of the greatness and sublimity of the received gift coming from God not from us.
- 3. Need of an authentic and active sacramental life.
- 4. Passionate work for the good of people entrusted to them.
- 5. Collaboration with a Laity that should be protagonists rather than mere spectators.
- 6. Attention and concern toward the Movements that the Holy Spirit fosters in the Church.
- 7. Placing the sacrament of reconciliation at the center of their pastoral care
- 8. Living a life-style according to Christ, the eternal priest.
- 9. Giving prominence to communion with the local Bishop.
- 10. Being witnesses more than teachers in what they announce.

## New Council Cooperators Northern-Italy

On May 9, 2009, the Cooperators from Northern-Italy and Switzerland held their assembly for electing their new council.

Mr. Paolo Cattaneo (president of the expiring council) made his final report on the four years of activity to the participants: members of the old Council, Fr. Mario Lino Mapelli (SdC delegate) and 43 delegates.

The new provincial council is formed by:

- Sacchetti Carla (Como Lora), president
- Cattaneo Paolo (Cassago), vice-president
- Benzoni Romana (Livraga), secretary
- -Pellini Luciano (Como Lora), treasurer
- Bianchi Augusto (Castel S. Pietro), delegate for Switzerland
- Monti Mari (Cernobbio), councillor

## New Council Central-Southern Italy

On October 3, 2009, the election of the new provincial council was carried out. It was preceded by the final report of the expiring president, Mr. Pietro Ozimo, and by remarks given by Fr. Pino Venerito, Fr. Umberto Brugnoni, and Sr. Giulietta Saginario.

The new council is formed by:

- Pietro Francesco Ozimo (Laureana di Borrello), president;
- Giorgio Maino (Bari), *vice-president and treasurer*;
- Maria Teresa Corigliano (Laureana di Borrello), secretary;
- -Pina Fradà (Messina), *councillor*;
- Rocco Ozimo (Laureana di Borrello), councillor;
- Mario Convertino (Alberobello), councillor;
- Anna Zallo (Roma), *councillor*.

The meeting was closed by the Eucharistic celebration, thanking the Good Lord for the gift they have received: the "call" to be Guanellian cooperators. They entrusted the association and its work to the Blesseds Guanella and Bosatta.

The new council held the first meeting on the same day because of the necessity to make plans for the social year 2009-2010.

They were days spent in harmony and fraternity, in a family style according to the spirit and teaching of Blessed Louis Guanella.

## Coyhaique (Chile): free loan agreement with the Servants of Charity

It is already 20 years that the Coyhaique Cooperators are running the facility for elderly dedicated to Fr. Antonio Ronchi, SdC. Forty very indigent elderly are under their loving care, people who have nothing, the poorest of the poor of the area. They are assisted and cared by a good number of Cooperators who are doing that as volunteers. In the name of Fr. Guanella, the needy under care receive bread and Lord. The Congregation, by a Decree (July 27, 2009) had suppressed the local religious community. The activity toward children was already closed years ago. Our Sisters are still present along with the Cooperators and they are carrying out together the charism of our Blessed Founder in a country very poor yet thirsty of God. For that reason, the Servants of Charity agreed to cede to the local Cooperators a good part of the facility for free. The agreement entrusts to them the full administrative autonomy of the facility, its ordinary and extraordinary maintenance, with the provision that the charism of Fr. Guanella is to be carried out faithfully. Our confrere Fr. Francesco Belotti is allowed to reside there. Though 87, he is still working there with great joy and enthusiasm.

#### **GUANELLIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT**

# New Team Coordinating Central-Southern Italy

On June 14, the delegates of the Central-Southern Italy gathered to elect the new team in charge of coordinating the activities of the GYM.

- Coordinator: Daniela Bilanzuoli, Bari
- Assistant Coordinator: Pierangelo La Spada, Messina
- Secretary: Davide Quarto, Bari
- Link for Sicily: Pietro Vitellaro, Agrigento
- Link for Calabria: Rosanna Furci, San Ferdinando
- Link for Puglia: Irma Rosso, Bari
- -Link for Lazio and Campania, Umbria e Toscana: Giulia Zaragorovskaia, Ferentino

According to art 14 of the M2G Directory, the chaplains were confirmed:

- Sr. *Chiara Minoia*, DSMP,
- the SdC confreres of the *Vocation Ministry in Bari*.

The new team will hold its office for three years, until June 14, 2012 (art. 19).

We wish the new team to be faithful to the office they have received and towork for a further development of the Movement.

To the former Coordinator, Francesco Cannella, and collaborators our thanks for the good they had done in the previous three years. The acquired experience may be now at the service of other fields within the great Guanellian family.

## VIII Italian GYM Meeting

"Fragile: handle with care!"

That's the slogan of the 8th Italian Meeting of the Guanellian Youth Movement (Rome, 30 April-3 May, 2009) held at St. Joseph at Trionfale Parish. Participants were from Rome, Ferentino, Naples, Bari, San Ferdinando, Messina, Agrigento, Naro, Como and Padua. The coordinator Francesco Cannella presided and opened the gathering. Each group had the opportunity to show their activities through DVD, documentary or musicals. The Central/Southern Italy team organized the meeting. In March, they met the local groups in Bari together with the youth belonging to Rome-Trionfale.

Many people were there, having in common the desire to live a strong experience of faith and to reflect on human fragility. It is already known that the fragility of human beings originates from its being a creature. However, it may become a positive aspect if we consider life as a vocation and a gift. Each young man and woman is called to recognize and accept their fragility by facing their "shadows".

At the meeting, we learned to face them through the Lectio Divina, because God's Word gives directions and meaning to our human life, even to the fragility of young people, Church and society.

We read and meditated on 2 Cor 4:6-15 where Paul talks about a "treasure in earthen vessels." Each one of us is that earthen vessel, a fragile material that nevertheless contains a treasure, the love of God in Christ and his power.

The second day was intensely dedicated to our spirit. After the *lectio* and *meditatio*, we entered into the *oratio* and *contemplatio* in front of the Blessed Sacrament. We put all our limitations into the hands of Jesus so that the Eucharist may take and *transform* our human fragility. Caught up by the transforming power of the Eucharist, each one of us went through the experience of the healing power of the sacrament of reconciliation. We discovered once again that God's love is much, much bigger than all our fragilities put together. At the end of the sacrament of penance, each participant received an earthen vessel to color later on at "the corner

of transformation and beauty" at the door of the chapel. The vessels were then exchanged among ourselves. By decorating them, we committed ourselves to transform our fragility and that of others.

Listening to the Word was the leitmotif of the day and into small groups, we shared what the Spirit had inspired us. Last step was the *actio* through our pilgrimage to the basilica of St. Paul. St. Paul was elected leader of our meeting, and so we could not miss the opportunity to visit his tomb in the special year dedicated to him. Our pilgrimage had its beginning at Seven Churches Street and step after step in prayer and personal meditation (stopping sometimes to listen to biblical passages referring to the Apostle and the experience of his fragility) we reached the splendid basilica where we made the profession of our Catholic faith.

Very much appreciated was the talk delivered by Most Rev. Domenico Sigalini, Bishop of Palestrina. He told us not to be ashamed of our human fragility, but to allow the Lord Jesus to touch our eyes (the gospel of the day talked about a blind man healed by Jesus) sure that, by giving him our limitations, he will heal us because he is love and salvation. Bishop said that our fragility should not be a mere obstacle to overcome, but a spiritual source leading to holiness.

Another enriching experience was the musical "With me, from me, for me" interpreted by the Buoni Figli from Via Aurelia and their friends. It tells the story of Daniel – an only child, special and different from all other children – and his parents, Martha and Paul. It was the last Guanellian touch in which we saw with our own eyes the fragility of man.

Afterwards, all in St. Joseph Church in Via Aurelia for the closing Mass followed by an evening with the Party Project.

Let us conclude with a line of the song that we have sung and danced for days: "Though a fragile and weak man; though poor and unworthy of You; for each heart there is Love!".

## II National Congress of the Colombian GYM

"We look for Fountains of Mercy for young people".

Last year, on May 24-25, we members of the Colombian Guanellian Youth Movement participated with the Colombian GLM to the first national congress of the GLM. Referring to the Aparecida Final Document, the groups from Bogota', Florencia and Ocana presented to our attention the themes "Lay faithful," "Formation', "Parish." The group from Bucaramanga presented the GLM Statute and some questions requesting our study and an answer.

Each national GYM had time to answer some questions: Who are we; when and where we gathers; what we do; history of our group; mission and formation; number of members; and plans. Each group chose then only three suggestions among the many on the table and later on, they informed the assembly on how they will be carried out. Practically, each group was choosing its own journey.

A year has gone! Each group had done its journey. Time has come to give an evaluation and to make another step ahead by strengthening the groups and continuing to build communion among the GYM in Colombia.

The Second Congress was not called by the GLM National Council but was born from the desire of different groups to see informally each other in Bucaramanga. Only later on, the National Council made that desire its own, and welcoming the opportunity, it organized the congress.

The Meeting slogan was "We look for Fountains of Mercy for young people". It was to us a beautiful slogan rich of many meanings that are affecting our Colombian society.

We welcomed the beautiful invitation made to the GYM of Columbia to open the doors and windows of its group and go out toward other young people inviting them all to be "fountains of mercy," like Father Guanella, to be passionate for the salvation of so many youth who are living under difficult situations.

#### **GUANELLIAN FAMILIES**

#### Gathering of Guanellian Families in Fraciscio

Ten families from Bari, Napoli, Roma, Bergamo. Some were from the Guanellian movement. From Napoli there were parents who once were children playing in the youth center in Miano (*a section of Naples*) run by the Servants. Others were from Bari and Bergamo and it was the first time that they were meeting the Guanellian movement. In addition, three priests Fr. Antonio, who wanted to celebrate his 80th birthday with them, Fr. Francesco and Fr. Nico.

They gathered in Fraciscio with the Guanellian families on 2-8 August 2009.

Theme: "On his footsteps." Discussions were centered on educational emergency.

For the first time, we had a parallel meeting with 10 adolescents, children of those same families. The meeting was led by two Guanellian seminarians, Juan Manuel and Felix.

The retreat was articulated around:

- a) Daily prayer/Eucharist and meditations on the life of the Founder and the life of a family: what is a family, faith in a family, freedom between laws and values, difficulties within a family.
- *b*) Outings and visits to the Guanellian places like Gualdera, Gallivaggio, Campodolcino, Savogno, Prosto, Motta and Angeloga.

"We have seen children and parents walking, doing house chores, and praying side by side", Fr. Nico remarks, "The new families who have joined us for the first time, though knowing nothing about Fr. Guanella, enriched all of us with their presence".

Among the children, there was a disabled girl. "Her family's precious witness of faith and care were a gift to us. The patience and overabundant care of her parents helped us to appreciate more and more the gifts of God we take for granted".

The talks on how to form their children, according to the life-experience of the young Guanella, caught the attention of all parents who got involved in discussing and reviewing their ways on how to grow their own ones. Fr. Nico adds, "It was a precious occasion to examine – not only in theory, but also in practice – their way of forming their children in the day after day family context".

"The atmosphere in Fraciscio is special". – Laura C. says – "This is my second year. Being here is very good and helpful to my children, who through activities in close contact with Mother Nature taste the beauty of discovering new things, the essentiality of life, and the beauty of sharing. Here they can understand that limits can be overcome. The language of the mountain when teaching its values does not need any word".

Fr. Nico concludes, "Seeing how successful this meeting had been, we foresee to hold next year two gatherings so that we may welcome more families, who have already expressed their desire to attend this activity".

#### Guanellian Families Meeting in Rome

"How to overcome communication barriers within the life of a couple and within the family". This was the topic on which 30 couples from Napoli, Bari and Rome talked about in their meeting held in Rome (October 25) at the Guanellian Center in Via Aurelia. Ninety people overall, including children and young adults who with

their families attend summer camps on the Alps where Fr. Guanella was born. They were well entertained by the Guanellian novices through games and different engaging activities. From Naples with their pastor, Fr. Aniello, there was also a group of engaged couples preparing for their wedding.

Communication in the family. It is the topic taken into consideration by Agnese Mattera, psychologist, specialist on Parenthood at the *Apostolato Accademico Salvatoriano* in Rome.

"Communication means to put in common, to make room in order to welcome what the other is saying".

There are three conditions: EMPATHY (being aware of our own heart, mind, and keep them separated from the emotions of the counterpart); ACCEPTANCE (a spouse has to accept unconditionally what the other says, without judging); COHERENCE (being able to express and feel what we are in an authentic way).

A workshop gave the opportunity for a first integration among the participants by helping them to check on their "barriers of communication". Limits were coming out and from them new ways to overcome them.

After the Eucharistic celebration, presided by Fr. Schiavone, just arrived from his visit to Poland where he attended the dedication of the new House in Skawina, lunch and slides show on the activities carried out by the Servants the previous summer for families and children.

"In these meetings" – Laura and Alessandro, married for 13 years and with two girls, comment – we find a welcome environment where we have the opportunity to share our life-experience and encounter other friends, couples and priests. They are truly helpful in carrying out our daily life. What we experience here is a stronghold on which we may find support for our family life, to learn how to accept the other, and to discover their dignity and the proper role within the life of a couple".

The next meeting will be held in Naples on February 14, 2010 and it will resume the topics taken into consideration and the formation activities to better family life.

#### PUENTES ONGD:

## A Guanellian Organization in Spain in favor of our missions

PUENTES ONGD is a non-governmental organization for social development born within the lay people of the Servants of Charity Institute. Its mission is to seek sensitivity and collaboration in regard of projects in poor countries, and to promote an environment of justice and solidarity.

PUENTES ONGD was born in Palencia (Spain) into a juridical entity on 24 February 2007 and registered in the Register of Associations of Castilla and Leon, number 2026, First Section. It is also registered in the Townships of Palencia and Valladolid (Spain).

It is also registered in the official Register of non-governmental organizations for development run by the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for development and in the Register of the Agents of Cooperation to Development of Castilla and Leon.

#### **Purposes**

- 1. We would like to give our cooperation to social development by participating to different social programs for the benefit of disadvantaged people in poor countries. In a special way towards:
  - People in a situation of physical and psychological handicapped that in those countries means marginalization and poverty.
  - The children most in need, especially the street-kids of big cities, usually victims of abuses and easy prey of adults forcing them to become childsoldiers or prostitutes.
  - The social promotion of women, the true motor of family economy in poor countries.
  - The development of the rural world through a rational utilization of agricultural resources and respect toward the ecosystem through agricultural formation and stock farming.
  - The abandoned and sick elderly through alimentary and health programs.
  - Helping in the health and education fields of people who cannot afford access to public health and school.
  - Those sectors of the local population that because of their ethnicity, religion, language or sex form in a particular area marginalized and excluded minorities.
- 2. We would like to be sensitive toward the human and social promotion carried out by the Spanish Guanellian Missions and Spanish Servants of Charity

Missionaries by giving our cooperation to their projects of solidarity and development.

3. We would like to promote the creation of a new mentality among the members of the association and favor the cause of the poor and those unfortunate human beings.

## With whom are we cooperating?

PUENTES cooperates with the Servants of Charity or other entities members of the same Congregation or supported by it in their endeavor to promote projects directed to a social and human development in Spain, South America, Central America, and Africa.

In a few years of our existence, we have carried out many projects and many others are in store. We trust in Divine Providence and in the good will of many sensible people.

### IN GERMANY, A GUANELLIAN MISSIONS OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED

After many contacts between the General Council and the Divine Providence Province, it was decided to authorize the "German Solidarity Foundations" to give financial help for now only to India and the Philippines. Other Provinces or the delegation will be possibly recipients of that help later on through a global authorization that will cover the whole Congregation. The authorization is valid until December 31, 2011 and can be modified at every moment.

The authorization does not cover the United States and Western Europe, except the countries belonging to Eastern Europe who are receiving help from Germany for charitable or cult activities. The established Guanellian Missions Office in Germany has become one of the 120 Congregations that work in Germany. During the year 2008, they had benefited from 120 million Euros that are financing missionary projects in five continents. Teachers in how to raise money are our cousins, the Salesians. By meetings and courses, I have learned from them how to better "sell" our projects, how to underline their best aspects, and to whom I should go without wasting time. Right now, the German foundations are interested in helping especially projects that are destined to facilities dedicated to disabled people in mission territory.

After having received the green light from the Provincial Fr. Luigi De Giambattista, at the end of May 2009, we had published a booklet in German describing the Guanellian Institute, its goals, its fields of action, and its needs.

This booklet is the first publication in German, and could be useful in the future for contacting similar foundations in Austria.

## Purpose of the Guanellian Mission Office

- To spread information on our Congregation and especially its Guanellian educational method among the disabled;
- To contact different charitable organizations who are sensitive to this ministry. Missio of Munich, Aachen, Cologne; Misereor of Aachen; Sternsinger of Cologne (an army of little Magi that on January 6th sing from door to door raising almost five million Euros). Brot fii die Welt (Bread for the World), a Protestant charitable association that does not exclude the Catholic Church located in Stuttgart; Renovabis...
- To present them projects for charitable works in the missions. Each foundation has its own offices responsible for different countries. In order to weave a web of good connections with them we have to be constantly on the road.

To reach that goal, our Office participated to the first national convention of the Missions Offices in May 2009 held in Bavaria. We have approached almost 60 procurators and from them we have received a lot of help and precious information plus encouragements to continue our work among the disabled in mission territory.

The first official contact was made on June 15 by Fr. Joseph Rinaldo, SdC, and I at the Munich Missio. We presented a number of projects in favor of the Philipino Houses of Quezon City and Legazpi. We have found interest and will in pursuing the project of Fr. Dong, SdC, the superior of Quezon City, for building a new house for disabled in that city. Fr. Joseph and I have founded hope to be able to carry out the first project in the next few weeks. Other minor projects presented by Fr. Oggioni, SdC, were forwarded to other foundations in Northern Germany. Visits to Foundation in the Cologne/Aachen area will be carried out in September.

To Misereor, we will present some plans concerning India for the benefit of disabled people.

In May 2010 a kind of "Mission Appeal Day" will be held in Munich. In a special stand, there is room for two hours of presentation on our Congregation.

#### Right now, what can our Office do for projects regarding other Provinces?

- am in contact with Fr. Folonaro, SdC, to prepare a project of a farmschool in Kinshasa (Congo). Once the project will be laid down in French, I will present it to the Aachen Missio.
- Regarding the O.L. of Guadalupe Province, through Mr. Juan Bautista Aguado, President of Puentes ONGD in Spain, we are preparing some little projects for Guatemala, Mexico and Colombia.

Gero Lombardo, Procuratore

#### ASCI DON GUANELLA

#### Letter of the President to the Superior general and his Council

... (*omissis*)...

During the last few years, the ASCI Association has extended his presence by establishing new branches in Como and Rome. Its work, plans and international adoption services are trying to satisfy the many requests coming from the Guanellian Missions around the world through confreres working in loco, the General Council, the Provincial superiors and the African Delegate.

The aim of our commitment is to carry out as better as possible two main purposes:

- to support the day to day life in the Missions, and new projects for the benefit of the poor;
- to spread more and more among the Laity the Guanellian charism and to promote among them the spirit of charity of the Founder, and to offer them the opportunity to spend a short or prolonged period of time in mission territory as a volunteer or lay missionary.

They are great plans that could be easily thought to be too presumptuous. It is not presumption that moves us. It is a desire to do more and more and the best way possible the evangelical words "love each other as I have loved you", go, and be my witnesses Our strengths and means are limited.

Yet, we believe that our limit should be the one that Fr. Guanella himself held dearly, "the whole world is your homeland" and "we can never stop as long as there are poor to be assisted".

This is the limit that we should keep in mind and so... let us go forth! The organization is facing today a twofold situation:

- Many members are abandoning. There is a lack of motivation, almost an indifference towards both the life of the association itself and its activities carried out for the missions. The very scarce attendance to the last assembly confirms my suspicion.
- There is however a positive aspect: I am seeing a total communion of mind and heart with the Guanellian Institute, a strong motivation and passion toward solidarity present in old and new volunteers, laity and religious, that are working constantly to support the association and to promote its future activity and existence.

It is a fact that the association is in close contact with the Servants of Charity both in Italy and in mission territories. The characteristics of that relationship could be summarized into close communication, synergy, and common goals.

The evidence could be the decision of our general assembly to adopt the procedure endorsed by our branch in Rome regarding all those projects that the association has in mind to carry out.

Every project should be submitted beforehand to Father Provincial or Delegate for their approval so that every financial help from the ASCI may be known by the Institute and be considered as a unified effort.

The original headquarters located in Chiavenna is now carrying out only a bureaucratic role and only toward those situations specifically requested by the Italian State.

#### Reasons:

- lack of volunteers;
- competences, inadequate tools, and living space at times almost unfit for use:
- new ways both in relating with the Institute and in carrying out our work toward cooperation and solidarity.

De facto, today all operations are planned, followed and verified by the Como and Rome branches, even those projects that are financially depending from the national headquarters even when other people collect the funds.

The ordinary support of some missions, several projects, the financial support to local children, and everything relating to our African missions are now under the direct supervision of the two branches.

Because of that and of the association's future development, we have identified the necessity to move the headquarters of the association. For now, it is only a move regarding the operational activity.

Later on, we are planning to modify the Statutes in a way that the legal headquarters will correspond also to the operational headquarters.

All agreed to identify Como as the best place because:

- Como is closer to Chiavenna, where the legal headquarters are now located:
- Como gives the opportunity to be still in close contact with Sondrio Province and the Guanellian places;
- The Sacred Heart Province operates a Missions Center in Como. He is using funds that he himself requests and obtains from private foundations and state organizations;
- Como allows the association to be much closer to a very active group of\
  volunteers:
- A new place allows a better conservation and a more secure location for the documents that right now are suffering from humidity and inadequate premises.

At this point, our dream is to find a place at the Divine Providence House in Como or at the Sacred Heart Province headquarters where we may set up our new operative center. This center should become the new main point of reference for private or state contacts.

It would allow the development programs (established during the last assembly) to be put into action much more easily and effectively:

- -communication.
- formation.
- fund raising,
- boosting more solidarity and volunteered activities.

... (omissis)...

Because of a lack of motivation among the members and because of our plan to revitalize the association, the assembly stressed once again the necessity for a solid and constant formation.

We truly feel the need to rekindle and to deepen more and more our formation on charity, on the missionary spirit, and on our Christian commitment according to the Guanellian spirit.

We firmly believe that it is very important in forming the young people, many of whom are expressing their desire to spend periods in mission territory as volunteers.

After so many years of effective ministry among us, Fr. Pietro Pasquali is retiring from his position of chaplain of the association because of age and health issues. Because of that, and because the assembly requested a new chaplain for the

spiritual formation of its members the association asks the Institute to appoint a new confrere as its chaplain, and that formation activities may be done in common for the two branches and carried out by the same person on the whole Italian area.

Finally, I would like to mention two observations made by the assembly.

First, the association is willing to participate more actively to the GLM because it is a precious occasion for formation activities and for expressing our sense of belonging to the Guanellian family.

Secondly, it came to our attention that some Servants of Charity have expressed some perplexity regarding our activity.

Though they believe that the association does good things, it is however viewed as depriving them of their privileged role to support their missions.

Some of them are alleging that the association is reluctant to inform the Institute on its activities and complaining that we show excessive power in taking decisions.

What we do both in planning and in carrying out activities, should be enough to put the heart of those alarmed confreres in peace.

ASCI Don Guanella ONLUS GIULIANA ABBATE, President

#### 9. Brazil: the Five Provincial Councils' Meeting

In an atmosphere of fraternity, spirituality and joy it was held in San Paolo (Brazil) the meeting among the 5 provincial councils of South America (16-21 February 2009), two belonging to the DSMP and three representing the SdC.

The purpose was to discuss guidelines common to the Guanellian Institutes present in South America: fraternal and charismatic communion among the two Congregations, and common activities between the Institutes and the Lay Movement.

The following decisions were taken:

- Novitiate House in Lujan: beginning this year, the Novitiate activity will begin on March 1.
- Pre-Novitiate: From now on, the entrance date into Novitiate will be June 29.

- Organization of a network among the Guanellian schools and elaboration of an educational project for South America.
- Better inter-communication among Provincials through the official web sites and those responsible of them.
- Organization in 2011 of a South America meeting with the Cooperators.
   Request of organization or re-organization of the Cooperators
   Association in all Provinces.
- Organization of a meeting among the juniors of the two Congregations in Canela (July 2010).
- Organization of a meeting among the formators of the two Congregations in Porto Alegre before the juniors meeting.
- Meeting in Argentina of the youth-ministry-vocation-ministry (18-20 July 2009).
- Organization of a meeting for permanent formation of the two Congregations in Paraguay or Brazil (2009).

Saturday 21: a pilgrimage to the Blessed Mother Aparecida closed the meeting.

#### 10. New activities

#### • Thalavadi (India)

A beautiful area 600 meters above sea level, but a little remote from all our communities. By car six hours from Bangalore and Cuddalore, seven hours from Chennai, still in Tamil Nadu, close to the States of Kerala and Karnataka.

The opening ceremony was simple but well done and well attended. The General Superior cut the ribbon while the Bishop of Ootacamud blessed the House. The concelebration, attended by a large number of Diocesan priests, was presided by the Bishop. The Bishop and all the priests expressed their joy and gratitude for the presence of our Congregation in their Diocese in a field as unique as that of mental and physical disability.

The decree of foundation of the House, for the time being a residence under the responsibility of the Provincial Superior, is dated May 26, 2009. The activity, however, will start on May 28, 2009.

#### • New Mission in Vietnam

On August 21st, after a long period of preparation and discernment, Fr. Felicks Kirupanithi, SdC, has reached the land of Vietnam, together with his Father Provincial, Fr. Luigi De Giambattista.

Born in India 35 years ago and ordained as a priest in 2006, Fr. Felicks was previously vice-rector of the major seminary in Poonamallee and director of the Don Guanella Rehabilitation Center.

"The entire Congregation of the SdC has joyfully received the good news of the appointment of Fr. Felicks to Vietnam, a country in which the Christian faith, though in the minority, is nonetheless alive and well. – Fr. Alfonso Crippa, superior general of the SdC wrote in a note – While being there, he should study the feasibility for a future presence of our Guanellian charism. Our Institute having already taken roots in the Philippines and India, we have desired more and more to expand our charism of charity to other Asian countries, both to strengthen the commitment of the local Church towards the poor and to enrich our charism with new cultures. I accompany this new endeavor with great hope that the small seed may take root and grow into a fruitful tree".

#### • Skawina (Poland)

On October 22, 2009, in Skawina (Poland) the new Group Home *Holy Family* was blessed and officially opened. It welcomes orphans and minors living a situation of social and family difficulty.

His Eminence Stanislaus Cardinal Dziwisz was presiding over the Eucharistic celebration. Present were the Roman Province Superior, Fr. Pino Venerito, Fr. Wladimiro Bogoni, representing the General Council, Fr. Fabio Lorenzetti, Fr. Mario Cogliati, the Polish Sem. Jarek Januszewki, and the postulant Rocco Saluzzi, the local pastor, neighbor priests, religious, seminarians, friends, the couple that donated the land (Sofia and Jan Sajdera), the architects and all those who had built the House.

#### • Eluru, Andhra Pradesh - India: New Seminary

On November 14, a new minor seminary was blessed and opened at Eluru, Andhra Pradesh, India, by the Provincial Superior, Fr. Luigi de Giambattista, and Fr. Piero Lippoli, general councillor responsible for Asia, and Bishop Prakash Mallavarapu, apostolic administrator of Eluru Diocese.

The 20 seminarians were previously sharing the Guanella Karunalaya, the facility for orphans. Having seen the growing desire of local boys to join the

seminary and receive a good spiritual formation, the Congregation purchased three acres of land on which to build a small house for them.

The house can accommodate forty young men.

Because of this new opening, demanded by the many vocations, we would like to give thanks to the Lord and His Providence, who never, in the last five years of our presence in the area, forgot to give us his assistance and give great satisfactions to the confreres and the local people they serve so well.

#### 11. Important Anniversaires

#### • Philippines: twenty years of Guanellian presence

As part of the Guanellian centenary, the twentieth anniversary of the Guanellian presence was celebrated on Saturday, March 7, at Manila in the Philippines. To promote a great solidarity dinner, the Guanellian co-operators who have distributed over 450 tickets at a cost of one thousand pesos each.

Entertainment and information with three hours of movies and projections relating to the charism and of Guanellian mission. More than 250 people were present. Among all these, the entire Council of the Province Divine Providence, the Secretary General Don Piero Lippoli, and all the Guanellian brothers and sisters who work in Manila, together with a good number of the disabled guests. A demonstration of solidarity that has received appreciation and interest among the participants, many of them for the first time got to know the reality and the charism of Opera Don Guanella.

#### • Mexico: twenty-five years of presence

We have just closed the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Guanellian presence in Mexico. We had opened them on November 12 by celebrating Mass at the House of our Sisters. The 15th was dedicated to the different facilities present in the area (Day Care for Children, Day Care for Elderly, Community Center "Domingo Frantellizzi").

On the 29th, we held conferences, discussions, and concerts of local bands. On December 5, Bishop Victor Sanchez celebrated Mass for the staff and volunteers of our facilities.

A dozen Guanellian confreres concelebrated with him. Noticeable among them was Fr. Piero Lippoli representing the General Council. On the eighth Fr. Cosme Pedagna, one of the first Guanellians to reach Mexico spending there 16 years, celebrated Mass for benefactors. On Sunday the seven, Bishop Pierre Christophe, Apostolic Nuncio in Mexico, celebrated Mass for the Guanellian communities and those they serve. A meal was shared with all enriched by music and a lot of fun.

"It is a mission asked by the Lord and carried out in prayer". These were the very words that were said on December 2, 1983, during the Mass of farewell to Fr. Scano and Fr. Panaro in Rome the day before their departure to Mexico.

It was God's call through the local Church: "A trip filled with trust because it is God who is at work, as Fr. Guanella was used to say. Prepare yourselves to be immersed in great poverty, the most widespread social condition of the people you will meet. However, poverty is also the condition of God's friends, of those who God loves".

They are an extract from the homily delivered by Bishop Carlos Talavera Ramirez at the celebration in Rome. Many confreres afterwards joined the two, and later on, several young Mexicans and Columbians entered the seminary and became Guanellian priests.

"We are here now to give thanks to the Lord", Fr. Piero Lippoli remarked, "and to the confreres here present and those who spent time here. We thank them for their dedication, their enthusiasm, and their work. We thank the Church authorities that kindly welcomed us, helped us in many ways, and encouraged us. We thank the civil authorities for their help in those difficult circumstances when we were looking for the right locations on which to build our facilities for the poor. We thank the many people who have helped us by their advice, their assistance, and their financial support. A deep gratitude should be given also to the people of God that is surrounding us, a people living situations of poverty. They are God's friends and ours. Perhaps, the confreres were thinking that by their coming over here they were bringing something special. That is true. They brought with them a lot and given a lot. However, they had received much more from you and with them the whole Guanellian Institute. Above all, we would like to give thanks to the Lord, the God and Father of Providence. Thank you, O Lord, because your Providence was all the time present among us in these 25 years. You were always close to us. Our work here is yours, and, through our hands, you are the One who is constantly at work".

The Servants of Charity are working in St. Miguel Teotongo, one of the poorest areas of Mexico City. They are serving a parish (Corpus Christi), 8 chapels, 1 Day Center for Elderly, the Blessed Louis Guanella Day Care Center for children, a Center offering various services (psychologist, dentist, pharmacy, eye doctor, general physician), and the "Domingo Frantellizzi" Center for mentally handicapped.

#### • 50 years at Perugia Montebello (Italy)

The *Centro Sereni in Perugia* completes 50 years of service on 20 th June. The institute, which has 64 differently abled adults as residents and 20 for day care centre, was born in 1949, thanks to the donation by the couple Sereni of Castle of S. Elena di Cerqueto, near Marsciano. It was a gesture that inaugurated thus the Guanellian presence in Umbria.

It was a Palace of family surrounded by woods with vast hectares of land. Initially, it had the name "Little Cottolengo". Already some years before, it was assigned to accept persons with psychic and physical disabilities, in majority sons of the farmers who worked in the propriety of Sereni. In fact, the collaboration had already begun on experimental basis in 1946.

The continuous increase in the applications to admit such persons lead to identifying after some years another institute more close to the city, in Montebello zone, where Mons. Pietro Parente blessed the foundation stone for the new house on 21 June, 1956. The persons who were difficult to be educated remained at S. Elena while others were transferred to Montebello.

The medium age of the residents is 45-50 years. "We have 5, 6 persons at the center who resided at S. Elena from the beginning of years '50", remarks don Beppe Frugis, councilor and director of works.

"The face of the Guanellian houses is deeply changed in fifty years. The structure, the use and the type of rehabilitation was modified, specializing in the diagnosis and care of the persons with severe cognitive disability".

Every educational and rehabilitative action, understood by don Guanella, as "work of everyday for all the days of life" is aimed at Casa Sereni, also according to the recent orientations of the neurosciences with regard to retaining and acquiring cognitive strategies that better the quality of life. For this, the center offers the following medical, nursing, psychological, social and rehabilitative services like physiotherapy, hydrokinetic therapy, logo therapy, cognitive rehabilitation, psycho theraphy, music and dance therapy.

Various initiatives for the future are in planning. Some of them are a historical scientific convention in collaboration with the University of Perugia and the performance of the show prepared for the 50th Anniversary by the workers and the boys of the centre. In the long run the rebuilding of S. Elena with the redistribution of the residents and the openings for women, solicited also by ASL, inday care center form and the consequent revision of the Educational Plan.

The celebrations foresee a Holy Mass of thanks giving on Saturday 20 June at  $17.30\,\mathrm{pm}$ . The main celebrant would be Mons. Giuseppe Chiaretti, Archbishop of Perugia and concelebrated by Superiors and confreres of Opera don Guanella. It will be followed by the address of the Authorities at 19.0 pm for which, the Mayor of Perugia has assured his presence. We have the Inauguration of the historical exposition with photos on the center and the display of works done by the residents in the handicraft workshop. In the evening, small refreshment for the participants and the show "We made it for 50 years".

#### 12. The art of accompanying at the end of life

Was the theme of the meeting promoted by the Pious Union of Transit that took place in Buenos Aires from 23 to 25 October. Some of the objectives of the meeting were: share and propose love and defend life from the birth to its natural ending; put in common the experiences and responsibilities in accompanying terminally sick persons both spiritually and humanly; work in network with different agencies who sustain the relatives of the sick during these moments.

That the idea was born by the similar experience promoted in Rome in January 2008. It was P. Jorge Dominguez, director of the Pious Union of Transit of St Joseph in Buenos Aires who "imported it" in Argentina. He organized it with the collaboration of the staff of the school where he is the Head Master.

It was directed to men and women religious, health workers, doctors, nurses, psychologists, psycho therapists, teachers, relatives of the sick and more than 500 persons participated in the meeting.

There were also teachers from the Guanellian schools, faithful from various parishes, Fr. Carlos Blanchoud, delegate of the General Council for Latin America, Fr. Sergio Rojas Franco, Provincial Superior, Fr. Jorge Domínguez Vicar Provincial and director of the Pious Union in Argentina, Fr. Gustavo De Bonis, Provincial Delegate for Argentina and Andrés Tello Corneo from the Commission for health Pastoral ministry of the Bishop Conference of Argentina.

The topics were: a comparison between the terminally sick and the passion of Jesus; how to speak about death and the difficult topics, history and mission of the Pious Union of Transit, death from the prospective of a public hospital, death at the service of life and dignity of the human being at the end of his existence.

Concluding Fr. Dominguez underlined that "it is a very delicate and actual theme and it is an occasion of service for us and an opportunity to mature together with the community and offer in this area a more authentic and true Christian witness. It is something different to provoke death and to allow it. The first attitude carries in it the negation of life and the second accepts its natural ending".

In the Guanellian charism, the Founder prophetically expressed it, precisely through the Pious Union of Transit, the love for life in its natural ending and implicit respect and care with which to accompany the meeting with its end; to live well and to die well.

During the group discussion the words truth, sincerity and accompanying were frequent. The power of the truth and its incredible power of liberation, accompanied by charity, for, death is not the end of life, but the meeting with its source; the end of every evil and the beginning of every good. It is saying like father Guanella "How sweet is to die in the Lord!".

#### 13. Finances

Regarding finances, our Congregation too is unfortunately caught up in the worldwide financial crisis. Today, the work of treasurers has become very challenging in trying to find a balance between income (more and more thinner) and the service to our poor that the PEG demands all the time well qualified. While the financial resources in Europe and North America are shortening, in Asia and Africa the Congregation experiences a growing number of confreres and facilities. Prudence demands from us all to be more thoughtful and cautious in dealing with financial issues, without losing our trust in Divine Providence as the Founder had taught us.

The general treasurer in these past years is working (helped by experts) on a Manual for Treasurer that takes into consideration the needs of the Congregation with those requested by the Law of each country. It is not an easy job. However, we give you here the final index of content.

#### CHAPTER I

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

- A. What kind of Administration.
- B. Requests for authorizations and Limits of competence.

#### CHAPTER II

## RECEPIENTS OF THE MANUAL: THOSE INVOLVED IN ADMINISTERING THE GOODS OF THE CONGREGATION

- A. The Religious and the Administration of goods.
- B. The Superior and his Council.
- C. The Treasurer.
- D. The religious Community in a parish setting.
- E. The lay coordinator of activities.
- F. Lay collaborators in the administrative field.
- G. The Legal Representative and his Procurators.
- H. Formation and technical preparation on the financial and administrative management of the Houses.

#### CHAPTER III

#### GOODS IN COMMUNION

- A. Distribution of financial resources: dues to the Congregation.
- B. Celebration of Holy Masses.
- C. Local Fund Raising (Pia Opera) and Pious Union of St. Joseph.
- D. Prayers for deceased confreres and relatives.
- E. Bequests and Donations.

#### CHAPTER IV

#### MANAGEMENT OF THE PATRIMONY

- A. Definition.
- B. Immovable Goods.

- C. Movable Goods.
- D. Insurance.
- E. Sources and Use.

## CHAPTER V THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

- A. Introduction.
- B. Subordinate Work.
- C. Other forms of collaboration.

#### CHAPTER VI

#### FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

- A. Financial and administrative management.
- B. Accounting.
- C. Budget.
- D. Criteria in preparing an estimate budget.

#### CHAPTER VII

#### BODY OF LEGISLATION AND ITS APPLICATION

- A. The Law.
- B. People involved.
- C. Obligations of the Houses.
- D. Reference points to Religious.

#### CHAPTER VIII

#### ARCHIVE AND DUTIES

- A. The financial and administrative archive.
- B. Financial and administrative Duties.

# DECREES

### 1. ALIENAZIONE DI IMMOBILI DEL PATRIMONIO STABILE DELLA CONGREGAZIONE

Prot. n. 12/02-09

Ai Rev.di Superiori di Provincia e Delegazione LORO SEDI

Ai Rev.di Economi di Provincia e Delegazione LORO SEDI

Il Superiore generale, nella sua facoltà di sospendere o modificare alcune norme dei Regolamenti (cfr. Reg. n. 284/2),

- viste le necessità della Congregazione,
- per assicurare un adeguato aiuto alle nostre Comunità in terra di missione,
- per appoggiare, sia pur con la dovuta prudenza, l'espansione della Congregazione in Nazioni di recente approdo della nostra Opera,

nell'intento di favorire la comunione dei beni, raccomandata dai nn. 144 e 145 delle Costituzioni e ribadita dal XVIII Capitolo generale al n. 53, avuto il voto positivo e unanime dei suoi consiglieri,

#### dispone

che dal 1º gennaio 2009, anche tutte le vendite di immobili che fanno parte del patrimonio stabile della Congregazione siano gravate dall'onere del versamento

- del 10% alla Curia generalizia e del 10% alla Curia provincializia, se il ricavato della vendita dell'immobile è destinato ad una Casa,
- del 20% alla Curia generalizia, se il ricavato della vendita dell'immobile è destinato alla Provincia.

Spetterà al prossimo Capitolo generale, come prescrivono i nostri Regolamenti, confermare o abrogare questa determinazione.

Con l'occasione porgiamo cordiali saluti.

P. Alfonso Crippa Superiore generale

Don Piero Lippoli Segretario generale

Roma, 7 febbraio 2009

## 2. ERECTION OF A NEW RELIGIOUS HOUSE AT THALAVADI (T.N. - India)

Prot. n. 34/05-09

To the Rev. Superior
Fr. Luigi De Giambattista
and his Council
Divine Providence Province
29, James Street
POONAMALLEE - CHENNAL

The Superior general, after some discussions about this new activity in different council meetings, after received your request to open new activity, at the 28th - 29th of April 2009 meeting, received the positive vote of his Councillors

#### **Erects**

as Religious House the Community of NAZARETH ILLAM, Guanella Nagar - Talavadi - 638461 - Erode DS. (Tamil Nadu) - Ootacamund Diocese.

The community is officially open on May 28<sup>th</sup>, with the blessing of the House by the Most Rev. Mons. A. Amalraj, Bishop of Ootacamund.

This new community for now is a RESIDENCE only, under the responsibility of the Provincial Superior.

Wishing that this new mission, according to the Charism of our Founder, be always a good witness of charity, enthusiasm and commitment to the poor, we assure our remembrance to the Lord and to Mary Mother of Divine Providence.

Fr. Alfonso Crippa Superior general

Fr. Piero Lippoli General Secretary

Bangalore, 26.05.2009, Anniversary of the Ordination of our Founder

#### 3. DIMISSIONE DALLA CONGREGAZIONE

Prot. n. 54/07-09

I, the undersigned, Fr. Alfonso Crippa, Superior general of the Congregation Servants of Charity - Opera Don Guanella, with the unanimous consent of my Counsellors, obtained at the meeting of the General Council, which took place on 06-08 July 2009, having observed all the required norms of canon 696, §1 and 699 of the CIC, of n. 236 of our Regulations, with this decree DISMISS

#### Fr. Bilanvindira Panneer Raja

Priest and member of the Divine Providence Province, from the Servants of Charity Congregation, *for formal disobedience*. On 07.02.2009, I sent him the letter "in virtute Sanctae Obedientiae" to live India and to come to Rome in the Generalate: no replay from him; after more than one month, on 21.03.2009, I sent him the first canonical warning: no replay; after once again more than one month, on 5.05. 2009 I sent him the second canonical warning: no replay.

So, from these situations and from the study of the documents it is clearly established that he, despite the warnings issued by the Superior general, *has not repented and continues in his sinful situation*.

I remind him finally that he has the right to have recourse to the Apostolic See, within 10 (ten) days of having received this decree, and that during the appeal the juridical power of the decree is suspended.

Fr. Alfonso Crippa Superior general

Fr. Piero Lippoli General Secretary

Rome, 11.07.2009

#### 4. CHIUSURA DELLA COMUNITÀ DI COYHAIQUE (Chile)

Prot. n. 56/07-09

Rev. Superiore provinciale P. Sergio Rojas e Consiglio Provincia Cruz del Sur BUENOS AIRES

e P. C. A S.E.R

Mons. Luis Infanti Della Mora
Vicariato di Aisen
COYHAIQUE

Il Superiore generale, avendo ricevuto richiesta formale da parte del Vs. Consiglio provinciale, confermata con lettera a firma del Segretario provinciale, P. Gustavo De Bonis, datata 18 luglio 2009, avendo avuto il voto positivo del suo Consiglio, delibera di chiudere la Comunità di Coyhaique.

Le strutture e i terreni, che nella divisione con il Vicariato risultano di proprietà dei Servi della Carità, permangono di proprietà della nostra Congregazione, anche se dati in comodato ai Cooperatori.

Onde venire incontro alle esigenze pastorali del Popolo di Dio e a conforto e accompagnamento delle altre due componenti della Famiglia Guanelliana (le Figlie di S. Maria della Provvidenza e i Cooperatori), P. FRANCESCO BELOTTI rimarrà in loco, con impegni pastorali, fin quando se la sentirà. Dipenderà religiosamente dal Padre Delegato per il Chile.

Il ringraziamento a tutti i confratelli, che per tanti anni hanno speso le loro migliori energie in questo campo di apostolato guanelliano, è avvalorato dalle

nostre fraterne preghiere, affinché il Signore li ricompensi con il premio dovuto ai suoi servi fedeli.

P. Alfonso Crippa Superiore generale

Don Piero Lippoli Segretario generale

Roma, 27 luglio 2009

## 5. EREZIONE GIURIDICA DI CASA RELIGIOSA A SKAWINA (Polonia)

Prot. n. 60/09-09

Al Rev.do Superiore provinciale Don Pino Venerito e Consiglio Via Aurelia Antica, 446 ROMA

Il Superiore generale, nella riunione di Consiglio dell'8-10 settembre 2009 letta lo Vs. cortese richiesta, datata 8 settembre 2009, prot. 100/09/09, di erigere giuridicamente una nuova Casa religiosa che ospiterà la Comunità religiosa, e un'opera per minori bisognosi, avuto il parere positivo del suo Consiglio,

#### decreta

l'erezione della nuova Casa religiosa, situata a 32-050 Skawina (Cracovia-Polonia), in Via Lesna, 5, con il titolo di «Maria Madre della Divina Provvidenza».

Per intanto la Casa funzionerà come Residenza, dipendente dal Superiore provinciale.

P. Alfonso Crippa Superiore generale

Don Piero Lippoli Segretario generale

Roma, 15 settembre 2009, Memoria di Maria SS. Addolorata

#### 6. EREZIONE DI CASA DI NOVIZIATO

Prot. n. 61/09-09

Al Rev.do Superiore provinciale Don Pino Venerito e Consiglio Via Aurelia Antica, 446 ROMA

Il Superiore generale, nella riunione di Consiglio dell'8-10 settembre 2009 letta la Vs. cortese richiesta, datata 8 settembre 2009, prot. 100/09-09, di erigere giuridicamente, anche se solo temporaneamente, una Sede di Noviziato, avuto il parere positivo del suo Consiglio, decreta l'erezione a Noviziato della Casa di Accoglienza Vocazionale e Pastorale "Beato Luigi Guanella, situata a 70124 - Bari, in Via Matteo Calvario, 1.

P. Alfonso Crippa Superiore generale

Don Piero Lippoli Segretario generale

Roma, 15 settembre 2009, Memoria di Maria SS. Addolorata

#### 7. APPOINTMENTS

#### • Prot. n. 3 del 17 gennaio 2009

- Pe. Flávio Demoliner, pároco da Paróquia Nossa Senhora de Nazaré no Rio de Janeiro - RJ
- Pe. Antônio Francisco de Melo Viana, pároco da Paróquia Santa Terezinha, em Sta Terezinha de Itaipu - PR
- Pe. Gelsi Fiorentin, pároco da Paróquia Nossa Senhora do Perpétuo Socorro em Piraguara - PR
- Pe. Amélio Parini, pároco da Paróquia São José do Patrocínio em Santa Maria - RS

- Pe. Antônio Francisco de Melo Viana, superior da Comunidade de Santa Terezinha de Itaipu - PR
- Pe. Odair Danieli, superior das duas residências (Água Boa Canarana) em Água Boa - MT
- Pe. Adelmo Luiz Maldaner, superior da Comunidade do Patronato Santo Antônio em Carazinho

#### • Prot. n. 4 del 17 gennaio 2009

- P. Agustín Urra Carvajal, Parroco della Parroquia Tránsito de San José, a Renca, Cile
- P. César E. Mendoza Otazú, superiore della Comunidad de Caaguazú, Paraguay

#### • Prot. n. 27 del 21 aprile 2009

- P. Valdemar Pereira, Consigliere provinciale della Provincia Santa Cruz

#### • Prot. n. 36 del 5 giugno 2009

- Don Giuseppe Minuzzo, superiore della Comunità di Nuova Olonio
- Don Davide Patuelli, superiore della Comunità di Gozzano-Cerano
- Don Bruno Capparoni, superiore della Comunità di Campodolcino-Gallivaggio
- Don Tonino Gridelli, superiore della Comunità di Caidate
- P. Kelechi Maduforo, superiore della Comunità di Abor
- P. Giancarlo Frigerio, superiore delle Comunità di Kinshasa
- P. Bernardin Mbaya, superiore della Comunità di Ibadan
- P. François Mpunga, padre maestro a Nnebukwu
- P. Kelechi Maduforo, consigliere/economo Delegazione "Nostra Signora della Speranza"
- Fratel Franco Lain, segretario della Delegazione "Nostra Signora della Speranza"

#### • Prot. n. 47 del 10 luglio 2009

P. Sepulveda, Amministratore Parrocchiale a Parrocchia del Transito Buenos Aires

#### • Prot. n. 51 del 10 luglio 2009

- Don Silvio Sperotto, 1º Consigliere nel Seminario Teologico di Roma

#### • Prot. n. 52 dell'11 luglio 2009

- P. Andres Garcia, superiore a Palencia
- P. Carlos Staper, superiore e parroco a Messico City

#### • Prot. n. 57 del 29 luglio 2009

- Don Umberto Brugnoni, assistente generale dei Cooperatori

#### • Prot. n. 58 dell'11 settembre 2009

- P. Andres Garcia, Legale Rappresentante in Spagna

#### • Prot. n. 62 del 15 settembre 2009

- Don Aldo Recco, Padre Maestro a Bari

#### • Prot. n. 75 del 2 novembre 2009

Don Remigio Oprandi, superiore ad interim della Casa di Gino

#### • Prot. n. 78 del 4 novembre 2009

Riconferma del Consiglio provinciale della Provincia Sacro Cuore

#### • Prot. n. 79 del 4 novembre 2009

- Don Gabriele Mortin, IV Consigliere provinciale

#### • Prot. n. 82 del 12 novembre 2009

– Don Nino Minetti, superiore della Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe

#### • Prot. n. 83 del 12 novembre 2009

Don Aldo Mosca, consigliere della Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe

#### • Prot. n. 84 del 12 novembre 2009

Don Matteo Rinaldi, consigliere della Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe

#### • Prot. n. 85 del 12 novembre 2009

– Don Nico Rutigliano, consigliere della Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe

#### • Prot. n. 86 del 12 novembre 2009

Don Fabrio Lorenzetti, consigliere della Provincia Romana S. Giuseppe

#### Prot. n. 93 dell'11 dicembre 2009

Conferma del Consiglio della Delegazione Nostra Signora della Speranza

#### • Prot. n. 95 del 12 dicembre 2009

- Don Flavio Demoliner, parroco a Piraquara (Brasile)
- Don Alcides Vergutz, parroco a Anchieta (Brasile)

#### Prot. n. 96 del 14 dicembre 2009

P. Sergio Rojas, superiore della Provincia Cruz del Sur

#### • Prot. n. 97 del 14 dicembre 2009

- P. Nelson Jerez, vicario e 1º consigliere della Provincia Cruz del Sur

#### Prot. n. 98 del 14 dicembre 2009

- P. Gustavo De Bonis, 2º consigliere della Provincia Cruz del Sur

#### • Prot. n. 99 del 14 dicembre 2009

- P. Eladio Adorno, 3º consigliere della Provincia Cruz del Sur

#### • Prot. n. 100 del 14 dicembre 2009

- P. Hernan Latin, 4° consigliere della Provincia Cruz del Sur

#### Prot. n. 106 del 22 dicembre 2009

Don Cosimo Schiavone, economo della Provincia Romana San Giuseppe

#### 8. CHANGE OF PROVINCE

#### • Prot. n. 2 del 14 gennaio 2009

 Don Giuseppe Giannini, dalla Provincia Cruz del Sur alla Provincia Sacro Cuore

#### Prot. n. 10 del 6 febbraio 2009

- Fr. B. Panneer, dalla Divine Providence Province alla Curia generalizia

#### • Prot. n. 14 del 21 febbraio 2009

 Don Abbondio Fumagalli, dalla Provincia Cruz del Sur alla Provincia Sacro Cuore

#### Prot. n. 33 del 26 maggio 2009

- Fr. Roosewelt, dalla Divine Providence Province alla Provincia S. Cuore

#### Prot. n. 92 dell'11 dicembre 2009

- Don Peppino Maffioli, dalla Provincia S. Cuore alla Curia generalizia

#### • Prot. n. 94 dell'11 dicembre 2009

 P. Edgar Morales, dalla Provincia N. S. di Guadalupe alla Provincia Cruz del Sur

## 9. LEAVINIG THE CONGREGATION - ESCLAUSTRATIONS - PERMISSIONS

#### PASSAGGIO AD ALTRE CONGREGAZIONI

- Prot. n. 30 del 26 aprile 2009
  - P. Victor Troncoso, alla Congregazione H.nos Francescanos di Spagna
- Prot. n. 41 del 16 giugno 2009
  - Bro. Fr. Arockiasamy Antony Samy, all'Opera Famiglia di Nazareth in Italia

#### ASSENZA CON PERMESSO

- Navarro Leon David (Cruz del Sur) il 1º gennaio 2009
- Protasoni Fr. Eugenio (Sacro Cuore) il 13 gennaio 2009
- P. Hugo Ramon Julian Balcazar (Cruz del Sur) il 10 luglio 2009
- Fuentes Gonzales Don Gabriel (Cruz del Sur) il 20 dicembre 2009

#### HANNO LASCIATO DEFINITIVAMENTE LA CONGREGAZIONE

- Gustavo Caceres Quintero Novizio (N.S. de Guadalupe) da Lujan il 14 febbraio 09
- Gayila Eleuthere Novizio (Delegazione N.S. della Spernza) il 1º aprile 2009
- Ortega Ramon Lorenzo Prof. temporaneo (Cruz del Sur) l'11 maggio 2009
- Pushpanathan Christhraj Novizio (Divine Providence Province) il 24 maggio 2009

- Moluanton Nenyimi Steve Prof. temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 19 giugno 2009
- Monsengo Beno Richard Prof. temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 1º luglio 2009
- Aguilar Sanchez Emmanuel Novizio (N.S. di Guadalupe) il 28 agosto 2009
- Fernandez Ruiz Diaz Ch. Alcides Ruben Novizio (Cruz del Sur) il 10 settembre 2009
- Vincent Arockia Prabu Novizio (Divine Providence Province) il 7 novembre 2009
- Iorwa Aondoaseer Joseph Prof. temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 7 ottobre 2009
- Kajo Tarnongu Christopher Prof. Temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 7 ottobre 2009
- Kalumba Ngadi Reagan Prof. Temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 7 ottobre 2009
- Lema Kiese Claver Prof. Temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 7 ottobre 2009
- Nzambisa Mandongo Thomas Prof. Temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 7 ottobre 2009
- Obidike Uzoma Paul Prof. temporaneo (Delegazione N.S. della Speranza) il 7 ottobre 2009

## L DOCUMENTS

#### Vocation and formation of the Christian Guanellian Lay Person

When taking into consideration the Christian lay faithful we have to face some inevitable questions:

- What is the vocation and mission of the Catholic laity?
- How they can be carried out in today society?
- What kind of dangers a layperson should avoid?
- Is there any description of the Guanellian laity?
- What does mean to be a member of the GLM?
- What kind of formation should they go through?

I have to be short in my exposition. Therefore, my answer does not pretend to be complete and I do not want to impose theories. My sole desire is to open a discussion leading to further study and development.

#### Vocation and mission of the Christian lay faithful

The Catholic Church deals with the vocation and mission of the lay faithful in a very constructive and positive way at the Vatican II, in the Dogmatic Constitution "Lumen Gentium" (21 November 1964), number 31. "By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will.

They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life, which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of

the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer".

The Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II "Christifideles Laici" (30 December 1988) follows, confirms and deepens what the Council said. Lay faithful reach their holiness not in spite of the world, but because of the world, being aware of their evangelical mission and eschatological destiny (not of this world). Family, job, social and political activity, hobbies...are places where Christian laity find their sanctification, where they are called – in a unique way – to bear witness to the risen Christ through their creativity, competence, self-giving, discernment, prudence, courage, kindness, joy and hope.

Even Benedict XVI in his encyclical "Deus Caritas Est", number 29 says: "The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. So they cannot relinquish their participation in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative, and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good. The mission of the lay faithful is therefore to configure social life correctly, respecting its legitimate autonomy and cooperating with other citizens according to their respective competences and fulfilling their own responsibility. Even if the specific expressions of ecclesial charity can never be confused with the activity of the State, it still remains true that charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as social charity".

#### Testimonies in the social context of the present day

The context of the present day is particularly problematic because of its rampant individualism, consumerism, secularism, scientism and relativism, all coming from Enlightenment.

A consequence is that the faithful laity has to deal with a renewed way of being present in the temporal reality if he wants to give his contribution to the building of the earthly city.

They should know how to spell out evangelization and human promotion. To be able to collaborate with men of good will in seeking the common good, are not enough generosity, competence, good will, dialogue, mediation, tolerance, solidarity and forgiveness (necessary characteristics but yet insufficient today).

We are living in a time when the evil uses new and subtle ways to allure people, when new editions of sin are not easily recognizable. They are attractive and apparently harmless, yet their consequences are devastating to people and communities.

We can even summarize them through slogans that are very attractive: free development of personality, individual and his needs, "carpe diem" (*enjoy your life*), infinite possibilities of science and technology, satisfaction of one's appetites and instincts, unrestricted demand for auto-determination, primacy of material and sexual gratification, seeking success, new age...

Solipsism (the theory that nothing exists or is real but the self = selfishness) and using people as tools to individual success are subtly and strongly imposing today. Instead of beauty, we see an explosion of solitude, depression, anxiety, anguish, anger, aggressiveness, destruction, ill feeling, and vengeance.

The post-modern man is increasingly bent on himself in a devastating centripetal force that builds barriers and closes valuable and meaningful relationships with others. People can become solely an obstacle on his path, something to manipulate, an annoyance to eliminate, a weight to let go.

Examples – often camouflaged under justifications of every kind – are tragic and under our own eyes: rejection, marginalization, violence, abortion, euthanasia.

Therefore, today faithful lay people "should give time and energy to mature in their faith, to possess better analysis skills, and to search for better criteria in interpreting temporal realities in order to elaborate intelligent answers to the problems facing society and daily life.

Those answers can derive only from Christian faith and should effectively discern good from evil. In this way, we can exercise charity without being exploited. Such mature attitude has to continue for our entire life, without being obsessed to reach a perfection that does not belong to our human condition. Yet, we should never surrender ourselves to difficulties.

The alluring and attractive suggestions of the world should not have the last word upon us".

We need also to broaden our view on the entire world, to see further than the end of our nose.

We need constant care to discern what is good and what is evil, a task that is not always easy to accomplish. Yet, it is necessary. Above all we need "to start again from an intellect open to the supernatural, from a search that involves both faith and reason, from the question of what is true and good (*today replaced by what is practicable, alas!*), according to a rationale that is different from the dominating one, a reason open to God".

#### Dangers for the faithful layperson

Several dangers or dangerous situations could affect a Christian and especially a faithful layperson:

- professing a faith and live a life where God does not have any room: practical atheism;
- making wrong compromises in the name of an alleged necessity for building at all costs bridges useful to communicate with others;
- allowing instinct to take over our life. Instincts are always taking over a person when that person is unable to take them under control through reason and faith. Even love, confused as charity, can justify evil;
- renouncing the use and formation of our intellect because of laziness, tranquility, convenience under the influence of the dominant culture and its vocal prophets;
- in bearing witness to charity, placing first our own material realization and in doing so sinking into careerism (it has nothing to do with a desire to offer to society our talents and skills);
  - sacrificing even our family to our own personal success;
- forgetting that we need to share and put into service towards those in need what we possess. Material goods should not be accumulated and enjoyed by ourselves or with a few chosen lucky ones;
- auto-justifying ourselves in order to avoid a possible admission of faults and abuses:
- camouflaging relational crisis with family or others; hiding educational inability and confusion under personal problems. These are often resolved to the expense of others, and the recourse to psychotherapies and medications and their connected damage.

This complex world cannot be dealt with by naïve people.

We need to be equipped with the necessary tools if we want to help others to be rational, wise, vigilant, and ready like sentinels in the night.

#### Guanellian Christian lay faithful

The Lay Guanellian faithful are Christian who endorse and live the charism of Blessed Louis Guanella, who share with the religious Guanellian their service to the least ones, who received a formation inspired to the Founder and who were formed to carried out the works of mercy according to the Guanellian spirit. They are called to become more and more disciples of Jesus in fullness through gradual experiences of charity.

They can have the opportunity to approach the Guanellian Institutes in different ways. They should know that they will be welcome into the family and be introduced into the Guanellian spirit and life.

They become part of the great family of Father Guanella and of its work; a work that is always dynamic, creative, ready to re-invent itself for a better service to the person in need; a work that shows concern and goes to look after the needy that are hidden and abandoned and do not have any voice whatsoever.

The Guanellian ministry addresses spiritual and material poverties, physical and psychological issues, existential and day-to-day difficulties. Its purpose is to serve the marginalized and the rejected, without prejudice and self interest, through precise interventions and being aware that the interventions it offers are for their formation, a formation that has teleological (teleology = the study of final causes) and metaphysical horizons.

Father Guanella reminds us that – though philanthropy is praiseworthy – we have to start from his maxim "Bread and Lord". He says, "Our taking care of the body should be a tool we use to enter into the soul of our poor. If our concern is only to the body, why bother? Public facilities offer more excellent cares than we do. We Servants of Charity instead should be able to conquer the hearts of our poor so that they can love the Lord, be good, and observe His commandments. Every role and activity in the House should be finalized to the sanctification of the members of the two Congregations and to the salvation of the residents".

This good answer truly promotes the whole person and is in conformity with the true expectations of a human being. It is also a present day answer – besides to physical and material difficulties – to existential hard-life, social insecurity, and mental fragility.

The Guanellian characteristic – being close to those in difficulty and helping them in their life-journey – rests on the fact that the help given to the poor is a way the Guanellians use to form and educate people, of all ages and classes. It is a pedagogical approach besides the services dealing with assistance and health care.

A pedagogical approach prepares and builds situations in which a person is truly welcome, totally understood and accepted, ready to embrace the potential that the person possesses in order to guarantee a good existence in society.

What kind of educational method and qualities a Guanellian layperson should display?

The main characteristics are: believing in the dignity of man and his educability; realistic optimism; simplicity and sensitivity; creativity; empathy and sharing; patience; balance and self-control; dedication and self-giving; joyful spirit of service; humility and being able to listen; and sense of (co) responsibility.

The Guanellian Lay Movement (GLM) favors communication, formation and communion among the many Guanellian lay groups. It respects the variety of their Guanellian gifts, their identity, autonomy and projects for a better mutual acquaintance. It strengthens the sense of belonging, and fosters the same Guanellian mission. It leads the individual – that by chance or by choice (but all the time providentially) had met the Guanellian ministry – to a full sharing of the charism and mission of Father Guanella, all the time respecting the situation and pace of each person. The GLM helps through adequate suggestions and activities having in mind the sanctification of the members.

#### Formation of the Guanellian lay faithful

We should make a distinction between formation and education.

Formation is molding a person in such a way that the person can willingly choose to incarnate a given suggestion.

Formation means proposing common activities directed toward a better knowledge of the life, thought and work of the Founder and of the major figures of Guanellian confreres. From that knowledge, we can adopt their teaching, their values, and ideals to be carried out in our life and plans.

Formation means also to study and discuss together the fundamental and official documents of the Guanellian Congregations that put into practice the mind and heart of the Founder.

I refer especially to "The Basic Document for the Guanellian Mission" (PEG) and With Faith, Love, and Competence. Profile of the Guanellian Staff. The GLM offers already both at a local or provincial level the School of the Charism.

The Sacred Heart Province, for instance, is holding now the second year of the second cycle of its three years course. There is a large and active presence of participants.

Formation includes also the preparation and the up-to-dating of the lay staff that work in the Guanellian Houses. That is carried out through courses offered by the singly Houses, Provinces or combined Provinces. Formation is offering courses for those who volunteer in the Houses, so that they may serve for the right reason (the spirit and charism of Fr. Guanella) and not only for mere philanthropy.

Education is the process of training and developing the knowledge received. Education deals with how to live our life according to the Guanellian style. The first educators or trainers are the Guanellian Religious, followed by the Guanellian lay people, through their example and welcoming attitude. The preventive system reminds, "It is that method of charity, custom and convenience,

through which superiors surround their dependents with paternal care, whilebrothers and sisters surround each other with concern, so that in each day's work no evil of any sort should come to anyone, and in the path of life all may achieve a happy goal" (PEG 10).

We form the lay staff through efficient and effective activities that favor the acquirement of charitable habits. It is necessary "to improve synergies (working together in a combined or cooperative action) through working as a team, a work well structured and organized through clear roles, functioning connections, constant (daily) communication, frequent meetings that will help to carry out properly our mission".

In this way, we may help persons in difficulty (disabled, minors, elderly...) that the Guanellian Houses are serving and put into practice the particular climate of benevolence so dear to Father Guanella. He said, "The benevolence proper to a family is the true system of prevention. The heart needs it as the body needs food. It is a natural and supernatural attitude that consists in showing the affection of a good heart that wants to help the suffering brothers and sisters for the love of God".

We want to promote the permanent formation of the Guanellian lay faithful within and without the Guanellian world, 24 hours a day, and 365 days a year.

Dr. VITTORE MARIANI
President of the Italian GLM

## 2. Letter of introduction to the GLM Document: "Making Charity the Heart of the World"

It is with great joy and gratitude to the Lord that we offer to the Guanellian Family this Document on the Guanellian Lay Movement (GLM). We firmly believe that lay people are a gift of God's mercy to us, a mercy that makes more fruitful and valid our mission of charity.

The Document is the result of a long journey of study and reflection shared by the Congregations of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence and the Servants of Charity, the Guanellian Cooperators and the National Council of the Italian GLM.

We cordially thank all those who have given their contribution in preparing this Document, which is the final stage of a journey that has begun in 2001 at the first National Convention of the Italian Guanellian Lay Groups held in Rome, Italy.

The Document is the expression of the manifold experience of active collaboration and communion undergone during the past eight years of the Movement's history. It was enriched also by the contribution of new cultures and new ecclesial sensitivities.

After a long period of reflection and consultation, time has come for us to express jointly our position on the presence of the Guanellian lay world, in fidelity to the Founder and to the Church, in which we feel members through our specific charism.

The Proposals approved by our two General Chapters request "to take into consideration the constitution of the Guanellian Lay Movement... with the purpose of encouraging the sharing of the Guanellian charism and communication among groups" (17 GC, SdC, proposals 55-56). Additionally, "to carefully follow the development of the Guanellian Lay Movement" (16 GC, DSMP), through this Document, we confirm the common commitment to promote the Guanellian Lay Movement for a better coordination of the many expressions of lay collaboration and for a better sharing of Guanellian spirituality and mission.

We believe that all together – religious and laity – we will be able to promote much more fruitfully the riches of our charism by offering to Church and world a witness of communion and fraternity and by joyfully showing in truth the Face of God, who is a Father, calling everyone to be members of his family.

It is our wish that this Document may strengthen the identity of each vocation, and may urge the different groups belonging to the GLM to be open to each other and be co-responsible. May esteem and trust be mutual and always animate our relationship, so that all may enjoy the beauty, the warmth, and the strength of the "bond of charity".

In particular, we would like to encourage the Guanellian Cooperators to be faithful interpreters and witnesses of the Guanellian spirit in their lay vocation, so that the GLM may gain solidity and may "infect" and invite more men and women of good will to be bearers of love in the world.

Mary, Mother of Divine Providence, Blesseds Luigi Guanella and Clare Bosatta, the many "saints" of the Guanellian Family may intercede and accompany us in our journey of fidelity, holiness and commitment to "make Charity the heart of the world".

Together with our General Councils, we would like to reach each one of you by our affection and prayer.

Superior General DSMP
Sr. Giustina Valicenti

Superior General Sdc Fr. Alfonso Crippa

Rome, 12 November 2009, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of Divine Providence

#### 3. The future is called communion, fraternity

In the context of community life, it means right relationships between authority and obedience, superiors and confreres (Meditation at the VI General Consultation of the servants of Charity, Rome, 11 January 2010).

#### Scripture Reading

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life, for the life was made visible. We have seen it, testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us. For our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:1-3).

"... I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me" (Jn 17:20-23).

#### **Church Documents:**

PC Perfectae Caritatis (Vatican II, 1965)

**SAFC** Starting Afresh From Christ (2002)

FLC Fraternal Life in Community (1994)

**SAO** The Service of Authority and Obedience (2008)

MR Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious (1978)

CCL Code of Canon Law (1983) VC Vita Consecrata (1996)

#### 1) In the beginning was communion

In the beginning was communion. It is still now and it will be until the end of time (PC 15), because communion is the center of Christian revelation, the center of our faith and our Christian life (SAFC 28-32; FLC 8-10; VC 41-71; SAO 18-22). Our life as religious is a form of living that mystery of communion

expressed in fraternal life. Several surveys highlight that the most troubled aspect of religious life today is not celibacy (celibacy is all the time in trouble, anyway!) but fraternity, the hardships of living together. Young people, for instance, join religious life expecting – at least there – to find in it a truly fraternal life. It is not rare to find them deeply disappointed in what they encounter, and some of them leave religious life because of that.

Many religious (adult and old) are still going on but almost resigned to live community life below the level of expectations so dreamed during their novitiate or first years of profession. There is a lot of talking today about religious life, its crisis, and its future. Religious life will deserve a future and will have a future only when it bears true witness of communion, and evangelical fraternity, to a world immersed in individualism yet so thirsty of true humanity, that is, fraternity.

#### Very wisely, SAO 22 says:

"It is necessary to recall that the time dedicated to improving the quality of community life is not time wasted, because 'all the fruitfulness of religious life depends on the quality of community life' (FLC 54). The tension of making real fraternal community is not only preparation for the mission but also an integral part of it, from the moment that fraternal communion, as such, is already an apostolate".

Communion in fraternal life is a vast topic that cannot be covered in few pages. In the past, we have spent a lot of time talking and meditating on it. Today, I would like to say a word on an aspect that influence communion: relationships among confreres, relationships between community and superior, or as we have said for centuries, relationships between superiors and subjects. They are not the right words, because the only Superior is God, and the only Father (Mt 23:8-12) is God. In a religious community, all are brothers. Curiously, Perfectae Caritatis (14c) when talking about community never uses "subjects" but "brothers," sons of God (SAO 14b).

When in my exposition I am talking about the superior, I am referring to the local superior. I believe that what I say can be apply in part to the general and provincial superiors too.

#### 2) Communion: reason for existence of the service of authority and obedience

What do we find at the roots (origin) of a religious community? A life experience of *sequela Christi*, following Christ, done in communion of charism, life and mission. In other words, a charismatic-human-apostolic fraternity, a *convocation*. FLC explains very well this idea:

"There is a convergence of 'yeses' to God which unites a number of religious into one single community of life. Consecrated together – united in the same 'yes', united in the Spirit – religious discover every day that their following of Christ, obedient, poor, and chaste, is lived in fraternity, as was the case with the disciples who followed Jesus in his ministry. They are united with Christ, and therefore called to be united among themselves. They are united in the mission to oppose prophetically the idolatry of power, possession, and pleasure. Thus, obedience binds together the various wills and unites them in one single fraternal community, endowed with a specific mission to be accomplished within the Church. Obedience is a 'yes' to God's design, by which he has entrusted a particular task to a group of people. It brings with it a bond to the mission, but also to the community, which must carry out its service here, now, and together. It also requires a clear-sighted vision of faith regarding the superiors who fulfill their duty of service and leadership and who are to see that there is conformity between apostolic work and the mission. It is in communion with them that the divine will – the only will which can save – must be fulfilled" (FLC 44bcd).

In the documents there is a constant referring to God's will to which all – superiors and confreres – are subjected (PC 14; SAO 4-12). Vita Consecrata 42 states:

"In community life it should in some way be evident that, more than an instrument for carrying out a specific mission, fraternal communion is a God enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the Risen Lord (Mt 18:20). This comes about through the mutual love of all the members of the community, a love nourished by the word and the Eucharist, purified in the Sacrament of reconciliation, and sustained by prayer for unity, the special gift of the Spirit to those who obediently listen to the Gospel".

Thus, at the roots (origin) of a religious community there is God and the *con-vocation* of some faithful, a call to a most intimate, visible and continuous fraternal communion among them. Living together with other disciples of Christ according to a charism – the one inspired by God to the Founder – that incarnates and interprets the life of Christian communion, emphasizing especially some of its aspects.

From that communion (in Greek 'koinonia') a twofold service (diakonia) comes forth: 1) within the group, the common searching of God's will and fraternal life; 2) outside the group, the particular apostolic mission (FLC 46, 58; VC 46, 72). The particular mission, in its turn, underlines how we carry out our fraternal relationship, our celibacy, poverty, and prayer life... (FLC 43, 46).

Everything is carried out within a relationship of authority-obedience among the members of the community as manifestation of everyone's obedience to God. He is the Only One who deserves to be obeyed and who can demand to be obeyed: "All obey, each with various tasks" (SAO 18b). Consequently, authority and obedience in community life should become two complementary aspects of a process of obedience and of service to God's will. The relationship authorityobedience in a community is therefore a relationship of mutual "diakonia" or "mediation". They are forming the frame of mind toward obedience that is the characteristic of all those called by God to find and carry out what is pleasing to God.

Both authority and obedience are to be understood as a service that favors communion. Some religious serve by exercising command and obeying, while others participate in discerning God's will and obeying. Each is God's presence to the other: the confrere exercising authority regarding the other confreres, the confreres regarding the one who carries out the service of presiding the community; and finally among the confreres themselves, "the brothers and sisters become sacraments of Jesus and of the encounter with God" (SAO 19c).

In short, the answer of each religious to God's call (con-vocation) creates communion, and communion leads to mutual acceptance and service. We have trusted God and his call. We have believed in Him. This same faith should bring us to trust the confreres that the Lord puts at our side. Behind and through their human and spiritual qualities and limits (VC 92; SAO 26-28) there is always God's presence, a presence we may see in full light or in a foggy way. Obedience from all confreres is more a matter of trust rather than submission. It is seeking the face of the Father through an open acceptance of the confreres, an acceptance that is filled with hope. In the evangelical obedience faith, trust, hope and love – at a human and supernatural level – come into play.

Our vow of obedience, rather than being solely a renunciation of our own will (though it is needed, VC 16a; 38b; 87a) is an opening into new horizons where the confreres that God gives us become a major factor. Our mind and heart should include the confreres in such a way that they are now shaping our own human spiritual way of thinking and acting. We are not going to renounce the ability of thinking, seeking, judging, and deciding. It would be inhuman! Intelligence is God's gift for our own good and others, a gift to share.

It is true that we renounce. However, we renounce to do all that by ourselves. It is renouncing solitude in order to be in communion and fraternity. Once again, we find here the nucleus of Christian life ( $1 \ Jn \ 1:1-3$ ). Authorityobedience within a community becomes a constant opposition between "I-You" and "We" (FLC 39-42). Each confrere has to feel "We". Until we do not reach this goal, we did not "enter" into true community and we are not yet part of it. Once we are truly part of the community, we offer to our brothers our freedom and autonomy for their own benefit and the benefit of the mission. Fraternal life

becomes an "obeying to each other"; not a mere obedience toward a group of people (those in authority), but also toward those like us, subjects. It should be echoing the Pauline "be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21). I do not think that we have to reduce obedience to something discretional or optional, bound to the personality of those in authority ("If I like them or not", "If we are on the same tune or not", "If they are my type or not"). Obedience is not shrewdness from those who know how to cheat superiors in favor of their own way of life. Neither should we take obedience as just mere convenience.

The Lord calls us to live the mystery of Christ in communion of life. Because of our religious vocation – gift of the Holy Spirit – we renounce to live alone in order to follow and obey the Lord in a community, in a group of confreres given us by Him. Certainly, it will limit our personal autonomy. However, it is also a human and spiritual enrichment and a visible prophetic testimony of evangelical communion. From now on, because of God's will, each religious has to rely on his confreres. Divine will does not reach us through solitude, but through communion, reciprocity, dialogue, solidarity, that is, "fraternity".

Therefore, it is wrong to talk of "mutilation" or frustration when I renounce my ideas in order to embrace the one proposed by my brothers in community. Rather, my renunciation is the consequence of our communal seeking and discerning and living God's will. It is His will the true purpose of our life as believers – because He had called us to form a fraternity founded on the Gospel. As God's will reaches the Christian couple through the demands of family life, so God's will reaches Religious through community life in fraternity. God is reached through mediations (SAO 9), especially through the mediation of our brothers. It is the evangelical principle of the Incarnation (*Mt* 25:31-46; *1 Jn* 4:20-21). The "others" (confreres or neighbor) are not a restraint or an annoyance in my journey to God (the philosopher Sartre would call them "Hell"), but a tool that the Father gives me to walk toward Him. A confrere becomes part of my life, and my life part of his. We belong to each other. We walk to the Father together. Therefore, every one of us should say, "I am we!" (FLC 39-42; VC 91-92).

Finally, the religious obedience of all the religious is not a mere sociological or organizational factor in view of a mere efficiency in apostolic activities. It is not even an ascetical or juridical one. However, it is a powerful spiritual aspect and a privileged example of fraternity born from the Gospel. We are not going to downplay religious poverty by reducing it to a lack of money, though even money is involved because it is part of our daily life. I do not give to the Lord and community my wallet; I am giving them ME! I do not share with them my income, but my life! At the same time, we do not reduce obedience to asceticism or Canon Law, though it requests some norms and a good amount of asceticism. Obedience is above all a fundamental theological ingredient of the life of every Christian.

# 3) The service of those who are presiding over a fraternity

Now, let us give a look of the specific role, mission, ministry, service of the confreres that are chosen to preside over a fraternity.

In order to protect, to foster and to stimulate cohesion and fidelity to their vocation, a fraternity chooses among the confreres one of them to take care of them; one that should be a mediator between fraternity and individuals, between the local community and the Institute (Province, General House), between the community and the Church/Society. It is true that communion and seeking God's will is a work involving all confreres and not only a few of them. However, the community asks the superior to dedicate his time and energy to take its care. A superior is par excellence the servant of communion and search of God's will (a deacon of the koinonia). The document,

"The service of authority and obedience," says, "In the community all are called to seek what is pleasing to the Lord and to obey Him. However some are called, usually temporarily, to exercise the particular task of being the sign of unity and the guide in the common search both personal and communitarian of carrying out the will of God. This is the service of authority" (SAO 1c; see also FLC 47-53).

Authority can be described also as the "servant of the servants of God," and its primary duty is

"building in unity the brothers and sisters of a fraternal community in which God is sought and loved above all. A superior must therefore be, above all, a spiritual person [...]. His main task will be the spiritual, community, and apostolic animation of his or her community" (FLC 50a; cf. SAO 12, 13a, 14, 17b).

It should be important for a superior not only to exercise *authority* (juridical task), but also to show his being *authoritative* (moral task). Let us repeat it once again – communion is a work involving every member of a community, and not a burden to discharge on the shoulders, sometimes fragile, of a confrere. Therefore, the new name of obedience is "collaboration", "co-responsibility" (FLC 71a), washing each other feet. When Jesus at the Last Supper said good-bye to his disciples, he did not leave back a notarized document. He did not put on priestly vestments, but an apron, a towel and washed their feet (*Jn* 13:1-17; VC 75; SAO 12b, 17b, 21). According to the Master and Lord (*Jn* 23:11), to be in authority in the Church (and in Religious Life) does not mean to take a step up, but a step down, to be at the feet of others. Superiors are not to become chieftains of clans or villages, masters of communities, parishes, nor facilities..., but to be the "servant of the servants of God"; not to be served, but to serve (*Mt* 20:27-28; 23:11). To do otherwise is like to "copy" what leaders of nations are doing. "*But it shall not be so* 

among you" (Mt 20:26). The true "greatness" of those who serve their brothers is to be images of the Son of Man that washes the feet of his disciples. Being or acting otherwise means that we did not understand properly the Gospel. Rather, we are betraying it; we believe in some other god, but not the God of Jesus Christ! A superior is called to be "pontiff" not because he is above all others or speaks "ex cathedra," but because is a "builder of bridges" (pontes facere = to build bridges) among the members of the community (Province or Congregation), Church and society.

It is because of that that a superior is required (in similar way but not confused with or equated to the task of a bishop) to be a master of spirit, a prophet, an instrument of sanctification and government, a confrere that accompanies other confreres (MR 13, 14c, 26-27; CCL 619; FLC 50; VC 43, 93). In one way is a brother among brothers; on the other he represents and serves what God, Church, society expect from the community. He 'represents' God, not because he is infallible and perfect in his human decisions (his limits are openly recognized by the Magisterium: VC 92b; SAO 10a, 11, 13d, 18a, 21c, 25a, 30a). However, because he tries his best to accompany his confreres in seeking and fulfilling God's will within the limits of his jurisdiction and using the tools (Word of God, Rule, Constitutions, Decisions of Chapters, signs of the time...) that the Church has judged legitimate. He acts therefore as an "intermediate" mediator. At the end, what happens is that all of us – as we have said before – trust in God, who is the one who acts through the fraternity to which He had called us to belong. Because of that trust, we trust also in our brothers and in those who preside over us in our journey toward Him. In short, a community is not serving a superior, but Christ, God, whom we individually or in a community try to serve. Among his brothers, a superior is called to be memory, leaven, stimulus, encouragement (SAFC 14). He substitutes the conscience of no one, but he makes responsible his confreres. He listens to; he serves; he stimulates, he enriches his confreres; he does not constrain anyone; he is not paternalistic (SAO 14b) because that kind of behavior would lead to a childish attitude (SAO 20b, 25a). In brief, superior and community do not exist as two separate or, worse, opposite entities as they are two opposing armies, each one carrying their drawn swords. Likewise, a superior does not exist without a community (like being a senator for life) or a community for a superior. However, all are at the service of each other and, together, at the service of God.

# 4) The right relationship between superior and confreres in favor of the community

I would like to offer some general criteria useful to both those who are called to the service of authority and those of obedience.

The confrere called to serve his fraternity:

- 1) Should often meditate what SAO 13, 20, 25, states.
- 2) Should not be afraid to accept that service; he should be aware that he will carry out his service better than some others, worse than a few others, and more or less like many others.
- 3) Should use the expressions: I have to do; others have to do; I have to let others to do (Card. A.M. Larraona).
- 4) Should observe everything; dissimulate many things; correct some others (Blessed Pope John XXIII).
- 5) Should remember that those in authority need three things: a cup of knowledge, a barrel of prudence, an ocean of patience (M.T. Cicero).
- 6) Should not be ashamed to recognize his limits. Everyone knows to have limits, anyway! Therefore, he should not dramatize possible mistakes that could happen in his position. He should drink every now and then "a glass of humor." He should not take himself too seriously, not to expect to make everyone happy, not to resolve all problems. There is only One God and He is enough! A superior should avoid a paternalistic attitude (SAO 14b), remembering that everyone is an adult and until proved to the contrary sufficiently mature. He should inform the confreres that his opinions and decisions could be at time debatable, or proved wrong later on, yet never done with evil intention but in good faith. He has to do say that to them.
- 7) He should personally care of every single confrere, especially the sick, the aged, and the un-educated ones. All confreres should be in his daily prayer. He can find thus in his service an inexhaustible source for prayer and humility. Humility does not mean compliance or cowardice before one or more confreres (in community, Province, Institute). Humility is simplicity of heart and peace of heart. In this way, he will add to his authority the necessary authoritativeness and will remind all that the true "master" of the community is not the superior but the Lord.

Now, how should the individual confrere express obedience and how should he give a hand in increasing communion/fraternity?

- 1) The obedience of the so-called "subject" should be an adult and mature one and founded on faith. It should not be individualistic, self-centered, childish, passive, worldly, or done only when asked for, or when he likes to (SAO 20b, 25a). Religious obedience should be always "reasonable" (it excludes absurdity), but it cannot be always "rational" (it would exclude the final say of faith).
- 2) He has Christ (the will of the Father), the free man (SAO 15) as his point of reference.
- 3) He is the expression of the fraternity of the Congregation. He should be aware that he is a "We"; that his "I am" does not exist without the presence of the other confreres, even when they are not around (FLC 39-42).

4) He look at his superior not as a rival, someone who is imposing limits, but as a confrere to whom he should show gratitude for his service, whom he should pray for and help in discerning God's will and carry out what was legitimately decided in total responsibility and collaboration (SAO 19b).

## 5) "Decalogue" of community relationship in favor of communion

From what I have said until now, it is possible now to offer a kind of "Decalogue" of the community relationship so that fraternity may be a visible sign of evangelical communion.

# 1) Possible attitude of "prejudice" between Superior and Community once a superior is appointed

A *superior*, once appointed, should try his best to know the history and mission of the community entrusted to him and identify himself to it. "*Incarnation*" into a new community does not mean to approve what happened before but to accept it as part of the community history. It is the only way to feel the community as his community, to care for it, and truly to give himself to the confreres. He will avoid the risk to be perceived as an "alien", a "foreigner". The superior, at the other hand, who is unable to accept his new community and even to love it in its good qualities and defects, very unlikely will inspire trust, and will communicate the encouragement to communion that his role requests.

He should be smart enough to identify himself with the whole community, not only with a part of it. He should be careful (especially at the beginning) not to be "captured" by partiality, by a group of confreres. He is at the service of all and each one, and not of a number of them. If sometimes he believes that it is right to support a group of confreres rather than another (causing their irritation), he should accept it as a penance, a cross. He could even consider it a consequence for his wrong way of governing, a way that had divided the community, and a way that he was previously unable to heal and to bring back to communion. In some communities, there are in existence some "illegitimate superiors". They are confreres who, usually, are occupying secondary roles in the community, but 'de facto' are imposing their law, their will, and neutralizing the role of the new superior. In this delicate case, the newly appointed superior should block the "illegitimate" right away with kindness, respect and decision. For instance, in the first community meetings he should expressly ask all confreres to present openly their opinion even when someone wants to talk on behalf of others.

The *community*, in its turn, as a sign of its human and spiritual maturity, should give its vote of confidence, and should welcome to the new superior.

Confreres should definitely avoid putting him in their black list, a move that will hinder his good will. They should totally avoid gossiping among themselves and spreading gossips around before and after his arrival in the community. John 1:46 could be a good reminder: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" It should be a true act of respect and love toward this confrere who was appointed to be at their service. He did not look after that position. It is a way that would show the desire of the confreres to give him a hand in a role that not always is easy, and most of the time not joyfully accepted.

### 2) The first meeting

The *superior*, as a member of the local community, should not introduce himself as the one that knows it all and has already at hand a new plan to be applied to the community ("Now, I will show you...!"). The first reaction to a plan done 'a priori' and not discussed together will be certainly negative. Each community is different from another, like each one of us as individuals. There are no pre fabricated systems that could be equally applied to all communities. If the superior has to plan the future together with his confreres, it is logical that he should meet them disarmed, even if he is well disposed toward them and having good ideas to present them for discernment. He should remember that he is dealing with adults, persons - until proved to the contrary – sufficiently mature.

The *community* should not judge the new superior according to what the previous one had done, nor according to what they have heard about him when he was a member of other communities. Neither a community should force him to follow what has been done under previous superiors ("Here business was done in this way...!"). Let him bring in some fresh air that could enrich and help the community both in a human and spiritual way! Therefore, a community should display toward him a fraternal, fair, friendly attitude of benevolence. Let the community have a positive approach.

### 3) Humanity and spirituality

The *superior* should show his humanity and spirituality. He should be simple, merciful, understanding. He should value all positive signs and serve in joy ("God loves a cheerful giver", 2 Cor 9:1), without being a burden to his confreres ("You have chosen me. Now you will regret it!"). Those who don't have a sense of humor and don't laugh at themselves, don't like to talk because they fear losing authority, have a short temper, or talks only about "serious" or "spiritual" matters, should not be a superior in a community, especially one made up by young confreres. Human beings need variety especially (and not only) in their young age. Often a friendly joke or a laugh is the best preparation before entering into serious matters.

Laughing is a sign of freedom. Those who do not laugh are slaves of their image. Sense of humor is sign of human maturity ("Those who don't laugh, are not serious persons!" Schumann said). There is a time for everything under the sun (Eccl. 3:1-7).

An ineffectual superior should be neither in charge, or one that is afraid or restrains himself to exhort his confreres in their spiritual life ("They are adult enough to know what they are supposed to do"!). Because he has to deal with a Religious Community, he has to show great concern and care about their spiritual life, especially regarding community prayer (VC 93-95; FLC 12-20; SAFC 20-26; SAO 13ab). A community that does not pray together does not make any sense; it destroys its reason of being in existence, existence that is built on a faith lived together. To belong to an Institute of community life, it is not enough showing a certain amount of personal prayer. It is needed also the community one. The Holy Spirit called them to a visible community, not to be hermits inside a common building. Therefore, the community that normally does not know how to pray together or cannot pray together should be disbanded. The individual religious that normally does not pray with his confreres either he would change his attitude or leave the community, because his behavior says that he is not cut for that kind of religious life. We are not a business, a company more or less apostolic, but we are above all a community of faith. Regarding how much we should pray, how to pray and what to pray, each Institute should find out according to his spirit and style (FLC 12-20, 46).

The *community* should respect the role of the superior, going beyond the friendly joke on his possible limitations (VC 92b). Confreres should possess enough humility and spirit of faith to let the superior exhort them in their human and spiritual life. When necessary, they should learn to value what is said to them, in spite of whom has spoken or how it has been spoken ("Do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice," ( $Mt \, 23:3$ ).

## 4) The superior and his way of being

The *superior* should not oppress his community through his character and temper. The choleric, the stubborn or the aggressive one is prone to do everything himself and does not listen to anyone. He may force others to do what he wants, believing that through fear he brings his confreres to religious obedience. At the most, he may frighten those who are timid or weak, while earning the distrust and antipathy of the other confreres, except those who are in tune with him. A melancholic person listens too much because he is unable to take a decision. A sanguine type accepts too easily everything that is new because he is inconstant. And so on. A superior has to be able to listen to and to decide (VC 43). A superior, that in simplicity and honesty admits his own defects and limitations, is open to criticism and creates around him a climate of freedom and responsibility.

The authoritativeness of those serving in authority comes not from either shouting at or consenting everything, but from listening to, from creating communion, from addressing things clearly and in truth, from being merciful, from being humble and patient servants, from being credible and coherent witnesses, and from having a minimum of those qualities needed for governing. Authoritativeness does not come because a superior is an extraordinary and capable man of governance (there are very few around, anyway!).

As we have mentioned before, a superior should be aware that he probably would carry out his role better than others would, worse than others, and more or less like many others. He should not expect, then, to please every confrere or to succeed in everything and right away. He should not fall into depression if that would happen to him (not even Our Lord was spared that humiliation!). He should not promise what he cannot do. He should be aware that, what he does and will do, can also be questioned and maybe be humanly wrong at time, though not done with bad intention. He should keep his good will and the desire to learn. He should apply the words of Pope Benedict XVI:

"In all humility we will do what we can, and in all humility we will entrust the rest to the Lord. God governs the world, not we. We offer him our service only to the extent that we can, and for as long as he grants us the strength. To do all we can with what strength we have, however, is the task which keeps the good servant of Jesus Christ always at work" (*God is Love*, 35).

The *community* should be conscious that its superior has to have his own character and temper. It implies that confreres have to accept his good qualities and defects as well. We may even say that a superior has the "right" to be imperfect, because no one on earth is perfect. There is not in existence yet the perfect ideal community (FLC 26-28). Confreres should not be upset or surprised. They should not be afraid, in a fraternal dialogue (FLC 29-34), to help the superior to get rid of his defects, and to go beyond his particular way of being. A community should not be dragged by the exasperating pace of a member that is demanding too much from the majority of the community. At the same time, a community should not be dragged either by the passivity of a superior who is too often absent from the House or who has a poor personality. We should never forget that the community is responsible of all its members. A community is not functioning because its superior is less gifted, but because not everything depends from him.

# 5) The atmosphere that should be created among all: discretion and serenity, prudence and wisdom

The *superior* should strive to keep himself *serene* and *fair*. There will be in the community moments of tension, intolerance and humanly immature positions.

As much as possible, he should keep himself above parts. For that reason, he needs equilibrium and serenity, prudence and wisdom. He needs *serenity*, because in a society like ours, where all of us are terribly on the verge of being a bundle of nerves, we need persons that can manage things without being affected by intellectual and affective prejudices. He needs *discretion*; he needs to keep silence on many situations too personal to be necessarily shared with the confreres. Confreres have the right to their private life, reserve, and good reputation. Trust, friendship, fraternity, and communion do not mean to disclose everything to the public (confreres and world). We cannot demand trust 'a priori'. We have to deserve it. Unfortunately, not everyone inspires trust or deserves the same trust, not even within a religious community. Being reserved is then the first important resource. That does not mean either that a superior should be mute all the time. It means that he should be able to keep necessary secrets.

That supposes a certain amount of solitude in those in authority (SAO 28c). The more authority one holds, the more he will experience solitude. More secrets a person receives, more silent and reserved he should be. He should learn to disclose what he could disclose, and be silent on what he cannot disclose. He should keep a certain interior distance regarding what is going on around him, for his own sake and for the sake of others. We need our superiors to be serene. For that reason, they need rest, mental hygiene. Otherwise, situations could overwhelm them rather than vice-versa. Being right in the eye of a cyclone of interpersonal tensions, at time a superior will find difficult to keep the necessary peace of mind. Perhaps, he was a religious who was chosen to be a superior because of his harmonious equilibrium, when he was a subject. Once appointed, however, that equilibrium breaks down because of his election. Maybe, we marvel at this. In reality, we have not fully known that confrere. Therefore, it is not a dogma of faith that any confrere, more or less balanced and wise, would be necessarily an adequate superior. We would know if he is a good superior only by experience. St. Bernard wrote to Pope Eugene III, one of his monks:

"I do not ask you to abandon what you are doing, but only to interrupt them (...). Because everyone tries to take advantage of something, you too should take advantage of something useful to you. Why should you be the only one on earth to be deprived of that opportunity? Remember, then, that you owe something to yourself. I do not say all the time, nor even often, but at least occasionally. "Am I asking you too much?" (F. Charbonneau, I 60 anni, Leumann 2005, 5).

The *community*, in its turn, should keep its *serenity* in front of possible fuming of its superior. Confreres should be discrete by not going around telling everyone what is happening within the community, superior included. They should not demand, because we are a family and living in a democracy, that the superior discloses what he knows about people and their problems when prudence and charity are advising him to the contrary. Confreres should not demand that a

superior may be a humanly and spiritually aseptic or a piece of wood, when even Jesus had his own friends (Jn 15: 12-17; 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7.20; Mt 17:1-8; Lk 10:38-42; Jn 11:1-44;...).

## 6) Authority should be helped, because it is not "upon," but "for," "in favor of"

A *superior* should remember that he is a brother among brothers; that his authority is a service in favor of his confreres. He does not exercise authority "upon" them but "for" them, not above them, but for their benefit. He does not rule "over" them but "for" them, to 'profit' them. It means that a superior has to intervene when opportunity, prudence and necessity require, and not simply because they should remember that there is someone in command. It means that his authority is at the service of real people, not at norms, rules or schedule. A superior is not chosen to enforce laws and to make sure that they are respected and followed. He should help people to correspond to what God wants from them. Norms, rules, schedule are still valid and necessary, but they are means, tools in helping people to do God's will. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (*Mk* 2, 27). If a superior "represents" God among his brothers, the brothers are the "sacrament" of Christ to the superior (*Mt* 10:40-42; 25:40-45). This is the reason why St. Augustine in his Rule (*Praeceptum* 7) and St. Benedict (*Rule* 3, 5, 64) mention the *cauta gubernatio*, the *prudent governing*.

The *community*, or part of it, should not surrender to the temptation of provoking a superior to intervene beyond what circumstance and prudence suggest. Maybe some confreres have the hidden intention of imposing their idea on the other part of the community or even on one of its member who disagrees with them. The superior is an aid not a "man-of-all-work." If he is supposed not to fall into the defect of trying to do everything by him or controlling everything..., the others too should not fall into the temptation to put on his shoulders everything they should do.

### 7) Authority, a temporary service

A **superior** should remember that authority is a service, not an honor and the less a tool to exercise power (Mk 10:42-45). According to the Gospel, authority is not a power under the disguise of service. It is a service; it is washing feet (Jn 13:2-17). Confreres should not choose a superior because they want to reward him for his previous successful activities. They should take into consideration instead the qualities that the confreres possesses and useful for his new role. Confreres should avoid the tendency of allowing a superior to be superior for life because – once he reaches that prestigious role – just the idea of removing him would be perceived as a dishonor or a personal insult. Former superiors should not be treatedlike "senators for life" or "perpetual presidents" in religious life.

We religious should stop once and for all two attitudes very common in religious life: to allow the existence of a restricted circle of religious (formed by the same people) that for years and years are changing and re-changing among themselves the same roles (no human being is forever young!); to continue the wretched habit of *promoveatur ut removeatur*; promote to remove person. Often the result is that of placing in a delicate situation incompetent people who were unable to solve previous ones. It is going against everything that is human and even religious to sacrifice the community to an incompetent or arrogant individual. It is not a dishonor to be a simple religious or to have secondary roles. It is following the Gospel when it says,

"When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do" (Lk 17:10).

It should be normal to go back and be a simple religious after a time spent at serving others according to the spirit and words of the Gospel.

A superior should be always ready to retire, not in order to pass on to others the possible problems at hand or to lead a life more peaceful and free. He should retire for the benefit of the confreres whom he was called to serve. On the other hand, it may happen that some religious do not want to accept any role of authority not because of alleged humility or legitimate incompetence, but because of egotism and personal advantage. Religious who do not show particular ambitions to reach power know that it is much more comfortable today to be a subject rather than a superior. That attitude does not help but drives superiors crazy in trying to find someone disposed to accept the role of authority. Unfortunately, there are confreres around who refuse to be superiors and have the courage to complain openly about the chosen ones.

The members of the *community* should be open to accept the role of superior (and other roles) when confreres or superiors would request, in simplicity and in spirit of service. Charity towards others means to be able to sacrifice personal and even apostolic interests when the good of the community and Institute requires it. Each religious is committed to that good once he had answered the call of the Spirit to be a member of a Congregation.

# 8) Serving and obeying means to dedicate our life for the confreres

A *superior* gives his time and energy to each of his confreres. If his role is a service, a superior should be available to serve. Those who are not available to all because they are partial towards some confreres, or because they are involved in many other pressing activities, should limit their activities and give the necessary time to carry out their service to the confreres. Certainly, we should strongly disapprove the superior who, because he is a superior, does not do anything, and from his desk, he pretends to supervise everything. In reality he is wasting his

time reading newspapers or magazines, watching television or playing for hours with some technological gadget (the internet most of the time!) while waiting possible requests for help. He should display a constant attitude of welcoming and showing interest and benevolence towards each confrere without thinking that he is "wasting" his time in listening to them. Unfortunately, haste is a common temptation today! The good shepherd knows his sheep and they know his voice (Jn 10:3.14). He should not be tempted to judge easily the confreres and their intentions. Rather, he should follow the evangelical wisdom:

"For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye and do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye?" (Mt7:1-5).

He should not mistake psychology with morals, and the sick with the sinner. He should give preference to the confreres physically weak (the sick ones), or to the cultural and spiritually ones (VC 44; FLC 68), and not to the strong, healthy ones, or those who are more educated or those who bring home more money. It happens sometimes that superiors are weak in front of the strong and strong in front of the weak. It should be the opposite.

At a personal level, a superior should not grant to himself (except when is at stake the good of the community or his own health) what is not normally granted to others. Neither should demand from others what he does not demand from himself.

By patient listening and intelligent inquiring, he should encourage the introvert to open up a little, and the superficial to examine better himself. At community meetings, he should be the one who links together the discussion among the confreres and then try to put together the different opinions. He should not encourage unfounded optimism risking of appearing naïve. Neither should push too much concern of not leaving behind some confreres. All the time he should inspire hope and reasonable trust. St. Augustine said, "May the Lord free us from despair that has no way out, and from a hope that has no foundation!" (SAO 20).

His role is to help his confreres to welcome each other, to serve the Lord better and together. Though he has to fill-in sometimes, he should not give the impression that he is the one that runs everything the community carries out. He should not give the impression that he is the community "martyr." He should insist instead that the group is to be responsible of itself and that each confrere should be faithful to their role. He should be aware of the talents of his confreres, and to each one of them he should give the right role according to their capabilities. He should not leave behind confrere (young or aged) not holding any role as they could feel marginalized or depreciated.

A superior wears two peculiar hats: he is "pontiff" and "fireman." He builds bridges (pontiff means that!). He puts out fire (firefighter); he rescues people

from debris and car accidents; he deflates tensions. He is a brother, a guide, the person available all the time. He is not the one who is in front of all (only Christ has that role), but he is in the middle of his confreres to help them, at their back to push them on and see that no one is left behind or goes astray (if he is in front he would not be aware of that). He is a father or a brother that is not imposing but offers. He is not a police officer that gives away traffic tickets but a guide that shows the road when necessary. He should not weary his confreres with endless meetings. When he realizes that his community can proceeds by itself, he should not believe that he is incompetent or not strong enough to impose himself. It is instead the sign that he had reached the purpose of his mission.

Finally, he should always remember that he was a subject once, and that eventually he will be back to that role again.

For its part, the *community* should not bother its superiors with problems falsely created or inflated, or weary them with petty details. A community will go on in the right way when each member will be responsible and serious in carrying out his role. Confreres should not create unnecessary problems to their superiors in their daily life and community dialogue. It is a fact that in a community there are always confreres that talk constantly except during community meetings. It happens that a superior is appointed or elected and he approaches his confreres with all the good intentions he can have. However, the same community declares war against him because he is not the confrere that the community (or part of it) had expected, or because he is still inexperienced and was unable for a period of time to do the right things. The confreres know that a superior is not infallible. That means that they have to give him a hand, they have to welcome him and help him if he is still inexperienced. A way to help him is to carry out responsibly their role. Obedience means collaboration.

## 9) A local superior and his major superiors

A *superior* towards his superiors should practice the same voluntary obedience that he himself wishes to receive from his confreres. A superior that with his community criticizes major superiors does a great disservice. The latter may deduce that if he does not show any respect toward them, then they too can reciprocate. This does not mean that orders cannot be discussed in a constructive and serious way when it is opportune and necessary. We are adults and supposedly mature persons.

A *community* should not take advantage of the inconsistencies of its superior or of his criticism of superiors because they want to pay him back in his own coin and think that they are dispensed from giving their due respect and obedience to him and to their major superiors. We cannot answer to an immature and disrespectful attitude with another similar one. If necessary, the confreres should give an example of respect and charity toward their superior. It is a good way to help him.

#### 10) Communion and witness come from everyone

If it is true that each confrere represents the community when dealing with the outside world, it is also true regarding their superior. It is a superior that usually represents the community. It is his job to establish good relationships with people, the parish, other religious communities, the diocese... He fosters mutual acquaintance, meetings and collaboration according to the specific mission of his community (VC 48-56, 76, 84-95; FLC 58-70; SAFC 30-32; SAO 25). Being responsible of his community, he should put into practice – prudently and generously – the words of St. Paul: "Exercise hospitality" (Rom 12: 13). A community should not appear as an inexpensive hotel that welcomes constantly relatives and friends. Neither is it an impregnable fortress. A religious community needs its time and space to carry out its own life and to follow the law of the country. However, certain unmotivated barriers could be interpreted not as a due respect toward rightful requirements inherent to religious life, but to personal or community narrow-mindedness, to lack of contact with the surrounding people, or to the fact that it is not a respectable community. The image of the community depends on all confreres. More than ever today, because our communities are more open and many lay people go in and out of our houses because they work there (cooks, cleaning staff, receptionists, teachers, nurses, parishioners...). We are constantly under the eyes of many and we should not surmise that, having seen something wrong going on in our communities, those people are bound to secrecy. On the contrary!

#### 6) Conclusion

Finally, our life and witness of evangelical communion (1 Jn 1:1-3) depends upon all the members of the community, superiors and confreres. The *superior* should apply to him the words of St. Peter:

"I exhort the presbyters among you, as a fellow presbyter and witness to the sufferings of Christ and one who has a share in the glory to be revealed. Tend the flock of God in your midst, overseeing not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (1 Pt 5:1-4).

The *community* should gratefully love, pray and collaborate with his brother called to serve it by listening and obeying to God's will, true purpose of our life. If we would like that the world may believe, let us heed Christ's words (*In* 17:20-23; VC 84ff). There is no other way we can be witness and prophets of communion (1Jn 1:1-3) except by a constant effort to be "of one heart and mind" (Acts 4:32) in spite of our fragility.

P. J. ROVIRA, cmf.

# 4. Incarico di Assistente generale dei Cooperatori a don Umberto Brugnoni

Prot. n. 57/07-09

Rev.da Superiora generale Sr. Giustina Valicenti Figlie S. Maria della Provvidenza SUA SEDE

Rev.di Superiori/Superiore di Provincia e Delegazione Famiglia Guanelliana LORO SEDI

Ai Sigg. Presidenti Associazione Cooperatori Guanelliani Famiglia guanelliana LORO SEDI

## OGGETTO: Nomina dell'Assistente generale dei Cooperatori Guanelliani.

Il Superiore generale, nell'intento di dare incremento all'Associazione dei Cooperatori guanelliani, terzo ramo della famiglia guanelliana, come richiesto dal CG18, e per dare una certa linea di unità al cammino che l'Associazione sta portando avanti da diversi decenni, in accordo con il Consiglio generale delle FSMP, udito il suo Consiglio, ha nominato don Umberto Brugnoni come Assistente generale dei Cooperatori Guanelliani.

Sarà lui stesso nei prossimi giorni ad indicare il suo ruolo, con una sua lettera di presentazione.

Sicuri di aver dato un valido aiuto nel procedere della nostra cara Associazione verso mete sempre più carismatiche e impegnative, assicuriamo anche la nostra vicinanza e solidarietà specie nella preghiera.

Don Piero Lippoli Segretario generale

Roma, 29 luglio 2009

# DECEASED CONFRERES

- 1. Father Josef Lorenz Sgier
- 2. Brother Arnaldo Della Bella
- 3. Father Gianni Battista Piatti
- 4. Father Antonio Filippi
- 5. Father Luigi Reali
- 6. Father Emilio Canosi
- 7. Father Giuseppe Rossi
- 8. Father Emidio Di Nicola

- 9. Father Romolo Cogliati
- 10. Father Ruggero Baldan
- 11. Father Paolino Bonomo
- 12. Father Mario Uglietti
- 13. Father Gaetano Ghinaglia
- 14. Brother Luigi Pisnoli
- 15. Father Giuseppe Marangi
- 16. Father Salvatore Guida

# 1. Father Josef Lorenz Sgier

Born in Lumbrein, Grigioni Canton, Switzerland, on July 4, 1932

Entered in Polleggio, Grigioni Canton, Switzerland, on March 1, 1955

Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra, Varese, Italy, from September 12, 1955

First Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1957 Perpetual Profession, in Chiavenna, Sondrio, os September 24, 1961

Ordination at Como Cathedral, on June 23, 1963 Died at the Porto Alegre Hospital, on January 9, 2009 Buried at the cemetery of Porto Alegre, Brazil



Fr. Lorenz was going through a very difficult period in his life. He thought that he did not have much time left to live and felt ready to return to the Father's house. For a departure from this life, he decided to write a diary. The opening page reads, "I write this page to thank God for the gift of life and the grace of being a Guanellian. My life has been a valuable adventure because it has been a donation. The years I lived, especially in Brazil, are mostly a testimony of the way God works through creatures like us, men inadequate and weak. Divine Providence is looking after my life step by step. These are pages of gratitude to God the Father and my family, always present through prayer and help.

Thanks to the many confreres, I met along the journey of formation and work. Some have been good papas, many like brothers and friends.

I thank the Brazilian people! I received much in generosity, warmth and hospitality. I reach the end of my days happy for the gift of my efforts, my life and my poverty for the Santa Cruz Brazilian Province".

Father Lorenz was born In Switzerland on July 4, 1932, in the town of Lumbrein, at 1405 meters, surrounded by the splendid sight of the Swiss Alps of the Grigioni Canton where people speak the Ladino language.

Fr. Lorenz was ordained a priest in Como, Italy, on June 23, 1963. Most of his ministry as a Servant of Charity was exercised in Brazil where he arrived in 1965.

He came from the Guanellian Institute of Naro, the heart of Sicily. He worked there only a few months, but enough to be touched by the warm Sicilian people.

On September 11, 1965, he started his priestly ministry at the San Jose Institute of Itaguai, Rio de Janeiro, for the next five years. He often remembered the rewarding experience in Itaguai. He must have done plenty of good there, if even today many people still remember him with affection.

From 1970 to 1974, he worked in Sao Paulo at the Santa Cruz Parish. He often mentioned with nostalgia the great pastoral work among the youth of the parish.

He was Provincial treasurer for four years and then he went back to the "Pao doe Pobres" of San Antonio. He had previously worked there for ten years. Actually, he worked in that house for a total of 23 years in different roles. Always passionate about his work, he operated with precision and method in his typical Swiss style.

His spirit of prayer was notable. He lived it in simplicity and joy. His recreational hobby was playing cards. Once he told me that when he was playing cards alone, he was whispering small prayers. The last years of his life, he provided his services at the Provincial House in Porto Alegre. He got up early in the morning and punctually was in Chapel at 5:30AM where he prayed until seven when he celebrated the daily Mass.

We all remember his plainness and detachment from things and money. Everything he received from his family, back home or from friends and benefac-

tors, was used for the house where his main concern were the poor children and youth whether residents or in the neighborhood.

Always faithful to his personal principles and his commitments, he was tolerant of others and excelled in punctuality when it came to community life, which he loved. He loved life as well, but life offered him much suffering. He never complained about it except in extreme cases.

One day he told me the story when Father General, on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, gave him the obedience that would transfer him to the Elisa Fernandes Institute in Naples, Italy.

He was still in Como, and after dinner, he said goodbye to all the confreres. When he got to the superior of the community, he received the train ticket. He put it in his pocket and the superior asked him, "Aren't you going to look at it?" He replied: "What for? I am going to Naples, am I not?" Upon the insistence of the other one, he looked at the ticket and realized that the name of the destination city was not Naples, but Canicatti, which is the station of Naro in Sicily, very far from Naples. Fr. Lorenz, a little concerned, asked, "Father General told me that my destination is Naples!". The answer came short and simple, "Father General changed his mind." Therefore, Fr Lorenz moved to Naro. Such was the obedience those days!

In November 2008, a nephew with his wife and another relative came to visit him from Switzerland. He was very happy about it and gave his visiting relatives the grand tour of all the places he had worked. He took them to Rio de Janeiro, the San Jose Institute, Sao Paulo, Santa Maria, Pao dos Pobres and Carazinho. At the end of his tour, he was tired but happy. It was like the last goodbye to the people and the houses where he had given the best of his energies for the Kingdom of God and for the well-being of so many poor brothers and sisters.

During this period, his health appeared to hold fine. He was in an upbeat mood, happy and on the move. However, it did not last. On January 8, 2009, he was admitted at the Santa Casa Hospital where his personal doctor was working and toward whom he had much trust.

They found an abdominal aneurism, which was not operable because his poor general health was complicated by heart problems.

On January 9, Fr Ivo Cattani, at his bedside, informed him of his condition and serenely talked about the acceptance of sister death. Fr Lorenz looked him in the eyes and thanked him. The hospital chaplain administered the anointing of the sick, which he received with faith and devotion.

At the time of his admission to the hospital, there were no openings at the St. Francis Hall. They had placed him always there in the past. He was instead transferred to the St Joseph Hall.

He had a deep devotion toward this great Saint because he had worked for many years to spread the Pious Union of St Joseph for the Suffering and Dying, as director of the association, in Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre. It all made sense. St. Joseph had wanted this beloved son under his protection during the last minutes of his life to accompany him through the doors of Heaven. In fact, a few minutes after his admission to the St Joseph Hall, Fr Lorenz thanked Fr Ivo and told him, "Now I am good".

These were his last words. He had taken leave from all his friends and now was ready for the last departure totally placing himself in the merciful hands of God.

The death of the just!

Thank you Fr Lorenz for being among us. Your presence has made this world a better place. Pray for us.

Fr. CIRO ATTANASIO

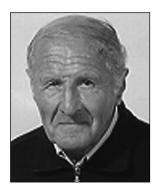
# 2. Brother Arnaldo Della Bella

Born in Chiavenna, Sondrio, Italy on February 27, 1926 Entered in Chiavenna, Casa Don Guanella on March 12, 1942

Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra, Varese, Italy from September 12, 1942

First Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1944 Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1949

Died in Barza d'Ispra on March 19, 2009 Buried at the Cemetery of Ispra, Varese, Italy



Dear Confreres, Sisters and people of God:

We are journeying through Lent, which will accompany us to encounter the risen Lord. This encounter shall change our life into "New creatures that search for things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father." (Col 3, 1-4). This is the wish expressed by St Paul in the first reading on Easter day. The daily word of God leads us on our journey. Today also, together with our Brother Arnaldo Della Bella, we want to ask the word of God to assist us in the stretch of road we need to walk on this March 11, 2009.

The first prophetic reading presents us Jeremiah as a figure of the future Messiah. Like the Christ Jesus, also the prophet Jeremiah chooses the safer journey of humility and of obedience to the will of God. Like Jesus, the prototype of the suffering servant of God, Jeremiah, intercedes for the rebels and is ready to

take upon himself the weight of their sins. It is certainly a beautiful and total image of solidarity with the people of God. Jesus will later personally experience the same in the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection. All for the good of the people who belongs to the Father. I have not come to condemn but to save!

I would like to apply this characteristic to Brother Arnaldo as a legacy for us all. He was a man totally dedicated to his daily labor to support his religious family.

He was a religious who offered to God his life of consecrated Brother, because where his working arms did not reach, he compensated with the prayer of his heart.

Father Guanella would have said, "Let us work and pray!"

"As long as we have one day of life, let us work. How noble is a pilot who does not abandon his leadership even in his old age! A soldier falling with a weapon in his hands touches our heart, like a farmer who dies while plowing his fields! The Lord is looking for Christians like these to become his followers." (Father Louis Guanella).

A letter was found in the archives of the General Headquarters, the only one Brother Arnaldo wrote to Father General on February 25, 1990. In a telegraphic style he expresses his gratitude for the birthday wishes he received with these simple but significant words, "I warmly thank you and all the Superiors and confreres of the General House, for the birthday wishes. Prayer is our support to continue in the right way until the Lord wants."

A couple of times during the last years I went to Barza and made a point to visit him. I always found him with the rosary in his hands praying by himself or together with the other elderly.

He continued to do good until the Lord wanted. First with the work of his hands in the barn or the fields to support as best as he could the community, then with the rosary in his hands. The same intention and attention: for the good of his religious family!

He was reserved and resisted compliments for his job well done. He was a man who would redirect the attention and praise to God. Everything he did was a gift from God. He was only a collaborator, an instrument of God's Providence "until the Lord wanted."

Even today's Gospel (*Mt* 20, 20-28), underlines the Guanellian spirit that we have heard in the first reading. The mother of Zebedee's sons who pleads to Jesus for her two sons can be seen as our Founder, Father Guanella, who as a father, collects and presents to Jesus all his children.

Today he will plead for Brother Arnaldo who, at the end of a life at the service of the poor on earth, is ready to receive in heaven the gift of the eternal Love, Jesus Christ Himself. "Whoever among you would like to be first, must be your servants".

Father Guanella called the priests and brothers of our Congregation Servants of Charity. The model of charity is Jesus called by today's Gospel "The Son of man who came to serve and give his life for the many".

We have just published the new *Ratio Formationis* of the Servants of Charity, by the title, "By the Ways of the Heart". Brother Arnaldo did not live long enough to read it.

However its content has been already present and celebrated in his life. Number 34 of the *Ratio* strongly proclaims that, "We long for Christ the Lord, the model of the fullness of humanity. His way of life, thinking and assessing, loving and serving, praying and suffering, reveals to us the mystery of the love and the salvific will of the Father" (GS).

Brother Arnaldo, as a good Servant of Charity, has served his brothers through the several duties assigned to him by his superiors, always with his faith fixed on Jesus Christ, servants of the Father. Did he ever pull back? Did he say "no" sometimes? Who knew him since the days of his novitiate, knows well that his alarm clock went on before dawn. He had to attend daily to the feeding and milking of the cows to provide fresh milk to the community every morning after meditation and Mass. For him it was a joy to offer these little gestures of charity for his community. Besides that, he took care of the barn and the heavy work in the fields. He was the good Servant of Charity who poured out his best to complete the work that the good Lord entrusted to him through obedience. He never let fatigue or difficulties stop him or slow him down, even though he had his heavy share of struggles through his life. Today we have prayed in the liturgy Psalm 30, the prayer that was Brother Arnaldo's life, "Save me, I trust in you".

Brother Arnaldo and our Congregation are harvesting the fruits of his work. His sowing was gifted, loved and suffered. He fertilized the fields of our great Guanellian family with his heart in love with God and his passionate dedication for the good of his brothers.

There is no doubt that he will hear the blessed and consoling words of Jesus, "Come, good and faithful servant, enter into the eternal joy of your Lord". The whole Congregation from today will enjoy the legacy of his witness. In heaven we will have one more mediator with the Father.

Our Founder reminds us about it in his writings. "Our beloved dead are our brothers. How many times, when we find ourselves in spiritual or physical danger, we call on them and they listen to our plea. They have lived here on earth a life of struggles and pain, as we do now, therefore they know our needs and has ten to help us" (Father Guanella, Writings, Volume III, page 993).

Thank you Brother Arnaldo for everything you have taught us with your serene and virtuous life. We are your family, proud of you, and today we present you to the risen Christ as a masterpiece of his grace, to be introduced for ever in the Life of the Saints!

At this time, as we separate from our dear Brother, the words of Pope Benedict are of great consolation for all of us. "I have risen and now I am always with you, He says to each one of us. My hand sustains you. Wherever you may fall, you will fall in my hands. I am present up to the door of death where no one can accompany you and you can not carry anything. There I wait for you and change for you darkness into light." (Benedict XVI, 2007 Easter Vigil Homily).

May this Easter Vigil be celebrated for you today, dear Brother Arnaldo. Amen

From the Eulogy of Fr. Umberto Brugnoni

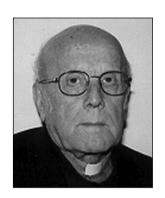
#### 3. Father Gianni Battista Piatti

Born in Lurate Caccivio, Como, Italy, on June 28, 1920 Entered the Minor Seminary of Fara Novarese on October 3, 1938

Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 12, 1940 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1942 Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1945

Ordination in Milan's Duomo, Italy, on May 22, 1948 Died in Como, Casa Divina Provvidenza on March 12, 2009

Buried in the Cemetery of Lurate Caccivio, Como, Italy



Father Gianni Piatti was born in Lurate Caccivio, Como, Italy, on June 28, 1920 and was baptized at the Parish church the following July 4. At the same parish, he received Confirmation on August 31, 1929. The pastor saw good potential in this young man and sent him to the Seminary of Venegono. The Rector found him to be a good student, devout and diligent, but not too successful in his studies and therefore advised him to leave the seminary. Gianni remained home for sometime and then applied to the Guanellian Congregation. At 18, he enters the seminary of Fara Novarese. He concludes his high school with sufficient marks for admission to novitiate in 1940.

The report of his superiors is in agreement with the previous ones "A sincere young man, with common sense and responsible to his commitments. A little rigid but fair with everyone". These are also the qualities that showed through all his life and all the responsibilities the superiors entrusted to him.

He started his ministry as supervisor and teacher in the Houses of Cassago, Milan, Como, Minor Seminary of Rome, Anzano Del Parco (Como), Perugia-Montebello. From 1961 to 1973, he worked in Nuova Olonio. In 1973, he was transferred to Castano Primo as treasurer for ten years. He is getting older and his health is getting poor.

However, he never refused to accept any type of obedience. This was in fact one of his best qualities.

For the next nine years, he served at the shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Tirano as an assistant for pastoral ministry to the large crowds of pilgrims. When the Congregation returned the Shrine to the Diocese, Fr Gianni, now eighty years old, is still able to offer his services at the Sacred Heart Shrine in Como. Here the Lord called him to the reward of heaven at the full age of eighty-nine.

We are here dear Father Gianni to give you the last goodbye, in the Mother House that protected you for the last ten years of your life and in this Shrine of the Sacred Heart that saw you until recently exercising your pastoral ministry.

Last year you had the privilege of celebrating your 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination after many years of work in various activities of the Congregation. The first years were dedicated to the education of the children.

Then you were teacher in the seminaries and treasurer in several houses. Finally, the last twenty years you spent in pastoral ministry in Tirano and Como. Your service was always marked by clarity and precision, fruit of you practical sense.

It times your temperament and your reactions were expressed in simplicity but sharp and critical. It was not the greatest weakness or sin. Fr. Guanella had the same personality. The words of St Paul come to mind, "each one of us will be accountable to God".

In the last years of your life, you withdrew in solitude and suffered, as many elderly do, but you used this stage to analyze your life with a newly acquired wisdom.

The last years of your life were like a steady declining. The death of yur younger brother and other relatives took a toll on your health. You were not able to work any longer, suffered a lot for that and had a hard time to be moved aside until were forced to retire to the nursing home.

You prepared yourself to die, alert up to the last moment, which came suddenly. However, you had already given up and surrendered your life long before. Now dear Father Gianni, you have joined your dear relatives and you confreres where God waits for us all.

We see you in the arms of the divine mercy, the same arms that will embrace us all. We see you longing for the final resurrection, which is the purpose of our living. About our living, we are grateful to God for the today's reading where St. Paul writes, "No one lives for himself (especially a priest) and no one dies for himself, because if we live, we live for the Lord (especially a priest). If we die, we die for the Lord. Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord" (*Rom*14, 7-9).

Do you remember the story of the old and wise Priest? He was discussing with a young man about his future and asked him, "What are you going to do next year?" High school.

"And then?" College. "And then?" I will get married. "And Then?" I will have children.

"And then?" I will retire. "And then?" I will get old. "And then?" The young man had no answer, but understood.

What really counts it's the afterwards of the after and the last after. The most important moment of life is death.

The Gospel reading is also very touching. It is Jesus' prayer, eternal, infinite and divine because it is the prayer of the Son of God, "Father, I want the ones you gave me to be also where I am.

The world did not know you, but these know that you sent me. And I taught them your name." (Jn 17, 24-26). Jesus came, lived, died and rose from the dead so that we all lived forever with Him. This is the answer to all the "Whys," the "What for," and the "For whom" of religious consecration, that is to be with Him now and eternally thereafter.

It is the Word of the God of the living and of the dead.

I conclude with your own words, Father Gianni, reported by our magazine, *La Divina Provvidenza*, at an interview on the occasion of your sixtieth anniversary. Your words were spontaneous and therefore more authentic, not prepared, or premeditated.

Your words came from your heart where the balance of your life had substantiated through struggles and positive experiences. "Along the way one always encounters many obstacles, but if one follows a personal plan, surely he will always progress. In life, I learned not to worry if things do not go the way I like. I always moved on. After all, the good that you do, is known to God alone".

Fr. Angelo Gottardi

# 4. Father Antonio Filippi

Born in Capizzone, Bergamo, Italy on October 8, 1922 Entered in Como, Casa Divina Provvidenza, on October 12, 1945

Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra, Casa Don Guanella, from September 12, 1946

First Professions in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1948 Perpetual Profession in Milan, Istituto S. Gaetano on June 29, 1951

Ordination in Clusone, Bergamo, on August 12 1951 Died in Rome, Casa S. Giuseppe on March 29, 2009

Buried in the Confreres Chapel at the Prima Porta Cemetery in Rome



Father Antonio Filippi was born on September 8, 1933 to Battista and Maria Paganoni, a family of modest means but of great Christian faith, in Capizzone, a lively and industrial city near Bergamo.

Capizzone was known for its bloody fights against a neighboring town a few centuries earlier. The enemies were able to climb the fortified walls of the city and burn the church. The Cardinal of Milan, now St. Charles Borromeo, intervened to reconcile the parties and solve the complex dispute. Since then, the citizens of Capizzone have acquired an entrepreneur habit and are committed in charitable and social activities.

Little Antonio was baptized two days after his birth and was confirmed on September 6, 1936, at the age of fourteen.

On August 12, 2001, on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary of Ordina tion, he compiled a diary with the most significant dates of his life. It is a modest composition reflecting his character, but it expresses all his gratitude to the Lord for the "Great things He had operated in me".

"My pastor, Fr. Giuseppe Zamboni, on October 12, 1936 sent me to a formation house of the Padri Missionari Del Sacro Cuore in Albino, Bergamo. From there I went to Como at the Mother House of the Guanellians.

That number 12 was my lucky number for the most important stages of my life.

On October 12, 1945, I entered as postulant at the Casa Divina Provvidenza of Father Guanella in Como. On September 12, 1946, I started Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra and on September 12, 1948, I professed among the Servants of Charity.

On March 12, 1949, Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster, now Blessed, at the Milan's Duomo, conferred the minor Orders and the Subdiaconate to me and 76 other candidates.

I have forgotten to write that I professed perpetually with the Servants of Charity at the Istituto S. Gaetano in Milan on June 29, 1951, the feast Day of St Peter and Paul.

Bishop Antonio Picconi of Vigevano, Pavia, ordained me Deacon on July 25, 1951. I completed my comprehensive examination of theological studies with Bishop Domenico Bernareggi of Bergamo. I had studied theology for four years while taking care of the kids at the Istituto S. Gaetano in Milan. Bishop Clemente Gaddi presented me to Archbishop Adriano Bernareggi for Ordination. I was ordained on August 12, 1951 in Clusone, Bergamo, at the Santa Maria Basilica. The Holy Spirit came upon me and turned me into a servant of God.

Two months later, on October 12, 1951, I sailed to South America. I departed from my town, Levate, and my relatives and went to Genoa, to find the liner that would take me to Buenos Aires. It was a foreign ship. Our liners had been confiscated to repay war debts.

I worked in Argentina 12 years during Peron's persecution and his dramatic return to power of a country in a shambles.

I have worked in Argentina and in Italy as a vocation promoter for the Guanellian Congregation, sometimes behind the curtains and sometimes on stage, in Tapiales, Argentina, Alberobello and Rome, in Italy. At the same time, I acquired a diploma in Sacred Liturgy and Psychology.

Therefore it is only fair, on the occasion of my fiftieth anniversary, so rich with graces from God, to express gratitude for everything and everyone to Divine Providence, the Mother of all Priests, to St Joseph protector of the priestly and religious vocations in line with the divine oath, "The Lord has sworn, and he will not repent: "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek".

For a better understanding of Fr. Filippi's life, it is important to follow his services and movements. While in Argentina, he worked in Buenos Aires from 1951 to 1953 as a teacher at the S. Jose Institute. In the years 1953-55 at the Nuestra Senora Del Transito in S. Fe. From 1955 to 1962 in Tapiales at the Nuestra Senora de Lujan y San Luis Gonzaga.

Upon his return to Italy, for a decade, he was committed to the vocation ministry at the minor seminary of Alberobello. Those were fulfilling years of spreading the good news that brought a generous harvest of many priests who have occupied important roles in the Congregation.

In 1972, he went back to the Istituto S. Gaetano in Milan as an educator until 1977.

From 1977 to 1981, he worked for both the minor seminaries of Rome and Civita, Latina. From 1982 to 1987, he served at the Spirituality Center in Barza D'Ispra, Varese. In the years 1987-89 he served at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart by the Mother House in Como.

From there for twelve more years, he was engaged in pastoral ministry at the Madonna Del Lavoro Parish in Bologna. He still had energy and will to work when he asked to go back to the Roman Province and work in the small chapel of S. Elena in Marsciano, Perugia, a program for developmentally disabled adults, Fr Guanella's beloved.

On March 2006, he requested a transfer to the Casa S. Giuseppe in Rome. He was looking for some respite to his old age, health problems and cancer, the disease of the century.

In this house, he would return to God, the giver of all goods, the evening of March 8, 2009, at the age of 87. He concluded a life of an intense and high spirituality.

Fr. Filippi's life is remarkable in many aspects. First of all, he was an extraordinary worker as we can see from the results of his various assignments carried out with fervor, employing all his physical and spiritual energies. He excelled in the education of children, especially the ones who showed a particular inclination to the specific vocation to the priesthood. However, with a solid faith and his psychological skills, he was adamant in following the directives of the Church and the rules of the Congregation.

After Vatican II, he realized that his educational standard needed updating. New findings and modern technology convinced him that he needed to go back to school. He registered at the Salesian University in Rome in Science of Education, which was his field of operation.

He graduated with excellence and received praise and compliments attached to the comments on his thesis, "The psychological, educational and spiritual assistance of the priest in the vocational discernment." It was indeed rewarding for him.

"The work presents an attentive and intelligent knowledge of the essential studies in Italian and Spanish, related to the psychological development and education of the religious and priestly vocations, keeping in mind the stages indicated in the past and recent documents of the Church". Rev. Dr. Albino Ronco, Pontifical Salesian University of Rome, June 24, 1976 signed it.

Another of his good merits was that of being a scrupulous believer of the Sacred Liturgy. He was sincerely convinced of what he read in the Encyclical *Gaudium and Spes*. "Christ is always present in His Church and in a special way in the liturgical actions. He is present in the Sacrament of the Mass. He is present with his grace in the Sacraments. He is present in His Word. He is present when the Church prays and sings the Psalms".

He nurtured these supreme truths deep in his heart and in his activities. Sometimes his stance placed him in contrast with people who often did not have the sensitivity he had in preparing the liturgies.

He had also a great respect for all liturgical and religious books and was an ardent collector of anything that had to do with liturgy. He loved the solemnity of the

the sacred ceremonies and appreciated the accuracy of the celebrations. He prepared the daily Mass with attention and selected the best appropriate readings for the event.

He did not accept sloppiness or the excessive concern of a quick celebra tion even for important commitments.

In the last years of his life, though debilitated by age, he continued to be the faithful servant of God in love with His Word and custodian of the perennial praise to the Trinity.

Last, but not least, he had the additional merit of being a fervent devout of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He never refused to participate in a pilgrimage, a procession, or an event in honor of the Blessed Mother. He had a list of all the Marian Shrines he had visit ed. Often he was seen with tears in his eyes when listening to a touching sermon on the Mother of God, and with passion and filial love, he would assent with a motion of his head.

The Blessed Mother was his custodian. He kept in the pages of his breviary a holy card of the Virgin where he had written the words of St Bernard, *Ipsa duce, non fatigaris, ipsa propitia pervenis.* (Under her guidance, there is no weariness; under her protection there is success).

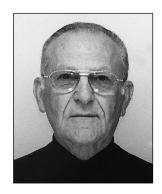
Fr. Tarcisio Casali

# 5. Father Luigi Reali

Born in Ferentino, Frosinone, Italy, on June 20, 1929 Entered the Minor Seminary in Rome, on January 22, 1946

Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra, Varese, from September 12, 1947

First Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1949 Perpetual Profession in Barza, on September 12, 1954 Ordination at the Duomo in Milan, on May 26, 1956 Died in Curitiba, Brazil, on March 30, 2009 Buried at the Parque Iguazu Cemetery, Curitiba



Father Luigi Reali was born In Ferentino, Frosinone, an ancient city along the famous Via Casilina that united Rome to Naples, on June 20, 1929, form Umberto and Maria Di Mario. They baptized him at their parish church, Santa Maria Dei Gaudenti, on July 29, 1929.

Young Luigi received from his parents a good religious education, grows close to the church and very soon shows the desire to follow Jesus, by becoming a priest.

His pastor noticed the young man's potential and sent him to the Diocesan Seminary. However, a few years later, he befriended the Guanellians who operated the St. Agatha Parish in the same town and requested admission to the Guanellian Congregation.

Fr. Armando Budino, who later became Superior General, accepted his request. From that moment on, Luigi remained under the particular care of Fr. Armando who will follow him for the rest of his life, especially during the difficult times

For a few months, he moved to the seminary in Rome until the admission to Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1947. Here he professed for the first time and finished college. His theology studies were taken at the seminary of Anzano, some in Chiavenna and finally in Milan where he was ordained at the Duomo on May 26, 1956.

His first assignment takes him to the Guanellian Mission in Pollegio, Switzerland. He did not stay there for long because on March of 1957, he is already in Porto Alegre, Brazil. He had a hard start. Once arrived in Brazil he went to Itaguai.

The House was next to a cemetery. This and his poor health, compounded with homesickness, forced him to follow Fr Mario Verse, SdC, to Rio de Janeiro as assistant at the Nostra Signora di Nazaret Parish. A few days later, Fr Alessandro Cengia, SdC, invited him to Porto Alegre. He worked there until 1965 and, as a treasurer of the house; he established great relationships with the government and several benefactors.

Through his activity and connections, he was able to build the new church of the Our Lady of the Workers in Porto Alegre, the house of Capao da Canoa and the seminary of Canela.

For this reason, the superiors chose him to be the formator at the new seminary until the end of 1967. Then many problems arose that changed his life. He fell victim to political intrigues. Threatened with murder, he was advised to divest of his priestly garments and run into hiding for a while.

A strange and dark period, with bizarre adventure went on from 1968 to 1994.

Without leaving the priesthood, he found a job, got married and had two children. A Bishop tried to help him and his lifestyle started to change for the best.

Widower since 1986, with the children now adult and doing well, on November 14 1994, after repeated requests to return to the Congregation, the Superior General, Fr Nino Minetti, finally readmitted him to the Guanellian family.

He professed again, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on December 8, 1994, in the presence of Fr. Minetti.

His return was painful for him and the confreres. He had to accept unkind comments from some imprudent confreres and the confreres had to accept his sharp and critical character not totally due to old age.

He went back to Curitiba for the last years of his life, custodian of that small building that used to be a theology seminary that closed in 2001. He feels now a strong pull to contemplative life, dedicates many hours to adoration and asks to join a monastic group. The experience did not work.

Back to Cutiriba, one day he was trying to stir the fire by pouring alcohol over it.

The surging flame hit him square in the face and torso. Rushed to the hospital, he was not able to recover from the acute burns and a few days later, on March 30, 2009, gave his soul to God.

He is buried at the Parque Iguazu cemetery in Cutiriba.

Fr. Celio Mattiuzzo

#### 6. Father Emilio Canosi

Born in Pieve Porto Morone, Pavia, Italy, on April 9, 1921

Entered in Fara Novarese, on December 27, 1939 Novitiate in Barza D'Ispra, from September 12, 1941 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1943

Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1947

Ordination at the Como Cathedral, on June 26, 1949 Died in Barza D'Ispra, on March 30, 2009 Buried at the Cemetery of Pieve Porto Morone, Pavia



I knew Fr. Emilio when I entered the seminary of Gatteo. It was his first assignment after Ordination on June 26, 1949. He accepted me and I was impressed by two new situations. One was the different way of being a priest who lives and shares his day with the youth. The other was his ascetic figure, skinny and decisive. He was at times even too srict as the educational methods were those days.

He remained in Gatteo four years, until 1953, when he was appointed Spiritual Director of the Seminary in Rome and then Rector of the Seminary of Civita, Latina. From 1956 to 1959 he was at the Casa S. Giuseppe in Rome and then for the next thirty years he dedicated his life to pastoral ministry in Bari first and then in Padua.

Here I met him again when I was already a Priest and started my life in pastoral ministry as well. He was a traditional priest, of few words and many deeds. There is nothing wrong with the past, so why change it. Women? They are what they are because they have nothing to do all day.

Despite all this, people loved him for his directness, simplicity and genuine charity. He had a strong sense of Church tied to the figure of the Bishop. "What the bishop says is always right." Bishop Bortignon loved his dedication and style and made sure that Fr. Canosi remained in Padua as long as possible. For Fr. Emilio, who never claimed to be a philosopher, to feel with the Bishop, was to feel with the Church.

Although he was a simple man who avoided complications and too much thinking, he accepted a very heavy burden when, in 1962, he was sent to Padua as a pastor to build the new parish church. He started with the classical warehouse building and in time, he managed to finish the beautiful church to St. Stephen of Hungary. It was the sad period when the Russian tanks crushed in a bloody massacre the insurrection in Hungary. The Bishop wanted to remember the cruel event by dedicating the church to the King who brought the faith to his people. The parishioners helped him considerably in this effort. He always remembered them with affection and gratitude. With a well-planned method they visited periodically all the families of the parish, collecting a contribution for the new church. They obtained the double result of uniting the parishioners in one big family and making them part of the great effort of building their own church. He was always doing something; it was his way of being a pastor. He was chiding his assistant priests, "You waste too much time over your books!".

The parishioners got used to see him with a wheelbarrow and shovel in his hands going about to one of his projects as a 'laborer priest'.

He valued his assistants whom he called the Vatican II priests. He encouraged them, praised them and openly supported them for the whole parish to know, allowing them plenty of freedom in their pastoral work. With them he gradually opened a number of programs for all age groups of the parish. They were the recreational center, the St Vincent De Paul, the scouts, the altar servers and the sport clubs which were better developed than others. He was very happy, as a good Guanellian, when the sisters, Daughters of St Mary of Providence, opened next to the Parish a kindergarten and preschool program. Every day, he visited the sick, but early in the morning, because during the day 'he had things to do'. He remembered often our Guanellian confrere, Fr. Enrico Sordi, from his own town, who died very early due to cancer.

When his time came to move to another House, it was very hard for him who had built that parish from the ground up and for twenty-four years had seen it grow to maturity.

His departure was very hard for the parishioners as well. They loved his simple and practical style. Later on, in the new ministry of Verdello, where he worked for 20 years, he would understand that the change was the best for all.

Fr. MARIO BALDINI

# 7. Father Giuseppe Rossi

Born in Sabbioneta, Verona, Italy, on February 25, 1930 Entered in Fara Novarese, on September 20, 1949 Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra, from September 12, 1952 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1954 Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1959

Ordination at the Como Cathedral, on June 26, 1960 Died at the Borgomanero hospital, on April 14, 2009 Buried at the cemetery of Gozzano, Novara, Italy



Fr Giuseppe Rossi, SdC, was born in Sabbioneta, Verona, on February 25, 1930. He entered as an aspirant at Fara Novarese on September 20, 1949, and professed perpetually in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12 1959. He was ordained on June 26, 1960 at the Como Cathedral.

Fr. Giuseppe dedicated most of his life as a priest in Brazil where he arrived in September 1962.

His service to the poor was carried out in a variety of responsibilities and offices. For many years, he worked at the seminaries of Carazinho and Canela.

He was also a very good provider and therefore, the superiors appointed him treasurer of the seminary in Canela and the Casa Santo Antonio in Carazinho a catholic school that also enrolled many resident students.

He was a good administrator, frugal and attentive with the expenses, but at the same time made sure they had what they needed. I remember that when he left the administration of Sao Jose in Canela, he left a comfortable sum of savings. Later he became the pastor of Sao Jose, Patron of the Suffering and Dying, in Santa Maria. He loved pastoral ministry and the superiors left him in that field for twenty-three years and many more after his return to Italy. He had a particular lar attention for the sick and he visited them often, giving them opportunities for confession and communion.

He was a faithful servants in all duties assigned to him. He was strict to himself and to others. For this reason perhaps, the superiors entrusted him duties in formation, education and the seminaries. Unfortunately, his health did not cooperate much with his work, due perhaps to excessive smoking. For these medical reasons, he went back to Italy, in 2004, sooner than expected. In Italy, he did not rest either.

He offered his services in Barza d'Ispra as assistant in Pastoral Ministry and subsequently as chaplain to the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence in Fratta ta Polesine at the Holy Family House. He was helping in Pastoral ministry in Gozzano when the Lord called him on April 14, 2009.

Fr. Rossi loved the Brazilian people for whom he gave his energies for forty years.

He was a true Servant of Charity and for this, he will hear the word of the good Lord, "Come blessed by my Father, and inherit the Kingdom the Father has prepared for you since the creation of the world".

Fr. CIRO ATTANASIO

#### 8. Father Emidio Di Nicola

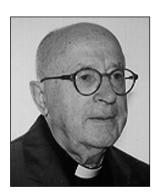
Born in Penne, Pescara, Italy, on December 13, 1912 Entered at the St Joseph Trionfale Parish in Rome, on March 18, 1933

Novitiate in Fara Novarese and Barza d'Ispra, from September 8, 1933

First profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1935 Perpetual Profession in Chiavenna, Sondrio, on September 12, 1938

Ordination at the Sacred Heart Shrine in Como, on March 8, 1941

Died in Bari, at the Don Guanella Center, on April 30, 2009 Buried at the Cemetery of Bari, Italy



Father Emidio De Nicola, an admired patriarch of the Congregation and of the Roman Province, died on the night of April 30, 2009. His death was like a crown of all his achievements in the Congregation. He was the oldest member, sixty-eight years in the priesthood, who had occupied so many offices in a variety of fields. He was an educator in several institutions, formator in a few seminaries, and pastor for many years, treasurer in some houses, superior of a few religious communities and, dear to his heart, confessor and spiritual director to a countless number of people of all ages and category.

On his sixtieth anniversary of priesthood, Fr. Emidio wanted to remember the event with a text where he described the itinerary of his life until that point. It is an essential and complete document and it deserves to be reported for a better appreciation of the person, the priest and the religious.

These pages were not written with the desire to show off, but to reveal an immense gratitude to the Lord for choosing him to be a meek instrument of sincere cooperation.

"Fr. Emidio was born in Penne, Pescara, on December 13, 1912. He is baptized on December 15, third Sunday of Advent, at the penne Cathedral. At sixteen, he enters the Diocesan Seminary of Penne, but four years later starts his formation journey among the Guanellians at the St. Joseph Trionfale in Rome.

From Rome, he moves to Fara Novarese to begin his novitiate which will conclude in Barza on September 12, 1935 with his first profession. For the next six years he attends to philosophy and theology studies while working as an educator at the institutes of Como, Vellai di Feltre, Belluno, and Chiavenna.

He was ordained by Bishop Macchi on March 8, 1941, at the Sacred Heart Shrine in Como, the Mother House of the Guanellian Family. From the birthplace of the Order he started his fruitful mission throughout Italy. Educator at the Institutes of Lecco and Chiavenna. In pastoral ministry at the Shrines of the Most Holy Mother of Civita and San Calogero in Naro. Teacher at the Bishop Bacciarini seminary in Rome and at the San Clemente in Velletri, at the Sant' Antonio in Alberobello. Parish work at S. Ciro in Bari, St. Joseph Cottolengo in Valle Aurelia, Rome, the Most Holy Mary in Bari and the Don Guanella Center in Bari.

He was a formator, educator, treasurer, pastor, superior, teacher, and confessor. Hoverer, in these dry although precise pages, the world of Fr. Emidio is not entirely reflected. Reading the many notes he left, sometimes written on scrap paper, we can see how repeatedly he writes about his life as a Guanellian and of the most important dates of his life. Significant are also the letters he writes to his superiors for all sorts of events and circumstances.

They show joy and satisfaction for the grace he received of being accepted by the Guanellian family. He was coming from a city rich in history and art but extremely poor as many Italians were those days of dictatorship and wars. He was also bitter by the fact that he was dismissed by the Diocesan Seminary of Penne because of the family inability to continue the payment of the high monthly tuition.

It was 1932. It is obvious how grateful he was for landing in one of Fr. Guanella's houses.

"I knew Fr Guanella through the direct testimony of his first priests: Fr. Mazzucchi, Fr. Salvatore Alippi, Fr. Filisetti, Fr. Guglielmo Bianchi and Fr. Martino Cugnasca.

The Founder had gone to heaven a decade ago. I was an  $11_{th}$  grade student and was 20 years old when I entered among the Guanellian Family at the St. Joseph Trionfale Parish. There I took care of the children of the recreation center. I convinced Fr. Alessandro Zaffaroni, who was my supervisor, to let me resume my studies by joining the group of young aspirants who were taking classes with Fr. Giuseppe Preatoni at the house on Via Aurelia Antica.

I was happy for the positive answer to my request, but it was not easy. I had to get up every morning at five for meditation and Mass. Afterwards I took my books and walked along to Vatican walls, the Madonna of Rest church, the Carpegna Square and Via di Torre Rossa. I walked a round trip to and from Via Aurelia Antica for one hour of school.

During this hour, I was given homework on several subjects for the day after. Once I was back to Trionfale I had to take care of the children at the recreation center until the late hours.

However, I gained admission to Novitiate, at Fara first, and then in Barza d'Ispra, where the superiors had purchased a huge park connected with a grandiose villa. After profession, I left for college studies.

I had the grace to know Bishop Aurelio Bacciarini who came to Barza to visit his nephew Fr. Michele. It did not last long because the Bishop died in 1935, going to receive from the Lord his eternal reward. I call it a grace because he was a gift for my vocation to the priesthood and religious life in the Congregation of Father Guanella.

The priests I met as well as my studies and work companions appreciated me for my strong vocation and we supported one another in carrying on the plan God had laid for each one of us.

I always tried my best to remain faithful to Father Guanella, no matter what difficulties I faced in my daily life.

I don't claim to be a hero. I am proud for my fidelity to my promise and I am saying it with pride now that I am the oldest confrere in the Congregation. I am ninety-three years old; the oldest religious with seventy-three years of religious life and sixty-three years as a priest. I can honestly say that I always worked for the interests of the Congregation without overlooking the main goal: my own salvation. I thank Jesus, Son of God and His Mother, the Blessed Virgin, for the gift of life".

These notes were written on December 13, 2005.

Fr. Emidio's life does not need any comment for the intensity and fullness he lived it. Many people have walked a spiritual journey with him and countless are the episodes and the events bloomed or smoothed by the Franciscan spirit typical of the Founder.

A Benedictine Sister of the Santa Maria Del Monte Monastery in Bevagna, Perugia, wanted to honor the life of Fr. Emidio, now ninety years old, with a poem.

In the poem, Fr. Emidio looks backwards on his life and identifies the times of donation, of fidelity and of pain common to every religious faithful to the Rule and the Founder.

"Ninety years: a blip in the wind. - An offered yes, among the Guanellians, - a yes repeated to the beloved community, - a yes sung in earnest waiting and faithful acquiescence - that today, at ninety - I offer as a gift - I come back to you in trepid joy - with hesitant steps - quivering, perhaps, slow - with the joy of my choice. -

Ninety years: a life that springs from ageless wings; - moving through time and eternity, - weaving always new patterns, - of many suffered yes, pronounced, - prayed, sprung, loved in total dedication, - fruit of my heart for you, my Lord. - Time and again my yes bumped into rocky obstacles, - often heavy storms have slowed my journey; - often my powerless cry has caged my heart in pain - but I have sown, I have sown love. -

Poor, with the poverty of Fr. Guanella I have given you. - Simple, with the simplicity of Fr. Guanella I have announced you. - Humble, with the humility of Fr. Guanella I have looked for you. - Free, with the freedom of Fr. Guanella I found you. -Brother and friend of all like Fr Guanella, I dedicated you - my whole life, - with the spirit of Fr. Guanella - I have composed love symphonies for you - that only you know, my Lord. - Then your love is still waiting for love -

have even more to offer you - and renew it with the enthusiasm of one time, - because your will never sets: - it has only the dawn of my notice, - the joy of my eve, - the fullness of my prayer.

Now I have become old - I have to tell you, my Lord that you are - my leader and companion; - you are in my thoughts and deeds - in my memories, in my dreams, in my songs, - in my silence, in my joy, - in my pain, you the eternal yes of my heart.

I am grateful - of my something and my nothing. - Thank you, my Lord, of my ninety years of love. -

I offer you my age, which is not just a poem: it's my entire life!".

Fr. Tarcisio Casali

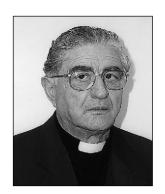
## 9. Father Romolo Cogliati

Born in Terrazzano Rho, Milan, Italy, on January 11, 1924

Entered Fara Novarese on October 14, 1942 Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 12, 1943 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1945

Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1949

Ordination at the Como Cathedral on June 29, 1952 Died in Caidate, Varese, on May 16, 2009 Buried at the Cemetery of Terrazzano, Milan, Italy



Father Cogliati was born in Terrazzano Rho, a lively and industrious town of the metropolitan area of Milan. In his hometown, he was baptized, confirmed and received his First Communion. His parents, good Christians and hard work ers, identified early the signs of vocation. With the assistance of their pastor, they invited him to the Diocesan seminary of St. Peter Martyr where he finished high school. During his senior year, 1941-42, he lost his father, lost his concentration and was discharged from the seminary. However, the ways of Providence are unpredictable.

Sometimes God prepares unexpected rewards and successes to overcome a loss. This was what happened to young Romolo. He was faithful to his vocation and requested to enter the Guanellian seminary of Fara Novarese. He was admitted in September 1942 to repeat the lost school year. In September 1943, he enters Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra, where he professes for the first time on September 12, 1945, and perpetually on September 12, 1949. He will be ordained at the Como Cathedral on June 29, 1952.

His life as a Guanellian priest started, same as the majority of the newly ordained priests, in the role of educator at the Community of Como, Casa Divina Provvidenza.

They remember him as an attentive educator, concerned of the total growth of the children entrusted to his care, even though at times overly reserved. In September 1952, he moved to the Pia Casa S. Giuseppe in Gozzano, with the same duty. However, his heart was longing for other worlds. He was attracted by missionary work and requested to do just that. On January 1954, he arrived in Brazil where he took over the education program of the Educandario S. Luiz in Porto Alegre, Brazil. In 1955, he started to work in pastoral ministry and became the first pastor of the new parish, Our Lady of the Workers in Porto Alegre. In 1959, he was transferred to the St. Francis Xavier parish in Itaguay as an assistant at first and then as pastor until 1967.

Eighteen years after his arrival in Brazil, he felt the desire to go back to Italy and with great humility petitioned the Superior General. The confreres in Brazil as well as the Superiors understood his motivations, but nonetheless tried to convince him to stay a few more years. However, he had already made his decision. He left the good memories of a faithful servant in his educational and pastoral work, done with total dedication and without reservation for the good of the souls. Especially remarkable was his kindness and commitment to the youth groups.

In Italy he continued to work in pastoral ministry, first at the Our Lady of the Workers parish in Bologna and then at the S.Gaetano Parish in Milan. He was the pastor there from 1984 to 1989. He moved to Cerano as a pastor for a while. However, being almost 80 years old, he returned to Milan as an assistant pastor.

He lived many years of intense activity. The ones who knew him closely remember how he made people feel comfortable no matter what the problem was. In Milan, in a special way, people kept visiting him with all sorts of problems. He had always a soothing solution and restored their hope. He had a particular attention, already exhibited in Brazil, for the sick, especially the very ill. He gave his time, comfort and the sacraments. His confessional kept the light on for several hours of presence every day.

His community life was nothing but exemplary. He was always present for community prayer and devoted much time to personal adoration. He followed faithfully Father Guanella's example of the Eucharistic adoration, inviting people to this distinctive time with Jesus, assuring them the special graces over their families from this unique devotion. Many of his friends still remember him and follow the style of his faith.

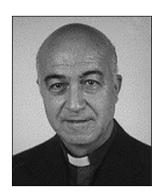
In 2006, at the venerable age of 82, he gave up his activities and retired in peace and serenity at the Rest Home in Caidate, Varese.

He brought his soul back to God on May 16, 2009, to get the reward of the faithful servant of God.

Fr. A TTILIO MOLTENI

## 10. Father Ruggero Baldan

Born in Stra, Venice, Italy, on December 20, 1927
Entered the St. Joseph Seminary in Anzano Del Parco,
Como, on October 30, 1951
Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 12, 1954
First profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1956
Perpetual Profession in Chiavenna on September 12, 1960
Ordination in Stra, Venice, on June 24, 1962
Died in Naro, Agrigento, on June 19, 2009
Buried in the Priests' tomb at the cemetery of Stra,
Venice, Italy



Stra is a small community with less than ten thousand people within the Venice, Italy, metropolitan area. The town had in the past a diversified history of alliances now with Venice, then with Padua or other powers. Venice turned that coastal town into a showcase once it fell under its political control. The nobility of the Most Serene Republic of St. Mark built there the most splendid villas especially on the banks of the Brenta River as a place of vacation and relaxation. Among them today we can admire the royal and magnificent Villa Pisani, built in 1700, and decorated by the frescoes of the Tiepolo brothers. It still shows its beauty and unique architecture even though it has become a Footwear Museum. The native industrialist Luigi Voltan, toward the end of the 18 th century, trans formed the prevalently agricultural town into a capital of fashion shoes.

Now it is a city and the birthplace of five Guanellian priests: Fr. Ruggero Baldan; Fr. Antonio Bettini, whose memory remains in blessing for the gift of himself to the children of Naro, Sicily, and the handicapped of the large facility of Via Aurelia Antica in Rome; Fr. Ermes Boran, appreciated for his religious and human virtues. In wisdom and patience, he developed the Casa di Gino in Lora, Como; The two Simion brothers, Giorgio and Vincenzo, still working in the Guanellian Family.

In Stra, on April 26 1951, a twenty-four years old young man, who had in mind a better plan than becoming an expert shoemaker, presented himself to Fr. Romolo Cavazzane and asked him to find a Religious Institute because he desired to consecrate himself to the Lord. He is ready to return to the study books abandoned years ago. Fr Romolo knows of the Guanellians and initiates the negotiations. He received a positive response and was requested to get in touch with the St. Joseph Seminary in Anzano Del Parco.

Impressive and interesting is the *post scriptum* that the pastor added to the letter of presentation of his young parishioner. "He is a mature young man. He came to this point by his own will. The world is not for him. He is my first bloom. Make him a priest. He will conquer many souls".

He even takes the time to list his qualities. "Perfect conduct. Very reflective decisive and generous. He is an example of piety and model of virtue. Intelligent and willing to learn. He enjoys good physical and mental health and is well built. He does not have any family problems or even objections from his parents".

The director of the seminary, Fr. Antonio Fontana, is happy to accept him; especially after he learned that the young man had completed the correct number of school years but did not graduate.

Through the wonder of God's Providence, Ruggero Baldan arrives to the Guanellians.

Fr. Ruggero was born on December 20 from Attilio and Maria Prior. He was baptized, confirmed and received the First Eucharist at the St. Mary church in Stra. His family was modest and respectable. They lived on the outskirts of town, a cluster of houses with families attached to the faith of their fathers and the local traditions. Ruggero inherited all his family convictions and always witnessed their faith whether attending school or going to work. The climate of his early years was not definitely supporting any type of Christian life.

He was a member of the Catholic Action and together with other active members took on the streets, during the dark days of 1945 to 1950, to fight back the communist aggression planning to eradicate the catholic culture and faith. In all the fights he had always next to him Antonio Bettini who, not much later, will follow him in the seminary, moved as well by the attention dedicated to the suffering and handicapped by Father Guanella' charism.

In 1954, he left the seminary of Anzano where he had taken condensed classes that shortened the years, and started his Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra. He was accompanied by the evaluation of the formators, "He gives clear signs of understanding religious life and his attitude is warranted in all ways". All doubts and concerns about the twenty-four years old young man who wanted to become a priest in his mature age had disappeared.

In the Novitiate of Barza, he had the grace of meeting two extraordinary formators: Fr Olimpio Giampedraglia and Fr. Armando Budino. They both will become Superior Generals. From the first one he learned everything about the Rule and the tradition of the Servants of Charity. From the other, the spirit of piety and docility. He needed it badly because he had realized that he was a little "too impulsive and too stubborn".

He finished college in three years, while taking care of the children at the San Luigi Institute in Albizzate, Varese. In 1960, he was in Chiavenna for the theology studies and, that same year, on September 12, he professed perpetually. He received the Minor and Major Orders at the Mother House in . Como He was ordained on June 24, 1962, at the age of thirty-five, by Bishop Gerolamo Bortignon in Stra, the place where he started his journey in the Guanellian Family.

It was his time to start his mission. The first assignment was San Gaetano in Milan. The following year, from there, he initiated his very long ministry in Sicily. This island became his new homeland that bonded him for his entire life as religious and priest.

The Istituto San Calogero in Naro had him as spiritual director and educator of the children. From 1969 to 1981, he was pastor of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of Divine Providence parish in Agrigento. In 1981 is back in Naro as Superior of the Community and in 1987, pastor in Agrigento, and in 1994 again in Naro.

He leaves Sicily and for five years he works as activity Director at the Istituto Madonna Della Civita in Gaeta, Latina. It was a difficult time for the congregation in that area. Fr. Ruggero, wisely and patiently saves the day. Finally, he returns to his beloved Sicily for the last stage of his life concluded on June 19, 2009. It was the end of the Feast Day of San Calogero, the annual religious and civil regional festival so dear to the Institute, the town and the whole island. He lived his last years in great sufferance, embraced with determination and sense of purification, which, every pain carries to the world of the ones who suffer.

The number of activities and the quality of performance reveal Fr. Ruggero as a person of many facets. The list may turn into a glorification, but that is out of our scope.

A few meaningful observations can summarize the whole person. Fr. Ruggero has been a priest of great serenity and composure, a man not always cheerful but rich in humanity. He was detached from material things connected to prestige and wealth.

Always meticulous and faithful, he fulfilled his work and duties, no matter what they were. His free attitude was sacrificed a few times by local politics to protect people from being hurt. He welcomed everyone with an open heart, especially the ones who returned to San Calogero or the parish to talk or exchange news.

He evangelized with his gaze and comforted with his words. Ready to listen, he offered an opinion but pulled back when the conclusions did not agree with his belief. He spread the Gospel like a missionary, walking and organizing. The annual Celebration in honor of San Calogero became proverbial. The decoration and beauty of the parish church reveal faith, taste, practical and liturgical sense. His everyday life style was managed by authentic faith that gave hope to the sensitive hearts and challenged many people around him whose lives moved to opposite directions.

In conclusion, it is only fair to say that Fr Ruggero has written a large part of the Congregation history in Sicily, where he lived for forty years, quietly, in simplicity and modesty. In Sicily, the Servants of Charity have done a tremendous job, but you never hear anything about it.

The Congregation is proud of the priests who have shaped the faith and love of whole generations of youngsters to whom has been given the love of Christ through the charism of Father Guanella.

Much of this merit goes to Fr. Ruggero who has reached the reward promised by Jesus to all who would give "Bread and Lord" in His name. "I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me in his service." (1 Tim 1, 12).

Fr. TARCISIO CASALI

#### 11. Father Paolino Bonomo

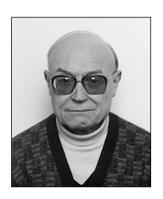
Born in Cazzano di Treviglia, Verona, Italy, on September 16, 1931

Entered the seminary of Fara Novarese on September 15, 1941

Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 12, 1947 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1949 Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1954

Ordination at the Bacciarini Seminary Chapel in Rome, on April 28, 1957

Died in Caidate, Varese, on September 9, 2009 Buried in the Confreres' tomb at the Cemetery of Como, Italy



The Servants of Charity have many priests coming from the Veneto region. There are many reasons for that. The most important factor for this region is the deep roots in the Christian faith for many centuries. It is been an area at the center of many glorious events on behalf of the Christian faith, even though its hard working and ingenious people remain constant in their simplicity and modesty. This area has given to the Church many outstanding men who have influenced their generations through their office or their contribution to society. Among those, we have St Pius X and John Paul I. The first one came from Riese, a small town near Padua, and the other from Canale d'Agordo, near Belluno. This land has given to the church so many priests through so many seminaries, but now unfortunately most of them are closed.

These considerations must have gone through Father Guanella's mind as well. He worked mostly in the province of Rovigo where now there are two

large institutions operated by our sisters. Now the vocations are gone, even because our presence there is reduced to one parish in Padua, after the closure of the big Institution in Vellai di Feltre, Belluno.

Fr. Paolino Bonomo comes from that area. He was born in Cazzano di Tramigna, twenty kilometers north of Verona, on September 16, 1931. He did not talk much about himself and therefore we have little information of his early life and how he found our seminary of Fara Novarese.

The formation years are also uneventful, not because it was void of efforts or anecdotes, but because it was carried on with a constant and regular methodology and dedication that impressed everyone. All the superiors appreciated his progress in his studies and his spiritual life. They all praised his commitment to his studies, his poise and his journey in religious life. There are remarks here and there about his tendency to criticism, a pattern that accompanied him through his life of scholar and teacher.

Novitiate, the first profession, the yearly renewals and the perpetual profession on September12, 1954, took place all in Barza d'Ispra, Varese. After college, the superiors, assessing his good qualities of personality, intelligence and commitment to studies, send him to Rome for the theological studies at the Pontifical University of Propaganda Fide.

Here he prepared himself for his future priestly and Guanellian ministry. Gradually, every year he received the Minor and Major Orders and on April 28, 1957, he was ordained priest at the Theological Seminary Aurelio Bacciarini in Rome.

Now comes the time to put all that preparation into practice. He will reside at the seminary in Rome through 1961 when he moves to Barza d'Ispra as a college teacher. He will remain there until 1976. During these years, to complete even further his education, he received masters in Theology and Philosophy. The time came to take a break from the academic world and he was assigned to the administration of the Casa Don Guanella in Lecco, Como.

In 1982, he was elected Provincial Vicar and his residence was transferred to the Mother House in Como. The chronicle of his activities is well known. He worked intensely also in finances as Local and Provincial Treasurer. He was the Provincial Fr. Piero Pellegrini's right arm, especially when his health started deteriorating.

Someone close to him had said that Fr. Bonomo had offered the vow not to waste time. At this level, one can ask a legitimate question: in the midst of so much work where did his spirituality stand? Did it suffer?

Nothing like that. At the end of each day and at the end of so much work, he became a permanent feature in chapel where he closed the day late at night in prayer under a lamp that marked his presence, united to the sanctuary lamp that marks the Real Presence. A bright example today, that is loosing ground, because when some body is looking for us. It is not spontaneous any longer to look in the chapel.

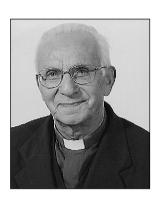
Suffering was his last test of love. It came on January 22, 2002. He had a stroke that forced him to inactivity and inability, which he accepted with dignity. He spent two years in Como and then in Caidate. Here, on September 9, 2009, the Lord called him for the last time and he promptly answered, "Here I am Lord".

Fr. Guido Dall'Amico

# 12. Father Mario Uglietti

Born in Momo, Novara, Italy, on March 7, 1916 Entered Fara Novarese on January 18, 1931 Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 8, 1934 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra, on September 12, 1936 Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1939

Ordination at the Como Cathedral, on May 14, 1942 Died in Caidate, Varese, on September 23, 2009 Buried in the confreres' tomb at the cemetery of Como, Italy



Fr. Mario Uglietti comes from Momo, Novara, but his family moved to Domodossola. He wanted to be a priest since he was a little kid. During the annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Blessed Mother in Re, the ten year old little Mario was asked to carry the monstrance, while another little French girl was asked to carry the hosts to be consecrated.

Mario, on that occasion, promised the Virgin Mary that when he grew up, he would be a priest, and it happened. The little girl instead, became a Rosminian sister. In his old age he remembered, "That coincidence looks like a miracle. The credit for my vocation and my priestly life goes entirely to the Madonna of Re whom I honor and love". He enters the Diocesan Seminary of Miasino, but for unspecified reasons he withdrew after a few years. The pastor in Domodossola, Fr. Raffaele De Giuli, with a polite note asked the Guanellians for the admission of the young man saying, "I can't say that he is perfect, but he has a positive attitude and a good education will do him much good".

On January 18, 1931, at fifteen, Mario enters the Seminary of Fara to finish high school. Three years later, he is in Barza for Novitiate. On September 12, 1936 he professes for the first time and on September 12, 1939 he professed

perpetually. His Ordination took place at the Como Cathedral on May 14, 1942. He is ready to take on whatever mission they assign him. He feels a true Guanellian, ready to bring the Founder's Charism to any part of the world the superiors want to send him.

He starts as a teacher at the seminary of Fara, and then moves to teach the theology students at San Gaetano in Milan, followed by the students in Cassago Brianza and finally the ones in Gozzano. In 1951, he receives the obedience to go to the small seminary of Velletri, in central Italy, 50 kilometers west of Rome. He will be stationed there for 17 years. He returns to North Italy as superior of the Casa di Gino in Como-Lora. The next assignment was that of treasurer in the House of Albizzate, Varese, and then treasurer again at the House of Barza d'Ispra. Finally, he enjoys a little stability at the House of Gozzano where he arrives in 1989 and will remain there for 18 years.

When the energies diminished and his health decline, he needed more assistance and more care. The nursing home of Caidate was more appropriate to serve his needs. He lived two more years. On September 23, 2009, sister death took him to heaven at the age of ninety-three.

He was a man with a great heart who never turned down anyone he met and needed his help. His affable and kind character, together with his cheerful spirit gained him so many friends who did not hesitate to support him on behalf of the Guanellian institutions. Friend of many industrialists, he visited them at least once a year after he had given them a list of what he needed. On the other hand, he never showed up empty handed. He loved to be acknowledged for the good things he did, but at the same time, he was a humble person. He had also a strong personality and from time to time conflicts aroused where he always wanted the upper hand. He remembered with passion and pride the years he worked in Velletri, when Cardinal Micara put him in charge of the Pontifical Assistance Organization. Through this organization, he provided food and milk for the children during the terrible postwar period. He did his best and more to protect those children from the memories and the losses of war and sent as many as he could to summer camps.

His pet project, however, was the Alpine summerhouse of Macugnaga. It was located among the mountains where he was born. He loved his mountains and was still on his skies at ninety-two. The last time he did it, he wanted a photo taken as a souvenir. For years, he had provided summer camps for the orphan residents at the House of Gozzano. Then he opened the house for guests throughout the summer and with his kindness and hospitality, he exercised an effective ministry. He protected his territory and duties. Rarely did he allow other people to take over and only after endless recommendations and extremely detailed instructions always reminding them that he was in charge.

With the children, he nurtured a grandfather relationship. He was interested in each one of them and their situation. Quite often, he entertained them with his stories and jokes. His homilies, especially in his late years. were lengthly, but people loved his sense of humor and the little anecdotes he reported.

While stationed in Gozzano, he provided pastoral services in the village of Mescia. Every Saturday he drove from Macugnaga, attended to confessions and Mass and drove back trying to beat his own record of travel time. Actually, he was a risky driver up to the end of his driving career when he was over ninety. In fact, he was a man who risked a lot especially when it came to serve his brothers, defend the oppressed, help the poor, beg the benefactors. In all of them he saw the face of the suffering Christ.

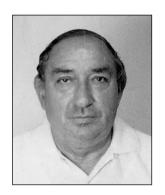
Even in his old age, his spirit looked ahead. He kept saying that he had arrived, but he kept sowing and planting as if he was going to see the harvest and the fruits. Certainly, as a good Servant of Charity, he will enjoy the fruits of his work even better in Heaven.

Fr. GIUSEPPE POZZI

## 13. Father Gaetano Chinaglia

Born in Costa di Rovigo, Italy, on September 3, 1935 Entered Anzano Del Parco on November 21, 1950 Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 12, 1955 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1957 Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 24, 1963

Ordination at the Como Cathedral on April 28, 1965 Died in Aqua Boa, Brazil, on October 10, 2009 Buried at the cemetery of Aqua Boa, Brazil



Father Gaetano Chinaglia was born in Costa di Rovigo, Italy, on September 3, 1935. He became a member of the Servants of Charity with his first profession on September 12, 1957, in Barza d'Ispra. He was ordained priest at the cathedral of Como on April 28, 1965.

Fr. Gaetano lived his entire religious life out of his homeland. He arrived in Brazil on December 5, 1966.

For the first twenty years, as a good Servant of Charity, he worked among Jesus' beloved children: the poor and the abandoned, physically and spiritually. For all those twenty years, he resided at the *Cidade dos Meninos* in Camobi, the first house the Guanellians opened in Brazil in 1947.

He dedicated the remaining twenty-three years in pastoral ministry for the people of God, in the desolate regions of the Northeast of Brazil. He was stationed in the City of Salgueiro, Pernambuco, serving a people thirsty for drinking and irrigation water and most of all thirsty for God.

He had a reserved character, but loved everyone and they all loved him. He was pensive and of few words, however he was a man of many friends and wherever he went, he left many people who remember him with affection even for a long time.

Fr. Gaetano's religious and priestly life was a total fidelity to his consecration, prayer, pastoral ministry and mission. His life can be summarized with the few simple words coined by our Founder, Father Guanella, "A good Servant of Charity". People used to say that Fr. Gaetano was a man who never complained about life, calm, serene and always available; for him everything was going well.

He was a man of intense and constant prayer. In the last years of his life, especially in Aqua Boa, he found what his heart always desired: a peaceful life and silent prayer. A good collaborator in pastoral life, he was always ready to satisfy, at any time, the request for confessions or any other pastoral service.

There is no doubt about Fr. Gaetano's goodness of heart. He always tried to follow the recommendation of the Founder to, "do something good." He did it quietly, without big projects, without applauses or on the stage. His goodness of heart, his composure, his serenity surrounded him with many friends. These friends all of a sudden appeared when he moved out or changed activity. They missed him greatly and remembered him with sincere affection. It was amazing to see people in tears at his funeral; they were from all backgrounds and occupations, lay and religious men and women. He was sincerely loved and appreciated.

Silence was characteristic to his personality and that brought him to a deep interior life. When he spoke however, this depth surfaced and his words were meaningful, to the point, challenging and always made people feel better about themselves.

His last talk, on September 27, 2009, left everyone impressed. He explained the Gospel of the day touching on tolerance in a pluralistic society.

Another beautiful aspect of his life was his profound and filial devotion to the Blessed Mother; he never missed his daily Rosary.

The parishioners also witnessed how often he spoke about our Founder, his spirituality and charism. They felt part of a family and tried to live the experience of that charism as lay Guanellians.

The last time I saw Fr. Gaetano, in mid-August 2009, he appeared a little worried. He remembered our conversation and decision that at the beginning of the year he was supposed to leave for Canara, the town next to Aqua Boa. The passage had been delayed because of an accident to Fr. Danieli. I asked him if he was still

available for Canara. He replied the he preferred to stay in Aqua Boa, because the following year, 2010, he was planning to return to Italy. I asked him, "Father, how many years have you been in Brazil?" He answered, "Forty three". And I added, "Why don't you stay two more years and round up your presence to forty five years?" He simply replied, "If God gives me health and my life is still useful, I will be happy to stay two more years".

I thanked him for his generosity and he remained in Aqua Boa. However, God's plan was different and He called him to eternal life on October 1, 2009.

On October 2, at the end of the Mass presided by the Guanellian Bishop Joseph Protogenes Luft, I witnessed that Father Gaetano with his life of Christian, priest and Servant of Charity in the Church of Jesus Christ, had helped to make this world a better place.

Fr. Ciro Attanasio

## 14. Brother Luigi Pisnoli

Born in Castelletto Ticino, Novara, Italy, on July 2, 1924 Entered in Gozzano in September 1930 Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 12, 1939 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1941 Perpetual Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1945

Died in Barza d'Ispra on October 26, 2009 Buried at the Cemetery of Ispra, Varese, Italy



Today the liturgy of the Church honors the Apostles Simon and Jude. They are two names of the twelve that all four evangelists report. We do not know much about these two Apostles, but Jesus prayed all night that his choice be in harmony with the will of the Father.

...

This Gospel page does not give us just a dry list of names, because for God we are not mere numbers. He calls us by name, creates us from nothing and gives us an identity. Each one of us is unique, unrepeatable. God from eternity had dreamed it like that. In that name, there is a call, my call, only mine. "He chose twelve and called Apostles". Twelve. However, the vocation of Peter is not that of Andrew, because Simon Peter from eternity was in the heart of God as

Simon Peter, the impulsive Peter, full of resources but so fragile, that Peter who will deny the Master, but also the one who will shed his blood for the Lord. That same Peter will have the duty to affirm the others and will hold the keys of the Kingdom.

The same for every man, for me, for you, for each one of us, for Brother Luigi. We have been called from eternity, because we have been in God's dream as we are, with that face, with that specific mission in life that cannot be separated from what we are.

I do not have a vocation, I am my vocation. The voice that created me from nothing, that gave me a face at the same time that, in its infinite tenderness, called my name, that voice called me "To be for".

It is fascinating, my dear friends, to consider for a minute and think with certitude that God wanted each one of us because loved by God just as each one of us is.

How can we not love one another, not accept one another despite our limits, how can we not love our vocation? How can we not explode in joy? Indeed! It is that voice whose echo we save in our heart in deep nostalgia, that voice that called us to follow him, that voice that, as the prophet puts it, seduced us but, at the same time, planted in our heart the desire to be seduced, that voice again continues to call us to joy, to life and to the fullness of our existence.

Moreover, even when the same voice invites us, like today Brother Luigi, to leave everything for a journey to eternity, it is not a voice of failure, of destruction, of annihilation, of consummation, it is a voice of serenity, peace and perfection for a life that continues in Him and with Him for He is the Eternal. This is the tranquility St. Augustine is talking about: Once we reach God, we get lost in Him.

Jesus' prayer on the mountain through the night tells plenty on the style of God who loves the impossible task, who proposes a model of ministry for our communities.

The cross will bond the hearts of these different men; the resurrection will turn them into one bright message of light for every man.

I believe that we have to see Brother Luigi's life in this prospective. He celebrated his consecration entirely in this community for seventy years. He entered the Barza's Novitiate on September 12, 1939. He did not want to be associated with anything or anybody, except the Lord and his Gospel. He was a multitalented man and gifted in qualities and skills by the generous God. He was a carpenter, a printer, electrician, successful farmer, musician, choir director and teacher of every musical instrument in a band.

The hundreds of seminarians, who went through Barza for their formation, had to cross paths with Brother Luigi one way or another. They all had the opportunity to witness the hard work and the dedication to the mission of this exemplary Servant of Charity.

There is not much in the archives about this confrere with the exception of some notes from his formators early in the beginning of his journey in the Congregation of the Servants of Charity of Father Luigi Guanella. The many who knew him, carry in their heart the memory of a word, a gesture and many deeds that encouraged and suggested goodness.

His Master of Novices, Fr Carlo de Ambroggi wrote, "The novice Luigi Pisnoli shows a spirit of true piety, good moral conduct, diligent observance of the Rule, open and amenable character, love for the Congregation and industriousness. His constitution is a little delicate but healthy".

That note was written on July 3, 1941, sixty-eight years ago. I believe, however, that it describes perfectly Brother Luigi all along his sixty-eight years of consecrated life.

The fragility of his health, especially in these last years, together with his forced and prolonged inactivity, made him a little tense and brusque in his behavior and relationships.

With the death of Brother Luigi, an historical phase of the House in Barza will be over. The numerous "Religious Brothers," in this Community, more than in any other House of the Congregation, have been a determining factor in the mission of the house with their significant presence, passionate witness, work and prayer.

Let us thank God that through these confreres, workers of the first hour, he traced a deep path for our Guanellian Family with the confidence of reaching Christ the Lord, the final goal of our consecration.

Benedict XVI, in his Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, proposes this life style to all the Church. "Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer, Christians moved by the knowledge that truth-filled love, caritas in veritate, from which authentic development proceeds, is not produced by us, but given to us.

For this reason, even in the most difficult and complex times, besides recognizing what is happening, we must above all else turn to God's love. Development requires attention to the spiritual life, a serious consideration of the experiences of trust in God, spiritual fellowship in Christ, reliance upon God's providence and mercy, love and forgiveness, self-denial, acceptance of others, justice and peace. All this is essential if "hearts of stone" are to be transformed into "hearts of flesh" (Ezek 36, 26), rendering life on earth "divine" and thus more worthy of humanity" (79).

We have the example of the Apostles, Simon the Zealot and Jude Thaddeus, called by the Lord to participate in the experience of building the Kingdom. We have the example of our Religious Brothers who, especially in this House, have always witnessed the joy of "belonging to God".

Following these examples let us ask the Lord Jesus that our Christian and religious communities be more open to reciprocal tolerance and acceptance. May

we understand that there is richness in diversity and have the ability to move from our human logic to the inscrutable logic of God. He is the good and merciful Father who loves all, accepts all and helps all to reach holiness.

Dear Brother Luigi, today we entrust to you the task of mediating with the Father these resolutions of good. May you rest in peace. Amen!

From the Eulogy of Fr. Umberto Brugnoni

## 15. Father Giuseppe Marangi

Born in Ceglie Messapica, Brindisi, Italy, on April 8, 1946 Entered in Ceglie Messapica on October 10, 1956 Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra, Varese, from September 24, 1964

First Profession in Barza D'Ispra on September 24, 1966 Perpetual Profession at the Theological Seminary of Rome on March 19, 1973

Ordination in Alberobello, Bari, on December 19, 1973 Died in Bari, Mater Dei Clinic, on November 9, 2009 Buried at the cemetery of Bari, Italy



The Gospel that has just been proclaimed has underlined a strong and meaningful Christian principle: whatever we do in life, we shall behave in the end as "useless servants". This statement needs to be understood properly first, and then we will live without the fear that it diminishes our dignity and our personality. This statement refers us to the value that our Founder, Father Louis Guanella, wanted to give to the name he chose for his disciples: Servants of Charity. We will do it this morning while we are gathered together to give our farewell to Fr Giuseppe, a Servant of Charity the Father has called to eternity.

The translation we have read in the Gospel, "We are useless servants," is not accurate because the servant who does his work is not useless and because God did not create anything useless. Everything has a meaning and everything has a purpose. The Bible scholars prefer a better meaning for this term: we are servants without compensation, therefore incapable of earning. This means that Christians do not work for compensation, for personal earning, but for duty and without payment, therefore not for shameful profit (1Pt 5, 2), but because the love of Christ impels us once we have come to the conviction that he died for us (2 Cor 5, 14).

However, in other parts of the Gospel Jesus urges us to do good also in view of the final reward. He tells his apostles, "Truly I tell you: you who have followed me, in the new creation, when the Son of man will be seated on the throne of his glory, you too will be seated on twelve thrones in judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel". He repeatedly talks about the reward reserved to the ones who remain faithful, but this confirms that the immeasurable reward springs from the divine mercy. I believe that we can draw from this ideal to read the life and the witness that Fr. Giuseppe left to continue for us confreres, relatives and friends.

It is true, however, that by doing this, I will go against the desire of Fr. Giuseppe who did not want people to talk about him. I remember that in one of his writings, mentioning the death of a confrere he knew very well, suggested that I read what he had written. "No one has the duty of a eulogy, but it is an exquisite charity to ask the Lord for his eternal peace. May he rest in peace".

His desire was just a prayer. "My life was what it was. The important thing is that, the day of my death, someone prays for me and recommends my soul to the Lord".

Certainly, today we want to present this gift to Fr Giuseppe. We want to recommend him to the Lord in the Eucharist, which is the thanksgiving for everything the good Lord has given us through him, his presence, his heart, his intelligence and generosity.

With him, we want to ask forgiveness for his limitations, his needs, and his fragility that have been present in his life. Besides this, we would like to identify in his life a message for all of us.

"We are servants without earnings, without interests". Isn't that the main trait emerging from the Life of Fr. Giuseppe?

A formator of the seminarian, Giuseppe Marangi, wrote on the back of his application to first profession. "We support and recommend this request. We think that the applicant has reached a good level of maturity and clarity in planning his life. He shows seriousness and commitment. He is a good element in our community for the transparency of his ideas and the accuracy of his assessments. He states that he does not have specific tendencies, but he had felt comfortable in all the experienced activities of the Congregation. His piety is sober and it appears to us sincere and deep. His family does not approve of his vocation and this can be another warranty in his favor".

All these elements put together give a true description of Fr. Giuseppe's life.

We definitely remember the transparency of his ideas and the accuracy of his assessments in the studies and research that the Congregation had conducted for our Constitutions and the Guanellian Educational Project.

We remember also, how, during the celebration of General and Provincial Chapters or other general assemblies, he was able to make a point with his humor and or a drawing. It was his way for the ideas to remain easier and longer in our minds. He had a shy personality and learned to overcome it with a ready joke and

loud laugh so that the other party did not feel embarrassed for awkward silences or misunderstandings. A man open to joy, generous and attentive, he was very receptive of others especially the laity. The "Good Children" in Rome, the elderly of Bari or the parishioners in Ceglie experienced his kindness. He was considerate toward the personnel and anyone who collaborated with him or his friends. He always appreciated everyone who had done anything for him or worked with him in any activity.

An open man to others but not about himself, his suffering and his struggles, Fr. Giuseppe did not let out even the truth. He wanted to live in solitude his personal fears, carry his cross by himself; a heavy cross that God had placed on his shoulders and asked him to follow Jesus.

His formator had mentioned a "sober piety". Fr. Giuseppe in fact, did not go for complicated things, extended liturgies or public manifestations. He was happy however, when he participated. Sober piety, sincere and deep. Two simple memories of Fr. Giuseppe.

He was sent to India as representative of the Provincial Council for the Ordination of a confrere. At the imposition of the hands over the candidate, at the moment when Fr. Giuseppe's turn came up, the stage build for the occasion collapsed, creating general panic. Back to Rome, with a loud laugh he commented, "You see what happens when you send me to these celebrations!".

I remember that, one day driving through the town of Martina Franca, he told me that his mother was buried in the local cemetery. I told him to stop by and bring a flower.

Just the time for a flower and a *requiem*. From that day on, anytime we went to that town we stopped briefly for a flower and a *requiem*.

Dear Fr. Giuseppe, we give you the last goodbye as confreres, relatives and friends. Today is the vigil of Mary, Mother of Divine Providence feast day. Our Founder, Blessed Louis Guanella, gave her as Patroness to both of his Congregations. You have always worked in administration and are aware how necessary the Providence of God is for our life and mission. Continue to obtain it from God, you who now live in his presence.

May you fulfill what the *Ratio Formationis* promises to the Servants of Charity.

"Joyful for the presence of Christ and confident in Divine Providence, we feel accompanied by the Virgin Mary our Mother, until, at the end of our life, we shall commend our spirit into the hands of the Father and fulfill our personal Passover. Everything will conclude with an eternal praise. Which would resound eternally in the celestial harmony" (316).

From the Eulogy of Fr. Umberto Brugnoni

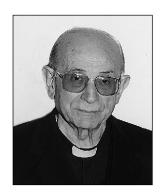
#### 16. Father Salvatore Guida

Born in Lagonero, Potenza, Italy, on December 2, 1919 Entered in Fara Novarese on September 23, 1936 Novitiate in Barza d'Ispra from September 12, 1938 First Profession in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1940 Perpetual Profession at the Collegio S. Maria in Pollegio, Switzerland, on September 12, 1943 Ordination at the Cathedral of Lugano, Switzerland

on March 16, 1946

Died at the St Joseph Trionfale in Rome, on November 26, 2009

Buried at the Prima Porta Cemetery in Rome, Italy



We are at the conclusion of the liturgical year. Tonight we will enter the new liturgical year with the Advent, the immediate preparation to the Birth of Christ. It is also a rich period full of hope for the last coming, at the end of times, when the Lord will judge our life for eternal happiness or not.

In today's Gospel, Jesus strongly invites us to be vigilant (*Lk* 21, 34-35) and prayerful (*Lc* 21, 36). He warns us to pay attention and be careful of not loosing the conscience of the true meaning of our life. Jesus also gives us a specific appeal to pray in our everyday life as a sure engine to search and find the best source to build a culture of hope.

"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunk enness and the anxieties of daily life and that day does not catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth".

Jesus had given already a similar advice to his apostles when they asked about the coming of the Kingdom (Lk 17, 20-210. He answered that the coming of the Kingdom will be like a lightening, suddenly, without warning. People have to be ready always attentive and prepared (Lk 17, 22-27).

Jesus in his Gospel encourages us to pay attention to these situations, not to underestimate them, to witness to our brothers our ability to resist, of moving against the current not for indifference or carelessness, but for the love of truth, to educate the modern man to the truth, to the non-renounceable values for a Christian and consecrated person.

Jesus also recommends prayer to us as a source of our discerning con science open to hope. "Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man" (Lk 21, 36).

Constant prayer is a very important tool to keep the presence of the Spirit. It deepens in our heart the awareness of the presence of God among us and gives the strength and vision to bear the difficult days and grow in hope. The study

that Dr. Carlo Laudenzi did on the spirituality of Father Guanella, affirms that, "For a better understanding of the form of prayer for a religious family it is necessary to know the charism that originated the same religious family". The charism of Father Guanella that is the foundation of its prayer is the conviction that, "God is Father and we are his children". Father Guanella's prayer, writings, spirituality and mission are centered in the search and desire of finding the face of the father. "Father, I want to come to you, I can't live without seeing you".

To Father Guanella, prayer means walking toward God, but also allowing God to get closer to us. In the booklet, *Let us go to the Father*, he writes, "I am your Father and you are my children, beloved children. Come closer to me, my children, so I can hug you".

For Father Guanella, however, going toward the Father will not happen, unless we are together with our brothers; it will not happen alone! Our Constitutions (30) state, "We journey to the Father enriched by the presence of our brethren, especially the poorest. We share their suffering and aspirations; we stay with them and pray with them, happy to share fraternally Faith, Hope and Love".

My dear confreres, I believe that these thoughts of today's liturgy and the life of our Founder have taught us about keeping our life under control, and clearly describe the traits of the serene and full of interior peace of Fr. Salvatore. Many of us do not know the events of the life of this good Servant of Charity. We will mention them to honor his person.

Fr Salvatore was born in Lagonero, Potenza, on December 2, 1919, from Nicola and Maria Magdalena Marino. On January 6, 1920, he received his Baptism at the S. Nicola Parish in Lagonero. He was confirmed on March 20, 1932, at the church of the Pious Union of St Joseph in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where his family had emigrated. After his probation period at the House of Fara, he enters the Novitiate of the Servants of Charity in Barza d'Ispra on September 12, 1938. Two years later, always in Barza, he pronounced his first profession. He professed perpetually on September 12, 1943 at the Santa Maria Collegio in Pollegio, Switzerland.

He receives the Minor Orders in Lugano and on March 16, 1946, he was ordained priest in Lugano, Switzerland.

He returns to Argentina and there he offered his priesthood for 24 years, from 1946 to 1970.

From 1951 to 1955, spiritual director at the St. Pius X seminary in Tapiales.

From 1955 to 1964, treasurer at the S. Jose Obrero parish in Ciudad Madero.

From 1964 to 1970, local superior at the S. Jose Obrero parish.

In 1970, he returns to Italy and was assigned to the house of Naples as spiritual assistant.

From 1973 to 1976, local superior at the Elderly Center in Bari.

From 1976 to 1977, he returned to Naples as parochial vicar

From 1977 to 1980, local superior in Naples.

From 1980 to 1981, local superior in Naro, Agrigento.

From 1981 to 1983, Bari.

From 1983, he serves at the St Joseph Trionfale in Rome and until 1994, he was also the Chaplain at the Columbus clinic in Rome. From 1994, he poured all his remaining energies at the St Joseph Parish, identified with the confessional, his preferred seat on his journey to God.

Lately, he has suffered for his illness, which gathered a great number of generous parishioners eager to care for him on a daily basis.

He died serenely, as he had lived, Thursday, November 26, 2009, the day before his 90th Birthday.

We learned about Fr. Salvatore's life through the correspondence, over the years, between him and the various General Superiors and from the numerous reports of his formators. I also had the privilege to receive his confidences and to hear the passionate recount of his long missionary experience in Argentina. We can conclude that Fr. Salvatore has been a simple, good, exemplary and obedient Servant of Charity. He was a man of faith and nobility, capable of relationships with others in such a delicate and respectful manner that at times appeared a little naïve.

He was a humble priest and aware of his undeserved vocation to which the Lord had called him to follow Him. Every newly ordained chooses a souvenir holy card printed with the biblical expression that better reflects his expectation and his priestly commitment. Fr. Salvatore chose for his holy card Psalm 88, "I will sing the mercies of the Lord for eternity". Don't you think dear confreres, relatives and friends who have known Fr. Salvatore that this song of mercy and humility has truly been a continuous song through all his life in the beautiful and rich witness that he left us?

Father Guanella, in his comments on prayer, many times underlined the characteristic of humility. Asking does not diminish our personality, but it magnifies it by pointing us to Mary as the best model of prayer lived in humility, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word" (*Lk* 1,38).

Even the Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasizes that humility is the necessary disposition to receive the gift of prayer because in reality man is the beggar of God. Do not be afraid, Jesus assures us, "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. How much more will the Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (*Lk* 11,9-13).

Fr. Salvatore was humorous in his interventions, and his remarks clearly expressed what his thought was. He never hid his opinion, but he always presente it with kindness and humor so that no one would be offended by his remarks on positions, events or weaknesses in life.

He was the smiling man, the greeting man, interested in you and your health. He did not do it for convenience but for real care. We can call him a man, a confrere of simple and common expressions of manners and affection, things that often are missing in our parochial and religious communities, among ourselves, as if they were unnecessary or even useless. The great Master of Novices, Fr. Carlo Bernareggi, SdC, would have said, "Yes, we love one another, from the head and up, like the mind, the heart and the whole body did not get involved!".

Thank you, Fr. Salvatore for being with us ninety years in wisdom of heart, with kindness, without pretenses or defender of issues. Instead, you have communicated the joy and serenity of the man who has placed all his trust in God. Therefore, he does not fear and for everything and by everyone he is invited to offer his contribution, the simple but healing action of the oil and the wine of his hope.

Thank you Fr. Salvatore, you have reminded us that often we complicate our life for nothing, we make ourselves miserable for insignificant things, because what really counts is the love for one another because we are all children of God Papa. We are brethren to one another, fragile but inhabited by the Spirit of God who makes us temples of his presence.

Rest in peace, Fr. Salvatore, the peace that many have discovered and appreciated in you face even in your last days of pain and patient waiting. Your peace, even without speaking, announced your intense faith, your strong and mature love for Christ. Your peace today becomes an Alleluia song for your Passover.

Live, Fr. Salvatore, in eternity, in the peace and joy of the risen Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Amen.

From the Eulogy of Fr. Umberto Brugnoni

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