

Loving our Xaverian vocation

*Behold, I will do something new!
Now it springs forth; will you not be aware of it?
(Is 43:19)*



Preparing the XVIII General Chapter

Issue n. 05 (January 2023)

Where are we?

Economy, structures, government

*"The Holy Spirit needs us. Listen to him by listening to yourselves.
Do not leave anyone out or behind".*

Pope Francis, on the synodal path, Rome, 18.09.2021

Objective

To reflect on our resources and possibilities, sobriety and solidarity, synodality and structures, especially when they are onerous, in view of the mission rather than self-preservation (cf. EG 27).

Inspirational text

C 74: Authority, in our Institute, is exercised by confreres who are called to be the center of unity and to help us seek the Lord's will in harmony between personal aspirations and community needs, guiding us with fraternal charity and a spirit of service to the realization of our vocation.

EG 27: "I dream of a missionary choice capable of transforming everything, so that customs, styles, time-tables, language and every ecclesial structure become an adequate channel for the evangelization of today's world, rather than for self-preservation. The reform of structures, which demands pastoral conversion, can only be understood in this sense: to make them all become more missionary. ... As John Paul II said to the Bishops of Oceania, 'every renewal in the Church must have the mission as its aim so as not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion'".



**XAVERIAN
MISSIONARIES**

Bukavu (DRC), July 2023
dg.saveriani.org



Presentation

Economics

Globally, we live in a period where we hear more and more about monetary instability and complex issues in the world of finance. Aggravating factors include the Covid-19 pandemic, wars and direct geopolitical consequences on trade. The southern hemisphere aspires to self-determination and economic sovereignty beyond the pressures of a bipolar world (rich-poor, North-South...). The Church and religious institutes fit into this context, with economic implications.

Self-reliance becomes an urgent issue in its understanding and implementation, following the decrease in number of confreres who had constant contact with benefactors who materially supported the various works, and which, for various reasons, have decreased. The last General Chapter asked to "initiate a study to reflect on the forms of support for the Congregation according to the spirit of our charism (cf. C 29), taking into account the diversity of the contexts in which we work" (XVII-CG 90). Among the aims of the new *Procura Generale*, based in Rome from 2020, is the search for and ma-

nagement of new possibilities for self-sustainability, consultancy to grow in the capacity to administer goods, and distribution, giving priority to the Circumscriptions where the need is most urgent.

From the Circumscriptions, the generosity of the people around us is increasing, and there is a request to decrease the "economic dependence on funds from abroad" (cf. XVII GC 75), creatively promoting initiatives for the realization of the mission, locally arousing the generosity of benefactors, accounting for the gifts received (parishes, schools, lay people) in view of the mission. Often it is noted that the hardworking spirit, fairness and fidelity in monthly economic reports as good managers, are not yet well established.

Structures (*Facilities*)

Browsing through the *Stato del Personale*, we count about 78 houses of Xaverian property in our Circumscriptions (*domus, houses of formation, various buildings...*), not counting other land or bequests received. Of these properties, part (difficult to quantify) is not fully inhabited (large houses, rarely used rooms). The global membership of the Xaverians has decreased by 20% in the last 30 years (from 890 Xaverians in 1990 to 658

in 2021). Especially since the XVI-GC, there has been a talk of restructuring, not only based on these figures but also keeping in mind the new social and ecclesial contexts, to better respond to the bold project of the mission ad gentes today. While on the one hand resistance and fears of change have been noted, on the other hand new meeting structures are being opened up, such as the continental Cosuma, which makes it possible to address issues from a more homogeneous missionary context (cf. XVII GC no. 95).

Governance

The synodal path we are walking along in the Church encourages us to overcome stereotypical "superior-subordinate, leader-subordinate" positions and to implement dynamics of ecclesial participation, harmonizing principles of respect for the person, subsidiarity and synodality, obedience and dialogue. Referring concretely to the discernment of the confreres' destinations, dialogue becomes more 'synodal' between the GD and the RD and the confreres concerned.

The GD proposed guidelines against "clericalism", inviting us to take concrete preventive measures against all forms of abuse (cf. Letter of

27.02.2019) and to grow in attention to the new ethical demands of society and the Church. Reflection on how to effectively prevent and deal with the reality of abuse remains open.

As far as governance strategies are concerned, since the XVIICG, *criteria* have been listed for merging or changing legal status of the Circumscriptions (cf. nos. 92-93). For the change from Region to Delegation: the number of confreres making up the Region, less than 15; significant presence of vocational fruits; the agility of decision-making in being a Delegation; circumstantial reasons dictated by common sense. For the unification of Circumscriptions: geographical proximity, similar characteristics, number and age of the confreres, linguistic factor, joining together to strengthen a more solid future perspective (vocations, laity, etc). The inter-capitular COSUMA proposed to '*synchronise*' the term of office of the Circumscription Councils with that of the GD. This is to encourage better planning and collaboration in the exercise of the authority of the Circumscription's Superiors with the path of the GD, which is established by the indications given by the GC.

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Method

This form is designed for reflection in our local communities. After personal reflection, we answer the proposed questions, and report them in writing by sending them to the coordinators of the Preparatory Committee for the GC by **15 February 2023**.¹

Questions

1. The statistics ask us for urgent, timely and effective discernment on the issue of the economy. How do we make our communities live materially? What initiatives are we promoting in the local communities to make them self-sufficient (and contribute to the Circumscription *Common Fund*)?

2. Concerning some large structures, not (or little) used and difficult to maintain, taking into account the various aspects such as simplicity of means, sobriety of life, priority of mission today, expenses of maintenance...: what verification criteria for these presences and what decisions/actions to propose?

3. The GD has already indicated criteria to be met with a view to unifying or changing the legal status of the Circumscriptions (cf. Cosuma 2021. *iSaveriani* 122, pp. 79-80). What proposals to take a step forward, both in our Circumscription and throughout the Institute?

¹ P. Fabien Kalehezo: kalehezo@saveriani.org,
P. Eugenio Pulcini: pulcini@saveriani.org and
P. Faustino Turco: faustinturco@gmail.com