



MISSIONARI SAVERIANI

DIREZIONE GENERALE

VIALE VATICANO 40

00165 ROMA

Tel. 06 393 754 21

Fax 06 393 665 71

LETTER TO THE CONFRERES OF SOUTH BRAZIL

Dear brothers,

At the end of the retreat in July, we left you some lines of reflection that you should bear in mind in view of the upcoming XVI Regional Chapter in January 2017, which must mark a time of restructuring for the Region.

Our visit to the Region enabled us to understand the confreres' constant commitment, your dedication to the apostolate and the affection that the Christian communities, and the people in general, have for you. This confirms to us that the presence of the Xaverians is still necessary for the Brazilian Church and society.

The current times in which we are living require that the Church and our Family commit to self-renewal, restructuring and a new beginning. The XVI General Chapter has given us precise guidelines and we take inspiration from them. Restructuring is not a consequence of the drop in personnel numbers, but an insuppressible necessity of living our charism well and courageously, bearing in mind the needs of the mission today and the qualified contribution that we are called to make. Restructuring and hope in the future always walk hand in hand.

At the end of our Visit to the Circumscription, we leave you the following project as the basis of the Region's journey beginning from the Regional Chapter in January 2017.

VERIFICATION OF OUR FIDELITY TO OUR CHARISM

This verification is asked for by the General Rule 10.1:

"During Chapters and other occasions, our various activities are to be assessed in the light of our charism. Commitments which no longer conform to our sole and exclusive purpose are to be discontinued, gradually and in a resolute manner, in dialogue with the local Church and the General Direction."

The verification should be done according to the criteria contained in the General Rule 12.2:

"Evangelization is not a single and isolated action but, rather, a profoundly ecclesial one. This implies a necessary continuity in our work, with due respect for the initiatives of our predecessors, and the convergence of individual projects and communal programs."

More specifically, we ask that the verification touch upon the following areas:

Structures

Is the Regional Domus of Vila Mariana still necessary? What functions is it carrying out and for what purposes do you plan to use it? What real problems would its closure create for the Region today? Do the functions it currently

carries out require such a large and costly structure, or can they be carried out only in São Paulo?

We believe it should be closed and that the headquarters of the Regional Superior and the Archives be moved elsewhere.

- The Center of Vocation Ministry in Laranjeiras do Sul. Do you believe its current use is sufficient and satisfactory? Are modifications necessary in order to modernize the structure and make it suitable for an effective vocation animation? Is this structure a good instrument of presence and animation for Xaverian vocation ministry? An essential condition for ensuring it is a place of Missionary and Vocation Animation is the presence of a full-time Vocation Animator and a close collaboration with the Xaverian community that works in the Parish.
- The seminary of Londrina must be equipped in order to receive and look after elderly or sick confreres. This project should be studied with realism and in the short term and it must also involve the Region of North Brazil. This entails the relocation of the seminarians to the seminary of Curitiba.

Missionary Animation of the local Church

"Our mission charism prompts us to work, as our Founder did, so that local Churches acknowledge and embrace their responsibility for the mission to non-Christians. We help them maintain a genuine concern for all the Churches, so that the wonders the Spirit works in them may be occasions for praise and an invitation to ongoing conversion" (C 15).

- Every Parish must have a Missionary Pastoral Project that completes the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. This project must not be subject to the personal tastes of the parish priest, but developed by the community with enthusiasm and creativity, since it is a fundamental part of our Xaverian charism. (cf. RMX 74-75)
- The Parishes served by the Xaverians must also commit themselves to form the Lay Xaverians and collaborate with them in the Missionary Animation and missionary works of the Parish or the Sector. The Lay Xaverians should be promoted and helped to internalize the Xaverian spirituality. (cf. RMX 73)

Relationship with the Dioceses

"The pastoral service we offer to Christian communities in established, though not yet fully self-sufficient, Churches is of a temporary nature. We make every effort to ensure that our assistance is not prolonged more than is necessary.

In accordance with our specific charism, we help these communities in their process of growth and inculturation, in their efforts to become responsible agents of the mission to non-Christians, and to live in communion with other Churches (C 10).

- Handing one or two parishes back to the Dioceses will enable us to give more attention and resources to Missionary-Vocation Animation, Formation in our Seminaries and the Missionary Formation of the Local Church.
- We believe that we must hand back to the Dioceses the Parishes of Nossa Senhora Aparecida in Hortolândia and São João Batista in Nova Laranjeiras. The plan for handing over these parishes should be completed by 2018 at the latest.

Vocation Animation

"The Regional Directions must bear in mind the importance of the vocation issue and provide the most suitable means for an effective vocation ministry" (GR 16.1).

"Our charism commits every community to animate the Local Church so that it becomes and remains open to the mission ad gentes. Consequently, the XVI General Chapter reminds us all that we should consider missionary-vocation animation as a task of every confrere, in accordance with each one's possibilities, and it calls upon all the Circumscriptions to embrace this task with greater conviction and determination". (XVIGC 72).

- Vocation Animation must become one of the Region's priorities. The current difficulties in the vocation field must not diminish our commitment in this area which is vital for our Family. Vocation Animation is the task of all the confreres, especially of those who work in the Parishes.
- We ask that the Region appoint two confreres to work full-time in Vocation Animation.

VERIFICATION OF OUR FIDELITY TO OUR CONSECRATION

Our Consecration with the 4 vows is essential to our charism, as C 1 clearly states:

"The Spirit of the Lord animates the Church and constantly renews her awareness of her mission in the world. The same spirit inspired Bishop Guido Maria Conforti to dedicate himself to the evangelization of non-Christians, and to gather into one missionary community men called to consecrate their lives to God for the same ideal".

The local Community

The local Community is made up of confreres who *"reside in the same house, legitimately set up, with their own Superior"*(GR 78.1).

"In order to ensure that our communities become places of discernment of God's will, it is necessary that we rediscover the role of the superior within a renewed vision of obedience, in accordance with the desire of the Founder who wanted us to be marked by a spirit of faith, obedience and love for our family." (...) (RMX 38)

"The Superior normally leaves the direct administration of the community's goods to the treasurer; however, he keeps himself informed about the progress of the finances and watches over everything to ensure that all is done out of a spirit of poverty and, at the same time, that nothing necessary for the community life is lacking. Should he believe it is necessary, in exceptional cases, to carry out personal acts of administration, he shall promptly inform the treasure about them" (DTG 47).

Every community should therefore have a superior and treasurer.

The community life is regulated on the basis of the General Rule 36.1:

"Each local community draws up its own community project to govern the internal life of the group and organize its apostolate with particular reference to the surrounding milieu. The community project establishes times for prayer, planning, study, assessment, relaxation, fraternal socializing, and determines the criteria that govern the lifestyle of the community itself".

Besides prayer and other moments, such as shared meals and community meetings, the community project must also provide for:

- The common kitty: wages, pensions, offerings, etc., should all be handed directly, and in their entirety, to the treasurer. Each confrere asks for the money he needs for his ordinary personal expenses and presents his

financial report on time (GR 28.4). The community draws up an annual budget and verifies it periodically.

"The local community practices full communion of goods: consequently, there is no such thing as personal goods or goods for the exclusive use of any individual (DTG 62).

"The community also practices full financial communion with the Region: the community turns to the Regional Superior in times of need; in times of abundance it hands over its surplus in compliance with the Regional norms" (DTG 63).

- Faithful participation in the sector Meetings: these meetings cannot be reduced to just a few hours. It is normal that a sector meeting should occupy the whole day. There are no reasons to justify avoiding these precious and indispensable moments of Xaverian life. Absence at sector meetings, partial participation and a lack of collaboration towards their positive outcome, should all be looked upon as a serious form of disrespect towards the community.
- Annual Spiritual Retreats and Regional Assemblies: participation is compulsory, except in cases of illness. Any confrere who deliberately fails to take part in them should think about whether or not he should belong to the Circumscription.

Finances

In the Region there should no longer be any exceptions regarding:

- Unauthorized private bank accounts and the failure to present financial reports to the Regional Superior. Everything must be governed in accordance with no. 25 of the General Directory of Temporal Goods. Authorized bank accounts must be backed up by two signatures. Anyone who refuses to observe this norm should reflect seriously upon his belonging to the Circumscription, since he poses a grave obstacle to the serene and fruitful progress of the community and missionary life.
- Purchases of a considerable nature or travel, both within and outside Brazil, without the permission of the Regional Superior.

CONCLUSION

The Region of South Brazil still has much to offer the Congregation and the Local Church. Proof of this is the Bishop's esteem for the Xaverians and the liberty they grant to our Vocation Animation.

Moreover, the Christian communities show an authentic love for our confreres and a great admiration for their work.

Precisely for the above-mentioned reasons, it is vitally important that the Region's missionary Project be reformulated and now is the favorable time.

In closing the Spiritual retreat in 2016, the Superior General said:

"Every missionary project, every new beginning, finds its point of departure in persons who are humanly rich, harmonious and who possess a free heart".

We invite you all not to experience the Regional Chapter as a matter of routine, but as a providential event, because the next Regional Chapter could be decisive for the future of the Circumscription. Let us prepare for it with a free heart, (...) let us leave behind all fear, factions, ancient history or current mutual misunderstandings and dissatisfaction. The journey of the Region, which the Chapter will plan, deserves our total interest and all our affection!

The reflections contained therein aimed at helping us to retrieve a healthy self-esteem, centered upon fidelity to our Consecration, and a wise management of our "emotional energies", which should always be channeled towards living our vocation and charism ... Today, more than ever, our Missionary Family needs confreres with "*FREEDOM OF HEART, COURAGE AND AVAILABILITY*".

The preparation to the Regional Chapter should therefore be intense and a time of committed reflection, planning and restructuring. Furthermore, you must be aware that decisions should be taken and implemented in accordance with a strict deadline.

The General Direction feels its responsibility to help the Region to make a realistic plan and fulfill it, in accordance with request of the XVI General Chapter 77:

- a. *The Circumscriptions that have not yet established any criteria in this matter should be helped to do so by the General Direction, in view of carrying out the necessary reorganization and achieving a better use of their personnel;*
- c. *Wherever our specific identity is no longer relevant and personnel numbers are too small, the General Direction, whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity, should help the Circumscriptions to set in motion their programs of restructuring and reorganization.*

We thank you sincerely for your fraternal welcome and availability during our Visit to the communities. A special word of thanks to the Regional Superior, Fr. Domenico Borrotti, who accompanied us throughout the visit.

Thanks also for making it possible for us to take part in Sector meetings. Your openness of heart enabled us to leave with you the program of life and work contained in this letter.

May St. Guido M. Conforti accompany you all with his protection and guidance.

Fraternally

Fr. Luigi Menegazzo sx – Superior General

Fr. Mario C. Mula sx – Vicar General

São Paulo, 6 August 2016
Feast of the Transfiguration