



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

Prot. Supgen/0018/19

«Today, we too are invited to live in different situations and cultures, in the contemporary world challenges that call back the consecrated persons and the laity of the Opera to the commitment of an authentic and evangelical life. “There is a whole humanity waiting: people who have lost any hope, families in difficulties, abandoned children, young people who are denied any future, sick persons and abandoned elders, rich sated with goods, and emptiness in the heart, men and women in search of the meaning of life, thirsty of divine”. It is our life that should speak in front of these situations, a life in which joy shines along with the beauty of living the Gospel and the Calabrian charism in the following of Jesus Christ.»¹

Dearest brothers,

The Risen Lord be with you!

The Divine Providence, to which we entrust our whole existence and in whose name we perform our activities, during next year will offer us the opportunity to live the XII General Chapter of the Congregation, a very special occasion of joy and gratitude. First of all, we deal with the joy to put a hand to the Opera in order to realize its future, and to ensure that the next six years will be a reason to recognize and realize that particular prophesy for the present times, that is inherent to the “pure and genuine spirit” and our saint Founder has left us.

It is the joy of letting ourselves be questioned by our charism, the soul of the Opera, in order to foster its growth and development in today's world. It is the joy to meet one another as brothers in order to elaborate together those projects that give substance and relevance to the prophetic visions that spring from the same charism. Because - and this is the purpose of each Chapter - we are called, here and now, to develop and to make visible the prophetic intuitions that *“like a mustard seed... sown*

¹ *The Joy of Radicalism* – Letter of the Casante to the Calabrian Family, December 8, 2014, n° 32.



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

*on the ground*² belong to the Opera. During this year we will have the responsibility, but especially the joy to help each other to make the prophetic richness of our charism flourish with an evangelical creativity and human sensitivity.

The Chapter is defined in the Constitutions³ as “collegial body”. It means that the Chapter is something alive, made up of various members that are called to get together to listen to the Spirit, in fraternal dialogue, that consists in mutual listening and sharing in order to elaborate some ideas and projects capable to realize the plans of God. Since the Chapter is “the main sign of the unity and co-responsibility of all religious”, it requires the active and creative participation of all the members of the Opera. We all must feel called to give our contribution in order to be able to make the choices and realize the renewal that are requested in order to maintain a prophetic force in the Opera; the force that is capable to face so many questions and challenges that history offers us today, and thus reaffirming and reviving the fidelity to the Charism.

In this time that separates us from the celebration of the Chapter, each one of us is called to a deep examination of his fidelity to the Charism, so that all the contributions of each one of us - thoughts, proposals and creative visions - may be founded on a profound commitment of personal and group review (be it religious community, Delegation, lay Association, group of collaborators or Calabrian-inspired groups), with the sole purpose of living with more coherence the richness of the spirit of the Opera.

² Gospel of Mark 4: 26-32.

³ Cost. N° 135 “The General Chapter is a body of people that has the supreme authority in the Congregation, even if it is limited to the duration period of its celebration. It is the principal sign of the unity and co-responsibility of all the religious. Its primary function is to safeguard the charismatic patrimony of the Institute, that is: its objective, nature, spirit, characteristics and healthy traditions, promoting an adequate renewal. Therefore it must be seen as a particular moment of grace during which the Congregation comes together in an atmosphere of particular fraternity and charity in order to reflect on the life of the Congregation with an objective and serene examination of all that has been done in the preceding six years, on decisions to fulfil and the renewal of its members, in order to deepen and learn the will of the heavenly Father regarding the Opera.”



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

The discernment⁴ to which the Chapter is called, starts from the action of each one of us by which we recognize in our life what is according to the will of God and what is contrary to it. As a result of this discernment, thoughts and visions will come out that will be able to guide the Opera on the way of prophecy, a way marked by boldness and humility, passion for God and passion for the men and women of our time. It is a prophecy that, as I wrote in my letter⁵, must be both announcement and denunciation action, capable to get involved in the realities of today's world, with a particular concern for the poorest and vulnerable persons.

Having all this in the background, and in compliance with what is decreed by the art. 138 of our Constitutions, as the Casante of this Opera and with the consent of the General Council

I OFFICIALLY CALL THE

XII GENERAL CHAPTER

which will have

The Prophecy of Communion

as its theme

⁴ Speech of Pope Francis: Capitolari Missionari Figli del Cuore Imm. Di Maria, September 11, 2015; Capitolari Missionari Oblati di Maria Imm., October 7, 2016; Capitolari Ordine Osped. di San Giovanni di Dio, February 1, 2019.

⁵ *The Joy of Prophecy* – Letter of the Casante to the Calabrian Family, September 8, 2017.



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

“Above all regard each other as brothers and as such love and help each other especially in the spiritual life”⁶

The General Council has come to propose this theme after hearing the Delegates, the Superiors of Missions, and the General Council of the Poor Servants of D. P. Sisters, on the occasion of our last meeting⁷. Thanks to the prayer lived together, the dialogue and the exchange of perspectives and visions, we have made a discernment that led us to focus a list of themes that can stimulate our preparatory reflection:

- *The life in the Spirit*: the person in relationship with God and the neighbors; listening; sharing the spiritual life; liturgy and life, for a live and transforming relationship;
- *The spirit of Family*: fraternity and fertility; dialogue with diversity; the Calabrian Family;
- *The Formation*: the Formation Plan/Ratio Formationis (with attention to the identity, the testimony, and the ongoing formation, the community life and the formation method);
- *The Mission*: style of service (with joy, in the logic of gratuitousness and self-giving); attention to the new peripheries; attention to the person with disabilities;
- *The Casante*: mission, role and responsibility;
- *The Religious Brother*: the vocation of the Brother today, and the vocational proposal;

⁶ St. John Calabria - *Sante Norme*, September 23, 1908.

⁷ 3rd meeting of Delegates and Mission Superior – Mother House, March 12-15, 2019.



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

- Verification of Delegation Regulations.

The methodology we wish to make our own to prepare and live the XII Chapter, as I said in the beginning, will foster the spirit of collaboration, the sharing of thoughts and sentiments through a “responsible and ordered participation” of all the members of the Opera, the exchange of points of view with respect for various diversities and cultural sensitivities, the collegiality that is expressed by a sincere self-giving, the union with God and with the brothers. Using a word dear to Pope Francis, we will try to make our own a synodal style, make the synodality⁸ our “modus vivendi et operandi”⁹. We too like to assume this word in its meaning of “journey made together”: our participation, our reflection, listening and communication will aim to build a journey together, a common path, “the same feeling”. Besides, all this will help us to make a path of discernment together, useful to give birth to a “harmonious reality”¹⁰.

We are sure that each one of us will answer our proposals with active and creative participation¹¹, overcoming any passivity and indifference.

In order to realize all these purposes a pre-capitular commission will be constituted in each Delegation or Mission, with the task to organize the involvement of the religious and the communities in the work of preparation and synthesis, and the gathering of the contributions. Moreover it will prepare the pre-capitular General Assembly at the conclusion of the work preparation in each Delegation and Mission,

⁸ International Theological Commission, “*Sinodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*” n° 66: “The notion of sinodality implies that of collegiality, and vice versa, as the two realities, being distinct, sustain and authenticate each other”.

⁹ International Theological Commission, “*Sinodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*” n° 6: “*Sinodality, in this ecclesiological context, indicates the specific modus vivendi et operandi of the Church as People of God that shows and realizes concretely its being communion in walking together, gathering in assembly and in the active participation of all its members in its evangelizing mission.*”

¹⁰ International theological Commission “*Sinodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*” n° 3.

¹¹ Speech of Pope Francis: Chapter members of the Piccole Suore Miss. della Carità, May 26, 2017; Chapter members of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, October 22, 2018.



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

and it will support the involvement of and the listening to every component of the Calabrian Family present in one's own reality.

Some practical aspects necessary for an adequate preparation for the Chapter.

The Chapter will start **on April 26, 2020** and will take place **in Italy**.

The composition of the Chapter Assembly will follow the rules established by our Constitutions, and it is established that the participation of the religious should be according to the percentage defined in the previous Chapter, of 11% of the total of the religious present in the Congregation, at the moment of the elections.

In addition to those entitled: Casante, Vicar General, General Councilors and e Delegates, the Assembly of the Chapter will be made up of the representatives of the various Delegations whose election will take place on the occasion of the feast of St. John Calabria, next **October 8, 2019**.

The lists of the eligible will be drafted in such a way as to ensure adequate representation of minorities.

We should not forget that the Chapter is an event of the Spirit and nothing will be done good if we will not base what we do on the prayer and on spiritual deepening. No prophecy is born of hyperactivity, or of concentration in human technicalities. The Chapter will be a prophetic event if it will be the result of inner silence open to the listening to the Word of God and to the life of today's humankind. Therefore, an adequate spiritual preparation both individual and community/group will be fundamental for the success of the Chapter. Our call to prayer is not a fact of routine, but a pressing invitation that the Chapter be really a "kairos" for each one and for the whole Opera, that is a proper time, fit for an authentic "metanoia", a change, a



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

transformation of our personal thoughts and actions, a convergence of mind, heart and spirit towards the fundamental values of our charism.

In order to facilitate participation and give order to collaborations, the General Council establishes a Chapter Secretariat to which all, the single religious, communities, Delegations, and Calabrian Groups will refer, in order to obtain some material and to send the summaries of the Assemblies and any other contribution.

The Opera is God's, and the Opera is each one of us, St. John Calabria wrote. In these words by which I like to greet you, I feel a warm invitation to express our love for the Opera through an active participation, with our spirit and heart, to the journey of preparation that starts right now, and whose Assembly of the Chapter is just an expression of the same Chapter before time.

Our charism has in its foundation a strong invitation to trust and therefore to hope; let us express fully our spiritual energies, let us spend fully our patrimony of love for the Opera!

And in order to live this love with passion, let us ask for help to the Lady whom Fr. John Calabria used to call the "Mistress of the Opera", the Virgin Mary, the Mother who by loving us teaches us how to love, how to practise gratuitousness, mercy and compassion. Let us allow ourselves to be embraced by her love and we will be ready to spread it around us.

I carry all of you in my heart, certain that each one of you is a God's word of love for the world.

With fraternal affection I bless you from the depth of my heart.

Verona, April 28, 2019, on the Sunday of Mercy, the Octave of Easter.



POVERI·SERVI
DELLA·DIVINA
PROVVIDENZA

Superiore Generale

Padre Miguel Tofful
(Superiore Generale)