

Le Supérieur général



The Superior General

Tagaytay, Philippines, January 10, 2010

LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY

Dear confreres,

We are sending you this letter from Tagaytay in the Philippines to inform you of some of the decisions taken by the General Council during the meeting we have just concluded. At the beginning of Lent we will send you another text (a working document) intended for the preparation of the next Council of the Congregation. In that document we will invite you to reflect personally or/and in community on the question of our identity and our present mission (motion 2.3 –GA 2007).

We like to say “Together for the mission.”

- How do we live the charism of Saint John Eudes in the present context of globalization we live in? (How do we live this “creative faithfulness” as evangelizers and formators?)
- How are we, or are not, a truly missionary Society of Apostolic Life (SAL)?
- How are we, or are not, a truly multicultural and international SAL?
- It seems at times that our concern for our Province comes ahead of the spirit of the Congregation. How are your feelings on this statement?

Today we wish simply to share a few good news with you to begin the year 2010 on the positive note.

Tagaytay

The first one is that we have just experienced a very good week in Tagaytay. Between council meetings we had the opportunity to meet with our confreres from our first Eudist community in Asia, “Ave Cor”. We discovered a young, smiling, enthusiastic community full of hope for the future. This community is composed of three priests: Ron Bagley, François Jourdan, José Angel Carrillo, and 5 seminarians, Serge, Eboy, Mike, Bogs, and Ren. Although we did not share their accommodations since the house only has 7 rooms, we had the joy to share, pray, celebrate and even partake in a few

festive meals with them. We were hosted, and we must add warmly received, by our Sisters of the Good Shepherd at their Maryridge Retreat House, which is located on a splendid site on the heights overseeing Lake Taal with its volcanoes, surrounded by flowers and luxuriant tropical vegetation.

It was truly a good week which gave us also the opportunity to meet and share a meal with Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle (Bishop Chito), bishop of the diocese of Imus, who is well known and appreciated by many Eudists: those who have been to Tagaytay (about 15 already) and also the Eudists in Rome and Charlesbourg.

The Life in the Provinces

As we usually do, we took time to look back on the life and important events in each Province since the last Council of the Congregation: international meeting of the Associates in France, the creation of the Province of the Minuto de Dios and the nomination of Father Guillermo Acero as Provincial, the installation of Father José-Antonio Sabino as new Provincial of Venezuela, the Provincial Assemblies of France, Colombia and Minuto de Dios, the meeting of the Province of France on November 11 to reflect on the identity of the Eudist priest.

Unfortunately a few confreres also passed away, Father Francis Fréhel, Father Alain Robert, Father Iberio Pena, Father Samuel Gonzales, and Father Désiré Chotard. Meanwhile we rejoiced in the ordination of 10 new priests for the Congregation (Vice-Province of Africa, Province of Colombia and Province of Minuto de Dios) and the presence of 9 candidates in San Diego for the Province of North America. A few of these will take part in the international Special Time of Spirituality which will be held in Tagaytay beginning in July 2010 along with 5 Filipinos and 2 African candidates.

Incorporations

After the deliberative vote of the General Council (Const. 77 & PR 142, b 1.2), I had the joy to call to incorporation 4 young confreres, **Rodrigue Azanmasso Séda**, **Hervé Constant Kouassi N'gouan**, **Paul Zogbladan Koffi**, of the Vice-Province of Africa, and **Pablo Padilla** of the Province of Colombia. We are happy to welcome them in our "Little Congregation." We assure them of fraternal prayer and support.

Nihil Obstat

Three Provinces held their Assemblies since July 2009. I was able to participate in at least part of the work of these Assemblies. Everyone agrees, including me, that the atmosphere of these Assemblies was excellent and very fraternal. The General Council had already given its "Nihil obstat" to the Acts of the Province of France last September. However, at this session it studied attentively the Acts of the Assemblies of the Provinces of Colombia and the Province of Minuto de Dios. We appreciated the quality of both documents. By a collegiate vote it also gave its "Nihil obstat" to the

decisions taken permitting the promulgation and publication of these Acts (Const. & PR 101, PR 141, a.2.2).

A Few Financial Questions

Father Damien Stammers, the new General Bursar, sent a working document to the Council asking a few questions concerning the finances of the General Administration, the contributions of the Provinces and our house in Rome. We studied these documents in preparation for the Council of the Congregation of June 2010 which will decide on these issues (motion 7.2 – GA 2007).

Otherwise, we would like to inform you that, at the request of the General Bursar, a new meeting of the Financial Council of the Congregation and the Provincial Bursars will take place from September 6 to 10, 2010, in Bogotá (Shalom Retreat House) (motion 7.5 – GA 2007).

The Associates

You have already received a few reactions concerning the interprovincial meeting of the Associates which took place in France in July 2009. You were also able to read the final document that was published at the end of the meeting. According to all the participants, it was a peek experience for the life of all the Congregation and it fulfilled the wishes expressed at the General Assembly held in Quebec (motion 5.1 – GA 2007). We are happy to observe that the dynamic impulse begun during this meeting continues to this day in most of the Provinces, i.e. prayer the 19 of each month, interprovincial communication, etc.

“Ratio” for Eudist Formation

After the meeting of the General Council of January 2009 you received the Ratio for the initial and permanent Eudist formation. The text exists presently in French, Spanish and English. We would like the document to become known and applied by all the Provinces: this does not seem to be the case everywhere at this point. A future General Council will make an evaluation of this document and will invite you, especially those responsible for formation, to let us know how it has been applied and what other suggestions you might have concerning this document.

Communication

We are aware that most of the Provinces presently have a website but we have nothing at this point at the level of the General Administration of the CJM. The General Council, however, is convinced of the importance of having our own website which would serve as a link between the different Provinces and guarantee a rapid access to information, official documents and the fundamental writings of the Congregation (motion 3 –GA 2007). We hope that finally (!) we will be able to activate such a site during the coming semester with the technical help of Father Pablo Velasquez.

Message of Gratitude to our Elders

Just about everywhere the Year of the Priest gave the opportunity to talk about vocations, the ministry, the life of the priests and to pray for them. It seems to us however that much was said about the future priests, the young priests, the pastors in full activity, but less has been said about our elders who have assured the service of the Gospel to their brothers and sisters in a thousand different ways for decades around the world with zeal and abnegation. That is why the General Council wished to send a message of recognition and gratitude to the older fathers of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (75+). This message was sent today via the Provincial Superiors.

A Few Dates

The next Council of the Congregation will take place from Tuesday, June 15 in the morning, to Saturday, June 19 in the morning. Beside the General Council it will include the General Bursar and the 6 Provincial Superiors. It will be held at the General House.

The meeting of the General Council of the end of the year will also take place held in Rome from Sunday, November 28 to Thursday, December 2, 2010.

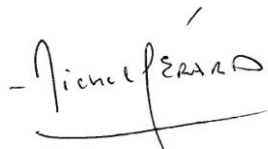
The upcoming Canonical Visitations will be as follows: Province of Colombia between February and April 2010, Province of France from February to March, Province of North America end of October to the beginning of November, and the Vice-Province of Africa at the beginning of 2011.

Apostolic Blessing

At his catechesis of August 19, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI spoke at length of Saint John Eudes. We thanked him in the name of the Congregation and also sent him copies of the Eudist Lectionary in French and Spanish in order to offer him the opportunity to deepen his knowledge of our founder's writings!

In response you will find in an annex, not only his word of thanks but also his Apostolic Blessing which he extends to all the members of the Congregation.

Offering you once again our best wishes for a wonderful and happy year 2010, we assure you of our fraternal greetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michel Gérard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Michel Gérard, cjm
General Superior and
General Council