

Rome, 25 June 2019

Dear Brothers,

*“It is not enough to enter religious life, we must then walk in religious life”* (AP 1958/1, p. 91). With this admonition of our Founder, we turn to you, dear brothers, to begin together the journey of approaching the next General Chapter.

In the letter of the Superior General of 16 June 2019, which marks the beginning of this journey, he gives us the *leitmotiv* that must accompany and guide our steps, our reflections and our responses.

There are two dimensions that he emphasizes and they are connected to each other: **a synodal style and a willingness to listen:**

*“...we want to experience this “journeying together”, trying to find out what the Spirit of the Lord expects of us, in an itinerary of discernment that, starting from our Pauline identity, helps us to look with objectivity...”*

*“...we want to begin (...) a path that requires above all the continuous exercise of listening. (...) In this perspective, it is necessary to realize that everyone has something to say and at the same time has something to learn from each other and, therefore, everyone is invited to get in tune with others and to welcome each other.”*

The methodology chosen, therefore, both for the preparation and for the celebration of the General Chapter itself, is synodality. This method, as the name itself indicates, has the intention of involving all the members, each one giving his contribution with the accumulated experiences and talents that he has as a gift, with his own reflections and suggestions.

Dear Brothers, in order to tune in and spur each other on this new journey, we offer you, for your personal reading and reflection, two documents that are the synthesis of this process restarted by Pope Francis and the Church. You can find them in your own language by clicking on these links<sup>1</sup>.

It is hoped that the two documents mentioned above, together with the letter of the Superior General *Start of the “Synodal Journey”*. *In preparation for the XI General Chapter*, and for this letter, be the object of a shared reflection in a community meeting, where everyone can pay attention to what our brother can tell us: *“everyone, in fact, has something to say and also has something to learn from each other”*.

In this meeting, we can begin by asking ourselves these questions: what does a synodal journey of the Congregation mean for me? What contribution can we offer, on a personal and community level, to enrich this journey?

As we have already mentioned, the first and principal act of the synodal journey is to listen to all, so that all may be active protagonists of the Chapter, above all because it concerns us Paulines.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20180302\\_sinodalita\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_it.html)  
[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151017\\_50-anniversario-sinodo.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html)

We asked ourselves what could be the best way to listen to everyone and make sure that everyone is given the opportunity to express himself freely. Dear Brothers, for now, we have found no other way to involve you if not through a **first questionnaire**. If there are other ways, you may suggest them to us so that along the way to the General Chapter we can take them into consideration and value them.

**The Objective of the first questionnaire:** the questionnaire is personal, individual and has the objective of presenting and understanding the general situation of the Congregation and its main problems. For this reason, the questions in this first questionnaire do not yet enter into any specific area or sector of our Pauline life but serve to focus on the primary difficulties and challenges of the Congregation, from which we will then derive and decide on the theme of the next General Chapter.

The responses are open and need adequate personal reflection and awareness, as well as the assumption of responsibility.

They must report and must be based on your personal experience. They must freely present the point of view of each one of you, and therefore they must not be generic. They must, therefore, be as objective as possible and also concise.

**Timing:** Responses must reach us on or before 31 August 2019. Although the time may seem short and in some countries we are approaching the holiday season, we request you to devote the necessary time and not to give in to the temptation: “I will answer later”.

**How to respond:** Preferably, you are asked to respond online by going to this web address that you will receive also by e-mail:

**Italiano:** <https://forms.gle/Ca8AmfbD8ViVmc4Z8>

**Españolo:** <https://forms.gle/K9uo128s3Zbe873D9>

**English:** <https://forms.gle/VwWB8JsouZVLLdQS7>

**Português:** <https://forms.gle/q1AFyUDzeAWfEHxR8>

**Français:** <https://forms.gle/PFFaii1sTnSic3e8>

You can also reply by e-mail, taking up the attached questionnaire and answering any question in word. Finally, you can also answer in print format, for those who do not have the opportunity to answer online or by e-mail. As a last resort, the answers can be handwritten, legibly so as to facilitate interpretation and translation.

We, therefore, ask the Superiors of the Circumscription to send the questionnaire promptly, perhaps through the local Superiors, to all the members and to those who do not use the computer to send a printed copy.

**In which language to answer:** the Questionnaire is sent in 5 languages: Italian, Spanish, English, French and Portuguese. The answers should preferably be in Italian, but each of you can answer in your official national language.

The Superiors of the Circumscription, together with the local Superiors, are the first mediators of this synodal journey. Therefore, they should make sure that each brother has received the questionnaire and try to motivate and facilitate both the participation and the work of answering the questionnaire. Without this work of sensitization on the part of the Superiors, it is difficult for us to begin this synodal journey.

This is the first stage of the pre-preparatory phase, of which Fr Valdir José De Castro also speaks in his letter, the listening phase, and we do so through an open questionnaire.

The choice of the questionnaire is not to “give an idea of greater democracy, nor is it a strategy to seem more popular. It has a deeper meaning and is part of that process of congregational discernment that involves not only those who will participate directly in the General Chapter but all the members through whom the Spirit suggests to the Congregation the way forward. (...) A good General Chapter is seen not only in the concrete results of the final document but also in the process that it has been able to activate and of which consultation is a necessary part”.<sup>2</sup>

May Jesus Master, who is our Way, enlighten us and guide us in starting the first steps on this synodal path that requires patience, collaboration and audacity to overcome the comfortable objection of “it has always been done this way”.

May Saint Paul the Apostle, whose feast we will soon celebrate, and Mary, Queen of the Apostles, who prayed with the Apostles for the descent of the Holy Spirit, obtain for us from the Lord a new Pentecost.

Fraternally,

#### **Pre-preparatory commission**

*Father Vito Fracchiolla  
Father Celso Godilano  
Brother Darlei Zanon  
Father Francis Dalmet  
Father Rafael Espino Guzmán  
Father Luigi Giovannini  
Brother Marcello Sannai*

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<sup>2</sup> Matteo Visioli: *Non è semplice raccolta di opinioni*, in *Vita Pastorale*, Marzo 2019.