

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI DEL CUORE DI GESÙ



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MESSAGE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE XVIII GENERAL CHAPTER TO ALL CONFRERES

Rome 3rd October 2015

Dearest Confrères,

Peace in Christ our Life!

Finding ourselves by now at the conclusion of the XVIII General Chapter, we strongly feel the need to share with you a message of communion and hope. You have all been very much present in our reflections and decisions; thank you for your prayers and above all, for your witness of service and dedication.

We recognize with heartfelt gratitude the work undertaken in our Provinces and Delegations in preparation for this General Chapter; the proposals, suggestions and reflections have greatly helped in our discernment.

It is difficult to express in words the experience that we have lived during these days together. It has certainly been a celebration of fraternity and of a shared passion for the *Mission*. We have committed ourselves to searching for the footsteps of Daniel Comboni among the missionary challenges that humanity confronts us with today. All of this under the promptings of the Spirit of the Resurrected One who helps us to overcome fear and discouragement, to herald in a new world of reconciliation, justice and wholeness in peace.

In a particular way the suffering of the peoples with whom we make *common cause* has accompanied us. We carry in our hearts the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Eritrea, the tragedy of refugees ... and in different ways every other country in which we live and work. These tragedies are also ours; love always overcomes evil, as much as it may appear insurmountable at times.

At the conclusion of this Chapter, we wish to assure you that it has been an experience of unity and joy which has even taken ourselves by surprise: we have re-discovered the beauty of our common missionary vocation. Jesus continues to call each one of us to proclaim the *Gospel of Mercy* to the suffering masses at the margins of human history, among the poorest and not yet evangelized, those discarded by a system of death or simply ignored by indifference.

Today the complex reality of society, the Church and of our Institute in many ways places us in front of our many limitations. More than ever we are invited to a profound conversion, personal,

communitarian and institutional, to a transformational encounter with the Good Shepherd, the heart of our Charism, and to a re-qualification of our commitments, to be all the more humble servants of, and collaborators in, the *Mission*.

The gestures and teaching of Pope Francis, who in a private audience manifested his personal appreciation for all that we do before imparting his Apostolic Blessing, confirm for us the dream of Daniel Comboni.

Finally, together with yourselves, we wish to thank the out-going Superior-General, Father Enrique Sánchez, and his Council for their total dedication to the Institute over the last six years: that the certainty of having served God in and through ourselves may fill them with joy in the new missionary challenge journey which awaits them.

In a similar way, we pledge our friendship, prayer and willing co-operation to Father Tesfaye Tadesse, the new Superior-General and to his brother Councillors, who will assist him in guiding the Institute over the coming six years.

When you receive the Capitular Documents and have them in your hands, you will see that they are truly the fruit of your labours: we have merely been instruments in the hands of God, searching to bring about convergence among the ideas, dreams and proposals before us. Now, all together without distinction, we are able to embody them, as Mary our Mother, in missionary attitudes that are full of the joy of the Gospel, a joy that the world of today needs from us as never before.