

1 - DISCIPLES AND APOSTLES



"BECOMING SAINTS BY MAKING SAINTS"

In the lead up to the coming Synod on "Evangelization for the transmission of Christian Faith", the Chapter hears the call of the Church. It remembers also the same call heard in the Apostolic Exhortation "Vita Consecrata" (no. 81):

*"If the great challenges which modern history poses to the **new evangelization are to be faced successfully, what is needed above all is a consecrated life which is continually open to challenge** by the revealed word and the signs of the times. The memory of the great evangelizers, both men and women, who were themselves profoundly evangelized, shows that in order to face the world of today **it is necessary to have people who are lovingly dedicated to the Lord and his Gospel.** [...]
The new evangelization will be effective if it proclaims from the rooftops what it has first lived in intimacy with the Lord. It calls for strong personalities, inspired by saintly fervour."*

We are welcoming this challenge.

We want to respond to it as **disciples following Jesus after the example of Jean-Marie de la Mennais**, with a renewed zeal.
May it be the joy of our consecrated life!

OUR MISSION

WORD OF GOD

Like all those who follow Jesus, we are both **disciples and sent messengers**.

*"He appointed **twelve**, that they might **be with him**, and **he might send them forth to preach and to have authority to drive out demons**". (Mk 3, 14)*

WORD OF THE CHURCH

And today the Church invites us to carry out this integration:

*"The history of the Church, from the earliest years to our present days, is rich of admirable examples of consecrated people who lived and who still live **the search for holiness through their teaching commitment**, while proposing **holiness as a goal in education**." (VC 96)*

The Church also reminds of the spirituality of communion:

*"In this way the path of holiness becomes a way that all members of the community follow together; not just a path for an individual but even more, a community experience: in the reciprocal welcoming; in the sharing of gifts, above all the gift of love, of pardon, and of fraternal correction; in the common search for the will of the Lord rich in grace and mercy; in the willingness of each one to bear one another's burdens. In today's cultural atmosphere, **community holiness** is a convincing witness, perhaps even more than that of the individual." (Service of Authority and Obedience, 19)*

RULE OF LIFE

Like the first apostles called by Christ, we live our vocation as disciples and apostles **in community**.

*"It is in community that the Brothers seek God and exercise their apostolate. Together, they read the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel.
Living with men whose company they have not chosen and whom they call Brothers, they witness to the new and universal Brotherhood instituted by Christ. Their unity is a special sign of the Kingdom and a powerful source of energy in the realization of their mission."*

The community aspect of their lives gives the Brothers a sure guide in their quest for God. It assures true freedom and authenticity in the choice of ministries.”(D 6)

WORD OF THE FOUNDER

This is what F. de la Mennais wanted of us: sent by God, in the image of Jesus, to make his Kingdom come:

*"Strive to inspire in your children true and tender piety; **do not consider yourselves as profane teachers, but as missionaries** charged with the mission of making the reign of God come into their hearts: it is there, indeed, your vocation, and it will be **by making saints that you will sanctify yourselves.**"* (To Br. Alfred-Marie Laborie, on July 7, 1844).

TO ALLOW OURSELVES BE EVANGELIZED

Calls and Challenges

Whatever his age, the Brother hears the voice of the Lord "who urges him, calls him by his name, and send him." (cf. D 19)

To answer in a personal way, the Brother is attentive to his encounter with the Lord, in listening to his Word, in the Eucharist, in his personal prayer, in his meetings with people and in the events of life.

It is there that he discovers how to love and serve his Lord.

- "Present in a world marked by efficiency and consumerism, the Brother, united to the Lord, is a happy witness full of hope. He recognizes the presence of the Spirit in this world loved by God." (cf. D8)
- He reminds himself that his 'experience of God' is measured by the **essential bonds** he creates with his Brothers, the laity, the children and the youth and the poor.

Action Plan

The Chapter invites each Brother to make the effort to develop and live his personal project, shared in community, a project that:

- **Places Christ** and the love of children **at the center of his life**
- **Specifies the time** deemed necessary to achieve **the unity of his life:**
 - time for formation, that will facilitate his spiritual growth and creative fidelity,
 - apostolic involvement discerned in community and with the superior,
 - time also for sharing and reviewing this project with a spiritual mentor and his superior.

COMMUNITIES THAT EVANGELIZE

Calls and Challenges

In a world where relationships are quickly formed and quickly broken, where the thirst for relationships and fraternity is felt, especially among young people, our vocation of Brother is a clear sign of fraternity.

We hear the call for conversion to community life. It is in community that the Brothers welcome the Gospel. They proclaim it through their fraternal lives. **"A community is missionary, and the mission is for communion."** (Fraternal life in community, no. 58)

It is in community and with the community that we are called to holiness.

The community is the place where the Brothers strive to live as messengers in a common mission, which contributes to its unity.

Action Plan

2

1. The Chapter invites each community to develop **a project for its community life**, sign and proclamation of the Gospel. This project, agreed together and approved by the Provincial, must benefit the mission and must facilitate:

- a. **Together as-Brothers-:** Brothers who take time to live together, pray together and share the Word of God, to meet regularly and give importance to Sundays, Brothers who can relax together.
The quality of their relationships is shown in their attention each other, in communication, in forgiveness, etc.
- b. **Visibility and openness:** The local community must strive to develop an attitude of welcoming of and openness to all, with a special attention to the Mennaisian Family, young people and the local Church.

This is made possible by the capacity:

- to adapt times and places to make such sharing possible (prayer time, meals, time of relaxation),
- to make significant changes that will enable it to be recognized as a community of Brothers.

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2. To animate the community, the mission of the local superior is vital. This is why the Province must attach much importance to their formation. Formational Guidelines need to be developed as to be implemented by the Local Superiors.

BROTHERS SENT TO EVANGELIZE

Calls and Challenges

This challenge of new evangelization comes at a precise moment when, due to the evolution of the education systems and of young people and their families, we may feel a little impoverished. Aware of our frailties, in the spirit of faith, we must continue boldly.

The education of children and young people requires from teachers a greater professionalism in the context of secularism, it brings with it the difficulty to perceive the **meaning of the mission** as well as the **unity** between spiritual life, professionalism and mission of evangelization.

Many Brothers have reached the age of professional retirement and are no longer working in schools. Sometimes these Brothers have difficulty in seeing how they can still participate in the mission of the Congregation.

We renew our commitment to continue to walk in the footsteps of so many Brothers, and achieve today in our educational work the mission of Jesus himself. *"Sublime vocation! It is the vocation of Jesus himself. He left the bosom of his Father to fulfill the mission that yourself are asked to achieve at his example... You must teach the true doctrines to those who are still ignorant of them, and you will perform miracles in the spiritual order..."* (Opening of the Retreat of the Brothers, SVII 2237)

Action Plan

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The Chapter, while giving thanks for the great commitment of the Brothers at the service of the mission, wants to encourage them to live that **spirituality of being "a messenger"**, by cultivating an attitude of service and availability, in a resolute commitment to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

- **Brothers in Formation:** They live that phase of their journey as a time of preparation for the mission. They put aside some time to announce the Gospel to children and young people, particularly to the poorest. (cf. D 149)

- **Brothers in Active Service:** Strong in their passion for Christ and passion children and young people, the Brothers make efforts to preserve the balance of their life. They commit themselves to evangelization with faith, humility, charity and abnegation.
- **Our Retired Brothers:** Witnesses to the joy and peace that come from their fidelity to God, they commit themselves to the mission in a way that is adapted to their age and situation: solidarity with their confreres involved in activities, expressions of welcome, participation in activities with the Mennaisian family, prayer, and the offering of their infirmities, their suffering and sickness...

5 [To the retired Brothers, the province offers a time of renewal, so that they may live this new phase of their life in joy, peace, and generosity.