



LETTER TO THE MENNAISIAN FAMILY

November 2018
The Superior General

LIVING IN THE MENNAISIAN FAMILY MODE

Dear Brothers, dear Lay Mennaisian,

Peace and joy in Christ Jesus, our Brother, who calls us all to holiness. The last General Chapter invites each Brother, each Lay Mennaisian and each community to think and live more and more "in the Mennaisian Family mode".

To live "in the Mennaisian Family mode" is the path of holiness that the General Chapter 2018 traces for us. But how can it be achieved? By living with love one's daily commitment, wherever one finds himself and no matter what his state of life maybe.

Are you an active Brother? Be holy by living your consecration and your mission to young people and Brothers joyfully. Are you a retired Brother? Be holy by being the loving, benevolent and cordial presence of Christ wherever you are and in whatever state of health. Are you a Lay Mennaisian? Be holy by living the aspect of the Mennaisian charism that seduced you with generosity and passion.

Let us learn to flourish where God has planted us.

In order to live more and more in « the Mennaisian Family mode », the General Chapter of 2018 invites to:

1- Return to the Source

At the last synod, the young people affirmed that they want an authentic, luminous, transparent and joyful Church. And what are the expectations of our children and young people in our educational centers? What do they ask of the Mennaisian Family? They are hungry and thirsty for close, merciful, credible and compassionate witnesses. The closer the members of the Family are to Christ, the more authentic, luminous, transparent and joyful sentinels will the children and young people claim with all their being. Without returning to the Source which is Christ, it will be impossible for us to fulfill the beautiful mission entrusted to us: to be holy by making saints. And about the "young people, faith and vocational discernment" the synod tells us the

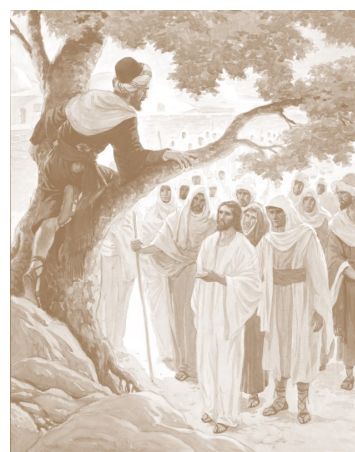


same thing when it says: *"We must be holy to invite young people to become holy"* (Final document of the last Synod, N° 166)

I therefore exhort all members of the Mennaisian Family

to return to the Source by learning to become more brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, the Saint par excellence, by daily listening to his Word, through frequent participation in the Eucharist and by prolonged adoration in silence.

2- Reach out to others



The Gospel always invites us to run the risk of meeting the other. The love of God is inseparable from that of the neighbour. Jesus eats at the homes of his friends: Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He meets the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. He invites himself to Zacchaeus' home. He participates in the wedding at Cana. Jesus welcomes and forgives the sinner at Si-

mon's house.

In the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the last Synod (No. 68), young people want a "close and friendly" Church, an ecclesial community that is *"a family where one feels welcomed, listened to, protected and integrated"*. What is the quality of the relationships and meetings of the members of the Mennaisian Family? Do we form a real family where everyone feels welcome with his wealth and fragility? Are we forming a real family for the growth of children and young people in our educational centers? Do we dare to risk meeting others in the manner of Jesus? Is the lived fraternity appealing?

I invite each Mennaisian group to reread, during a meeting, its ability to risk meeting others by identifying two barriers to tear down and two bridges to build in order to live more and more "in a Mennaisian Family mode".

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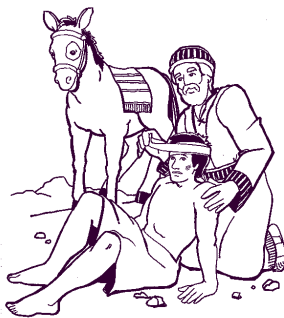


3- Dare to go the peripheries

Pope Francis keeps reminding us that the credibility of the Church depends on its capacity to be a Church that goes out and which dares the peripheries.

The reality of the peripheries is diverse. The unemployed person is on the periphery: he lacks the good of work, which goes against his dignity and his rights. It is the same for the migrant: he is looking for an identity, a country and a home. A young person or a street child misses the affection and the warmth of the family, whereas the only person suffers the absence of relationships.

Can the Mennaisian Family be insensitive to this suffering? How to dare to go the peripheries? I therefore reiterate the call of the last General Chapter which encourages the Brothers and the Laity to work together *"to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, and to support those among them who are in social and emotional precariousness"* (GC 2018, N° 18).



LET US PRAY

Lord, give us the audacity and the creativity to dare to go out, look and call disciples. Give our Congregation the vocations it needs to continue its mission in the Church and for the world.

Open our eyes, our ears, our hands and our hearts: may our communities become spaces where young people touch the warmth of fraternity and friendship. May they thus experience your tenderness, your closeness, your affection and your mercy.

God alone in time! God alone in eternity!

4- Dare to call new disciples

The theme of the second year of preparation for the bicentenary of the Congregation invites the entire Mennaisian Family to dare to call new disciples. And this invitation is rooted in the conviction that *"the Lord still calls today in all contexts and across all walks of life"* (GC 2018, N° 5). Each Mennaisian group should ask itself this vital question: what can we do, Brothers and Laity together, to dare to call new disciples?



Pope Francis offers us two interesting lines of action:

1. Ask the Lord to send workers to his harvest: *"Behind and before any vocation, there is always someone's strong and intense prayer: of a grandmother, a grandfather, a mother, a father, a community ... Vocations are born in prayer and from prayer; and they can persevere and bear fruit only in prayer"* (Pope Francis, Regina Caeli, 21 April 2018). During the three days of prayer to Saint Joseph, at the beginning of each month, it would be a good thing if each Mennaisian group could meet once for an hour of adoration and intercession for the vocations of Brothers and Lay Mennaisians.
2. Evangelise the young people so that they can open up to the call of the Lord: in reality, it is, above all, *"to be by their side to contaminate them with the joy of the Gospel and of belonging to Christ"* (Pope Francis to the Spanish Conference of Religious Men and Women, 13 November 2018). Why not think of organising, at the level of each Mennaisian group, an open day "Doors wide open" to introduce young people to the Mennaisian vocation?

Christmas Wishes From General Council

The Brother Superior General and his Council would like to wish the whole Mennaisian Family:

a Merry Christmas 2018
and a Good, Holy and Happy New Year 2019.

May the contemplation of the Child of Bethlehem, the Source of Flowing Water to which Jean-Marie de la Mennais and Gabriel Deshayes were drinking, make us sentinels who today announce by the testimony of their life that *"holiness is the most beautiful face of the Church"* (Gaudete and Exsultate No. 8).

May this new year, which marks the bicentenary of our Congregation, be the perfect moment to *write a new page*, where everyone finds himself, with the ink of communion, on the paper of collaboration.